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English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Students' Speech Errors: Implications for English Language Teaching

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A B S T R A C T
This study identifies, categorizes, and analyzes speech errors committed by EFL students and explores their implications for English teaching. Data were collected through content analysis, following a qualitative descriptive design, and recorded via an audio recorder and a speech log over one month. The study revealed that speech errors were categorized into twelve types: anticipation, perseveration, substitution, metathesis (exchange), addition, blends, shift, omission (deletion), malapropism, spoonerism, sound-exchange errors, and native language interference errors. To improve students' speaking skills, English teachers may design lessons that enhance fluency and accuracy while encouraging EFL learners to develop self-repair strategies to minimize repeated errors. Additionally, they are encouraged to conduct further research on effective error correction strategies to improve teaching practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Errors are inevitable in language learning, as in any other form of human learning. Errors are not just mistakes but essential steps in acquiring a second language (Khansir, 2022; Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013). Errors should not be seen as failures but as signs of learners actively trying to understand and apply complex language rules (Komaromi & Jerković, 2023).

When individuals produce speech, they strive for what Clark and Clark (1977, p.261) call *"ideal delivery,"* where sentences are correctly constructed, clearly articulated, and fluently expressed. However, in reality, most speakers unconsciously make speech errors, also known as slips of the tongue. These errors, which occur frequently in daily communication, can disrupt fluency and hinder effective speech production. While some may find them amusing, others see them as frustrating obstacles to clear communication.

Psycholinguistic research explores these errors as part of subconscious cognitive processes. Speakers often remain unaware of their mistakes until they hear themselves say something unexpected. During the fast speech, errors become more common as speakers lose track of their utterances in real time.

Freud (1901) was one of the first to suggest that speech errors might have hidden meanings. They believed that what people unintentionally say, what they called parapraxis, or more commonly, "Freudian slips," could reveal suppressed emotions or unconscious thoughts. In Freud's view, these errors were not just minor linguistic accidents. They were clues to deeper psychological conflicts that people might not even realize they have.

Not everyone agrees with Freud's take on speech errors. Many linguists and cognitive scientists view them as breakdowns in language processing rather than windows into the unconscious mind. Yule (1996) described these errors as moments when thinking and speaking fall out of sync, causing hesitations, mispronunciations, or word swaps. Some words are retrieved faster than others based on familiarity, and errors occur when this process is disrupted.

Fromkin (1973) looked at how speech errors happen and found that sounds from one word can influence another, disrupting sentence structure. Instead of building speech word by word in real time, the brain seems to follow a pre-planned structure that sometimes gets mixed up. Studying these breakdowns helps researchers understand how language is mentally organized before it is spoken.

Other researchers have explored word retrieval struggles, those frustrating moments when a word feels just out of reach. Yule (1996) called this the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon, where some words come instantly while others seem temporarily blocked. Their research suggests this happens because the brain processes language, retrieves memory, and stores words.

Decades before Freud's theories became well-known, Meringer and Mayer (1895) studied speech errors from a linguistic perspective rather than a psychological one. While Freud believed slips of the tongue revealed hidden emotions, Meringer and Mayer saw them as a natural part of language processing. They argued that these mistakes occur when similar words interfere with one another, leading to unintended substitutions. Their work challenged

Freud's idea that speech errors expose unconscious thoughts, suggesting that they happen because the brain constantly juggles multiple language elements simultaneously.

To better understand these errors, researchers have grouped them into categories. Smith (2003) classified them as sound, morpheme, and word errors. Sound errors happen when individual sounds swap places in a sentence, morpheme errors occur when grammatical units are misplaced, and word errors involve substituting or rearranging entire words.

Similarly, Zhu and Liu (2018) identified six types of speech errors. These include exchange errors (where sounds or words trade places), anticipation errors (where a sound appears too early), and perseveration errors (where a sound sticks around too long). They also described blends, where two words unintentionally merge; shifts, where sounds or words move to the wrong place; and substitutions, where an incorrect word replaces the intended one.

Clark and Clark (1977) had more categories, identifying nine types of speech errors, including deletion (when sounds are left out), addition (when extra sounds sneak in), and misdeviation (when words take on unexpected forms). Their research showed that speech errors are not random. They follow patterns that reveal how the brain organizes language.

Some researchers believe speech errors reveal deep psychological processes. Freud (1901) suggested that slips of the tongue reflect unconscious thoughts and desires, making them more than simple mistakes. Others focus on external factors. Kafifah and Aini (2020) found that high-pressure situations increase the likelihood of speech errors. Rangkuti et al. (2023) observed that public speaking anxiety makes mistakes more common, especially when speakers are highly self-conscious.

Phonological errors also follow predictable patterns. Goldrick (2011) suggested that misplaced phonemes disrupt fluency because the brain organizes speech sounds in specific sequences. Oppenheim and Dell (2008) proposed that lexical bias plays a role in word substitutions, making similar-sounding words more likely to be confused.

Research suggests that age and language proficiency influence speech errors. Syukri (2018) observed that children produce more slips of the tongue because their phonetic structures are still developing. Yang (2013) examined additional factors, noting that first-language interference, target language influence, and cultural constraints all contribute to errors in speech.

In learning English as a foreign language (EFL), speech errors are even more common. English is compulsory in Japan, with students typically studying the language for eight to ten years (Okumura, 2017; Nemoto, 2018). Even after years of studying English, many Japanese learners still struggle with speaking, especially when conversations happen on the spot. It is not for lack of effort or ability. It is just that Japanese and English work so differently in structure and sound. If teachers do not fully understand the patterns behind these errors, fixing them in a way that genuinely helps students can be tricky. Nevertheless, when teachers understand what is causing these errors, they can support students in a way that makes speaking English feel more natural and less overwhelming.

This study examines the speech errors or slips of the tongue that Japanese EFL students make during speaking exercises. Instead of just listing these errors, it explores what causes them and what they say about how students develop language and process thoughts. Understanding these patterns can help teachers give students the right kind of support, making it easier for them to gain confidence and speak more naturally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Freudian Slips and the Theory of Parapraxis (Freud, 1901)

Freudian slips, also called parapraxis, are those awkward moments when someone accidentally says something that seems a little too honest or revealing, often catching them off guard and leaving them scrambling to take it back. The slip makes people pause, laugh, or scramble to correct themselves because sometimes, it sounds like their subconscious is speaking louder than they are. Sigmund Freud (1901) believed these were not random blunders but signs of hidden thoughts or emotions slipping into speech. Instead of a simple mix-up, these slips can expose unconscious feelings or desires trying to break through. While Freud's theory is still debated, the idea that speech mistakes can unintentionally reveal what is on someone's mind has never really gone away. Even today, people laugh about Freudian slips when a slip of the tongue makes it seem like someone's true feelings have accidentally come out.

Perceptual Loop Theory (Levelt, 1983)

The Perceptual Loop Theory by Willem Levelt (1983) explains speech errors as the brain's way of self-monitoring and correcting speech in real time. Unlike Freud, who linked slips of the tongue to hidden thoughts, Levelt viewed them as failures in the brain's internal speech-check system. Before words are spoken, the brain compares them to the intended message, correcting mistakes when possible. However, errors slip through when distractions, time pressure, or cognitive overload interfere. This explains why people sometimes catch mistakes mid-sentence and quickly correct themselves. Rather than a simple word-forming process, speech is a continuous cycle of planning, monitoring, and adjusting to ensure smooth communication.

Natural Phonology Theory (Stampe 1969)

Natural Phonology Theory, introduced by David Stampe (1969), explains how speech naturally adapts to the limitations of human articulation. This theory suggests that speakers, especially children, naturally adjust complex sounds to make them easier to pronounce. Speakers often replace tricky sounds with easier ones, leave out certain sounds, or adjust them to fit the flow of speech. These changes do not happen randomly. They follow patterns seen across many languages. As people develop stronger language skills, these simplifications fade, though some still appear in fast or casual speech. Instead of strictly following set rules, speech naturally adapts to what feels easier for the mouth and brain to process.

Theory of Sonority Scale (Jespersen, 1904)

Otto Jespersen's Theory of Sonority Scale (1904) explains how sounds' natural loudness influences their syllables' order. This idea led to the Sonority Sequencing Principle (SSP), which suggests that syllables tend to place quieter, less sonorous sounds (like stops and fricatives) at the edges and louder, more sonorous sounds (like vowels and nasals) in the middle. This pattern makes specific word structures feel smooth and natural, while others seem awkward or difficult to pronounce. Even when people make speech errors, they usually follow this pattern rather than occurring randomly. The SSP is a key concept in phonology, helping explain how syllables are structured across languages and why some sounds are easier to learn and use in both first and second languages.

Spreading-Activation Theory of Semantic Processing (Collins & Loftus, 1975)

The Spreading-Activation Theory of Semantic Processing by Allan Collins and Elizabeth Loftus (1975) explains how the brain organizes and retrieves words by linking related ideas in a mental network. When one word is activated, it naturally brings up closely connected others. For example, hearing *"apple"* might immediately bring to mind *"fruit," "red,"* or *"juice"* because these words are strongly linked in memory. The more often a connection is used, the faster the brain retrieves it. This process helps explain why some words come to mind instantly, why specific thoughts appear out of nowhere, and even why speech errors happen when unintended words pop up instead of the intended ones.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design with content analysis to examine speech errors among adult EFL students of varying English proficiency levels. Twelve participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique from an English conversation school (*eikaiwa/英会話*). Data collection involved audio recording and logbook documentation of students' natural speech during speaking exercises and practice sessions over one month. Speech errors were then identified, categorized, and analyzed, with results tabulated and representative utterances presented for discussion. Expert evaluators were consulted to validate the results of the speech error analysis. Ethical considerations were also considered.

RESEARCH RESULT

Table 1 summarizes the errors made by EFL students over a month, as documented, identified, categorized, and analyzed by the researcher.

Table 1. Summary of Speech Errors with Representative Utterances

Target Utterance	Error Utterance	Category	Type of error
1. Ron sensei, please give me the reading list for next week's homework.	"Ron sensei, please give me the **leading list* (reading list) for next week's homework."	Phonological	Anticipation/ Native language interference
2. Events? Wait, Ron sensei, do you celebrate April Fool's Day in the Philippines?	"Events? Wait, Ron sensei, do you have April **Pool's* (Fool's) Day in the Philippines?"	Phonological	Perseveration
3. I like the main character in the story because she has an immortal life.	"I like the main character in the story because she has an **immoral life* (immortal life)."	Lexical	Substitution (Phonological)
4. Ron sensei, can I ask you about the test?	"Ron sensei, can I **aks* (ask) you about the test?"	Phonological	Metathesis/ Exchange Dialectical
5. I like black. I like dogs.	"I **liku* (like) **burakku* (black). I **liku* (like) **doggu* (dogs)."	Phonological	Addition (Phonological)/ Native language interference
6. Ron sensei, look at this picture. This is the number one university in Kagawa, Japan for me.	"Ron sensei, look at this picture. This is the number one **universary* (university) in Kagawa, Japan for me."	Lexical	Blends
7. In summary, the school plans to implement new rules next year.	"In summary, the school plans to **implements* new rules next year."	Morphological	Shift
8. In will go to the school ground.	"I will go to the school **floor* (ground)."	Lexical	Substitution (Semantic)
9. Yes, she can play the piano well.	"Yes, she can **pay* (play) the piano well."	Phonological	Omission/Deletion
10. We should visit the brass band club today.	"We, * *(I, and you)* should visit the brass band club today."	Lexical	Addition (Syntactic)

11. In Japan, dead bodies were buried before, but now they are cremated.	"In Japan, dead bodies were buried before, but now they are **concreted* (concreted)."	Lexical	Malapropism,
12. Oh yes, I'll make sure to pack my lunch.	"Oh yes, I'll make sure to **lack my punch!* (pack my lunch)."	Lexical	Spoonerism
13. Let us toss a coin or do 'janken' (rock, paper, scissors) to know which group will start the sharing.	"Let us **toin a coss* (toss a coin) or do 'janken' (rock, paper, scissors) to know which group will start the sharing."	Phonological	Sound-exchange error

DISCUSSION

Error 1: Anticipation

Actual Utterance:

Student: *"Ron sensei, please give me the *leading list (reading list) for next week's homework."*

Teacher: *"Sorry, what was that?"*

Discussion/Analysis:

This speech error is categorized as anticipation, a phonemic segment error that occurs when a sound from a later part of the utterance appears earlier than intended. In this case, the */l/* sound from the word *"list"* is mistakenly used at the beginning of the earlier word *"reading,"* resulting in the incorrect pronunciation of *"leading."* This error happens when a later segment replaces an earlier one within the same utterance.

This speech error can also be attributed to native language interference, which occurs when elements of a speaker's first language influence the learning and production of a second language. Such elements may include phonological, grammatical, lexical, and orthographic features (Skiba, 1997). Errors in a learner's foreign language that can be traced back to their native language are known as interlingual errors (Lott, 1983).

Japanese speakers, in particular, often struggle to distinguish between */r/* and */l/* sounds in English. This difficulty arises because these sounds do not exist as separate phonemes in Japanese. Instead, Japanese has a single liquid phoneme */r/*, which is typically realized as an apico-alveolar tap *[r]* and sometimes as an alveolar lateral approximant *[l]*. The Japanese "*ra ri ru re ro*" row (ら, り, る, れ, ろ) in the phonetic hiragana alphabet produces a sound that falls between English */r/* and */l/*. As a result, English words such as *"rice"* may be pronounced as *"lice"* and *"balloon"* as *"baroon."* This phenomenon led to the humorous term *"Engrish,"* which describes mispronunciations and mistranslations in Japanese English.

Research has shown that Japanese speakers who learn English later in life often struggle to hear and accurately produce the distinct */r/* and */l/* sounds. Best

and Strange (1992) and Yamada and Tohkura (1992) found that Japanese speakers perceive English */r/* as something similar to a compressed-lip velar approximant [ɰ]. Other studies suggest that Japanese learners perceive English */r/* as a poorly formed version of their native */r/.* Goto (1971) reported that even fluent Japanese speakers of English who have lived in English-speaking countries for extended periods still struggle to differentiate the acoustic properties of */r/* and */l/.* Even if they can produce the sounds correctly in speech, their perception of the distinction remains weak.

However, research also suggests that Japanese speakers can distinguish between */r/* and */l/* when the sounds are not mentally processed as speech. Miyawaki et al. (1975) found that Japanese speakers could differentiate */r/* and */l/* as well as native English speakers when the sounds were acoustically manipulated to remove speech-like qualities, leaving only the F3 component. In speech science, the F3 component refers to the third formant frequency, an important acoustic cue crucial in distinguishing */r/* and */l/* in English. Native English speakers rely on it to hear the difference, while Japanese speakers may not naturally process this distinction due to their linguistic background unless isolated from other speech cues. Similarly, Lively et al. (1993) observed that a speaker's ability to distinguish between the two sounds depends on their position within a word. English */r/* and */l/* were most effortless to differentiate in word-final positions (preceded by a vowel), followed by word-initial positions. They were most difficult to distinguish when occurring in consonant clusters or between vowels.

Additionally, Bradlow et al. (1997) provided evidence that perception and production are linked, meaning that improvements in perception generally transfer to better pronunciation. However, individual learning strategies vary widely, and there may be a limited correlation between perception and production skills following perception-based training.

Error 2: Perseveration

Actual Utterance:

Teacher: *"Do you celebrate any annual cultural events in Japan?"*

Student: *"Events? Wait, Ron sensei, do you have April *Pool's (Fool's) Day in the Philippines?"*

Teacher: *"Do you mean April Fool's Day? Yes, we observe it in the Philippines."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The student made a speech error classified as perseveration, which occurs when a sound from a previous word reappears or replaces a segment in a later word within the same utterance. In this case, the */p/* sound from *"April"* persists and influences the pronunciation of *"Fool's,"* resulting in the incorrect utterance *"Pool's"* instead of *"Fool's."*

One of the primary causes of perseveration errors is cognitive load, particularly the limitations of working memory during language production. When processing multiple linguistic elements simultaneously, such as in fast communication or complex sentences, students may struggle with cognitive organization, leading to repeated words (Fossett et al., 2015).

Nozari and Dell (2012) emphasize that such slips illustrate the dynamic interaction between lexical storage and speech production mechanisms, where persisted activation misdirects subsequent speech output. This tendency is particularly pronounced in EFL learners who may experience processing challenges navigating two linguistic systems.

Error 3: Substitution (Phonological)

Actual Utterances:

Teacher: *"What do you like about the story?"*

Student: *"I like the main character in the story because she has an *immoral life. (immortal life)."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The speech error in this utterance is a phonologically based word substitution. One prominent cause of phonologically based substitutions is phonological overlap. Substitution errors occur when a segment in speech is replaced by a closely related segment, typically due to similarities in sound or meaning. In this case, the student mistakenly substituted "*immortal*" with "*immoral*" because of their phonetic resemblance.

Research in speech production supports the role of phonological similarity in word substitution errors. Dell and Reich (1981) analyzed speech error data and found that words sharing similar phonological structures are more likely to be confused during retrieval. This suggests that substitution errors are not random but reflect underlying cognitive processes that govern word retrieval in speech production. Their findings align with the observed error in this utterance, where the similarity between "*immortal*" and "*immoral*" likely contributed to the misretrieval of the intended word.

Error 4: Metathesis

Actual Utterances:

Student: *"Ron sensei, can I *aks (ask) you about the test."*

Teacher: *"Okay, what do you want to know?"*

Discussion/Analysis:

The speech error in this utterance is an example of metathesis, which occurs when two sounds within a word swap places. In this case, the student pronounced *"ask"* (*/æsk/*) as *"aks"* (*/æks/*) by switching the positions of the */s/* and */k/* sounds. This type of phonological reordering is a common linguistic phenomenon in many languages.

This metathesis pattern can be traced back to early English literature, such as Beowulf (7th century AD). Interestingly, the *"aks"* pronunciation has been preserved in some English dialects, making it more than just a speech error. It is also a recognized variant in specific linguistic communities. This can be attributed to the fact that English has very few words ending in */sk/* but many ending in */ks/*, influencing the tendency for this switch to occur.

Metathesis is one of the most widespread phonological processes in languages with consonant clusters. It involves the transposition of sounds within a word, usually affecting consonants. In this case, the middle and final sounds */s/* and */k/* in the word *"ask"* are reversed, leading to the pronunciation *"aks."* This

transposition combines anticipation (where a sound appears earlier than intended) and perseveration (where a sound lingers from an earlier position).

Phonological processing issues cause the error committed. Mooney (2022) posits that speech production relies on manipulating phonological structures, which can lead to metathesis when segments are improperly sequenced. It may also be connected to syllable structure constraints. Finley's (2017) investigation into phonological constraints also reveals that speakers adjust sounds according to their native phonological rules. This results in metathesis, mainly when specific phonemes are more manageable to articulate in certain positions. Metathesis can also be caused by orthographic influence. It is prevalent in the speech of language learners who still align their understanding of spelling with pronunciation (Czaplicki, 2009). This underscores the connection between written forms and spoken errors.

This metathesis error is also associated with specific dialects of English. In some English varieties, the word *"ask"* is naturally pronounced as *"aks"*, leading to sentences like *"May I ax you a question?"* While this pronunciation might be considered an error in Standard English, it has been passed down through generations and remains an accepted variant in some dialects. The pronunciation shift is part of the natural evolution of language, similar to how historical English accents, such as those during Shakespeare's time, have vastly changed over centuries, affecting pronunciation, word stress, and even the delivery of puns and jokes in classical literature.

Error 5: Addition (Phonological)

Actual Utterances:

Ron (Teacher): *"What ... do you like?"*

Student: *"I *liku (like) *burakku (black). I *liku (like) *doggu *(dogs)."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The speech error in this utterance is classified as an addition, which occurs when a speaker inserts an extra sound into a word or introduces additional linguistic material that was not part of the intended utterance. In this case, instead of saying, "*I like black. I like dogs,*" the speaker added the vowel sound */u/* at the end of "*like,*" "*black,*" and "*dog,*" resulting in "*I liku buhlacku. I liku doguh.*" This is an example of a phonological/phoneme (sound) addition error.

This error can also be attributed to first language (L1) interference, specifically from the katakana syllabary used in the Japanese writing system. Katakana pronunciation refers to how English words are adapted into katakana, often altering their original phonetics. For example, English words such as "*sit*" become "*shitto,*" "*light,*" becomes "*raito,*" and "*thing*" becomes "*shingu.*" While katakana pronunciation is an initial aid for Japanese learners in acquiring English phonetics, it can hinder accurate pronunciation when it becomes the default speaking pattern. The Japanese katakana script lacks specific phonemes present in English. Consequently, learners often substitute English sounds with their closest katakana equivalents. This substitution can lead to inconsistencies in pronunciation, which is noted in a study exploring the katakana effect (Martin, 2004).

The influence of katakana pronunciation presents a major challenge in English oral proficiency for Japanese learners. A significant part of this interference stems from the phonetic structure of katakana, which modifies foreign words to fit Japanese phonological patterns. In doing so, these words lose their original English pronunciation and take on a uniquely Japanese articulation. Examples include "*hamburger*" pronounced as */hanbaagaa/*, "*table*" as */teiburu/*, "*world*" as */waarudo/,* "*curtain*" as */kaaten/*, and "*stop*" as */sutoppu/.*

Since many foreign loanwords in Japanese originate from English, katakana words often reflect English terms that have been phonologically transformed. As a result, when Japanese speakers of English attempt to pronounce these words, they may unconsciously apply katakana pronunciation, leading to L1 (native language) interference in their English speech. This interference often makes it difficult for non-Japanese English speakers to understand Japanese speakers, as their pronunciation differs significantly from standard English.

Error 6: Blend

Actual Utterances:

Student: *"Ron sensei, look at this picture. This is the number one *universary (university) in Kagawa, Japan for me."*

Teacher: *"Wow! It is so beautiful."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The student's utterance illustrates a blend error, a lexical selection error in which two competing words are activated simultaneously, leading to their unintentional fusion into a single incorrect form. In this case, the student blended the words *"university"* and *"anniversary,"* resulting in the incorrect output *"universary."*

Blend errors occur because multiple related words are activated simultaneously, causing elements of both to merge into a single utterance. According to Fromkin (1971), these errors arise when speakers retrieve multiple lexical entries simultaneously and fail to suppress one before articulation. Fromkin's studies on speech errors provide numerous instances where words sharing phonological or semantic similarities are inadvertently combined.

Dell (1986) further explains that lexical selection errors, including blends, occur due to misactivated word representations in the mental lexicon. When semantically or phonologically related words compete for selection, activation overlap can cause elements from both words to merge into a blend error.

Another explanation comes from Baars' (1980) Competing Plans Hypothesis, which suggests that speakers generate multiple speech plans before selecting the final output. A blend error can occur when two competing words are activated simultaneously, and the speaker fails to suppress one. This theory explains why *"university"* and *"anniversary"* were combined, as both words were likely activated at the same time, leading to the fusion *"universary."*

Blends are more likely to occur when words have similar sounds or are thematically connected, leading to cognitive merging during speech production. In this example, *'university'* and *'anniversary'* share multiple phonemes, particularly the stressed sequence */vɜːrs/,* which may have contributed to their

partial replacement and combination into a single erroneous word. However, lexical blending is not solely based on phonological similarity. It also reflects cognitive processes involved in lexical retrieval and competition.

Error 7: Shift

Actual Utterances:
Teacher: *"Can you help me translate this document?"*
Student: *"In summary, the school plans to *implements (implement) new rules next year."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The student's response illustrates a shift error, precisely a morpheme shift error, where a bound morpheme (in this case, the third-person singular present tense suffix */-s/*) is incorrectly attached to a verb that does not require it. Instead of correctly saying, *"... the school plans to implement new rules,"* the student erroneously used *"implements,"* misplacing the */-s/* suffix.

According to Garrett's Model of Sentence Production (1980), morpheme shift errors occur at the functional level, where grammatical functions and morphemes are assigned before phonological encoding. A misassignment at this stage leads to the incorrect placement of inflectional morphemes, as observed in the student's utterance. Garrett's research on speech error patterns found that morpheme shifts frequently involve misplaced inflectional markers, supporting the idea that morphological and phonological processing occurs in separate stages during speech production.

The Transformational Hypothesis, derived from Chomsky's Transformational Grammar (1957), suggests that syntactic transformations can influence morpheme placement in sentence construction. When these transformations are misapplied, errors such as the misplacement of inflectional morphemes occur. In this case, the */-s/* morpheme was mistakenly imposed on *"implement,"* leading to the incorrect formation of *"implements."*

Additionally, Levelt's (1983) Perceptual Loop Theory suggests that speakers internally monitor their speech before articulation. However, morphological errors such as morpheme shifts may not always be detected before utterance completion, primarily when speakers are focused on higher-level grammatical structuring rather than individual morphemes.

This error highlights the complexity of morphological encoding in speech production. Misassigning grammatical morphemes during sentence construction demonstrates how morphosyntactic structures are processed independently from phonological encoding and word retrieval, reinforcing that speech errors reflect underlying cognitive processes involved in language formulation.

Error 8

Actual Utterances:
Teacher: *"Where are you going?"*
Student: *"I will go to the school *floor (ground)."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The error committed by the student is a semantic substitution error, where a word is mistakenly replaced with another that has a similar meaning but is

incorrect in context. In this case, the student intended to say *"ground"* but instead said *"floor"* because both words refer to surfaces but differ in usage – *"ground"* refers to the earth's surface, while *"floor"* refers to the man-made surface inside a building.

Fromkin (1971) analyzed such errors and found that they often involve substitutions between semantically related words, even with little phonological similarity. This suggests that the error likely occurred during the lexical selection phase of speech production, where multiple related words were activated, and the wrong one was chosen.

According to Garrett's Model of Speech Production (1980), substitution errors occur at the functional level, where abstract word meanings (lemmas) are selected before phonological encoding. The misselection of *"floor"* instead of *"ground"* suggests that the speaker retrieved a word from the same semantic field but failed to access the correct one. Additionally, substitution errors highlight the interaction between linguistic processing and working memory, as speakers must retrieve and maintain lexical items while forming an utterance. When multiple related words are activated, interference can cause an incorrect selection. Furthermore, Levelt's (1983) Perceptual Loop Theory suggests that speakers internally monitor their speech before articulation; however, if the monitoring system fails to detect the inappropriate substitution, the error surfaces in spoken language.

Harley and MacAndrew (2001) further explored the constraints upon word substitution speech errors, noting that the similarity between the target word and the intrusion influences semantic and phonological substitutions. Their study found that words are often replaced by more imageable competitors in semantic substitution errors, indicating that the mental imagery associated with words can impact lexical selection.

Semantic substitution errors are common in spontaneous speech and second-language acquisition. For example, a speaker might say *"elevator"* instead of *"escalator"* because both involve vertical transportation, or *"church"* instead of "temple" because both are places of worship. These errors reveal how words stored in related semantic fields can interfere with one another during retrieval (Garrett, 1980).

Error 9: Omission/Deletion

Actual Utterances:

Teacher: *"Your daughter is so talented. She is so good at playing musical instruments."*

Student: *"Yes, she can *pay the piano well."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The speech error in this utterance is classified as omission (deletion), occurring when a necessary sound or phoneme is left out during speech production. In this case, the student omitted the */l/* sound in *"play,"* resulting in the incorrect utterance *"pay"* instead.

Omission errors often arise due to articulatory difficulty, especially when certain sounds require more effort to pronounce. The Sonority Scale proposed by Jespersen (1904) explains that speech sounds are hierarchically ranked based on

their loudness and prominence in syllables. Liquids such as */l/* are relatively sonorous but less stable in consonant clusters compared to stops and vowels. Due to this, learners struggling with complex phonological structures may omit a liquid like */l/* when it follows a less sonorous consonant like */p/.* This process aligns with Natural Phonology Theory by Stampe (1969), which suggests that speakers naturally simplify challenging sound patterns to facilitate articulation.

Omission errors also impact communication, as missing phonemes can alter a word's meaning and lead to misinterpretation. According to Garrett's Model of Speech Production (1980), such errors occur when specific phonemes fail to be wholly encoded in the phonological structure of an utterance. Levelt's (1983) Perceptual Loop Theory further suggests that speakers monitor their speech, but during rapid communication, missing sounds may not be detected before articulation, resulting in phoneme omission.

Error 10: Addition (Syntactic)

Actual Utterances:
Ron: *"I want to watch some of the students' club activities."*
Student: *"We, *(I, and you) should visit the brass band club today."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The speech error in this utterance is classified as an addition, which occurs when a speaker inserts extra linguistic material into an utterance that was not originally intended. In this case, instead of saying, *"We should visit the brass band club today,"* the speaker added *"I"* and *"you,"* resulting in the incorrect phrase *"We, I, and you should visit the brass band club today."* This is an example of a syntactic addition error, where unnecessary words were inserted rather than substituted for others. Addition errors are cases where extra sounds, syllables, or words are unintentionally inserted during speech production.

Addition errors often occur due to overproduction or mismanagement of syntactic structure during speech formulation. According to Garrett's Model of Speech Production (1980), speech errors can arise when multiple competing grammatical structures are activated simultaneously, leading to unintended insertions of words or phrases. In this case, the speaker may have initially considered multiple sentence structures (e.g., *"I should visit..."* or *"We should visit..."*) and inadvertently included elements from both.

This error may also be linked to conceptual planning issues, where the speaker attempts to clarify or emphasize the subject but fails to edit the final utterance before speaking. According to Levelt's (1983) Perceptual Loop Theory, speakers monitor their speech output and attempt to edit errors before articulation. However, redundant elements may not be detected before speaking in real-time speech production, leading to addition errors.

Fromkin (1973) highlights that these errors provide insight into the complexities of language processing and how cognitive mechanisms manage linguistic structures in real time. Addition errors, like other speech errors, reflect how the brain organizes and retrieves linguistic elements during spontaneous speech.

Error 11: Malapropism

Actual Utterances:

Teacher: *"Do you still practice traditional burials, where the deceased are buried underground?"*

Student: *"In Japan, dead bodies were buried before, but now they are *concreted (cremated)."*

Discussion/Analysis:

The speech error committed by the speaker is classified as a malapropism (also known as malaprop, acyrologia, or Dogberryism). A malapropism occurs when a speaker mistakenly uses an incorrect word that sounds similar to the intended word, leading to a nonsensical or humorous utterance. Instead of "*cremated,*" the speaker said "*concreted,*" a word with some phonetic overlap but an entirely different meaning.

Malapropisms occur due to lexical retrieval errors, where the brain selects a phonologically similar but semantically incorrect word. Davidson (1986) suggests that malapropisms provide insight into cognitive processes in speech production, illustrating how the brain organizes and retrieves words. These errors typically maintain the grammatical category of the intended word—nouns replace nouns, verbs replace verbs—indicating that speech errors are structured rather than random (Aitchison, 2003).

Kristianti (2024) notes that malapropisms highlight the phonetic and semantic relationships between words, showing how sound similarity can influence lexical selection. Chan and Vitevitch (2010) also explain that phonologically similar words can interfere with lexical retrieval, increasing the likelihood of substitution errors like malapropisms.

Error 12: Spoonerism

Actual Utterances:

Teacher: "*Don't forget to pack your lunch for the field trip tomorrow!*"

Student: "*Oh yes, I'll make sure to *lack my punch! (pack my lunch)."*

Discussion/Analysis:

This speech error is classified as a spoonerism, a phonological error in which the initial sounds of two words are swapped, creating an unintended phrase. In this case, the student mistakenly said "lack my punch" instead of *"pack my lunch,"* switching the initial sounds */p/* and */l/* between the two words.

Spoonerisms are named after Reverend William Archibald Spooner (1901), a 19th-century scholar known for unintentionally mixing up sounds in speech. According to Dell's Spreading Activation Model (1986), phonemes in an utterance are activated simultaneously during speech production. If multiple phonemes compete for activation, their order may be incorrectly processed, leading to errors like spoonerisms.

Additionally, Levelt's (1983) Perceptual Loop Theory suggests that speakers monitor their speech before articulation. However, when speech is produced rapidly, these errors can slip through before being corrected. Nooteboom and Quené (2008) further explain that phonological units close in articulation are more likely to be transposed, especially when a speaker is speaking quickly or under cognitive load.

Error 13: Sound-exchange Error
Actual Utterances:
Teacher: *"Class, which group will go first?"*
Student: *"Let us *toin a coss (toss a coin) or do "janken" (rock, paper, scissors) to know which group group will start the sharing."*
Discussion/Analysis:

This speech error is classified as a sound-exchange error, which occurs when two sounds from different words swap places. Instead of saying *'toss a coin,'* the speaker mistakenly said *'toin a coss,'* switching the initial /t/ and /k/ sounds between the two words.

This type of error is a performance error resulting from temporary lapses in speech production rather than an underlying language deficit. According to Dell's Spreading Activation Model (1986), sound exchange errors occur when phonemes in an utterance are activated in the wrong sequence, leading to an incorrect but still recognizable output.

Schriefers et al. (1990) explored lexical access in speech production and found that sound-exchange errors occur due to disruptions in phonological encoding. Their research supports a two-stage model of lexical access, where words are first retrieved at the semantic and syntactic level (lemma retrieval) before being encoded phonologically. Errors like sound exchanges highlight how phonemes can be misordered during this process, especially in fast or spontaneous speech.

Implications for English Language Teaching

Speech errors, or slips of the tongue, offer valuable insight into how learners process language and where they struggle in English Language Teaching (ELT). These mistakes often stem from phonetic difficulties, first-language interference, or psychological factors like stress and time pressure. For example, substitution errors may indicate trouble with specific sounds, highlighting the need for targeted pronunciation practice. A supportive, low-anxiety learning environment can help reduce these slips, making students more comfortable speaking and improving fluency. Analyzing speech errors helps teachers refine their instruction and encourages students to view mistakes as a natural part of learning. Frequent errors can shake a learner's confidence, making them hesitant to participate, but when self-correction and peer feedback are encouraged, students develop resilience and communication skills. Recognizing and addressing speech errors ultimately leads to more effective teaching, better student engagement, and excellent language proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded that speech errors are a natural occurrence in speech production. Even native and near-native speakers of English occasionally commit slips of the tongue. The speech errors observed in students result from interference in phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic aspects of an utterance, as well as psychological factors affecting the speaker. These errors primarily occur due to the movement, replacement, transposition, substitution, or addition of sounds in an utterance. Based on the findings, it is recommended

that English teachers design lessons that enhance fluency and accuracy while encouraging EFL learners to develop self-repair strategies to minimize recurring errors. Additionally, educators are encouraged to research effective error correction strategies to improve teaching practices.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

While this study contributes to understanding speech errors in EFL learners, its findings are subject to limitations related to sample size, data collection methods, qualitative analysis, and contextual variability. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating more extensive, diverse samples, extended data collection periods, and experimental approaches to enhance validity and applicability in EFL teaching and learning.

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