URSE OF STUDY IN GRAMMAR

Based Upon the Grammatical Errors of School Children of Kansas City, Missouri

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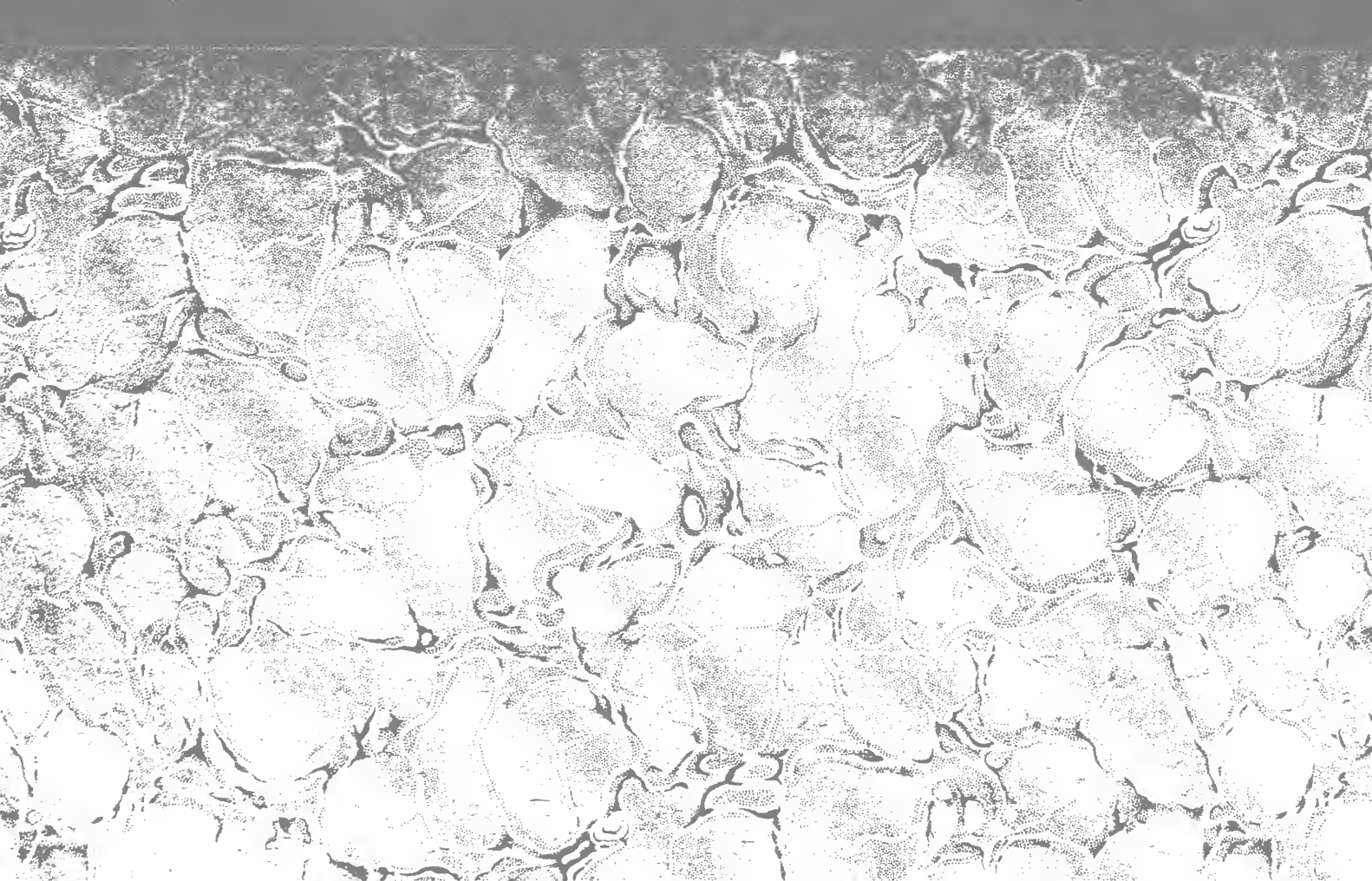

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I. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Certain criticisms are urged persistently against the course of study in grammar in the upper grades of the elementary school. The most prominent of these bases its claims upon the theory that the function of grammar in the grades is to serve as an aid to correct oral and written expression, and asserts that many of the rules of grammar taught are not broken by children and ought not, therefore, to be included in the course of study.

Although this criticism has been current for many years, no systematic attempt seems to have been made to elaborate it by a study of the oral and written errors of the children who study grammar. This task was undertaken when Superintendent I. I. Cammack provided the opportunity and the school board of Kansas City provided the money for an investigation in the schools of Kansas City, Missouri.

The purpose of the investigation was to find (1) what errors in the use of oral and written language forms violating rules of grammar, were made by the children of the Kansas City elementary schools, (2) what rules in grammar were necessary in order to include and understand these items, and (3) what items in the present course of study in Kansas City were included but unnecessary, and what items should be included but were omitted.

In reading this study, the following facts should be borne in mind:

(1) The list of grammatical rules, obviously, should include only grammatical rules, but the errors based upon the misuse of these rules are sometimes not commonly called grammatical errors. For instance, the rule, *A sentence is a group of words expressing a thought*, is clearly a grammatical rule, but the failure to put a period at the end of a sentence, although based upon a disregard of this rule, is classed as an error in punctuation. Consequently, in collecting errors dependent upon the misuse of rules of grammar, many cases of errors not usually classed as grammatical must be included.

(2) The list includes both the broken rules and additional rules and definitions necessary to understand the broken rules. For instance, the rule, *The subject of a verb is in the nominative case*, is included in the list because it is frequently broken; but, in addition, it is necessary, in order to understand this rule, to know *subject*, *predicate*, *verb*, *pronoun*, *noun*, and *nominative case*, although frequently these secondary rules are not broken. These two classes of rules must be included in a complete course of study.

(3) Rules not broken nor needed to explain broken rules are not included. This does not necessarily mean that they are not used. Some infinitive constructions, for example, are used, but never incorrectly. These are not included. On the other hand, some constructions, such as the nominative absolute, seem to be used not at all in the papers studied.

(4) It is neither claimed nor asserted in this study that a course of study in grammar should be based solely upon errors. Other methods of selection are frequently advocated and the relative validity of these need to be investigated with care. Our purpose is merely to indicate how closely the Kansas City course of study corresponds to one constructed upon the basis of errors. The practical question of the adoption of this course in Kansas City or of its modification and adoption, is an important one, but does not concern us here.

II. METHOD OF COLLECTING MATERIAL

The following directions for collecting both oral and written work were given to the teachers:

Written Language

Aim of Investigation: To find what errors in grammar children naturally make in writing when not corrected by the teacher.

1. *Who shall collect written work.* All teachers of grades III to VII inclusive shall hand in to the principal the written work of their pupils.

2. *What written work shall not be handed in.* No dictated work or work copied from books or blackboards shall be handed in to the principal. No work which is rewritten after corrections have been made by teacher or the class shall be handed in to the principal by the teacher.

3. *Subjects of written work.* Written work ordinarily done in the regular order of school work should be included. No special effort to get written work should be made, except that if possible the pupils should select or be assigned once a week some topic upon which they will write with great freedom and at some length. If they write freely and at some length, they will reveal their errors, which is the desired end.

4. *Form.* (a) Any kind of paper may be used. (b) Ink or pencil may be used. That which will give greatest freedom in expression should be used. (c) No unusual mention should be made of neatness or legibility. (d) At the top of each page each pupil should write the name, the school, the grade, the room, and the date.

5. *How to bundle the papers.* When the teacher has finished with a set of papers, the set should be bound together securely with a cord, and in a conspicuous place on the bundle should be given the name of the school, the grade, the room, and the date. Each set should be bound by itself in one bundle, and on November 21 all the bundles should be bound securely into one large bundle, conspicuously marked as to school, grade, and room, and sent to the principal's office. Along with this bundle should be sent, in an envelope, the names of all pupils in the room, arranged alphabetically by sex together with age in years and months on November 21. The principal will then forward all the bundles to the superintendent's office upon the first visit of the trucks after November 21. The principal should, if convenient, fasten the room bundles together, marking each large bundle with the name of the school.

6. *Length of period for collection.* Papers written between October 27 and November 21, inclusive, should be handed in.

Note.—Children must not be told that their papers are being collected for grammatical errors, nor should anything be done to make them unusually careful or to make them unnatural or stilted. If papers are

corrected or recopied, the rewritten work must not be handed in, but the original work must be. No corrections should be made on the original paper.

Oral Language

Aim of Investigation: To find what errors in grammar children naturally make in talking when not corrected by the teacher.

1. *Who shall collect the oral errors.* All teachers of grades II to VII, inclusive, and principals shall collect all oral errors in grammar made in the school room and around the school building by children of any age.

2. *Time to be spent in collecting errors.* From eight o'clock Monday morning, November 17, to four o'clock Friday evening, November 21.

3. *Details of tabulation.* (a) Carry a note book constantly for these five days and jot down every grammatical error made orally in your presence. If the same error occurs more than once, either with or without the use of the same words, note it each time it occurs. (b) Copy each error as nearly as possible with the exact words used. (c) In copying the errors from the note books to hand in to the principal, each error should be written in ink on a separate piece of school paper 1 inch by 4 inches in size. This will save the office much copying work. (d) Seal all these in one or more large envelopes, writing on the outside of each envelope "Oral errors reported by ————————————————————
(Name of teacher)
of the ———————— school, grade————————." (e) The principal will bind all these envelopes into one package and conspicuously mark "Oral errors from ———————————— school," and send as soon as possible to the superintendent's office.

Teachers' Opinions

Teachers from grades III to VII, inclusive, and principals will state the ten grammatical rules which they believe to be most commonly broken by children of Kansas City and as far as may be give them in the order of frequency, the most frequent first. This list should be put in an envelope stating on the outside "Opinions about most common errors, given by ———————————————— of the ———————————— school, grade ————————," and sent to the principal on November 21. He will bind these envelopes in one bundle and forward them to the superintendent's office.

Criticisms

Ideal conditions for the collecting of material require a complete report of all the written and oral language of all the children in the Kansas City grades. To secure this, all written

work within school and at home—compositions, letters, exercises, and so forth—would need to be collected, and stenographic reports of all conversation carried on by all the children in school, at home, and on the playground and streets would have to be obtained.

After careful study, it seemed advisable to collect for one month all the written work of all the grades from three to seven. Kansas City has no eighth grade; and below the third, little written work of such kind as to reveal grammatical errors is carried on. It was thought that this amount of material would reveal all the types of errors that would be made in a much larger selection. As a matter of fact, it was found that a comparatively small number of papers revealed all types of error; and if the study were to be made again where 6000 children are concerned, one paper of 150 words from each child would be ample for examination and valid conclusions.

Private correspondence and other material written by the children without expectation of supervision and grading by the teacher would have proved a valuable aid to our study, but it was impossible to collect this upon any adequate scale, except under conditions that were almost certain to be artificial.

In collecting the oral errors, no stenographic reports of the speech of the children were obtained. Our list was obtained by having the teachers report errors which they heard in the school room and on the play ground.

This method is open to several objections. The teachers were busy and in all probability did not note all the errors they heard, they did not hear all the errors, and they might possibly not have recognized certain errors. But it was believed, and later observations confirmed the belief, that all types of error would be observed somewhere in the school system, and that by taking a cross-section of the speech of the children for a week, all errors made by the individual children would be revealed. A later examination of several pages of stereotype reports of class conversations revealed no new classes of error.

However, despite these criticisms there is value in the reports since they are without doubt approximately correct,

and in any event the light they throw upon conditions is clearer and more accurate than that derived from mere individual opinion.

III. THE TABULATION OF ORAL ERRORS

Two elements entered to disturb the validity of the classification of oral errors. First, the list was collected by teachers whose reports must, of course, be less comprehensive and intensive than a stenographic reproduction of conversation. The observation of errors in the use of *shall* and *will* and of local errors such as *It seems like he should have gone*, are likely to be missed occasionally. But the teachers reporting have included both these errors; and it is likely that if any mistake has arisen in the reporting, it is in the relative percentage of errors rather than in the absence of any class of error.

The second difficulty encountered was that of deciding whether a particular class of error should or should not be classed as a violation of grammar. It will be noticed that while there is no doubt about most of the rules in table A being clearly grammatical, there is likely to be a difference of opinion about a few. The borderland between rules of grammar and rules of rhetoric is decidedly dim; and in this half light, it is easy for grammarians to disagree. For instance, the double negative (number 20, table A) is classed by some authorities as an error in grammar, by others it is not so included. Syntactical redundance (table A, rule 22) as, *Where am I at?* is another class about which there is a difference of opinion.

The rule followed in making decisions upon the inclusion of classes was that, when in doubt after careful examination of authorities, the class should be included since it is easy for the strict constructionist to omit a class while it is impossible for a latitudinarian to add one which was not reported in the list.

This inclusion of debatable classes will affect the relative frequency of errors, but this is not a serious matter since the method of collecting oral errors precludes us in any case from laying great emphasis upon the exact percentages of errors. They give merely a bird's eye of the situation.

The Opinions of Teachers (the third part of the printed directions above) were collected, but they are not included here because they were not classified by the same set of tabulators and the terminology was sufficiently different to make impossible a close comparison between them and the reported oral errors. However, since they indicated in a general way what were likely to be the most common errors, they served as a tentative basis for the classification of oral errors.

When the reports of the teachers upon oral errors were examined, it was found that of the eight thousand errors reported, a considerable number did not have a grammatical basis. These were, of course, discarded; but there still remained 5883 errors, which are found classified in table A.

In table A, the error is stated rather than the rule which is broken; e.g., *Subject of verb not in nominative case* instead of the rule, *The subject of the verb is in the nominative case.* The reason for this was that this form is less cumbersome. In a later table (H) the errors are stated in terms of the corresponding rules.

In table A, which follows, the results of the tabulations are summed up. On the left is a statement of the errors; to the right of this, are given a few typical examples of each. Next, to the right, is found the total number of errors reported by all the teachers, and on the extreme right is given the percentage of errors approximated to the nearest integer and obtained by dividing the numbers in the "total errors" column by 6000 instead of 5883.

TABLE A

The Working List for Oral Errors used by the Tabulators and the Number and Percent of each Kind of Error

	Error	*Illustration*	*Total Errors*	*Per Cent Error*
1.	Subject of verb not in nominative case.	*Us* girls went.	253	4
2.	Predicate nominative not in nominative case.	They were John and *him*. It is *me*.	118	2
3.	Object of verb or preposition not in objective case.	She gave it to Martha and *I*.	85	1
4.	Wrong form of noun or pronoun.	*Sheeps—theirself*. The problem *what* is—	106	2
5.	First personal pronoun standing first in a series.	*Me* and *him*.	108	2
6.	Failure of the pronoun to agree with its noun in number, person and gender.	Nobody can do what *they* like.	20	0
7.	Confusion of demonstrative adjective and personal pronoun.	*Them* things.	190	3
8.	Failure of verb to agree with its subject in number and person.	There *is* six. You *was*.	831	14
9.	Confusion of past and present tenses.	She *give* us four. He *ask* me.	93	2
10.	Confusion of past tense and past participle.	I *seen*. I *have saw*.	1426	24
11.	Wrong tense form.	*Attacted*; *had ought*.	294	5
12.	Wrong verb.	*Lay* for *lie*; *aint got*; confusion of *can* and *may*, *shall* and *will*.	732	12
13.	Incorrect use of mood.	If I *was* in your place.	20	0
14.	Incorrect comparison of adjectives.	*Joyfulest*; *beautifuler; more better; worser*.	38	1
15.	Confusion of comparatives and superlatives.	She is the *tallest* (of two).	9	0
16.	Confusion of adjectives and adverbs.	He looked up *quick*. That *there* book.	263	4
17.	Misplaced modifier.	He *only* went two miles.	17	0
18.	Double negative.	He *isn't hardly* old enough.	632	11
19.	Confusion of preposition and conjunction.	He talks *like* he is sick.	14	0
20.	Syntactical redundance.	Mother *she* said so. Where is it *at*?	593	10
21.	Wrong part of speech due to similarity of sound.	I would *of* known; *they* for *there*.	41	1

The percentage column has some interesting figures. The largest single item, 24%, is the confusion of the past tense and the past participle. This comprises one quarter of the errors reported. The next largest, 14%, is the failure of the verb to agree with its subject in person and number. The errors in the use of the verb (errors number 8 to 13) constitute 57% of the total errors. Mistakes in the use of case, particularly in pronouns, (errors number 1 to 3) comprise 7% of the total. The confusions of the adjective forms with each other and with the adverb (errors number 14, 15 and 17), total 5%. Double negatives occur in 11% of the errors, and syntactical redundance (error number 20) includes 10%. When to these there is added 3% for the confusion of the demonstrative adjective with the personal pronoun, the remainder of the errors are scattering. The narrow limits of the field are striking.

In table B, the errors included in table A, are further classified to show somewhat more fully the details of errors. If the reader wishes to obtain specific examples of errors, he may get them by consulting table I.

In table B are given four items, which from left to right are the error numbers, the statement of error with subclasses, the total of each subclass, and the total of the class. This table corresponds in totaling, numbering, and so forth with table B.

TABLE B

Subclassification of Table A

1. Subject of verb not in nominative case		253
2. Predicate nominative not in nominative case		118
A. With expletive	103	
B. Others	15	
3. Object of verb or preposition not in objective case		85
A. Of verb	44	
B. Of preposition	41	

4.	Wrong form of noun or pronoun		106
	A. Nouns	11	
	B. Pronouns	95	
5.	First personal pronoun standing first in a series		108
6.	Failure of the pronoun to agree with its noun in number, person and gender		20
	A. Personal pronoun	11	
	B. Adjective pronoun	9	
7.	Confusion of demonstrative adjective and personal pronoun		190
8.	Failure of verb to agree with its subject in person and number		831
	A. Person (due to ain't)	167	
	B. Person (miscellaneous)	76	
	C. Number (single subject and plural verb)	122	
	D. Number (plural subject and singular verb)	466	
9.	Confusion of past and present tenses		95
	A. *Give*	59	
	B. Miscellaneous	36	
10.	Confusion of past tense and past participle		1426
	A. *See*	517	
	B. *Do*	258	
	C. *Come*	206	
	D. *Ring*	123	
	E. *Sing, drink*	18	
	F. *Go*	73	
	G. Miscellaneous	231	
11.	Wrong tense form		387
	A. Past in *en*	125	
	B. Small groups	90	
	C. Miscellaneous	77	
12.	Wrong verb.		732
	A. *Can* and *may*	248	
	B. *Ain't got*	202	
	C. *Sit* and *set*	124	
	D. *Lie* and *lay*	71	
	E. *Teach* and *learn*	52	
	F. *Shall* and *will*	13	
	G. *Bring* and *take*	2	
	H. Miscellaneous	20	

13.	Incorrect use of mood		20
14.	Incorrect comparison of adjectives		38
	A. Wrong comparison of adjectives	23	
	B. Double comparison of adjectives	15	
15.	Confusion of comparatives and superlatives		9
16.	Confusion of adjectives and adverbs		263
	A. Adverb modifying noun	153	
	B. Adjective modifying adjective or adverb	30	
	C. Adjective modifying verb	80	
17.	Misplaced modifier		17
18.	Double negative		632
	A. Crude type	597	
	B. Triple	22	
	C. Less crude double	13	
19.	Confusion of preposition and conjunction		14
20.	Syntactical redundance		593
	A. In pronouns	162	
	B. In verbs		
	1. *have got*	196	
	2. *done got*	56	
	3. *went and did*	37	
	C. In prepositions	80	
	D. Use of *why*	33	
	E. Miscellaneous	29	
21.	Wrong part of speech due to similarity of sound		41
	A. Confusion of pronoun and adverb	28	
	B. Confusion of preposition and verb	13	

Tables A and B are compiled from errors reported by the teachers of grades III and VII and by the principals. Table C is abstracted from table A. It includes the errors reported by the teachers of grades VI and VII, the grades in which grammar is taught in Kansas City. The purpose of table C is to show the relative frequency of the errors in these grades as

compared with the written errors tabulated later. However, it must be remembered that these teachers reported (see "Directions to Teachers") not only the errors in their own rooms but also those heard outside, and that the figures are not to be given undue weight.

The numbers in the column on the left in table C refer to the error numbers found in tables A and B on the left. In the column on the right the figures represent the precentages found in table A.

One cannot be certain that any significance can be placed upon the parallel between the figures in the two right hand columns of table C, but the closeness is interesting. Interesting, also, is the comparison between table C and the right hand column of table D.

TABLE C

The Oral Errors Reported by the Teachers of the Sixth and Seventh Grades

Rule	*Grade VI*	*Grade VII*	*Total*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cents in Table A*
1	51	19	70	4	4
2	27	14	41	2	2
3	20	7	27	1	1
4	40	16	56	3	2
5	22	7	29	2	2
6	11	8	19	1	0
7	41	23	64	3	3
8	147	106	253	13	10
9	15	12	27	2	2
10	226	190	416	22	24
11	71	76	147	8	5
12	141	71	212	11	12
13	3	7	10	1	0
14	4	12	16	1	1
15	4	2	6	0	0
16	44	32	76	4	4
17	4	4	8	0	0
18	114	94	208	11	11
19	3	3	6	0	0
20	73	87	160	8	8
21	8	5	13	1	1

Table D presents the oral errors found in grades VI and VII of the twelve schools whose written errors were tabulated. Here, again, the relative percentages parallel those in tables A and C, if allowance is made for the percentage skews that arise in the handling of small numbers.

TABLE D

The Oral Errors Reported by Teachers of the Sixth and Seventh Grades in the Twelve Schools in which the Written Work was Studied

Rule	*Grade VI*	*Grade VII*	*Total*	*Per Cent*
1	29	8	37	5
2	20	7	27	3
3	14	4	18	2
4	32	6	38	5
5	7	0	7	1
6	0	2	2	0
7	9	11	20	3
8	61	36	97	12
9	8	6	14	2
10	124	65	189	24
11	39	28	67	8
12	56	30	86	11
13	1	2	3	0
14	1	6	7	1
15	2	1	3	0
16	20	8	28	4
17	2	2	4	1
18	41	31	72	9
19	2	2	4	1
20	27	38	65	8
21	4	2	6	1

IV. THE TABULATION OF WRITTEN ERRORS

It was necessary to study the written errors in addition to the oral errors for two reasons. In the first place, in the absence of stenographic reports of oral speech, the written work served as a partial check upon the accuracy of our results in collecting data through the teachers since, if they missed any types of error which persisted in the written speech of the children, the tabulators would be able to check them. In the

second place, there are many violations of grammatical rules which are found only in written speech. For instance, capitalization of proper nouns would not be included in errors of oral speech. To this may be added some rules of punctuation such as the interrogation point at the end of an interrogative sentence, a period at the end of a declarative sentence, etc. Others will be found in table E.

The quantity of written material collected in accordance with the directions in section A of "Directions to Teachers" was large. Fifteen thousand children seem to a small group of tabulators to write a surprisingly large amount in four weeks. Measured by weight, the material amounted to seven hundred pounds.

After careful consideration, it seemed possible to reach valid conclusions in the consideration of the problem by limiting the study in two ways. In the first place, only the sixth and seventh grade material was of first importance since the problem was to construct a course of study in grammar based upon errors, and since grammar was studied in only those two grades. Information about the errors of the lower grades would be interesting and serviceable as a supplementary aid, but it was not essential. In the second place, it was practicable to limit the number of sixth and seventh grades to those in twelve schools. There were two reasons for doing this. First, all the types of error tabulated in table E were found in the first school studied; and consequently, when other schools were studied, the only change in the tabulations that occurred was in the relative percentages of error among the different classes. The study of the last half dozen schools did not affect the results and served chiefly as a check upon the work. Second, a comparison of table D with table C indicated that when the oral errors of the twelve schools were compared with the results found in table D, the percentages of error paralleled quite closely those in all the sixth and seventh grades as found in table C. This fact combined with the experience mentioned just above led to the conclusion that a study of the written work of the sixth and seventh grades of the twelve schools would give reasonably accurate results.

The schools included one, the Webster, in the Polish and Russian Jewish quarter and one, the Adams, attended by many children of Mexican parentage. The other schools were selected from both the wealthier and the poorer parts of the city.

The total number of pages read was 4819. It is the opinion of the tabulators that if another study of the same kind were being undertaken in a city with 5,000 children or more in the grades, it would be sufficient, in order to study written "school errors," to collect from each pupil one paper of approximately 150 words in length, original in theme and natural and free in expression. This would, probably, be true, also, of a school system of as few as 2,000 children. To study "home errors," it would be necessary to supplement these by letters and other matter written without expectation of school scrutiny and correction.

In table E, which follows, are found all the classes of oral errors listed in table A and some additional errors caused by failure to handle such mechanics of writing as punctuation. The omission of one or two items from the oral errors is evidently due to the failure to have stenographic reports of oral speech. For instance, it is obvious that children, in talking, confuse dependent and independent clauses, but no such errors were reported by the teachers, who, intent upon errors in the use of parts of speech and hurried by school duties in jotting down the errors, paid little attention to the longer clauses. Errors due to faulty sentence structure, unless particularly flagrant, are likely to escape the attention until seen in cold print.

In table E, the errors, the numbers on the left, the illustrations, and the totals are self-explanatory. The left hand percentage list takes into account all errors tabulated and shows the errors of punctuation to be the most frequent. The right hand list shows the relative percentages of those items which are listed under oral errors in tables A, C, and D. A comparison of this column with table D is interesting even though not conclusive.

TABLE E

The Working List of Written Errors used by Tabulators and the Number and Percentage of Each Kind of Error

	Error	*Illustration*	*Totals*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent of first* 21
1.	Subject of verb not in nominative case.	*Us* girls went.	42	0	1
2.	Predicate nominative not in nominative case.	They were John and *him*. It is *me*.	49	0	1
3.	Object of verb or preposition not in objective case.	She gave it to you and *I*.	48	0	1
4.	Wrong form of noun or pronoun.	*Sheeps—theirself*.	655	5	16
5.	First personal pronoun standing first in a series.	*Me* and him.	25	0	1
6.	Disagreement of noun and pronoun in number, person and gender.	I saw a man *which*	162	1	4
7.	Confusion of demonstrative adjective and personal pronoun.	*Them* chickens	3	0	0
8.	Failure of verb to agree with its subject in number and person.	You *was*. He *don't*.	753	6	19
9.	Confusion of past and present tenses.	She *give* us four. He *ask* me.	474	4	12
10.	Confusion of past tense and past participle.	I *had went*. I *seen* it.	188	2	5
11.	Wrong tense forms.	I *clumb* a tree. They *drug* the road.	198	2	5
12.	Wrong verb.	*Set* for *sit*, *lay* for *lie*, *learn* for *teach*, Confusion of *can* and *may*, *will* and *shall*.	265	2	7
13.	Incorrect use of mood.	If I *was* in your place	61	0	2
14.	Incorrect comparison of adjectives.	*Wonderfulest—more better*	12	0	0
15.	Confusion of comparatives and superlatives.	*Best* (of two)	8	0	0
16.	Confusion of adjectives and adverbs.	This *here* book. Do that *quick*.	253	2	6

TABLE E—*Continued*

Error	*Illustration*	*Totals*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent of first* 21
17. Misplaced modifier.	I *only* have one.	225	2	6
18. Double negative.	I *can't* see *nothing*. *Aren't hardly* any.	58	0	1
19. Confusion of prepositions and conjunctions.	He talks *like* he is sick.	53	0	1
20. Syntactical redundance.	Papa *he* said I might	467	4	11
21. Wrong part of speech due to similarity of sound.	*To* (*two*, *too*); *there* (*their*)	1334	11	
22. Failure to put period at end of statement.		3600	30	
23. Failure to put question mark at end of question.		208	2	
24. Failure to put apostrophe to denote possession.		744	6	
25. Omission of subject.		313	3	
26. Omission of predicate.		297	2	
27. Confusion of dependent and independent clauses.		1059	9	

Table F is added to show in detail the classification of errors by grades in the twelve schools studied. The name of the school is given on the upper horizontal line; immediately below, the grades are inserted; then the number of pages read is inserted. On the left hand side is found the number of the class of error corresponding to table E.

The pages were computed as follows: Less than one fourth of a page including the heading was not counted; between one fourth and three fourths of a page was called one half page; and over three fourths of a page was counted as a full page.

TABLE F

A Detailed Statement of Table E

Name of School	Adams		Allen		Bancroft		Jackson		Jefferson		Longfellow		Lowell		McCoy		Morse		Rollins		Webster		Woodland		
Grade	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	Total
No. pp.	283	90	286	180	494	120	197	291	201	196	130	70	26	35	7	112	68	86	160	240	29	183	831	434	4819
Error Number																									
1		2					1	17									3	3		3		3	9	1	42
2		1	1					18									1	1		2		4	21		49
3		1				1		7	1	1	1		3	1			3	1	1	3	1	3	12	8	48
4	121	26	11	49	12	15	30	25	8	6	30	20	1	3	1	31	29	20	8	27	16	16	70	80	655
5		1			3			1	3	2	2							2		1	3	4	1	2	25
6			2	16	4	2	1	19	3		17	6				4	4	7	4	6	7	1	30	29	162
7	1																1			1					3
8	129	19	14	22	25	17	43	45	30	9	37	4	1	1		7	55	39	6	31	21	21	89	88	753
9	41	18	17	15	3	14	22	13	29	12	28	15	2	5		8	34	16	2	11	17	17	77	58	474
10	23	3	9	4	11	6	3	7	10	4	2	1	5			12	21	12	1	9		6	21	18	188
11	3	6	13	13	2	4	4	6	8	10	5	1	4	3		17	10	10	3	14	11	3	35	13	198
12		11	3	26	9	28	6	7	9	9	10	3	3	3	2	10	11	2	2	14	11	5	68	13	265
13	2	5		2	2		2	2	2		3	5		8		1	4	2		4			11	6	61
14				2	2			1			1					1						4	1	12
15	1					1	1				1									1			2	1	8

TABLE F—*Continued*

A Detailed Statement of Table E

Name of School	Adams		Allen		Bancroft		Jackson		Jefferson		Longfellow		Lowell		McCoy		Morse		Rollins		Webster		Woodland		
Grade	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	Total
No. pp.	283	90	286	180	494	120	197	291	201	196	130	70	26	35	7	112	68	86	160	240	29	183	831	434	4819
Error Number																									
16	11		11	29	18	6	21	8	16	5	6	4	6	8	2	8	12	8	7	12	11	11	15	18	253
17	12	6	1	18	15	2	12	24	3		5	6	1	2		7	12	9	5	21	12	3	30	19	225
18	8	3	1	4	3	1	8	2	1		2			1		2	4	2		2	3	4	5	2	58
19	2	1	1	3	1		2	4	1	2	2	2				3	5	2	1	5	4		3	9	53
20	29	24	11	16	16	8	21	23	16	13	23	21	2		1	23	28	12	17	28	34	12	40	49	467
21	62	11	60	54	54	30	134	46	87	42	45	17	11	5	10	73	143	49	15	51	38	33	196	68	1334
22	963	74	94	189	128	39	56	85	45	33	104	28	16	2	13	120	381	80	142	102	183	195	286	242	3600
23	34		2	24	3	6		45	4	3	27	9	2			2	21	2		5			17	2	208
24	55	13	3	34	7	18	21	20	8	3	58	1				13	149	42	7	78	18	18	74	94	744
25	1	1	2	41	11	3	8	17	2	2	9	2	5			15	13	15		23	42	19	41	41	313
26	7	5	4	21	5	1	4	6	4	3	11	5	2			21	27	7		13	40	14	61	36	297
27	4	10	8	90	34	14	87	20	14	6	39	2	5		9	45	257	8	26	46	20	17	140	158	1059

When the papers were first read, a study of errors in capitalization violating grammatical rules was erroneously overlooked. Later, a separate study of capitalization as related to proper and common nouns was made. This still leaves to be tabulated possible errors in the capitalization of the first word in a sentence and in the capitalization of proper adjectives.

TABLE G

Errors in Capitalization as Found in Four Schools of Kansas City, Missouri

School	*Proper Nouns Not Capitals*	*Common Nouns Capitals*	*Other Parts of Speech Capitals*
Jackson VI (197 pp.)	165	61	45
Jackson VII (291 pp.)	83	49	41
Jefferson VI (201 pp.)	240	100	91
Jefferson VII (196 pp.)	136	48	37
Morse VI (68 pp.)	12	22	17
Morse VII (86 pp.)	57	67	16
Webster VI (99 pp.)	210	18	23
Webster VII (183 pp.)	136	48	37

In table H, is given an analysis of table E showing in some detail the subclasses and subtypes of error tabulated therein. The figures on the right are the totals found in table E, those in the next column to the left are the number of errors listed in each subclass. Examples of these errors, supplemental to those listed as illustrations in tables E and H, are found in table I.

TABLE H

An Analysis of Table E

1.	Subject of verb not in nominative case		42
2.	Predicate nominative not in nominative case		49
3.	Object of verb or preposition not in objective case		48
4.	Wrong form of noun or pronoun		655
	A. Number in nouns	417	
	B. Case in nouns	32	
	C. Wrong pronoun	44	
	D. Use of *myself*	26	
	E. Miscellaneous	136	
5.	First personal pronoun standing first in a series		25
6.	Failure of the pronoun to agree with its noun in number, person and gender		162
	A. Number	106	
	B. Person	7	
	C. Gender	49	
7.	Confusion of demonstrative adjective and personal pronoun		3
8.	Failure of verb to agree with its subject in number and person		753
	A. Plural subject and singular verb	537	
	B. Singular subject and plural verb	206	
	C. Person	10	
9.	Confusion of present and past tenses		474
	A. Miscellaneous	430	
	B. *Ask*	44	
10.	Confusion of past tense and past participle		188
	A. Miscellaneous	7	
	B. *See*	53	
	C. *Come*	7	
	D. *Do*	20	
	E. *Go*	18	
	F. *Run*	33	
11.	Wrong tense forms		198
	A. Miscellaneous compound verbs	98	
	B. Miscellaneous simple verbs	71	
	C. Verbs spelled with *t* for *ed*	17	
	D. Miscellaneous	12	
12.	Wrong verb		265
	A. Confusion of *lay* and *lie*	31	
	B. Confusion of *sit* and *set*	19	
	C. Confusion of *learn* and *teach*	14	
	D. Confusion of *can* and *may*	12	

	S. Nouns and adjectives very similar	42	
	T Part of speech not wrong but meaning twisted	113	
22.	Failure to put period at end of statement		3600
23.	Failure to put question mark at end of question		208
24.	Failure to put apostrophe to denote possession		744
25.	Omission of subject		313
26.	Omission of predicate		267
27.	Confusion of dependent and independent clauses		1059

Table I gives a number of specific examples of oral and written errors taken from the material. It is tabulated to illustrate each type of error; but any illustration listed under one class may, and frequently does, contain errors other than the one under which it is listed.

TABLE I

Sample Errors, Written and Oral, Classified According to Rules Broken

(The Arabic figures in the titles refer to the numbers in tables A and E, C and G.)

1. Subject of verb not in nominative case.
   a. Me and her was both late.
   b Her was settin here.
   c. Them's mine.
   d. Men whom are lazy are no count.
   e. His brother is taller than him.
2. Predicate nominative not in nominative case.
   a. That little boy was me.
   b. Those are them.
   c. That's him.
   d. It was me that went.
   e. It is whom?
3. Object of verb or preposition not in objective case.
   a. The boy is dead who you shot in the foot.
   b. She took all of we children.
   c. She went with her and I.
   d. I want you to meet he and I at 29th.
   e. He gave he and I both some.

4. Wrong form of noun or pronoun.
   a. He has learnt his'n.
   b. He was an actress.
   c. How many postes in that row?
   d. Another man wife was along.
   e. He hurt hisself.
   f. I can't do that problem what is multiplied by 4.
5. First personal pronoun standing first in a series.
   a. I and nine more fell into the lake.
   b. Christmas afternoon my brother and I and Catherine and another boy went.
   c. Can I and Henry go?
   d. Let's me and you play.
   e. Me and Bill got the ball.
6. Failure of the pronoun to agree with its noun in person, number and gender.
   a. She was one of these kind of people.
   b. I can tell each one what they make.
   c. Each fellow put their foot on the line.
   d. Foremost among them was Evangeline's "White Heifer." He seemed to be conscious of human affection.
   e. The owners had a tutor for his children.
   f. The cow, he wore horns on his head.
7. Confusion of demonstrative adjective and personal pronoun.
   a. He had them pigs in a pen.
   b. Them girls kept pushing those baskets.
   c. I don't like them boughten dresses.
   d. Miss Hill, them boys have been pestering me every afternoon.
   e. Is them our problems?
8. Failure of verb to agree with its subject in number and person.
   a. How is Uncle Wallace and Aunt Clara?
   b. It don't count nothing.
   c. The scenery of the Alps are beautiful.
   d. Don't she make you tired?
   e. Aint them fish cute?
   f. It aint right to say, "He aint here today."
9. Confusion of past and present tenses.
   a. She recognized, hug, and kiss him.
   b. He give it.
   c. It use to be.
   d. We help distributed the fruit.
   e. The little girl stood silent and her father ask her if she intended doing what he ask.
10. Confusion of past tense and past participle.
    a. We have went a sailing in music.
    b. He had ran too long. We run awful hard.

c. He taken and spoiled my pen.
d. The people got took back.
e. He might have knew that the colt was following.
f. Pies they are ate with a fork.
g. I could have did better.
h. I wish you had been here to have went with me.
i. You would have saw stars.
j. Has the tardy bell rang yet?

11. Wrong tense forms.
a. Balboa clumb a tree and seen the Pacific.
b. I seed him this morning.
c. I got over het.
d. I was borned in the briar patch.
e. The Louisiana territory was boughten.
f. John has got a busted arm.
g. He hadn't oughter said that.
h. Had aten his dinner.
i. I got throwed off.

12. Wrong verb.
a. Her's down there learning we calisthenics.
b. I was setting on a fence post.
c. Sit it on my desk.
d. I haint got no paint brush.
e. Washington left him have it.
f. The sun was sitting.
g. A collie laying amidst my dresses.
h. If he would fail ———
i. I think I will graduate.
j. Can I bring them cards tomorrow?
k. Can I set with Elma to study that there lesson?

13. Incorrect use of mood.
a. If you was him would you do it?
b. If it wasnt for more soldiers coming they would have been whipped out.
c. If I was you I just wouldnt go.
d. It is not as good as it would be if it was ———
e. If I was homeless I would have nobody to care for me.

14. Incorrect comparison of adjectives.
a. Far more queerer.
b. Most laziest man.
c. Is farer East.
d. The most principal cities.
e. Beautifulest.
f. Worser.
g. Baddest.
h. Littler.

15. Confusion of comparatives and superlatives.
    a. The larger of the three.
    b. Most (of two).
    c. The five larger cities.
    d. My brother and I measure and he was tallest.
    e. The best of the two.
    f. The hardest of the two.
16. Confusion of adjective and adverb.
    a. Wounded very bad.
    b. I sure was stiff.
    c. Drank out of a cup easy.
    d. They got that off pretty good.
    e. Is them there problems for us?
    f. This here paper is tore.
17. Misplaced modifier.
    a. I spend my evenings in front of a grate when there is a north wind blowing with the works of Poe, Cooper, and Hiawatha.
    b. The others got their food from the rivers which was fish.
    c. The new scale book that I first had when I began to take music lessons that burnt up.
    d. The yard is higher than the street surrounded by a brick wall.
    e. He heard about the colonies fighting England at the Banquet.
    f. There was a large heavy set fellow weighing 250 pounds on both ends.
    g. We saw some feed for chickens on a wire.
18. Double negative.
    a. He aint never coming back no more.
    b. You don't care nothing for nobody but yourself.
    c. One Indian he didn't have on nothing hardly.
    d. I never, neither.
    e. Free trade means very little or not no tariff at all.
    f. Haven't nary.
    g. Didnt done nothing.
    h. They aint no more chalk.
    i. Couldn't be no more happier.
19. Confusion of preposition and conjunction.
    a. It looks like there was three stars.
    b. He lets on like he ain't.
    c. It seems like it ought to be.
20. Syntactical redundance.
    a. The men who are it they run.
    b. I haven't got the time.
    c. Where's my book at?
    d. I've done did it by short division.
    e. This here horse shoe curve, has it coal mines on both sides?

f. Why, my Uncle he set on his front porch.
g. It was kind of rather green.

21. Wrong part of speech due to similarity of sound.
a. He was faint from lose of blood.
b. I had and uncle.
c. They will give away samples four headaches.
d. They was a bear tore up his garden.
e. Then you try to get to base buy taking a step. It is the best looking iron you can by.
f. They sold ever thing.
g. I to shall try a seventh time. There were to women in green costumes.
h. They had know time to waste. Thy did not no each other.
i. We got threw with our turkey. This is the ball which he through.
j. The sailors road about a mile.
k. The game goes on like this until your tired.
l. When I got their there was five other boys at there house.
m. Less go outside and play.
n. Meat me at seven.
o. The basket was maid of grass.
p. They had a gun a peace.

27. Confusion of dependent and independent clauses.
a. LaSalle planted French arms at the Mississippi and claimed all the land of the Mississippi and its tributaries flowed through.
b. It was a very captivating game, of which the Woodland girls won.
c. The invention of the compass that aided in the people going out with boats farther out in ocean. The printing press than they could print the news for all over the world.
d. There was an old grocer who had a daughter who had a beau which her father did not like who had a man which was clever in tricks.
e. The compass help the sailor's to tell in what direction they were going. The gun-powder to fight the savages and the printing to send news papers to the people.
f. We came home about five clock and my Aunt and Uncle was there after we had our supper we all went to the show.
g. The game I enjoy playing is capitian ball. Because you must play and think fast.
h. She gave water to each soldiers until she came to her husband who was dying for a drink was shot in his side and killed.
i. About a half dozen young girls went crazy they mewed like cats barked like dogs and they said the old gentleman had an interview with them and it almost brought ruin to the colonies

and they hanged them and till one day the govonor's wife caught it and they stopped hanging them.

j. We spent our thanksgiving out at my Father's Father and Mother's house it was very pleasant we had turkey and lots of other good things for dinner after dinner we took a car ride over to Montgomery ward's new place it is very large and will be a fine place after it is finished then we went over to the Club and wandered around till evening and then we come back and had lunch we staid out there till about nine oclock and then come home we were very tired after our days jaunt.

V. THE TABULATION OF THE RULES IMPLIED IN THE FOREGOING ERRORS

At this point the problem shifts. Heretofore, the problem has been to tabulate the errors. Beyond this point, the problem will be to determine upon the basis of these errors the grammatical rules which should be taught.

The first step is to change the form from the statement of the error as in the foregoing tables to the statement of the rule broken. For instance, in a simple case, error number 1 in tables A and E reading thus, *Subject of verb not in nominative case*, must be changed to read *The subject of the verb is in the nominative case.* In a more cumbersome case, error number 4 in tables A and E, reading, *Wrong forms of nouns and pronouns*, is changed to include the long list of rules listed in table J, 4 (a) and 4 (b) just below.

These changes are made in table J. The numbers on the left are those used in connection with the corresponding error in the preceding tables. The terminology in which the rules are stated is that ordinarily used by the tabulators.

TABLE J

Rules to Cover all Tabulated Errors

(Numbers to the left refer to rule numbers in table C.)

1. The subject of a verb is in the nominative case.

2. A substantive standing in the predicate, but describing or defining the subject, agrees with the subject in case, and is called a predicate nominative.

3. The object of a verb is in the objective case. The substantive which follows a preposition is called its object and is in the objective case.

4. (a) Most nouns form their plural by adding *s* or *es* to the singular. Nouns ending in *y* preceded by a consonant, change *y* to *i* and add *es* to form the plural.

The words *half*, *wife*, *knife*, *life*, and a few others change *f* to *v* before adding the suffix *s* or *es*.

A few nouns form their plural in *en*.

A few nouns form their plural by a change of vowel.

A few nouns have the same form for singular and plural.

The possessive case of most singular nouns is formed by adding *'s* to the nominative.

The feminine gender is often indicated by the ending *ess*. (Frequently when the masculine form ends in *or* or *er*, the feminine ends in *ress*.)

Gender is sometimes indicated by the ending *man*, *woman*, *maid*, *boy*, or *girl*.

(b) Person is that form of a pronoun which shows whether it refers to the person speaking, the person addressed, or the person (or thing) spoken of. Thus, there are three persons. Pronouns, also, have number —singular and plural, the singular referring to one person (as *I*), and the plural referring to that one person jointly with one or more other persons (as *we*—*I* and one or more other persons).

There is no change of form to denote the gender of the person speaking or the person spoken to; but there are forms to represent the difference in gender in the person or thing spoken of: *he* (if masculine gender), *she* (if feminine), and *it* (if lower animal or inanimate object). The plural of all genders of the third person is *they*.

For case of pronouns, see 1, 2, and 3 under this table.

The compound personal pronouns are formed (a) in the first person by adding *self* to the possessive singular, *selves*, to the possessive plural, (b) in the second person, as in the first.

(c) In the third, by adding *self* to the objective singular, *selves* to the objective plural.

These forms are to be used only after the occurrence of the corresponding personal pronouns (e. g.: "*You* YOURSELF must go." "*He* hurt HIMSELF.")

The relative pronoun, *who*, like the personal pronouns, has different forms for the different cases. Their use is like that of substantives. (See table J, 1, 2, 3.)

Of the relative pronouns, *who* refers to persons, *which* to animals and inanimate objects. *That* may have any antecedent. *What* takes the place of both antecedent and relative.

5. In a series of nouns and pronouns, the pronoun of the first person always stands last.

6. A pronoun must agree with its noun in gender, number, and person.

7. The demonstratives are *this*, plural *these;* and *that*, plural *those*. They may be used as adjectives or as pronouns. The personal pronoun *them* is not used as an adjective.

8. A verb must agree with its subject in number and person. If (in a compound subject) the substantives connected by *or* or *nor* differ in number or person, the verb usually agrees with the nearer.

9, 10, 11. Verbs have forms of tense to indicate present, past, or future time.

Weak verbs form the past by adding *ed*, *d*, or *t* to the present, sometimes with change of vowel. Strong verbs form the past by changing the vowel of the present, without an additional ending.

The future tense is a verb phrase consisting of the auxiliary verbs *shall* or *will* followed by the infinitive without *to*. The past participle is that part of the verb form which is used after *I have* to form the perfect tense.

Ought is a finite verb, not a participle and, therefore, cannot be used with *have* (had) to form compound tenses.

12. Some verbs may be followed by a substantive denoting that which receives the action or is produced by it. These are called *transitive* verbs. All others are *intransitive*.

Some transitive verbs take a *secondary* object denoting the person or thing towards whom or towards which the action of the verb is directed.

May indicates permission, possibility, wish. *Can* indicates ability.

In the first person *shall*, in the second and third *will*, indicate simple futurity.

In the first person *will*, in the second and third *shall*, denote a promise, threat, consent, or resolve, the volition always being that of the speaker.

Should and *would* follow the same rules in use as do *shall* and *will*.

13. Subjunctive forms are used in wishes, prayers, conditions, and concessions. They are rare except in the copula *be*.

14. Double comparison is common in older English but now it is a gross error.

The comparative degree of an adjective is usually formed by adding *er* to the positive. There are a few irregular forms.

The superlative is usually formed by adding *est*. There are a few irregular forms.

Many adjectives of two syllables, and most adjectives of three or more syllables are compared by the use of *more* and *most*.

15. The comparative and not the superlative is used in comparing two persons or things.

The superlative is used to compare one person or thing with two or more others.

16. An adjective is a word which modifies a substantive. An adverb is a word which modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb.

17. Modifiers should be placed as near as possible to the word or words they limit. No modifier should be inserted between *to* and its infinitive.

18. Two negatives contradict each other and make an affirmative.

19. Prepositions, also conjunctions, show various distinctions in use and meaning which must be learned by practice and the study of synonyms.

20. Unnecessary words after the meaning is made clear, should be avoided.

21. Many words, though pronounced alike, have different functions to perform. The spelling usually varies according to the function.

22. The end of a declarative and very often of an imperative sentence is marked by a period.

23. The end of a direct question is marked by an interrogation point.

24. The possessive case of most singular nouns has *'s*. Plural nouns ending in *s* add an apostrophe to denote possession. Plural nouns not ending in *s* take *'s*.

25 and 26. A sentence must contain subject and predicate.

27. A sentence is the expression of a complete thought.

Capitalization

1. Every sentence begins with a capital letter.
2. Proper nouns and adjectives derived therefrom begin with capital letters.

The rules listed in table J are broken by the children and should, therefore, from the point of view of this study, constitute the core of the course of study in grammar. But if these rules constitute the whole course, the pupils cannot understand them without learning the meaning of subject and predicate, noun, pronoun, etc., which are themselves rules or definitions of

grammar. Hence, the course of study must include, as was pointed out in an earlier paragraph, not only the rules broken but in addition thereto, the rules and definitions necessary for an understanding of the broken rules. The complete list is worked out in table K.

TABLE K

An Analysis of the Grammatical Facts Needed to Understand the Rules Listed in Table J

The rules are indicated by the numbers used in table J, rule 1.

Rule 1. Rule 1 involves a knowledge of *subject* and *predicate*, and, therefore, of the *sentence*. *Subject* involves a knowledge of *noun* and *pronoun*. Nominative case includes *case* and *nominative case* in pronouns. Predicate involves the use of the *verb*.

Rule 2. This rule involves the *copula*, the *expletive* and the *predicate nominative* as new facts.

Rule 3. (1) The new elements in this rule are the *object*, *objective case* and the *transitive verb*.

(2) The *preposition* is introduced in 3 (2).

Rule 4. (1) In rule 4 (a) are introduced *number in nouns*, *gender in nouns* and *the possessive case in nouns*.

(2) In rule 4 (b) is added *case*, *person*, *gender*, and *number in personal pronouns*, the *compound personal pronoun*, *case of relative pronouns*, *gender of relative pronouns*, use of *which* and uses of *what*.

Rule 5. Rule 5 introduces the *conjunction*.

Rule 6. No new element is added.

Rule 7. The new facts introduced are *demonstrative adjectives* and *demonstrative pronouns*.

Rule 8. (1) Rule 8 (a) involves two new elements—*person* in *verbs* and *number* in *verbs*.

(2) Rule 8 (b) adds the *compound subject*.

Rule 9. The new facts included in the rules given under 9 are *strong verbs*, *weak verbs*, *present tense* and *past tense*.

Rule 10. Here is introduced the *past participle*, the *perfect tense* of the *active voice* and all the tenses of the *passive voice*.

Rule 11. No new elements are added in Rule 11.

Rule 12. Rule 12 needs three new facts—the *intransitive verb*, the *direct object* (as such) and the *indirect object*. The auxiliaries *can* and *may* are introduced. Other new facts needed to understand rule 12 are the *future tense*, *shall* and *will* as auxiliaries and *should* and *would*.

Rule 13. This rule implies a knowledge of the subjunctive mood in the copula *be*.

Rule 14. The supplementary facts needed in these rules are *comparison of adjectives*.

Rule 15. No new element is needed.

Rule 16. The new facts introduced in rule 18 are the *adverb* and the *comparison of adverbs.*

Rule 17. (a) No new element is needed.
(b) The *infinitive* is here used.

Rule 18. Introduces the *double negative.*

Rule 19. In rule 19 no rule not already mentioned is needed.

Rule 20. No new fact is needed in rule 20.

Rule 21. No new grammatical fact is introduced.

Rule 22. Rule 22 introduces the *declarative* and the *imperative sentence.*

Rule 23. This rule introduces the *interrogative* sentence.

Rule 24. No new element is added.

Rule 25. No new element is added.

Rule 26. No new element is added.

Rule 27. Rule 27 introduces the *dependent clause* and the *independent clause* (as such).

Capitalization rule 1 involves nothing new.

Capitalization rule 2 involves a knowledge of *proper nouns*, of *common nouns*, and of *proper adjectives.*

In table L, which follows, tabulations A to K are focused; and a discussion of the elements of grammar is centered around the parts of speech, their inflections and syntax, and the supplemental processes of parsing and analysis.

In this table use is made of the relative percentages found in the earlier tables to show to an approximate degree where the emphasis should be placed. Of the subclasses of error and other data, use is also made.

TABLE L

A Discussion of the Items to be Included in a Course of Study Based upon Grammatical Errors

A. *Nouns.*

(a) The definition of the word noun must be learned. It is evident that the children should learn the difference between common and proper nouns, since in a total of 1321 pages, 1039 proper nouns are found beginning with small letters, and 413 common nouns beginning with capitals. (See table G.)

(b) There is a decided need for the study of the inflection of nouns.

1. By far the most important element in the inflection of nouns is number. Here (table H 4a) we find 417 violations or about three per cent of the total errors. Worse than this, in H 8 A and B, 776 times the verb fails to agree with its subject in number—six per cent of the total written errors; and in table B 8 C and D, 588 times the verb fails to agree with its subject in number—ten per cent of the total oral errors. Thus we find that number in nouns can hardly be stressed too hard. (For errors see table I 8.)

2. There is not great need for a study of case. The only place in which it is necessary to understand case in nouns is in the matter of the possessive, where 32 instances of failure to add the *s* to form the possessive are found—a small per cent in the total of errors. (See table H 4; table I 4 d.) However, the proper placing of the apostrophe must be emphasized. (Table E 24.)

3. Gender also must be studied, but it is hardly more necessary than case. There are (table H 4 and table B 4) no errors tabulated in the gender of nouns. There were too few to note separately—only three. However, the need of the study of gender in nouns may be readily seen when the pronoun's failure to agree in gender with its antecedent is noted. There are 49 instances in table H 6, and several in table B 6. (For errors see table I 4b, I 6d, and f.)

(c) Syntax in nouns seems to be covered by the study of four constructions; i.e., the case of the subject of a verb, the case of the subjective complement, the case of the objective of the verb or preposition, and the case of the indirect object (table K 1, 2, 3, and 12). As far as the matter of error is concerned, these are not important in the study of nouns. They need to be studied only to facilitate the handling of analysis where the noun and pronoun are so closely connected in their syntactical functions. (For errors see table I 1, 2, 3, and 12a.)

The indirect object construction needs to be taught to help the children to see that a verb may be followed by two words both in the objective case. (For errors see table I 12a, and b.)

B. *Pronouns.*

In pronouns the student must first know what a pronoun is. Then the different kinds must be studied. The syntax rules governing the use of pronouns are like those governing the use of nouns.

(a) The personal pronouns, probably because of their high degree of inflection, have caused more difficulty than anything else outside of the field of verbs. Almost every instance of error in table A 1, 2, and 3, and table E 1, 2, and 3 is due to lack of understanding of the case of the personal pronoun. Rules of gender are violated very seldom (for example, see table I 6d and f), but when such instances do occur, they are unusually bad.

Number, also, is important. To use a plural pronoun referring to a singular antecedent is one of the most common mistakes, outside as well as inside a school room. Over half of the instances in which the pronoun fails to agree with its noun are due to failure to agree in number. (Table H 6 A.)

Person may be neglected except as it forms the basis for the other inflections of the personal pronouns. (Tables H 6 B, I 4.)

(b) The compound personal pronouns are often very badly formed. (See table B 4 B, one per cent of total oral errors; table H 4 C, one-half per cent of total written errors; table I 4 f.) Also the proper use of these pronouns is not observed. They are used far too often for the personal pronoun. (See table H 4 D.)

(c) The relative pronoun shows three specific causes for trouble. First, gender. (Tables B 3 and 6, H 3 and 6 C.) The students fail to realize that *which* does not do exactly the work of *who* or *whom*. A definite example of this is a sentence from one of the 6th grade papers: "There was an old grocer who had a daughter who had a beau which her father did not like who had a man which was clever in tricks."

In the case formations there is a decided lack of understanding that the objective case of the relative *who* ends in *m*. Of course, the number of instances is very small; that is because there was not a large need of it. But almost invariably where they need the objective form they leave off the *m*. (Table A 3, table C 3. For errors in the use of relative pronouns, see table I 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.)

(d) And, lastly, the use of *what*. This word as a relative occurs only a very few times (tables A 4, E 4) but it usually has its antecedent expressed. (Table I 4 f.)

C. *Adjectives.*

(a) The first thing to be learned about adjectives is the definition and the fact that personal pronouns may never be used as adjectives. (See tables A 7, I 7.) This error, so common in the children's language that it totals three per cent of the whole number of errors, strangely enough, rarely occurs in the written work, appearing only three times (table E 7, table I 7). The demonstrative adjectives should be taught. The difference between the cardinal and ordinal numbers and the proper terminations for the ordinal must be given. For instance, such expressions as "one of seventeenth children," and "23st Street" occur not infrequently.

(b) The derivation of proper adjectives should be taught, chiefly for the capitalization of these words, (as *English* from *England*, *Greek* from *Greece*, etc.). Very often indeed the noun appears in the place of the adjective, and even if the adjective is used the word is very seldom capitalized.

Another error almost of this type is the use of common nouns for common adjectives; i.e., *center* for *central*, reminiscence for reminiscent, etc. (See table H 21 S.)

(c) The comparison of adjectives must be taught. The rules for the addition of *er* and *est*, of *more* and *most* and the irregular forms must be memorized. (Table B 14 A and B; table H 14; table I 14.)

(d) The use as well as the formation of the comparative and superlative respectively should be taught. (Table B 15; table H 15; table I 15.)

D. *Verbs.*

Running one's eye down the column of total errors either of table A or table E one cannot but be struck by the enormous proportion of error in verbs. Table A 8-13 shows well over half the total of errors—57 per cent. Table E 8-13 shows 16 per cent of the written errors to be in verbs. So evidently it is here that teachers need to lay the greatest stress. (Table I 8 to 13.)

(a) First, of course, we must find out what a verb is; then what kinds of verbs there are. Here we have transitive, intransitive, and the copula. Transitive verbs we must understand to understand direct object. We need this knowledge again to understand the difference between the verbs *to lay* and *to lie*, *to set* and *to sit*, and *to learn* and *to teach* (table B 12 C and D, 3 per cent; table H 12 A and B, 1 per cent.) Examples of errors are found in table I 12. Copulative verbs have to be understood in order to comprehend what a predicate noun is.

(b) (1) In the inflection of verbs, person is almost the least important factor. In the oral work, the use of *ain't* for person besides the first singular, made a total of 3 per cent all by itself. (Table B 8 A, table I 8 e, f.) (*Ain't* for *am not* in *I am not* was not considered to be an error.) But aside from this case we find only one per cent among the total oral errors (table B 8 B) and almost none among the written errors (table H 8 C). The few errors that there are, are due largely to such an expression as *she don't* (which, of course, might also be called an error in number).

The understanding of number, as was pointed out in this table under number in nouns, is exceedingly weak. In table B 8, we have 588 failures of the verb to agree in number with its subject as against 243 in person inclusive of 167 due to the use of *ain't*. In table H 8 we find 753 failures of the verb to agree in number with its subject, as against 10 in person. (Table I 8.)

This mistake is most common, first, when the subject follows the verb (as in case of the use of the expletive *there*), and, second, when there is a compound subject. In this second case there seems to be an irresistible temptation to make the verb agree with the nearest subject, even if there are three or four other nouns joined to it by *ands*. A third misleading condition often arises when a singular subject is separated from the verb by a phrase containing a plural noun, or when a plural subject is separated from the verb by a phrase containing a singular noun. (Examples of both are: "The governor of the proprietary colonies were chosen by...." and "The men who lived in the northern part was.....").

Table A 8 and table E 8 (also table B 8 and table H 8) prove conclusively that too much stress can hardly be laid upon number in verbs.

(3) The only thing more urgent than number is tense. The three headings of tense in table A 9, 10 and 11 total 31 per cent of all oral errors. Table E 9, 10 and 11 shows a like per cent. We see an appalling lack of knowledge here. And, furthermore, this is a far more difficult matter to handle than number. (For errors see table I 9, 10, and 11.)

There are a few verbs which should be hammered on without cessation all through each child's grammar school education. These are:

1st, the verb *to see*. (Table B 10 A shows 10 per cent of total errors. Table H 10 B.)

2nd, the verb *to do*. (Table B 10 B shows 5 per cent of total errors. Table H 10 D.)

3rd, the verb *to come*. (Table B 10 C shows 4 per cent of total errors. Table H 10 C.)

Go, *run*, *ring*, *sing*, *drink*, *ask*, *give*, *write*, etc., are very commonly given in the wrong tense. (See table B 10; table H 10.) And many verbs (table B 11; table H 11) appear with impossible tense forms, the commonest, perhaps, being *drawed*, *seed*, *attackeded*, *had ought*, *clumb*, *drug*, etc. (For errors see table I 10.)

Another element that enters into tense is the proper use of the auxiliaries *shall* and *will* (*should* and *would*) in the future tense.

(4) One of the most curious things shown by this study is the comparison of errors, written and oral, in the use of *can* and *may* and *shall* and *will*. Table B 12 A and F shows that *can* and *may* were interchanged 248 times against 13 times for *shall* and *will* in the oral errors; and table H 12 D, E shows that *can* and *may* were interchanged 12 times against 125 times for *shall* and *will* in the written work. One reason for this is that permission involving the use of *can* and *may* is usually asked orally and seldom in writing. Another is that in the Middle West we are lax in the use of *shall* and *will* and frequently fail to notice errors. But it seems both a curious and interesting thing, and it shows the necessity of equal emphasis and training in the use of both pairs of auxiliaries. It, also, shows more clearly than any other fact the way in which the oral work and the written work supplement each other, and illustrates the necessity of further investigation. (Table I 12.)

(5) Errors in mood are all due to failure to use the subjunctive forms. Mood is quite unimportant for grade children. Table A 13 shows no per cent of oral errors and table E 13 shows no per cent of written errors. (For errors see table I 13.) Besides this fact the error when made is a slight one. The subjunctive mood is a very technical thing, and to understand it thoroughly a child must have a very strong logical sense— a sense seldom possessed by young children. The last, but not least, reason for discarding mood is the fact that the subjunctive is dying such a rapid natural death. Practically none of the forms are used now-a-days

except the past, and sometimes the present, of the verb *to be*, and these forms which need to be taught might be taught as special cases.

(6) Voice must be taught in order to have the children understand the part of the verb used in these compound forms. For instance, *was wrote well* will appear for *was written well*. This may be primarily based upon the tense work taken up earlier in this table—confusion of past ense and past participle. But an understanding of voice will surely be necessary to show that in this we find the past participle always used in conjunction with the forms of the verb *to be*.

(7) The past participle has been dwelt upon above in connection with tense. It must be learned in learning the principal parts of a verb.

(8) The infinitive form needs to be studied only to show that an adverb (or anything else) should not be inserted between the parts of the infinitive ("not able to *quite* see"). (Table B 11 B; table H 11 D; table B 17; table H 17.)

E. *Adverbs.*

(a) Adverbs must be studied only far enough to show that adjectives and adverbs are not interchangeable. In the first place the function of an adverb is different; that is, instead of modifying a noun, it modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb. Then an adverb tells where or how or when or how much. This must be learned in order to eliminate such expressions as "that *there* lesson". (Table B 16 A—3 per cent of total errors, table H 16 C; table E 16; table A 21.)

(b) The comparison of adverbs must be studied.

F. *Prepositions.*

Two things about prepositions must be studied—first, what they are; and second, their relation to the objective case and the pronouns which they govern.

G. *Conjunctions.*

Work on conjunctions should be like that on prepositions. The principal thing to be guarded against here is the use of *like* as a conjunction. This is a very common error all through the South and West, and it should be brought under control if possible. (See table H 19; table I 19.)

Classification of conjunctions should be studied also and a list of the principal coördinate conjunctions learned.

H. *Misplaced Modifiers.*

The oral work (table A 17) shows almost no misplaced modifiers, but the written work (table E 17) shows many. Their absence in the oral illustrations is probably due to the failure to obtain stenographic reports of the oral speech of the children. Table I 17 contains some of the very worst examples of errors that have been found in this study.

I. *Double Negatives.*

Double negatives show an enormous percentage in oral work (table A 18), and an almost negligible percentage in written work (table E 18). Table I 18 contains examples of errors.

J. *Syntactical Redundance.*

Ten per cent of the oral errors are located here (table A 20) and four per cent of the written ones (table E 20). Redundance in prepositions seems to be the most common type, as "where is a thing *at?*" etc. (See table B 20 C; table H 20 A.) For examples of errors see table I 20. Then in verbs it is very common, especially in oral work. (See table B 20 B; table H 20 B; also C (1) and (4).)

K. *Spelling.*

A rather intangible topic—one to be handled rather by the ingenuity of the teacher according to the necessities of the case than by rule—is the matter of spelling. Often when words are misspelled, their whole grammatical sense is changed. For instance *there* is not the possessive case of the plural third personal pronoun, but an adverb of place. This type of error included 11 per cent of the written errors (table E 21; table I 21). Naturally it does not appear in the oral work. Table H 21 B to R shows the commonest of these errors, with the number of mistakes to the discredit of each. It is evident that much attention must be given this matter, especially H 21 B, C, D, E, I, J, K, M, O, Q. Some groups however, may have more trouble with some of the others.

L. *Sentence Structure.*

(a) Lastly, the children must understand what a sentence is and how to write it. (Table E 25, 26, 27 are all due to lack of knowledge of what a sentence is. This includes 14 per cent of written errors. Illustrations of errors are found in table I 27.)

(b) (1). To know how to write the sentence, two items of info mation are necessary. First, every sentence must begin with a capital letter. If failures to capitalize the first word in a sentence had been counted here, they would have been just about equal to the failures to put a period at the end of a sentence—a total of 3,600; for the placing of a period and the use of a capital after it go together n our minds. Second, every sentence must be followed by some mark of punctuation, an exclamation point, a period, or an interrogation point. The exclamatory type of sentence may be disregarded, as no examples were found. The kind of sentence that asks a question is called interrogative, and is followed by an interrogation point; and all others that the children used are followed by a period. 30 per cent of the written errors were made because of the failure to put into practice this simple rule (table E 22). The third type of sentence—the one that asks a question—is followed by an interrogation point. As there are bound to be far fewer sentences of this type, we naturally have a far lower percentage here (table E 23). But usually when this type of sentence does occur it is punctuated incorrectly.

M. *Parsing and Analysis.*

Parsing and analysis are necessarily much simplified with this much simplified system of syntax. The sentences given the children to be parsed must contain only the simple constructions covered by this work, representing, as it does, the language of the children themselves.

First, the students must know what parsing is. They must be able to divide a sentence into its main elements, subject, and predicate, and in case of a transitive verb, direct object; sometimes also an indirect object, or if a copulative verb, subjective complement. They must be taught that only a noun in the possessive case, an adjective, adjective phrase, or adjective clause may modify the subject; that only an adverb, adverbial phrase, or adverbial clause may modify the predicate.

(There are so few cases in which trouble in handling noun clauses is felt by the children, and the intrinsic difficulty in handling the matter is so great, that it may be discarded. An example of this type is, "I couldn't tell *who* I saw." It is better to teach it as a special case than to go through all the intricacies of noun clauses.)

This, of course, necessitates the teaching of the adjectival and adverbial types of phrases and clauses, which can be made plain quite easily.

Then, in parsing a noun, its gender, kind, number, case, and syntax *must be stated*; a pronoun, its kind, gender, number, person, case, and syntax; adjective, its kind and what it modifies; also, if numeral, which kind, and if descriptive, which degree; a verb, kind (if transitive, its object must be mentioned; if copulative, its complement must be mentioned), person, number, tense, voice; an adverb, what it modifies (and what degree it is); a preposition, what words it connects; a conjunction, what words, phrases and clauses it connects; phrases and clauses, what kind they are and what they modify.

The extent to which analysis is to be carried is determined by the errors which the children make. No sentences (simple, compound, or complex) should be analyzed which do not involve potential errors, except that simple exercises necessary for the explanation of and drill upon the rules are, of course, necessary. Even these, however, should, as far as possible be such as contain potential errors. Sentences involving subtleties of grammar would by these principles be avoided unless they involve actual or potential errors.

Table M, which is based upon the oral and written errors of the children of the community, displays the items to be included in a course of study for the elementary grades. It assumes that all types of error were found and reported. That this assumption is absolutely correct is not probable. That it is approximately correct seems reasonably certain. To verify

its accuracy further other studies would need to be made in Kansas City.

As the present course of study in grammar in the sixth and in the seventh grades of the Kansas City schools was materially simplified in the 1913-14 session, it is now one of the simplest in the United States. Notwithstanding this fact, many items would be omitted from it upon the basis of table K. These are included in table L. The pages refer to *Grammar and Composition with Practical English* by Robins, Row, and Scott (*Row, Peterson & Company, Chicago*), the text now in use in the sixth and seventh grades.

TABLE M

Omissions from and Additions to the Present Elementary Course of Study in Grammar in Kansas City

Omissions.

1. Exclamatory sentence, p. 2.
2. The interjection, pp. 16 f.
3. The appositive, pp. 37 ff.
4. The nominative of address, pp. 39 f.
5. The nominative by exclamation, pp. 40 f.
6. The objective complement, pp. 53 f.
7. The adverbial objective, pp. 56 f.
8. The indefinite pronouns, pp. 69 f.
9. The objective complement, p. 91.
10. The objective used as a substantive, p. 91.
11. The classification of adverbs, pp. 94 ff.
12. The noun clause, pp. 107 ff.
13. Conjunctive adverbs, p. 116.
14. The retained objective, pp. 128 f.
15. The moods (except possibly the subjunctive of *to be*), pp. 135 ff. and 152 ff.
16. The infinitive except the split infinitive, pp. 145 ff.
17. The objective subject, pp. 149 f.
18. The participle except the definition and the present and the past forms, pp. 162 ff.
19. The nominative absolute, pp. 165 ff.
20. The gerund, pp. 168 f.

Additions.

1. The pronoun *what.*
2. Proper and numeral adjectives.

The first, second, and third of the omissions affect punctuation; the first and second, the exclamation point; and the third, the comma. The exclamation point is used at the end of the exclamatory sentence and after interjections to express an intensity of feeling greater than that expressed by the period, and it is doubtful if children have the nicety of experience to understand the difference. If the point is absent, its omission cannot be counted as an error because the reader has no way of knowing how intense is the feeling that accompanied the sentence. Strangely enough, the children used the appositive hardly at all. Instead of saying, "Bill, the bandit, killed a deer," they seem to prefer to say, "Bill was a bandit, and he killed a deer."

To the omissions, tabulated in table M, should be added such sentences for analysis and parsing as are given to children solely because they involve subtle points in grammar. This is true because the errors made by children seem to occur in the commoner and more easily classified constructions as may be seen by an examination of table I.

POSTSCRIPT

The content of the course of study in elementary grammar in the Kansas City schools is not dealt with here. The problem is simply and solely to find out what the course of study would be *if it were based upon the errors of the children.* The problem of the content of the course of study requires such serious consideration that it can be determined only by practical experience and opinion aided by other scientifically conditioned studies.

The setting of the problem, the collection of the material, the general oversight of the work, the writing of much of the final report, and the revision of all of it was done by Dean W. W. Charters. The technical part of the study was supervised by Miss Edith Miller, who made the classifications, organized the tables, and put them into final form. The clerical work involved in tabulating the errors was performed under Miss Miller's supervision by students of the University of Missouri, selected for proficiency in grammar. Professors H. M. Belden and R. M. Dewey of the department of English were consulted in cases of doubt; but they are in no way responsible for any errors that are found in the study. Professors Belden and F. M. Tisdel have read the report and have given valuable criticisms upon it while it was being written.