LING440 - Lab 1b
Due Fri. 2/8/13
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In Lab 1b, you will try to make sense of the speech error data collected by the class, considering what it may suggest about the speech production system. 25% of your grade for Lab 1 will come from Part a and 75% from Part b. You may use the Traxler chapter (pp 43-45) and the Fromkin (1971) reading as basic background. For any answer where you refer to a particular error in the dataset, be sure to provide BOTH the content of the error AND the ID number in the Excel file for that error.

A. Exploring the dataset and methodological considerations

1. Did you encounter challenges in collecting the dataset? What were they? Can you think of ways of improving the methodology to address these challenges?

2. Take a few minutes to look through the dataset. (a) What kinds of variability do you observe in the data from the different collectors (provide specific examples)? (b) Why might this be expected? (c) How could/should one take this variability into consideration when interpreting speech error data in this lab and in the broader literature?

3. What benefits does this technique have compared to running production experiments in the lab where participants are encouraged to produce particular kinds of utterances?

4. Conversely, what are the drawbacks?

5. Are there any cases in the corpus that you think might reflect differences in dialect or violations of prescriptive grammar rather than true errors of the production system? Explain.

B. Phonological errors

1. Provide at least 5 examples of what might be considered phonological errors from the corpus (try to choose examples from different collectors if possible).

2. Do you see any examples of phonological substitution?

3. What about anticipation or perseveration? Does one appear more common than the other?

4. Does it appear that segments with shared phonological features are more likely to be substituted or replaced? Explain.

5. There is at least one example of an error in which the segments are correct but the stress is misplaced—what is it? Would you call this a phonological error or a lexical error? Explain.

6. Do the errors you observe provide information on how far in advance speakers are planning the utterance? Explain.
8. Fromkin (1971) gives examples in which individual segments of a consonant cluster are transposed. Given what you know about English phonology, why do you think this doesn’t happen in Error #175?

C. Lexical errors

1. Provide at least 5 examples of what might be considered lexical errors from the corpus (try to choose examples from different collectors if possible).

2. What are some examples in which phonologically similar words seem to be exchanged?

3. What are some examples in which semantically similar words seem to be exchanged?

4. Do the lexical exchanges and replacements in this corpus always involve words of the same syntactic category?

5. If we only had the lexical error data, how far in advance would it suggest speakers are able to plan the utterance? If you compare the semantic to the phonological errors, does it appear that the distance over which phonological information is planned is longer or shorter than the distance over which semantic information is planned?

D. Morphological errors

1. Provide at least 2 examples of what might be considered morphological errors from the corpus (e.g. errors of tense, agreement, etc.)

2. If you had to speculate, what step do you think might go wrong in the production system to cause these errors?

E. Restatements

1. Provide at least 3 examples from the corpus of cases in which the speaker stopped and reframed part of the utterance.

2. What do you think these cases tell us about the mechanisms involved in planning and producing at the sentence-level? Did you notice any cases where the speaker appeared to ‘talk themselves into a hole’, in other words starting the sentence in a way that would be hard to finish grammatically?

F. Final/additional thoughts

1. Any additional observations that you found interesting?

2. What is your overall opinion now about this method of investigating the production system?