

NONACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTION OF USAGE ERRORS

ABSTRACT: To test whether nonacademic professionals' attitudes towards usage errors have changed in twenty years, we conducted a small-scale survey similar to one conducted by Maxine Hairston in 1979. The results differ from those of the earlier study, indicating a trend for respondents to find errors less bothersome than the respondents did twenty years ago. However, the results support the claim made by Hairston and other researchers that many of the errors found most bothersome are dialect features. We conclude this report by discussing the implications as well as the limitations of our findings.

In 1981, *College English* published an article by Maxine Hairston entitled "Not All Errors Are Created Equal: Nonacademic Readers in the Professions Respond to Lapses in Usage." Since its publication, Hairston's research has appeared in other books, both academic and nonacademic. For example, Rei Noguchi discusses Hairston's results in *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing*, Constance Weaver refers to them in *Teaching Grammar in Context*, and Kathryn Riley and Frank Parker use them in a chapter-final exercise in *English Grammar*. Outside of the classroom, Douglas Cazort uses Hairston's findings as an organizing principle in his book for the usage-anxious writer, *Under the Grammar Hammer*. Because these results have been considered significant, we conducted a similar survey to see whether responses to the usage topics cited in Hairston's study, which relate to matters of grammar, spelling, diction, and punctuation, have changed in the past twenty years.

In both academic and popular forums, usage issues are still at the center of debates over the status of "Standard English" (Bex and Watts 5, Lippi-Green 53). Although much has been written since 1981 about language variation and language rights, writers of both popular and academic books continue to report entrenched, conservative attitudes toward usage. In *The Language Instinct*, Steven Pinker discusses the intolerance of "language mavens" (370-403), and in "The Consequences of Standardisation in Descriptive Linguistics," James Milroy warns

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against the capricious judgments of “language guardians,” many with a limited knowledge of grammar or “a clear notion of what ‘grammaticality’ is” (21). Deborah Cameron advises against simply dismissing the views of language mavens and guardians, instead recommending that a full account be given of their language judgments as well as the beliefs and values that underlie them (xi).

We have undertaken this study with the hope that by learning more about the conventions of and attitudes toward language, we can refine our class discussions of language usage. Unless one takes a prescriptivist approach to language, teaching usage is difficult. On the one hand, we want to recognize and appreciate language variation. On the other, we want our students to be aware of the conventions that they may be expected to follow in school and in the workplace, as well as to be conscious of the character judgments often accompanying language bias.

Hairston’s Study

Hairston introduces her research on usage by describing a quandary she encountered while writing a composition textbook. Although “content and organization” were her primary concerns, she worried that neglect of “surface features” would lead to complaints from professionals outside of academia. Hairston explains:

[I]f we take the attitude that helping students to generate content and organize it in a coherent pattern should be our major goal and that surface features are comparatively unimportant, we open ourselves to attack from that large group of nonacademic readers who are genuinely – even passionately – concerned about good English. They are the administrators and executives and business people who claim that we are not doing our job, that they hire high-school or college graduates who cannot write a readable report or compose a decent letter. They complain that their employees cannot spell or punctuate and that much of the writing they see by professionals is semi-literate. And they imply – or sometimes charge openly – that in their day English teachers were a different breed who had standards and saw to it that no one left their classrooms without being able to write. (794)

Thus, believing that surface conventions were indeed important and hoping to give appropriate advice to students headed for the non-academic workplace, Hairston set out to determine whether common errors could be sequenced according to priority. Some mistakes might

draw more attention than others, she posited. Her hypothesis was confirmed in a survey she conducted, the results of which suggested the title for her article: "Not All Errors Are Created Equal." She found that errors do bother nonacademic professionals, but not always the same errors and not always to the same degree.

Hairston surveyed 101 professionals, none of whom were English teachers, 85% of whom were acquaintances of hers. Her survey (see Appendix A) consisted of sixty-six sentences containing one error apiece. (She later removed one sentence because of a typing mistake.) She then asked nonacademic professionals to indicate their feelings about the sentences by choosing one of the following answers: "Does not bother me," "Bothers me a little," or "Bothers me a lot." There was also a final question asking respondents to identify "the most annoying feature of the writing" they encountered at work. Eighty-four surveys were returned, which she tabulated by hand, putting the sentences in categories according to the number of responses to each answer. She established six categories: Outrageous, Very Serious, Serious, Moderately Serious, Minor, or Unimportant. The results of the categorization are listed below. Hairston did not explain why she combined the last two categories, Minor and Unimportant, into one. She also failed to clarify whether she had ranked the items within each category.

Outrageous

Nonstandard past or past-participle verb form:

brung, has went

Lack of subject-verb agreement (Type 1):¹

we was

Double negative:

there has never been no one here

Object pronoun as subject:

Him and Richard were

Very Serious

Fragment:

In spite of administrative warnings.

Fused sentence:

He concentrated on his job he never took vacations.

Noncapitalization of proper noun:

texas instruments company

Misspelling:

would of

- Lack of subject-verb agreement (Type 2):
Enclosed in his personnel file is his discharge papers.
- Comma between the verb and its complement:
Cox cannot predict, that street crime will diminish.
- Nonparallelism:
impressed by her smooth manner, elegant clothes, and being witty
- Faulty adverb form:
treated his men bad
- Misuse of transitive verbs:
If the regulating agency sets down on the job

Serious

- Faulty predication (Type 1):²
The state's hiring policies intimidate the applications of ambitious people.
- Dangling modifier:
Having argued all morning, a decision was finally reached.
- Subject pronoun used as an object pronoun:
The army moved my husband and I.
- Lack of commas to set off interrupters:
When the time came to pay the filing fee however the candidate withdrew.
- Lack of commas in a series:
We direct our advertising to the young prosperous and sports-minded reader.
- Tense switching:
The reporter paid attention to officers but ignores enlisted men.
- Use of a plural determiner with a singular noun:
These kind of errors
- Lack of pronoun³-antecedent agreement:
Everyone who attends will have to pay their own expenses.

Moderately Serious

- Lack of possessive determiner before a gerund:
no objections to us leaving
- Lack of comma to set off an absolute or a nonrestrictive appositive:
The President dismissed four cabinet members among them Joseph Califano.

Inappropriate use of quotation marks:

"Take what you want and pay for it.

Lack of subjunctive mood:

If I was in charge

Object pronoun as predicate nominative:

That is her.

Lack of comma after an introductory clause:

Although the candidate is new to politics she has a good chance of winning.

Faulty predication (Type 2):

The situation is when the patient ignores warning symptoms.

Word usage:

The three men talked between themselves.

Comma splice:

Never reveal your weaknesses to others, they will exploit them.

Minor or Unimportant

Qualifier before a nongradable adjective:

the most unique city

Collocation mistake:

different than that of previous years

Lack of subject-verb agreement (Type 3):

The data supports

Use of colon after a linking verb:

Three causes of inflation are:

Omission of an apostrophe in a contraction:

Its wonderful.

Hairston's categorization is a valuable first attempt at gauging the impact of usage errors on professionals who are not academics. The following evaluation of her work, then, is done in the spirit of improvement. Our own study seeks, among other things, to broaden and strengthen some methodological aspects of Hairston's study conducted over twenty years ago.

One problem with Hairston's survey is that it lacks consistency in the number of sentences used for each category. The survey includes four examples of fragments but only two examples of dangling modifiers, two apostrophe errors but only one colon error, and so on. Hairston does not explain why she chose a specific number of sentences for each error category. Nor does she account for her choice of error category in the first place. For example, she does not say why she includes misuse of the colon but not misuse of the semicolon. In addition, she neglects

to explain differences in error types: some errors, such as omitting final quotation marks, are likely the result of the writer's uneven proof-reading, while others, such as using an object form as the subject predicate, probably result from a dialect or register preference. Accordingly, these errors may or may not be intentional.

Furthermore, the survey itself includes some distracting sentences. For instance, one sentence, which is supposed to be incorrect, is actually correct. The sentence Extra copies will be provided for whoever needs them was presumably testing for the use of whomever as object. However, the sentence is correct because whoever is the subject of needs. The entire clause whoever needs them is the object of the preposition for. Similarly, it is not clear that We direct our advertising to the young prosperous and sports-minded reader is necessarily comma deficient. According to Hairston, there should be commas because there is a series of adjectives. Although these adjectives do appear together, they are not necessarily coordinate. The "writer" (and perhaps some of Hairston's respondents) may be differentiating between young and old prosperous and sports-minded readers. Yet another sentence includes two possible errors. The error in Good policemen require three qualities: courage, tolerance, and dedicated could be faulty predication or lack of parallelism.

The tallying of the surveys in Hairston's study is also problematic. Out of 84 surveys returned, the number of responses recorded for each sentence ranged from 64 to 88. If some people chose not to answer or answered with two responses, that deviation was not mentioned. Thus, the ranking of errors may not be reliable. In addition, the methodology used for ranking is not clearly described, resulting in inconsistencies and gaps in reporting. As the raw data are included in the report, however, we tried doing our own ranking. We used three different methods: (1) adding just the responses in the "bothers me a lot category," (2) adding all responses in the "bothers me a little" and "bothers me a lot" categories, (3) adding all responses in the "bothers me a little" and "bothers me a lot" categories but counting double for those responses in the "bothers me a lot" category. Unfortunately, we derived three different rankings, and inconsistencies and lapses were found in all three. For example, one sentence with noncapitalization of proper nouns (I was last employed by texas instruments company) clustered with other errors labeled very serious; however, another sentence with a noncapitalization error (A person who knows french and german will get along well in Switzerland) was ranked with other sentences labeled moderately serious. Along with inconsistencies such as this one, certain error types were not ranked; the possessive-signaling apostrophe and vague pronoun usage are two of those unmentioned.

Update of Survey

In our attempt to update this study, we made some changes in the original survey. (This study's survey can be found in Appendix B.) First, we removed sentences in categories that included more than two examples. As well as taking sentences out, we added sentences. In categories that contained only one example, we added another. This change made it possible to examine the consistency of judgments. If the sentences were judged similarly, it would be safe to say that a given type of error was or was not bothersome. In addition, we included correct sentences in order to determine whether the professionals really identified mistakes or whether they were just marking an answer to save face. For the same purpose, we added a "No error" answer. Because we added quite a few sentences, we decided to remove those that contained errors we have rarely encountered so that the survey would not become too long. We also altered a few sentences that might be considered offensive to today's readers (e.g., Man is not the only user of tools, apes can also learn to manipulate them). Finally, we added sentences that reflected errors commonly found in student papers at our institution. Along with these changes in the content of the survey, we altered the format to include a blank under a sentence for those who wished to comment on the sentence.

Surveying Procedures

The survey was first piloted and then sent out to 420 nonacademic professionals from around the United States. This pool of prospective respondents included relatives, friends, acquaintances of friends, and professionals listed on Internet sources. Only 84 of the 420 surveys were returned, the same number of responses received for the original study. Most of the respondents in our study were from the West Coast, although 15 different states were represented. Of the 84 respondents, 51 were women and 33 were men. This study thus differs from Hairston's Texas-based, male-dominated study. The number of occupations represented in the two studies is similar, between 50 and 55; however, no teachers were included in our study. Hairston surveyed five non-English-teaching professors, three deans, and a superintendent.

Results and Discussion

The comparison reported in Table 1 shows the change in the num-

ber of respondents marking sentences with usage errors as “bothers me a lot.” For this comparison, we used only sentences from our study that were from the same error category as those in Hairston’s; sentences from an error category not included in Hairston’s study were dropped. We also matched the number of sentences falling into each category. Thus, if Hairston used only one test sentence, we chose the sentence from our study that most closely matched it syntactically. When an error category includes two sentences, numbers in parentheses placed below the category indicate the number of sentences out of the total number of sentences used in the comparison. So 1/2 means that one of two sentences with the same error decreased by the amount indicated at the top of the column. The results of our survey show a trend for respondents to find errors less bothersome than the respondents did twenty years ago.

For most sentences, the percentage of “bothers me a lot” responses decreased, and the percentage of “bothers me a little” responses increased. In our study, nonacademic professionals identified a problem but were not as bothered by it. For 23 of the 39 sentences in the comparison, the number of responses in the “bothers me a lot” category dropped by 10% or more. For 6 sentences, the drop was 5% to 9%. For 5 sentences, the number dropped 1% to 4% percent. That leaves 5 sentences that did not follow the trend. In total, these sentences represent 31 different error types.

Because Hairston prepared a ranking of her errors (from “outrageous” to “unimportant”), we decided to compare a ranking of our data against hers (see Table 2). However, given that her methodology for ranking was not clear, we returned to her data and ranked them according to the number of responses in the “bothers me a little” and the “bothers me a lot” categories, counting double for the responses in the “bothers me a lot” category to account for the intensity of the response.

Following this same method, we then ranked our own data. At first, we tried to rank them according to error category, but we found this procedure problematic because both sentences from one error category were rarely ranked together. In order to retain the intensity of responses to a particular sentence, we decided instead to rank only the fifteen most annoying sentences from each study and to include a description of the usage error in each.

Our list is similar to Hairston’s. The most bothersome errors are still nonstandard verb forms, double negatives, object pronouns as subjects, and lack of subject-verb agreement. The lists do vary in some ways, however. For example, our list includes tense switching and misspelling, but Hairston’s does not. And conversely, Hairston’s list includes fragments and noncapitalization, but ours does not. The relatively low ranking of fragments differs from other studies as well (Leonard and Gilsdorf 145; Beason 41).

Table 1. Decrease in "Bothers Me a Lot" Category

Decrease: 20% or more	Decrease: 10% or more	Decrease: 5% to 9%	Decrease: 1% to 4%	No decrease
Noncapitalization (1/2)	Nonstandard past-participle verb form	Lack of subject- verb agreement Type 1 (1/2)	Tense switching	Contraction apostrophe (2/2)
Subject pronoun used as object	Double negative	Fused sentence	Lack of subject- verb agreement Type 3	Lack of subject- verb agreement Type 2
Lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement (2/2)	Object pronoun as subject	Omission of possessive apostrophe	Nonparallelism (1/2)	Fragment (1/2)
Dangling modifier (2/2)	Misspelling	Lack of commas in a series	Lack of subject- verb agreement Type 1 (1/2)	Nonstandard past verb form
Object pronoun as predicate nominative	Misplaced comma (verb/complement)	Lack of commas around interrupters (1/2)	Lack of commas around interrupters (1/2)	
Lack of possessive determiner before a gerund	Faulty predication Type 1	Faulty adverb form		
Use of a plural modifier with a singular noun	Lack of comma to set off an absolute			
	Nonparallelism (1/2)			
	Fragment (1/2)			
	Lack of subjunctive mood			
	Noncapitalization (1/2)			
	Colon after linking verb			
	Collocation mistake			
	Qualifier before a nongradable adjective			

One expected yet disturbing finding of this study was that our survey takers were inconsistent, and sometimes incorrect, in their application of rules. As previously mentioned, we made sure we had two examples for each category of error. The differences in “bothers me a lot” responses to the two examples ranged from 0% to 38%. This disparity could have been caused by having more than one problem in a sentence. However, in other cases, that reason does not hold. The sentences for subject-verb agreement (Type 2) are as follows:

Enclosed in his personnel file is his discharge papers and job references.

Included on the resume is the experience and education of the applicant.

Sixty percent of the respondents were bothered a lot by the first sentence; only 28% of these same respondents were bothered by the second sentence. We believe that many of the respondents were either viewing “experience and education” as one conceptual unit or applying a proximity rule to these sentences rather than the traditional handbook rule. Also noting inconsistencies among each of the fourteen participants in his study, Larry Beason explains the variation with both textual reasons (e.g., lexical or syntactic complexity) and extra-textual reasons (e.g., assumptions about the nature of language) (47).

By adding a “no error” category and correct sentences, we were also able to determine how well some of the rules were understood. In all but one of the error categories, there were a number of respondents who marked “no error” next to sentences that contained errors according to traditional handbook rules. Likewise, all the correct sentences were marked bothersome by some percentage of respondents. For example, next to He is one of the people who agree with the manager, 48% of the respondents marked “bothers me a little” and 37% of the respondents marked “bothers me a lot.” Given such inconsistencies, English teachers may well ask, “What should we teach our students?” If students learn and apply the handbook rule, they may be considered poor writers. This finding, by the way, supports Marianne Celce-Murcia and Diane Larsen-Freeman’s suggestion that this agreement rule be revised to reflect current usage (66).

Table 2. Comparison of Sentences with Errors (Most Bothersome to Least Bothersome)

Hairston (1979, published in 1981)	Current (2000)
1. When Mitchell moved, he brung his secretary with him. Nonstandard past verb form	1. When we was in the planning stages of the project, we underestimated costs. Subject-verb agreement (type 1)
2. There has never been no one here like that woman. Double negative	2. When Mr. Mitchell moved, he brung his golf clubs with him. Nonstandard past verb form
3. Him and Richards were the last ones hired. Object pronoun as subject	3. I can't get no one to do the job. Double negative
4. Calhoun has went after every prize in the university. Nonstandard past-participle verb form	4. The director should have went to the training session. Nonstandard past-participle verb form
5. Jones don't think it is acceptable. Subject-verb agreement (Type 1)	5. Him and Richards were the last ones hired. Object pronoun as subject
6. When we was in the planning stages of the project, we underestimated costs. Subject-verb agreement (Type 1)	6. There has never been no one here like him. Double negative
7. State employees can't hardly expect a raise this year. Word usage	7. Mrs. Gray and her are working on the project. Object pronoun as subject
8. Senator javits comes from new york. Noncapitalization of proper nouns	8. The client refused to pay the filing fee and then cancels his court date. Tense switching
9. The company is prepared to raise prices. In spite of administrative warnings. Fragment	9. Good police officers require three qualities: courage, tolerance, and dedicated. Nonparallelism, Faulty predication
10. The lieutenant treated his men bad. Faulty adverb form	10. He concentrated on his job he never took vacations. Fused sentence
11. Good policemen require three qualities: courage, tolerance, and dedicated. Nonparallelism, Faulty predication	11. Mrs. Jones don't think it's acceptable. Subject-verb agreement (Type 1)
12. The army moved my husband and I to California last year. Subject pronoun as object	12. She went to the meeting she gave her presentation. Fused sentence
13. Cox cannot predict, that street crime will diminish. Comma between verb and complement	13. She wishes the presentation would of gone better. Misspelling
14. He concentrated on his job he never took vacations. Fused sentence	14. The manager treated his employees bad. Faulty adverb form
15. I was last employed by texas instruments company. Noncapitalization of proper nouns	15. He went through a long battle a fight against unscrupulous opponents. Lack of comma to set off an appositive

Conclusion

The results of our study, and of all similar studies, are weakened by the impossibility of researchers knowing for sure which part of a sentence participants are judging. The results of this study also deserve qualification because the number of participants was small; thus, the percentages used in Table 1 might be deceiving. A 10% shift refers to only eight people. In addition, this study would be improved with better sentences. Like some of Hairston's sentences, some sentences in the current study included more than one possible error. Moreover, studies such as this one would benefit from surrounding the sentences with context. Decontextualized sentences, though they may be grammatically correct, often just sound strange.

Despite the survey's weaknesses, our study suggests that there has been a change in the ways nonacademic professionals view lapses in usage: they are not as bothered by many of the errors that were found irksome twenty years ago. Generally, fewer sentences fall into the "bothers me a lot" category. In his 1991 book, Noguchi predicted that the attitudes expressed in the Hairston study would change. This change seems to have occurred. However, Noguchi also claimed that if more females had participated in Hairston's study, "the degree of negative reactions for many of the nonstandard items would have, in all likelihood, increased rather than decreased" (27). This claim was based on sociolinguistic research from the 1970s showing that when perceiving language change as socially significant, women chose conservative rather than innovative forms. Hairston herself noted that women registered more responses in the "bothers me a lot" category (796). Noguchi's prediction, though, was not borne out in our overall findings; our female-dominated pool of respondents was less conservative, if we take *conservatism* to be related to intolerance of usage errors. Whether this finding contradicts earlier research or suggests that women today do not find these errors socially significant is not clear.

Our study does, however, suggest a dialect bias, also noted by Hairston, Noguchi, Weaver, and Rubba. Many of the high-stakes errors are common dialect features. But these features are only considered erroneous when they appear in contexts that require Edited American English. If double negatives and nonstandard pronoun forms appear on an application letter, the writer will be judged harshly. When these forms are used among speakers of the same dialect, they will go unremarked. Unfortunately, according to Johanna Rubba, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds will likely be perceived as making errors, instead of choices, and consequently be "punished more severely" for doing so.

As teachers, then, we need to encourage students to become aware

of register and dialect differences. In order to do so, we may have to go beyond the minimalist grammar recommended by Noguchi and Weaver. Students may benefit from learning sentence parts other than the subject, verb, and modifier. For example, in order to choose correct pronouns for occasions requiring Edited American English, students will have to know the difference between subject and object. In addition, to select an appropriate adverb for a formal paper, they will have to know the difference between an adverb and an adjective. Learning certain rules of formal English may help students in various ways. For example, students who develop a large repertoire of metalinguistic skills may not only produce essays that are more “correct,” but they may also develop a better understanding of the similarities and differences between the language of their homes and the language of other communities such as the university or the workplace.

We should be honest in letting students know of the inconsistency that exists in the nature and application of usage rules. Sometimes participants in our study found one instance of an error but not the second instance. Sometimes they hypercorrected; that is, they mistakenly found a structure erroneous because it resembled another erroneous structure. A common hypercorrection is to suppose that because object pronouns are incorrect in the position before the verb, they are also incorrect in positions following the verb. Additionally, there were some participants who misidentified an error (e.g., identifying a split infinitive when there was none). Such inconsistency implies a danger that subordinates are being judged unfairly. Thus, basic writing that follows the rules of formal English is not guaranteed high marks outside the classroom.

Although it is difficult to say what effect the results of this study may have, we hope that they reflect a trend toward tolerance and that this trend will continue. By “tolerance,” we do not mean lowering standards to accept careless proofreading; rather, in tolerating usage that veers from a standard, we stress the need for teachers and students to recognize the arbitrariness of usage rules, the dialect prestige associated with the mastery of certain of these rules, and the misunderstanding and misapplication of many of these rules. Thus, we encourage the teaching of a comprehensive grammar curriculum, one that focuses both on the rules of English used for various professional purposes and on the rules that describe English used for other purposes. We advocate moving away from using the traditional dichotomies of correct/incorrect, right/wrong, grammatical/ungrammatical and instead moving toward discussing usage in terms of community conventions—expectations of language usage and other behaviors that change as the defining features of the community change. Against this background, teachers and students, together, can examine language judgments—their own and those of others—as well as the beliefs and values that

support them.

Notes

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1. Three types of subject-verb agreement were examined. The first type is based on the canonical subject-verb order. The second type is based on the inversion of the subject and the main verb. The third type is similar to the first in that the subject comes before the verb. It differs from the first in that the subject in Type 3 is used as a mass noun (like *furniture*) by many professional writers.
2. The first type of faulty predication involves nonlinking verbs. In Type 2, the main verb links the subject to an inappropriate clause.
3. In current descriptions of grammar, *their* is generally considered a determiner rather than a pronoun.
4. Prepared by NCTE's Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar, *Grammar Alive! A Guide for Teachers* provides useful background information and activities addressing these goals.

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APPENDIX A

Sentences in Hairston's Study

1. Extra copies will be provided for whoever needs them.
2. Tact not anger is the best tactic in this case.
3. He concentrated on his job he never took vacations.
4. Wellington said, Trains will just cause the lower classes to move about needlessly.
5. The three men talked between themselves and decided not to fire the auditor.
6. Never reveal your weaknesses to others, they will exploit them.
7. Everyone who attends will have to pay their own expenses.
8. Murphy is the person we chose to represent us. (Results discarded.)
9. Coventry is the most unique city in England.
10. People are always impressed by her smooth manner, elegant clothes, and being witty.
11. Almost everyone dislikes her; they say she is careless and insolent.
12. The state's hiring policies intimidate the applications of ambitious people.
13. The small towns are dying. One of the problems being that young people are leaving.
14. Having argued all morning, a decision was finally reached.
15. If the regulating agency sets down on the job, everyone will suffer.
16. The situation is quite different than that of previous years.
17. A person who knows french and german will get along well in Switzerland.
18. It is late in his term and inflation is worse and no one has a solution.
19. Our companys record is exceptional.
20. The President dismissed four cabinet members among them Joseph Califano.
21. When Mitchell moved, he brung his secretary with him.
22. Three causes of inflation are: easy credit, costly oil, and consumer demand.
23. When a person moves every year, one cannot expect them to develop civic pride.
24. We direct our advertising to the young prosperous and sports-

- minded reader.
25. The worst situation is when the patient ignores warning symptoms.
 26. The army moved my husband and I to California last year.
 27. He went through a long battle. A fight against unscrupulous opponents.
 28. The lieutenant treated his men bad.
 29. Sanford inquired whether the loan was overdue?
 30. When the time came to pay the filing fee however the candidate withdrew.
 31. The data supports her hypothesis.
 32. Those are the employees that were honored.
 33. Visitors find it difficult to locate the plant, which affects business.
 34. Him and Richards were the last ones hired.
 35. There has never been no one here like that woman.
 36. These kind of errors would soon bankrupt a company.
 37. My favorite quotation is, "Take what you want and pay for it.
 38. The reporter paid attention to officers but ignores enlisted men.
 39. If I was in charge of that campaign, I would be worried about opinion polls.
 40. If Clemens had picked up that option, his family would of been rich.
 41. Its wonderful to have Graham back on the job.
 42. Calhoun has went after every prize in the university.
 43. Next year we expect to send a representative to China (if Peking allows it.
 44. Cheap labor and low costs. These are two benefits enjoyed by Taiwan-based firms.
 45. The difficult part is if the client refused to cooperate.
 46. State employees can't hardly expect a raise this year.
 47. The supervisor has no objections to us leaving.
 48. Although the candidate is new to politics she has a good chance of winning.
 49. A convicted felon no matter how good his record may not serve on a grand jury.
 50. I was last employed by texas instruments company.
 51. When leaving college, clothes suddenly become a major problem.
 52. Enclosed in his personnel file is his discharge papers and job references.
 53. The president or the vice-president are going to be at the opening ceremonies.
 54. To me, every person is an individual, and they should be treated with respect.
 55. Good policemen require three qualities: courage, tolerance, and dedicated.

56. The interruption will not effect my work.
57. I have always hoped to work in that field, now I will have the opportunity.
58. Senator javits comes from new york.
59. I believe everyone of them are guilty.
60. That is her across the street.
61. Cox cannot predict, that street crime will diminish.
62. When we was in the planning stages of the project, we underestimated costs.
63. The union claims it's rights have been violated.
64. The company is prepared to raise prices. In spite of administrative warnings.
65. Jones don't think it is acceptable.
66. Man is not the only user of tools, apes can also learn to manipulate them.

APPENDIX B

Sentences in Current Study

Note: An asterisk indicates a sentence used for the comparison reported in Table 1.

1. Extra copies will be provided for whoever needs them.
2. That is him in the front row.
- *3. These kind of errors would soon bankrupt a company.
- *4. When the time came to pay the filing fees however the candidate withdrew.
5. He lay down for a nap after the noon meeting.
6. The market shares have grown quick.
7. If I would have known about the party, I would have attended it.
- *8. The director should have went to the training session.
9. He is one of the people who agree with the manager.
10. Mrs. Gray and her are working on the project.
11. These data support our decision.
12. The manager didn't like his talking on the phone to non-customers.
- *13. A convicted felon no matter how good his record may not serve on a grand jury.
- *14. The small towns are dying. One of the problems being that young people are leaving.
- *15. Him and Richards were the last ones hired.
16. Most of the computers from the 1970's are no longer in use.
17. Given that our deadline is only three weeks away, we have decided to postpone our annual meeting, which usually takes place in March, so that we can complete the project and submit it to the committee.
- *18. We are merging with microsoft.
19. The museum bought a valuable old marble statue.
- *20. Mrs. Jones don't think it's acceptable.
- *21. If Mr. Clemens had picked up that option, his family would of been rich.
22. She went to the meeting she gave her presentation.
23. Included on the resume is the experience and education of the applicant.
24. There will be job recruiting at the university this week.
25. The staff must choose, which intern to hire.

- *26. Cheap labor and low costs. These are two benefits enjoyed by Taiwan-based firms.
- *27. People are always impressed by her smooth manner, elegant clothes, and being witty.
- *28. There has never been no one here like him.
- *29. The manager treated his employees bad.
- 30. Sit the computer on the table.
- *31. Good police officers require three qualities: courage, tolerance, and dedicated.
- *32. The state's hiring policies intimidate the applications of ambitious people.
- *33. He concentrated on his job he never took vacations.
- *34. Having argued all morning, a decision was finally reached.
- 35. We must decide which computer software to use for the design of the Web page.
- *36. The company asked my husband and I to move to California.
- *37. Enclosed in his personnel file is his discharge papers and job references.
- *38. A person who knows french will get along well in Quebec.
- 39. She did, however, attend the meeting on time.
- 40. The marketing director was a skilled diligent imaginative employee.
- 41. They asked my husband and me out to dinner.
- *42. The reporter paid attention to officers but ignores enlisted men.
- 43. These type of stocks are expensive.
- *44. Our companys record is exceptional.
- *45. Ms. Cox cannot predict, that street crime will diminish.
- 46. The work was theirs, so they were rewarded properly.
- *47. The supervisor has no objections to us leaving.
- *48. The President dismissed four cabinet members among them Joseph Califano.
- 49. Lets look over these details after lunch.
- 50. The manager went through the training program, classes that all managers have to attend.
- *51. If I was in charge of that campaign, I would be worried about opinion polls.
- 52. She wishes the presentation would of gone better.
- *53. That is her across the street.
- 54. I can't get no one to do the job.
- 55. Who did you appoint to the cabinet?
- 56. If I was you, I'd apply for that position.
- *57. Everyone who attends will have to pay their own expenses.
- 58. The hostess didn't mind him networking.
- 59. The investment is their's to handle.
- 60. Those are they in the file.

61. Who did you call?
- *62. The union claims it's rights have been violated.
- *63. Coventry is the most unique city in England.
64. Ones resume must have education and experience listed.
- *65. To me, every person is an individual, and they should be treated with respect.
66. The file will be more complete when the form is added.
67. The perks of the job are: maternity leave, three week vacations, and a company car.
- *68. The situation is quite different than that of previous years.
69. The papers and contract are laying on the table.
70. The marketing result was different than that of last month.
- *71. The data supports her hypothesis.
72. Everybody has to do his or her own work according to the manager's requests.
73. The criteria for the job is to have a Ph.D.
74. The reason that the meeting didn't go well proved that they were not prepared.
- *75. Three causes of inflation are: easy credit, costly oil, and consumer demand.
- *76. We direct our advertising to the young prosperous and sports-minded reader.
- *77. Its wonderful to have Mr. Graham back on the job.
78. If it were up to the owner and I, we'd buy the stocks.
79. There was much economic turmoil during the 1990's.
80. He went through a long battle a fight against unscrupulous opponents.
81. If I had known about the meeting, I would have had the proofs done on time.
- *82. When Mr. Mitchell moved, he brung his golf clubs with him.
- *83. When leaving college, clothes suddenly become a major problem.
84. If we would have had that information by the deadline, we would have included it in the brochure.
- *85. When we was in the planning stages of the project, we underestimated costs.
86. The client refused to pay the filing fee and then cancels his court date.
87. The 1998's volatile stock market rose more than it fell.
88. The supplies to bring for the seminar will be paper, a laptop computer, and graph sheets.