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College of Education
Department of _______________________

The University of British Columbia,
Vancouver 8, Canada.

Date September 14, 1960.
The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency of errors in English usage, punctuation, and spelling made by grade 12 students in the two paragraphs that each student wrote on the June, 1953, English 40 (Language) University Entrance examination in British Columbia. The errors were classified within each of fourteen major categories. These categories were further divided to give a total of seventy-four classes. In order to record specific errors some of the seventy-four classes were further subdivided to increase the number of classes to 10^4, excluding spelling errors. Furthermore an attempt was made to discover a relationship between the incidence of errors in English and certain factors that possibly may have been associated with such errors. These factors were: the student's (a) intelligence (scholastic ability); (b) sex; (c) socio-economic status as determined by the father's occupation; (d) interest in English as determined by the student's choice of major subjects; (e) choice of topics on which the student wrote his paragraphs, and (f) choice of high school program: University or General. Furthermore, in order to determine the extent to which the number of words in the paragraphs might have influenced the number of errors, this writer found a relationship between the number of errors students made and (a) the number of words written on the two paragraphs on the examination, and (b) the number of words written on (i) the expository paragraph and (ii) the descriptive or narrative paragraph. By discovering the extent of the relationship between errors made in the paragraphs and the marks that teachers gave to the paragraphs,
this investigator attempted to find out the degree to which markers took into consideration mechanical errors in English.

On examining 599 paragraphs written by 300 grade 12 students, this writer found the number of words written and errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling as summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of</th>
<th>Paragraphs</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>47,075</td>
<td>2254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>28,695</td>
<td>1294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>21,124</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>96,894</td>
<td>4389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students wrote the mean number of words and made the mean number of errors as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>words per paragraph</th>
<th>errors per paragraph</th>
<th>errors per words written 10,000 words for one error made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>158.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>149.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>192.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Paragraphs</td>
<td>161.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When one considers the fourteen main categories of errors, he finds that spelling and punctuation account for slightly more than two-thirds of the errors. If four other categories (capitalization, the apostrophe, omissions, misuse of quotation marks) are added to the punctuation and spelling, one finds that usage errors account for nearly 80 per cent of the total number of errors. Those errors ranking 1 - 7 account for nearly 93 per cent of all errors. Ten kinds of errors in punctuation accounted for 89.9 per cent of all such errors.
By applying appropriate statistical analyses, this investigator attempted to determine the relationship between errors and the elements mentioned in the first paragraph. The writer found that the coefficient of correlation between errors and scholastic ability was -0.304. On both paragraphs boys made a mean of 16.73 errors and girls 13.41; $t$ was found to be 3.12. For 293 degrees of freedom $t$ is 2.59 at the 1 per cent level or less. Consequently, for $t = 3.12$, the hypothesis of no difference in the means can be rejected. The writer found that students whose fathers were in the professional, semi-professional, and managerial vocations made a mean of 11.17 errors, and students whose fathers were in the skilled, semi-skilled and un-skilled vocations made 14.8. For 98 degrees of freedom $t$ is 1.984 at the 5 per cent level. But for the means just given $t$ is 2.062. Therefore the hypothesis of no difference can be rejected.

If choice of majors is used as a criterion of interest, students who are primarily interested in English make fewer errors than those who are not. The former made a mean of 12.61 errors on both paragraphs; the latter, 14.00. For 267 degrees of freedom $t$ is 1.969 at the 5 per cent level of significance; therefore the hypothesis of no difference in the means can be rejected. Turning to a consideration of errors made by University Programme students and those made by General Programme students, one finds that the former made a mean of 12.35 errors; the latter, 17.55. For 287 degrees of freedom $t$ is 2.592 at the 1 per cent level of significance. One can therefore reject with considerable confidence the hypothesis of no difference in the means.
That the number of errors on a paragraph does not increase directly as the number of words written is shown by the fact that the coefficient of correlation between the number of errors and the number of words written is .574. Consequently the use of the paragraph as a unit on which to base the numbers of errors need not invalidate the statistical analyses and inferences previously made. Finally, examiners probably took errors into consideration when they marked the paragraphs as the coefficient of correlation between errors and the marks the examiners gave the paragraphs was - .202, which is significant at the 1 per cent level.
The writer would like to acknowledge the help he has received from a number of persons in the preparation of this thesis: Dr. H. L. Stein, Dr. J. Katz, Dr. J. R. McIntosh, Professor P. Penner, and Dr. Marion B. Smith for their invaluable comments and criticism; Dr. C. B. Conway and Mr. H. M. Evans, who placed the facilities of the Department of Education at his disposal; numerous principals of public and private schools throughout British Columbia, who supplied the writer with information that he requested; the British Columbia Teachers' Federation for financial assistance, and his wife, Olga, and family without whose forbearance this thesis could not have been completed.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................ vii

Chapter

I. THE PROBLEM ........................................................................................................ 1

A. Statement of the problem
B. Some terms defined

II. JUSTIFICATION FOR MAKING THIS STUDY ............................................... 6

III. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM .............................................................. 10

A. A study made in Scotland
B. Studies of errors in usage made in Canada
C. Error studies in British Columbia
D. Periodical literature dealing with studies of errors in usage made in the United States
E. Summary of conclusions reached by investigators, 1905 to 1930
F. Criticism of error counts made before the 1930's
G. Investigations since 1930
H. Summary of research, 1930-1955
I. Monographs and books on error frequency counts

IV. THE PROBLEM OF CORRECTNESS IN USAGE ......................................... 34

A. Attempts to determine standards of correct usage
B. Definitions of good usage
C. High School standards of English

V. METHOD ............................................................................................................... 57

A. Educational hypothesis
B. Definition of limits
C. Research design
D. Outline of statistical analysis
Chapter

VI. SOURCES AND DESCRIPTION OF DATA

A. Data recorded from the examination papers
B. Data about students

VII. ERRORS IN USAGE, PUNCTUATION, AND SPELLING

A. Punctuation
B. Usage
C. Spelling

VIII. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ERRORS IN USAGE AND VARIOUS FACTORS

A. Intelligence
B. Sex
C. Socio-economic background
D. Interest in English
E. Choice of topic
F. University programme or general programme
G. Number of words written
H. Marks given to paragraphs

IX. CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary and general conclusions
B. Weaknesses and strengths of this study
C. Suggestions for further research

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX.

A. Table showing fourteen categories and forty-seven classes of error, together with the totals in each group, errors per 10,000 words, percentage of total errors, and rank order

B. Actual examples of errors from older studies and corresponding errors made by Grade 12 students on the Junior Matriculation Examination, June, 1953, together with actual numbers of errors made in each category and the rank within each of fourteen main categories

C. Actual errors in spelling made on paragraphs written by 300 students on the English 40 (language) British Columbia University Entrance Examination, June, 1953
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Studies of Errors to Which Charters Referred in 1917</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Rank and Percentage of Form Errors of Louisiana Children in Grade 8 and Grades 3 to 8 as Compiled by Sunae</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Rank and Percentage of Syntactical Errors of Louisiana Children in Grade 8 and Grade 3 to 8 as Compiled by Sunae</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Number of Errors out of a Possible 1000</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Correlation Between Various Error Frequency Counts of High School Freshman Compositions Made by Several Investigators</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. The First Ten Categories of Errors Arranged in Rank Order According to the Number of Errors Per Thousand Chances of Making the Error as Found by Stormzand and O'Shea</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Data from 599 Paragraphs Written by British Columbia Grade 12 Students</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Various Means: Mean Number of Words per Paragraph, Mean Number of Errors per Paragraph, per Sentence and per 10,000 Words, and Number of Words Written for One Error Made</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Frequency Distribution Showing Errors in English and Number of Students Making the Errors on Both Paragraphs</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Actual Number of Errors, Number of Errors per 10,000 Words, Percentage of Total Errors, and Rank Order of Errors of the Fourteen Main Categories in This Study and This Study Revised</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. A Comparison Between the Actual Number of Errors, Number of Errors Per 10,000 Words, Percentage of Total Errors and Rank Order of Errors in Older Studies and This One in Fourteen Categories</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. Number of Errors per 10,000 Words, Percentage of Total Errors, and Rank Order of Errors in Forty-Seven Sub-Categories, and the Results of Revising the Count According to the Criteria of Pooley et al.</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. Rank Order, Numbers, and Names of Sub-Categories in Punctuation (Category VIII), Total Number of Errors in Punctuation, Number of Errors per 10,000 Words, Percentage of Errors in Punctuation, and Percentage of All Errors</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV. Rank Order, Frequency of Occurrence, Frequency per 10,000 Words, and Percentage of Occurrence of 104 Types of Errors in Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV. The Ten Most Frequently Occurring Errors in Punctuation</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI. The Twenty Most Frequently Occurring Errors in Usage</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII. Percentage of Errors Occurring in the First Five Main Categories of All Errors</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII. The Ten Sub-Categories in Which Errors Occurred Most Frequently</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX. Four Main Parts of Errors in Spelling, Numbers of Errors in Each Part, and the Rank Order of the Parts</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX. Categories of Errors in Spelling, the Number of Errors in Each Category, Percentage of Errors, and Rank of Each Category</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI. Twenty-Seven Categories of Errors in Spelling Arranged in Rank Order of Decreasing Frequency, Showing Number of Errors in Each Category</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII. Words Most Frequently Misspelled</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII. Words Misspelled by at Least Two Students</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV. Standard Deviations, Standard Errors of the Means of Errors in Usage Made by 176 Girls and 119 Boys</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV. Occupational Grouping of Fathers or Mothers of 148 Students</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI. Medians, Means, Standard Deviations, and Standard Errors of the Means of Errors in Usage Made by Children of Occupational Groups 0-0 to 9 and 4-0 to 9</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII. Mean Number of Errors Made by Sons and Daughters of Professional and Semi-Professional People (Groups 0-0 to 0-9, Dictionary of Occupational Titles.)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVIII. Students' Choices of Major Subjects</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIX. Means, Standard Deviations, and Standard Errors of the Means of the English and Non-English Choices of Majors, and Numbers of Choices of Each</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX. Number of Paragraphs Written by Grade 12 Students on Each of Nine Topics, Median Number of Words Written on Each Topic, and Median Number of Errors Made by Various Groups of Students on Each Topic</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
XXXI. Numbers of Students on the University Programme, Those on the General Programme, Means of Errors in English Usage Made by Each Group, Standard Deviations, and Standard Errors of the Mean ....... 137

XXXII. Occupational Grouping of Fathers or Mothers, and the Choice of High School Programme that 148 Boys and Girls Made .............................................. 147
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The general purpose of this study is to determine the relative frequency of errors in English made by grade 12 students in paragraphs written on a final examination and the significance of the following factors which may possibly be associated with such errors: intelligence (scholastic ability), sex, socio-economic background, interest in English, choice of topic, and the type of high school program chosen by the student. In addition, an attempt will be made to discover whether or not the number of errors increases proportionately to the number of words written in the paragraphs. Furthermore, this investigator will try to determine the correlation between errors and marks obtained on the paragraphs.

More specifically, this investigator will count, classify, and tabulate errors in English usage, punctuation, and spelling that grade 12 students made in the two paragraphs they wrote on the June, 1953, British Columbia English Language 40 Junior Matriculation Examination. These errors will be classified within each of fourteen major categories. Furthermore, the fourteen categories will be divided into seventy-four classes.
In order to record errors more specifically, certain of the seventy-four classes will be subdivided. This subdivision will increase the seventy-four classes to 104. Second, the frequency with which errors occurred when a traditional set of criteria of "correctness" was used to ascertain the errors will be compared with the frequency with which errors were made when a more modern set of criteria of correctness was applied to the selection of errors.

Third, an attempt will be made to discover a relationship between the incidence of errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling and certain factors that may possibly be associated with making errors in usage. These factors are the student's (a) intelligence (scholastic ability); (b) sex; (c) socio-economic status or background; (d) interest in English and related subjects, such as social studies and languages; (e) choice of topic, and (f) choice of high school program: University or General. Fourth, other relationships to be determined are those between the number of errors students made and (a) number of words written on the two paragraphs on the examination, (b) number of words written on (1) the expository paragraph and, (2) the descriptive or narrative paragraph. Fifth, an attempt will be made to discover a relationship between errors made on the paragraphs and marks that teachers gave to the paragraphs.

Some Terms Defined

At this point certain words used frequently throughout this study will be defined. The reader should keep in mind,
however, the fact that the context will sometimes determine the shade of meaning. This is especially true in Chapters III and IV, where the writer cannot be held responsible for shades of meaning that other writers have given the terms defined below. Where this investigator himself uses the terminology in this study he will adhere to the meanings given below.

**Paragraph** means all of the words that a student wrote on each of two topics, including the title. Regardless of whether or not the student indented to indicate the beginning of a new paragraph, the total number of words he wrote on each topic was considered a paragraph.

**Errors** means errors made in English usage, punctuation, and spelling. The criteria for determining correctness of usage in English will be discussed fully later on in this study.

Many people, including teachers, frequently use grammar and usage synonymously. On the other hand, each term sometimes means different things to different people. Consequently, there is considerable confusion in the discussion of the roles of grammar and usage in education. According to Norman Foerster and J. M. Steadman "The function of grammar is to codify the sounds, inflections, and syntax of words, to describe systematically the speech habits of the best writers and speakers."¹

Robert Waddell asserts that "... grammar is simply the set of conventions or habits according to which the users of a language vary the forms of its words and put these words together for communication." It is "... a description and analysis of the conventions according to which people use their language. ... From this point of view anything is 'correct' and nothing is incorrect except what is meaningless."\(^2\) Robert Pooley states that "... grammar is the observation of the forms and arrangements of English words as they are employed singly and in combination to convey meaning in discourse. ... The fact that we may prefer one kind of expression over another has nothing to do with grammar as it is here defined."\(^3\) The three definitions quoted above are similar except that Foerster and Steadman qualify their definition by including "... the speech habits of the best writers and speakers." This is a significant qualification as will be pointed out in Chapter IV, "The Problem of Correctness in Usage."

Bergen Evans and Cornelia Evans define *usage* as "... a habitual practice which has served to create a standard, especially in matters of language ... (A Dictionary of Modern English Usage)."\(^4\) Pooley's definition is that "Usage ... is


the term employed to cover the full range of choice and discrimination in the use of language. ... Usage is to grammar as etiquette is to behaviour ... etiquette sets up standards to guide actions.\(^5\) In this study the writer will attempt to adhere to these definitions of grammar and usage; that is, grammar is the set of written or oral conventions and symbols into which language is organized to convey meaning; usage is the customary or socially acceptable arrangement of such symbols. It follows, therefore, that incorrect usage is usage that is not socially acceptable. The problem of correctness of usage will be considered fully, however, in Chapter IV. The term ungrammatical means that there is an error in syntax; for example, the sentence may be incomplete owing to the omission of a verb, or a new sentence may not have been made to show that a new complete thought is to be communicated; that is, a run-on sentence has been written.

Although the reader may not agree entirely with the definitions of grammar and usage given above, at least the use of these definitions makes it possible to discuss errors in English in a more objective manner than would otherwise be possible.

\(^5\) Pooley, *Teaching English Grammar*. 
CHAPTER II

JUSTIFICATION FOR MAKING THIS STUDY

In Chapters III and IV the writer will refer to a large number of usage error counts and to several investigations that attempted to determine what constitutes good English. The need for an additional usage error count would appear, therefore, to be superfluous. Yet this investigator believes that not only is this count necessary, but also that counts of the same kind should be made, say, every ten years in any one area. Here are the reasons.

Although investigations such as this one were made in the United States as early as 1906, and continued to be made for twenty years, very, very few have been made for the last twenty years.¹ Furthermore, Pooley² has shown that objective test results do not measure adequately the actual performance of students in English. It is quite possible for a student to do

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¹ A report published by ASCD in 1955 cites only two investigations made since 1940 remotely resembling this one. (Harold G. Shane, Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts, Washington, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Education Association, 1955.

well on a usage objective test because he is concentrating on particular points of usage, but he may fail to use the correct level of usage in his written compositions. Consequently, an examination of a representative sample of students' actual written work should be made periodically.³

A second reason for this study is that not only have no studies of this kind been made in British Columbia, but according to the Ayers letter previously referred to, and the lack of published evidence, none apparently has been made in Canada.

If the proof of the teaching is in the product, then the product should, where possible, be evaluated quantitatively. This is the only sure method to determine what aspects of usage students are weak in. Without this type of investigation, whether of the formal type such as this study, or the informal, teaching diagnostic type, teachers will spend a great deal of time in teaching usage that most students already know, or that is difficult but unimportant.⁴

A third reason is that in spite of a great deal of grammar and usage taught in our schools in British Columbia,

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⁴ Shane, in Research Helps says "A tremendous amount of time is spent on grammar and composition in the 12 grades, . . . in few if any content areas is there more repetitive study. . . . There is a paradoxical dearth of research in this phase of the language arts, . . .", p. 57
many errors are still made in grade 12. This observation was confirmed by the writer when he marked grade 12 paragraphs written on the British Columbia English Language 40 University Entrance Examinations in June, 1953 and 1954. It seemed impossible that many students could be exposed to the teaching of grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling for twelve years and still make so many errors. These errors had persisted throughout the students' school years. In spite of the increased complexity of their thought processes as students become more mature, with, consequently, opportunities for increasing the number of errors, surely it should be possible to eliminate many of these persistent errors.

A fourth reason is that no evidence has been found that attempts have been made in Canada to ascertain the effect that intelligence (scholastic ability), sex, socio-economic background, type of high school program, choice of topic, and interest in English have on making errors in usage. No attempt appears to have been made to determine the extent of the relationship between the factors just named and errors in usage. Fifth, no evidence has been found that any studies in errors in Canada have used paragraphs written on a grade 12 university entrance examination as a source of errors in usage.

5 R. L. Lyman in "Fluency, Accuracy, and General Excellence in English Composition," School Review, vol. 26, no. 2 (February 1918), page 85, gives as his purpose for making an investigation: "... to eradicate errors which are the despair of business men, whose condemnation of the schools has been unsparing, ..."
In short, before effective remedial work can be done efficiently in English usage in British Columbia, and before the curriculum can be adjusted to eliminate persistent errors in usage, one must know what the weaknesses are, their relative frequencies of occurrence, and their relative importance.
CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Numerous investigations of errors in English usage have been made throughout the English-speaking world. In this chapter investigations made outside of the United States will be considered first; then those made in the United States will be dealt with.

A Study Made in Scotland

W. J. MacCaulay, having given a series of tests in grammar to secondary students in Scotland, concluded that only the best seniors reached a 50 per cent standard. This result was obtained in a country where formal grammar is very thoroughly taught. MacCaulay concluded that the teaching of formal grammar did not reduce materially the number of errors made in English composition especially at the elementary and junior high school levels.

Studies of Errors in Usage Made in Canada

To find out what investigations had been made in errors in usage in Canada, this investigator wrote to Dr. J. D. Ayres, Research Director, Canadian Teachers' Federation. His reply was that "There has probably been very little done on errors in English usage in Canada."\(^2\) This writer did not follow up Dr. Ayres' suggestion that he write the Ontario College of Education as it was under Dr. R. W. B. Jackson, the Director of the College's Research Bureau that this investigator took the course in Methodology of Educational Research at the University of British Columbia in the summer of 1954. Dr. Jackson approved the topic. The writer concluded therefore that very little if any research has been done in Canada in errors in usage.

An examination of the Canadian Education Association's publications of the Research Council\(^3\) resulted in the writer's finding that apparently no research has been done in Canada on this problem. However, W. J. Stewart,\(^4\) an inspector of schools in Ontario, examined the entrance examination papers in history,

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\(^2\) J. D. Ayres. Letter to the writer, September 8, 1955.


composition and literature of twenty-five grade 8 pupils. He found that run-on sentences, omissions of the period, comma, and capitals, occurred most frequently. Stewart did not include the number of words or sentences written. His sample too, was very limited.

Error Studies in British Columbia

No error studies of a formal type have been made in British Columbia if an examination of Masters' theses topics in the University Library is a criterion. However, the "Greater Victoria Child Study and Special Education Department" published in mimeographed form a report of errors made by grade 7 pupils. "Of those stories which had a value of 60 per cent or more, one hundred were studied in detail for errors. No attempt was made to report the relative frequencies of the errors and only common errors were reported."^5

The following errors were reported: the half-sentence fault, the comma blunder, the run-together sentence (usually called the "run-on"), the run-on sentence (a series of three or four principal clauses joined by a conjunction), unnecessary second subjects (in a compound sentence), overworked so, and so. The report dealt with spelling too. Here the chief difficulties were writing separate words for solid words, for example, "coastguard", or separate words for hyphened words. Homonyms

---

5 "An Error Study Based on the Willing Composition Scale, Administered in March, 1953, to 907 Grade Seven students in the Greater Victoria Schools," Green Staff Bulletin Book, II: No. 6(a) (1953).
misspelled and letters dropped constituted other spelling errors. A careful analysis of the errors was made, examples of errors given, and remedial methods indicated. Unfortunately a frequency count of errors was not made; consequently the reader is given no idea of the relative frequencies of the errors; nor can the teacher, therefore, determine the errors upon which most stress should be put to eliminate them.

Periodical Literature Dealing with Studies of Errors in Usage Made in the United States

Although few error frequency counts have been made in Canada or Great Britain, many have been made in the United States. These counts extend over the past fifty years, but the majority were made in the twenty-five years from approximately 1916 to 1940.

Many administrators, superintendents, and teachers had become dissatisfied with the results of teaching grammar in which the emphasis was put on picking out parts of speech and sentence elements. These people felt that this analytical type of grammar teaching neither assisted the pupil to improve his style in writing, nor helped him to avoid or eliminate errors in usage. Consequently investigators wanted to know whether or not the teaching of grammar (1) played any effective role in the pupil's learning "correct" writing and speaking, and (2) helped to eliminate errors in English usage. Investigators therefore had to find out what errors children made and the relative frequency with which errors were made, so that instruction could be given to eliminate the most frequently recurring errors.
G. M. Wilson, 6 in 1920, stated that the first such enquiry into the efficacy of teaching grammar was made in 1906 and another in 1913. In his article Wilson cites a number of error counts, including his own made in 1909, the Boise Study, 1915, and the Kansas City Study made by Dr. Charters, 1916. Wilson concluded that:

1. Relatively few errors in usage account for a large number of mistakes; that is, the same errors are repeated many times.

2. Errors made in the lower grades continue to be made in the upper grades where few new errors are added.

3. Errors are specific. If a student learns a rule concerning usage, there is no guarantee that he will apply the rule to all cases which it covers.

4. Oral and written errors are similar except that homonyms are confused in written work. (Wilson did not include punctuation errors.)

5. Students could probably be trained rapidly to eliminate errors if teachers concentrated on specific errors.

W. W. Charters, 7 in his investigation made in 1915, refers to all of the studies previously made which he could find. These include those shown in Table I.

---


Table I
STUDIES OF ERRORS TO WHICH CHARTERS REFERRED IN 1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Study</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
<th>Oral or Written</th>
<th>Method of Collecting</th>
<th>Language or Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First Kansas City</td>
<td>Jan., 1915</td>
<td>written</td>
<td>by teachers</td>
<td>grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Northern Illinois</td>
<td>May, 1915</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>by teachers</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Boise Study</td>
<td>June, 1915</td>
<td>oral</td>
<td>by teachers</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Second Kansas City</td>
<td>June, 1916</td>
<td>written</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cincinnati Study</td>
<td>Sept., 1916 Unpublished</td>
<td>oral</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bonham, Texas Study</td>
<td>Sept., 1916 Unpublished</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>by teachers</td>
<td>grammar only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Columbia Missouri</td>
<td>Sept., 1916 Unpublished</td>
<td>oral</td>
<td>by teachers</td>
<td>grammar only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Detroit Study</td>
<td>Sept., 1916 Unpublished</td>
<td>oral</td>
<td>by teachers</td>
<td>grammar only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Charters found that when he ranked the kinds of errors found in the above studies the rank orders of kinds of errors were almost identical. He concluded, therefore, that the relative frequencies in which errors occur are national rather than regional.

Roy Ivan Johnson, in 1917, made a very thorough study of the persistency of error in English composition. He obtained

a narrative, a descriptive, and an expository paragraph from each of 132 high school freshmen and 66 college freshmen. The total number of words written by the high school students was 50,371, and by the college students 32,693. In order to compare frequencies of occurrence of the different kinds of errors, he grouped them under fourteen main headings and forty-seven subheadings. He found that the kind of material written made little difference in the number of errors committed, that there was a reduction of only 38 per cent in the errors made between grade 9 and the college freshmen year, and that the rank order of the main classes of errors made by both groups was very similar; that is, there was a high correlation between errors made by grade 9 students and college freshmen. No distinction as to ability was made between the groups.

Combining his ranks of persistency and prevalence of error, Johnson suggested that emphasis be placed on errors in the following order:

1. Mistakes in capitalization.
2. Mistakes in the use of the apostrophe.
3. Mistakes in punctuation.
4. Mistakes in the use of adjectives and adverbs.
5. Mistakes in spelling.
6. Mistakes in pronouns (not including case). (Careless omission and repetition was equal to No. 6 in rank.)
7. Mistakes in the use of verbs.
8. Mistakes in the use of prepositions and conjunctions (equal to No. 7 in rank).
Johnson concluded that his study established the order of needed increase in emphasis upon the major classes of error; in other words, it established a scientific basis for the direction of effort.

Dagne Sunne, in 1923, investigated the extent of differences in language errors of children in widely separated geographical areas. Specifically she compared the errors made by 8618 Louisiana children in grades 3 to 8 with errors made by students in the northern United States as reported by Charters. Furthermore, she compared the errors of rural and urban children. Sunne found that, although specific errors varied from district to district, the rank order was the same as that found by Charters. This finding confirmed Charters' conclusion, that in the major divisions of language errors, the order is national rather than regional. Sunne found also that errors made in grade 3 ranked almost the same as in grade 8, thus confirming the findings of Johnson that errors persist throughout the grades. Tables II and III, taken from Sunne's investigation, emphasize the foregoing statements.


10 Charters, Loc. cit.

11 Johnson, Loc. cit.
### Table II
RANK AND PERCENTAGE OF FORM ERRORS OF LOUISIANA CHILDREN IN GRADE 8 AND GRADES 3 to 8 AS COMPILED BY SUNNE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Grade VIII</th>
<th>Grades III to VIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal Punctuation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation Marks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular-Plural</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;And&quot; clauses</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete Sentences</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractions</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table III
RANK AND PERCENTAGE OF SYNTACTICAL ERRORS OF LOUISIANA CHILDREN IN GRADE 8 AND GRADES 3 to 8 AS COMPILED BY SUNNE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Grade VIII</th>
<th>Grades III to VIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negatives</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactical Redundance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective and adverbs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the ten form errors ranking highest in grade 3, nine ranked highest in every grade. An examination of the tables shows, too, that throughout the grades errors ranking 1, 2, and 3 in Tables II and III account for about 80 per cent or more of the total errors made.

After noting the inconsistency in the placing of the various phases of English language instruction in curricula throughout the United States, Percival M. Symonds and Baldwin Lee attempted "to describe exactly how pupils learn to express themselves in writing." The first of this series of investigations dealt with punctuation. The investigators examined the 616 compositions with a total of 99,708 words that had been rated on the Hillegas Composition Scale. The authors recorded incorrect usage, omissions, and other errors per ten thousand words and compared their finding with those of M. H. Willing, M. J. Stormzand and M. V. O'Shea, R. L. Lyman, and R. I. Johnson. Symonds and Lee noted that there was little or no

15 M.H. Willing, "Valid Diagnosis in High School Composition," Contributions to Education, No. 236, Teachers College (1926).
16 M.J. Stormzand and M.V. O'Shea, How Much English Grammar (Baltimore, Warwick and York, 1924). [Note: this book will be considered under the heading "Books on Errors in Usage."]
18 Johnson, "Persistency of Error."
increase after grade 7 in the number of punctuation marks per hundred words used, and that omissions in punctuation decreased steadily. The maximum number of errors occurred in grades 6 and 7. It was noted that there was little change in numbers of errors from grades 4 to 10. This persistency of error raises the following questions: Is the pupil merely holding his own? Is he making a real gain in punctuation ability but writing more complicated sentences? Was he ready, in some grade below grade 10, to have a particular error eliminated?

Symonds and Helen Fern Daringer\textsuperscript{19} found that errors in sentence structure decreased throughout the grades, except for misplaced modifiers. They found, in addition, that the most persistent errors were faulty reference of pronouns, vaguely related clauses, and the comma blunder.

In their study of errors in grammar, Symonds and Eugene M. Hinton\textsuperscript{20} showed the learning that takes place in the elimination of errors as one proceeds from inferior to superior compositions. They noted that learning correct usage is specific, hence specific errors should be recorded. Of the errors made in usage, those involving verb forms occurred most frequently, and of these, errors in tense exceeded errors in the use of


irregular verbs. Errors in the use of conjunctions and prepositions persisted through the grades. They concluded that relatively few errors occurred in usage and that these errors were greatly exceeded by errors in punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure.

Summary of Conclusions Reached by Investigators, 1905 to 1930

During the twenty-five years before 1930 a number of investigations of errors in English usage had been made by actually counting the mistakes made by students in their written work. The investigators found that (1) errors of the same general class occurred with the same relative frequency throughout the entire United States; for example, errors in punctuation constituted about 50% of the total; (2) specific errors persisted throughout the grades; (3) persistency of errors in punctuation after grade 7 was probably the result of increased complexity in sentence structure; (4) curriculum changes should be made to allow for the mastery of "minimum essentials" to be based on the actual errors made by students, and (5) as there was little relationship between the time spent on teaching grammar and the elimination of errors in usage, much of the time spent on teaching grammar might be spent to better advantage on eliminating the relatively few errors in construction that, when repeated, account for many mistakes in usage.
Criticisms of Error Frequency Counts, Made Before the 1930's

John Paul Leonard\textsuperscript{21} summarized the findings of several investigators then offered some criticisms of error counts. He mentions the following investigations: Ragsdale found that punctuation errors accounted for 46 per cent of all errors made in the themes of college freshmen. Gunderson found fourteen errors per theme in freshmen themes. Rodgers found that twenty-four types of errors accounted for 82 per cent of the mistakes made and that there was no correlation between errors in usage and intelligence. By calculating the ratio of errors made to possible errors, that is, the error quotient, Hamilton and Cockrill tried to determine the control which pupils had over punctuation situations of their own making.

In criticizing the investigations, Leonard felt that many of them were loosely made and that the errors were listed in vague or too general terms. He said that there was too much emphasis on the details of mechanics and that some errors listed were of little importance. He doubted the usefulness of error counts as a basis of curriculum building. "Studies of language growth in terms of adolescent maturity and reasonable expectancy of achievement would be more valuable,"\textsuperscript{22} he stated, and conceded that such studies as those of Symonds and Hinton\textsuperscript{23} showing growth in writing were useful.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 451.
\textsuperscript{23} Symonds and Hinton, \textit{loc. cit.}
Investigations Since 1930 as Reported in Periodicals

Among the investigations of errors in usage appearing in periodical literature in the 1930's and 1940's were those of Spraye (1931), Frogner (1933), Ransom (1933), Butler (1936), Bradford (1941), and Lange (1948).

Edith J. Spraye found that punctuation and capitalization errors accounted for 70.6 per cent of all errors, but that errors in verb usage accounted for only five per cent of all errors.

Ellen Frogner analyzed 2821 compositions totalling over 400,000 words, written by 959 Minneapolis grade 7, 9, and 11 pupils. The papers were also grouped into those written by pupils whose IQ was less than 90, those whose IQ's were 90 - 110, and those whose IQ's were over 110. Errors per 10,000 words were recorded, as well as error quotients. For consistent results in analyzing errors in pupils' written work Frogner concluded that material should include 50,000 to 60,000 words. In her analysis of errors in sentence structure, she found the following errors: clauses and phrases were written as complete sentences; misplaced clauses and phrases resulted in awkward or unintelligible sentences; students wrote run-on sentences.


and committed the "comma fault". She reported her findings in the form of the error quotient formula: that is,

\[
\text{The error quotient } = \frac{\text{number of errors}}{\text{possible number of errors}}
\]

She found that adverb clauses caused more difficulty than adjective or noun clauses. Her findings are summarized in Table IV.

Table IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Adjective Clauses</th>
<th>Adverb Clauses</th>
<th>Noun Clauses</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Awkward Complex Sentences***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.006*</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reads 6 errors out of a possible 1000
*** Misplaced modifying clause, etc.

Frognor concluded that time spent in teaching grammar in grades 7 to 9 was largely wasted, as in these grades pupils had much more difficulty in recognizing complete sentences than had the grade 11 pupils. Her viewpoint was confirmed by Symonds and Daringer.²⁶

²⁶ Symonds and Daringer, "Studies in English Expression," Teachers College Record.
Grace Ransom, using experimental and control groups, showed that analyzing the specific errors of pupils was valuable as a preliminary step to eliminating them by using drill methods. David C. Butler declared that the most frequently recurring errors may not be the most important.

Apart from considering maturity as indicated by age, grade, or IQ no investigations made before 1941 tried to determine what factors may be responsible for making errors in English. In 1941 Leeland P. Bradford gave a test on English fundamentals to 854 persons employed on W.P.A. as teachers, about one-third of whom had had previous teaching experience. Using the product moment co-efficients of intercorrelation computed between measures of English usage, education, age, previous occupation, and the number of years spent in the occupation, Bradford concluded that there was little relationship between English usage and education or occupation, although occupation appeared to be more important than education. Persons with a farm background made fewer errors than those with a town or city background.

Phil C. Lange, in 1948, attempted to ascertain errors in subjects other than English. He analyzed compositions written

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by 261 college freshmen at a teachers' college. He concluded that the students did not feel responsible for good standards of English in subjects other than English. This study is open to criticism in that no attempt is made to compare the number of errors made in themes assigned in English classes with errors made in the other subjects.

Arvette Wheeler found that in Kentucky urban pupils made fewer errors per pupil than rural pupils. His study confirmed the conclusions reached by other investigators previously mentioned that a few errors -- twelve to nineteen -- account for 70 per cent of all errors made.

That there is little relationship between objective test results in English usage and errors made by pupils in their written work is reported by Pooley as the result of a carefully controlled experiment which he made in 1928.

Summary of Research, 1930-55

Researchers since 1930 have concluded that teaching grammar before Grade 10 is largely a waste of time, that drilling on specific errors will eliminate them and that students probably make more errors in composition in subjects other than English than they do in English themes. One investigator found that


persons with a rural background did better on a standardized test than those with a small town or city background. But another found that pupils in rural areas made more errors than pupils in cities. There appeared to be little relationship between scholastic aptitude and errors in usage. Finally, there seemed to be little relationship between errors made in written themes and errors discovered by using objective tests.

In spite of the conclusions reached by researchers, Robert C. Pooley reported that in Wisconsin and in New York non-functional grammar is still being taught, and exercises are being given that do not contribute to English skills. Writing as recently as 1954, Pooley observed that there are not yet any text books on grammar that treat it as a tool subject; indeed, there is no evidence of change in the schools' attitude. It might be added, however, that there is an increasing tendency to treat grammar and usage as separate studies, the definition of George P. Faust being used as the basis of the separation. Faust says "The structuralist is interested in discovering and describing habitual linguistic patterns within the whole language system; . . . The authority on usage reports on the social acceptability of particular locutions." The works of Paul Pooley, loc. cit.

Ibid., Pooley reports the results of an investigation made by Dora B. Smith in New York State.


Roberts\textsuperscript{37} and D. Dashwood-Jones\textsuperscript{38} are examples of the linguistic approach to grammar at the high school level.

Monographs and Books on Error Frequency Counts

In order to determine how much English grammar should be taught in schools, Stormzand and O'Shea\textsuperscript{39} analyzed 10,000 sentences taken from material ranging from the works of Stevenson to letters written to a women's magazine. They also analyzed the errors in 288 compositions totalling 58,196 words, written by pupils in grades 6 to 12 as well as by students attending university. They declared: "It is shown beyond question that many grammatical constructions to which much attention is given in our schools, play very little role in the written expression of American people, while other constructions that are not sufficiently stressed play an important role."\textsuperscript{40} These researchers listed the errors under seventy-four headings grouped into fourteen main categories. They found a high correlation between errors found by Johnson\textsuperscript{41} and Lyman\textsuperscript{42} and their own error count as shown in Table V.


\textsuperscript{38} D. Dashwood-Jones, \textit{Patterns for Writing}, Toronto, W. J. Gage, 1959.

\textsuperscript{39} M. J. Stormzand and M.V. O'Shea, \textit{How Much English Grammar}.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}, Introduction, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{41} Johnson, "The Persistency of Error," \textit{The School Review}.

\textsuperscript{42} Lyman, "Fluency, Accuracy," \textit{The School Review}.
Table V
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VARIOUS ERROR FREQUENCY COUNTS OF HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMEN COMPOSITIONS MADE BY SEVERAL INVESTIGATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnson and Lyman</td>
<td>+ .80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormzand and O'Shea and Lyman</td>
<td>+ .88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, and Stormzand and O'Shea</td>
<td>+ .69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike previous and subsequent studies, that of Stormzand and O'Shea included an example, in sentence form, of each kind of error made. This added and, indeed, necessary feature makes it possible for researchers to be reasonably certain that they are comparing the same kinds of errors. Persistency of errors characterized the compositions in this study, punctuation ranking first, followed by spelling, failure to express clear meaning, and capitalization. This writer has arranged in rank order the percentage of errors recorded by Charters and Miller, and reported by Stormzand and O'Shea. A number of the errors are "ungrammatical."

43 Stormzand and O'Shea, How Much English, Table E, "The Working List of Written Errors used by Tabulators, and the Number and Percentage of Each Kind of Error."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Failure to put a period at the end of a sentence 30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wrong part of speech due to similarity of sound 11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Confusion of dependent and independent clauses 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Failure of verb to agree with subject in number and person ..... 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Failure to use an apostrophe to denote possession 6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wrong form of noun or pronoun .................. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Confusion of past and present tenses ............ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Syntactical redundance ......................... 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Omission of subject ...................... 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Omission of predicate .................. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Wrong verb .................................. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Confusion of adverbs and adjectives ............ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Misplaced modifier .................... 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Failure to put a question mark at the end of an interrogative sentence 2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Others .................................... 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 100

* non-usage errors

In thirty-three of the seventy-four categories of errors, Stormzand and O'Shea determined the "error quotient", that is, the actual number of errors in a category compared to

44 Stormzand and O'Shea, Table 97, p. 191.
the total number that might have been made. They found, for example, that few actual errors were made in the use of the apostrophe, although students misused or omitted it in nearly one-half of the places where it should have been used. On the other hand, the total number of actual errors made in using the period was large but students misused it in only 3.7 per cent of the possible places where it might have been used. Table VI shows the first ten categories of errors, arranged in rank order according to the number of errors per thousand chances of making the error as found by Stormzand and O'Shea.

Table VI
THE FIRST TEN CATEGORIES OF ERRORS, ARRANGED IN RANK ORDER ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF ERRORS PER THOUSAND CHANCES OF MAKING THE ERROR AS FOUND BY STORMZAND AND O'SHEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Errors per Thousand Chances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIII* 29**</td>
<td>Independent clauses of a compound sentence not separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII 42</td>
<td>Hyphen omitted in compound words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII 32</td>
<td>Non-restrictive clauses not set off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII 28</td>
<td>Members of a series not separated by a comma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII 30</td>
<td>No punctuation after such introductory expressions as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII 32</td>
<td>Comma before, after, or in, broken quotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 4</td>
<td>Use of objective for possessive with gerund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX 34</td>
<td>Wrong form of possessive nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II 6</td>
<td>Indefinite use of &quot;you&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X 37</td>
<td>Failure to capitalize proper nouns and adjectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Stormzand's and O'Shea's main classes of errors
** Stormzand's and O'Shea's subclasses of errors
From Table VI it is evident that punctuation not only accounts for most of the errors that students make but also indicates that students need much practice in the use of punctuation marks. Furthermore, although Table VI probably reveals the kinds of constructions with which students had the most difficulty, it does not reveal with any degree of certainty errors resulting from difficulty, carelessness, or ignorance.

L. J. O'Rourke attempted to determine "the relative importance of subject matter in a course of study, to eliminate that which is of little functional value and which consumes time entirely out of proportion to its significance, and to improve teaching methods so as to ensure greater mastery of that which is essential." O'Rourke obtained his ratings as to the relative importance of errors in usage from college and high school teachers. Tests were administered with the cooperation of 40,000 teachers. As a result of an analysis of this survey O'Rourke concluded that the average increase in mastery of usage items from grade to grade was only 6 per cent for the United States as a whole. He found that the relative difficulty of all items regardless of type remained constant from grades seven to twelve. He also found "little or no consistency among schools or school systems as to the grades to which or the sequence in which phases of usage are allocated for teaching." He felt that difficult but unimportant

45 L.J. O'Rourke, Rebuilding the English Usage Curriculum to Ensure Greater Mastery of Essentials, Washington D.C., 1934, Psychological Institute, p. v.
46 Ibid., p. 8. 47 Ibid., p. 30. 48 Ibid., p. 8
phases of usage took up teaching time that might be devoted to teaching correct usage. Using practical utility, the difficulty of each phase of usage, and the relation of each phase to the other phases as criteria, he drew up a sequence of topics on usage organized on a cyclical basis. His system was designed to ensure mastery of usage essentials.

The conclusions reached by Stormzand and O'Shea, and O'Rourke are similar to and reinforce those previously listed.

All but one of the studies dealt with above were made on the assumption that correct usage, as set forth in the contemporary grammar texts, was fixed and immutable and was the same for all persons at all times and under all conditions. This assumption will be examined in the next chapter in which consideration will be given as to what constitutes "correct" usage or "good English."

49 O'Rourke, op. cit., p. 97, Appendix A.
CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF CORRECTNESS IN USAGE

I know well this, in forme of speche is chaunge
Within a thousand yere, and wordis tho
That haddyn pris, now wondur nyce and straunge
Us thinkith hem, and yet they spake hem so,
And spedde as well in love, as men now do:
Eke for to wynnyn love in sundry ages,
In sundry londis sundry bene usages. 1

Chaucer

A criticism of the error counts recorded on the previous pages is that with the exception of Stormzand and O'Shea none indicated what criteria of "correct" usage were used. That is, we cannot assume that the same standard of correctness in usage has been used by all of the tabulators of errors. Although only a large variation in the standard used would have greatly affected the conclusions to which the investigators came, yet it would seem necessary that anyone making an error count should be certain that what he is recording as an error actually is one.

Attempts to Determine Standards of Correct Usage

Together with Chaucer and other famous writers, linguists have long recognized that the English language changes from generation to generation. Charles V. Harting\textsuperscript{2} points out that the scientist J. B. Priestley was the first to advocate and practise the "doctrine of general usage." W. D. Whitney, Fitzedward Hall, and Alexander Hall emulated Priestley in pioneering the way to the acceptance of the "doctrine of general usage." However, for the past two centuries many grammarians\textsuperscript{3} and teachers have maintained that there is a fixed, correct way of speaking and writing. Not until 1894, when the Danish scholar, Otto Jespersen,\textsuperscript{4} announced that changes in a language led to simplification and clarification of communication, was there the beginning of a change in the attitude of grammarians to grammar. Even sixty years later, nevertheless, the change in attitude towards grammar among grammarians and even among teachers, is slight.\textsuperscript{5}


\textsuperscript{3} Harting points out that J. S. Mill thought that grammar corresponded with "universal forms of thought."


\textsuperscript{5} Pooley, "Contributions to Research," \textit{The English Journal}.
The history of the teaching of grammar in schools no doubt accounts for the attitude that there has been and is only one correct way of writing and speaking. Pooley traces the origin of most grammar texts currently in use in the schools to Bishop Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* published in England in 1762. In 1795 the American, Lindley Murray, published a grammar text based on Lowth's. These texts are written on the principle, derived from Latin grammar, that there must be a rule to explain every construction. Today, consequently, many people believe a sentence should not end with a preposition nor should an infinitive be split -- ever. Pooley cites many examples from the works of outstanding writers, past and present, that show the absurdity of such rules. H.W. Fowler says, "What grammarians say should be has perhaps less influence on what shall be than even the more modest of them realize; usage evolves itself little disturbed by their likes and dislikes." Fries gives one explanation for so-called errors: "Nearly all the grammatical forms that are called mistakes in the speech of the uneducated are simply forms from older periods of English language."  

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That changes in usage are going on at present can easily be seen almost daily in any current newspaper or periodical. The increasing use of "like" as a conjunction (deplored by this writer), the confusion of lay and lie\(^9\) (also deplored), the "down" style of capitalization,\(^10\) the tendency, particularly in the United States, to simplify spelling are all evidence of change and possibly simplification of the language. Use of these locutions on the radio and television, and in the press will hasten their acceptance, no matter how "deplorable" some may be to the writer or authoritarians in matters of language.

If the grammarians' concepts of correct usage have never accurately reflected the spoken and written usage of even good writers and speakers, and the gap between the language used by cultured people and the language advocated by the text-book writers has been increasing, where then can one turn to find out what usage is acceptable?

Three important attempts to find out what 'good English'\(^11\) is have been made. The first was made by J. Leslie Hall in 1917. Hall based his criteria on the English usage of eminent

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\(^9\) "Matilda, a penguin was laying [sic] flat on her stomach, on the pool walkway exhausted by the whole thing this morning despite the fact she hasn't sat on the egg for two weeks..." *Vancouver Province*, August 1, 1956, p. 1. [Note that Matilda was not laying an egg on the walkway. The egg had been hatched the day before.]

\(^10\) *The Canadian Press Style Book*.

and reputable authors. He submitted 141 locutions on which opinion of correct usage was divided to the test: Have these locutions been used by reputable authors and, if so, to what extent? The second attempt was made in 1932 by S. A. Leonard. Leonard's study was a development of an earlier study by Leonard and H.Y. Moffett made in 1927, the results of which will be one of the criteria used by this writer to evaluate errors in this study. Leonard and Moffett proposed "to find out what various judges have observed about the actual use or non-use by cultivated persons of a large number of expressions usually condemned in English text-books and classes."14

To this end, these investigators asked a group of 229 qualified persons, including linguists, members of the Modern Language Association, the English Council, the Speech Council, business executives, authors, and editors to give their opinions, based on observation, of the levels of usage of 230 expressions "of whose standing there might be some doubt." The study did not include punctuation or spelling. The judges were to give a value "1" to "formally correct English, appropriate chiefly for serious and important occasions . . .;" "2" "to fully acceptable English for formal conversation, correspondence . . .; standard, cultivated, colloquial English;" and "4" to "popular or illiterate speech, not used by persons who wish to pass as cultivated. . ."15 If more than 75 per cent of the judges

14 Loc. cit.
15 Loc. cit.
rated an expression 1.5 or less, it was designated "literary"; if 1.5 to 2.5, it was considered a part of cultivated, standard English, at least for informal use; if over 3.5, it was condemned as illiterate. The linguists were the most lenient in their judgments, and the editors the most severe. Of the 230 locutions considered, both linguists and judges rated seventy-one as established, thirty-eight as illiterate, and 121 as doubtful.

Before considering the Leonard and Moffett study in greater detail, the third attempt to establish acceptable levels of usage will be discussed, as its authors, Albert H. Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott, declared it to be supplementary to the Leonard study.


17 Hall, English Usage.
18 Marckwardt and Walcott, ibid., p. 21.
As a result of their work, they concluded that the number of expressions considered by Leonard to be acceptable could be considerably increased. Furthermore, Marckwardt and Walcott abandoned the term "levels of usage" because they felt that it implied that some locutions were "correct" and that others were "wrong" and should, therefore, never be used. Consequently, they used the following classifications: literary English, American literary English, colloquial English, American colloquial English, dialect, and archaic.

Although detailed results of the Marckwardt and Walcott study will be given in Appendix B, it is of interest that Marckwardt and Walcott consider the following forty-five locutions literary English: (* indicates that 75% or more of the linguists consulted by Leonard and Moffett approved the expression; that is, they scored it 2.5 or less.)

1. "You just had a telephone call." "Did they leave any message?"
2. This was the reason why he went home.
3. That's a dangerous curve; you'd better go slow.
4. Will you be at the Brown's this evening?
5. The New York climate is healthiest in fall.
6. The real reason he failed was because he tried to do too much. (The writer heard President Eisenhower use this type of locution during a radio broadcast when Eisenhower spoke about his illness in the spring of 1956.)
7. This book is valueless, that one has more to recommend it. (comma fault or comma splice.)
8. None of them are here.
9. We will try and get it.
10. We only had one left. (Hall gives 400 examples from 104 authors: Marckwardt and Walcott.)

11. He moves mighty quick on a tennis court.

12. Invite whoever you like to the party.

13. I have got my own opinion on that.

14. My father walked very slow down the street.

15. There was a bed, a dresser, and two chairs.

16. A treaty was concluded between the four powers.

17. We drive slow down that hill.

18. You had to have property to vote in the eighteenth century.

19. I wish I was wonderful.

20. What was the reason for Bennett making that disturbance?

21. Can I be excused from this class?

22. Everyone was here, but they all went home early.

23. Either of these three roads is good.

24. You are older than me.

25. Neither of your reasons are really valid.

26. Trollop's novels have already begun to date.

27. I will probably come a little late. (The authors quote Fries on p. 42 as saying, "The first person with "will" has always predominated.")

28. Of two disputants, the warmest is generally in the wrong.

29. Everybody bought their own ticket.

30. Everybody's [sic] else affairs are his alone.

31. The fire captain with his loyal men were cheered.

32. The British look at this differently than we do.

33. It's real cold to-day. (American literary English)
34. We don't often see many animals like they have in the tropics.  
35. The child was weak due to improper feeding.  
36. Neither author nor publisher are subject to censorship.  
37. She sang very well.  
38. Do it like he tells you.  
39. Now, just where are we at? (A.L.E.)  
40. The data is often inaccurate.  

41. John had awoken much earlier than usual. (Oxford Dictionary classifies this as obsolescent.)  
42. A woman whom I know as my friend, spoke next.  
43. Both leaves of the drawbridge raise at once.  
44. I enjoy wandering among a library.  

45. They swung their partners in the reel. (Webster: "archaic," Curme: "older literary form.")

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the writer will set forth in the following section what various authorities say concerning what constitutes correct or good usage in English.

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18 Marckwardt and Walcott report on p. 42 that the Oxford Dictionary calls this locution "vulgar"—"but examples may be found in many recent writers of standing."

19 This expression and nos. 37, 38 were classified as "disputable" by the linguists, and "illiterate" by the other judges in the Leonard and Moffett study.

20 This and the expression No. 40 were classified as "illiterate" by the linguists, and "disputable" by the other judges in the Leonard and Moffett study.

21 Nos. 41-45 were classified as "illiterate" by all of the judges. Evans and Evans: No. 41 is acceptable in Britain but not in the United States.
Definitions of Good Usage

In order to detect alleged errors in usage, the investigator should have in mind a clear definition of good English, and he should make this definition clear to his readers. As pointed out above, it is at this point that many error counts have been at fault. Definitions of good usage may be classified as conservative and authoritarian, or "scientific" or a compromise may be made between these two kinds of definitions. An example of the authoritarian definition was that of Norman Foerster and J. M. Steadman, given in the 1931 edition of their textbook Writing and Thinking, a book for the use of college freshmen. "Good use is the English sanctioned by the best writers and speakers. It is not the usage of people in general, but of cultivated people. In other words, the standard of good use is set by the educated classes --the master classes--and not by the mere numerical majority."

Although Foerster and Steadman's definition of good use in their 1941 edition seems to reflect little change in attitude (they have merely left out the phrase "master classes") they

22 The term "scientific" is used by Fries in his American English Grammar. On page 4 he agrees with the attitude of Henry Sweet as expressed in the following quotation from Sweet's New English Grammar, p.5 (Oxford, 1891). "... the rules of grammar have no value except as statements of facts: whatever is in general use in a language is for that very reason grammatically correct. . . ."


have acknowledged the work of such men as Jespersen, S.A.Leaden, Fries, and Pooley by saying, on page 322, "The choice between them (formal and colloquial English) depends upon the degree of formality most appropriate to the subject, the linguistic occasion, the writer, and his attitude towards his readers or hearers."

Furthermore, they distinguish between colloquial and formal usage in such locutions as who (whom) did she marry? (p. 111). It's me (I) (p. 112). On account of the clock (clock's) making so much noise (p. 114). He acts as if he was (were) sick (p. 117). Neither of the boys were (was) ready to leave (p. 104). Everybody in the room turned his face (or their faces) towards the speaker (p. 103).

A few recent books on English composition and grammar have adopted Pooley's definition of good English. His criteria, set forth in his definition, directly reflect the influence of the scientific investigations. His definition follows: "Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the purpose of the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to the speaker and the listener. It is the product of custom, neither cramped by rule, nor freed from all restraint; it is never fixed, but changes with the organic life of the language." Pooley advocates five classifications, rather

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than levels, of usage: the illiterate, homely, standard informal, standard formal, and literary.\(^{26}\) His definition of literary English, narrower than definitions in most other textbooks, is "that form of speech or writing, which in aim goes beyond mere utility to achieve beauty."\(^{27}\) It is obvious that this level, requiring, as it does, a high degree of mental maturity and skill, need concern neither the high school student nor his teacher except in rare instances. Pooley feels that students should use his standard formal level in their written themes.

Evidence that Pooley's definition is becoming accepted may be gathered from modern textbooks on composition and grammar. The definition is quoted in the *English Language Arts*\(^{28}\) published by the National Council of Teachers of English. Porter G. Perrin defines good English as "language that is effective for a particular communication, that is appropriate to the subject and situation, to the listener or reader, and to the speaker or writer."\(^{29}\) Richard K. Corbin and Porter G. Perrin, in their high school textbook, use very nearly the same definition\(^{30}\) and also adopt the attitude that there are different kinds, not levels, of English usage.\(^{31}\) L. M. Myers uses very

\(^{27}\) *Loc. cit.*
\(^{28}\) *English Language Arts*, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952.
much the same approach, though he makes a bow to Hall when he says "if we pay some attention to the speech and writing of people whom we admire, most of us can get along very well." Good usage, says Myers, is characterized by (1) restraint in vocabulary; (2) care regarding agreement in number, in tense sequence, and in case-agreement of pronouns, and (3) flexibility in sentence structure. Pupils should avoid expressions such as blame-on, due to (when incorrectly used), and like used as a conjunction, which are permissible in standard informal speech and writing even in the classroom.

The desire to get away from usage terms that connote the inferiority of one "level" to another is expressed also by De Boers, Kaulfers, and Miller, who cite the classifications given by Kaulfers. Kaulfers uses the Pooley basis of "appropriateness" for the following classifications: (1) "Ceremonial usage is . . . the vocabulary and grammar appropriate to formal public address or to ceremonial occasions . . .;"


33 De Boer, Kaulfers, and Miller, Teaching Secondary English, p. 57.

34 Walter V. Kaulfers, Four Studies in Teaching Grammar from the Socio-Psychological Viewpoint, Stanford University Bookstore Stanford University, California.

35 Pooley, Teaching English Usage.
(2) "Affective usage" is that "appropriate to belles lettres;" [that is, the literary English of Pooley] (3) "Normative usage" is that used by people in their day to day business and semi-formal social gatherings, and (4) "Indigenous usage" is that acceptable among particular groups of people. This would include "professional jargon" as well as those forms often branded as illiterate or inferior.

According to Harting, there are four current doctrines of usage: (1) the doctrine of rules; (2) the doctrine of general usage; (3) the doctrine of appropriate usage, and (4) the doctrine of the linguistic norm. The inconsistencies of those grammarians advocating the first doctrine have been previously referred to. J. Leslie Hall in his English Usage (1917) pioneered the second in written language, and Leonard in the spoken language. The doctrine of appropriateness to the social situation was advocated by G. P. Krapp in 1909. Discussing the fourth, the linguistic norm, Harting echoes I.A. Richards when he says "language should be judged by consciously derived criteria." Harting concludes by saying that the linguistic norm holds in balance the intention of the speaker, the nature of language, and the probable effect on the audience.

37 Leonard, Current English Usage.
The criteria used by this writer in recording errors were those of the traditionalists. There were four reasons for using these criteria. The writer was familiar with them, particularly as recorded in Foerster and Steadman (1931 edition), and had used them as his criteria in teaching senior high school English. Second, although some of the criteria may result in "hyper-urbanisms," there is no doubt as to their classification as literary English. Third, the traditional or textbook criteria appear to have been used by those who made the error counts referred to in previous pages. And finally, the British Columbia English Language 40 Junior Matriculation Examination demands a knowledge of usage which may be considered "literary." Proof of this statement is given in the section "High School Standards of English" in this chapter.

High School Standards of English

What criteria should govern the ascertaining of errors in English usage in high school, particularly in grade 12? In the preceding part of this chapter, the lack of agreement among the experts has been pointed out, although sufficient evidence has been given to show that criteria used by the traditionalists are not necessarily those used by well-educated persons or by good writers and speakers. To find out what criteria are used

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40 This term is used by Marckwardt and Walcott to describe expressions resulting from strict adherence to rules, with a resulting pedantic effect; for example, "one rarely enjoys one's lunch when one is tired."
in Canada some school textbooks published in Canada will be examined for definitions of correct usage, and/or exercises in these textbooks will be criticized.

A recently published grade 7 textbook contains the following sentences for correction or asks the pupil why the sentence is correct.

Who did you see? Joan thought it was us. It was me that did it last time (p. 231). Neither of the pencils (is, are) sharp. None of the boys (is, are) ready (p. 237). I shall be twelve next month (p. 239). May we go skating this afternoon? (p. 240). Drive (slow, slowly) near the school (p. 256). [But the sign near the school might say "Go Slow"!] These crayons are different ______ those (p. 266) ["from" or "than" to be supplied].

Every one of the errors implied in these sentences is condoned by Pooley at the senior high school level. He would give no class instruction in these kinds of errors in the senior high school.

In their textbook published in 1956 and intended for use in grades 11 and 12, Betty Bealey and Eric McCann define "reputable usage as language that is current, nationally understood, and used as the speech of well-educated persons and as

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42 Pooley, Teaching English Usage.
the means of expression in the books of the best writers.43

Taken from exercises or examples in this text are these sentences, to be corrected on the basis of reputable usage.

If you do like they did, you'll get by fine.

Everyone felt badly about him going away (p. 231).

State what preposition should follow "different" (p. 243). [The authors observe that "loan" as a verb is an Americanism (p. 100) It might be noted that the Canadian textbooks' insistence that the indefinite pronouns everyone, everybody, neither, etc., always be considered singular is American rather than British.]44

Real must not be used adverbially (p. 103).

The reason why I failed was because I had not studied (p. 76). [There were six other sentences similar to the last one to be corrected.]

He practised nightly, which was pitiful to hear (p.78).

To eat corn on the cob, it should be well buttered (p.79)

If I was you, I would change my mind (p. 85).

Shall is preferable in the first person, . . . (p. 84).

It looks like it is going to rain (p. 86). [Listed under "Miscellaneous Errors of a Serious Nature."

She did not like me saying that (p. 87).

To really succeed, one must work hard (p. 88).

[Corrected textbook version: Really to succeed, one must work hard.]

It would appear that the results of the work of a large number of investigators have been ignored by Canadian textbook

43 Betty Bealey and Eric McCann, Style and Structure, Toronto, Dent, 1956, p. 228.

44 Pooley, Teaching English Usage, p. 91.
writers. These remarks also apply to the textbook used in British Columbia in grades 11 and 12 for many years. It should be pointed out, however, that this textbook as well as some of the others, frequently notes that one form or another of a disputable point in usage "is accepted colloquial English . . . or is the practice of most writers."  

Margaret M. Bryant, M.L. Howe, Philip R. Jenkins, and Helen T. Munn, point out in their high school textbook English at Work, Course Four, that authorities differ. They list as authorities the American College Dictionary, H.W. Fowler, Albert H. Marchwardt and Frederic G. Cassidy's Scribner Handbook of English, Second Edition, Albert H. Marchwardt and Fred Walcott's Facts About Current English Usage, the Oxford Dictionary, Porter G. Perrin's Index to English, and Writers Guide and Index to English, Robert C. Pooley's Teaching English Usage, and Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Unlike Pooley, the writers of this text imply that "literary English" should be written by high school students. 

John E. Warriner and Frances Griffith say "Good English is the kind of English used by educated people . . . which kind of English we use depends upon the situation." They are somewhat more conservative than the writers mentioned in the previous paragraph.

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47 Margaret M. Bryant, M.L. Howe, Philip R. Jenkins, Helen T. Munn, English at Work: Course Four, Scribner's Sons, 1956.
None of the authors mentioned excludes entirely from their textbooks consideration of the kinds of usage listed by Pooley and some agree with Pooley's definition of good usage mentioned earlier in this study. To cover all eventualities, the textbook writers say that such and such a locution should be used in "standard" English or "literary" English. A comparison between the Canadian textbooks just discussed and such American textbooks as those written by Perrin, Corbin and Perrin, Myers, and Bergen Evans and Cornelia Evans (a recently published dictionary of usage), indicates that American authors of textbooks on composition are more aware of studies in English usage than are Canadian textbook writers.

One criteria for determining the standard of usage expected of British Columbia grade 12 students is the questions on usage on the final examination. Let us therefore examine the questions on usage of several British Columbia English Language Examination papers. The English Language Junior Matriculation Examination, June 1953, contained the following sentences, each illustrating an error in usage, the incorrectness of which would be doubted by such persons as Leonard, Marckwardt and Walcott, Pooley, and Evans and Evans.

See how slow that bird is flying.
The two girls loved one another.
There is no excuse for them quarreling.
No love is lost between you and I. (Evans and Evans say, p. 60: "Not standard English . . . but has been used by so many great writers that it cannot be classed as a mistaken attempt to speak 'elegant' English.")

49 Pooley, Teaching English Usage, 221-223.
51 Ibid.
He shall be forty years old next spring. (Evans and Evans, p. 448: In the United States "Will expresses obligation or compulsion." And on p. 558: "... will is used as a future auxiliary in all persons and in all types of sentences."

In the sentence under discussion, shall is used incorrectly according to the practice in both United States and England. However, if the speaker had been engaged in an argument and wished to emphasize his statement, shall is correctly used. Could a teacher, therefore, mark shall as incorrect when there is an alternative interpretation?)

We understood it to be her. (See remarks in the discussion of the 1958 examination paper.) Of the ten sentences to be corrected on the 1953 examination paper four (and possibly five) were not condemned by the authorities named above.

The June, 1955, examination contains the following locutions which were to be corrected, or if correct, the correctness was to be verified:

Each of them has finished his work. (Evans and Evans say, on p. 148 "... the plural is generally preferred."

Can I help you with your coat? (Evans and Evans, p. 81: "In asking permission, may is generally felt to be more polite than can . . . but can is also used here, . . .")

Our class has less students this year than last year. (Evans and Evans, p. 272: "In the United States a college president might speak of less men or less courses."

Most all the students wrote excellent papers. (Evans and Evans, p. 306: "But there is no doubt that these forms are acceptable spoken English in the United States."

I wish I could sing like she can. (Evans and Evans, p. 276: "Some people believe that it is a mistake to use like in this way. But they are a minority."

The girl who we met goes to high school. (Evans and Evans, p. 556: "Today the form who is preferred when the word stands before a verb, as in who did you see? . . . But that is preferred in a man that I respect . . .")
We met the acrobat whom we were told received a very high salary. (Evans and Evans, p. 556: "In sentences such as these either who or whom is acceptable to all except purists.")

Neither the boy nor his father have reported the accident. (Evans and Evans, p. 315: ". . . a singular verb is permissible but a plural is preferred, as in . . . neither reason, art, nor peace are possible to man.")

Of twenty questions on the 1955 examination, thirteen involved usage of the above kinds. Of these, eight are not condemned by Evans and Evans.

The June, 1957, examination paper contained only two questions on usage. One involved the use of who, whom; the other, due to. Of due to Evans and Evans say, p. 147: "But it is used to qualify a verb millions of times every day. And it is used in this way in very respectable places."

The August, 1958, examination paper contained twenty questions on diction, misuse of verbs, and other examples of usage. Of the last there were seven. These seven examples involved: mighty glad, I wish I was, between the three powers, visitor to be she, haven't hardly begun, either of the five answers will do, and more wiser.

Of mighty Evans and Evans say, p. 299: "it has an old fashioned rather than a nonstandard tone."

Of I wish I was Evans and Evans say (p. 547): "Was has been used as a past subjunctive in literary English for more than three hundred years and is the preferred form today," but if I were you is preferred; however, if I was you is not wrong.
Between the three powers is correct but there is a very nice distinction between the various uses of *between* as dealt with on pages 31 and 60 of Evans and Evans.

Evans and Evans say, p. 55, of the kind of locution *visitor to be she*, "The rules just given represent correct Latin. They do not represent good English. In the best English . . . the subjective form of a pronoun is used immediately before a verb and the objective form in any other position."

As for *Either of the five answers will do* Evans and Evans say it "is recognized as standard by the Oxford English Dictionary." These authors also say that it is considered singular or plural in the United States but in its sense of "both" "is now considered archaic or Biblical in England.

Of the twenty questions five on this examination paper involved errors in usage that might be termed "disputable."

One of these, *visitor to be she*, was neither upheld nor condemned by Evans and Evans. There were four other questions in which the usage is indisputable. The remaining questions involved diction, redundancy, verb form, and comparison.

To summarize the findings on the four English Language 40 examination papers, one finds that there were fifty-two sentences that involved use of correct diction, subject-verb agreement, the double negative, and various other forms of usage. The last numbered thirty-three. Of the thirty-three, Evans and Evans certainly did not condemn nineteen. Of the nineteen they pointed out that one was "old-fashioned" and another (*visitor to be her*) followed the normal English pattern. Seventeen therefore were approved. Having taught English for a number of years, the writer is aware that teachers through grades 7 to 13 spend a lot of time trying to eliminate these kinds of errors from
students' writing, and to some extent, from their speaking.

Teachers of English 40 must prepare their students for a final government examination containing the kinds of questions discussed above. Consequently, they try to train their students to eliminate errors which, perhaps, only the editors of the *Atlantic* would condemn. Surely these students should be examined at least on the basis of levels of usage rather than be expected, even on the university programme, to attain a level of formal English usage demanded of say, the editorial writer of a large daily newspaper.
CHAPTER V

METHOD

Educational Hypothesis

The principal hypothesis proposed in this study is that errors in English usage, punctuation, and spelling made by grade 12 students in British Columbia in June, 1953, can be ascertained, counted, and classified, and the relative frequency of occurrence of such errors determined. Furthermore, a number of additional hypotheses have been set forth below.

The truth of each hypothesis will be examined later on by the method which seems most appropriate to the hypothesis being tested. In determining whether or not the number of errors in English usage, punctuation, and spelling found in students' paragraphs would be less if modern criteria of corrections were used, the errors will be classified, the criteria applied, and the difference in the number of errors in each class will be ascertained by inspection. The truth of three of the hypotheses will be determined by finding the coefficient of correlation for each set of data and testing for the significance of the coefficient. The significance of the difference of means will be used to test four additional hypotheses. These hypotheses will be expressed in terms of the null hypothesis,
that is, the assumption will be made that there is "no difference" in the means. The medians of various sets of data will be inspected to test still another hypothesis. The hypotheses are set forth in the following section.

The Hypotheses

A. There is a considerable difference between numbers and kinds of errors in usage as determined by traditional criteria of correctness and numbers and kinds of errors as determined by modern criteria of correctness.

B. There is a statistically significant relationship between the number of errors students make and their intelligence (scholastic ability).

C. There is no significant difference between the number of errors made by: (1) girls and those made by boys; (2) students whose fathers are in the professional or managerial vocations and those whose fathers are in the skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled vocations; (3) students who are interested in English, social studies, and languages, mathematics, commerce, home economics, industrial arts, and science, and (4) students who have chosen the University Programme and students who have chosen the General Programme of High School Graduation in British Columbia.

D. There is a significant relationship between errors and (1) marks given by examiners to paragraphs, and (2) errors and numbers of words written in the paragraphs.
E. The number of errors students made was affected by their choice of the topic they wrote on.

Definition of Limits

A. "Paragraph" means all of the words that a student wrote on each of two topics, including the title. Regardless of whether the student indented to indicate the beginning of a new paragraph or did not indent, the total number of words he wrote on each topic was considered a "paragraph."

B. "Errors in English" means errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling. Criteria for judging errors are those used by Poerster and Steadman, 1930 edition. A second set of criteria as advocated by Pooley, Leonard and Moffett, and Marckwardt and Walcott, will be used for purposes of comparison.

C. "Grade 12 students" refers to British Columbia students who wrote the English Language 10 examination, Department of Education of the Province of British Columbia, in June, 1953.

D. The factors to be studied are defined as follows:

1. "Intelligence" (scholastic ability) is that indicated on the "Transfer of Record" cards filed with the Department of Education, Victoria, British Columbia. The Transfer of Record cards do not show the name of the intelligence test used.

1 Poerster and Steadman, Writing and Thinking, 1930 ed.
2 Pooley, Teaching English Usage.
3 Leonard and Moffett, "Current Definitions" English Language Journal.
4 Marckwardt and Walcott, Facts About Current English Usage.
2. "Socio-economic background" is to be determined on the basis of the occupation of the student's father.

3. "Interest" means interest as determined by the student's choice of major subjects on the High School Graduation Programme.

4. "University Programme" means the High School Graduation Programme chosen by students planning to attend university. The University Programme limits students in their choice of subjects and demands a relatively high standard of attainment. These students may be considered a "select" group. The General Programme, on the other hand, offers a wider choice of subjects and accepts lower standard of attainment than the University Programme. As pointed out on page 66, all students, University Programme and General Programme, who were not recommended in June, 1953, had to write the English Language, June 1953, University Entrance examination and consequently had to attain an acceptable standard of achievement in order to graduate.

5. "Topic" refers to any one of nine topics on the examination from which a student had to choose two on which to write a paragraph.

6. Only errors made in the expository, descriptive, and narrative paragraphs written on the English Language examination will be counted.
Research Design

A. Data

1. Errors will be counted, classified, and tabulated into the following groups:
   (a) Fourteen main categories as shown on pages 70-71.
   (b) Seventy-four subdivisions, including spelling errors, and an alternate group of
   (c) 104 subdivisions, excluding spelling errors.
      (The alternate group resulted from further subdivision of some of the groups included in the seventy-four subdivisions. Hence groups "b" and "c" are not mutually exclusive.

2. In order to facilitate a broad comparison with previous studies, this investigator will find the number of errors per 10,000 words, percentage of errors, and rank of each kind of error within each of the categories, a, b, and c, named in (1) above.

3. Number of errors, words, and sentences for each paragraph will be tabulated.

4. The following data about each student will be recorded: scholastic ability, father's occupation, sex, type of program enrolled in, majors selected.

Outline of Statistical Analysis

1. Differences in frequencies of errors will be noted as a result of applying the criteria of Pooley, et al.
2. To facilitate the discovery of the errors that occur most frequently, errors will be arranged in rank order in various categories.

3. The relationship between frequencies of errors and certain factors will be determined:
   (a) Between errors and scholastic ability by determining the coefficient of correlation using the product-moment formula.
   (b) Between errors and (i) sex, (ii) socio-economic background, (iii) interest in English, and (iv) type of high school program, by evaluating the observed mean difference in each set of data and testing the significance of the difference by means of the null hypothesis.

4. The median number of errors students made on each topic will be found.

5. The relationship between lengths of paragraphs, as determined by the number of words in the paragraphs and numbers of errors will be ascertained.

6. The relationship between numbers of errors and scores given by teachers on the paragraphs will be determined.

7. Spelling errors will be analyzed on the basis of misspelling of vowel and consonant sounds.
CHAPTER VI

SOURCES AND DESCRIPTION OF DATA

The data for this study were obtained by counting the errors in English usage made in 599 paragraphs written by three hundred Grade 12 students in British Columbia. These paragraphs were written as part of a two and one-half hour, June, 1953, English 40 (Language) University Entrance examination. Instructions to students were as follows:

You are to write two paragraphs. One topic is to be chosen from Group A and the other is to be chosen from either Group B or Group C. The length of each paragraph should be from 100 to 150 words.

Space is provided for planning and rough drafts. A special effort should be made to plan each paragraph thoroughly.

Group A. Exposition
1. The National Characteristics of the Canadian
2. The Problems Faced by To-day's Youth
3. How to Prepare for a Personal Interview with a prospective Employer

Group B. Artistic Description
1. Churchill as We Will Remember Him
2. A Storm at Sea (or Over the Land)
3. A Description of a Painting (or a Piece of Music)

Group C. Narrative
1. A Prank of My Youth
2. Lost!
3. It Never Rains but It Pours.
The kinds and numbers of paragraphs written were:

- Expository - 297
- Descriptive - 192
- Narrative - 110

Total 599

Three students omitted expository paragraphs and two students wrote descriptive paragraphs instead of expository paragraphs.

Dr. C. B. Conway, Director, Division of Tests, Standards and Research, Government of British Columbia, selected the sample, representative of a population of 5130 students. Of the 5130 students who applied to write the examination, 3178 or 62 per cent were recommended, and 1952 or 38 per cent wrote the examination. In a memorandum to the writer dated December 28, 1954, Dr. Conway states:

The sample is a build-up one in which a larger proportion of the higher scores are obtained from non-accredited schools to replace the students who have been recommended in accredited schools and therefore have not written. It is also an atypical sample being slightly better than average because we reduce all our validation samples to the same distribution. In some cases, as in the present one, this results in a sample that is better than the one we would obtain if we sampled at random. 1

Data Recorded from the Examination Papers

The following data were recorded from each examination paper:
1. Actual score on the examination.
2. Percentage obtained on the examination.

3. Score out of 50 on each paragraph.
4. Number of words written in each paragraph.
5. Number of sentences written in each paragraph.
6. Classification of each paragraph as expository, descriptive, or narrative.
7. Errors made in usage, punctuation, and spelling.
8. Number of students writing on each topic.
9. Names of topics on which the students wrote.

Data About Students

The following data about each student were obtained through the cooperation of the Department of Education and the principals of fifty-nine British Columbia public and private high schools:

1. Age.
2. Sex.
3. Scholastic aptitude (IQ).
4. Type of High School Graduation Programme the student was on: the University Programme or General Programme (U.P. or G.P.).
5. Objective Test Results. (The number of results was too few, and method of recording them in the progress record cards proved to be too inconsistent to be of value.)
6. Subjects in which students had majored (an indication of interest).
7. Student's place of birth.
8. Town in which the student wrote the examination.
9 Father's occupation as a measure of the student's socio-economic background.

It should be pointed out that non-recommended English 40 (Language) students on the General Programme as well as those on the University Programme had to write the University Entrance examination in June, 1953.

From the paragraphs examined the data as shown in Table VII were obtained.

Table VII
DATA FROM 599 PARAGRAPHS WRITTEN BY GRADE 12 STUDENTS ON THE JUNE, 1953, ENGLISH LANGUAGE 40 UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of</th>
<th>Paragraphs</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>47075</td>
<td>2881</td>
<td>2254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>28695</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>1294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>21124</td>
<td>1375</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>96894</td>
<td>5912</td>
<td>4389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VIII shows various means as computed from Table VII: mean number of words per paragraph, mean number of words per sentence, number of errors per paragraph, number of errors per sentence, number of errors per 10,000 words, and number of words written for one error made.
Table VIII

MEANS OF NUMBERS OF WORDS PER PARAGRAPH, NUMBER OF WORDS PER SENTENCE, NUMBER OF ERRORS PER PARAGRAPH, NUMBER OF ERRORS PER SENTENCE, NUMBER OF ERRORS PER 10,000 WORDS, AND NUMBER OF WORDS WRITTEN FOR ONE ERROR MADE FOR 297 EXPOSITORY, 192 DESCRIPTIVE, AND 110 NARRATIVE PARAGRAPHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of words of per paragraph</th>
<th>Number of words of per sentence</th>
<th>Number of errors per paragraph</th>
<th>Number of errors per sentence</th>
<th>Number of errors per 10,000 words</th>
<th>Number of words written for one error made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>158.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>149.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>192.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All paragraphs</td>
<td>161.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table VIII it would seem that students made less than one error per sentence, or one error for every 22.1 words written. Although students wrote longer narrative paragraphs than expository or descriptive, they made on the average fewer errors per 10,000 words. Their sentences on the narrative were shorter than those on the descriptive or expository paragraphs. A more rigorous analysis of the relationship between the type of topic students wrote on and the errors made will be found in Chapter VIII, Part E.
To find out if a few students made a large number of errors, with the possible result that later statistics would be made invalid, Table IX was drawn up. This table is a frequency distribution showing the number of errors and the number of students making the errors.

**Table IX**

**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION SHOWING ERRORS IN ENGLISH AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS MAKING THE ERRORS ON BOTH PARAGRAPHS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Number of Students Making Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-32</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean: 14.72

Median: 13.1
From Table IX it is evident that very few students made a sufficiently large number of errors to invalidate subsequent statistical calculations.
CHAPTER VII

ERRORS IN USAGE, PUNCTUATION, AND SPELLING

The errors in the 599 paragraphs were tabulated under fourteen main headings and, at first, seventy-four sub-headings. These headings are similar to those used by the investigators mentioned earlier in this study: Stormzand and O' Shea, Johnson, Willing, and Lyman. In addition this investigator subdivided a number of the seventy-four sub-headings for the purpose of dealing with some items in a more specific manner than had been done by earlier researchers. The total number of sub-headings, therefore became 104, exclusive of spelling errors.

The errors were classified and tabulated under one of the following fourteen main categories as shown in Table X.

I. Case of pronouns.

II. Other misuses of the pronoun; for example, disagreement between the pronoun and its antecedent.

III. Verbs.

IV. Adjectives and adverbs.

V. Prepositions and conjunctions.

VI. Ungrammatical sentence structure. (See Table XIII for specific errors.)

VII. Lack of clear thinking. (See footnote to Table XIII for types of specific errors.)
VIII. Punctuation.
IX. Apostrophe.
X. Capitalization.
XI. Omissions.
XII. Spelling.
XIII. Misuse of quotation marks.
XIV. Miscellaneous errors.

Table X shows, in each of the fourteen main categories, the actual number of errors made in 599 paragraphs, the number made per 10,000 words, the percentage of total errors, and the rank order in which the errors occur. The table also shows these data revised if one applies Pooley's 1 criteria of correctness. Punctuation accounts for almost half the errors. These are more than double those in spelling, the category that ranks second in the largest number of errors made. The first and second ranking categories, punctuation and spelling respectively, account for 66.1 per cent (67.5 per cent of the revised error count) or about two-thirds of the total number of errors. If non-grammatical categories X (Capitalization, 4.5 per cent), IX (Apostrophe, 4.0 per cent), XI (Omissions, 1.7 per cent), and XIII (Misuse of Quotation Marks, .5 per cent), are added to the punctuation and spelling, the total percentage of strictly non-grammatical errors becomes 76.8 per cent or three-fourths of the total. Errors involving pronouns (Categories I and II, 6.2 per cent), verbs (Category III, 3.2 per cent), prepositions

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1 Pooley, *Teaching English Usage*. 
and conjunctions (Category V, 1.3 per cent), adjectives and
adverbs (Category IV, .3 per cent) and ungrammatical sentence
structure (Category VI, 4.2 per cent) account for 15.2 per cent
of all errors. The remaining categories (Lack of Clear Think-
ing (Category VII, 7.9 per cent) and Miscellaneous Errors
(Category XIV, .1 per cent) account for 8 per cent of the
errors. It may be generally stated, therefore, that non-
grammatical errors account for 75 to 80 per cent of the total
errors, while errors in usage account for only 20 to 25 per cent.
If one adds to the errors in punctuation, spelling, lack of
clear thinking (see footnote, Table X), and misuses of the pro-
noun (other than case), comprising 80 per cent of the total
number of errors, the next three in rank, capitalization, the
apostrophe, and ungrammatical sentence structure, one finds
that these seven of the fourteen categories account for 92.8
per cent of the errors made.

It is a mistake to consider each category equally
important as undoubtedly there are many more opportunities for
making errors in the categories in which the largest number of
errors occur, but it would certainly appear that considerably
more effort and ingenuity should be spent in high school teach-
ing punctuation and spelling than is now being spent. Punctu-
ation symbolizes, rather inadequately, stress and intonation
in English and therefore is often more necessary for clarity
of expression than "correct" usage.
Table X
ACTUAL NUMBER OF ERRORS, NUMBER OF ERRORS PER 10,000 WORDS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ERRORS, AND RANK ORDER OF ERRORS OF THE FOURTEEN MAIN CATEGORIES IN THIS STUDY AND THIS STUDY REVISED ACCORDING TO THE CRITERIA OF CORRECTNESS ADVOCATED BY POOLEY.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Category</th>
<th>Name of Category</th>
<th>Actual Number of Errors</th>
<th>Number of Errors Per 10,000 Words</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Errors</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This Study</td>
<td>This Study Revised</td>
<td>This Study</td>
<td>This Study Revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>208.2</td>
<td>197.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* VII</td>
<td>Lack of Clear Thinking</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Other Misuses of the Pronoun</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Apostrophe</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Ungrammatical Sentence Structure</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Omissions</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Prepositions and Conjunctions</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>Misuse of Quotation Marks</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Adjectives and Adverbs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Errors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Case of Pronouns</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4389</strong></td>
<td><strong>4143</strong></td>
<td><strong>453.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>427.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Pooley, Teaching English Usage.

* This category includes these faulty uses of the pronoun: ambiguity, vague reference, and antecedent lacking or far removed from pronoun. The category includes also illogical construction, misplaced modifiers, mistakes in idiom, dangling constructions, wrong tense sequence, meaningless sentences, and false diction. (See Appendix B, Part VII for actual examples.)
Errors in the use of the pronoun account for 6.2 per cent of the total number of errors. Even this low percentage is reduced still further when the twenty to thirty-year-old criteria of Pooley and Marckwardt and Walcott are used. Although the percentage of errors is low, the student should make no errors at all where faulty use of the pronoun may result in ambiguity of meaning.

Apart from pronouns, errors in the use of verbs (3.2 per cent), prepositions and conjunctions (1.3 per cent), adjectives and adverbs (.3 per cent), and ungrammatical sentence structure (4.2 per cent) account for only 9 per cent of the total number of errors. If the category "Lack of Clear Thinking" (See footnote, Table X) is included (7.9 per cent), one finds that errors in usage account for 23.1 per cent of all errors. If the Pooley and Marckwardt criteria are applied, this percentage would be reduced by 3.3 percent to about 20 per cent. The writer, who has taught grammar and usage for quite a few years, is of the opinion that he has spent a disproportionate amount of time in trying to teach students to eliminate errors in the agreement of the pronoun with its antecedent (particularly when the antecedent is an indefinite pronoun), and the avoidance of the indefinite use of "you", these "errors" being included in the 3.3 per cent just mentioned.

Summarizing the considerations of Table X, one may say that the time spent in teaching grammar and usage might be considerably reduced without appreciably affecting the "correctness" of usage of students' writing. At the same time, one must
also conclude that either more time must be spent on punctuation and spelling, or more effective methods must be used to reduce errors in these categories.

Referring to Table XI, showing a comparison between actual number of errors, number of errors per 10,000 words, percentage of total errors, and rank order of errors in older studies and this one, this investigator finds some evidence that the students included in this study made more errors per 10,000 words written than the students of one or two generations ago. It is, however, difficult to make comparisons as comparisons have to be made with either lower grade pupils or university freshmen or an average struck between these groups. As pointed out earlier, it is difficult to apply criteria of fifty years ago to the usage of modern students. The ratio of errors to number of words written indicates that the British Columbia grade 12 student made nearly as many errors as the grade 9 pupil in the Johnson study, and almost twice as many errors as the university freshman. On the other hand, British Columbia students made only one error for every 22.1 words as compared to one error to 16.3 in the Lyman study of grade 9 students and 16.8 words written by grade 6 to university students in the Stormzand and O'Shea study. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to draw statistically valid conclusions concerning whether or not contemporary students make fewer or more errors in usage than those of a generation or two ago. It is safe to


4 Lyman, "Fluency, Accuracy," School Review.

5 Stormzand and O'Shea, How Much English Grammar.
### Table IX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Freshmen (Grade XII)</th>
<th>Grade XI (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade X (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade IX</th>
<th>Grade VIII (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade VII (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade VI (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade V (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade IV (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade III (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade II (Revised Count)</th>
<th>Grade I (Revised Count)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Freshmen</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
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<td>Grade X</td>
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<td>Grade IX</td>
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<td>Grade IV</td>
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<td>Grade I</td>
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<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table includes a comparison between the actual number of errors per 1,000 words and the number of errors per 1,000 words, including and excluding errors in other studies and other one, excluding errors in other studies and other one.
| Grade XII - Revised Count | Grade XII University | Grade XII - IX University | Grade VI - IX University | Grade VI - Freshman | Grade VI - Revised Count | Grade VI - University | Grade VI - College Freshman | Grade XII - University | Grade XII - Freshman | Grade VI - Revised Count | Grade VI - University | Grade VI - College Freshman | Grade XII - University | Grade XII - Freshman | Grade VI - Revised Count | Grade VI - University | Grade VI - College Freshman |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 10                       | 12                  | 15                        | 12                       | 10                  | 12                     | 15                       | 12                     | 10                     | 12                     | 15                     | 12                     | 10                     | 12                     | 15                     | 12                     | 10                     |
| 9                        | 11                  | 14                        | 11                       | 9                   | 11                     | 14                       | 11                     | 9                      | 11                     | 14                     | 11                     | 9                      | 11                     | 14                     | 11                     | 9                      |
| 8                        | 10                  | 13                        | 10                       | 8                   | 10                     | 13                       | 10                     | 8                      | 10                     | 13                     | 10                     | 8                      | 10                     | 13                     | 10                     | 8                      |
| 7                        | 9                   | 12                        | 9                        | 7                   | 9                      | 12                       | 9                      | 7                      | 9                      | 12                     | 9                      | 7                      | 9                      | 12                     | 9                      | 7                      |
| 6                        | 8                   | 11                        | 8                        | 6                   | 8                      | 11                       | 8                      | 6                      | 8                      | 11                     | 8                      | 6                      | 8                      | 11                     | 8                      | 6                      |
| 5                        | 7                   | 10                        | 7                        | 5                   | 7                      | 10                       | 7                      | 5                      | 7                      | 10                     | 7                      | 5                      | 7                      | 10                     | 7                      | 5                      |
| 4                        | 6                   | 9                         | 6                        | 4                   | 6                      | 9                        | 6                      | 4                      | 6                      | 9                      | 6                      | 4                      | 6                      | 9                      | 6                      | 4                      |
| 3                        | 5                   | 8                         | 5                        | 3                   | 5                      | 8                        | 5                      | 3                      | 5                      | 8                      | 5                      | 3                      | 5                      | 8                      | 5                      | 3                      |
| 2                        | 4                   | 7                         | 4                        | 2                   | 4                      | 7                        | 4                      | 2                      | 4                      | 7                      | 4                      | 2                      | 4                      | 7                      | 4                      | 2                      |
| 1                        | 3                   | 6                         | 3                        | 1                   | 3                      | 6                        | 3                      | 1                      | 3                      | 6                      | 3                      | 1                      | 3                      | 6                      | 3                      | 1                      |

*This is an excerpt from a larger document.*
say, however, that the errors in usage made by students today are not so frequent, relatively, as some critics would have one believe. Certainly a comparison by inspection of the rank-order of errors in this study with the rank-orders of errors of the three previous studies would show as high a correlation with the three previous studies as these studies do among themselves. 6

Consideration of, and Conclusions to be Drawn from, a Detailed Analysis of Errors as Set Forth in Tables XII, XIII, and XIV

In the preceding pages some consideration has been given to Tables X and XI in which were summarized the total number of errors in each of fourteen broad classifications. However, as has been frequently emphasized in this study, errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling are specific; for example, a student may know the rule that a singular personal pronoun should follow certain indefinite pronouns but he will apply the rule successfully to some indefinite pronouns and not to others. Consequently, in order to determine still further which specific errors occur most frequently three additional tables, Tables XII, XIII and XIV have been drawn up. Table XIII shows twenty-five errors in punctuation, their rank order, total number of errors, errors per 10,000 words, percentage that each punctuation error constitutes in the total number (2018) of punctuation errors, and percentage that each punctuation error constitutes in the

6 See Table V, p. 29.
total of all errors (4389) found in the 599 paragraphs studied. Table XIV was drawn up to treat in further detail the forty-seven subdivisions shown in Table XII, these subdivisions corresponding to the forty-seven divisions (shown by arabic numerals 1-47) of the Johnson, Lyman, and Stormzand and O'Shea studies. The total number of subdivisions in Table XIV is 104, exclusive of spelling. This figure added to the twenty-seven divisions into which the spelling errors have been divided as on pages 111-112 gives a total of 131 divisions. To this figure may be added an additional twenty-six spelling subdivisions (shown in Appendix C) within the twenty-seven spelling divisions to give a total of 157 divisions for all errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling.

Table XIV, including the twenty-five kinds of errors in punctuation and seventy-nine in usage, but none in spelling (apart from the use of the apostrophe and errors in capitalization), shows the rank order of 104 errors, total number of errors, errors in usage per 10,000 words, percentage of all usage errors (1006) and percentage of all errors made (4389) in the 599 paragraphs examined. The twenty-five errors in punctuation are listed in Table XIII, but are also listed in Table XIV to show their rank within the 104 errors in punctuation and usage.

The writer will now discuss the errors in more detail under each of the main fourteen categories indicated at the beginning of this chapter. The errors will be discussed in the same order as indicated except that errors in punctuation, which occurred in the greatest number, will be dealt with first: and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Name of Sub-Category</th>
<th>Number of Errors Per 10,000 Words</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Errors</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Miscellaneous mistakes in punctuation (d:19.3, f:15.7, e:12, gl:4.5, b:3:7.2, h:5:5.0, a:2.3, b:2.8)</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Other misspelled words</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Independent clauses of compound sentence not separated</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>No punctuation after introductory expression: Adverb clauses, participial, infinitive, gerundial phrases (a: 40.6)</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Other cases of failure to express clear thinking (a: 4.1, b:5.5, c:1.6, d:o, f:12.8)</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Members of a series not separated</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>&quot;you&quot; or &quot;they&quot; used indefinitely</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Compound words incorrectly written: omission of hyphen</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Improper use of capitals</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Wrong form of possessive nouns (a:17.2, b:2.4, 5)</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Ambiguity due to indefinite pronominal reference</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Name of city and province written without punctuation</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Incomplete sentence</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Omission of a word or phrase</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Failure to use a capital letter</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Miscellaneous mistakes in sentence structure (b:1.7)</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Miscellaneous use of the pronoun</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Wrong past tense or past participle (a:4.8)</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Disagreement of pronoun and antecedent</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Period omitted (a:4.0)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Misspelling of &quot;their&quot;, &quot;there&quot; &quot;they're,&quot;</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Miscellaneous mistakes in use of apostrophe: omission in &quot;don't,&quot; etc.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Disagreement of verb and subject (a: 3.5)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Failure to make a new sentence for a new thought: i.e., principal clauses not separated by any punctuation</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>&quot;Like&quot; used as a conjunction and omissions in the use of conjunctions</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Misuse of quotation marks</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Failure to distinguish between &quot;it's&quot; and &quot;its&quot;</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Missspeaking of &quot;to&quot;, &quot;too&quot;</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Use of wrong or superfluous preposition</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Mistakes in mood</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Change of tense within the paragraph</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Use of adjective for an adverb</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Awkward wordy, or complicated phrasing</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Use of wrong conjunctions (&quot;The reason was because...&quot;)</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Name of Sub-Category</td>
<td>Number of Errors Per 10,000 Words</td>
<td>Percentage of Total Errors</td>
<td>Rank Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III 11</td>
<td>Wrong verb used (&quot;I will lay down&quot;)</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV 47</td>
<td>Miscellaneous errors</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 1</td>
<td>Subject or object of a verb in wrong case</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 3</td>
<td>Object of a preposition in wrong case</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 17</td>
<td>Miscellaneous misuse of adjectives and adverbs</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 4</td>
<td>Use of object for possessive with the gerund</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 15</td>
<td>&quot;Only&quot; misplaced in the sentence</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI 40</td>
<td>Omission of a letter or a syllable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI 41</td>
<td>Repetition of syllables, words or phrases</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 2</td>
<td>Predicate nominative in wrong case</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 14</td>
<td>Use of &quot;most&quot; for &quot;almost&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 16</td>
<td>Use of double negative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX 35</td>
<td>O'clock written without the apostrophe</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in</td>
<td>Rank in</td>
<td>Number of</td>
<td>Name of Sub-Category</td>
<td>Total Errors in Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30a</td>
<td>No comma after introductory adverbial clauses, participial, infinitive, or gerundial phrases</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29a</td>
<td>Comma omitted before the coordinating conjunction</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29b</td>
<td>Comma used instead of a semicolon or period</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (8.5)+</td>
<td>4 (10.5)+</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Members of a series not separated (Note: 10% of these comprised omissions before &quot;and&quot;).</td>
<td>203 (99)+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32d</td>
<td>Non-restrictive elements not set off</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32f</td>
<td>Comma for clearness omitted</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32e</td>
<td>Use of unnecessary commas</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31a</td>
<td>No punctuation after, or around, a transition expression</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>32h3</td>
<td>Semicolon misused or omitted</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32h5</td>
<td>Dash misused</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32g</td>
<td>Interrogation mark omitted</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>27a</td>
<td>Period omitted at the end of a sentence</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32b</td>
<td>Comma around appositive omitted</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>32a</td>
<td>Comma setting off a dependent clause, or a phrase, out of its natural order</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>No punctuation after introductory (or transition) expression</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>32h2</td>
<td>Colon not used</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>32hl</td>
<td>Exclamation mark misused</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>27d</td>
<td>Unnecessary periods</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>32b1</td>
<td>Comma indicating omission omitted</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>32c</td>
<td>Comma around quotations omitted</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>32c1</td>
<td>Comma omitted after a nominative of address</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27c</td>
<td>Period omitted after abbreviations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>32h1</td>
<td>Unnecessary use of &quot;...&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Comma omitted in writing name of city or town and province</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>27b</td>
<td>Period omitted after titles</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 2018 208.4 100.0 46.1

+Revised study ranking +Punctuation marks other than the comma.
Total number of such errors: 211 or 12 percent of total number of punctuation errors.
+Revised Study +Revised Study
errors in spelling will be discussed last. The categories to be discussed, then, are the following: Punctuation (VIII), Pronouns (I, II), Verbs (III), Adjectives and Adverbs (IV), Prepositions and Conjunctions (V), Ungrammatical Sentence Structure (VI), Lack of Clear Thinking (VII), The Apostrophe (IX), Capitalization (X), Omissions (XI), Misuse of Quotation Marks (XIII), Miscellaneous Errors (XIV), and Spelling (XII).

Punctuation (VIII)

Of all the errors made, punctuation constituted the largest group; and of errors in punctuation, the comma caused the most trouble. Table XIII details the errors in punctuation and indicates that out of 2018 errors, 1777 or 88 per cent involved the comma. The first three categories of comma errors: omission of the comma following an introductory phrase or clause (19.6 per cent), omission before a coordinating conjunction (16.8 per cent), and the comma fault (11.2 per cent), account for nearly half the errors in punctuation (47.6 per cent). The first eight errors: those already named plus failure to separate items in a series, non-restrictive elements not set off, comma for clearness omitted, use of unnecessary commas, and no punctuation around transition expressions comprise nearly three-quarters of the errors or 74 per cent. The reader should note that Pooley does not consider omitting the comma before and in a series to be a serious error, but Fowler does. One of the most important uses of the comma in so far as maintaining clarity of meaning is concerned is to differentiate
between restrictive and non-restrictive expressions. Yet this error ranked high—fifth—on the list of punctuation errors and constituted 9.3 per cent of the errors made in punctuation. It should be emphasized that the highest five categories in punctuation are also the highest when included in usage and punctuation, as shown in Table XIV. Considering the misuse of the semicolon (rank 9) and failure to use the period after a sentence (rank 12), in conjunction with the comma fault, one may conclude that many students, even in grade 12, fail to recognize a "complete thought" or are very careless in using the symbols that indicate complete ideas. It is not necessary to labour the point that the comma is necessary at the very least for easy reading, and at most is essential for meaning. The educational implications of Table XIII are clear. The amount of effort that should be devoted to teaching the use of the comma should be increased and divided more or less in the ratios indicated by the number of errors. This point of view is further supported when one considers that the first five categories, each of which indicates an error in the use of the comma, in Table XIV, constitute nearly one-third (30.8 per cent) of all errors of all kinds made in the 599 paragraphs.

On punctuation marks other than the comma, little comment is needed. These constituted a bare 12 per cent of errors in

7 Sydney J. Harris, in his column "Point of View" in The Province (Vancouver, April 18, 1957), quotes the following sentence, originally quoted in Sir Ernest Gower's "Plain Words": "Pilots, whose minds are dull, do not usually live long."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Sub Category</th>
<th>Name of Category</th>
<th>Total Errors</th>
<th>Number of Errors per 10,000 Words</th>
<th>Usage Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30a</td>
<td>No punctuation after introductory adverbial clause, etc.</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29a</td>
<td>Comma omitted before the coordinating conjunction</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>29b</td>
<td>Comma used instead of a semicolon or period</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Members of a series not separated (revised study: rank - 10.5)</td>
<td>203(99)*</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32d</td>
<td>Non-restrictive elements not set off</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>32f</td>
<td>Comma for clearness omitted</td>
<td>160(112)*</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>X 38</td>
<td>Unnecessary capitalization</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>VII 26f</td>
<td>False diction (colloquialisms, malapropisms, etc.)</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>32e</td>
<td>Use of unnecessary commas</td>
<td>124(121)*</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>31a</td>
<td>No punctuations after, or around, transition expressions</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>32h3</td>
<td>Semicolon misused or omitted</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>Mistakes in Idiom</td>
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<td>Dash misplaced</td>
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<td>Disagreement between the pronoun and its antecedent in number</td>
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<td>Apostrophe omitted in genitive (todays youth)</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Interrogation mark omitted</td>
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<td>Careless substitution of one word for another</td>
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<td>VII 28b</td>
<td>Pronoun has no antecedent, or antecedent far removed</td>
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<td>VII 29</td>
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<td>X 37b</td>
<td>No capitals in titles</td>
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<td>Quotation marks omitted</td>
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<td>Apostrophe omitted from &quot;don't&quot; etc.</td>
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<td>VI 23b</td>
<td>Redundancy (&quot;have got&quot; careless repetition of &quot;and&quot;, etc.)</td>
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<td>IX 33</td>
<td>Apostrophe: failure to distinguish between &quot;its&quot; and &quot;it's&quot;</td>
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<td>VII 24a</td>
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<td>VII 27d</td>
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<td>Disagreement of verb following &quot;there&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;O'lock&quot; written without an apostrophe</td>
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+ Percentages for errors in punctuation are shown in Table XIII
** Blank spaces signify Category VIII, punctuation
*** Letters and figures following the number of the sub-category indicate further subdivisions of the sub-category.

(Revised study)
punctuation and less than 5 per cent of all errors. Omission of the period at the end of a sentence occurred thirty-nine times and constituted only 2 per cent of punctuation errors. More serious was the omission of the interrogation mark. Although the omission occurred only forty-three times and constituted a little more than 2 per cent of the mistakes in punctuation, the opportunities for making this error are much fewer than for making errors involving the period. The same comment may be made concerning the dash. This punctuation mark has a very limited use -- a use with which many students seem unfamiliar; consequently they use it where a comma, semicolon, colon, or even a period should be used. The colon was not used seventeen times where it should have been. Although this is a low figure, the opportunities for using the colon are undoubtedly few, and one may conclude that this useful punctuation mark should receive more emphasis. When one considers that 2018 errors in punctuation occurred in 5912 sentences or one error in nearly three (2.9) sentences, and that punctuation is essential to ease of reading and clarity of meaning, means should certainly be taken to eliminate errors in punctuation.

Errors in Usage

Consideration will now be given to errors in usage. Each of the main divisions of errors will be dealt with in turn: pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions, ungrammatical sentence structure and failure to
express clear thinking. These categories accounted for 1006 errors, if one uses the traditional criteria as the standard of correctness, or 864 errors if one uses the Pooley standard. Table XIV, ranking 104 subdivisions, and Appendix A will be the basis for the comments and conclusions that follow. Appendix A lists the fourteen categories and their various sub-categories and ranks the errors within each sub-category. Accompanying most sub-categories are three specific examples of the error. The first example in each sub-category is taken from the Leonard study; the second, from the paragraphs written on the English Language 40 examination, 1953; and the third from the particular source noted.

Pronouns, I-II

Errors involving pronouns (Categories I, II and VII 24, 24a and b) totalled 352 of the 1006 errors or 35 per cent. If the revised study is considered, 281 of 864 errors were made, or 32.6 per cent. The most frequent error was the indefinite use of "you" and "they" which occurred 160 times and constituted 15.9 per cent of the errors in usage. If, however, one uses Pooley's criteria, the number of such errors would be reduced to 112. The figure 112 represents the number of times you or they occurred in paragraphs in which an unnecessary change of person occurred. Turning now to the conjunctival and relative

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8 Ashe also condones the use of indefinite you in her article "One Can Use an Indefinite You Occasionally, Can't You?" Dora Jean Ashe, College English, vol. 14, 1953, pp. 216-219.
pronoun that, one finds that when very strict adherence to a standard demanding that all omitted that's be counted, there were 53. Fowler condones many such omissions; consequently the figure 53 has been reduced (by estimation -- not actual counting) to ten. From a rank of 15.5 this error drops to about 50 and may be considered to cause little concern to teachers of English.

Disagreement between a pronoun and its antecedent was generally the result of using a plural pronoun with a singular collective noun (11,5) as in the sentences "A serious problem confronts the younger generation -- they don't want to face responsibility," and "I saw a flock of geese on their way." (Fowler says flock may be treated as singular or plural.) The problem of agreement of pronouns with collective nouns is difficult to solve. The pronoun (or verb) following such a noun may, by synesis, make such a noun plural in intent. This investigator applied the rule of agreement quite rigorously; consequently the number of errors found in this subdivision might, perhaps, have been reduced if the process of synesis had been recognized in many constructions. In a sentence such as "A person can find what they look for," (11,5) there will, of course, be no doubt that an error has been made. This error, ranking 19, occurred forty-six times, constituted 4.6 per cent of errors in usage and 1 per cent of all errors.

Three errors involving faulty reference of pronouns will now be considered. These are lack of an antecedent for
A pronoun, ambiguity of reference, and vague reference to an idea (24b, 24, 24a), ranking 26, 27 and 36 respectively. These three errors accounted for thirty-three, thirty-two, and nineteen errors respectively or a total of eighty-four errors constituting 8.4 per cent of the errors in usage. As faulty reference of pronouns may result in obscuring meaning, the first two faults, lack of an antecedent and ambiguity of reference, constitute a more serious kind of error than some kinds of errors in which students made more mistakes. The third kind of error, vague reference to an idea, is not so serious an error as the first two. Both Fowler and Marckwardt and Walcott condone a pronoun's referring to a whole idea; therefore in the revised study vagueness of reference was not considered an error. The use of which for who (11,7) occurred only six times and ranked 61. Teachers have, apparently, done a good job in teaching students to distinguish between these pronouns, although perhaps general use contributes as much as education to a pupil's not confusing the use of the two pronouns. In any case, it does not seem to cause pupils much trouble.

Only three errors were found involving lack of agreement between a pronoun and its antecedent indefinite pronoun (11,5a) as in the sentence "Everyone has their own troubles." There is certainly no doubt that this error occurs frequently in everyday speech; consequently one wonders that so few errors were made in this category. One explanation might be that this locution would be rarely used in descriptive paragraphs. In the expository
paragraph, the pronoun \textit{you} was used very frequently in the indefinite sense, thus eliminating the necessity of using the indefinite pronouns. Should pronouns of the type \textit{everyone}, \textit{no-one} (the hyphen is Fowler's suggestion), \textit{everybody}, always be considered singular? Fowler prefers \textit{his} in the sentence "Everyone has their own troubles," but Pooley thinks that these indefinite pronouns should be referred to by plural pronouns if the sense is plural.

The first category (I) in this and the older studies deals with the case of the pronoun. Only six mistakes were made in this category and, as in the older studies, this one ranked fourteenth or lowest. Only one example was found on the subject being in the wrong case ("She saw my sister and I"). There were two examples of an object of a preposition in the wrong case ("I did it for he"), but no examples of a predicate nominative ("It is me", "I do not know whom he is") in the wrong case. It is difficult to reconcile the low frequency of these errors in written English with the large number of such errors heard in spoken English, particularly of the type "He gave the money to Bill and I." When teaching this construction, teachers might keep in mind that only eight of the more common prepositions are used 92 per cent of the time\textsuperscript{9} and teach the construction with these specific prepositions. Two examples of using the objective case for the possessive with a gerund

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\textsuperscript{9} Fries, Charles Carpenter, \textit{American English Grammar}, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940. The prepositions are at, by, for, from, in, of, to, with.
were found. As neither Pooley nor the Marckwardt and Walcott studies especially favours the possessive, this construction was not considered an error in the revised study. In view of this conclusion it seems unnecessary that teachers spend any time trying to teach students to differentiate between the two constructions. In summarizing the comments on errors involving case of pronouns, one can conclude that teachers have nearly eliminated this error in written work, except for the case of the pronoun before a gerund. And certainly, in the high school, little if any attempt should be made to eliminate what may not be an "error" anyway.

Verbs (III)

Among the misuse of verbs, the wrong form of the past tense (III 10a) ranked highest within this category with forty-seven errors, and ranked 18 in the total number of errors. The error constituted 5.2 per cent of the errors in usage, and 1.1 per cent of all errors. Some of the errors might better have been classed as spelling errors ("They happen(ed) to come," "He past the store."). Confusion of the past perfect tense with the past ("The boats, which were (had been) strong enough to stand a lake's waves could not endure the ocean") occurred frequently in this subdivision. There were only four errors in the use of the past participle and four in mood. Even when one considers the substitution of like for as if or as though (V, 20-nine errors) and, in most cases, the consequent necessity
of using the subjunctive mood, there were relatively few errors in mood. This is the more surprising when one hears on every hand the use of the indicative for the subjunctive mood. Pooley says, "The use of the subjunctive today becomes, therefore, more largely a question of taste than of 'correctness'." 10

Of the wrong verb forms used (III,11) only two errors out of a total of seven involved lie and lay. The sparsity of errors involving these two verbs is also surprising when one considers the extent to which people confuse them in speech. Pooley quotes Greenough and Kittredge as saying "In the first half of the last century lay was pretty common for lie even in respectable authors." 11

Ranking second in errors made in using verbs, were errors involving agreement of the subject and predicate (III,8). This error ranked 25 in all errors and made up 3.4 per cent of the errors in usage. The errors usually occurred when the sentence order was reversed ("On the bank was some water lilies"), or in an interrogative sentence, or following there, or when a phrase or clause containing a plural noun was placed between the subject and the predicate. Changing tense within a paragraph was the third most frequent error in verb use, though the error ranked 42.5 in the total number of errors and constituted only 1.6 per cent of the errors in usage. Verbs used in the wrong

10 Pooley, Teaching English Usage, p. 59.
11 Ibid., p. 164.
sense (III,12a) occurred infrequently (ten times). An example of such misuse is: "He had to determine the people." The split infinitive was found only six times and this was reduced to two when Pooley's criteria were used. It would appear that wrong forms of verbs in the past tense, and disagreement between a verb and its subject in certain constructions, constitute the chief difficulties in handling verbs.

Adjectives and Adverbs (IV)

Substitutions of an adjective for an adverb (IV,13) occurred twelve times, constituted 1.2 per cent of the errors in usage and ranked 50. Examples of errors were "He spoke disrespectful" and "It sure is a sunny day," the latter locution, of course, being common in everyday speech. There were only two errors involving the wrong comparative as in "He held it more closer." No errors occurred of the type "It was a very healthy food" or "There wasn't hardly room for me" (double negative). Nor did the misplacing of the modifier only occur, although Pooley condones the use of only as in "I only had one lesson to study." (Insistence on the strict placement of only is certainly not in accord with current usage.) No examples of the use of most for almost occurred. Students seem to have little difficulty in using adjectives and adverbs correctly in their written work.

Prepositions and Conjunctions (V)

Wrong (V, 18,a) and superfluous use of prepositions (V,18,b) occurred twenty times; the former seven, to rank 58.5,
and the latter thirteen, to rank 49. Wrong prepositions occurring in sentences such as "This book is different than that one" is considered literary English by Marckwardt and Walcott. The use of due to in the sentence "The party was postponed due to hail," is condemned by Fowler but not by Marckwardt and Walcott. Pooley comments that due to is following the same course in acceptance as owing to. Superfluous use of prepositions occurred in locutions such as "This was the destination in which we set out for," and "For whom is he seeking?" Although Fowler condemns the use of like as a conjunction, Marckwardt and Walcott considers its use in such constructions as "It looks like he isn't coming" as literary English. Eighteen omissions occurred with conjunctions "whether ... or not," "as ... as," "as ... than," "not only ... but also." This error ranked 37.5 and made up 1.8 per cent of the errors in usage. Marckwardt and Walcott considers the construction "The reason was because ..." literary English and Pooley condones its use by school children. Consequently, this study revised shows three instead of nine errors. Other errors involved the use of and instead of but and of whether instead of as to whether.

Judging from the investigations of Leonard and Moffett, Pooley, and Marckwardt and Walcott, teachers should not expect high school students to distinguish between owing to and due to.

12 Pooley, Teaching English Usage, p. 135.
or different to (Fowler), and different than, or "The reason was that . . ." and "The reason was because . . ." (This was the reason why . . ."), or like and as, and as if, or such as. The use of superfluous prepositions and omissions in certain conjunctions should be condemned.

Ungrammatical Sentence Structure (VI)

Most of the errors (100 out of 175) under the heading "Ungrammatical Sentence Structure" might be classified under the sub-heading "incomplete sentence"; however, an attempt has been made in this study to discover the kinds of grammatical structures that are involved in incomplete sentence structure. Forty errors of this type consisted of "action" words and nouns; that is, they were verbal phrases (ranking 42.5); adjective clauses (ranking 46.5), and adverb clauses (ranking 52). The admonition of teachers that "A sentence or a principal clause contains a subject and a predicate and needs no introductory word; ... A sentence makes complete sense . . . when standing alone; . . ." or variations thereof, seems insufficient to guarantee the writing of complete sentences. A further sixty errors comprised fragments of thoughts (ranking 15.5). These were fragments (twenty-two errors) such as "not too useful," omission of the verb (seventeen errors) as in "shake hands and a remark ready," omission of the subject (six errors), other

13 Tressler and Lewis, Mastering Effective English, p. 56.
errors (nine) of the fragment kind, writing appositives by themselves (five errors), and use of the nominative absolute by itself (one error). The run-on sentence, or failure to put any punctuation between complete thoughts occurred thirty-nine times (ranking 23.5). There were therefore 139 errors involving a lack of sentence sense or 13.9 per cent of the errors in usage. If a separate heading had been set up for lack of sentence sense, this classification would rank about eighth. Consequently this type of error, the elimination of which is important to clarity of writing, should receive much attention from teachers.

Obvious lack of parallelism occurred only ten times; redundancy, twenty-two times.

Failure to Express Clear Thinking (VII)

Most of the causes of failure to express clear thinking involved pronouns; consequently these errors were dealt with when pronouns were previously discussed (ranking 15.5). Mistakes in idiom occurred fifty-three times and usually involved prepositions in the idiomatic constructions. Perhaps some errors of this type should have been considered under "Prepositions." Examples of errors involving mistakes in idiom are "to my point of view" and "try and define it." Pooley and Marckwardt and Walcott consider the latter example literary English. Careless or ignorant substitution of one word for another, as in "he could of done it," and "it doesn't jive," occurred forty times and ranked 22.
Illogical construction (25 c) of the kind "Doctors and other professions have many openings" occurred fourteen times, and dangling construction (26 c) sixteen times. Most of the dangling constructions resulted from the use of elliptical clauses such as "Politeness plays a part when being interviewed," "As a child, my mother made me do household chores," and "when lost, the intelligent thing to...." Pooley maintains that the first and third examples may be considered literary English where the meaning is unmistakable; consequently this study revised shows thirteen instead of seventeen errors. In view of the few dangling constructions found one may conclude that (1) there were relatively few chances to make the error, or (2) teachers did an excellent job of eliminating the error. Possibly both factors worked together.

False diction, consisting mostly of colloquialisms, ranked 9, and included 124 errors. Most of these errors do not detract from clarity of meaning but offend the sensibilities of the reader who believes that formal writing should exclude such expressions as a lot or a bunch of people, a must, an out, and apt (for likely). On the other hand, where a colloquialism replaces a more exact word as in the use of funny for peculiar, less for fewer, and guess for suppose, the student should use the more appropriate word. (The writer


15 In his column "Preview and Comment" in the English Journal, April 1956, the editor, Dwight L. Burton, says "...some speech training for all English teachers is a must." Neither the Concise Oxford Dictionary nor Webster's Twentieth Century Dictionary lists "must" as a noun.
has noticed that radio and television speakers, as well as
other quite well educated people occasionally confuse
uninterested and disinterested, infer and imply, fewer and
less, amount and number, each of which has its own distinct
meaning.) In addition to this kind of error a number of
confusions of word meaning occurred; for example, employee's
for employer's, tribe for herd, ensured for assured, moral for
morale, councils for counsels, so for very, healthfulness for
health, industriousness for industry, perfectness for perfection,
unreasonable panic for unreasoning panic, fastness for speed,
subsequently for consequently, and cynical for suspicious.
(Students tended to add ness unnecessarily to form nouns when
these already exist.) The incorrect use of words constituted
12.3 per cent of the errors in usage. As this is a relatively
large percentage of the errors in usage and as word use appears
to be largely an individual matter, the more practice a student
gets in speaking and writing the more likely is the teacher to
discover pupils' errors in diction.

Misplacing modifiers occurred only seven times and
ranked 58.5. This error, therefore, gives little cause for
concern.

Mistakes in the Use of the Apostrophe (IX)

Before discussing errors in the use of the apostrophe,
the writer should point out that this error is not included in
Table XIII dealing with punctuation errors. It is of course
included in Table XIV which lists all errors (except spelling), but is not included in the 1006 errors in usage listed as percentages in Table XIV.

By far the greatest number of errors in the use of the apostrophe occurred in the possessive nouns. There were 121 such errors. Of this number, seventy errors were made in words exclusive of today's as in today's youth; seven in such genitives as a summer's day, and forty-four in the single word today's. The frequency of the last error may be explained by observing that one of the topics that many students wrote on was "Problems of Today's Youth." Even though the apostrophe was included in the word Today's appearing in the topic on the examination paper, students made the mistake. Omission of the apostrophe in words other than today's and such locutions as summer's day ranked 12.5 in all errors and constituted 5.2 percent of the errors in usage. If the genitive in today's be added (forty-four) and fourteen errors involving putting the apostrophe in the wrong place, as in lady's dresses, the number of errors becomes 135. If the apostrophe had been included with errors in usage, the misuse of the possessive would have comprised about 12 per cent of the combined total and would rank about 7 in Table XI. One may conclude, therefore, that teachers should stress the use of the apostrophe in possessive nouns more, perhaps, than they have.

Students made twenty-three errors by omitting the apostrophe in such contractions as don't and isn't and an
additional three by putting the apostrophe in the wrong place such as in shouldn't. The first of these errors ranked 30 out of 104. This use of the apostrophe did not appear to give much trouble.

**Mistakes in Capitalization (X)**

There were 133 words unnecessarily capitalized, making unnecessary capitalization one of the more serious errors from the standpoint of correctness if not of meaning. The error ranked 8 in all errors as shown in Table XI. Students made only eighteen errors by not capitalizing proper nouns. Probably some of these errors resulted from following the journalistic practice of using the "down" style in which the name of a physical feature, street, or avenue is spelled with a lower case letter when preceded by a name, as in Burnaby lake. When not to capitalize rather than when to capitalize seems confusing to students. Students failed to capitalize one or more words in the title of a paragraph only twenty-six times in 550 paragraphs. Students failed fourteen times to capitalize sentences following the period of a preceding sentence, and did not capitalize the first word in a quotation four times. Consequently, these kinds of errors do not seem to be prevalent.

(Not all of the actual words showing errors in capitalization were recorded, but only some examples. It was felt that recording them as in Table XIV would be sufficiently specific. This explains the discrepancy between the number of
errors (151) in capitalization of words as shown in this section and the number (twenty-three) shown in the section on spelling.)

Careless Omissions or Repetitions (XI)

Nearly all (sixty-seven) omissions of words were the result of carelessness or haste. The omission of being in the phrase human being has Perrin's blessing.

Spelling Errors (XII)

This category will be considered in detail on pages 108-118 and in Appendix C.

Misuse or Omission of Quotation Marks (XIII)

Students misused or omitted quotation marks twenty-four times. This error would not ordinarily occur in descriptive or expository paragraphs; however, students wrote 110 narrative paragraphs (out of 599); consequently they had some, but not much opportunity to make the error. One may conclude, therefore, that omission of quotation marks is a more serious error than its rank of 30 would indicate.

Miscellaneous Errors (XIV)

As "miscellaneous errors" occurred only twice in 10,000 words, there is no need to comment on them. The reason for

16 Perrin, Writer's Guide and Index to English.
their low frequency in this study is that the writer distributed these errors under the additional sub-headings included in this study but not included in older studies.

In order to summarize the preceding discussion and to make the implications more apparent, a series of tables has been drawn up listing in rank order the five, ten, or twenty most frequently occurring errors under various headings: punctuation (Table XV), usage (Table XVI), main categories (Table XVII), and ten, along with sub-headings, of the forty-seven sub-categories (Table XVIII).

The ten errors in punctuation shown in Table XV accounted for 89.9 or nearly 90 per cent of all errors in punctuation. The first five errors accounted for more than two-thirds of the errors in punctuation; that is, 66.9 per cent. One should note that certain of these errors contribute to obscurity of meaning; consequently every effort should be made to eliminate them. These are omission of the comma to set off restrictive clauses, omission of the comma where obscurity of meaning results from its omission and, in some instances, the use of the comma instead of the semicolon or period. However, all of the errors in punctuation listed above detract from ease of reading and should be eliminated. It should be noted that of the ten errors listed above, the first five ranked highest of all kinds out of a total of 104 types of error.
Table XV

THE TEN MOST FREQUENTLY OCCURRING ERRORS IN PUNCTUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name of Error</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Errors in Punctuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No comma after introductory adverbial clauses, participial, infinitive, or gerundial phrases</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Comma omitted before the coordinating conjunction</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Comma used instead of a semicolon or period (comma fault)</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Members of a series not separated (Note: Nearly half of these comprised omissions before the and preceding the final word in the series.)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Non-restrictive elements not set off by a comma</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Comma omitted where clearness demanded</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>its being inserted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The comma used unnecessarily</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>No punctuation after or around a transition expression</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Semicolon misused or omitted</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The dash misused</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table XVI
THE TWENTY MOST FREQUENTLY OCCURRING ERRORS IN USAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>Percentage of Errors in Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>You or they used indefinitely. (Note: in the revised study the 15.9 per cent was reduced to 11.2 per cent.)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>False diction (colloquialisms, malapropisms, etc.)</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Relative pronoun that omitted (Using Fowler's criteria, the percentage would be reduced to 1.0)</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mistakes in idiom (often involving the wrong preposition)</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wrong form in the past tense</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Disagreement between the pronoun and its antecedent in number</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Careless substitution of one word for another</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Failure to make a new sentence for a new thought</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Disagreement between a verb and its subject</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Pronoun has no antecedent, or antecedent is far removed</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Incomplete sentence: fragments</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Redundancy (have got, careless repetition of and, etc.)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Vague reference of pronoun to an idea (Note: use of the criteria of Marckwardt and Walcott would reduce this error to zero)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Omissions in the use of conjunction (whether, as, etc.)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Verb omitted from a sentence</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Change of tense within the paragraph</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Incomplete sentence consisting usually of verb phrases</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Dangling constructions (about half involved elliptical clauses)</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Incomplete sentence (consisting of an adjective clause)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Superfluous use of prepositions</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The errors shown in Table XVI emphasize that errors are specific. There is, however, an advantage in knowing what larger groups contain the most errors. Below will be given, first, the principal errors from main categories I to XIV with percentages (Table XVII); second, principal errors from sub-categories 1 to 47 with percentages (Table XVIII).

**Table XVII**

**PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS OCCURRING IN THE FIRST FIVE MAIN CATEGORIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of All Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>VIII Punctuation</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>XII Spelling</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>VII Lack of clear thinking</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>II Other Misuses of the Pronoun</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>X Capitalization</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These five categories constitute 84.6 per cent of all errors. Including the next category, the apostrophe (4.0 per cent), one finds that the leading six categories constitute almost 90 per cent of all errors.

The ten errors enumerated in Table XVIII constitute more than three-fourths (77.3 per cent) of all errors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name of Error</th>
<th>Percentage of all Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Errors in Punctuation</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. non-restrictive clauses not set off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. comma for clearness, especially in setting off participial and paren-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thetical expressions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. comma used unnecessarily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. colon, semicolon, exclamatory marks, and dash misused or omitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. interrogative mark omitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. comma around an opposite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. comma setting off a dependent clause or phrase out of its natural order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. comma around a quotation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Misspelled words other than wrong omission or inclusion of the hyphen,</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>incorrect spelling of compound words; to, too, two, their, there,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they're, other homonyms, confusion of ie and ei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Independent clauses of a compound sentence not separated</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>No punctuation after an introductory expression</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Other cases of failure to express clear thinking:</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. false diction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. mistakes in idiom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. careless substitution of one word for another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. dangling constructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. meaningless sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Members of a series not separated</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>You or they used indefinitely</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Compound words incorrectly written: hyphen omitted</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Improper use of capitals</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Wrong form of possessive nouns</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The criteria of correctness that this investigator used in this study to pick out errors were the criteria of Poerster and Steadman at the formal level of usage. In the early 1930's Marckwardt and Walcott, basing their work on that of S.A. Leonard and H.Y. Moffett, attempted to determine the following standards of English: archaic, dialect, American colloquial, colloquial, American literary, and literary. Pooley also has drawn up a list of standards, based on the studies mentioned above, applicable to high school students. What would be the effect on the number and kinds of errors if, instead of the traditional criteria, Pooley's criteria were used to determine the errors of the grade 12 level? The application of Pooley's criteria had the effect of reducing the total number of errors from 4389 to 4142 or 5.6 per cent. The greatest reductions occurred in the use of the pronoun and the comma. The implications for teachers of the Leonard, Marckwardt and Walcott, and Pooley criteria are summarized below.

1. A comma before and in a series is not necessary.

(Fowler objects because of the possibility of ambiguity.)

---

17 Poerster and Steadman, Writing and Thinking.
20 Pooley, Teaching English Usage.
2. You may be used as an indefinite pronoun when no change of person is involved.

3. The relative pronoun that may be omitted in most cases.

4. Have got may be used.

5. A pronoun may be used to refer to a preceding idea.

6. In certain constructions like may be used as a conjunction.

7. The dangling construction is permissible when the meaning is clear.

8. Such expressions as "the reason was because . . ." are permissible.

9. No objection should be taken to the use of the split infinitive unless awkwardness results from its use.

10. The subjunctive mood exists in English only in the verb to be and is fast disappearing. Teachers should not insist on its use.

11. Use of the accusative case with the gerund is permissible.

12. Indefinite pronouns, particularly everybody may be plural when the sense demands it.

It is evident that teachers would save considerable time in teaching English if they did not insist that students master the preceding aspects of usage.
Summary and General Conclusions

An examination of 599 paragraphs, with a total of 96,894 words written by British Columbia grade 12 students, revealed a total of 4,389 errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The average number of errors per paragraph was 7.4; per sentence, .74; and per 10,000 words, .453. One error was made in 22.1 words. Errors in usage constituted 1006, or 22.3 per cent; in punctuation 2018, or 46.1 per cent; spelling 881, or 20.1 per cent. Other errors, made up of errors in capitalization, 195 or 4.5 per cent; those involving the use of the apostrophe, 184, or 4.2 per cent; comprising omissions and miscellaneous errors, 105, or 2.4 per cent, made up the other 11.1 per cent. It is evident, therefore, that errors in punctuation accounted for more than twice the errors in either usage or spelling.

Previous investigators, as well as this one, recognized that errors were very specific. Consequently, errors in usage, punctuation and spelling were grouped separately to determine the most frequent errors in each of these main groups. Then 104 kinds of errors in the three groups were ranked together to discover the most frequently occurring of the 104 errors. Furthermore the criteria of Pooley and Marckwardt and Walcott were applied, as well as the criteria of more traditional grammarians, to discover the extent to which errors would be reduced when the more modern criteria were used.
Spelling Errors (XII)

Because spelling constituted the second largest group of errors, that is 881 out of 4389 or 20.1 per cent, the writer felt that an analysis of these errors should be made to find out whether or not any underlying principles could be discovered to account for the errors that students make in spelling. (Errors in capitalization, discussed in a previous chapter, were not included in spelling errors.) Accordingly, spelling errors were grouped into four main parts: Part One includes errors involving consonants; Part Two, vowels; Part Three, compound and hyphenated (hyphenated is used by Fowler) words, and Part Four, other misspelled words. Table XIX summarizes the number of errors in each part, gives the percentage of errors of each part, and the rank order.

The four parts shown in Table XIX were subdivided into twenty-seven groups as shown in Tables XX and XXI. Table XX shows the number of errors in each of the twenty-seven groups, percentage of total errors in each group and the rank order. Table XXI gives the same information as Table XX except that the twenty-seven categories are arranged in rank-order of decreasing frequency. In the detailed analysis of the errors in spelling shown in Appendix C misspelled words were grouped under appropriate subheadings. If the same error was repeated by a student, the error was counted in this chapter as one error. The symbols representing the various vowel and elided sounds are those used in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (C.O.D).
Table XIX

FOUR MAIN PARTS OF ERRORS IN SPELLING, NUMBER OF ERRORS IN EACH PART, AND THE RANK-ORDER OF THE PARTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part Two: Errors involving vowels</th>
<th>Number of Errors</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>347</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part One: Errors involving consonants</th>
<th>Number of Errors</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part Three: Compound and hyphened words</th>
<th>Number of Errors</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>206</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part Four: Other classes of misspelled words</th>
<th>Number of Errors</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL                                         | 835*             | 100.0    |      |

* This total differs slightly from the 881 shown in the previous part of this study for the following reasons: (1) In the previous part of this study all errors in spelling made by every student were tabulated; whereas in this part of the study an error repeated in the same paragraph was counted as one error. (2) A word that involved two or more kinds of mistakes in spelling was grouped under each of the appropriate headings in the following tabulations.
A number in parentheses following misspelled words indicates the number of students who misspelled the words. (Appendix C)

Table XX

CATEGORIES OF ERRORS IN SPELLING, THE NUMBER OF ERRORS IN EACH CATEGORY, PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS, AND RANK OF EACH CATEGORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part One: Errors Involving Consonants</th>
<th>No. of Errors</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Omission of one of a pair of consonants</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Incorrect doubling of the consonant</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Incorrect inclusion or exclusion of consonants in the tch, ch, qu, and ck, sounds</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Incorrect spelling resulting from confusion of s, z, sh, ce, itious, etc, sounds</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Confusion of v, and f sounds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Misspelling of j, g, and dg, sounds</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Misuses of gh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Consonants incorrectly omitted, included, or substituted for others</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX Transposition of r in er, ro, re, sounds</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part</td>
<td>No. of Errors</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Incorrect substitution of one vowel for another, or omission of a vowel, especially in indeterminate sounds</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Misspelling of a or ã sounds</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Misspelling of ø sound</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>Misspelling ø sound</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>Misspelling of ı sound, particularly by confusing y, i, ie, and ies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>Mute e incorrectly included</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Mute e incorrectly omitted</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>Misspelling of or, ar and or sounds, including their, they're, your, you're</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>Misspelling of ır sounds, excluding your and you're</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>Misspelling of es, aw, ow, ı, oo, u, and u sounds, including to, two, too (21)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX</td>
<td>Incorrect inclusion of a vowel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table XX - continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part Three: Compound and Hyphened Words</th>
<th>No. of Errors</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXI Words incorrectly joined to form compound words</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII Components of words unnecessarily separated</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII Hyphen omitted from a hyphened word</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>206</strong></td>
<td><strong>24.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>III</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part Four: Other Classes of Misspelled Words</th>
<th>No. of Errors</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXIV Errors involving articles and and</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV Substitution of a figure for a written number</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI Use of &quot;modernized&quot; spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII Miscellaneous</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>IV</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL, Groups One, Two, Three and Four: 835
An examination of Tables XIX and XX shows that by far the largest number of errors in spelling, over 18 per cent, involve hyphenated words. As Fowler explains, the usage concerning hyphenated words is so variable that it is little wonder that students have difficulty with them. However, the number of errors might be considerably reduced if students were taught Fowler's principles governing the formation of hyphenated words. (See Appendix C, Section XXIII.) An examination of the partial list of misspelled hyphenated words shows that many students have no knowledge whatsoever concerning the principles governing the formation of this kind of word. If compound words that have been incorrectly separated are included in this category, the percentage is increased by 4.3 per cent to 22.7 per cent. Thus hyphenated and compound words account for well over one error in five of the total number of misspelled words.

Consonants, too, caused a lot of trouble, accounting for 28 per cent of the errors. Consonants incorrectly omitted included, or substituted for other consonants accounted for 10.8 per cent of the misspelling of such words as again(t) and ground. This kind of error appears to indicate slovenly pronunciation, as does the substitution of one consonant for another as in employeer, and taught for thought. Failure to double consonants that are indigenous to the word accounted for more than twice the errors resulting from failure to double the consonant upon adding a prefix. Failure to double the consonant totalled more than 6.2 per cent. On the other
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Errors</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXIII</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Number of Errors</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV Errors involving articles and and</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII Misspelling of e sound</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV Misspelling of i sound, particularly by confusing y, i, ie, and ies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI Words incorrectly joined to form compound words</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Incorrect inclusion or exclusion of consonants in the tch, ch, qu, and ck sounds</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII Miscellaneous</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Misspelling of j, g, and dg sounds</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI Misspelling of a or ø sounds</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX Transposition of r in er, re, re sounds</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII Misspelling of or sounds, excluding your and you're, which are included in XVII</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Confusion of v and f sounds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV Substitution of a figure for a written number</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Misuses of gh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI Use of &quot;modernized&quot; spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX Incorrect inclusion of a vowel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hand, incorrect doubling of consonants, as in across, becoming, accounted for 4.2 per cent of the errors. Errors involving doubling of consonants therefore involved 10.4 per cent of the mistakes in spelling.

Errors involving vowels constituted 41.5 per cent of the mistakes made in spelling. Of this percentage, incorrect substitution of one vowel for another, or omission of a vowel (audable, deserve, literature), accounted for 10 per cent of the errors in spelling. Inclusion of the mute e unnecessarily (7.4 per cent) and omission of mute e (3.7 per cent) (abhore, before), constituted nearly 11 per cent of the mistakes. Another 14.5 per cent of the errors involved misspelling of the sounds oo, aw, ow, o, oo, u, oo, u, (5.5), er, ar, and or, (4.8), e (4.1, e (2.2), i (1.9).

Although a large number of the errors resulted from poor pronunciation, probably 50 per cent (excluding hyphenated words from this figure) resulted from inconsistencies in English spelling; that is, lack of a consistent method of representing the sound symbols by corresponding written symbols.

Table XXII lists twenty words that were most frequently misspelled, and Table XXIII lists words that were misspelled by at least two students.
### Table XXII

**WORDS MOST FREQUENTLY MISSPELLED**

( THE NUMBER IN PARENTHESES SHOWS THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO MISSPELLED EACH WORD. THE ORIGINAL MISSPELLINGS, WHERE APPLICABLE, HAVE BEEN RETAINED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word(s)</th>
<th>Students Who Misspelled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to, too, two</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lightening</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a (for an)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an (for and)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>didn't</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their, there, they're</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h omitted from wh as in where</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>english</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recieve</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>untill</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your, you're</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lo(o)se</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>privilege</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qui(e)tely</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rember</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beleive</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occasionally</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stretch</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U(u)iversity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table XXIII

**WORDS MISSPELLED BY AT LEAST TWO STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word(s)</th>
<th>Students Who Misspelled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ad (advertisement)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brilliant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desireable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don (dawn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everthing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>french</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mease (mess)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once (ones)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prospective (perspective)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rythm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seperated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>than (then)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>threw (through)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Referring to Table XXII one will notice that the homonyms to, too, two, their, there, they're, your, you're, were misspelled by 36 of 300 students or 12 per cent, though this does not take into consideration the fact that one student may have misspelled more than one of the words listed; sixteen students or 5.3 per cent made errors in near homonyms: where, lo(o)se, qui(e)tely. That is, more than 17 per cent of the students made errors in spelling involving homonyms or near homonyms.

It should be noted that many students wrote a descriptive paragraph on a storm. This fact would account for the large number of errors in the word lightning.

Eight students, or about 3 per cent confused ie and ei in receive and believe.

Of course, not all of the 300 students used all of the words listed, consequently one may conclude that the proportion of errors made in spelling these words would have been much higher if all of the students had been compelled to spell them.
In this chapter an attempt will be made to ascertain whether or not there is a significant relationship between errors made in English usage and the following factors:

A. Intelligence (scholastic aptitude)
B. Sex
C. Socio-economic background
D. Interest in English
E. Choice of topic
F. University Program or General Program
G. Number of words written in paragraphs
H. Marks given by teachers to paragraphs

The first five of the factors listed were included in an attempt to find out why students make errors in paragraphs. In each of the studies which this investigator read not more than one of these factors was dealt with by previous investigators. Yet it seems obvious that no one factor exerts an effect exclusive of the others in influencing students in making errors in English. Furthermore, it is difficult, if not impossible, to consider each of these factors as a discrete influence, each acting independently of the other. For example,
a student of high scholastic ability might come from a home in which the parents are well-educated. One or both parents may be a member of a professional or managerial group. Does the student make few errors because he is intelligent or because of his socio-economic background? Some factors could not be considered in a study such as this. Some of these might be the student's feelings as he wrote the examination, the school course of study in English from grade one to grade twelve (the student might have come from outside of British Columbia), and the methods of teaching English. What this investigator has done in this chapter is to select subjectively those factors which, it is reasonable to suppose, might influence a student in making errors in English. He realizes that the factors may not be causitive but believes that if a significant association can be shown between errors in English and any one or all of the first five factors, one or all of the factors may be causitive or at least reflect a cause or causes common to two or more of them.

Considering the last three parts of the investigation; that is, F, G, and H, this investigator wishes to determine whether or not students who chose the University Programme made fewer or more errors than those who chose the General Programme. Such a choice is obviously not a factor in making errors, but is very likely a reflection of such factors as scholastic ability, socio-economic background, interest, as well as others previously
mentioned but not considered in this study. Since the number of errors in each paragraph varies somewhat, one might expect the number of errors to vary as the length of the paragraph. This variation, however, does not necessarily occur. Consequently it is of some importance to find out whether or not most of the errors occur in, say, the first hundred words of a relatively long paragraph as well as throughout the entire length of a shorter paragraph. If it turns out that most errors so occur, then the choice of the paragraph as a unit (as assigned on the Language 40, June, 1953, University Entrance Examination) on which to base various aspects of this investigation will have been justified. Part G, "Marks given by teachers to paragraphs" was included to see if the markers took usage, punctuation, and spelling into consideration when assigning a mark to the paragraph.

This investigator used two main statistical methods to arrive at the results of his investigations. The association of errors with: intelligence (A), numbers of words written on the paragraph (G) and marks given by teachers (H) was determined by finding the coefficient of correlation between these elements and the numbers of errors in the paragraphs. Four of the other parts of the investigation could be dichotomized (B -- sex: boys versus girls; C -- socio-economic background: professional and managerial versus skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers; D -- interest in English versus non-interest, and F -- University Programme versus General Programme. Consequently, for purposes of statistical treatment, the null hypothesis was used; that is, the hypothesis that no
difference exists between the means of errors found in each branch of the dichotomy. Where the investigator found a difference, he tested for the significance of the difference and determined the level of confidence at which the null hypothesis could be rejected. He also tested the significance of the coefficients of correlation in parts A, F, and G.

Part E, "Choice of Topic," was included to find out whether or not the student's interest in a topic as reflected in his choice of the topic on which he wrote tended to increase or decrease the number of errors he made.

A. Relationship Between Errors and Intelligence

Is there a relationship between errors made in English usage and intelligence or scholastic aptitude as measured by a standardized intelligence test? It would appear that few investigations have been made of the relationship between intelligence and errors in usage. John Paul Leonard cites an investigation by Rodgers, who concluded that there was no relationship.

The scholastic aptitude scores that were used in this study were those obtained from the Transfer of Record cards on file with the Department of Education of British Columbia. The names of the scholastic aptitude tests were not recorded on the Transfer of Record cards; nor were the results of the scholastic aptitude tests for forty of the three hundred students.

Except as noted, in this and the following analyses the errors made by a student included the total number of errors that he made on both paragraphs that he wrote.

To determine the coefficient of correlation, $r_{xy}$, the sums of scores, squares, and cross-products were obtained by using the correlation chart and substituting the values thus obtained in the formula:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{f_{xy} x'y' - (f_x x') (f_y y')}{\left(\frac{f_x x'^2}{N} - (f_x x')^2\right) \left(\frac{f_y y'^2}{N} - (f_y y')^2\right)}$$

$$= \frac{-580 - \frac{140 \times 416}{260}}{\left(\frac{3006 - (140)^2}{260}\right)} \left(\frac{3050 - (416)^2}{260}\right)$$

$$= -0.304$$

As might be expected, the correlation is negative; that is, as scholastic ability increases, the number of errors made decreases. Moreover, the relationship between intelligence scores and errors in usage appears to be significant. The coefficient of determination ($r^2$) is .09; that is, scholastic aptitude accounts for 9 per cent variance in errors in usage.

Although the correlation is low, it is significant as indicated by the "test for the significance of $r". For

258 degrees of freedom (N-2), $r = .125$ at the 5 per cent level of significance, and $r = .164$ at the 1 per cent level. Since $r = .304$ in this analysis, it is apparent that the hypothesis of zero correlation may be rejected and that in this group of students, students with a relatively high scholastic ability made fewer errors on their paragraphs than pupils with a lower intelligence score.

B. Relationship Between Errors and Sex of Student

Do girls or boys make the greater number of errors in usage? In her study "The Effect of Locality on Language Errors" Sunne\(^3\) compared the errors made by boys and girls in grade 8 and found that the average number of form errors made by the boys was 12, and that of girls was 8.5. Boys averaged 2.5 syntactical errors and girls 2.1.

In this study the mean number of errors made by 119 boys was 16.73, and by 176 girls, 13.41 on both paragraphs each wrote. Table XXIV shows means, standard deviations, and standard errors of the mean.

The standard error of the mean difference ($\bar{\Delta}m_d$) is 1.064 and $t$ is 3.12. For 293 degrees of freedom $t = 2.59$ at the 1 per cent level or less; consequently $t = 3.12$ is highly significant and the hypothesis of no difference may be rejected.

---

Table XXIV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (σ)</th>
<th>Standard Errors of the Means (σ/√n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>16.73</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From the records the sex of five students could not be determined

The fiducial limits of the population mean difference are: 16.73 - 13.41 (± 2.76), that is 6.08 or .56. Therefore the population mean difference at the 1 per cent level of confidence is within the limits 6.08 and .56. Consequently one may conclude that girls make fewer errors than boys.

C. Relationship Between Errors and Socio-Economic Background

Is there a relationship between the socio-economic background of the student and the number of errors he makes in English usage? No research on this problem appears to have been made, although Bradford found that there was a greater relationship between an adult's occupation and errors in usage than there was between his formal education and errors made in usage.

In order to answer this question the vocation of the student's father was taken as the most significant single factor in determining a student's socio-economic status.\(^5\) The occupations of the fathers (in three cases, mothers) of 148 students were grouped according to the classification of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.\(^6\) (Occupations of 152

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Numbers</th>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Number of Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-0 to 0-9</td>
<td>Professional, Semi-Professional, Managerial, and Official</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-0 to 1-9</td>
<td>Clerical and Sales, Sales, and Kindred Occupations</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-0 to 2-9</td>
<td>Domestic, Personal and Protective Services, Building Service, Workers, and Porters</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-0 to 3-9</td>
<td>Agricultural, Horticultural, and Kindred Occupations, Fishery, Forestry, Hunting, and Trapping</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,5,6,7,8,9</td>
<td>Skilled, Semi-skilled, and Unskilled Occupations</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong> 148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


7 Code Numbers according to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.
were not available owing to incomplete returns of the questionnaire sent out by this investigator.) For purposes of this investigation, five main groups were formed and the errors made by the children in each group were tabulated in a frequency distribution. This occupational grouping is shown in Table XXV.

In order to accentuate possible differences between groups, the groups that contained the largest numbers of fathers and, at the same time, constituted the extremes of the occupational classification were compared as to language errors made by their children. These were groups 0-0 to 0-9 (professional, semi-professional, managerial, and official), and 4,5,6,7,8,9 (skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled). Table XXVI shows the medians, means, standard deviations, and standard errors of the means of errors made by children of these two occupational groups.

Table XXVI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>χ</th>
<th>χ̅m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-0 to 0-9*</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,5,6,7,8,9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Group 0-0 to 0-3 (professional only), with N = 20, had a median score of 7.5.
The standard error of the mean difference, $\bar{m}_d$, is 1.759, and $t$ is 2.062. For 98 degrees of freedom $t$ is 1.984 at the 5 per cent level; therefore the hypothesis of no difference may be rejected at the 5 per cent level. The fiducial limits of the population are:

$$x = \pm t \left( \bar{m}_d \right)$$

$$= \pm 1.759 \times 1.984$$

$$= \pm 3.49$$

Therefore at the 5 per cent level of confidence we may infer that the population mean difference is within the limits

$$3.63 + 3.49 = 7.12 \text{ and}$$

$$3.63 - 3.49 = .14$$

As has been shown above, girls tend to make fewer errors than boys. To determine whether or not this factor appeared to act in favour of the professional group, the means for girls and boys in this group were determined. The results are shown in Table XXVII

Table XXVII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total Errors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>11.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>11.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident from the figures in Table XXVII that the presence of girls in the professional group has not invalidated the conclusion reached above that children of professional people make fewer errors in English usage than those in the skilled and semi-skilled groups. It would appear that the mean of errors made by boys in groups other than professional and semi-professional is even greater than that shown in Table XXVI.

D. Relationship Between Errors and Interest Shown in English

That interest in a school subject is a factor in determining a student's success in that subject has been known to teachers for a long time, but this writer could find no evidence that any work related to errors in English and interest in the subject had been done. What part, if any, does interest in English and related subjects play in determining the number of errors a student makes in his written English? To answer this question this investigator compared errors made by students who chose English, social studies, and a language as their majors with errors made by students who chose science, mathematics, industrial arts, home economics, commercial, and, or, art as majors. In other words, the student's choice of majors was used as the criterion for determining interest.

Table XXVIII shows the number of choices on each subject listed by students as their majors. There will, of course, be some overlapping of English and non-English subjects.
Table XXVIII
STUDENTS' CHOICES OF MAJOR SUBJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of Choices</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English and Related Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Social Language</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-English Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Arts</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-English Subjects (continued)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Art</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XXIX shows means, standard deviations, and standard errors of the mean of errors made in English by each group of students.

The standard error of the mean difference, \( \overline{m_d} \), is .665 and \( t \) is 2.09. The number of degrees of freedom is \( 312 + 384 - 2 = 694 \). At the 5 per cent level \( t \) is 1.965. Therefore the observed value of \( t \) is quite significant. The fiducial limits of the parameter at the 5 per cent level are:

\[
\pm (1.965) (0.665) = \pm 1.306
\]

and the population mean difference lies within the limits

\[
1.39 \pm 1.306 \text{ or } 2.70 \text{ and } 0.08
\]
Table XXIX

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND STANDARD ERRORS OF THE MEANS OF THE ENGLISH AND NON-ENGLISH CHOICES OF MAJORS AND NUMBERS OF CHOICES IN EACH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Choices</th>
<th>Mean Number of Errors</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Standard Error of the Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English and Related Subjects</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>12.61</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English Subjects</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If, instead of the number of choices, the number of students who indicated what majors they were taking is used, N = 269 and the number of degrees of freedom is 267. For N=269, t=1.969 at the 5 per cent level of significance. Again the hypothesis of no difference in the means may be rejected. Consequently, it is safe to conclude that interest in school subjects is a significant factor in making errors in English usage.

E. Choice of Topic

Did the student's choice of topic influence the number of his errors in English? Some, possibly most, teachers believe that if a student chooses his own topic, such a choice being evidence of the student's interest in the topic, he will make fewer errors than if the teacher arbitrarily assigns a topic for a paragraph or essay. To this writer's knowledge, no investigation of this aspect of writing English has been made. This writer will attempt to determine whether or not students who wrote the June, 1953, English Language 40 Examination made fewer errors on the topics they were interested in than those in which they were not interested.

The topics, previously listed in Chapter VI, are listed again below.
Students were asked to write two paragraphs: one chosen from Group A and the other from either of Groups B or C. Thus the student did not have a completely free choice of his own but had to choose two of nine topics. The student's first choice was quite limited: he had a choice of one of three topics. He had greater freedom to make his second choice: one of six topics. We must assume that he chose from each group the topic in which he was most interested and on which he felt he was best able to write. It would be very difficult to separate these two aspects of a choice and no attempt has been made to do so.
This investigator's argument is this: since the students had a wider choice for their second than for their first topic, if they made fewer errors per unit number of words written on the second topic than the first, it is possible that the reduced number of errors is the result of the greater interest shown in the second topic. There are a number of disadvantages to this method. It is quite possible that some students were less interested in all of the second set of topics (Groups B and C) than in the first. There is no way of determining this aspect of the student's attitude from the data at hand. Furthermore, the second choice paragraph was the last question on the examination. Undoubtedly, some students felt hurried, although of three hundred students in the sample, only one failed to complete the examination; that is, he omitted one paragraph. In addition, the factors previously examined influence the number of errors made; that is, sex, choice of high school graduation program, socio-economic background, intelligence, and interest in English. Since the previous analyses showed that sex and choice of high school program appeared to affect numbers of errors most, the influence of these factors will be considered in the analysis below.

Table XXX shows the number of paragraphs written on each of nine topics, the median number of words written on each topic, and the median number of errors made by various groups of students on each type of paragraph written. As information as to sex and program was not available for all students, 570 of the 599 paragraphs were considered. It should be pointed out
that all students were required to write only one expository paragraph. Except for two students, all did. Students then had a choice of writing an artistic or a narrative paragraph. Consequently, it would be in order to compare errors made on the expository paragraphs with those made on the descriptive or narrative paragraphs.

If a group of students shows fewer errors on one topic than it does on another, there is a possibility that the lower number of errors is the result of a greater interest in the topic upon which the students wrote. It should, however, be kept in mind that the factors of intelligence and socio-economic background are not excluded. Therefore, in this analysis, one cannot be certain that their role in affecting the medians is not important.

An inspection of Table XXX will show that nearly every group that wrote the expository paragraphs (A1, A2, A3) reduced its errors when it wrote descriptive paragraph B2. The only exceptions were General Programme students who wrote on topics A2 and A3, and University Programme boys who wrote on topic A2. (As relatively few students wrote on topics B1, B3, C1, and C3, errors made by these groups are being ignored in this part of the study. It might be pointed out, however, that the students as a whole who wrote descriptive paragraphs made fewer errors than those who wrote expository and narrative paragraphs.) One must conclude that students who wrote a descriptive paragraph made fewer errors because they were more interested in the topic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>A-Exposition</th>
<th>B-Artistic Description</th>
<th>C-Narration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1 A2 A3</td>
<td>B1 B2 B3</td>
<td>C1 C2 C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Paragraphs Written</td>
<td>48 117 118</td>
<td>34 112 35</td>
<td>27 63 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Number of Words</td>
<td>157 157 144(157)</td>
<td>152(157) 145(157) 140(157)</td>
<td>173(157) 185(157) 184(157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>8.1 6.8 7.0(7.7)</td>
<td>5.0(5.2) 5.5(6.0) 6.5(5.9)</td>
<td>8.2(7.0) 8.0(6.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>6.6 6.6 6.4(7.0)</td>
<td>5.1(5.5)</td>
<td>8.1(6.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>9.1 7.0 8.2(9.0)</td>
<td>6.0(6.5)</td>
<td>8.2(7.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.P. Students</td>
<td>10.2 8.5 8.0(8.7)</td>
<td>8.6(9.3)</td>
<td>9.1(7.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.P. Students</td>
<td>6.1 5.1 5.5(6.0)</td>
<td>4.6(5.0)</td>
<td>6.7(5.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.P. (Girls)</td>
<td>5.5 5.5 5.4(4.9)</td>
<td>4.2(4.5)</td>
<td>6.2(5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.P. (Boys)</td>
<td>6.6 4.8 5.9(5.4)</td>
<td>5.0(5.3)</td>
<td>8.5(7.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.P. (Girls)</td>
<td>9.6 8.3 7.2(7.8)</td>
<td>8.1(8.8)</td>
<td>9.1(7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.P. (Boys)</td>
<td>11.5 9.6 8.9(9.7)</td>
<td>8.5(9.2)</td>
<td>8.2(7.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medians on Paragraphs on:
- Exposition: 7.1
- Description: 5.5
- Narration: 7.4

Median: All Paragraphs (570) 6.65
or that it presented fewer problems in usage, punctuation, and spelling, than the expository or narrative paragraphs.

As between errors in expository paragraphs and those in narration, somewhat more errors occurred in the narrative paragraphs. This is true even when the error-count is compared on the basis of the same number of words. Of particular groups, boys made fewer errors on the narrative than on the expository, as did both boys and girls on the General Programme. That is, those groups of students who generally made most of the errors in all of the paragraphs as shown previously in this study, made fewer errors, generally, in narrative paragraphs than in expository. One might conclude that these groups of students felt more interest in and more 'at home' with a topic with which they could identify themselves than they did in the expository paragraph. It would appear, therefore, that students tend to make fewer errors on descriptive paragraphs than on expository or narrative paragraphs. Some groups of students, notably General Programme boys and girls make fewer errors on narrative paragraphs than they do on expository or descriptive paragraphs.

F. Relationship Between Errors and Type of High School Programme Chosen: University or General

In British Columbia, secondary students may choose one of two programs: the University Programme or the General Programme. The first permits a student to enter university and restricts the student in his choice of subjects; higher passing grades are
required. The General Programme permits a student to take a larger number of optional courses than does the University Programme. It is the purpose of this section to determine whether or not there is a significant difference between the number of errors in English made by students on the University Programme and those made by students on the General Programme. As some students attended coaching and night schools, they did not indicate what program they were on; consequently the total number of students considered is 289 instead of 300.

Table XXXI shows the number of students on each program, means of errors in English usage made by each group, standard deviations, and standard errors of the means of errors made by the students.

Table XXXI

NUMBERS OF STUDENTS ON THE UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME, THOSE ON THE GENERAL PROGRAMME, MEANS OF ERRORS IN ENGLISH MADE BY EACH GROUP, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, STANDARD ERRORS OF THE MEAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Standard Error of the Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Programme</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>.648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Programme</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>17.55</td>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>.867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The standard error of the mean difference is 1.082 and \( t = 4.804 \). For 287 degrees of freedom \( t \) is 2.592 at the 1 percent level. It is evident that \( t = 4.804 \) is highly significant
and that we may reject the hypothesis of no difference in the means. Consequently it is safe to conclude that students on the University Programme make fewer errors in English than those on the General Programme.

G. Relationship Between Errors and Number of Words Written

Does the number of errors made in the paragraphs increase proportionally with the increase in the number of words written in the paragraphs? As the numbers of errors in paragraphs have been used in the previous statistical calculations regardless of the length of the paragraphs, the answer to the question with which this paragraph began might affect the answers found previously. Although students were advised to write paragraphs of from 100 to 150 words, some students wrote more, some fewer, words. As shown in Table VIII, Chapter VI, the average number of words for all paragraphs is 161.7; the average for the expository paragraph, 158.5; for the descriptive paragraph, 149.4, and for the narrative paragraph, 192.0. The average number of errors in each type of paragraph was 7.4 for all paragraphs, 7.6 for expository, 6.7 for descriptive, and 7.8 for narrative; that is, the type that averaged the fewest words also averaged the fewest errors. The narrative paragraphs, however, showed an increase of 28.4 per cent of words written over the descriptive paragraph but had only a 16.4 per cent increase in the number of errors. The expository paragraph had an increase of 6.7 per cent of words written over the descriptive
paragraph and 13.4 per cent more errors. From these figures it would appear that an increase in the length of the paragraph leads to an increase in the number of errors per paragraph -- a not unexpected deduction. The figures show, however, that the increase in the number of errors is certainly not proportional to the increase in the number of words.

In order to determine more accurately the relationship between numbers of errors made and numbers of words written on paragraphs the following coefficients of correlation were found:

1. Between errors and numbers of words written on all paragraphs (N = 599): \( r_{ep} = .574 \)

Applying the test for the significance of \( r \) when \( N-2=597 \), we find that \( r = .083 \) (approximately) at the 5 per cent level of significance, and \( r = .125 \) at the 1 per cent level. We may conclude, therefore, that \( r_{ep} = .574 \) is highly significant. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination is .33; or 33 per cent; consequently, we may say that there is an increase in the number of errors with the numbers of words written but the rate of increase of errors is not proportional to the rate of increase of words written in all of the paragraphs.

2. Between errors and number of words written on the expository paragraphs (N = 297): \( r_{ec} = .235 \)

For 295 degrees of freedom, \( r_{ec} = .113 \) at the 5 per cent level of significance and \( r_{ec} = .148 \) at the 1 per cent level of significance. Therefore \( r = .235 \) is significant. The coefficient of determination is .056 or 5.6 per cent.
3. Between errors and numbers of words written on descriptive and narrative paragraphs (N = 302): \( r_{ed} = .222 \)

For 300 degrees of freedom \( r_{ed} = .113 \) at the 5 per cent level of significance and \( r_{ed} = .148 \) at the 1 per cent level. Hence \( r_{ed} = .222 \) may be regarded as significant. The coefficient of determination is .049 or 4.9 per cent.

As there is a large number of cases in each of the relationships, one may conclude that the relationships are significant, and that an increase in the length of a paragraph leads to additional errors being made, but the increase is not in proportion to the number of words written. Consequently, it is unlikely that this factor invalidates the conclusions reached in the previous statistical analyses. Indeed, it is reasonable to suppose, though not statistically determined in this study, that students with high IQ's wrote longer paragraphs than those with low IQ's; that girls wrote more than boys; that those especially interested in English wrote more than those less interested; that those on the University Programme wrote more than those on the General Programme, and perhaps, those with a superior socio-economic background wrote more than those with an inferior socio-economic background. Consequently the first named group of students in each of the previously mentioned cases had a greater chance of making errors than the group mentioned second. But we have seen in the statistical analyses on the previous pages that the first named groups made fewer errors than the second. Therefore it would appear that the length of the paragraphs under consideration in this study would not alter the results significantly.
H. Relationship Between Errors and Marks Given to Paragraphs

In assigning a subjective mark to a paragraph teachers undoubtedly consider, consciously or unconsciously, several factors. Some of these are organization of ideas, sentence structure, diction, use of figurative language, correctness of usage, punctuation, and spelling. An attempt will be made in this study to ascertain the degree to which marks on the paragraphs reflected errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling. The coefficient of correlation was found between the numbers of errors in the paragraphs and the total mark given on both paragraphs \((N = 300)\). It was found that \( r = -0.202 \). As \( r = 0.113 \) and \( 0.148 \) at the 5 per cent and 1 per cent levels of significance respectively, for \( N = 300 \), one may conclude that \( r = -0.202 \) is significant and that teachers do take into consideration usage when marking paragraphs.

To arrive at a more valid conclusion one would have to have teachers mark paragraphs of equal quality (or mark copies of the same paragraph), differing only in the number of errors in each paragraph.

Summary and Conclusions: Chapter VIII

It is, of course, difficult to separate factors of intelligence, sex, socio-economic background, interest, choice of topic, and choice of school program from one another. For example, a highly intelligent boy may make numerous errors in
English because he lacks interest in the subject, whereas a less intelligent girl may make fewer errors because she is interested in English or, perhaps, is more conscientious than the boy. A student's home background may influence his use of language more than any of the other factors previously mentioned. However, considering the three hundred students as a group, one finds that the coefficient of correlation between numbers of errors and scholastic ability is -.304 and that the coefficient of determination is .09. For a group as large as the sample considered here, these figures are quite significant. That is, one may expect that in a large, randomly selected group of grade twelve students, the more intelligent make fewer errors than the less intelligent. One would expect such a correlation since the ability to learn is closely associated with scholastic ability. Indeed, one might expect a considerably higher correlation. However, there are several reasons why this might not be so. Undoubtedly other factors play a role as important as, or more important than intelligence in learning language. A child learns his language by imitation and habit formation at an age where the ability to learn language is highly developed, say, between the ages of one to six. By the time the child is six he has acquired a large vocabulary and, more important, the language patterns of his cultural group. Part of the child's education consists of reinforcing those patterns of speech that are considered socially acceptable and eliminating those that are considered socially unacceptable. The process is complicated by the child's having to master a new skill: writing.
This skill involves learning new symbols such as those for capitalization and punctuation that replace the intonation and pauses of the spoken word. A child acquires this new skill through the exercise of intelligence and practice. One would expect that a highly intelligent child, other factors being equal, would acquire the skills required to symbolize speech more rapidly than would a child of average or below average ability. A highly intelligent child would probably learn to eliminate socially unacceptable errors, too, more rapidly than a less intelligent child.

This investigator found that the mean of errors (11.17) made by students whose fathers were in the professional, semi-professional, managerial, and official occupations was significantly less than the mean of errors (14.8) made by students whose fathers were in the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. Students whose fathers were in the professional class had a median score of only 7.5 errors on both paragraphs. That intelligence of students and socio-economic background of students are closely related is well established. Consequently each of these factors would operate to reduce errors in English. The parents of such students would tend to use better than average English in the home, and during his speech habit forming years the child would have acquired correct patterns of speech. Furthermore, parents in this group would encourage their children to write correct English because they will have recognized its

value as a criterion of cultural and vocational status. Indeed, it is possible that a student's socio-economic background is the most important factor in determining whether or not a student writes and speaks correct or socially acceptable English.

The difference in the means of errors made by boys (16.73) and those made by girls (13.41) is highly significant. This difference is even more surprising when one realizes that the median IQ for the 110 boys in this group is 121 and that of the 150 girls is 114. The median for the whole group of 260 is 116. (The IQ's of forty students were not available.) Although the statistics previously cited indicate that intelligence and socio-economic background are significant in reducing errors in English, sex seems even more important. Girls possess certain qualities that tend to make them more careful in reducing errors. Luella Cole says, "In the separate tests that together make up a scale for measuring intelligence, girls make much superior scores in tests depending upon verbalism, and boys upon tests involving mathematics."9 Girls are generally more conscientious than boys in detailed work and more likely to want to please the teacher. Boys are more likely to try to relate their school work to their future vocation. An indication of this attempt on the part of the boys is shown by the fact that only twenty-four out of 101 boys chose English and Social studies as majors whereas fifty-eight out of 154 girls chose these majors. (The record did not show the choices of twenty-two

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girls or eighteen boys.) In other words, the percentage of girls showing an interest in English was 38.2 and the percentage of boys was 20.6. That is, very nearly twice as many girls as boys showed an interest in English if choice of majors is used as the criteria of interest. Because many girls plan to become secretaries it is likely that they, too, choose English as a preparatory vocational course. The large difference between boys and girls in means of errors in English therefore probably reflects a greater aptitude for language on the part of girls, their greater attention to detail, and their greater interest in English, not only for itself but for its vocational value -- a value that boys do not seem to realize.

In the last paragraph the role that interest in English played (as indicated by choice of majors) was discussed in connection with errors made by boys and girls. That interest in English probably plays a role whether the student is a boy or a girl is indicated in Table XXIX. The table shows that students interested in English made a mean of 12.61 errors per paragraph, whereas those who were not (as shown by their choice of majors) made 14.00 errors per paragraph. The difference in the means proved to be significant. This difference is probably accentuated by the greater interest girls show in English than that shown by boys. Undoubtedly, too, the student's socio-economic background would influence his interest in English as well as his choice of high school program. Parents who belong to the professional group read more and better understand
the value of writing error-free English than do parents in the unskilled vocational group. Whatever the reason, it seems that interest in English results in writing that is freer of errors than where greater interest in other subjects is shown.

As previously indicated in this study, all students who were not recommended had to write the June, 1953, English Language 40 University Entrance examination, regardless of their having chosen the University Programme or the General Programme. Table XXXI shows that students on the University Programme made a mean of 12.35 errors per paragraph, whereas those on the General Programme made a mean of 17.55 errors. The difference is highly significant statistically. Almost half of the pupils who wrote the examination were on the General Programme. The General Programme students probably took English 21 and 31 in grades 10 and 11; consequently they would not have been required to reach as high a standard in their written English as students on the University Programme. The motivation of the University Programme student would be greater, for without his English credits he would be refused entrance to a university.

An inspection of Table XXXII, showing occupations of fathers or mothers and choice of high school program by 148 boys and girls, may enable us to ascertain with some degree of confidence, the influence of father's occupation and sex of student upon the student's choice of high school program, and help account for the large difference in the means of errors between students on the University Programme and those on the General Programme.
Of forty students whose parents are in the professional group, thirty-three or 82.6 per cent chose the University Programme, while only seven, or 17.4 per cent, chose the General Programme. Seventeen girls chose the University Programme but only five chose the General Programme. We have seen previously that students whose fathers are in the professional group tend to make fewer errors than those whose parents are in the skilled group. We also saw (Table XXVII) that boys and girls from the professional group made nearly the same number of errors in each paragraph. It would appear therefore that the boys and girls on the General Programme from the skilled group, augmented by those from Group 3-0 to 3-9 (agriculture, etc.) made a considerably greater number of errors than did students in the Group 0-0 to 0-9 (professional, etc.)

Table XXXII

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING OF FATHERS OR MOTHERS, AND THE CHOICE OF HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMME THAT 148 BOYS AND GIRLS MADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Code Numbers</th>
<th>University Programme</th>
<th>General Programme</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-0 to 0-9</td>
<td>Professional, etc.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-0 to 1-9</td>
<td>Clerical, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-0 to 2-9</td>
<td>Services, etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-0 to 3-9</td>
<td>Agricultural, etc.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 9</td>
<td>Skilled, etc.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the relative frequency of errors in English usage, punctuation, and spelling made by grade 12 students in the two paragraphs that each student wrote on the June, 1953, British Columbia Junior Matriculation examination. The errors were classified within each of fourteen major categories. These categories were further divided to give a total of seventy-four classes. In order to record errors more specifically, some of the seventy-four classes were further subdivided to increase the number of classes to 104, excluding spelling errors. An attempt was made to discover a relationship between the incidence of errors in English and certain factors that possibly may have been associated with such errors. These factors were: the student's (a) intelligence (scholastic ability) as recorded on the student’s Transfer of Record card on file with the Department of Education; (b) sex, (c) socio-economic status as determined by the father's occupation; (d) interest in English as determined by the student's choice of major subjects; (e) the choice of topics on which the student wrote his paragraphs, and (f) the student's choice of high school program: University of General. In addition, the relationship was found between the number of errors students made and (a) the number of words written on the two paragraphs.
on the examination, and (b) the number of words written on (i) the expository paragraph and (ii) the descriptive or narrative paragraph. An attempt was also made to find out the extent to which teachers took into consideration errors in English in their marking. This was done by discovering the extent of the relationship between errors made in the paragraphs and the marks that teachers gave to the paragraphs.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, some terms that were used throughout the study were defined. **Paragraph** means all of the words that a student wrote on a topic. **Errors** are errors in English usage, punctuation, and spelling. **Grammar** means the set of oral and written symbols into which language is organized to convey meaning; **usage** means the socially acceptable arrangement and inflexion of such symbols.

No error counts of the kind made in this study have been made in Canada, but a number were made in the United States between 1915 and 1940. Investigators found that in the same general classifications errors occurred with the same relative frequency throughout the United States, that specific errors persisted throughout the grades, and that persistency of errors after grade 7 was probably the result of increased complexity in sentence structure. Since relatively few kinds of errors accounted for a large number of mistakes, teachers should concentrate on eliminating these few kinds of mistakes. Objective tests, researchers found, did not necessarily reflect numbers or kinds of mistakes that students made in their written work.
Attempts were made to determine the number of errors that students made compared with the number that they could have made. One investigator concluded that students did not feel responsible for good standards in English in subjects other than English.

However, there was some criticism of error counts. The classes into which errors were grouped were too general to be of much value; except for O'Rourke, few attempts were made to ascertain which kinds of errors were the most important—importance of errors was frequently equated to numbers of errors. Very, very few investigators tried to find out why students made errors. Furthermore, Pooley, as recently as 1957, said that schools and textbooks have taken little cognizance of the results of research in language made during the past forty years.

Using such authorities as Fowler, Pooley, S.A.Leonard, Moffett, Marckwardt and Walcott, Foerster and Steadman, Perrin, and Evans and Evans, this investigator tried to arrive at a definition for "correct usage" applicable to the grade 12 level. Although he had used the criteria of Foerster and Steadman at the formal level of usage to pick out the errors in the paragraphs, this writer adjusted his error count in the light of

1 O'Rourke, Rebuilding the English Usage Curriculum.
2 Pooley, Teaching English Grammar, p. 52.
3 Foerster and Steadman, Writing and Thinking.
Pooley's definition, which is as follows: "Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the purpose of the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to the speaker and listener. It is the product of custom..." In his Teaching English Usage Pooley applied this definition to specific examples of disputed usage.

This writer found that a number of Canadian textbooks as well as four British Columbia English Language 40 Junior Matriculation examinations given in the past seven years showed little evidence of the research done in usage during the past thirty years. He feels that students should be examined on their knowledge of levels or classifications of usage rather than on an absolute literary level.

Results of the Investigation

On examining 599 paragraphs written by 300 grade 12 students, this writer found the number of words written and errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling as summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Total Number of Paragraphs</th>
<th>Total Words</th>
<th>Total Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>47,075</td>
<td>2254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>28,695</td>
<td>1294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>21,124</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>96,894</td>
<td>4389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students wrote the mean number of words and made the mean number of errors as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>words per paragraph</th>
<th>errors per paragraph</th>
<th>errors per 10,000 words</th>
<th>words written for one error made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>158.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>149.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>192.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All paragraphs</td>
<td>161.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students wrote longer paragraphs on narrative topics but made on the average, fewer mistakes per 10,000 words than on either of the other two paragraphs. However, the least number of mistakes per paragraph was made on the descriptive paragraphs.

Consideration of Fourteen Main Categories of Errors

When one considers the fourteen main categories of errors, he finds that they rank as in the table shown below. *(This Study Revised means the ranking resulting from the application of Pooley's criteria of correct usage.)* Spelling and punctuation account for slightly more than two-thirds of the errors. If categories IX, X, XI, and XIII are added to the punctuation and spelling, one finds that the number of non-grammatical errors account for nearly 80 per cent of the total number of errors. Those errors ranking 1 - 7 account for nearly 93 per cent of all errors. It should be noted that the application of Pooley's criteria reduces "Other Misuses of the Pronoun" from 6.1 per cent to 4.1 per cent, or about one-third.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Category</th>
<th>Name of Category</th>
<th>Percentage of total Errors</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This Study</td>
<td>This study Revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Lack of Clear Thinking</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Other Misuses of the Pronoun</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Apostrophe</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Ungrammatical Sentence Structure</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Omissions</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Prepositions and Conjunctions</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>Misuse of Quotation Marks</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Adjectives and Adverbs</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Errors</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Case of Pronouns</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten kinds of errors in punctuation accounted for 89.9 per cent of all such errors. The three most frequently occurring errors accounted for 47.6 or almost 50 per cent. These errors were: no comma after an introductory expression, such as an adverbial clause (19.6 per cent); comma omitted before the coordinating conjunction (16.8 per cent), and the comma fault (11.2 per cent).
Turning to the most frequently occurring errors in usage, one finds that the first ten account for 62.5 per cent of all errors in usage. These are: indefinite use of you or they (15.9 per cent, or 11.2 in the revised study); false diction (12.3); relative pronoun that omitted (5.2 per cent, or 1.0 per cent in the revised study); mistakes in idiom (5.2); wrong form in the past tense (4.7); pronoun and its antecedent disagreed in number (4.6); one word carelessly or ignorantly substituted for another (4.0); failure to make a new sentence for a new thought (3.9); disagreement between a pronoun and its antecedent (3.4) and pronoun lacking an antecedent (3.3).

Of the fourteen main categories of errors, six account for nearly 90 per cent of all errors: punctuation (46 per cent); spelling (20 per cent); lack of clear thinking (7.9 per cent); other misuses of the pronoun (7.9 per cent); capitalization (4.5 per cent) and misuse of the apostrophe (4.0 per cent).

Pooley condones twelve kinds of errors commonly condemned in textbooks if these errors are made at the high school level. These are the omission of the comma before and in a series, the indefinite use of you, omission of that as a relative pronoun, the use of have got, the use of a pronoun to refer to a preceding idea, the use of like as a conjunction, the use of

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Pooley, Teaching English Usage.
the dangling construction when the meaning is clear, the use of such expressions as "the reason was because . . .," use of the split infinitive, the avoidance of the subjunctive form of the verb to be, use of the accusative case with a gerund, and the use of the plural form of the verb with such indefinite pronouns as everybody.

In spelling, errors involving vowels constituted 41.5 per cent of all spelling errors; those involving consonants, 28.8; compounds and hyphenated words, 24.6; and other classes of misspelled words, 5.1. Thus ignorance of the principles and practice of hyphenation accounted for nearly one-quarter of the misspelled words. Although slovenly pronunciation undoubtedly accounted for a large number of errors, probably 50 per cent resulted from inconsistencies in English spelling. The following words were most frequently misspelled: to, too, two (by 21 students), lightening (20), a for an (13), an for and (10), their, there, they're (10), h omitted from wh (8), english (5), recieve (5), until (5), your, your'e (5). More than 17 per cent of the students misspelled homonyms or near homonyms.

Relationship Between Errors and Various Factors or Elements

The correlation between scholastic ability and errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling was found to be -.304, the coefficient of determination being .09. For 258 degrees of freedom $r = .125$ at the 5 per cent level of significance and .164 at the 1 per cent level. Consequently the hypothesis of
zero correlation may be rejected with considerable confidence.

Boys made more errors than girls. In this study 119 boys made a mean of 16.73 errors and 176 girls a mean of 13.41 errors on both paragraphs. The standard error of the mean difference is 1.064 and t is 3.12. For 293 degrees of freedom t is 2.59 at the 1 percent level; consequently t = 3.12 is highly significant and the hypothesis of no difference may be rejected. Girls would appear, therefore, to make considerably fewer errors than boys.

In determining whether socio-economic status made any difference in numbers of errors, it was found that the forty students whose fathers were in the professional, semi-professional, managerial, or official occupations made a mean of 11.17 errors; the sixty students whose fathers were in the skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled occupations made a mean of 14.8 errors. The standard error of the mean difference is 1.759 and t is 2.062. For 98 degrees of freedom t is 1.984 at the 5 percent level; therefore the hypothesis of no difference in the means may be rejected at this level. One may conclude, with some confidence, that children whose parents are in the professional, etc., occupations make fewer errors than those whose parents are in the skilled, etc., occupations.

It would seem that students who are more interested in English and the humanities make fewer errors than those interested in the sciences, mathematics, industrial arts, home economics,
commerce, and art. The criterion of the students' interest was their choice of majors. Students who chose English and related subjects made a mean of 12.61 errors on both paragraphs; those who chose non-English subjects made 14.00 errors. The standard error of the mean difference is 0.665 and t is 2.09. For 267 degrees of freedom t is 1.969 at the 5 per cent level of significance, therefore the hypothesis of no difference may be rejected.

A comparison of medians of errors found in paragraphs written on the various topics seems to indicate that choice of topic, or at least kind of topic — expository, descriptive, or narrative — has an influence on the number of errors a student makes. Nearly all students made fewer errors on the descriptive paragraphs than on the expository or narrative paragraphs.

Do General Programme students make more errors than University Programme students? The General Programme students made a mean of 17.55 errors, and the University Programme students 12.35. The standard error of the mean difference is 1.082 and t is 4.804. For 287 degrees of freedom t is 2.592 at the 1 per cent level of significance. One may therefore reject with confidence the hypothesis of no difference in the means. Consequently it is fairly safe to conclude that General Programme students made more errors in English than did University Programme students.
That the number of errors on a paragraph does not increase directly as the number of words written is shown by the fact that the correlation between the number of errors and the number of words written is \( \cdot574 \). Consequently, the use of the paragraph as a unit for computing errors need not invalidate the statistical analyses previously made in this study.

Teachers probably took errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling into consideration when they marked the paragraphs as the coefficient of correlation between errors and marks is \(-.202\), which, at the 1 per cent level, is significant.

The results of the statistical analysis in this study appear to indicate that the more intelligent students make fewer errors than the less intelligent; girls make fewer errors than boys; students whose fathers are in the professional, semi-professional, and managerial occupations, make fewer errors than those whose fathers are in the skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled occupations; students who are interested in English make fewer errors than those who are less interested, if choice of majors is used as a criterion of interest; students make fewer errors in descriptive writing than in expository or narrative writing, and teachers take errors into consideration when assigning marks to paragraphs.
written on examinations.

In this study errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling made in paragraphs written on a British Columbia University Entrance Language 40 Examination were counted, classified, and tabulated in order to determine the relative frequencies of such errors. An attempt was made to establish what should constitute "good English" for high school students, and finally, the extent to which certain factors or elements influence the incidence of errors was determined.
B. Weaknesses and Strengths of the Study

A study such as this one may have several inherent weaknesses. These are discussed in detail by Good, Barr, and Scates, who emphasize the following weaknesses: first, error studies do not indicate why students make the errors they do; second, there is an implication that because a student does not know something, he should know it; third, error studies give no insight into the way pupils learn; fourth, because of the narrowness of their scope they tend to make the researcher focus his attention on a restricted area of the child's development and ignore more important aspects of the child's education. Taken unqualified, these statements are only partly true. This study touches only in a general way on the reasons why students make errors. No attempt has been made to ascertain why students make specific errors. However, this study indicates that scholastic ability (IQ) does seem to have some effect on numbers of errors students make in English. Why boys should make more errors than girls is a question only partly answered in this study. Students' socio-economic status appears to have a bearing on the numbers of errors they make. Whether or not students are interested in English and related subjects also influences the number of errors made. If a student plans to enter University or a vocation requiring the University Programme as a prerequisite, he apparently makes

fewer mistakes in grade 12 than if he chooses the General Pro-
gramme.

An attempt was made in this study to overcome the
second criticism that what students don't know, they should
know. This investigator is aware of what grade 12 students
should know according to the British Columbia curriculum but
he has used the researches of Pooley, Leonard and Moffett, and
Marckwardt and Walcott as a basis for determining what students
in high school should know and has adjusted his determination
of errors accordingly. The third criticism is justified. No
attempt has been made to determine specifically how students
learn usage, punctuation, and spelling. However, the relation-
ships between errors in English and the factors previous named
in this study may give some clues as to how students learn
"correct" or "incorrect" English. Moreover language and its
errors are learned through habit. This gives one an indication
as to how errors may be eliminated and replaced by correct
responses. Correct language habits should probably be inculcated
through exercises that concentrate on specific errors rather than
on general rules.

The fourth criticism, that error studies tend to focus
the investigator's attention on a narrow aspect of child devel-
opment, might be made of almost any scientific research in
education. The determination of facts and their relationships
must be the basis on which further intelligent and effective
effort is based. An attempt has been made in this study to
discover the errors that grade 12 students in British Columbia
actually make in their written English. Until this is done, no concerted effort can be efficiently made to eliminate errors.

A more serious objection may be made to this type of study concerning the relative importance of errors. What type of punctuation error is more important than another? What are the more important errors in accidence or syntax? To what extent does correctness in spelling really matter? In this study some attempt was made to obviate this objection by appealing to the investigations mentioned previously in this study. Certainly clarity of communication is most important; beyond this, accepted current usage must be the criterion, but even this aspect bears further investigation. The most frequently recurring errors are not necessarily the most important.

The chief advantage in making this kind of study is that it reveals errors that students actually make in their written work and the proportion in which they are made. When this knowledge is made available to British Columbia teachers, they are in a better position to try to eliminate errors in usage that occur most frequently, particularly those errors that obscure meaning. By indicating, in addition, the criteria that should govern the usage that teachers teach, the study should help them avoid trying to teach unnecessary and often difficult aspects of usage.
The knowledge that certain factors appear to be associated—or not associated—with errors in usage should help teachers. That a student has low scholastic ability does not mean that he cannot learn correct usage; nor, on the other hand, because a student has a relatively high scholastic ability, does it mean that he will not make errors in usage. The fact that girls make fewer errors than boys should cause the teachers to try to give special attention to boys' written work. Students who are enrolled in the General Programme will require much more practice designed to eliminate errors in usage than will students on the University Programme. Pooley's standard informal English should suffice to satisfy the requirements of the former; while his standard formal, rather than his literary classification, should be mastered by the latter. And students whose interest does not lie in English and related subjects and who tend, consequently, to make more errors than those who are more interested in English, must be helped to see the necessity of writing clear and correct English.

C. Suggestions for Further Research

Shane says that "... there is a paradoxical dearth of research in this phase (good English usage) of the language arts. ..." This statement certainly applies to Canada, and British Columbia in particular, where, one might say, no research

7 Shane, *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, p. 57.
into the quantitative or qualitative aspects of English usage, punctuation, or spelling has been done. The person who wishes to conduct further research in this phase (as well as other phases) of the language arts will find many suggestions in Good, Barr, and Scates, Shane, and Monroe. Of course, one of the most fruitful sources of ideas for research is the teacher's own experience in the classroom. The writer will suggest below further topics or problems in English usage, punctuation, or spelling requiring investigation, particularly as pertaining to British Columbia.

1. Error counts such as the one conducted by this investigator should be made periodically. The results might then be compared with those obtained on standardized objective tests.

2. This investigator's research covered only grade 12 students. The same type of research might be conducted covering a number of grades in a large school system. The research may be based on data gathered at one time or, perhaps better, spread over a number of years so that the decrease in the number and kinds of errors made year by year could be measured. This kind of study would also show which errors tend to persist.

9 Shane, op. cit.
10 Encyclopedia of Educational Research.
3. Very little research seems to have been done to ascertain what aspects of usage are most important. What criteria should be used to judge the importance of an error: the extent to which it obscures meaning? its social unacceptability?

4. Although this investigator tried to ascertain the number of errors in expository, descriptive, and narrative writing, and in the nine topics on which the students wrote, he did not try to find out what kinds of errors occurred, if they occurred, in the different kinds of writing (except that the pronoun you was used many times in the expository paragraph). Do, in fact, more errors of one kind occur more frequently in one kind of writing than in another?

5. To what extent are the usage sections of the curriculum and textbooks used in British Columbia based on research? Is usage introduced in the appropriate grades? Is it excessively repetitive? (This is Shane's criticism of American textbooks. Do, in fact, Canadian textbooks and curricula reflect good usage in Canada? (This writer, earlier in this study, was critical of the usage sections of some Canadian textbooks.) Might not a survey of the

Shane, Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts.
type conducted by Leonard many years ago be made in Canada to find out what the levels or classifications of usage are?

6. Do students make more usage errors in other subjects than in English?

7. What is the most effective method of eliminating errors in usage? Drill exercises? Making the student re-write the error correctly several times? Some kind of punishment only remotely related to the error; for example, re-writing the whole theme in which one or two errors occur?

8. Much research has been done to find out how children learn to read and much of this research has been translated into action through textbooks, but the writer knows of very little research, let alone of any textbook, that tells how children learn to write. How do children's thought-processes develop from grade to grade? Can the psychologists give the teacher help in training children to develop their ideas and get them down on paper?

9. What is the relationship of errors in oral English to those in written English? Do pupils who use incorrect usage orally also use it in their written work? Would oral drill help to correct incorrect usage?

12 S. A. Leonard, Current English Usage.
10. Is there a correlation between errors in usage, punctuation, and spelling; that is, do pupils who habitually make many errors in usage also make errors in punctuation, or might pupils who make many errors in spelling make few in punctuation?

11. Assuming that children should have a knowledge of grammar, in what grades should children start to learn it? How should the content of a grammar course be distributed throughout the grades? How can grammar, as defined in this study, be linked to usage? Or should it be?
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


The authors of this recent textbook intended for use in grades 11 and 12, have ignored the research in usage of the past thirty years.


This is a high school text in which the authors make use of the researches of Pooley, Leonard, and others in their approach to usage.

Dashwood-Jones, D. *Patterns for Writing*. Toronto, W. J. Gage Limited. (No date of publication given but published 1958 or 1959.)

Written for the use of grade 7 pupils, this work uses the linguistic or structuralist approach to grammar. Its treatment of usage is very limited.


This grade 7 textbook authorized for use in Canadian, including British Columbia schools, contains instruction in the use of such locutions as different from, can - may, and shall - will. The authors have ignored the results of recent research in usage.

The authors of this excellent college textbook recognize the contributions that research workers in usage have made and advise the student accordingly.


The approach to English grammar in this book is that of the linguists: that the English language is constantly changing, that such change is normal, that the spoken language should constitute the basis of usage, and that usage is related to the social situation.


A first year college textbook, *Writing and Thinking* was quite traditionalist in its approach to usage in the 1931 edition, but in their 1941 edition the authors acknowledge the researches and viewpoints of a number of such men as Fries, Jespersen, Leonard, and Pooley.


Fowler's excellent and very readable dictionary is acknowledged as a standard work on usage everywhere in the English-speaking world.


In this rather verbose treatise in methods of research in education, the authors list a number of aspects of English usage in which research is needed.


A vocational guidance book for high school counsellors, this book was used in this study to classify parents of students on the basis of the parents' occupations.


By appealing to the works of standard authors on disputed locutions of usage, Hall showed that actual usage varied widely from that covered by the rules of the grammarians.


Chapter XI in this book refers particularly to the work of Fries and Marchwardt and Walcott.

Chapter IX, "Grammar," traces the changes in syntax in English that have occurred throughout the centuries.


The author notes that grammar as a formal set of rules to be mastered is giving way to grammar that explains usage.


Monroe indicates needed research in a number of aspects of English Language teaching. The Encyclopedia itself is invaluable for anyone planning research in education.


Basing their approach to grammar on semantics and the researches of Korzybski, Jespersen, Leonard, Pooley, Fries, and Marchwardt and Walcott, the authors say, "The aim of this book is to examine the structure of contemporary American English directly, and to explain its principal grammatical patterns to native speakers of the language." (Preface, p. vi)
O'Rourke, L. J. *Rebuilding the English Usage Curriculum to Ensure Greater Mastery of Essentials.* Washington, D.C., Psychological Institute, 1934.

On page v of his preface, O'Rourke declares that his purpose is "... to determine the relative importance of subject matter in a course of study, to eliminate that which is of little functional value and which consumes time entirely out of proportion to its significance, and to improve teaching methods so as to ensure greater mastery of that which is essential."


Perrin's book is one of the standard works on style and usage and recognizes the results of recent research in English language.


This book attempts to bridge the gap between the "inadequacies of traditional grammar" and "the experimental endeavours of contemporary linguists."


Intended for use by grade seven pupils, the exercises on usage in this text indicate that the authors expect too great a knowledge of usage by pupils in grade seven; for example, the distinction between shall and will, and different from and different than.


The authors believe that the father's occupation is the most significant factor in determining a family's socioeconomic status.

While retaining some of the terminology of the traditional grammar textbooks, this book is certainly among the first, if not the first, which treats at the grade twelve level, grammar as "English" grammar. The author develops the concept that the English language has its own unique patterns of expressing ideas.


The authors felt that much time was spent in schools trying to eliminate errors in usage, the locutions of which were little used by American adults; on the other hand, not enough time was spent on more useful grammatical constructions. They analyzed and parsed 10,000 sentences that ranged in authorship from grade four through college to Macaulay and Stevenson. Their study also included a study of errors in usage. For a person interested in the curriculum of the language arts, this is a useful book.


The authors distinguish between the various levels of usage. This textbook has been used in British Columbia for many years.


As this textbook is intended for use in advanced English courses in college, the author, though recognizing that usage depends on the social situation, treats disputed locutions more rigorously than if the text were to be used in high schools. For example, he does not condone the use of *only* in "John only needed five dollars."


The authors of this high school textbook are inclined to take the traditional attitude toward usage.
MONOGRAPHS, YEARBOOKS, REPORTS, AND PAMPHLETS


The author believes that the weaknesses children show in grammar should determine the content of the grammar course.


Fries determined the levels of usage by examining 2,000 letters and 1,000 excerpts from letters written by people whose styles varied from near-illiterate to formal. Fries believed that grammar should reflect current actual usage.

Greater Victoria Child Study and Special Education Department. Green Staff Bulletin Book, vol. 2, no. 6(a), 1953.

This study records the results of an attempt to determine the most prevalent errors made by children in written composition. The study did not record numbers of errors per paragraph or per a certain number of words written.


By combining Leonard and Moffett's technique of getting the opinion of a panel of judges on disputable locutions, and the technique of appealing to such authorities as Webster's New International Dictionary, the then recently completed Oxford Dictionary, Jespersen, Curme, Horwill, Pooley, and J. Leslie Hall, the authors hoped to determine the "correctness" of 121 of 230 locutions, about which in the Leonard study there remained some doubt. This is a very valuable monograph for anyone interested in usage.


Pooley's book is particularly useful to the teacher of high school English. The author traces the history of a number of disputed locutions and selects those he thinks should be taught in each of the three levels of school: elementary, junior, or senior high. He also lists those items of usage he thinks should not be taught. Not all teachers will agree with his lists but at least the reader of the book, especially if he is a traditionalist, should have a change of attitude towards usage.


This book was reviewed in the Vancouver Province of July 9, 1955.

Shane's pamphlet is a very fruitful source of research done in the English language arts.

PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS


NEWSPAPERS


MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Ayres, J. D. Letter to the Writer, September 8, 1955.


Replies received from fifty-nine principals of public and private high schools in British Columbia. The replies were received in response to a letter sent by the writer asking for certain data concerning students.
APPENDIX A

TABLE SHOWING FOURTEEN CATEGORIES AND FORTY-SEVEN CLASSES OF ERRORS MADE BY 300 STUDENTS, IN 96,894 WORDS. TOGETHER WITH THE TOTALS IN EACH GROUP, NUMBER OF ERRORS PER 10,000 WORDS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ERRORS, AND RANK ORDER OF ERRORS

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APPENDIX B

ACTUAL EXAMPLES OF ERRORS, EXCLUSIVE OF SPELLING, IN THE VARIOUS CLASSES AND CATEGORIES

Throughout this study, the writer has emphasized that errors are specific. Furthermore he has criticized earlier studies for failure to give examples of errors. To obviate such a criticism of this study this investigator has appended Appendix B in which actual examples of errors made by students are given as well as examples of errors cited by the Marckwardt and Walcott study. Examples from other sources are also quoted as well as comments by various authorities. These errors are grouped in the same fourteen categories and subdivisions as are used on previous pages.

In addition the frequency of occurrence of each error is given and the frequency adjusted in the light of Pooley's, and Marckwardt and Walcott's criteria. The rank of each error within each of the fourteen classes is given.

Notes Concerning Appendix B

1. Column I gives the number of errors made using the traditional (Foerster and Steadman, formal), standard of usage; Column II, the number made using the Pooley high school standard, and Column III, the Marckwardt and Walcott standard.

2. Columns A, B, AND C indicate the ranks of errors within each of the fourteen main divisions for Columns I, II, and III respectively.

3. Under each of most of the subdivisions one or more sentences is given illustrating the error. Sentences numbered "1" are examples taken from the S.A.Leonard study as quoted in
Marckwardt and Walcott, who consider all of these sentences "literary English;" sentences numbered "2" were taken from the paragraphs examined in this study, and those numbered "3" are from the sources noted. Examples from the examination (No. 2) have frequently been "built up" by this writer from two- or three-word notes made at the time the error was recorded.

I A II B III C

I. Case of Pronoun

1. Subject or object of verb or preposition in wrong case

(a) Subject in wrong case: 2.

They were the same as us. 3. These desert dwellers are luckier than us. (Vancouver Sun Magazine Section, p. 8, Aug. 8, 1959.)

Evans and Evans: "... is she taller than me?"

preferred. 1

(b) Object in wrong case:

1. Invite whoever you like to the party.

2. She saw my sister and I. 3. Who did you invite? He is a man

who I trust. (Compare "Do you like to know who a book's by?" with "Do you like to know by whom a book is?" The first sentence is quoted from an E.M. Forster essay in *How to Make Sense*, by Rudolph Flesch. The second sentence by Flesch shows how stilted the result is when one sticks to the rules set forth in most high school texts. Quotations are from p. 41.)

2. Predicate Nominative in wrong case. 2a. I do not know whom he is. 2b. It is me. (2b is acceptable in all but the most formal situations.)

3. Object of the preposition in wrong case. 1. They called to my friend and I. 2. I did it for he.

4. Use of objective case for possessive with gerund
1. It was all the result of that cat crossing my path.
3. It resulted in him clubbing to death his victim. ...whose job prevented him leaving until Thursday. (Province, Aug. 13, 1956.) I hope you don't mind me saying . . . (President Eisenhower, telecast, Sept. 2, 1959.)

Total. 6 - 4 - 4 -

II. Other misuses of the pronoun.

5a. A disagreement between a pronoun and its antecedent in number. 2. A person can find what they look for. I saw a flock of geese on their way. A serious problem confronts the younger generation—they don't want to face responsibility. He or she believes in their country.

... Britain. Their prime minister...

5b. Disagreement between pronoun and indefinite pronoun.

1. Everyone was here, but they all went home early.
2. No one has enough money when they are in high school.
Everyone has their own troubles.
Anyone has their own opinion.
6. You or they used indefinitely
You just had a telephone call.
Did they leave any message?
You had to have property...  

2. You first order the material
   When you start to high school
you feel important.
(Note 1: In the expository para-
graphs, where this error greatly
predominated, there is a tendency
to use you. You was used indefin-
itely 48 times in the paragraphs
analyzed. In the remaining 112
cases there was a change in person
involving changes from first to
third persons to second or the
various combinations.
Note 2: Pooley, p. 222, f.n.
says, "In informal speech and
writing, the indefinite you is
permissible." He classifies
you under his heading "Forms to
receive no class instruction in
high school."
7. Miscellaneous. (Use of that which, for who and vice versa.)

2. A lady which..... France, who suffered much damage during the war, is now recovering.

(a) Relative pronoun or conjunctival pronoun that omitted.

2. I think if I were you I would do it. (Here, that is omitted, from a substantival clause.) World War II was one of the worst wars the world has experienced. (Here, that is used in Fowler's sense of a defining relative.) Remember no employer will employ you if you are careless. The answer is they are all loyal. (Fowler says that should not be omitted from an appositive clause.) (p. 633)

(Note: An examination of actual examples of "errors" made shows that Fowler would approve of 80 per cent. The last two examples above would be unacceptable.)

Total: 268 177 177
III Verbs

8. Disagreement of verb and subject.

(a) General violation: 1 None of them are here. 2. On the bank was some water lilies. A race which distinguished themselves is admired.

(b) Disagreement following "there".

2. There is a few things. (Marckwardt and Walcott approve this as literary English if the subject is compound; for example, There was a bed, a dresser, and two chairs in the room.)

(c) Disagreement of verb and complement.
2. The Canadian is a hard-working people.

9. Change of tense in main clause. 0 9 0 10 0 10
   (a) Change of tense within the paragraph. 2. I asked her for the information. She replies with diffi-

cence.

10. (a) Wrong form in the past tense. 47 1 47 1 47 1

1. She sung very well.

2. At first a low moan, then rising (for it rose) so that it could be heard a mile. They happen(ed) to come. He hope to see us. The boats which were (had been) strong enough to stand a lake's waves could not endure the ocean. The ship sunk. (Most errors were (a) the result of confus-
ing forms such as had started with started, the first being correct.)

He was suppose(d) to come. He past the store. (These might better have been classified as spelling errors.)

(b) Wrong form in past participle. 4 7 4 7 4 7

1. We had drank. 2. It had become soaked. (Only two errors were of this type.)
(c) Auxiliary (or infinitive) omitted. 6 6 6 6 6 6

2. You sitting on the beach. 3. "Police said the car was a total wreck and passengers killed instantly." (The Vancouver Province, p. 17, Aug. 13, 1956.)

11. Wrong verb form (lie, will, etc.) 7 5 7 5 7 5

1. I will probably come a little late. 2. I will lay down. You lay there (two errors). (Concerning the displacing of lie by lay, Fries says "We may not like it but we can do absolutely nothing effective about it." p. 289.) His wit shall be admirable (one error). Where will is used instead of shall, Pooley condones such use (p. 222); he would probably condemn shall here.

12. Mistakes in Mood. 1. He acted as though he was the king's son. I wish I was wonderful. (Marckwardt and Walcott classify (1) as literary English. Fries says that the subjunctive form of to be is used in only about 20 percent of all possible instances in both vulgar and standard English.)

(a) Verbs used in wrong sense. 10 4 10 4 10 4

2. He had to determine the people.
Youth is encountered by problems.
(b) Split Infinitive. 2. It is well to never throw stones. It is best to always keep trying. (Pooley et al. agree that only when the split infinitive results in awkwardness should it be avoided. This dead horse is still being beaten as the following letter to the editor of *Newsweek*, August 13, 1956, shows: "Do you mean to say that James Mason really split an infinitive? See *Newsweek*, July 23: 'to dramatically portray'. (Signed) C.S. Hitchens, M.D., Hamden, Conn." Editor: "Yes, to effectively split an infinitive takes practice.")

Total 349 131 131

IV. Adjectives and Adverbs.

13. Use of the adjective for the adverb. 1. ...; you'd better go slow.
My father walked very slow down the street. 2. He spoke respectful.
His admiration rose great. The second job is done similar to the first. He never had it so good. Be sure to drive clean. It sure 1 is a sunny day.

1 "In fact, the avoidance of sure is one of the indications of cultivation in speech." Pooley, *Teaching English*, p. 162. Of loud, soft, slow, etc., Pooley, p. 61, says "...The sound of the adverb in the sentence is the determining factor;... For example, ... Drive slow, but we walked slowly."
14. Use of most for almost.  
15. Only misplaced in the sentence  

1. We only had one left. I only had one lesson to study. (Pooley and others consider this use good.)

(a) other adverbs misplaced.  
16. Use of double negatives:  

1. There wasn't hardly room for me.

17. Miscellaneous misuses.  

1. The New York climate is healthiest in the fall. It was a very healthy food.  

(a) Wrong comparative. 2. He held it more closer.  

Total  

18. (a) Wrong Preposition.  

1. The child was weak due to improper feeding. 2. He went in the house. He benefits financially by the deal. The party was postponed due to hail. The earth was packed from the hail. (Fowler condemns this use of due to. Of Marckwardt's and Walcott's judges, two-thirds condemn
it, but Pooley notes that it is following the same course in acceptance as the participle owing to. 3. My book is different than yours. (Pooley, pp. 166-170, discusses different from, different than, different to. The first form is preferred; the second is sometimes acceptable; the third, preferred in Britain.) Different than is considered literary English by Marckwardt and Walcott. Fowler (p. 114) says, in effect, that "different from or different to is equally acceptable."

(b) Superfluous use of prepositions. 2. He got off of the car. This was the destination in which we set out for. Choose in which branch to study. I decided to study on English. It was of a bright color. For whom is he seeking? He entered into the house. (The last is used in the Bible: "Enter into my house with praise...")

19 Wrong Conjunction. 1. The reason was because... (The writer heard President Eisenhower use "The reason was because" in 1956 in a radio
broadcast. Marckwardt and Walcott call it literary English and Pooley says "there is no need to condemn it in school children." p. 135. Teaching English Usage. Robert Waddell says that correctness in this type of sentence "...is a rather arbitrary matter of idiom," p. 139, Grammar and Style.

2. The big step is when one sees an employer. I decided to see him and (but) I changed my mind. No sooner had we left when (than) the storm broke. It was a dark night when we left. "... of whether" instead of "as to whether" used.

20. Misuse of like. 1. Do it like he tells you. 2. It looks like he wasn't coming. 2(a) There is no opportunity like there is now. (b) He pounced on it like a cat pounces on a bird. (c) Like usual, they won the soccer match. (d) It is like she sees an opportunity.

3. "Mexico is in the throes of an industrial revolution like the world has never seen." Victor Abrams, industrialist quoted in Vancouver Province, p.15, Aug. 13, 1956. "...like you're suspended in
air." (Chrysler advertisement on television, Mar. 28, 1957) (There were three examples of the use of like for as if. The others were like 2a, b, and 3 above. Pooley classifies the use of like, as used in 1, 2, 2a, b, above, under the heading "Forms to receive no class instruction in the senior high school." p. 223. But Marckwardt and Walcott classify 1, 2, 2a, b, and 3 as literary English. Fowler condemns as vulgar and slovenly 1, 2, 2a, b, and 3, that is, the use of like to connect a principal and subordinate clause. Like is certainly being increasingly used by radio and television speakers and by newspapers.)

20(a) Omissions in the use of conjunctions. 2. Whether he will come is disputable. I will decide whether you get the job. Make oneself (as) presentable as possible. We have the same problems and even more than our parents had. He is not as (so) tall as I am. He not only gave us dinner
but (also) took us to a show.

Total  56  49  50

VI. Ungrammatical Sentence Structure.

21. Incomplete sentences consisting usually of:
   (a) Participial, infinitive, or gerundial phrases (usually combined with a noun): 2. Canada being a prosperous country. Has many opportunities. Never to be found again.
   (b) Adjective clauses (often combined with the modified noun).
       2. In front of which we piled stones.
   (c) Adverb clauses. 2. Although we have many problems. As few people were present.
   (d) Appositives.
   (e) Nominative Absolute. 2. The result being that we couldn't go.
   (f) Fragments. 2. Not too useful.

What profession to choose? Problems of Today's Youth. (Title of the paragraph used as the topic sentence.)

What to say? Your hair neat? First, your appearance. Just a wreck. Only
a cabin. Then a sigh from afar. Two years. A long time. (Except for the second sentence none of these fragments have verbs or verbals.)

(g) Others. 2. The manager in the office. During the war when he was in France.

22. Failure to make a new sentence for a new thought. (Included were sentences that comprised two thoughts, but which had no punctuation mark between them; i.e., the run-on sentence.)

23. Miscellaneous mistakes in sentence structure.

(a) Subject omitted.

(b) Redundancy, especially have got. 1. I have got my own opinion on that. (Types of redundancies were: careless repetition of and, this one girl, and so (probably acceptable.) "He travels fast in action." "The sun sank itself." "Haven't got."

(The last appeared once and is considered literary English by Marckwardt and Walcott as well as by Foerster and Steadman (p. 327) in the sense have
acquired. Pooley substantiates these opinions. He also points out that the participle is *got*, not *gotten*.)

(c) Noun Clause *that* repeated. 0 12 0 13 0 13

(d) Verb omitted. 2. Shake hands 17 3 17 4 17 4

and (have) a remark ready. George is fifteen, dirty clothes. Your legs and feet. (Some of these might better have been classed under *Fragments*.)

(e) Obvious lack of parallelism. 10 6 10 7 10 7

2. The waves rushed up the beach and breaking on the rocks. 2. He either says *yes* or *no*. (The first might better have been classified under "incomplete sentence, wrong verb form.")

(f) Other. 4 10 4 11 4 11

Total 175 174 174

VII. Failure to Express Clear Thinking

24. Ambiguity due to faulty pronominal reference. 1. He had to eat olives with the Smith girls although he didn't like them.

(a) Vague reference of pronoun to an idea (clause, phrase.) 1. I have no prejudices, and *that* is the cause
of my unpopularity. 2. This topic (referring to the title of the para-
graph) is important. To prepare for an interview takes time. This is well worth doing. The house shook which frightened me. (Marckwardt and Walcott list the last two under "established" usage.) 3. Fowler: He lost his temper; this proved fatal. (Fowler condones this locution.)

(b) Pronoun has no antecedent, or the antecedent is far away. 2. The Canadian people's future is assured. Her resources are infinite.

(c) Illogical constructions. 2. One can be nurses or many others. Doctors and other professions have many openings. His help was a saviour. Hockey is an energetic game and so are Canadians. His clothes' styling was the same as his employer.

25. Awkward, wordy or complicated sentence structure.

(a) Misplaced modifiers. 26. (a) Careless substitution of one word for another. 2. Those are not are
feelings. He could of done it. Go
a little ways with him. Any (and)
he sported a jacket. I(t) was a fine
day. It doesn't jive (jibe, agree).
We left it far out to sea.

(b) Mistake in idiom. 2. to my point of view. She acted friendly-
like. We tried to help and keep him.
I couldn't get to go. Get an inter-
view from him. Up to the present he
has continued working. Try and define
it. (The last locution is considered
literary English by Pooley and Marck-
wardt and Walcott.)

Other unidiomatic phrases were
smiling to (at), a contrast from (to),
a believer of (in), in my belief
(opinion), if (as) the case may be,
a (in) bad taste, for an example.

(c) Dangling Constructions.

2. Politeness plays a part when
being interviewed. As a child, my
mother made me do household chores.
When nine years old, my mother ....
When lost, the intelligent thing to
do.... When entering an office,
good posture.... When preparing for an interview, there are points .... (At least half of the dangling constructions result from the students' using the elliptical clause.) Pooley says the construction is permissible and is even good English where there is no mistaking the meaning. Probably 25 per cent of the errors listed would come within Pooley's sanctioning.

(d) Wrong Tense Sequence. (See Verbs No. 9) 0 11 0 10 0 11
(e) Meaningless Sentences. 4 10 4 9 4 10
A bunch of people, a lot of people, an out, a must, fix (for adjust), insured (for assured), further (for farther), - the two words are often considered synonymous. Resolved (for resigned), funny (for peculiar), tribe (for herd), employee's (for employer's), less (for fewer), apt (for likely), guess (for suppose), portals (for portholes). Total 347 314 318
VIII. Mistakes in Punctuation.

27. Period Omitted.
   (a) At end of sentence.  
       39 12 39 12 39 12
   (b) After titles.  
       0 22 0 22 0 22  
   (c) After abbreviations.  
       3 20 3 20 3 20
   (d) Unnecessary periods.  
       5 18 5 18 5 18

   (104 of these comprised omissions before and preceding the final member of a series. Fowler insists that the comma before and be retained to avoid possible ambiguity. Corbin and Perrin say: "...in informal English it is quite often omitted, especially in newspaper and business writing."4 (Therefore these errors will be considered "correct" in this study.)

29. Independent clauses of a compound sentence not separated.
   (a) Comma omitted before the co-ordinating conjunction (commas omitted in short compound sentences were not counted.)

4 Corbin and Perrin, Guide to Modern English, p. 366
(b) Comma used instead of a semi-colon or period. 1. This book is valueless, that one has more to recommend it. (Marckwardt and Walcott classify this construction as literary English. In analyzing the comma fault errors this writer kept, perhaps, unnecessarily close to the conventional rule.)

30. No punctuation after introductory (or transition) expressions. 2. Well how are you? On the whole.... Believe me.... However.... Consequently....

(a) No punctuation after introductory adverbial clauses, participal, infinitive, or gerundial phrases. (Unless the introductory element was short -- except for the possibility of ambiguity -- this writer followed the rule in evaluating this error.)

31. Name of city or town and province written without punctuation. (These paragraphs gave little or no opportunity for making this error.)

(a) No punctuation after, or around, transition expressions. (There is some overlapping here with No. 30.)
32. Miscellaneous mistakes in punctuation.

(a) Comma setting off a dependent clause, or a phrase, out of its natural order.  22 14  22 14  22 14
(32a and 30a should probably be combined.)

(b) Commas around appositive omitted.  27 13  27 13  27 13

1. Comma indicating omission omitted.  4 19  4 19  4 19

(c) Comma around quotations omitted.  4 19  4 19  4 19

1. Setting off a nominative of address omitted.

(d) Non-restrictive elements not set off.  187  5  187  4  187  4

(e) Use of unnecessary commas.  117  7  117  6  117  6

(f) Comma for clearness omitted, especially with participial and parenthetical expressions.

(g) Interrogation mark omitted.  43 11  43 11  43 11

(h) Miscellaneous mistakes involving:

1. unnecessary use of ....  1 21  1 21  1 21

2. Colon not used.  17 16  17 17  17 17

3. Semi-colon misused or omitted.  70 9  70 9  70 9
(In some cases, perhaps, a period should have been used. See also No. 29.)

4. Exclamation mark misused.  16 17  16 17  16 17

5. Dash misused.  48 10  48 10  48 10

Total  2018  1914  1914
IX. Mistakes in the use of the apostrophe.

33. Failure to distinguish between *it's* for *it is* and *its* (possessive).

34. Wrong form of possessive nouns.
   (a) Omitted in possessive case, 70 1 70 1 70 1 (other than today's).
   Omitted in genitive of *today's youth*. 44 2 44 2 44 2
   (The topic of the paragraph was "The Problems Faced by Today's Youth." This topic accounts for the many errors under this heading. Many students failed to notice the apostrophe in *Today's Youth.*
   Omitted in genitive of *summer's day*, 7 6 7 6 7 6 an hour's journey.

35. O'clock written without the apostrophe. (Included in spelling errors - one mistake.)

36. (a) Wrong form in the possessive. 14 5 14 5 14 5 (Apostrophe in wrong place.)

2. There was a sale of ladle's dresses.
The Canadians' pride is in his country.
Two youth's bicycles were lost.
   (b) Apostrophe unnecessarily inserted. 1 8 1 8 1 8
   (c) Apostrophe omitted from *don't* 23 3 23 3 23 3
   *isn't* etc.
   (d) Apostrophe inserted in wrong place, in *could'nt*, etc.

Total 184 184 184
X. Mistakes in capitalization.

37. Failure to use capital letters.
   (a) At the beginning of a sentence.  14 4 14 4 14 4
   (b) At the beginning of a quotation.  4 5 4 5 4 5

1. In titles of paragraph topics.  26 2 26 2 26 2
   (c) At the beginning of proper nouns and adjectives.  18 3 18 3 18 3

and adjectives. 2. canadian, french,
Rocky mountain, Burnaby lake. (The last
two use the down style of newspaper
capitalization.)
god.

38. Unnecessary capitalization.  133 1 133 1 133 1

2. Pampas, East, West (directions),
Prime Minister, Fir tree, British
Subject, Province, Youth, Peace,
Parliament, Lake, Autumn, Science,
University, Gods, Maths, High School,
Democracy.

   Total 195 195 195

XI. Careless omissions or repetitions.

39. Omissions of a word or phrase.  67 1 67 1 67 1

2. a, the, the next (point), on (the)
whole.
   (a) Ignorant or illogical omissions.  6 2 6 2 6 2

2. Human (being), capable of (doing)
the work, remember (to) be yourself.
(Of human Perrin says "once a noun in good standing . . ., now seems being slowly brought back . . .) (p. 592, Writer's Guide.)

40. Omission of a letter or syllable (included under spelling.)

41. Repetition of words, syllables or phrases.

XII. Spelling Errors.

(These words will be listed alphabetically and also grouped by types in Appendix C.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Error</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. (a) Hyphen omitted.</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Compound words incorrect.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Confusion of to, too, and two.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Confusion of their, there, and they're.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Confusion of other homonyms.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Confusion of words with ei and ie</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Other misspelled words</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XIII.

46. Misuse or omission of quotation marks

XIV. Miscellaneous errors.

(a), (b), Grammatical and Rhetorical

2. People's problems who are less fortunate.... For quite some time we waited.

Total all errors 4389 4141 4146
APPENDIX C

ACTUAL ERRORS IN SPELLING MADE ON PARAGRAPHS WRITTEN BY
300 STUDENTS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 40, BRITISH COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, JUNE, 1953.

Part One: Consonants

I. Omission of one of a pair of consonants. (52)

(Note 1: The words were arranged alphabetically according
to the consonant omitted. 2. Some words are repeated in
two or three groups as they contained more than one kind
of error.)

A. Consonants omitted that are indigenous to the word. (36)

hoby
accurate
succeeded
sadens
downtroden
forbid
difficult
dificulty
sufice
exagerate
alright (all right)
brilliant (2)

folows
ightfal
olute
traveler
il-
ale
imer
ual
on like
ersonel
ersonel
usposedly

mariage
squires
asure
creves
reasuring
possession
successful
but(t)
flater
lat(t)er
latice

B. Failure to double a consonant when the suffixes -able,
-ed, -ing, -ly, were added. (6)

-able
uncontroable
mising
combatting(2)
puting
sheding
traping

-ing
eming
ising
aming(2)
uting
eding
aping

-ed
chiled
cripp
eped
eped
oped
ediced
ped
ediced

-ly
findly (finally)
franticaly
mentaly

II. Incorrect doubling of the consonant. (35)

Note: The words are arranged alphabetically according to the consonant doubled.

acchieve
across
ecessity
add(for advertisement) (2)
basically
stiffling
astilly
Particulary
Skillful
untill(5)
becoming
comming
Immagination
Vimmy Ridge
Hunn
shinny (for shiny)
arround
Carribou
surrounded
assistance
dissappointed
pass-time
occasionally(3)
usually
ettc.
Rabbitt
pitt falls
writting

III. Incorrect inclusion or exclusion of consonants in the "tch", "ch", "que", and "ck" sounds. (12)

skeptical(C.O.D.sceptical) hick (hike)
panicy
panick
drinking

titch
piching
streach (3)

IV. Incorrect spelling resulting from confusion of "s", "z", "sh", "itious", "ce", etc. sounds. (29)

A. "s" substituted for "c".

advise (ce)
s_certainly
seigar

choices
nessecary
notisted

prosedes
resources

B. "c" or "ce" substituted for "s", or "s" or "c" omitted in "sc".

considered
degeand
facinating
diciple
licisce
once (ones) (2)

recourses
sence (3)

C. Confusion of "s" and "z".

magazines
sympathise
surprized
D. Misspelling of "sh" sound

ambitious
caustious
conscious

E. Miscellaneous:

change (chance)

V. Confusion of "v" and "f" sounds. (5)

knives
leavy (leafy)

lifes (lives)
ourselves

fast (vast)

VI. Misspelling of "j", "g", "dg", sounds. (8)

colledge
figit
hugh (huge)

gesture
privilege (2)

slug (sludge)

VII. Misuse of "gh". (2)

twilight

thoughfully

VIII. Consonants incorrectly omitted, included or substituted for others. (90)

A. Consonants omitted:

1. Other than "r" or "s"

against(t)
bound(less)
carry(ing)
cost(ly)
calcium
department(al)
development
environ(ment)
ever(y)thing (2)
ground(d)
intermittently
light(ing)

particulary

po(l)ka-dot

Prinminister

rember (4)

respo(n)sible

sever(al)

though(t)

2. "r" omitted or unnecessarily included

car(r)verns
chivral(r)y
F(r)ench
impo(r)tant

joney (journey)
p(r)oletarians
resou(r)ces
sea(r)ch

sp(r)ing

sp(r)ing

sup(er)ior

sur(r)prise

you(r)

3. "s" omitted or unnecessarily included; usually in the formation of the plural.

cannon(s)
drug(s)

people(s)

problem(s)

sailor(s)

task(s)
it(s) prank(s) supposedly
manner(s) puzzler(s) top(s)
offspring(s)

B. Substitution of one consonant for another

amplifying learnt sgid (skid)
beloves(d) past (passed) sulfur
blindind (g) prest (pressed) taught (thought)
embloyers porquapine them(n)
clacer (glacier) problem vice viesa
grapped

c. Unnecessary inclusion of consonants

conincidence powereded slumberling
findly (finally) resgult supposedly

D. Silent consonants

new for knew knews for news clumssy for clumsy

E. Incorrect inclusion or omission of "h" in "sh", "ch", "ph", "sh", "rh", and "ah" sounds.

a for ah w(h)ere (2)
b(o)unc(h)ing (bunching) rythm (2) somew(h)ere
orchestra sulfur w(h)ether (2)
pus(h)ed w(h)arf w(h)imper
rapsody w(h)ent w(h)isks

IX. Transposition of "r" in er, ro, and ri, sounds. (7)

modren for modern prospective for
percipitate for precipitate perspective (2)
perspective for prospective tired for tried
prespiration for perspiration

Part Two: Errors Involving Vowels

X. Incorrect substitution of one vowel for another, or omission of a vowel, especially in indeterminate sounds. (85)

A. -able, -ible, etc.
audable permissable responsible
cabinate responsability visable
indivisible
B. Vowel incorrectly included

- communism
- exemplary
- hoodulums
- distarcous (disastrous)

C. Vowel omitted

- chocolate
- conservative
- desperately
- familiar
- low(y)ers
- laborously
- literature
- minstir
- mixture
-准备
- preparing
- nowadays
- minstir
- minstir
- principle(al)
- sovereignty
- savio(u)r (O.E.D)
- speeches
- tumultuous
- unusually

D. Confusion of "i", and "e", and "y"

- courtious
- difficult
- diserve
- defiant
- depleting
- earliest
- givin
- hazie
- ininginuity
- valley
- privledge (2)
- resources
- uneasyness
- loneliness

E. Substitution of "a" for "e", or "e" for "a"

1. in words ending in -ence, -ent, -ange.

- challenge (2)
- dependent
- existence (2)
- incompetent

2. in words ending in -ance.

- appearence
- appearence

3. in other words

- collage
- funnal
- nozzel
- oriters
- peddle (for pedal)
- ruffel
- sights
- sentinals
- unaffected
- secretary

F. Confusion of other vowels

- Britian
- capitalistic
- comparatively
- favourite

- horizen
- mechanization
- minit
- premenion
- Scandinavian
- women (for woman)
XI. Misspelling of "ā" or "ḁ" sounds. (8)

creves                          gail (gale)                      layed
daily                           grate (great)                   the(y)
foreiner                         her (hair)

XII. Misspelling of "ē" sound. (34)

A. Use of "ei" for "ie".
   acheive                          mein                           peace
                                believe (3)
B. Use of "ie" for "ei"
   recieve(d) (5)                 siezed                        weird

C. Other misspellings of the "ē" sound

appearance                        clacer (for glacier)        relieve
cheapen                           ideios                        reveared
debrece                           master-peace                   screen
disagrements                      purple                        skies
(e)erie                          prosedes                       shr(i)king
experience                        receed                        spech
gear for gear                     receipt                        streek

XIII. Misspelling of "ē" sound. (17)

A. Confusion of "ea" and "e"

brest                             lept (2)                     taring (tearing)
feead                             mease (mess)                  tred
lead (led)                         spead (sped)                   wheather

B. Wrong vowels substituted for "e"

education                        freindy                        imparative
erea (era)                         hylm (helm)                   than (then) (2)

XIV. Misspelling of "ı" sound, particularly by confusing "y", "i", "ie", and "ies". (16)

apologize                         frieghtening                  Rockys
bi-product                        hazy                          ski (sky)
come-latelys                      lieing                        spyd
country                          loneliness                     trys
cries                             rellys                        unseasyness
dieing

XV. Mute "e" incorrectly included (62)
A. Mute "e" added to the end of a word.

abhore
ache
brilliante
develop
efficienet
findes
mease (mess) (2)
mouthes
noone (2)
occures
passerbyes
prosedes
profite

B. Mute "e" added or retained when a suffix was added

attainement
desireable
development
didn't (10)
entertainment
fifty
heavey
lightening (20)
lorley
luckey
lyeing
monsterous
nosey
scaley
sparkely
toren
truely

C. Other: greateast

XVI. Mute "e" incorrectly omitted, (31)

A. Omission at the end of a word

bad (bade)
before)
born(e)
breez(e)
eco(e)s
gail(e)
hick(e) (hike)
minit(e)
petit(e)
sever(e)
therefor(e)
ther(e)

B. Not retained when the suffix was added

car(e)less
complet(e)ly
courg(e)ous
despert(e)ly
fright(e)ning
hav(e)n't
lon(e)ley
notic(e)able
perversely
polit(e)ly

C. Other omissions

aw(e)struck
boist(e)rous
foo(d)
for(e)boding
for(e)head
fore(g)round
and

XVII. Misspelling of "en", "en", "or" sounds. (41)

cirtain
characteristic(s) (2)
Chirchill
dignitories
easir
familler
farthur
labourors
lavendar
min(1)star
missionery
opportunities (2)
peddlar
preperation
serch
separate(d) (2)
someware
suberb
sulfer
sultury
there, their, they're con-fused (10)
term
travelor
your, you're (5)
XVIII. Misspelling of "or" sounds (exclusive of your, you're). (6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>co(u)rse</th>
<th>fo(u)rth</th>
<th>warning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>endeavor</td>
<td>fo(u)rty</td>
<td>starboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XIX. Misspelling of "oo", "aw", "ow", "o", "oo", "u", "u" sounds. (46)

| amoung     | astounding | taught (thought) |
| another    | arburn     | throw, threw     |
| automic    | no(w)      | (through) (2)    |
| bouy       | lo(o)se (4) | to, too, two (21) |
| don (dawn) (2) | hollowed  | onless          |
| grown (ground) | muid hole | swallowed       |
| ideologies  | nuneres (numerous) | bigoreous      |
|            |           | wonder (wonder) |

XX. Incorrect inclusion of a vowel. (1)

| calum      |

Part Three: Compound and Hyphenated Words

Note: As far as possible the Concise Oxford Dictionary and Webster's Twentieth Century Dictionary were used as authorities. Otherwise, Fowler's principles of hyphenating words were followed. Fowler remarks (p. 245) "that (current) usage concerning the hyphen is so variable as to be better named caprice." His principles for hyphenating are summarized as follows:

A. To show that two or more words are made into one, particularly where such a union is to be used attributively.

B. To announce that a compound expression consisting of a noun and its adjective means something different from what its elements left separate would mean. The accent in such a combination must be on the first element.

C. To render the combination amenable to some treatment to which it could not otherwise be subjected.

D. To show that two adjectives convey a compound idea.

E. To attach an adverb or a preposition closely to an active or passive participle. There must be, as in B, only one accent and that must be on the first syllable.

Evans and Evans (pp. 108-9) apply these following tests for determining the compounding of words: How is the compound treated grammatically? What does it mean? and how is it pronounced? Pronunciation is considered the most important of these three tests and the grammatical treatment the least important. If the accent falls on the first word of a two-word combination, then the two words should be written as one.
As for hyphenating, Evans and Evans give eight rules, the first seven of which deal with present-day use; the eighth with use resulting from custom. The rules are:

A. To denote the combination of two functions in one person; e.g., secretaty-treasurer.
B. To combine as nouns words originally made up of a verb and an adverb or preposition; e.g., a broken-down car.
C. Some nouns with qualifying words that are made into adjectives by adding -ed to the noun; e.g., kind-hearted. Similarly, past participles and a qualifying word are joined; e.g., air-borne, well-guarded.
D. In numbers and fractions.
E. Compounds beginning with self; e.g., self-controlled.
F. Such expressions as ex-college professor.
G. To prevent ambiguity; e.g., silver-box; i.e., a box for holding silver.

Note: Words in Part Three that are now considered correct as a result of applying modern practices in usage have been marked with an asterisk.

The second figure in parentheses shows the number of errors after modern usage has been considered.

XXI. Words incorrectly joined to form compound words. (16)(6)

A. Words joined that should have been hyphenated.

*businesslike goodhearted *makeup (2)
*cleanup *hairdo *teenager (3)
*getup

B. Words joined that should have been written separately.

abit alright (3)
alot *fingernail
XXII. Words whose components have been incorrectly separated. (36)

A. By a hyphen:

master-peace  
pass-time  

B. By a space:

before hand (2)  
down trodden  
drift wood  
head first  
muid hole  
now days  
one's self (2)  
over dressed  
over head  
in genious  
over sell  
pitt falls  
la crosse  
over populated  
some how  
some thing  
tomb stones  

XXIII. Hyphen omitted from a hyphened word. (Of 154 tabulated, 84 are listed below.)

all important  
blood poisoning  
blue green  
build up  
business like  
cannon like  
class conscious  
clean shaven  
curly headed  
ear phone  
easy going  
easy to keep  
english speaking  
ever amplifying  
ever changing (2)  
ever increasing (3)  
ever present  
fast moving  
fast striking  
fifteen mile  
fir covered  
flash flood  
flat surfaced  
fourty mile  
french speaking  
fun loving  
funnal shaped  
girl friend (3)  
grass covered  
grown up  
habit forming  
hard working (3)  
heaven devised  
heatl mouthed  
low heeled  
man made  
make up (2)  
modern day  
moss covered  
never ending  
orange yellow (2)  
pitter pattering  
pot belly  
peace loving  
red brown  
right hand  
three legged  
twenty one  

self control  
self portrait  
seventy five  
sickly looking  
silver foamed  
snow capped (2)  
south west  
sub group  
spike headed  
teen ager  
three hour  
twenty four  
two mile  
war ravaged  
war torn  
war weary  
well built  
well kept  
well mannered  
well polished  
well pressed (3)  
well shaven  
well tailored  
would be
Part Four: Other Classes of Misspelled Words

XXIV. Errors involving capitalization. (Errors in capitalization were not tabulated under the heading Spelling but under Capitalization as indicated in Chapter VII. The words here are a few examples of the kinds of errors made.)

A. Unnecessary capitalization

Boasting Maths Stock
Carribou(animal) National University
Government Priminister Youth
Hydrogen Bomb Rabbitt

B. Lower case letters substituted for capitals.

christianity french (2) persian cat
english (5) house of commons

XXV. Articles and "and". (25)

A. "a" written for "an" (13) a hour
B. "an" written for "and". (10)
C. "&" written for "and". (2)

XXVI. Substitution of a figure for a written number. (5)

XXVII. Use of "modernized" spelling (2)

thru lites

XXVIII. Miscellaneous. (10)

aristocrates industriousness maryauna
beqing (beginning) buiness plan (planning)
buiful confid (illegible) unsurmountable
buisness