



Receptive and Expressive Errors

Students often demonstrate accurate processing (hearing) of a word but make phonological errors when attempting to reproduce that word. Five types of phonological errors occur in processing, speaking, or decoding.

Types of Phonological Errors

<i>What Student Said</i>	<i>What Student Meant</i>	<i>Error Type</i>
Sit	Slit	<i>Omission or deletion of a phoneme</i>
Slit	Sit	<i>Addition or insertion of a phoneme</i>
Slit	Silt	<i>Transposition or reversal of phonemes</i>
Stit	Slit	<i>Assimilation or repetition of a phoneme</i>
Spit	Slit	<i>Substitution of one phoneme for another</i>

Receptive (Processing) Errors

With processing or receptive errors, students mishear a word in spite of having normal hearing in pure tone testing. As the contextual examples below illustrate, an error of just one phoneme in a word can cause a major change in meaning. In many cases, students “hear” – or at least opt for – a more familiar word.

Teacher: Use “lunge” in a sentence.

Student: *The students lunged around all afternoon.*

This student probably uses “lounge” and “lunge” interchangeably without detecting the difference in the single vowel sound.

Teacher: Describe a “bare head”.

Student: *(Gestures and laughs.) Nothing up there between the ears.*

Teacher: Use “coax” in a sentence.

Student: *He put several coats of paint on the wall.*

Teacher: Did you drive through Pennsylvania on your trip?

Student: *Oh, no! I would never want to go to Pennsylvania.*

In the third example above, the teacher learned that the student was thinking of Transylvania, with which he was probably familiar from stories about Dracula.

Student: *Are you going to watch the college football playoffs? Most people think the Nebraska Corn Huskies are dogs, but they’re not! They’re really football players! (The student meant “Huskers.”)*

Student: *My mom plants bullets in the spring. (The student meant “bulbs”.)*

Teacher: *(Giving a vocabulary pretest in a literature class.) Define “rebel”.*

Student: *Rebel: a little stone in a driveway or park.*

Teacher: *(Discussing harbor seals in a science class.)*

Student: *Harvard seals. All I hear about is Harvard. Does Harvard have to have its name on everything around here?*

Examples of Receptive Errors

<i>What Student Heard</i>	<i>What Was Said</i>	<i>Type of Phonological Error</i>
Lounge	Lunge	Interior vowel substitution
Airhead	Bare head	Did not process initial consonant
Coats	Coax	Interior consonant substitution
Transylvania	Pennsylvania	Substituted most of first syllable in four-syllable word
Corn Huskies	Corn Huskers	Interior phoneme substitution
Bullets	Bulbs	Addition plus substitution of interior phonemes
Pebble	Rebel	Initial consonant substitution
Harvard	Harbor	Interior phoneme substitution plus addition of final phoneme



Expressive (Production/Word Retrieval) Errors

The table below provides examples of expressive errors in context and classifies them according to type. The last three examples in the table include a semantic component as well. Specifically, one student associated “Barnes” with “barns” to produce “stable” instead of “Noble”. Another student incorrectly chose “navigator” as a synonym for “narrator”. In the last example, the student’s error involves place.

Examples of Expressive Errors in Context

<i>What Students Said</i>	<i>What Student Meant to Say</i>	<i>Type of Phonological Error</i>
Remember, Jane, patience is a <i>virgin</i> .	Virtue	Substitution
That’s because of the <i>disability</i> rule.	Divisibility	Omission plus substitution
In an <i>error</i> of Roman time...	Era	Addition (<i>Bostonians commonly add an r to most words that end in a vowel, both in spoken and written expression.</i>)
They didn’t have that book at Barnes and <i>Stable</i> .	Noble	Substitution
He’s the <i>navigator</i> of the story.	Narrator	Substitution
Instead of going to Christy’s, can we go to the store in <i>Mongolia</i> ?	Magnolia	Transposition plus substitution

Word Level Examples of Expressive Errors

<i>What Students Said</i>	<i>What Student Meant to Say</i>	<i>Type of Phonological Error</i>
Shing Slot	Sling Shot	Transposition
Codorado	Colorado	Assimilation
Death	Deaf	Substitution
Servus	Versus	Transposition
Photographree	Photography	Substitution plus insertion
Extercise	Exercise	Insertion
Pervered	Preserved	Reversals plus omission
Lopice station	Police station	Transposition
Tempescope	Telescope	Substitution plus insertion
Lippiphines	Phillipines	Transpositions
‘Clip	Eclipse	Omissions

Frequently, a student with word retrieval deficits appears to retrieve from neighboring words in phonological storage before producing the target word. For example, one student who was asked to label a scroll produced “scrab-scrable-scroll.” This student had studied Egypt and, in producing “scrab,” was probably combining “scarab” with the familiar “scab.” In producing “scrable,” he retained the scr- cluster, knew an *l* belonged in the word, and probably made a linkage to the board game “Scrabble.” Only then did this student produce the correct word, “scroll.”

Helping Students Say What They Mean and Mean What They Say: Thinking About Language

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