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Fusion in language: A case for supralelexical units

Coreil, Clyde, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1992

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**FUSION IN LANGUAGE:
A CASE FOR SUPRALEXICAL UNITS**

by

Clyde Coreil

**A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Linguistics
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
The City University of New York**

1992

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Linguistics in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

FUSION IN LANGUAGE:
A CASE FOR SUPRALEXICAL UNITS

by

Clyde Coreil

Advisor: Professor William Stewart

Apparently, linguistic fusion results in an enormous number of lexicalized phrases, or what I call "supralexical units." These extend along a continuum from literal constructions like "Don't worry about it" to semi-idioms like "a white lie" to full idioms like "kick the bucket." The principle of fusion also helps account for metaphors like "John is a lion." According to the Supralexical Hypothesis, one differentiating factor in these classifications is the number of semantic features that are added or deleted in the process of supralexicalization.

I identify fifteen characteristics of fused structures, including productivity, which results in "take one's blood pressure/pulse/temperature" but not "weight/height." The relevant semantic feature is apparently "measurement of a physiological process" which excludes weight and height. In the particular fused structure, such lexical items lose some of the properties that had characterized them as independent, and they become, to varying degrees, morpheme-like in nature.

Supralexical units seem to be preferred over analytic approximations, which would often be termed "unidiomatic" by native speakers: e.g. *start sleeping" vs "go to sleep." Management of fused structures (which represent a possible method of quantifying idiomatic speech) seems to be an important component of competence in a given language.

I present an experiment in which I asked 343 subjects to express preference in 40 pairs of sentences, which differed only in that one contained a supralexical unit, and the other, an analytic approximation: e.g., *"I wrote my homework. / I did my homework." Results show a significant difference at the $P < .05$ level between each of five groups of speakers: Intermediate ESL, Advanced ESL, Bilingual, Black English, and Standard English. Apparently, this method of testing is quite sensitive to supralexical differences both in the lower and the upper ranges of fluency in a given dialect. I mention possible implications of this research for several areas, including lexicography, the study of dialects, language acquisition and attrition, and various other aspects of language change.

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For their personal support when the going was tough, I thank my colleagues in the ESL Program at Jersey City State College--Adela, Anne, Claire, James, Joan, Marian, Steve, Viuu, and especially Veronica.

I formulated part of the basic idea behind this paper when I first began to poke around in linguistics. My teacher then was Gladys Wolff, who seemed to think that there was something promising in the direction of my inquiry. For her encouragement, I am grateful.

It is, however, to my wife Vivian that I owe the most.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I

RESEARCH GOALS

Three related goals informed the direction of this research. The first was to establish that the fusion of lexical items into recurring phrases is an important linguistic process that results, not only in an enormous number of discrete units, but also in a fundamental change in the nature of the lexical items involved. The second was to provide evidence that these fused phrasal units constitute a significant dimension of measurable difference between virtually any two idiolects. As such, the units might prove useful in distinguishing between, for example, (A) speakers of minimally different dialects, and (B) the fluency levels of students of English as a second language (ESL).

The third goal was to develop a type of test that is based on preformulated, fused phrases and that would help realize the possibilities of discrimination referred to above. That is, if different performances on the test should create

a pattern that is not random but statistically significant, then that would indicate that the discriminations are based on differences that are real and meaningful. The test might, then, also serve as a rough model for an instrument that would be capable of measuring very small degrees of language loss and change. Another important function would be to serve as a discrete-item test of idiomaticity, which has largely remained unquantified and which seems to be intimately related to fixed phrases. (I will discuss the relation between fusion and idiomaticity in Chapter Three.)

The test that evolved consisted of a simple task, made up of forty pairs of sentences whose semantic content was generally as near identical as I could make it. In each pair, one sentence contained a fused phrase in a target position, and the other contained an analytic approximation in that position: e.g. "I went to sleep" vs. "I started sleeping." The vocabulary, length and complexity of sentences were controlled, so that the only variable was the target phrase.

Results, computed by the Duncan and by the Scheffe procedures, show a significant difference at the $P < .05$ level between each of five groups of a total of 343 subjects: Intermediate Students of English as a Second Language (ESL), Advanced Students of ESL, Bilinguals in English and one other language (most often Spanish), Native Speakers of Black English, and Native Speakers of Standard English. To be more precise, there was no significant difference between the

scores of Speakers of Black English and those of Advanced Students of ESL. In Chapter Six, I will assess this finding and describe the experiment in general. In Chapter Seven, I will discuss in detail each of the eighty sentences in the "Supralexical Task," as I have named this type of test.

NOTE

Several other terms--e.g. lexical phrases, phraseological units, collocations, automatic speech, automatisms, non-propositional phrases, transparent idioms, idioms of encoding, and unitized subprograms--have been used to refer to the recurrence of specified lexical items in predetermined sequence. I prefer "supralexical units," because of four reasons. First, that term would seem to refer to countable chunks extending past the word boundary. Second, because of the similarity to the term "suprasegmental" which refers to "a vocal effect which extends over more than one sound segment in an utterance" (Crystal, 1985, p. 296). Third, because it is easy to talk about a process--fusion--motivating the formation of a particular kind of unit. And fourth, because it seems to serve well as a label for a category I will propose, one that covers a continuum of constructions including metaphors, idioms and the most syntactically regular, literal kind of expressions. I will also develop the claim that each such unit is linked to a unique semantic configuration.

II

ORGANIZATION

To explore the notion of fusion in language, I have divided this work into eight chapters, which I list and briefly describe in the paragraphs below. In Chapter Two, I discuss the broader problems that arise in chapters three through eight, and my approach to resolving some of them. This presentation of overviews is perhaps made advisable by the broad scope of the hypothesis I am presenting. There are many quite relevant ramifications, and the reader should be kept apprised of them as he or she proceeds through the text.

The eight chapters are as follows: (1) an introduction, (2) thematic overviews of chapter three through eight, (3) a discussion of various aspects and implications of the Supralexical Hypothesis, (4) a selective review of related literature, (5) the presentation and discussion of fifteen characteristics of fused structures, (6) the presentation of an experiment entitled "Supralexical Task", (7) a fairly close consideration of the pairs of sentences in the experiment, and (8) concluding remarks including additional considerations of the implications of fusion.

Through paradigms, comparisons, elaborations and other means, I attempt in Chapter Seven to do two things: first, I demonstrate that sentences in the Task containing analytic

constructions are no less syntactic than sentences containing supralexical units. (It should be pointed out that a broader concept of syntax, one partially based on the process of fusion, does indeed seem to make these analytic constructions unacceptable and therefore unsyntactic. Such arguments would, of course, support and not detract from our hypothesis.)

In that seventh chapter, I also explore the individual pre-formulated phrases in a way that is impossible without considering specific examples.

CHAPTER TWO

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS

I

THE SUPRALEXICAL HYPOTHESIS

In this paper, I will attempt to develop a hypothesis that might have strong implications for the relation between preformulated, fused phrases and the structure of the English language. However, it is not with that relationship per se that I am primarily concerned, but rather with examining these phrases to determine if they have features that distinguish them as the product of a basic linguistic operation, fusion. In the presence of such features, it would seem to be necessary to account for them in the grammar of English. (Although I assume that the principle of fusion is operative in other languages, I will not be concerned with arguing that point.) If a set of distinctive features is not present, then we would be advised to continue to

generally limit our discussion of preformulated phrases to the terms of relatively independent observations and intuitively salient impressions.

I will, then, be trying to find evidence to support the Supralexical Hypothesis, a main part of which is that fused phrases have a unique set of properties that have generally not been incorporated into descriptions of syntax. This goal of enumerating characteristics is in close accord with Van Lancker (1987) who formulated the following hypothesis:

That certain phrase types which are functionally and structurally unique exist, contrasting with the rest of language structure (which conforms to the classic unit-and-rule system described in generative grammar); and further, these subsets of language are represented differently in the brain from classic language structures" (p. 53).

She proceeds to mention several features of "idiomatic constructions" developed by Chafe (1968) and Weinreich (1969): "(1) their meaning is like that of a single lexical item, (2) they show transformational deficiencies, (3) they are often not syntactically well formed, (4) the text frequency of the literal counterpart is much lower than the idiomatic construction" (p. 97). In a previous work (1975), she devotes a chapter to "Properties of Non-propositional Speech Types" (p. 130) where she refers to "cohesion, or high transitional probability across the parts of a unit construction" (p. 146). Although these are certainly interesting, they do not seem to comprise the major part of a substantial approach

to the phenomena of preformulated, non-propositional speech. Rather, Van Lancker's (1975) appeal for "further research...to determine features and qualities of more or less automatic modes" still stands (p. 145).

Makkai (1972) has issued a similar appeal in speaking of what he calls "idioms of encoding," by which term he seems to refer to the "phraseological peculiarities" of certain phrases that are used to express certain specific concepts. Although the definition he gives of idioms of encoding is somewhat vague, these phrases appear to be quite similar to what we are including in the term "supralexicals":

It is important to emphasize that the phraseological approach to idiomaticity can only marginally be seconded by semantic criteria since certain "peculiar phrases" are only "peculiar" in so far as they exist at all and not in so far as it is impossible to deduce their meanings from their components. Thus, from a phraseological point of view, it may be "idiomatic" that whereas in most European languages one drives **with** a certain speed...in English the phrase is **he drove at 70 MPH....**There is little doubt that phenomena of this type need detailed treatment and it may turn out to be generally the most economical treatment to regard them as a special sub-variety of idiomaticity [emphasis mine]. Misunderstanding...and ambiguity, however, are not involved in this type of "idiom"....It seems appropriate to consider these "phraseological peculiarities" as IDIOMS OF ENCODING, and lexical clusters (**hot dog, hot potato, red herring**) and tournures (**to fly off the handle, to seize the bull by the horns, etc.**) as IDIOMS OF DECODING. (pp.24-25)

Yorio (1989) argues that "grammatical proficiency" is correlated with "the successful use of conventionalized

[preformulated] language." Although this is not a new argument (see pp. 63-66 of this paper), his comment that idiomaticity is an indicator of bilingual system proficiency does suggest a new perspective on the issue. He says, "Indeed, it seems that although fluency is possible without grammatical accuracy, idiomaticity is not. Idiomaticity then becomes an excellent indicator of bilingual system proficiency and, as such, it deserves to be further studied and understood" (p. 68). I do not wish to question this insight, but rather to suggest that the perceived correlation between syntax and proficiency is primarily due to the internalization of discrete supralexical units and a corresponding increase in idiomaticity. An extension of part of this idea is suggested by Bolander (1989) who comments that "routines" (for which we might substitute the term "supralexicals") can "develop into creative rules" (p. 74). We will mention one way in which this might happen in our discussion of "supralexical sets" (p. 191).

At this point, I would like to mention Lexical Phrases and Language Teaching (1992), a work soon to be brought out by Oxford University Press.¹ In that book, authors Nattinger and DeCarrico deal extensively with pedagogical applications

¹ A note of thanks to Oxford editor Cristina Whitecross for getting the proof of that book to me before bound copies were available.

of several of the principles I refer to in this paper. Their theoretical interests, however, are somewhat different from mine. For example, after discussing briefly the boundaries of idioms, they say: "We feel that these studies are worth mentioning in passing, though we take no particular position with respect to idioms and cliches, or other conventionalized forms, unless they can be seen as associated with specific functions" (p. 34). In this, they reflect the concern with speech acts and other functions which were evident in their earlier study of lexical phrases (1989), which I discuss briefly in Chapter Three.

My attempt to contribute to the theories concerning lexical fusion is centered in pages 25-29 and 155-198, where I suggest fifteen features that are characteristic of supralexicals. On pages 106-119, I identify the addition of semantic features as the common denominator linking Makkai's phraseological peculiarities to traditional idioms and metaphors, thereby creating a continuum of fused structures. Considering the possible weight of these characteristics and features, one observation seems to suggest itself: namely, that operations of fusion parallel in importance those of syntax in accounting for intuitions of acceptability in given sequences of lexical items.

Accordingly, an account that integrates holistic patterning with syntax would seem very much in order. However, that is beyond the scope of this paper, and the above observation

must remain, at this point, only a suggestion.

II ASPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF SUPRALEXICAL UNITS

In linguistics, the term "fusion" is perhaps most often used in morphological typology to refer to a condition in which "the expression of different categories within the same word is fused together to give a single, unsegmentable morph" (Comrie, 1981, p. 41). For example, in the English pronoun "he", person, gender, and number are jointly expressed. The word cannot be separated into pieces as can "typology": typ (type) + ology (a branch of science) = the scientific study of types. A more commonly given example involves verb affixes that combine or fuse, say, number and case into one unique form.

Another example involves what Zubin and Choi (1984) call gestalt and orientation imaging systems. Gestalt, as they use the term, refers to internal features of perceived objects; orientation, to external. The straightness or crookedness of a walking cane is gestalt; the straightness or crookedness of a telephone pole can refer to its being vertical or tilted in relation to the horizon and therefore has to do with orientation. "Although in this sense, orientation and gestalt are often conflated on the same lexical items [in English and a number of other languages], we find exceptions to this, notably in Korean, where one set of terms is anchored to gestalt properties of objects,

and another set to the orientation of objects in their environment" (p. 334). What Zubin and Choi call "conflated," we are calling "fused."

If we slightly extend this basic argument, we are faced with an enormous number of lexical items which exist in large part because of the fusion of semantic features. It seems that, accompanying fusion, is the token of the new fact that what was two before is now one. In linguistics, this token is usually a word or a phrase, i.e., an item that can enter the lexicon and subsequently be manipulated in constructing arguments, and inflected according to the needs of syntax. The elements that are fused are semantic features. Although such features can be brought to awareness, they largely remain as subconscious, functioning elements of cognition.

Human beings seem to operate in terms of a "belief structure" that is partially linguistic in nature. For example, some societies seem to hold that, generally, being ready to forgive others is ultimately weakness, and that a readiness to take revenge is indicative of sound character. In such a society, one semantic feature of "revenge" would likely be something more or less equivalent to "approved by society." The semantic features of "forgive" might well include "disapproved by society," "sign of weakness", and even "inauthentic feeling."

If we consider a lexical item to name a unique configuration of semantic features that have been united

by fusion, then we see that two English-speaking persons from different subcultures might have a different understanding of the lexical items "revenge" and "forgive." These understandings appear to be identical but are almost diametrically opposed in terms of one semantic feature, namely "socially approved value." There seems to me no good reason why such a feature should be considered of a different nature from the others that help constitute the meaning of "revenge," "forgive," and similar lexical items that make reference to the emotional and affective. It would seem possible to consciously modify learned concepts, e.g. "revenge" would become "disapproved by society," and "forgive," approved. However, the extent to which traces of the original features would remain intact in the lexicon is another question.

III FEATURE-BASED LEXICON

In this argument, we are making reference to what might be called a "feature-based lexicon" in which primary focus is not on the surface phonological label of a particular set of semantic features (the lexical item), but on those features themselves. A single word in a particular use (see the canonical/functional distinction, p. 99) seems to call up a particular set of features and thereby results in a certain degree of precision. If this is so, then a fixed multi-word phrase would seem capable of considerably greater complexity with a corresponding increase in precision. Because

this unit could be stored, accessed, and manipulated as a single item in the lexicon, its cost in terms of processing would be minimal. This is exactly what happens, I believe, in the formation and use of a supralexical unit.

The presence or absence of certain semantic features in lexical or supralexical items seems crucial to comprehension, yet this presence or absence is often masked when surface linguistic forms (e.g. "revenge") are identical. This observation is supported by research by Coppieters (1987), whose study was more directly concerned with syntax but whose findings seem most applicable to the principles of the lexicon that we are now discussing:

Do native and native-like non-native (i.e. near-native) speakers develop essentially identical underlying grammars of the same language? Results of extensive interviews indicate that native and near-native speakers of French have strikingly different intuitions on French sentences. In particular, the two groups have markedly divergent interpretations of sentences involving basic grammatical contrasts such as the two past tenses (imparfait and passe compose), the 3rd person pronouns *il* and *ce*, and the placement of the adjective before or after the noun. This is so in spite of the fact that the two groups appear to be equivalent at the level of language use and proficiency.

(p. 544)

Possibly, the presence or absence of certain semantic features help account for what Carroll, Bever and Pollack (1981) call "linguistic intuitions":

In the present study, we show that experimentally manipulated differences in mental state can

systematically alter the linguistic intuitions which speakers render about sentences. The regularity of this effect on intuitions opens up the possibility that the intuitive process can itself be controlled and studied. (p. 369)

We initially explored the effect of objective self-awareness on linguistic intuitions other than those of acceptability or similarity. In our first study, we asked subjects to rate the 'truth' of statements like these:

- (1) a. A house is a building.
- b. A garage is a building.
- c. A lean-to is a building.
- d. A tent is a building.

- (2) a. A robin is a bird.
- b. A chicken is a bird.
- c. An ostrich is a bird.
- d. A bat is a bird.

(p. 371)

The major variable was the presence or absence of a small mirror discreetly placed in front of the subjects which would supposedly create a heightened self-awareness. "Each sentence," say the reserarchers, "is 'true' in some communicative situation, and the more objectively self-aware person will tend to consider more such situations" (p. 372). On a scale in which "10" is most true and "1" is least true, the overall difference in the subject's ratings was 6.45 without mirror and 7.51 with mirror. "Prima facie, this...result reconfirms the possibility that categorical distinctions of truth and falsity can exist in behavior" (p. 373).

In my opinion, "intuition" here can be better (i.e. more concretely) expressed in terms of the feature-based lexicon in which the presence or absence of certain semantic

features is influenced by the sequence of sentences which serve as context. The study by Carroll et al supports the canonical/functional distinction I will discuss later. Briefly, by "canonical signification," I refer to all semantic features associated with a particular lexical item; by "functional signification" I refer to the set of features selected in sentential instantiation by context, supralexicale units, and very probably other linguistic devices.

One general thrust of the above observations suggests not only that perceptions of truth and falsity are based on the different sets of semantic features assigned to items in the lexicon, but that cognition itself occurs in terms of these features which are possibly grouped and named differently in different idiolects. From a more global point of view, it would seem not extraordinary to find radically different groupings in different languages and different cultures.

In this sense, language in general would seem to play an important part in the individual's ideas about reality and his relations to other individuals. This point of view might bring to mind the Whorfian hypothesis (Whorf, 1956) that "our conceptual categorisation of the world is determined by the structure of our language" (Crystal, 1985). The supralexicale hypothesis provides a possibly interesting perspective on Whorf's approach since, for evaluation, it does not require an intimate familiarity with a second

language and a second culture.

IV THREE LEVELS OF FUSION: SEMANTIC, GRAMMATICAL, COLLOCATIONAL

Fusion of the above kind--which occurs between semantic features that are not phonologically realized but remain at some level discrete but relatively abstract, a-morphemic, and unsegmentable--might be called "semantic fusion." There is also a kind of fusion that occurs between morphemes that are phonologically realized and expressed at surface level, and that are segmentable. "Typology" is an example, as are "fireman," "borderline," and "tasted" ("taste" + "-ed"). This kind of fusion might be called "grammatical fusion."

A third category might be called "collocational fusion." Bolinger (1981) comments that "Whenever a combination of words comes to be used again and again in reference to a particular thing or situation, it develops a kind of connective tissue. Sometimes we can tell a collocational fusion by the fact that it shelters words or constructions that are no longer current. He gave of himself contains an old partitive, also preserved in partake of but obsolete in They ate of the meat" (p. 250).

I find such preservation to be evidence of a fundamental and important characteristic of this kind of fusion, namely that fused, multi-word forms are island-like in their resistance to undergoing changes that would otherwise be

required by syntactic rules. I will discuss this at greater length as the fourth characteristic of fusion in Chapter Three. Because I will not deal with semantic fusion or grammatical fusion at length any further, subsequent references are to "collocational fusion" unless otherwise noted. However, the broader principles of fusion are, I believe, quite similar and would be generally applicable to the other types as well.

In collocational fusion, there seems to exist a dual tendency: (1) to exchange and (2) to retain. On the one hand, there is an exchange: individual lexical items tend to lose some of their constituent semantic features, while additional features are acquired by the supralexical unit as a whole. An extreme example of this is the phrase "spic and span," in which the components "spic" and "span" no longer have independent semantic value and are apparently not stored as independent items in the lexicon. A less extreme example is "How do you do?" which has become a greeting and not a real question. One result of this loss is "opaqueness," the opposite of "transparency." "For a speaker of English, 'getatable' is transparent, 'accessible' opaque" (Bolinger, 1981, p. 250).

The second tendency is to retain morphological form. This is seen in the resistance to, say, reduction in the idiom "kick the bucket" to something like "kucket." (One of many exceptions to this is in the reduction of "How do

you do?" to "Howdy.") A reasonable question is, "Why does a supralexical unit retain the morphological form of the phrase from which it was derived?" Part of the answer seems to lie in the complexity of patterns that can exist within even a small number of lexical items. Each of these patterns can become a supralexical unit with distinctive meaning. (I discuss some of these in Chapter Five, pp. 192-194.) Often, the slightest change in one of these supralexicals results not simply in a shortened version but in a different unit with a different semantic configuration. Even contractions like "Let us go" and "Let's go" can have contrastive meaning: "(You) let us go or we'll call the police" and "Let's you and I go."

V OUTLINE OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

During the past twenty years, much has been written about the recurrence of pre-formulated lexical phrases. Most of this literature is primarily concerned either with the functions of such phrases, (e.g., in terms of pragmatics, speech acts, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis) or with the role they play in language acquisition. Although he is concerned with these, Dwight Bollinger seems to be in a third category of his own in several respects. He has, in my opinion, successfully demonstrated that an enormous number of specific lexical phrases operate in a manner that is not primarily algorithmic and that is not accounted for

in the paradigm of generative grammar. He has also provided an incredibly rich and perceptive store of examples of this in his various publications.

In this paper, I follow Bollinger in his apparent attempt to develop a category of linguistic operations in which fixed phrases assume an importance denied them in much contemporary theoretical writing. Specifically, I develop a list of structural and semantic characteristics that are, to one degree or another, shared by supralexic units. I consider fusion to be the source of linguistic motivation in the formation of such constructions. I believe that the perception of some of these ideas may be original with me. Others are either suggested or developed by Bolinger and others. I will indicate this in the search of the literature and wherever else I find it to be relevant.

In developing the Supralexic Hypothesis, it is necessary to refer to a somewhat wide-ranging body of literature. We will also entertain briefly speculations that lie outside the main goal when they add to the context of fusion theory in general. One important aim in Chapter Four is to help delineate the category of supralexic units which would subsume but not be limited to collocations, idioms, proverbs, maxims, fixed phrases, routines, formulaic language, and chunks. In one way or another, all of these consist in large part of units of language that are larger than

individual lexical items and that share at least some of the characteristics of supralexical units. If the categorization proves to be principled, its inclusiveness would seem to lend support to our basic contention that fused structures parallel in importance structures that are generated analytically and creatively.

From a slightly different point of view, fused structures can be seen as operating within general syntactical parameters with the exception that syntactical constraints would seem to apply more to the supralexical unit as a whole rather than to its individual components. There certainly seem to be grounds for such a speculation. For instance, Fraser (1970) makes a case for traditional idioms operating in a transformational grammar. Although such idioms seem to be only one kind of supralexical unit, his arguments are interesting as applied to this larger unit. Other approaches attributing heavier roles to the lexicon are developed by Bresnan (1982) and mentioned by Bates et al. (1988):

Lapointe (1985) proposes a special phrase-structure lexicon that is governed by syntactic processes....Stemberger (1984) also argues that abstract phrase structures are stored and retrieved in a word-like fashion....In the more radical lexicalist proposals, more and more of the knowledge and work of syntax is being placed in the lexicon. Lexical retrieval not only **interacts** with phrase structure planning, lexical retrieval **is** phrase-structure planning. Possible syntactic frames come up with the words that we choose as we try

to arrange our thoughts into a coherent sentence.
(p. 357)

In our discussion of this last point, we will consider the role of "asyntactic apprehension" in the relation between linguistic and non-linguistic cognition. We will suggest that the relative freedom of fused structures from syntactic constraints is indicative of a dynamic, recursive cycle of lexical formation involving deep structure, surface structure and cognitive operations.

It has been widely acknowledged that certain lexical items co-occur with relatively great frequency. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1989), for example, categorize what they call "lexical phrases" as "polywords," "phrasal constraints," "deictic locutions," "sentence builders," "situational utterances," and "verbatim texts." What they and most others generally fail to do, however, is (1) formally describe the fundamental linguistic features that distinguish such "lexical phrases" or supralexical units from analytically generated combinations of lexical items, and (2) suggest substantial generalizations based on these observed features that might lead to a better understanding of the relationship between language generated analytically and language produced holistically. As I have indicated, these two concerns form the main goals of this paper.

LET ALONE

There are several other writers who also contribute substantially to research in this area. For example, in their very close analysis of the phrase "let alone," Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor (1988) make reference to a phenomenon that is important to us:

We think of a locution or manner of speaking as idiomatic if it is assigned an interpretation by the speech community but if somebody who merely knew the grammar and the vocabulary of the language could not, by virtue of that knowledge alone, know (i) how to say it, or (ii) what it means, or (iii) whether it is a conventional thing to say. Put differently, an idiomatic expression or construction is something a language user could fail to know while knowing everything else in the language.

(p. 504)

However, such constructions represent only one type of supralexical unit at one level. The addition of semantic features or anything of the sort is not brought up.

After carefully constructing a set of semantic and syntactic constraints for the single construction "let alone", Fillmore et al make the following comments:

It has seemed to us that a large part of a language user's competence is to be described as a repertory of clusters of information including simultaneously, morphosyntactic patterns, semantic interpretation principles to which these are dedicated, and in many cases, specific pragmatic functions in whose service they exist....A language can associate semantic information with structures larger than elementary lexical items and can associate semantic interpretation principles with syntactic

configurations larger and more complex than those
definable by means of single phrase structure rules

(p. 534, emphasis mine)

Nagy (1978) suggests several of the characteristics of fusion presented below. He refers to Weinreich's (1969) definition of a "phraseological unit" as "any expression in which at least one constituent is polysemous, and in which a selection of the subsense is determined by verbal context" (p. 42). Nagy notes that Weinreich "goes on to define idioms as a particular subset of the class of phraseological units. If I am correct in understanding 'verbal context' as 'lexical context,' then any phraseological unit must be listed in the lexicon, because it contains information that is not predictable" (p. 289).

It is with providing evidence to support this hypothesis that Nagy is primarily concerned. He says that "if the actually occurring combinations are listed in the lexicon, distribution is no longer dependent on semantic subtleties and selectional restrictions of the figurative meanings" (p. 298). However, Nagy does not go on to describe the formation of these combinations in terms of the more fundamental operation we are calling fusion.

CORPORA AND CONCORDANCES

Increases in the power and availability of smaller

computers and developments in programming are making it possible for serious researchers to look closely at the lexical environments of target words in vast corpora of written English. An excellent primer in this area is Corpus, Concordance and Collocation by John Sinclair (1991). Of particular interest will be the inexpensive software program MicroCord, which will be available in June, 1992, from Oxford University Press, and which can be run on a personal computer. This corpus of some ten million words with an accessing program could be quite useful to writers of ESL materials in that they will have access to the most frequently used supralexicals and will be able to construct lessons around them.

VI

ABBREVIATED CHARACTERISTICS OF FUSED STRUCTURES

The characterization of supralexical units is central to this paper, and we will discuss it in detail later. However, I consider it necessary at this point to briefly list the proposed characteristics so that the reader will have a better idea of what it is that I am suggesting. Individually, these characteristics do not constitute a litmus test of what is and what is not a supralexical unit; however, as a group, they do perhaps constitute a fairly clear

description of the linguistic unit and instantiate the more abstract notion of fusion. Let us first look at examples of what I consider to be supralelexical units (underlined) and then at the characteristics.

EXAMPLES OF SUPRALEXICAL UNITS

1. Do it, or else!
2. You have the wrong idea about me.
3. He is drunk more often than not.
4. John went to sleep at 10 p.m.
5. Jane should have known better.
6. Anne loves to go dancing.
7. Guess what happened! I won the lottery.
8. There's no way to get her out of the house.
9. What a dump!
10. He fixed the flat and went on his way.
11. At that time, few women worked outside the home.
12. At what time does it get dark in July.
13. Let's make a run for it.
14. Keep in mind that it is very late.
15. You lost some weight during the summer.
16. He can't walk, let alone run.
17. Let's sing "Jingle Bells."
18. When the going gets tough, only the tough keep going.
19. "Here's Johnny!" (Introduction of Johnny Carson on nightly television program)
20. You'll feel better after you eat.
21. Tell you what I'm gonna do.
22. It might take a little time but he'll get it.
23. See you later.
24. The doctor is on his way.
25. I didn't mean it like that.
26. Don't worry about it.

27. Now what? (High-falling intonation)
28. I'm sorry I'm late.
29. Did you hear about Sam and Judy? They got married.
30. Burt Reynolds used to star in something other than those ridiculous "action-packed adventure" flicks.
31. Okay. This is it. Here goes.

None of the above fits the widely accepted definition of idioms, e.g. as articulated by Fraser (1970): "a constituent or a series of constituents for which the semantic interpretation is not a compositional function of the formatives of which it is composed" (p. 22). Yet these sentences share general structural constraints such as rejection of lexical equivalents and of transformational variations. I suggest that idioms, semi-idioms, routines, etc. are subsets of supralexical units and can be classified according to the number of semantic features that are added to each upon supralexicalization.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUPRALEXICAL UNITS

1. Specific lexical items recur with a minimum of variation and in a fixed sequence.
2. Component lexical items lose their ability to combine with seemingly acceptable alternates in reference to specific concepts, (e.g. go to sleep/*proceed to sleep/*start to sleep; leading/*having a happy life).
3. Once fusion has occurred between two or more independent lexical items, those items undergo a significant reduction in their referential capacity; that is, the range of their normal semantic functions is constrained within the fused

structure. For example: "How do you do?" and "Readers on both sides of the Atlantic shared a common language." (This is different from the first characteristic in that the former is not concerned with referential function, but with collocational use.)

4. **The syntactic constraints that normally apply to lexical items in a sentence are altered, diminished or lost once fusion has occurred.** (e.g. "trip the light fantastic," "How come she's angry," "the very thing," "go home [**go to home*]").
5. **Semantic features not present in any of the component lexical items are added to the phrase that becomes fused.** ("Go fishing" entails leisure; although one can "go walking and dancing," one cannot "go working." The phrase "go to fish" does not carry the semantic feature of "leisure.")
6. **Fused phrases undergo differing degrees of limitation in the ability to undergo transformations.** (e.g. "She got him talking" / **"He was got talking by her."*)
7. **Fused phrases are often restructured in terms of constituency.**

[[You] [lost weight]] / **[[You] [lost] [weight]]*

8. **The nature of the neurolinguistic processing of supralexical units is apparently different from that of analytic phrases.**

"Evidence from aphasia, from psycholinguistic studies in normal subjects, and from linguistic analysis...show that [familiar phrases] are processed differently from propositional, newly generated language. In addition, the neurolinguistic hypothesis put forth here states that there is a neurophysiological basis to the propositional/nonpropositional dimension" (Van Lancker, 1987a, p. 56).

9. **Supralexical units seem to be marked. This marking often seems to be accomplished via semantic indirection (see item 10 below).**
10. **It seems that fusion often occurs between lexical items constituting phrases that are at some distance**

from the most explicit, i.e., the most efficient means of reaching a semantic goal. (e.g., go to sleep / ?start sleeping)

11. Suprasegmental variations are significantly reduced.
12. Supralexical units often become the basis for supralexical sets, that is, variations within a fixed semantic frame. (e.g. "take" in the sense of "make a measurement of one element in a physiological process" yields "take his blood pressure/temperature/pulse" but not *"take his weight/height.")
13. Supralexical units seem to be good candidates for ellipses, reductions, contractions and similar operations. (e.g. How do you do? = Howdy.)

NOTE: Some contracted forms acquire contrastive value in relation to their uncontracted derivations.

A. Let's go home.

B.*Let's out of prison / Let us out of prison.

14. Supralexical units often contain fewer lexical items than their analytic approximations.

A-1. Sam works in an all-night cafe

A-2. Sam works in a cafe that is open all night.

B-1. Don't stay out late.

B-2. Don't remain outside the house past the regular time.

15. In addition to creating single slots for variations (e.g. "take a _____ [bus, train etc.]"), supralexicals seem to create conceptual patterns in which multiple slots for various arguments can be filled: "She not only insulted John, but she also slapped him."

IDENTIFICATION OF SUPRALEXICALS

Once a particular phrase is nominated by the intuition as a candidate for classification as a supralexical unit, that status can be tentatively confirmed by considering it in terms of each of the above characteristics. Generally,

however, there is at this point, no heuristic that can be applied to, say, a given text in order to determine the supralexical units in that passage. As we will see below, individual lexical items share many of the properties of their supralexical cousins. However, these items have the advantage of being orthographically discrete, which allows them to be far more easily identified. It is our concern in this paper to make a case for supralexicity: if we are successful, our efforts might lead to more objective and more effective heuristic processes. At present, we can only hope to sharpen and harness our intuition in the identification of supralexical units.

Precedent for this kind of forging ahead according to intuition is fairly common in linguistics. For instance, Sells (1987) comments to the point: "Many different theories make reference to Theta-roles (under one name or another) yet there is unfortunately no presently available theory of what the range of possible roles is and how you might tell in a given context which one you're dealing with; one must, for the present, rely on intuition in large part" (p. 35).

This dependency on non-objective methods does open our argument to a charge of subjectivity and circularity: a supralexical unit is a supralexical unit because we have a hunch that it is a supralexical unit. In presenting the fifteen characteristics above, I hope to provide argument

and evidence that renders this principled objection less valid.

VII SUPRALEXICAL TASK: AN EXPERIMENT

The sixth chapter presents an experiment designed to measure the extent to which supralelexical units have been internalized by individuals assumed to differ in proficiency in Standard English. The sentences in the experiment were short and written so that the vocabulary and structure could be easily understood by intermediate ESL students. Predictions were that a stepladder effect would be observed in the results, with lowest proficiency subjects at the bottom, and highest proficiency at the top. This would indicate that supralelexicals were acquired discretely and in some sequence. This effect would also support the notion that supralelexicals are units of idiomaticity, a hitherto largely unquantified aspect of language.

The five groups of subjects were: intermediate students of English as a second language (ESL); advanced ESL students; native speakers of standard English; native speakers of Black English; and persons who were bilingual in standard English and one other language. Each subject registered his preference in each of forty pairs of sentences. For example,

A. John went to sleep at 10 p.m.

B. John started sleeping at 10 p.m.

One member of each pair contained a hypothetical supralexical unit (underlined above), while it's mate had an analytic construction in the target location. Subjects were asked to choose the sentence that they felt they would be most likely to hear and/or use in their own speech. It was predicted that differentials in the acquisition of supralexicals would result in substantial differences in the performance of different groups of subjects. These predictions were apparently borne out in the Task experiment (see Chapter Six).

This was a preference task but of the general kind that Levinson (1983) described in speaking of preference organization in conversation:

It must be pointed out immediately that the notion of preference here introduced is not a psychological one, in the sense that it does not refer to speakers' or hearers' individual preferences. Rather it is a structural notion that corresponds closely to the linguistic concept of **markedness**. In essence, preferred seconds [in conversational turns] are **unmarked**--they occur as structurally simpler turns; in contrast dispreferred seconds are marked by various kinds of structural complexity. Thus dispreferred seconds are typically delivered: (a) after some significant delay; (b) with some preface marking their dispreferred status, often the particle well; (c) with some account of why the preferred second cannot be performed. (p. 307)

Although this is generally very close to the selection dynamic that adds salience to and is otherwise involved in supralexical units, there is perhaps the need to add a word

about whether supralexical units are to be assigned the essentially intuitive designations "marked" or "unmarked." Supralexicals frequently seem to be marked, e.g., in terms of constrained semantic deviation (see Characteristic Ten, p. 188); however, such markedness appears to result in an ease of selection and access and is devoid of the general awkwardness mentioned by Levin. Indeed, if the analytical phrase is used in place of an existing, preferred supralexical, the result will be analogous to Levin's "dispreferred seconds." With that condition stated, supralexical units might still be said to be marked by semantic deviation, by head structure (see p. 170), by suprasegmental patterns, and by the unique contrast between the canonical signification and the functional signification, which in this case is the semantic configuration of the particular supralexical involved. The accessing of that configuration in cognition triggers the relevant phonological sequence in the production of speech. In the comprehension of speech, the process would seem to be reversed: the phonology accesses the semantic configuration. In this sense, that configuration and its surface constituents might be said to be co-indexed.

VIII. CLOSE CONSIDERATIONS OF ITEMS FROM THE SUPRALEXICAL TASK

The intended purpose of the detailed consideration of

the forty Supralexical Task items in Chapter Seven is related to the knotty question of how to classify a sentence that is (1) normally unacceptable but apparently syntactic (B), or (2) acceptable despite its seemingly unsyntactic structure (C):

- A. I did my homework.
- B. *I wrote my homework.
- C. Long time no see.

If we say that Item B is syntactic, we will have to put aside the grounds of acceptability under normal conditions, which seem to be the grounds which allowed us to form the concept of syntacticality in the first place. Chomsky (1957) addresses this point in Syntactic Structures: "Clearly, every grammar will have to meet certain external conditions of adequacy; e.g., the sentences generated will have to be acceptable to the native speaker" (pp. 49-50). If we say that Item B is not syntactic, then we have to explain why not. For example, if we say that "wrote homework" violates some undefined category of selection-collocation restriction and is therefore not syntactic, we will have to find a systematic principle that governs such conditions and not simply an ad hoc paraphrase that fits "homework". I have nothing against ad hoc paraphrases, but I find that structures requiring them are often governed more by semantics than by syntax. A good example of this is the common constrained expansion from a supralexical unit to a supralexical set. Part of the

difficulty here, in my opinion, is that the relationship between supralexical units and syntacticality has remained largely undefined and undescribed.

It would seem quite relevant, then, to examine closely a body of structures that we claim to be supralexical units and compare them to analytically generated constructions that are as nearly synonymous as possible. The sentences from the Task would seem to be a good choice because it would, at the same time, help readers to evaluate that experiment and determine for themselves if it measures what I claim it measures. Before the discussion of each item, there is placed a table indicating the performance on that item of subjects according to level, i.e. Intermediate ESL, etc.

IX. CONCLUSION

In the course of this paper, several minor aspects of the Supralexical Hypothesis will be mentioned in appropriate contexts. In the final chapter, I will summarize these minor as well as the major aspects of the Hypothesis. If I am successful in establishing these notions as credible, additional research would be in order, both on internal aspects of the theory and on its external applications. An example of the former involves the nature of the acquisition of supralexical units such as sequencing. An example of external applications would be language teaching pedagogy, the construction of lists and dictionaries, and the

development of tests based on the supralexical/analytic dichotomy for the purpose of making measurements related to decreolization and lexical diffusion (see Hudson, 1980, p. 169).

CHAPTER THREE

ASPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF FUSION

I

APPARENT ADVANTAGES OF FUSED STRUCTURES

We begin this chapter with an informal consideration of some of the possible advantages of fusion to the system of language and to the speakers who use that system. It is not, of course, a teleological rationale for why fusion occurs.

1. Fusion is conceivably an aid to processing. If the speaker and his interlocutor use the same supralexicale formulas to call up a large number of encapsulated specific concepts, then the burden of processing individual lexical items related to those concepts will be eased. Otherwise, analysis would be required, both of those items and of their relationship to other elements in given phrases.

2. Fusion is an aid to speech production and comprehension in that it allows interlocutors to set one phrase going and to move on to the next before the first

is completed. Pawley and Syder (1983), in an article on what they call "nativelike selection," make this point.

3. Fusion helps interlocutors interpret language in relation to the situation in which it is used. Through encapsulation and the addition of semantic features, supralexical units seem to refer to contexts that are projected from within the unit itself. For example, if a man walks up to me and whispers "Stick'em up," I will probably understand him more quickly than if he says, "Stick them up." Apparently, the supralexical unit "Stick'em up" carries the added feature: "signifies that one interlocutor wishes to rob another interlocutor."

4. Fusion helps in the achievement of technical precision. For example, the field of law has an enormous number of unvarying expressions whose stability and encapsulated content are generally perceived as indispensable. Many legal arguments are immediately concerned not with morality and justice per se, but with whether or not a given situation falls within a defined principle, the name for which is a supralexical unit; e.g., "running with the land" (passing with the transfer of the land) (Black, 1983, p. 694). The need for such lexical precision is, of course, common to a great many fields, all of which apparently employ a great many supralexical units in their terminology.

5. Fusion plays an important part in the "institutionalization" of culturally important concepts: e.g., "innocent until proven guilty," "the meek will inherit the earth," and "give to god what is god's; give to Caesar what is Caesar's." Each of these supralexical phrases seems to house presuppositions that are cultural in nature.

6. Supralexical units seem to help condition one's relation to the external world in terms of behavioral and philosophical values. (This function is closely related to Item 5 above.) For example, fused units help diminish the relevance of rational argument as to their underlying validity: such and such is true because Mao said it and not because of the logic or justice that might have led him to say it. A more positive aspect of this is the personal and social stability it fosters.

7. Supralexicals seem to participate in organizing perceptions. They do this by helping to determine (1) what is "registered" in a given perception and what is not registered, (2) the structure of that registration, and (3) the relationship between that new unit of registered material (that which is effectively perceived) and the pre-existing, old information that has already been integrated. For example, the supralexical "Idleness is the devil's workshop" might discourage the perception of "idleness" that some consider

essential to creativity.

8. Fusion helps avoid interminable locutions. The necessary foregrounding and backgrounding often seem to be accomplished through fused lexical phrases. Consider, for example, the sentence: "Zero coupon bonds are a good investment for parents interested in their kids' college." For an investment broker, the phrase "zero coupon bond" is a supralexical unit that refers to a definite but complex type of financial instrument. For parents who often discuss the higher education of their children, "kids' college" is a supralexical unit. In the above sentence, the use of this phrase makes it unnecessary to specify "saving money in such a way that it increases in value and will be available to pay the costs involved in securing a college education for the children."

9. Supralexical units help prevent ambiguity. For example in the sentence "You've got to load the gun if you want to shoot it," fusion of the phrase "load the gun" tends to prevent an interpretation of "load" in the sense of "stack up in the corner." Fusion of "shoot the gun" helps prevent an interpretation of "shoot it" as "fire the gun at an object." Obviously, context is also quite relevant here.

10. Fused lexical items provide units that quickly establish register and facilitate a consistency of expression. For example, the supralexical unit "Come on; gimme a break" sets or maintains a conversational tone that is quite different from, say, "Please don't be so inflexible."

11. Fusions provide a means for establishing solidarity. Hudson (1980) comments on the nature of "linguistic markers of social relations" introduced by Roger Brown (Brown and Ford, 1961; Brown and Gilman, 1960): "[These markers concern] the social distance between people--how much experience they have shared, how many social characteristics they share (religion, sex, age, region of origin, race, occupation, interests, etc.), how far they are prepared to share intimacies and other factors" (Hudson, p. 122). This marking, Hudson says, is accomplished through the careful use of (1) personal names, (2) pronouns of address, (3) noun phrases such as "your servant," (4) verb forms that are inflected to show differences in power and solidarity, and (5) vocabulary level.

There would seem to be another dimension of linguistic form related to power and solidarity, and that is the careful use of supralexical units to formulate questions and propositions. In these terms, precision and register (see Items 4 and 10 above) are quite relevant. For example, "I'm gonna catch me some Z's" instead of "I'm going to sleep for

a little while" would express, among other things of course, friendly casualness between the speaker and his interlocutor.

12. Fusions make puns possible. Without a well established supralexical unit, the pun is virtually impossible. For example, a Spanish gentleman might receive a "Dear Juan letter" from his departing sweetheart: this expression would make little sense without an understanding of the English supralexical unit "Dear John letter".

13. Fused lexical items facilitate the operation of "extra-syntactical patterning" in what we have called "supralexical sets". According to this notion, the use of a specific lexical item like "take" in "take his blood pressure" is extended to the measurement of physiological processes such as "take his temperature," and "take his pulse," but not to the measurement of static features such as *"take his weight" and *"take the width of the room." Except for such constrained variations, lexical items cannot generally be substituted. Once fusion has occurred, the fused elements become part of the lexicon and are accessible both in the formulative and the interpretive phases of communication through language. It would seem possible that, over time, a multitude of uniquely fused elements could influence the cognitive actualizations of a whole culture.

14. Semantic configurations are preserved through encapsulation in supralexical units. One possible function of fusion that seems to deserve close attention is the preservation of semantic configurations that occur in particular contexts. According to this suggestion, after fusion occurs, the particular supralexical unit assumes the role of representing the overall configuration and containing the encapsulated context. Manipulating this symbolic representation would seem absolutely essential to complex cognition, which would otherwise be mired in a mass of detail. In this way, lexis and syntax seem to help make complex thought possible.

In the presence of conscious demands, smaller and smaller context-capsules are accessed and brought to the foreground of consciousness, where the contents can be released. These contents are often other capsules of information which in turn are subject to release on demand. This mechanism seems to be semiautomatic and can possibly be triggered unconsciously resulting in apparently unmotivated verbal and non-verbal behavior. This model of information retrieval is, of course, not limited to encapsulation via supralexical units but works equally well with encapsulation via lexical items. The former, however, would seem far more able to handle complex materials by virtue of its Boolean properties.

In this sense, encapsulation is closely related to the concept of decomposition, particularly as developed in computational linguistics. For example, Grishman (1986) comments

on the following sentence:

"John sold his melons at the fair, but he lost the money on his way home."

To understand what 'the money' refers to, we must know that 'to sell X' is 'to give someone X in exchange for money'.

Schank's [1973] semantic representation embodies an extreme view regarding predicate decomposition. Because his sentence analysis is primarily semantic rather than syntactic, he finds such decomposition (which makes explicit the roles of all the 'participants' in an action or predicate) particularly important. In particular, he wants a semantic representation such that any two synonymous sentences will have the same semantic representation....As an example of his decomposition (without using his graphical representation),

John hit mary.

would become

John's propelling a physical object from John to Mary caused a state of physical contact between that object and Mary.

(p. 101)

Let us look more closely at several more concrete examples of this model. In the formation of supralexical units, specific ideas that are expressed in creatively assembled phrases and sentences are often "institutionalized," e.g. slogans such as "Happy days are here again." It seems to be the case that there are three stages in this process. First, semantic features are selected from the component lexical items of what might be called the "supralexical genitor structure." Second, other features that derive from the particular context are often added: in our "happy days" example, part of the encapsulated context would be the social programs of the Democratic Party in

post-depression America. And third, salient lexical items are selected and frozen into a sequence ("Here again are happy days"), forming a new unit of reference for subsequent cognition and lexical insertion.

I will use several of the above observations to question the traditional categories by which expressions are classified as metaphorical and non-metaphorical. What, for example, are the "literal" parameters of lexical items like "bear," "break" and "heart"? Does "break" mean "divide" as in "I broke the cookie," or does it have a more general meaning like "disrupt organic continuity" as in, "We broke at 10 a.m. for coffee and resumed the meeting at 10:30." There seems to be a significant semantic distance between the use of "break" in terms of physical objects and of time. On what grounds could we call these "literal" while classifying as metaphorical an expression of emotional disequilibrium like "She broke my heart"? A different analysis can be based on the constraining of semantic features in metaphor (see p. 113).

II THE FUNCTIONS OF CHUNKING

It is thought that input via chunks of language is important to the development of syntactic ability in a person acquiring a first or second language. Ellis (1986) is representative of this position:

Formulaic speech is an important factor in SLA [Second Language Acquisition], but is probably only a major factor in early SLA. The strategies of **pattern memorization**, **pattern imitation**, and (more controversially) **pattern analysis** are to be seen as minor learning strategies in comparison with those contributing directly to the creative rule system.

(p. 170)

According to this notion, a person uses the unanalyzed chunks to express specific concepts holistically until he has assimilated the rules necessary to break the chunk into its components parts and to generate similar structures. The basic assumption is that once syntactic control is accomplished, linguistic operations related to chunking are replaced by the more powerful operations of syntactic generation.

At present, debate that is considered relevant concerns (1) whether or not this chunking plays an important role in the development of syntax and (2), assuming a generally positive answer, "how a child gradually extracts grammatical information from the repertoire of imitated sequences at his disposal" (Clark, 1976, p. 341). The possibility that

chunking skills themselves are an integral part of language development has apparently not received much serious attention. It is to be noted that from the perspective of supralexical analysis, chunks are fused units linked to unitary concepts. As such, the process of chunking is virtually identical to that of supralexicalization. It is not, I think, an exaggeration to say that the management of chunks is generally of equal importance to syntactic control in that the ability to acquire, retain, access, modify, and string together these fused units is central to many basic operations in language. Chunking and the development of syntax are discussed further in the section of this paper that deals with imitation in language (p. 63).

This observation is supported by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1989) in their discussion of preformulated structures::

Lexical phrases are in fact basic to language performance; they are pervasive because they seem to be characteristic of the 'chunking' processes we use to comprehend and to speak.

This sort of 'chunking' also characterizes speech production to a surprising degree. Becker (1975), from his work in artificial intelligence on spoken language, feels that the frequency of lexical phrases in performed speech implies:

that the process of speaking is **Compositional**. We start with the information we wish to express or evoke, and we haul out of our phrasal lexicon some patterns that can provide the major elements of this expression. Then the problem is to stitch these phrases together into something roughly grammatical, to fill in the blanks with the particulars of the case at hand, to modify the phrases if need be, and if all else fails to generate phrases from scratch to smooth over the transitions

and fill in any remaining conceptual holes.
(Becker, 1975, p. 72).

(p. 119)

III NATIVE SPEAKERS, IDIOMATICITY AND SUPRALEXICALS

The appropriate use of supralelexical units seems to be essential in structures characterized as idiomatic. At this point, we might note that the terms "idiomatic" and "idiomaticity" have two senses: (1) pertaining specifically to idioms, the sum of whose components do not yield a designated meaning, and (2) pertaining to expressions formulated in the manner of native speakers of a language. We will use the term in the second sense.

It is often possible to construct what seem to be syntactic synonyms or near approximations to supralelexical units: e.g. "start sleeping" vs. "go to sleep." Usually, however, the use of such synonyms as "start sleeping" will mark the individual as a non-native speaker. And, as Coulmas (1984) reminds us, "Language simply doesn't exist but as a part of the human condition, hence we cannot even begin to study it without referring to a human being who is capable of providing us with the material of our investigation....'native speaker' is an indispensable component of the conceptual foundations of all linguistics" (pp. 2-3). So that whatever other purposes might be served--such as development of syntax--the practice of chunking is itself practice in a skill that is central to the development of native or native-

like speech.

In Chapter Two, I pointed out that Hudson (1980) relates the notion of native speaker to linguistic process and solidarity: because of its relevance, I repeat it here. Hudson says that "each linguistic item is associated with a social description which says who uses it, and when....The social descriptions of different items need not, and do not, all refer to the same factors, so within a single sentence some items (say, words) may reflect the speaker's region of origin, others his social class, others his relation to the addressee, others the formality of the occasion, and so on" (p.51).

In commenting on speech as a signal of social identity, he goes on to say, "It is common for the power-solidarity contrast to be quite crucial, and for...grammar...to refer to it at many points" (p.125). Hudson lists terms of address, verb forms, and vocabulary level as examples of signals of power and solidarity. To this list, I would add supralexic units and make reference to the great relevance of idiomaticity to solidarity. The use of greetings like "Long time no see," "How do you do," "Howdy," "Howdy, partner," "What's happening," and "Where you at, man" seem to be generally as specified as Japanese honorifics and Korean verb forms. The ability to use these idiomatic supralexic units in precisely those situations where they are appropriate would appear to be a critical part of native speaker competence.

IV GENERATIVE NOTIONS

It seems to be a basic assumption of much linguistic theory that, generally, individual lexical items operate as the primary and fundamental combining units in the formation of sentences. (By such items, I mean single words represented in writing by a contiguous arrangement of letters bounded by spaces.) For example, the syntactical relationship of individual lexical items is among the primary concerns of transformational generative grammar. The consideration of supralexical units as similar fundamental units might help to account for a phenomenon that is largely ignored at present, namely, the recurrence of specific lexical items in a definite sequence. Moreover, the behavior of these structures seems to occur in a pattern that can be observed and characterized: that is what we are concerned with in this paper.

Two things concern us here, and I mention them simply because they do not seem to accord with the supralexical hypothesis. The first is the old generative notion that semantics is generally distinct from syntax, which relates linguistic elements to one another without primary concern for their meaning value. It would seem to flow from our hypothesis, however, that semantic content and syntactic form are projected in fused units from the lexicon directly into surface structure, generally eliminating or reducing the possibility of transformations. Such projections would,

it seems, assign to lexis part of the responsibility for well-formedness that is often attributed solely to syntax.

The second is that terminal nodes in phrase structure theory are generally filled only by individual lexical items as we have defined them above. This is, according to generative theory, generally the place where semantic values interact directly with syntactic operations. The difficulty here is that if we insist on analyzing supralexic units in this manner, we will tend to miss the semantic content that brought the lexical items together in the first place.

The reason why generative theory is being given prominence in this paper is that it has, in the eyes of the scientific community in general, become virtually synonymous with linguistic theory over the past thirty years. It would be pointless to try to trace the evolution of generative theory since that has already been done (Newmeyer, 1986).

Having said this, I would like to refer to one relevant observation made by Sells (1987) on Government-Binding Theory (GB). It would seem that with its emphasis on such notions as "licensing," (see the following quotation), GB is considerably more receptive to the type of operation represented by the formation of supralexic units. However, to my knowledge, no significant research in GB is being done on the principle of fusion. Sells says:

The conception of syntactic structure that comes

out of the Projection Principle [in GB] is that some position will exist in syntactic structure just in case some lexical item requires it to exist. In such cases, the lexical item is said to **license** the category in structure. Not everything can be licensed via the Projection Principle, and recently there has been much emphasis on, and study of, this concept of licensing (see for discussion and references, Chomsky, 1986), such that one really can end up with a theory in which each bit of structure is there because some other bit of structure requires it to be there, or else the second is dependent on the first for its own well-formedness (p. 34). [The emphasis is mine.]

This comment on structure seems to be in close accord with at least the general spirit of the Supralexical Hypothesis.

Sells also points out that in GB, "Phrase structures, like entire constructions, are viewed as arising out of complex interactions of different principles, and are not assumed to be generated in any traditional way (i.e., by a set of rewriting rules)....(In fact, it is not even clear if GB is a 'generative grammar' any more, but I will not dwell on this issue)" (p. 31, emphasis mine).

Generative theory does provide the "idiom chunk argument," which maintains that "English has a class of Noun Phrases which are highly restricted in their distribution, in the sense that they generally occur only in conjunction with some specific verb: for example... 'John TOOK advantage of her generosity'" (Radford, 1981, p. 161). This principle--which seems to be essentially one aspect of selection restriction--represents one of the few attempts

in generative theory to deal systematically with the recurrence of lexical items in fixed patterns.

One general assumption seems to be that such recurrence is primarily performance-related via associations and is therefore generally of little concern to language as a system. I think, on the other hand, that the formation, accessing and production of fused structures is a fundamental characteristic of language and, as such, is no less important than similar operations involving morphosyntactic operations at the level of individual lexical items.

V FUSION IN VERB FORMS

A main thrust of generative theory is on that which is analytical and creative in language, on formulations that might well have never before been made but that syntax makes possible. Although such sentences are indeed possible, I doubt that many sentences are entirely the result of the creative use of language. For example, consider the following:

3-A. He should have known better than to attach
the pink string to the squirrel's tail.

It is likely that this sentence has never before been uttered or written in its entirety. However, the phrase "should have known better than to" has certainly occurred many times before and will almost definitely appear again in the speech of any single speaker. That phrase does not seem to be creative but rather prefabricated and specified

in terms of the situation of its occurrence. Namely, the phrase specifies definite features in a given situation (see Figure 1):

-
- (1) Makes a reference to past time,
 - (2) Refers to awareness of a particular cause-effect relationship,
 - (3) States that there was a certain deficiency in that awareness,
 - (4) States that this deficiency should have been removed,
 - (5) Expresses mild criticism of the judgment of an animal or more likely a human being,
 - (6) Has a definite implication that that animal or human has somehow experienced inconvenience or limited suffering,
 - (7) Also implies that the slight suffering is due to poor judgment.
-

FIGURE 1. FUSION IN VERB FORMS: Semantic specifications of "should have known better than to x".

At least these seven conditions will usually be true when the phrase is used. Specifications one, three and four are probably present in the lexical components of "should have known better." The second specification depends on our notion of "know": the phrase we are considering seems to refer to failure to exercise care and judgment, rather than to ignored or deficient knowledge.

Specifications five, six and seven are features added when the component lexical items are used in this sequence as a unit. It seems possible that a great many modifications of tense and modality in verbs are internalized and accessed as prefabricated wholes that are linked to specific conditions and concepts, rather than as creatively combined phrases.

Bland (manuscript) makes a similar point when she speaks of "treating syntactic forms (e.g., the progressive, future constructions, there construction, etc.) much the same way that we treat lexical items in lexical semantic analyses. That is, we describe the meaning, list the most typical uses, and we ask how it is used appropriately, namely: What are the presuppositions and other appropriacy conditions for use?" (p. 1).

Get John to Suffer Needlessly

The phrase "get the horse to move" specifies at least one feature that is nowhere in the constituent lexical items. That is, none of the lexical items refer to the volition implied in my understanding of the phrase. "Get the horse moving," on the other hand, lacks the feature of volition. We can substitute "car" for "horse" in that latter construction; but we cannot in the former.

The supralexical hypothesis allows us to deal somewhat efficiently with such phenomena as the above. One characteristic of fused phrases is that the semantic value

of their constituent items is often altered, or as in the case of traditional idioms, radically changed. That alteration or change is permanent within the parameters of the particular supralexical unit and will usually elicit a single complex concept from the lexicon.

This is not to say that the fused phrase is not productive: quite the opposite. In fact, as we will see below, another important characteristic of fused phrases is that they tend to constitute patterns or semantic frames in which constrained variation is possible. For example, it is not only a horse that can be gotten to do something. We can get a girl to smile, a baby to eat, a man to reduce his cholesterol intake. The feature "volition" is present in all of these **supralexical "sets"** as we will call them. On the other hand, we seem far less likely to use this phrase in the expression of some activity with a negative result:

3-B. *Get him to suffer needlessly.

3-C. *Get them to die.

The main point here is one of the main points in this paper: Individual lexical items have an innate tendency to fuse with other lexical items producing a permanent supralexical unit with its own structural integrity and semantic content. That content is not simply the sum of its component lexical items but, in fact, often adds features that are not present in those components. Once fused, the

supralexical unit tends to become a semantic frame in which parts of its elements can be varied within constraints unique to the frame. We might, then, suggest some of the semantic features of the complex fused structure of which "get the horse to move" is an example:

GET + (NP) + (VP)

(NP) = +ANIMATE
+OBJECTIVE CASE

(VP) = ±STATIVE, ±TRANSITIVE

FUSED PHRASE FEATURES = +VOLITION OF PATIENT
+CHANGE PROPOSED BY ACTOR
+MODERATE RESISTANCE BY PATIENT
+PATIENT BENEFIT INTENDED
+PATIENT BENEFIT ACHIEVED

The starred examples below do not have the specification indicated.

- ANIMATE: *John got the stone to break.
- CHANGE: *Ken doesn't eat fatty foods, so let's
 not get him to eat those kinds of food.
- VOLITION: *Please get Jim to wake up.
- RESISTANCE: *Tom is eager to go, so get him to go.
- BENEFIT: *I got Bill to suffer pointlessly.
 *Sam and Ed got Don to leave the party
 alone because they wanted to mug him.

Such an analysis would seem to indicate that the operation here is neither primarily semantic nor primarily syntactic, but shares aspects of both. What is syntactic

about it is the regularity of the operation and the enormity of the number of variables that can fill the slots. This syntacticality, however, seems to be more idiosyncratic than systematic in nature: the lexical item "get" in no other structure carries the feature "volition." What is semantic is the fact that meaning and not form provides the motivation for this operation. It is interesting to consider the speculative observation that fusion itself has brought about the merger of syntax and semantics to constitute this particular form. If that should somehow be true of "get + (NP) + (VP)", it would seem true of supralexicals in general and help explain the tendency of supralexical units to "generate" as productive supralexical sets.

VI

AN IN-PROGRESS SUMMARY

I will summarize some of the main ideas presented in this paper so far. In theories related not only to generative syntax but pragmatics and discourse analysis as well, there is a general inability to characterize idiomatic speech in such a way that would distinguish it from that which is syntactical yet unidiomatic. From our discussion of the characteristics of fused structures, there might evolve parameters that would help us to objectively identify idiomatic structures and to better understand the roles such structures play in language. One such role would seem to

be that by which a speaker establishes solidarity and identifies himself in reference to his/her interlocutor.

Language seems to be such that an attempt to separate these functions into (1) competence and (2) performance (e.g., related to the ongoing production and management of supralexical units) might well be less than justified. If there should be no central system that can be considered apart from performance, then it would be pointless, to say the least, to insist on finding such a core.

Based on structural features alone (i.e., not accent, topic choice, turn-taking signals, etc.), it would seem that virtually any native speaker of any language is able to identify the speech (and often the writing) of most non-native speakers of that language. In part, this is probably because non-native speech is often ungrammatical and/or unidiomatic. Syntactic transgressions can usually be identified in terms of rules. But the phenomenon of idiomaticity--that is, utterances strung together in the manner of native speakers--has received far less attention although the problems involved are at least as formidable as those of syntax. Consider again the following sentences:

3-D. John went to sleep at 7 p.m.

3-E. John started sleeping at 7 p.m.

It seems to be the case that when a supralexical phrase and an analytical phrase appear to have the same meaning,

as in "go to sleep / start sleeping," closer analysis often brings out one or more particular contexts in which each of the phrases is acceptable. For example, while few native speakers would use "start sleeping" to express what happens to most people at night, a researcher studying insomnia might refer to his subject's "starting to sleep."

This leads us to look for special features that are added to "go to sleep" as a fused entity. We suggest that such features are the following: (1) to lose wakefulness (2) naturally and (3) for the purpose of rest, i.e., without the use of alcohol or strong drugs--or for purposes related to research, such as one would encounter in a sleep lab. "Pass out" or "lose consciousness" would express an alcohol or drug-induced loss of wakefulness.

What seems to be needed, then, is a means of marking "went to sleep" (and "pass out" and "lose consciousness" as well) as a supralexical structure, the constituents of which have undergone fusion and are therefore different in nature from lexical items that can be independently parsed to yield elements whose sum is the relevant whole. As a result of fusion, it seems to be the case that the supralexical unit "go to sleep" is directly linked to the concept "CHANGE FROM WAKEFULNESS TO SLEEP UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS." This unit possibly has a lower threshold of activation in the lexicon than the analytic structure "start sleeping" for two reasons: (1) the latter phrase does not seem to constitute

a supralexical unit for most people, whereas "go to sleep" does, and (2) supralexical units seem more predictable than analytic constructions of the same length and word frequency. This despite the fact that "start sleeping" seems more semantically direct than "go to sleep." That is, "go" usually indicates physical movement to a definite place. Here, there is no movement, nor is sleep a place.

Observations like the above would seem to indicate that the supralexical hypothesis contributes to a fundamental, wide-ranging if only very general approach that is sensitive to idiomaticity. In fact, fused structures seem to be central to idiomaticity, and the failure to use these structures in situations where they are available usually results in formulations that might be syntactic but are unidiomatic and often misleading and confusing. In other words, idiomaticity is closely related to precision of expression and is not simply a choice related to style between alternate, essentially synonymous formulations.

VII FUSION AND ASSOCIATIONS

One possible reason for the apparent neglect of fused structures in contemporary theory is that their occurrence seems to be related to situational externals and not to the basic operations of language itself. For example, the somewhat frequent use of the phrase "hard day at the office" would seem to be due to the difficulty of one's work rather than to the structural characteristics of verbal communication. It is this principle--incidental and accidental association--that has apparently been considered the main factor in the recurrence of specific strings of lexical items. Perhaps the word "association" with its implications of somewhat ephemeral transience does not reflect the significance of the close link between the surface structure and the specific, underlying concept that seems to exist as a fused entry in the lexicon. Accordingly, we will use the term "fixed link" instead of "association" to refer to this connection.

The word "association" itself often brings to mind the much-criticized theories about language of the behaviorist B.F. Skinner. According to him, the central characteristic of language was that it was a system of stimuli and responses that came to be used as a result of reinforcement. Chomsky rejected this idea in making a case for the analytic creativity involved in, for example, stringing together lexical items that had never before occurred in the same

sentence (see, e.g., Chomsky's comments on Quine and conditioning, 1975, pp. 198-204). This was, he said, impossible to account for through behaviorist notions of reinforcement and response, but fairly well accounted for through theories of syntax, which Skinner had sorely neglected.

The presentation of the supralexical hypothesis in the present paper, while not immediately concerned with reinforcement and response, does acknowledge the importance of memory in accessing patterns of lexical items that have become fixed in reference to specific concepts. More specifically, the ability of a speaker to store vast numbers of supralexical units and access them quickly and automatically according to particular situations would seem to be related to both conditioned response and native speaker fluency.

VII IMITATION, SYNTAX AND SUPRALEXICALS

Implied here is a possible role for imitation in language acquisition. After Chomsky's endorsement of syntactic creativity, the notion of imitation as a significant factor in language learning came to be regarded as naive, particularly among more theoretical linguists. Generally, psychology and language acquisition reflected this attitude in that the question asked in relation to imitation was often

the following: To what degree does imitation of linguistic forms aid in the acquisition of syntax. Presently, opinion as to the answer to that question is divided; e.g. Olson (1973), Ruth Clark (1976) and Snow (1981).

However, it seems widely recognized that children do imitate many of the words and structures they hear (Slobin, 1968; Ryan, 1973; L. Fillmore, 1976), and it has been suggested that imitation does not cease as the child gets older but that "a child's capacity for recording utterances without immediate, overt reproduction will presumably increase with age. The whispered imitations that my elder son produced in quantity may have occurred as a transition between overt and covert imitation" (Snow, p. 342).

I would like to suggest that there exists a role in the development of language that is distinct from the development of syntax. I will pursue this suggestion by making two observations. The first is related to the development and maintenance of the ability to handle chunks. It has been widely held (Bloom et al, 1974; Moerk and Moerk, 1979; Krashen and Scarcella, 1978; Ramer, 1976) that "children for a time imitate semantic-syntactic structures or morphological markers they have not yet produced spontaneously, and gradually stop imitating these structures and markers as they start to use them in their spontaneous speech" (Snow, 1981). Little or no mention is made of "imitation" as it might itself figure

in language. Our theory of fusion, on the other hand, holds that supralelexical sets are not algorithmically generated but are acquired for the most part by speakers who hear them spoken or seem them written. Probably oversimplifying, we might call this process "imitation." Children learn to segment utterances including supralelexicals into their syntactic components, but also to keep many of these phrases together and treat them as wholes. Far from being lost, this skill in handling synthesized language is apparently critical to performance in adult native speakers. Lack of this ability seems to result in unidiomatic, imprecise, ambiguous, awkward speech. This type of speech would very likely be judged by generativists as indicative of a lack in competence.

The second observation involves the widely held opinion that balanced bilingualism (near-perfect fluency in two languages) is indeed rare. Bilingual subjects were included in our Supralelexical Task experiment because of the support that the supralelexical hypothesis might derive from their scoring between advanced students of ESL and native speakers of Standard English. Such scores would indicate a very close relationship between high-level fluency and the ability to recognize and use supralelexicals. That is, if the test were to discriminate between bilinguals and native speakers, it would be doing so on the basis of supralelexical units. The projected incrementally improving performance of other groups in the experiment would tend to support a broader suggestion:

that supralexical ability is not only indicative of fluency,
but that it is a major constituent of linguistic competence.

This projection seems to have been supported in the results of the Supralexical Task reported in Chapter Six.

IX. SUPRALEXICALS AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Through fusion, a particular configuration of semantic features is locked to a particular configuration of phonological lexical items and entered as a whole unit in the lexicon. There it is available for future use by the individual speaker, and is passed on to persons who are acquiring the language, either as children or indeed as adults. Unlike vocabulary or the more obvious rules of syntax, individual supralexical structures seem not to be taught systematically and coherently in either first or second language classrooms. Possibly, this is because the scope, formation, identity and integrity of these structures is not generally recognized.

There are, of course, qualified exceptions to this generalization. For example, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1989) suggest several reasons why fixed phrases should be used in the development of conversational skills in second language teaching. We will discuss these in Chapter Eight.

In the case of children acquiring a first language, exposure to a multitude of supralexical units and the propensity to internalize chunks (see Matrix Generating Device, Chapter Three) would seem to result in a very natural acquisition of fused structures. For persons acquiring a second language, however, the situation would seem to be quite different. Restricted linguistic input (exposure) and intake (comprehension), at least in the classroom, possibly result in a store of supralexical units that is not in keeping with students ability to generate syntactic structures.

That is, in a particular situation, there might exist in the lexicon of a non-native speaker (NNS) no supralexical unit to express a proposition related to that situation, whereas a native speaker (NS) would have in his lexicon a specific unit that he or she would consider the natural, idiomatic choice. This is quite important for it seems that analytic constructions are generally considered more or less unacceptable if there exists a supralexical unit that would do the job. For example, a NNS might formulate sentence 3-F or 3-G, while a NS would probably prefer sentence 3-H:

3-F. ?Sam went away from his bed at 7 a.m.

3-G. ?Sam left his bed at 7 a.m.

3-H. Sam got up at 7 a.m.

This can result in, for example, second language students having the ability to string together a sentence that, while traditionally syntactic, is not idiomatic because it fails

to use an existing supralexical unit. Let us look at another example of this:

- 3-I. ?She worked her best, but she still lost the job.
- 3-J. She did her best, but she still lost the job.
- 3-K. She worked very hard, but she still lost the job.
- 3-L. ?She did very hard, but she still lost the job.

The semantic similarity of 3-I through 3-L indicates that it is probably not differences in deep structure that make 3-I and 3-L doubtful. Rather, the internalization of "DO + ONE'S + BEST" seems to cause this supralexical unit to be preferred to the more specific verb when that verb signifies intentional mental or physical effort:

- 3-M. Jane did her best.
- ?worked her best
- ?attempted her best
- ?wrote her best
- ?thought her best

As we have already suggested, idiomaticity is different from syntacticality in that a structure can apparently be unidiomatic yet syntactically non-deviant. For example, consider the following:

- 3-N. ?Sam was very tired and started sleeping as soon as his shoulders were on the bed.
- 3-O. Sam was very tired and went to sleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

Syntactically, both sentences seem quite acceptable.

Yet it is my intuition that most native speakers of English would agree that the underlined structures of 3-N are "unidiomatic" or "not the way we would say it." With the changes indicated in 3-O, however, the sentence passes quite easily through the screen of idiomaticity. One reason why both structures in 3-N are offending, I believe, is that the content they attempt to express has already been locked to the supralexical units underlined in 3-O.

None of the four underlined phrases fits the traditional definition of an idiom because they all say exactly what they mean, yet "went to sleep" and "as soon as his head touched the pillow" are "idiom-like" in that even slight variations usually break the supralexicality and result once again in a lack of idiomaticity:

3-P. Sam went to sleep immediately.

- *went asleep
- *went into sleep
- *went sleeping
- *went for sleep
- *fell to sleep

3-Q. ...as soon as his head touched the pillow

- *his hair touched
- *his ear touched
- *his neck touched
- *his skin touched

It is likely that L_2 teachers see a great many more examples of deviation from idiomaticity than do teachers of language to native speakers of that language. Probably, both of the latter teachers and students acquire very similar

supralexical units as they learn their native language. If, as we contend, supralexicals are an important component of idiomaticity, then concentration on supralexicals would possibly lead to an increase in idiomaticity among students of a second language. And an increase in idiomaticity is--in the terms we have set forth--an increase in structural competence.

X. DICTIONARY TREATMENT OF THE SUPRALEXICAL UNIT

The lack of recognition of supralexicals is pervasive. For example, most dictionaries often include quite a few supralexical structures but only as examples of the usage of individual lexical items like "take," "go" and "time," and never as items that have an identity of their own. "Take one's temperature" is presented only quite incidentally in Simon and Schuster's Webster's New World Dictionary of American English, Third College Edition (hereafter WNWD), as an example of the fourth sense that is given of "take" which is "to get from a source" and further "to obtain or ascertain by observation, query, or experiment (to take a poll, to take one's temperature)" (p. 1363-4). No mention is made of the point that "take one's temperature" seems preferred to "measure one's temperature" or to the nature of the lexical items that can fill the slot in the supralexical set "take one's NP". ("Take" is used in reference to processes such as pulse and blood pressure,

but not with measurements of more static entities like weight and height.) Similar treatments are made in many dictionaries of supralexical units such as "go dancing" and "on time," which seem to constitute rather elaborate entries in the lexicon. A number of dictionaries of idioms, trade terminology, and various kinds of jargon are available, but none seem to focus on supralexical units as we are defining them in this paper. Two possible exceptions are the Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (1987) and the BBI Combinatory Dictionary (1986). The former presents the different senses of lexical items in accord with evidence of actual usage as derived from corpora. The BBI presents many structures we would classify as fused, but it does little or nothing in terms of discussing basic meaning, much less the semantic feature composition of these phrases. In short, they leave the "Dictionary of Supralexical Units" yet to be compiled.

Because of the lack of attention paid to supralexicals by most dictionaries, language textbooks, and language teachers, one might expect slow progress in this area by second-language students whose familiarity with these structures would generally tend to be limited to accidental exposure. This expectation would seem to be borne out by the great difficulty that college students of English as a second language have in passing out of ESL programs to regular mainstream courses (see Yorio, 1985).

**XI.
SUPRALEXICALS AND STYLE IN WRITING**

Proficiency in supralexical units would also seem to be intricately involved in the assessment of native speaker writing as lustrous, lackluster or deficient. It does not seem to be the case that supralexicals are simply more salient than the analytical construction they replace: once a supralexical has entered the lexicon, its analytical counterpart often seems unacceptable. If, however, there is no supralexical unit available for the concepts expressed, then the analytic construction (such as 3-R and 3-S below) seems quite acceptable:

3-R. Sam touched the table and said that it was beautiful.

3-S. Jane combed her hair after she ate dinner.

Sentences 3-T through 3-X below, however, seem to indicate a very close relationship between supralexicals and writing style. That is, items 3-T, 3-V and 3-X with their underlined supralexicals would probably be considered "better" writing than 3-U and 3-W, which have more analytical constructions in the target position.

3-T. That new mousetrap is worth every penny we paid for it.

3-U. That new mousetrap is worth the money we paid for it.

3-V. That computer is well worth every penny we paid for it.

3-W. That computer system is worth its price.

3-X. That new mousetrap is worth its weight in gold.

While native speakers seem to have great facility in fused units of a conversational nature, conventions of formal writing are significantly different. Considerable difficulty might well be expected for speakers of a dialect such as Black English in which writing, let alone writing style is relatively uncommon. In its place, oral traditions seem to have reached a high level of development. This does not help the speaker of Black English when he or she sits in freshman English composition class--or more accurately, a class in writing Standard English. These individuals are faced with mastering not only the syntax of a second dialect, but also the supralexical units used in conversation and/or those that are necessary for "good" writing. The results of the Supralexical Task experiment (Chapter Six) are strong evidence of the substance of this observation.

XII SUPRALEXICALS IN FOSSILIZATION AND CODE-SWITCHING

The supralexical hypothesis posits a faculty (the Matrix Generating Device) that expedites the internalization and production of fused units. It is quite conceivable that under conditions of limited linguistic input over an extended period of time, the non-native speaker would fuse lexical items that are not fused by native speakers or that are fused differently. The result would contribute to the condition

known as "fossilization," which Selinker (1972) defined as a "process by which certain 'linguistic items, rules, and sub-systems' become relatively permanently incorporated into the grammatical system of a second language learner. Selinker also made it clear that he intended for fossilization to include correct forms which would then become permanently learned" (Yorio, 1985, p. 14). I could find in neither Selinker, Yorio nor anyone else dealing with fossilization a development of the motivation that might unite "the permanent learning of correct forms" and fossilization. I am suggesting, of course, that that motivation is fusion.

An example of a fossilized form is "no gotta," as used for all tenses and persons in expressions for which native speakers would use several constructions like "don't have," "don't have to," "am not going to," and "did not." A similar "fossilized" supralelexical among persons who learn English on the street is "aint-a-gonna," as in "I/you/he/she/it/we/they aint-a-gonna work no more."

Of course, this fossilized form is identical to a dialectal variant that collapses into a single supralelexical unit all parts of the following paradigm--with little or no loss of understandability by speakers of Standard English.

I.....am

You.....are

He/She/It....is

not going to

We.....are

You.....are

They.....are

If the person happens to be a native speaker of English from the rural South, the structure would not be considered "fossilized," but a thoroughly respectable and perhaps even valuably ethnic construction. If the speaker has the misfortune to be a student of English as a second language who is struggling to get out of ESL and into regular academic courses, the use of "ain't-a-gonna" in a final written exam, will probably have truly grave consequences: likely, he will fail and be recycled, possibly with the words "hopelessly fossilized" written across his paper by a teacher who specializes in English as a foreign language.

The above does not seem to be an isolated case. Yorio (1985) cites his study of an ESL student whose compositions were "literally plagued with formal errors": only 32% of the T-units [main clause plus subordinate structure] were free of errors. Despite this miserable performance, a panel of 10 ESL and 9 non-ESL teachers found only 2% of all T-units

in the student's paper "to present any kind of meaning difficulty" (p. 5). I consider the apparent discrepancy between communication and form somewhat disconcerting. Perhaps the further study of supralexicals would result in a decreasing dependence on syntax as a primary requirement in the assessment of writing.

BILINGUAL CODE-SWITCHING

It is also interesting to consider bilingual code-switching from the perspective of supralexical fusion. This hypothesis might explain some of the triggers that initiate a change from one language to the other in individuals who are fluent in both languages. That is, it is conceivable that the salience of a particular supralexical unit in language "A" could be sufficiently great to cause a shift from language "B". This possibility has generally not been considered in studies of code-switching. (A brief but excellent summary of code-switching can be found on pages 319-330 of Grosjean, 1982.)

SEQUENCE IN THE ACQUISITION OF FUSED STRUCTURES

An interesting study could be done on the ages at which native speakers acquire different kinds of supralexical units, such as those that do not add features to a phrase, those that add one, and those that add more than one (see page

105). It would seem possible that there is a more precise sequence of acquisition involved, possibly semantically based, possibly somehow similar to the sequence of morphemes discovered by Brown (1973). I will not, however, attempt to develop such suggestions in this paper, but will remain focused on establishing that supralexicical units do exist as linguistic entities and that they play an important and essential role within the system of language.

XIII PRECISION, ENCAPSULATION AND SUPRALEXICALS

Supralexicical units seem to play a very important role in the stability of reference and, possibly even more importantly, the precision with which complex relationships are captured and encapsulated. Legal terminology provides a good example of this stability and precision. Perhaps it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the referential stability of carefully defined supralexicical units is absolutely crucial to legal processes, at least in the West.

For example, Black's Law Dictionary (1983) defines "clear and present danger doctrine" as follows:

Doctrine in constitutional law, first formulated in *Schenck v. U.S.*, 249 U.S. 47, 39 S.Ct. 247, 63 l.Ed. 470, providing that governmental restrictions on freedoms of speech and press will be upheld if necessary to prevent grave and immediate danger to interests which government may lawfully protect. Speech which incites to unlawful action falls outside the protection of the First Amendment where there is a direct connection between the speech and

violation of the law; this is the "clear and present danger test".

(p. 130)

It is to be noted that precision and stability of reference are accomplished here not only by a definite, fixed sequence of specified lexical items--"clear + and + present + danger"--but also by an attempt to specify as explicitly as possible and by codified agreement the exact semantic features that the phrase holds in formal law. The overt, deliberate manner in which these semantic features are added to this supralexical unit is apparently quite similar to the more unconscious manner in which such features are added in the normal process of supralexicalization.

XIV. WHORF-LIKE ASPECTS OF SUPRALEXICALS

Supralexicals, then, do indeed seem to play an important role in the recursive encapsulation of information in language. Let us look at a few other examples with an eye toward extending this observation to culture in general.

At each stage of the process of encoding and articulating knowledge, supralexical structures form a way of (1) capturing relationships between the elements of one or more concepts, and (2) stabilizing and representing information of a more basic nature as the principles of a higher or broader operation are brought to the foreground. Each capsule refers to a specific set of concepts that is stabilized in the

lexicon to facilitate manipulation.

For example, the supralexical unit "Infl is not a proper governor" represents a complex principle in GB theory arrived at through careful reasoning. After the principle has been supralexicalized--that is, linked to specific phonological elements in a fixed sequence--the resulting unit is used in evaluating additional information and in constructing higher arguments without bringing up all of the "careful reasoning" that went into the construction of the unit. That careful reasoning can, of course, be recalled if necessary, but the constant recall of it would seriously impede the construction of additional arguments, which would themselves be encapsulated in supralexical units. This notion helps account for the recurrence of fixed phrases and clauses in the technical jargon of virtually any field.

Let us consider another example of this principle. Grice (1975) named his "Maxim of Quality" and stipulated that the phrase would henceforth signify the following procedural description: "(i) do not say what you believe to be false" and "(ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence." Considering the widespread acceptance of the Gricean analysis, it would seem likely that these clauses--(i) and (ii)--have been fused into supralexicals as has the label "The Maxim of Quality." Other examples of supralexicals that are consciously stipulated and considered--at least at present--as sufficient for use in formal and informal

arguments are: "pied piping," "bounding node," "supply side economics," "three persons in one god," "the Monroe Doctrine," "politically correct," and "the Geneva conventions of war."

The content of these encapsulations seems able to constitute formidable barriers, not only to students of a second language, but to native speakers as well. The extent to which a larger capsule of information contains smaller capsules seems to be generally (1) the extent to which subjective feelings of understanding are elicited by lower items in a hierarchical supralexicon, and (2) the extent to which relevant arguments in a given field can be proposed and comprehended. This leads to the proposition, not that language is used in cognition, but (A) that language is an integral part of higher level cognition, and (B) that fusion in the lexicon plays a critical role in the the system of conceptual encapsulations that constitute much of what we call language.

An interesting situation is that in which a second-language student is also, say, a mathematician, and as such, is familiar with complex notions in that field. There is no way that the average language teacher could understand the information that is recursively encapsulated in the supralexical units of his own language: and it is precisely these supralexical units that the foreign-born mathematician needs to know in order to communicate professionally. To understand relationships in the

hierarchical system of supralexical encapsulations in mathematics is to understand mathematics. Another way of expressing this idea is to say that, to a significant degree, information is "lexically determined."

This situation might be said to be cultural in the broadest sense. Analogous situations are doubtless found in countless other parts of the "belief structures" of any individual. These would not only include moral values and ways of conceiving, but emotional overtones that are inseparable from the particular idea and/or the lexical and supralexical structures in which many of those conceptions are housed and accessed.

XV THE RELATIONSHIP OF PUNS TO SUPRALEXICALS

There appears to be a definite pattern in the evolution of supralexical units: (1) individual lexical items form (2) supralexical units that (3) often become productive as a semantic frame, while (4) remaining available for reanalysis. Concerning this last stage, puns are interesting for at least two reasons. First, without the fixed form (e.g. "read my lips," an expression of sincerity), the would-be pun will have only analytical meaning or virtually no meaning at all (e.g. "read my flips"). Second, puns are limited in number only by the supralexical units on which they are based. Because of this and because supralexical units are continually

being formed, puns represent an ongoing process in which there is a possibility of chunks of language coming together in accord with--in effect--the constraints of supralelexical sets. That is, punning is one way of extending the supralelexical unit into a set. Third, the production and comprehension of puns is evidence that access to the original lexical components of fused structures is not lost in the process of fusion. In turn, this offers support--albeit minor--to our claim that structural syntax interacts closely with holistic fusion in the system of language.

It is relevant to note that the constituents of supralelexical units--including traditional idioms--apparently remain individually accessible to the parser. For example, despite the fact that a particular speaker has never encountered "kick the bucket" in the passive, he would very likely understand the following dialogue:

SAM
How's your old dog Jupiter? He was sickly
and miserable the last time I saw him.
AL
With the help of a kindly veterinarian, the
bucket has finally been kicked.

A somewhat more complicated case can easily be imagined:

"The old drunkard finally kicked the barstool."

Out of context, this sentence is ambiguous between two readings, both of which involve supralelexical units: "kick

the bucket" (die) and "kick the habit" (break the addiction). The point of these two examples is that the link between the specific concepts and the respective supralexical units is apparently so well established that it remains recognizable despite ambiguity, unfamiliar transformations (passive), unfamiliar adverbial modification ("finally") and foreign lexical items (barstool instead of bucket).

This observation tends to be supported by Swinney and Cutler's (1979) finding that the lexical elements of idioms are simultaneously processed as analytical and as figurative items. The "barstool" observation suggests a close interaction between these modes of interpretation. Pursuing this speculation, it might be observed that the notion of a single type of processing is possible, provided that the marking by which the supralexical unit is reacted to holistically is not construed as constituting a basically different mode of processing. However, whether it is thought of as single or dual, this function is found in the processing of almost every sentence that is uttered--the function being the setting of analytical or holistic (supralexical) parameters to interpret incoming linguistic elements.

This ability to set appropriate parameters for literal or figurative interpretation is one part of what we have called the Matrix Generating Device. As the term implies, other functions of this device, to which we now turn, would include the accessing and insertion of supralexical units

in generated speech.

XVI

MATRIX GENERATING DEVICE

Generative theory does not tend to give attention to that which is associated with (1) memory of individual phrases originally encountered at surface structure level, (2) possible changes in the neurolinguistic status of such phraseological units, even as their threshold becomes lower and lower and as they acquire other characteristics of fusion; and (3) the influence of this neurolinguistic change within the system of language. It seems that because of these limitations in what amounts to the scope of its structure, generative theory is minimally capable of accounting for phrases that are incorporated into the lexicon as multi-word units, each having its own semantic constraints.

A theory that would incorporate the above possibilities would have three major effects. First, it would tend to blur the generative distinction between syntax and semantics, placing as much importance on (A) the complex units of meaning that are entered as wholes in the lexicon as on (B) the syntactical relationships between the individual lexical items that occur in these structures. Second, it would make syntax more blind to semantics in that meaning often could not be deduced by an analysis of individual lexical items

and of their syntactic relationships.

Third, the previous two effects would suggest a function that is neither primarily syntactical nor semantic, a function that coindexes (A) a complex conceptual aspect of a situation with (B) a unitary phrase in the lexicon. Possibly, this would tend to condition perception so as to predispose individuals (1) to interpret a situation in terms of the coindexed concept, (2) to comprehend phrases in terms of the concept, and (3) to generate phrases not analytically but rather holistically according to the formulations that are accessible in the lexicon, or perhaps we should say "supralexicon."

It is quite to the point to recall that what much of what is entered into the lexicon is not simply discrete lexical items but whole phrases--unanalysed and gestalt in nature. Not only do we have ready access to these phrases, but we seem to operate in terms of great sensitivity to them in a wide range of utterances, including those made in casual conversation and those involving extremely complex arguments. We will call this propensity to encode and decode via supralexical units the Matrix Generating Device (MGD), aware that naming a function does not remove it from any other apparatus that enables it to do its job. However, naming this function does allow us to focus more closely on it.

There would clearly seem to be a cognitive aspect involved in a constant state of receptivity to linguistic

matrices that are to be filled by fused supralexicalexical units; that is, in the "decoding" apparatus of the MGD. Concrete examples of the output of the MGD are to be found in phrases from the lyrics of songs ("a little help from my friends"), speeches ("Ask not what your country can do for you..."), and a-morphemic utterances (Tarzan's "Ah ooh ah"). These and virtually all other supralexicalexicalized phrases appear to issue directly from the lexicon with a minimum of analytic processing (e.g., involving transformations).

I think that the function of the Matrix Generating Device (MGD) is a bit more complex than this. It seems that syntax without the MGD function is incapable of accounting for all and only the sentences of a language. Directly involved in this is the possibility that conditioning sometimes seems to masquerade as syntacticality, which seems to me, first and foremost, a system of indicating relationships. A host of idiosyncratic operations in syntax seems to be--to a certain extent--a contradiction in terms. If a linguistic relationship is idiosyncratic, it tends to be, by definition, not systematic and hence of dubious syntax.

A different perspective on this matter might hold that patterning is hierarchically superior to syntax, in which case both syntax and fusion would be subsumed under patterning. One admittedly quite tenuous support of this proposition is that virtually all animal communication is unitary in structure. A somewhat more substantial support might be seen in the

tendency of supralexical units to undergo constrained productivity. For example, as we have seen, "take" in the sense of "use transportation" is productive yet decidedly constrained in that it can be used only with reference to public transportation. For expressions related to private transportation, the appropriate supralexical set would be "go by NP":

GO BY CAR
MOTORCYCLE
AIRPLANE
BICYCLE

Although the input into the MGD is usually syntactical, that MGD apparently operates with relative independence of syntax and will fuse elements of any type whether or not they are syntactic, and whether or not they are "legitimate" lexical items. Consider, for example, the sentence, "Let go of me." This construction seems at first glance to be perfectly syntactical; yet what is its syntactical structure? More precisely, is "go" a noun or a verb? What is the relationship between "let" and "go"? It does not appear to be simply a transformation of "Let me go" because the latter structure is ambiguous between "seeking release from a physical grasp" and "seeking permission to leave," while the former refers almost exclusively to physical grasp. Also, in the latter, "go" is interchangeable with almost any other verb: "let me go/eat/see/dance/sit down". In the former, this is not the case.

My opinion about this is that although the construction might be syntactically accounted for diachronically, it is simply a-syntactic according to the systematic rules that are said to map out contemporary English. Possibly, what makes "let go of me" seem quite ordinary is the fact that the MGD has incorporated "let go of NP" into the lexicon.

This has occurred with far more lexically anomalous candidates such as "Psssst", a request for attention; "Here, boy," a request to a dog to advance to the speaker; "Ahem!" a directive to an interlocutor to give attention to some aspect of a situation; "Zip ah dee do dah; zip ah dee ay," a general expression of well being; and "Be bop a loo lah," she's my baby," apparently an expression of joy.

It might be argued that in the case of "let go of me," we are dealing with an idiom, and therefore the rules of syntax are not fully applicable. I would respond to this objection in terms of an argument that I have already suggested but will take up again because it is of great importance to the Supralexical Hypothesis. The boundary between idioms and non-idioms is so very obscure, fuzzy and insubstantial that to use the term "idiom" in the traditional manner is rather misleading. It implies discreteness and integrity but actually refers to a fairly wide range in the spectrum of supralexical units. Let us consider another expression.

MAKE A RUN FOR IT

The meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from its parts: neither "kick" nor "bucket" has anything to do with dying. According to that definition, "make a run for it" certainly seems to be native-speaker-like, but it is not an idiom since (1) running is the activity specified, (2) the lexical item "run" is used in the expression, and (3) "make" can specify the performance of an activity--here, run. It appears that we have absolutely no reason to call this an idiom, not even a "transparent" idiom since it means exactly what it says. A similar argument could be made for "let go of me." In the lexical item "let," we make reference to permission; and in "go" to movement. So that we are hardly justified in saying that the meaning here is different from the sum of the parts.

Yet there is clearly something idiom-like about these constructions. For one thing, the meaning underlying the phrase "make a run for it" cannot be achieved if we vary the construction thusly: "make for it running," "run it," "make for it by running," "make a run" or "take a run." Possibly, one reason for this is the fact that some of these phrases ("run it" and "make a run") are themselves supralelexical units, and as such are (1) linked to a particular concept, and (2) to some degree, prohibited from participating analytically in other constructions. For the other phrases

(*"make for it running" and *"take a run," there seems no explanation more substantial than that they are perceived as deviant simply they because they do not comprise the specific fused structure that has been linked to a specific concept, which in the case of "make a run for it" is: "take a chance of danger and move quickly to a safe place." They are, in other words, examples of syntactically well formed structures that are nevertheless supralelexically and idiomatically deviant.

XVII

SUPRALEXICAL RESTRUCTURING OF CONSTITUENTS

The notion of fusion also seems to be relevant in the combination of lexical items to form the constituents of a sentence. Take, for example, the verb phrase "would have been." Once the concept of PAST UNREAL is conceived and supralelexically linked to WOULD + HAVE + BEEN in that sequence, the newly fused item itself seems to enter the lexicon in a gestalt-like form. This lexical entry is then subject to recall like any other lexical item when an appropriate situation is encountered, and a noun, an adjective, a past participle or a present participle is accessed to fill the slot after "been." In other words, it "generates": not as three independent lexical items in analytical relationship,

but as a fused supralexical set. We can represent that unit as it is entered in the lexicon in the following fashion:

(subject)	+	<u>WOULD HAVE BEEN</u>	+	(complement:	noun
		supralexical			past participle)
					adjective
					present participle

Verbal units formed in this manner are sometimes--possibly because of convention--not recognized as products of fusion. For example, the defacto modal construction "might as well" in

A. We might as well pay what they claim we owe

specifies a contrastive modification of the verb: namely, "reluctance and/or a lack of enthusiasm + agreement to perform some action". This seems to be in keeping with the observation that addition of specified semantic features is a basic characteristic of fused structures.

Another verb form which seems to have acquired the status of a modal through use as a fused set is "would like to" in, for example,

B. We would like to leave at 5 a.m.

C. Would you like to rest for a while?

In this structure, "would like to" has the general meaning of "want to" and to that extent contrasts with the "like" that is synonymous with "enjoy." Normally, the presence of

"would" indicates the conditional and requires the specification of the condition under which the main clause would hold:

D. I would go if I had the time.

Presumably, that condition is encapsulated as an unspecified, underlying "if" clause:

E. I would like to eat now (IF THAT IS CONVENIENT).

In the terms of fusion, this clause would be conceived as a set of specified semantic features that are added in the supralexical set "would like to + VP". Consider:

1. I would like to ski.	REQUEST
2. I would enjoy skiing if...	CONDITIONAL
3. I enjoy skiing.	STATEMENT
4. I like to ski.	STATEMENT

The supralexical set "would like to" seems to have the features "want to do something" and "politeness." The following lexical entry would seem possible:

SUPRALEXICAL SET

(subject) + WOULD LIKE TO + (verb)
supralexical

CONDITIONS OF USAGE: 1. wish to do something
2. wish to express politeness

Such an analysis implies that, in this case at least, fusion involves a restructuring of constituent elements. The more traditional analysis would identify "like" as the main verb taking the complement infinitive, e.g., "to pay." Our analysis has the advantage of maintaining that "pay" is the main verb, and that the supralelexical unit "would like to" is a modal. The supposed advantage lies in the analysis above.

If the supralelexical entry is indeed as we have represented it, there would be no slot in "would like to" for a subject construed as an empty element in D-STRUCTURE:

F. *He would like PRO to pay.

In this case, there would be neither need nor justification for positing PRO. Similar situations might well exist for "want" in

G. He wants to go.

It might be objected that if "wants to" is a supralelexical unit, then what happens when "John" is inserted after "wants" and before "go," as in

H. He wants John to go.

(van Riemsdijk and Williams, p. 133)? My suggestion would be simply that "want + (NP)" and "want to + (VP)" have

different representations in the lexicon. "Want" specifies the lack of a condition on the part of the subject that can be filled by an object, a person, or a certain quality in environment. "Want to" specifies a wish to do something.

- I. I (want) (quiet on the set).
- J. I (want to) (be quiet for a while).
- K. I (want) (John to be quiet for a while).

It has already been suggested in generative theory that restructuring occurs in verbs whose signification is modified by their coupling with prepositions and/or adverbs. Radford (1981) makes a clear case for this:

And if we continue to assume that only the object of a verb, not the object of a preposition can be passivised, then we have no principled way of accounting for passives like **John was taken advantage of**. It seems that what we want to say is that in sentences like [this] the whole expression **take advantage of** can optionally be treated as some kind of complex verb, whose object (**John**) can passivise just like the object of any other transitive verb. One way of capturing this intuition would be to say that a sequence like

[_V take] [_{NP} advantage] [_{PP} of [_{NP} someone]]

can optionally undergo a lexical (i.e. in the Lexicon) Restructuring Rule, whereby the structure [above] is converted into

[_V take advantage of] [_{NP} someone]

(p. 137)

Radford goes on to point out that while we can say L below, we cannot say M:

L. A book was written about her.

M. *She was written a book about.

"Hence, the relevant Restructuring Rule must be heavily lexically governed in ways that are not immediately obvious....So that it may be that in addition to **redundancy rules** our Lexicon will also contain a set of somewhat idiosyncratic and highly lexically governed **restructuring rules**--as Chomsky has proposed in a number of works" (p. 138).

It would seem, then, little more to suggest that restructuring occurs in phrases made up of, say, two adverbs such as "better" and "off" in "He is better off living alone." Actually, "to be better off" is probably the lexical entry since "better off" meaning "in a more advantageous situation" does not occur without some form of "to be." If we allow for a moment that "would be + (COMPLEMENT)" is a supralexical set, then "would be better off" represents a recursively formed supralexical unit of its own.

REDUCTIONS AND SUPRALEXICAL UNITS

Phrases occasionally become reduced to such an extent that they virtually become monomorphemic elements. It seems that many such reductions might occur only after the phrase has been supralexicalized and the constituent lexical items

radically changed with little algorithmic potencial.

In characteristic fourteen of fused structures, I suggest that supralexical units seem to be good candidates for ellipses, reductions, and similar operations. Let us consider two examples.

EXAMPLE 1:

What are you eating? ----->	Whatcha eating?
What do you say, Jose? ---->	Whatcha say, Jose?
	or
	Whaddaya say, Jose

Probably because of its rhyme and register, the expression "Whatcha say, Jose?" is sometimes used in colloquial English as a casual greeting that is generally the equivalent of "What's happening?" and "Where y'at." The "Jose greeting," which certainly seems to be fused, can serve to illustrate the close interaction between reductions and supralelexical restructuring. First, "Whatcha say" does not seem to be in accord with phrase structure rules insofar as those rules call for a VP consisting of an auxiliary and a main verb. Whereas we can substitute "doing" or "eating" for the main verb (e.g. "Whatcha eating?"), "whatcha" resists very strongly any attempt to separate NP from Aux.

Second, the reduction and subsequent optional collapse of "Whaddaya" and "Whatcha" indicate that the syntactically important distinction between "are" and "do" is of considerably less importance in these structures than in interrogatives posed in a more serious, grave, or solemn

situation:

- N. I'm afraid your friend is brain dead and will never come out of coma. His brother wants to remove him from the life support system. What do you say, Jose?
- O. What are you doing? You know that I'm married. I'm afraid that you will have to leave at once.
- P. What are you eating? I've never seen anything so disgusting in all my life.

Considering these examples, we might identify "casualness" as an added feature in the supralexical unit "whatcha + VP". A similar condition would be present in "Howdy" from "How do you do?" The reduced form would not be used in a meaningful question like, "How do you do it? I'm not good at puzzles."

EXAMPLE 2: Stick them up! -----> Stick'em up!

It is a well known feature of idioms that even a minimal variation of lexical items can interfere with the integrity of the idiom and make figurative interpretation more difficult: "paint the town red" but not "*color the town red" or "*paint the town crimson." My point of view is that idioms are simply one kind of supralexical unit, a point that tends to be supported by the observation that once the analytical "Stick them up" has become fused and reduced, it will seem awkward as compared to the new supralexical set: "Stick'em up."

This is in keeping with the principle that supralexical

units are linked to one specific concept, and that any variation will tend to set the interlocutor searching for either another fused set or a more analytical interpretation of the sentence. For example, "I wrote my homework" instead of "I did my homework" would, we suggest, imply that the speaker (1) had some quite unusual kind of homework that involves a great deal of writing, or (2) was not a native speaker of English.

FUSION OCCURS BETWEEN ANY ELEMENTS

It would seem that there are few if any constraints on (1) the kind of elements or (2) the syntactical structure (or lack of it) of elements that can be fused. Of course, most supralexical units do consist of syntactically related lexical items; however, this could be due to the fact that most of the input into the process of fusion happens to be from the structures found in normal, everyday language and not from a-syntactic utterances such as Tarzan's cry; Santa's "Ho, ho, ho"; the intonation and phonological elements in Woody Woodpecker's laugh (rising and then falling on the last syllable: "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha" repeated "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha"; and the Road Runner's "Beep, beep" at a specific pitch. The point here is that syntactic and a-syntactic utterances are fused with apparently equal ease.

The last two examples suggest that the process of fusion involves the memory of pitches, pauses, stresses, and length

of vowels that constitute songs and, more broadly, instrumental music. It is not at all unusual for a musician to reproduce exactly and without printed notation the thousands of notes in compositions of indeterminate length. If the stupendous memory demonstrated in such a performance is indeed closely related to fusion and the Matrix Generating Device, we need not be concerned about limitations on the power of human memory to produce an unlimited number of fusions of a more linguistic nature.

XVIII. CANONICAL/FUNCTIONAL SIGNIFICATION

It seems that in general, any particular lexical item consists of a limited set of semantic features. The number of such features that are called up in a particular utterance varies according to the context, to patterns of usage, and to other lexical items in the sentence. For example, "fight" normally implies psychological confrontation in "John and his wife fight every evening," physical contact in "The boxers fought in Madison Square Garden," and physical destruction in "Germany and the U.S.A. fought in WWII."

The lexical item "fought," then, could be said to have at least three entries in the lexicon in English. One alternative, which I have mentioned in discussing the notion of a feature-based lexicon (p. 13), places primary emphasis on the semantic features that are called up and less on the

label (e.g. "fought") which serves to represent those features as a unit that can be inflected and manipulated at surface level.

With this schema in mind, we can distinguish between "canonical" and "functional" signification. The former would refer to all of the semantic features clustered around a given phonological entity. Presumably, the encountering of this entity in the absence of any context would activate all of the features.

Functional signification would refer to a narrowing of the number of possible features that are considered relevant to the sentential instance. This could occur as a result of (1) context, (2) specific lexical environment, and (3) supralexic forms. Lexical environment, which might well be subsumed by "context," would refer to cases in which the mention of one word would narrow the possible features of another. For instance, in speaking of "class," the occurrence of the word "pupil" would probably tend to rule out "social division," just as "class" would tend to remove those features related to the eye from "pupil".

This observation is in keeping with the findings of Heeschen (1978) that the presentation of a secondary lexical item (Lex_2) that was associated with a primary lexical item (Lex_1) significantly increased the recognizability of Lex_1 when that item was exposed to subjects for 140 milliseconds. (All items were taken from the Kent-Rosanoff lists of

associations.) This would seem to support the relatively straightforward canonical/functional distinction made above in that Lex₂ served to decrease the canonical and increase the functional signification of Lex₁.

Supralexical units represent another way of getting from the canonical to the functional in that they specify very closely a particular set of overt and underlying semantic features. This is accomplished by (1) calling up individual lexical items that contain some of the needed features, (2) adding other features that arise out of the original utterance that resulted in the fused unit, and (3) deriving others from the general context in which the lexical items occur. As a result of this supralexicalization, complex sets of semantic features and minute specifications of usage are incorporated into the lexicon. For example, the supralexical unit A below is from football aficionado speech. Presumably, it is a reduction of the somewhat more explicit B.

- A. First and ten for Team X.
- B. It's first down for Team X and ten yards to go for another first down."
- C. Team X is about to execute its first play, and must proceed ten yards to earn another first down."

The semantic features of C most definitely occur in A and B, but remain at the underlying level, that is, not phonologically realized at surface level.

Our notion of the lexicon as an hierarchy-based,

organized body of semantic features instead of lexical items seems to be in accord with the above observations concerning fused units. At a lower level, we would have individual perception/cognition-produced attributes such as height, weight, color, beauty, and intelligence. On another level of organization would be clusters of these attributes, and on a yet higher level would be clusters of clusters and so on. For example, in "She's a knockout," knockout would include the semantic features "beautiful" and "shapely". Lexical and supralexic items might be imaged as labels given to any of these attributes, clusters, or clusters of clusters. Cognition involving any of these labels might be called "linguistic cognition." Syntax would involve the ordering and arranging of the elements of linguistic cognition in such a manner as to facilitate their expression and comprehension in language.

A sentence, for example, would involve the temporary fixing of representations of cognition at a given point in time in the mind of a speaker. It is by no means certain that an interlocutor would comprehend all of the semantic features intended by the speaker. This possible lack of comprehension would seem to increase as the distance from the place and time of utterance increases. Other factors affecting the comprehension of the unique and complex set of semantic features of a particular sentence--that is of the representations of cognition in the mind of a speaker

at the moment of utterance--might include the degree to which the speaker and the interlocutor shared the same supralexical units and intuitions concerning context, social and educational background, meanings of intonational patterns, sense of humor, gesture, etc. These are existential factors affecting communication.

This model, which is similar in some respects to that developed in Lexical-Function Grammar (Bresnan, 1982; Perlmutter, 1983), is related to the idea of encapsulations we discussed earlier. For example, the concept of a table involves several elements and possibilities: (1) a planar surface that is (2) generally horizontal and (3) supported by one or more legs (4) resting on a floor. If one forgets or does not know the word for "table," he will have to try to unpack or decompose the capsule and hope that his or her interlocutor will (A) have the same semantic capsule in his lexicon, (B) be able to select that particular capsule, and (3) not be forced to choose between two capsules, each of which has some but not all of the features of the forgotten target lexical item. If both the speaker and his interlocutor have lost, not only the name of the capsule but the collected semantic contents, communication--and cognition--will probably be severely retarded.

It would seem that communication is often proportionately reduced by mis-matched or missing capsules in the lexicon of two or more interlocutors: an increase in the complexity

of such capsules would often be accompanied by a decrease in the degree of understanding. In these terms, I would imagine that many of the difficulties in translation from one dialect or language or family of languages to another are a direct result of encapsulations in the lexicon--an idea familiar in the study of contrastive analysis and language transfer (Gass and Selinker, 1983). This is relevant for us because one of the prime means of such complex encapsulation seems to be the supralexical unit.

XIX. THE CONTINUUM OF FUSION

If we tentatively consider that different degrees of fusion are possible, we might suggest that some low degree of fusion is common to the comprehension of all linguistic formulations. At one point in the continuum of fusion, the fused elements take on the somewhat more observable characteristics of that phenomenon. This rather speculative notion of a continuum in fusion has been discussed by Bolinger (1976) who reproduces in his article an evocative illustration of this phenomenon from Van Lancker (1974). (Figure 2 is a very slightly revised version of that illustration.) It is to be noted that Van Lancker does not incorporate the integration of fusion into the operations of "novel" speech as I am doing in this paper.

PROPERTIES

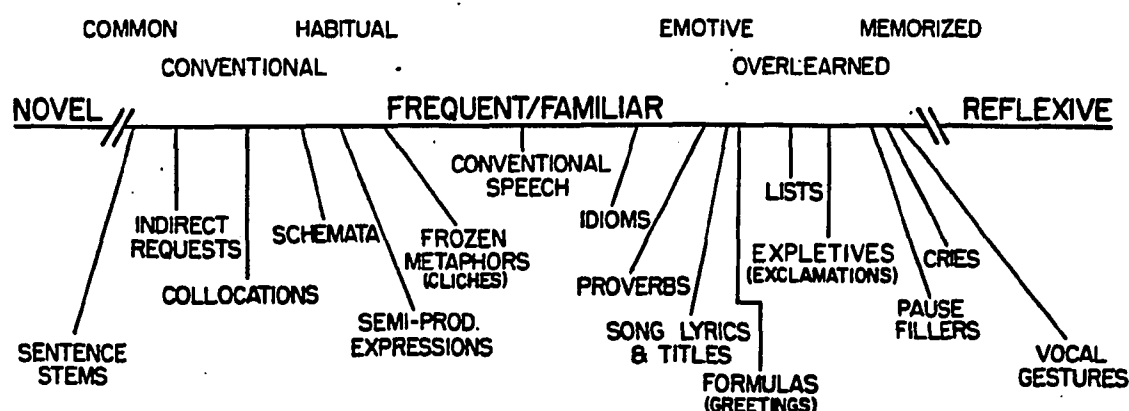


FIGURE 2. SUBSETS OF NONPROPOSITIONAL SPEECH and their common properties, presented on a hypothetical continuum from most novel to reflexive. From Van Lancker, 1987, p.56.

**XX.
CLASSIFICATION OF FUSED STRUCTURES
ACCORDING TO ADDED FEATURES**

One way of estimating the value of a broad hypothesis such as the one concerning supralexicals is considering the extent to which it helps explain and account for specific phenomena. At present, idioms have been carefully studied (e.g., Makkai, 1972; Fraser, 1970; Weinreich, 1969; Chafe, 1968), but the grounds for the relationship between transparent idioms, opaque idioms, metaphors, constructed verbs (e.g., "go to sleep"), and various kinds of fixed phrases remain a knotty problem. In this section, I attempt to apply one of the principles of fusion that we have been considering in an effort to test the supralexical hypothesis and to present another perspective on this very relevant problem. Specifically, I identify the addition of semantic features as the common denominator in idioms, metaphors and the other forms cited above.

FIRST ORDER FUSIONS

First order fusions are those that add no features to a phrase, but which link the particular formulation to a specific concept. The concept will, in turn, call up the designated phrase and inhibit synonymous alternatives.

FUSED PHRASESYNONYMOUS
APPROXIMATIONDon't worry about it.Don't be troubled
about it.A good time was had by all.A good time was
experienced
by everybody.SECOND ORDER FUSION

Second order fusions add a minimum number of features to
a given phrase.

Example: go to bed

FEATURES SPECIFIED

move to the bed

FEATURES ADDED

1. lie down
on the bed
2. start sleeping

THIRD ORDER FUSION

This category is made up of what are usually called
"transparent idioms" in which there are several added semantic
features but generally not enough to totally obscure the
semantic content of the phrase that is yielded through
analysis of component lexical items.

EXAMPLES:**FUSED****ANALYTICAL**

A. She was in and out all day long.

She departed and returned all day long.

B. This job is my bread and butter.

This job enables me to buy food, clothing and shelter.

FOURTH ORDER FUSION

This particular range on the continuum is centered on opaque idioms. It is the "added" semantic features and not the sum of the features of constituent lexical items that constitute the semantic content of the figurative interpretation of opaque idioms.

Traditionally, an idiom is a word or phrase whose constituent elements considered as a whole do not carry the figurative meaning of the phrase. This would seem to imply that we are dealing with a single linguistic ditropic construction; i.e., one structure with two equal possibilities of interpretation: literal and figurative. On the other hand, it would also seem possible that what we do have is, in effect, two significantly different entries in the lexicon. The constituent elements of one of them, the analytical, behave as independently combinatorial lexical items. The other--the figurative construction--seems to be a fused structure whose elements have lost much of their ability to behave as independent items. Let us look more closely at this.

Two critical factors might be kept in mind. First, the figurative interpretation results from the fusion of the lexical items involved. This fusion (1) links the phrase to a specific concept, and (2) reduces the lexical elements to what might be called "morphemic husks" with a reduced capacity to function as analytical, combinatory elements. (The image of "husk" here derives from the dead but relatively intact layer of skin or covering that is shed by various insects and snakes at the end of a growth cycle.) In other words, it would seem that the component elements of a fused phrase do not have to be parsed one by one. The figurative interpretation would, therefore, seem to be quite accessible. The degree of that accessibility would seem to depend on several factors, including the nature of the particular marking device that possibly signals that a supralexical unit is present.

The reduction to morphemic husks will tend to prevent analytical (literal) interpretation: the lock works both ways--it maintains the attachment to the specific concept, and it keeps the designated phrase from being used to express other concepts. After fusion occurs, it is the phrase itself that is the lexical item: the old individual lexical items (husks) now function in a fashion similar to that of bound morphemes. The speaker and the listener operate in cognitive terms that acknowledge this new status.

The second critical factor that should be kept in mind

is that the literal and the figurative meanings of virtually all idioms were at one time very closely related and did not call for two divergent interpretations. It has been observed that an idiom is a frozen metaphor. For example, an idiom like "kick the bucket" did not precipitate out of nothing. It has been conjectured that "bucket" meant the beam from which an animal was hung by the heels at slaughter (Brewer, 1981, p. 166). That animal did kick the bucket, and everyone knew what was literally meant by the phrase--at least according to this representative conjecture--just as everyone now knows that "go to bed" means to get in bed and start sleeping. Even though everyone were to start sleeping on mats and to forget the meaning of "bed," it would probably be a very long time before the expression "go to bed" were changed. This despite the fact that no one would really know what the literal meaning of "bed" was. The ambiguity that now attends "kick the bucket" apparently developed as the literal, analytical meaning of the phrase and the figurative meaning diverged.

According to the supralexic hypothesis, once the familiar phrase was fused, its constituent lexical items ceased to function as free, analytical elements and became instead morphemic husks whose individual function had passed to the unitary function of the phrase as a whole. As such, these fused constructions were largely immune to many of the influences that cause change in language. When, for

example, slaughtered pigs were no longer tied to a "bucket." the analytical interpretation simply disappeared, except for etymologists. The figurative interpretation, however, has remained.

One important possibility that this line of argument gives rise to involves processing and ambiguity. A minimum of ambiguity attends "go to bed," perhaps because the literal interpretation has been pre-empted by fusion. Possibly, the dropping of "the" before "bed" signals the presence of a supralexical and not an analytical construction. That is, possibly the normal syntactic need for "the" before a definite noun in effect results in the operational directive in Figure 3:

-
1. Do not consider 'go to bed' a viable alternative formulation for the phrase 'go to the bed.'
 2. Abandon parse.
 3. Continue holistic search.
 4. SELECT: GO TO BED = Move toward the bed, lie down and start sleeping.

FIGURE 3. Possible operational processing directive for analyzing "go to bed".

The absence of "the" might trigger an "abandon parse" (Step 2) reaction by the syntax component of the processor, but not by the supralexical component, which would consult

its list (Step 3) and produce the functional, holistic signification indicated in Step 4.

If we break reference to the fused unit by adding "the,"--"go to the bed"--two things occur: 1. the extra features of "lie down" and "start sleeing" are lost, and 2. the processing of the constituent lexical items in analytical terms is again possible. However, as long as "the" is missing, analysis will not begin. Although different means of marking different supralelexical units might be used, the basic procedure remains the same: analysis is resisted and holistic interpretation is triggered.

In the same vein, the nature of the supralelexical marking on "you lost weight" is uncertain at this time, yet the effect seems clear--analysis is halted but the holistic search continues until the entry "you lost weight" is found. As a result of the holistic instructions, (lost) + (weight) is restructured into (lost weight). "Weight" can no longer be extracted in response to the question, "What did you lose?"

In this particular supralelexical set ("lose weight"), "lose" can be inflected for third person singular, and "twenty pounds" can replace "weight." Yet because the supralelexical structure is a set, and these items satisfy the slots, the unitary interpretation retains priority. "Your weight became less" would stigmatize the speaker as foreign-born or pretentious. "To lose weight" would probably fall into the above classification of First Order Fusion.

FIFTH ORDER FUSION: METAPHOR

The creation of a metaphor seems to involve a limiting of semantic features that is analogous to the limiting of such features that results in the change from canonical to functional signification in supralexicial constructions. Let us start off by citing a simple metaphor to which we can refer:

METAPHOR: King John is a lion.

Following Max Black's (1981) terminology, we will call "King John" the "primary subject" and "lion" the "subsidiary subject" or "Lion₂".

In the formation of a metaphor, certain semantic features are selected from the feature spectrum that constitutes the canonical signification of a particular lexical item: in our example, that item is "Lion₁". These features will be fused, and a new use of the label "lion" will become possible: now, "Lion₂" will designate a unitary collection of features that can be used to describe an entity, which here is John. (This fusion of semantic features seems quite similar to the "semantic fusion" of gestalt and orientation referred to on page 11 of this paper.)

We might call these features "metaphor designated." They are not, of course, the only features that figure in the canonical signification of "lion": others include "walks

on all four," "smelly," and "sleeps a lot". Those features, however, are not called up in the metaphor involving Lion₂.

In many cases, the linkage between (A) the label "lion" for the subsidiary subject (Lion₂) and (B) the set of semantic features "designated for metaphor" is apparently acquired in language learning and shared by the members of a particular speech community. Actually, these features seem to be considerably more than simply marked for metaphor: they often constitute an almost mythical identity for a particular entity. Consider the unfortunate snake, which is--in many Western societies--considered evil, even the symbol of Satan, crushed by the Virgin Mary in religious ikons. It seems not unlikely that the perception of, say a real animal, could be profoundly influenced by the identification of that animal with the semantic features that are designated for metaphor.

These observations seem to be closely related to supralexical units in two ways, one of which seems decidedly Whorfian: that is, the way in which belief structures influence and are influenced by the way in which information is perceived, classified, and otherwise dealt with in a given language and in the group that speaks that language. I have suggested that fused units play an important role in this.

The second involves the question of whether or not a expression will "work" as a metaphor. There is indeed the possibility that it will not. For example, a buzzard soars

gracefully on wide, extended wings. In that manner of flight, the buzzard is much like an eagle. Yet only from the flight and other attributes of the eagle have semantic features been drawn and subsequently fused into a new entity that might be called "Eagle₂" by the members of a given culture or speech community. Because item A below refers to that pre-existing cultural marking, it "works," whereas for B there is no such positive cultural marking, and the expression is unsuccessful. Consider another case: although a trout moves very gracefully through the water, there is no marker, no set of semantic features comprising an entity (*Trout₂) that moves through water and that is normally used to describe graceful motion.

- A. The skater was an eagle as he moved across the ice.
- B. ?The skater was a buzzard as he moved across the ice.
- C. ?The skater was a trout as he moved across the ice.

The pig is many things in addition to an animal with a proclivity to what the culture regards as sloth and ravenous eating. These particular features, however, are the ones called forth in the metaphor: "Jane is a pig."

The subset of features, e.g., "Pig₂", often becomes an independent sense of the original lexical item. An example of this is the word "plow" (Br. plough) in the following sentence, which Black points to "as an instance (a clear case) of metaphor" (p. 65):

The chairman ploughed through the discussion.

However, the 1988 edition of the Random House College Dictionary lists as its eleventh sense of "plow"--"to move or proceed through something in a slow or forceful manner" (p. 1021). It also points out that "plow" is often followed by "through" or "into." So that, according to this dictionary, Black's example of a metaphor is actually not a metaphor at all, but an accepted use of the item plow.

Our explanation maintains that through the selection of archetypal sets of features and the attribution of those features to an entity as embodying them, the speakers of a language influence that language, which in turn to some degree shapes the perceptions of those who speak it. This process is effective in terms of efficiency. Once "plow through" becomes available as a lexical unit meaning "move forcefully," it is no longer necessary to explain in analytical language the underlying meaning that the phrase captures.

The transformation whereby an underlying concept ("Jane is slothful and eats ravenously") that is expressible only in analytical language becomes expressible through a fused unit (Pig₂) is similar to our First Order Fusion, in which the analytical elements of "Don't worry about it" become the fused version of the same phrase. It is also interesting

to consider a similar type of sentence where the same lexical item appears twice, once in analytic reference, and once in metaphor. The metaphorical item "Man₂", for example, encapsulates what this culture sees as an ideal man, one who is psychologically and physically strong, self-reliant, dependable, and just. (It is my impression that in France, qualities related to being suave, refined and sophisticated would probably be more emphasized than strength and self-reliance.) This can be represented as follows:

(NP₁) + TO BE + (NP₂)

SPECIFIC, ANALYTIC, UNFUSED

GENERIC, METAPHORICAL, FUSED

That man	is	a man.
That pig	is	a pig.
That teacher	is	a teacher.
That leader	is	a leader.
Boys	will be	boys.
*Women	are	women.

That class membership is not an issue here is evidenced by the negation of these sentences, which poses none of the problems one would expect in this situation of apparent self-contradiction.

That man is not a man.
 That pig is not a pig.
 That teacher is not a teacher.
 That leader is not a leader

It should be noted that intonation is critical to the difference between (1) the assertion of membership in a class and (2) the assertion that the particular member (on the left) possesses certain characteristics or features designated in the metaphorical subset. A phonemic distinction is effected by a stress of "4" instead of "3" as illustrated below:

METAPHORICAL REFERENCE

_____	4
_____	3
Mrs. <u>Smith</u> is a teacher.	2
_____	1

CLASS MEMBERSHIP

_____	4
_____	3
Mrs. <u>Smith</u> is a teacher.	2
_____	1

This is reminiscent of the demonstration by Van Lancker et al (1981b) that acoustic cues significantly distinguish idiomatic from literal utterances. Acoustic analysis, according to her, indicated the main cues to be pitch contour, pausing, durations, and pitch height (p.331.)

If the subsidiary subject is preceded by the lexical item "real", level 4 intonation does not seem to be necessary. (See Figure 4.)

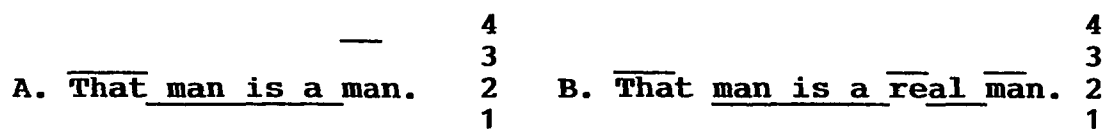


FIGURE 4. METAPHORICAL INTONATION. In sentence A, metaphorical reference is accomplished through level 4 stress. In sentence B, the lexical item "real" at level 3 makes the high stress on "man" unnecessary.

It will be recalled that we suggested that one basic characteristic of most fusions was the "absorption" of features which are nevertheless definitely implied. That the feature in question--real man, etc.--can be carried by a single difference in level of stress tends to support our observation about absorbed features: if the feature were not there, such variations in pitch might well be limited to emphasis.

XXI. FUSIONS AND INTUITIONS OF MEANING

I

The conscious, aware human mind seems to find or at least to search for logical relationships in the concepts it entertains, whereas that type of relationship is not always necessary for lexical items to unconsciously relate to one another and thereby elicit intuitions of "meaning" in an individual. For example, the following juxtaposed items seem nonsensical at first, but repeated and/or intense exposure

to them (say, in rock music) would seem to result in some sort of metaphorical comprehension. What possibly effects this increase in meaning is semantic fusion. This suggests a speculative principle: one fundamental result of fusion between lexical items is an increase in perceived meaning.

STONE MIDNIGHT

THIRSTY STARS

METALLIC SUNSHINE

Possibly, we use this seemingly extra-propositional aspect of fusion in the basic construction, discovery and negotiation of meaning in language. For example, "The ocean is blue" can possibly be interpreted as metaphorical in nature, since "ocean" is a body of water and not a range of values in the spectrum of light.

An ancient Chinese poem compares the sound of a particular stringed musical instrument to "large and small pearls being dropped onto a jade plate." The equivalent of the word "like" is used, which would supposedly take us out of the realm of metaphor. However, another way of looking at it is that "like" is simply reduced in metaphors (Max Black p. 71). This would certainly not change the semantic values or the implied parallel: no one believes that John has undergone metamorphosis in "John is a lion". If we acknowledge that, and consider the possibility that the distinction between idioms and non-idioms is far fuzzier

than is generally thought, we see that metaphor might well refer to a far more general operation in the formation of sentences.

In our pearl image, we are made to visualize well defined, somewhat familiar objects--pearls--and to imagine or "auditize" the sound of their being dropped onto a hard surface. What the poet is doing is asking the reader to auditize and visualize, that is recall experiences of specific perceptions as a means of eliciting from that reader the sense of relationship termed "meaning." To ask what additional propositional meaning the lines have is to suggest that an additional proposition is necessary for the poem to make sense. Such does not seem the case here or in any other imagistic poem.

XXII.

AURICTIC VALUE

One aspect of metaphor not usually dealt with is the notion of "aurictic value," (Coreil, manuscript). Briefly, I identify an emotive frame consisting of a low/high, negative/positive charge or "aura" surrounding lexical/supralexical items, or rather constituting part of their identity, much like a semantic feature. For example, a high-positive aurictic index value marks items like "God,"

"Christ," "doctor" (physician), "The President," "lover," "lion," "brave," and "sweetheart." A high-negative value attends items like "Satan," "thief," "atheist," "traitor," "liar," "coward," "rapist," and "incompetent."

The aurictic values associated with various lexical items would seem to vary with context and reference to general attributes and specific persons. That variation does not affect the notion that aurictic values are real and that they do play a part in language. For example, those values might help determine whether a potential metaphor will or will not work. For instance, mice are very clever about eluding capture, yet the metaphor "John is a clever mouse" will be confusing because the attribute of cleverness is not carried by mice. A fox ("John is a clever fox") on the other hand, does. In our culture, mice usually carry the attributes of "small, dirty and rather disgusting." So that "fox" might be said to have a more positive aurictic charge (with implications for its potential use in metaphors), whereas "mouse" would probably be negative. To contend that we are here dealing with nothing more than associations might well be to the point. However, it also seems possible that the aurictic notion helps to account for one type of association itself.

CHAPTER FOUR
A SELECTIVE REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

I

That some phrases occur more frequently than others seems to be among the most obvious generalizations about linguistics possible. Perhaps the virtual dismissal of that observation is due to its nature as seemingly trivial and uninteresting: phrases seem to recur because the real-world situations they refer to recur, and not because of operations that are internal to language.

Another possible reason for the lack of attention given to recurring phrases involves the overwhelming influence of generative theory and its concern with describing language in terms of a system of algorithmic relationships that result in syntactic strings of lexical items. Once the extremely complex operations of syntax are accepted as the problem to be solved, one possibly tends to look for final solutions that are internal to that order.

As Van Lancker (1987) puts it, "Human language has been characterised by modern linguistic theory as a homogenous class, composed of definable discrete elements which are combined according to specifiable grammatical rules" (p. 49). Friedrich (1974) more pointedly refers to the pivotal role assigned the individual lexeme. "From the point of view

of 'standard' generative grammar, lexemes and morphemes--or, the features bundled in lexemes and morphemes--are the minimal units, the final output of the semantic and syntactic components, the terminal string to which are applied the rules of the phonology" (p. 205).

Generative theory seeks to locate the relationships between these minimal units in the system of language itself and not in the psychodynamics of communication, one aspect of which is patterning based on experienced language. A passage from Lees' early review (1957) of Syntactic Structures makes this fundamental orientation fairly clear: "[Chomsky's book was] one of the first serious attempts on the part of a linguist to construct within the tradition of scientific theory-construction a comprehensive theory of language which may be understood in the same sense that a chemical, biological theory is ordinarily understood by experts in those fields" (p. 377).

Chomsky received widespread approval of his suggestion that a coherent and comprehensive theory of language can be built on syntax, and that competence was to be structurally defined as the ability to operate in terms of the syntactic and phonological algorithyms of a particular language. Such an ability was considered "creative" in that lexical items could be syntactically juxtaposed to create a virtually infinite number of new sentences. Performance was the sometimes flawed reflection in actual speech of these

principles. Chomsky had not provided all of the answers, but he had, it seemed, posed most of the questions in a fundamental orientation that was appropriate to the search for ultimate solutions.

These notions deeply influenced the assumptions of researchers in related fields. For example, Krashen and Scarcella (1978) undertook a study of the "relationship of routines and patterns to language acquisition, namely, whether routines and patterns play a direct role in the creative construction process" (p. 284, emphasis mine). Apparently, for these and many other writers, the structure of language was virtually identical with the creative construction process. Interestingly enough, Krashen and Scarcella found that "routines and patterns...do not serve a primary role in language acquisition and performance" (p. 283). This conclusion is quite similar to that of Ervin-Tripp (1973) who said that "there is not a shred of evidence supporting a view that progress toward adult norms of grammar arises merely from practice in overt imitation of adult sentences" (p. 192).

Perhaps such studies were limiting themselves unnecessarily to causative relations between (1) behavior involving preformulated (imitated) language, and (2) the development of the syntactic component of adult speech. Admittedly, neither said that such behavior is pointless. Ervin-Tripp said that "Possibly imitation aids in the

acquisition of vocabulary or of phonetic mastery" (p. 192), while Krashen and Scarcella suggest that patterns and routines may be useful in meeting conversational demands and in establishing relations. Such qualifications were quite a bit stronger in, Ruth Clark (1976), who made a concerted (if somewhat slight in principle) effort to re-establish the importance of imitation:

Theories that treat language as a system of rules, and attribute internal structure to children's sentences, reject imitation as a mechanism. However, even if children are to end up knowing rules, rather than having habits, imitation may be a helpful step in development. There is no logical reason for judging imitation to be quite irrelevant to language development simply because it has been overburdened with the weight of explanation in the past....[The] important question is no longer whether imitation can help children to acquire syntax, but precisely how a child gradually extracts grammatical information from the repertoire of imitated sequences at his disposal.

(p. 341)

However, even such positions as this do not make reference to anything so definite and extensive as what we are calling the supralexical hypothesis. According to that hypothesis, the choice of a specific formulation from among several syntactic possibilities is essential to the constructions that characterize native-like speech. Going a bit further, we suggest that in acquiring a language, an individual must be (1) extremely sensitive to precise patterns, (2) able to encode these patterns in his or her lexicon, (3) able to access them in reference to "external,"

real-world situations, and (4) able to syntactically integrate them with other elements in a sentence.

"External" here would also refer to the ability of a particular speaker to recognize whether or not there exists in his or her dialect a specific supralexical unit that is suitable according to register, tone of voice, and other aspects of a given situation. For example, the concept "commence sleeping" triggers in most people "go to sleep" and not "start sleeping"; whereas, for "commence eating", there is no supralexical unit in a formal register, although the more general "go to it" would be useful in a situation calling for something more colloquial.

The concept "commence playing baseball" as directed by the umpire would most definitely be tightly linked to the illocution "play ball." For an umpire to say "Let's start" or "Begin the game" in the same situation would seem quite unacceptable, rather confusing, and not in keeping with the tradition of behavior established by the rules of the game of baseball. If we call such statements syntactical, we would seemingly have to postulate that there are an enormous number of situations where judgments of syntacticality are not to include judgments of situational acceptability, which is often indistinguishable from acceptability in general.

Only if a speaker is sensitive to patterns and is able to encode and access them will he or she be regarded as a native speaker by the members of a given speech community.

Or, possibly more precisely if speculatively: the extent to which two or more speakers share specific supralelexical units contributes significantly to the possibility that a speech community exists. And since all of the above criteria (sensitivity, encoding, access, and deployment) are focused on existing patterns of speech, it seems not unlikely that children would, at an early age, begin to practice important skills involving the "imitation" of preformulated utterances. Such an argument would seem to lend great relevance to findings (e.g. by Slobin (1968) and Ryan (1973)) that children spend a great deal of time in imitating speech. To repeat, it would seem that children have a very good (albeit unconscious) reason to practice making imitations: they are possibly developing the skills that are critical to the formation and tactical deployment of supralelexical units, which seem to be basic components of language.

PATTERNING AND FUSION

The relationship between patterning and fusion seems fairly direct in broad terms: structures become fused in accordance with a language operation in which the need for patterning is felt. We have suggested that the integration of this notion with generative syntax would not seem too far fetched. Bateson (1975,) makes a similar observation:

Deep structure involves a pattern of differentiation which produces a surface structure of hierarchially ordered sequence. The use of preformed complex surface structures, then, must involve a short-circuiting of the generative process...The

step from NP [to the preformed element] may be a direct one....instead of actually involving the continued generation which, according to the syntax of the language, **could** have produced and originally did produce these noun phrases as novel utterances....From the generative point of view, praxons [which we will go into shortly] may be regarded as the terminal units of new generation in a specific performance...."

(p. 61)

Apparently, Bateson is referring to the prospect of projecting preformulated phrases directly from the lexicon itself onto surface structure, avoiding the stage of lexical insertion and syntactic assembly called for by more creative accounts. Such a suggestion seems quite compatible with our whole argument about supralexicals. Bolinger (1976) is quite cognizant of similar formidable difficulties in reconciling algorithms and patterns:

The selectional restrictions of generative grammar are one kind of collocational restriction....For example the verbs to look at and to regard are synonyms, and we can say either He looked at me strangely or He regarded me strangely. But whereas we can say simply He looked at me and let it go at that, or say He looked at me for five minutes, we cannot say either *He regarded me or *He regarded me for five minutes. The verb to regard in this sense has to collocate...with a manner adverb....The difficulty with trying to identify all [such collocations] with some sort of selectional restriction is both the vast number of categories that would have to be recognized and the vagueness of their borders.

(p. 9)

Speaking of a possible reason why we do not generate ***"sometime else"** if we generate **"somewhere else,"** Bolinger (1976) says "It is not because the generative mechanism is lacking. I suggest that at least in part we do not do it

because we have not heard it done. We have no memory of it" (p. 4, Bolinger's emphasis). If Bolinger is correct here--and I think he is--then a new model of grammatical orientation would seem to be indicated, one that is considerably more dynamic and existential than that provided by generative theory. Not only would the model incorporate the constraints of existing usage as we have discussed them in this paper, it would also have to provide for substantial, ongoing modification. We will explore some of these existential ramifications below. First, however, we will look at several writers who generally support the positions we have taken so far.

II

One of the most striking aspects of various notions about pre-formulated language is the diversity of areas in which they are found: first and second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, semantics, anthropology, and psychology. For example, Olson (1973), writing essentially in the last mentioned field, attempts to "decouple the neat correlation between mean utterance length and memory span" in children. He suggests that increases in the number of units a child can remember as he gets older are eclipsed in importance by the content of each unit. Relatively complex cognitive content, he seems to hold, are encoded by the child in utterances that are simpler than those that occur in adult speech. It is when Olson extends the notion of encoding to

adults that he becomes particularly interesting to us:

Most analyses of adult language performance have assumed a close isomorphism between the complexity of some aspect of linguistic descriptions like deep structures and the complexity of the mental processing underlying production or comprehension. However, I suspect that in many instances this isomorphism is quite loose, that in performance we are often able to reduce the effective complexity of utterances through the use of preprogrammed routines which represent components of the full description of a sentence as a single label or recoding....The phrase "the old gray mare" is not as effectively complicated as "the old orange cat" because it has become unitized or, as Vendler (1968) would say, "petrified."...We encode various linguistic subunits into unitized subprograms for performance which allow us to produce utterances without having to do the complete set of computations warranted by the structural complexity described in the formal grammar".

(p. 155-6, emphasis mine)

It seems fairly clear that these "unitized subprograms" are essentially what we have been calling "supralexical units."

There recurs in the literature such two-part suggestions: (1) that information is encoded and encapsulated in pre-formulated language and (2) that this results in increased efficiency and ease in processing. Although they offer logic and exemplification without data-based evidence, Pawley and Syder (1983) are clear in their observation:

In the store of familiar collocations there are expressions for a wide range of familiar concepts and speech acts, and the speaker is able to retrieve these as wholes or as automatic chains from the long term memory; by doing this he minimizes the amount of clause-internal encoding work to be done and frees himself to attend to other tasks in

talk-exchange, including the planning of larger units of discourse (p. 192).

A few lines earlier, their definition of "lexicalized sentence stem" indicates that this is similar to our term "supralexical units": "A lexicalized sentence stem is a unit of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed; its fixed elements form a standard label for a culturally recognized concept, a term in the language" (p. 191).

BATESON'S PRAXONS

Anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson makes reference to several of the points we have discussed in this chapter: modifications of generative grammar, fixed phrases, fusion, and the continuum of fusion. It is of considerable interest that she explicitly mentions "praxons" as conceptual units that are useful in both linguistics and anthropology.

The distance separating linguistics from anthropology has indeed narrowed over the past twenty years, and is probably not so great as the distance between psychology and linguistics that George Miller comments on in his article "Linguists, Psycholinguists, and the Cognitive Sciences" (1990). However, I still find Bateson's linking of two disciplines through a basic conceptual tool (her notion of praxons) striking and praiseworthy. It is particularly interesting to us because of the nature of this paper, and we will look more closely at praxons in a moment. At this

point, however, it may be useful--for the sake of interdisciplinary scholarship--to pause and consider Miller's comment.

Miller says that, unfortunately, the position of many linguists and psycholinguists is that

a unified cognitive science may someday be possible, but today it is premature (p. 317)....Linguists, for example, are interested primarily in characterizing membership in grammatically defined sets, whereas psychologists are preoccupied with the cognitive processes whereby those entities are produced or interpreted (p. 321).

For what it is worth, my own view is that linguists and psychologists subscribe to different theories of explanation. Linguists tend to accept simplifications as explanations. For example, a grammarian who can replace language-specific rewriting rules with X-bar theory and lexicalization feels he has explained something: the work formerly done by a vast array of specific rules can now be done with a simple schema. For a psychologist, on the other hand, an explanation is something phrased in terms of cause and effect, antecedent and subsequent, stimulus and response. To an experimental psychologist, X-bar theory is not an explanation; rather, if it is true, it is something to be explained. There is a preference for explanations in terms of learning, of course, because psychologists think they know something about learning; genetic explanations of cognitive processes are still pie in the sky.

(p. 321)

Let us now turn our attention to a long passage by Bateson (1975), underlining sentences that tend to support some of the observations we have been focusing on.

Deep structure involves a pattern of differentiation which produces a surface structure of hierarchichically ordered sequence. The use of preformed complex surface structures, then, must

involve a short-circuiting of the generative process: if the preformed elements fits at a later stage, then, for instance, the step from NP may be a direct one to "That man in the White House," "Teddy Bear," "The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization," or "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit," instead of actually involving the continued generation which, according to the syntax of the language, could have produced and originally did produce these phrases as novel utterances [supralexical genitor structures].

In focusing on surface structure here, we are speaking of segments, which, regardless of internal structure, are either used or interpreted as unitary. These we shall term praxons. The praxonic structure of an event may be different for different participants, so it is always necessary to specify whose praxonic structure is being discussed. From the generative point of view, praxons may be regarded as the terminal units of new generation in a specific performance (using the convenience of speaking of decoding in generative terms as well). From a descriptivist point of view, we are speaking of a miscellany of different units, as brief as a single morpheme or as long as the Gettysburg Address, the Latin canon of the mass, or "Horatius at the Bridge," any one of which can figure in a performance without their internal complexities being generated on the spot.

It is the generality of the phenomenon, as well as the heterogeneity of the unit, that prompts me to coin a new term. Any utterance or stretch of behavior may be seen as a sequence of praxons for each participant, and the praxonic segmentation is the one that will be useful if we wish to understand what is "happening," the key to controlling the massive detail of segmentary-hierarchical accounts of events. Up to this point, however, these elements are unstable, but there are a number of ways in which further changes can occur, syntactic and semantic, which stabilize or fuse them so that they become fused praxons...A fused praxon is one whose meaning is not derivable from its separate parts; in generative terms, whereas a praxon is a unit of performance, a fused praxon is a unit of competence and could not be generated in that meaning and context by the speaker using his normal grammar.

The concept of fused praxon was originally stimulated by Hockett's definition of an idiom:

"Let us momentarily use the term 'Y' for any grammatical form the meaning of which is not deducible from its structure. Any Y, in any occurrence in which it is not a constituent of a larger Y, is an idiom" (1958: 172). This definition and similar definitions of a larger lexeme apply readily to the concept of fused praxon, except that they were coined for discussing linguistic events briefer than sentences, and have not in practice been applied, for instance, to fully preformed rituals many minutes or even hours long, containing kinesic as well as linguistic material. Such a fused praxon as the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag or the Apostle's Creed may give the impression that its meaning, allowing for a few archaisms, is deducible from its structure, but an examination of their usage in context suggests that this is not so, and this is the basis of the use of the praxon concept for the study of ritual.

Here we come to another useful concept, the concept of praxonic **texture**. If the degree of fusion in a linguistic text were characterized, say, by a ratio of morphemes (etymologically determined) to praxons, it would be possible to speak of that text as more or less highly fused. One type of highly fused text is exemplified by Bernstein's restricted code, while his elaborated code is less highly fused.

(p. 61-63)

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1989) use the term "lexical phrase" to refer to "multi-word lexical phenomena that exist somewhere between the traditional poles of lexicon and syntax. They are similar to lexicon in being treated as units, yet most of them consist of more than one word, and many of them can at the same time be derived from the regular rules of syntax, just like other sentences" (p. 118). The writers" refer to "six categories of lexical phrases according to their functional and structural characteristics" (Nattinger, 1980), some of which are of particular interest to us because

they suggest the strong influence of patterning in sentences that would likely be judged highly idiomatic, that is in accord with native-speaker speech.

The six categories are (1) **polywords**, including traditional idioms, euphemisms such as "powder room," and two- and three-part verbs; (2) **phrasal constraints** such as greetings, partings, exclamations, and insults; (3) **deictic locutions** whose purpose is to direct conversation by marking illocutions such as "as far as I know," and to exercise social control--"hey, wait a minute," "see here" and "shut up," and (4) **verbatim texts** consisting of entire texts including proverbs and "general units, used by everyone in the speech community...[and]...more idiosyncratic phrases that an individual has stored because they have been found an efficient and pleasing way of getting an idea across" (p. 119).

Of somewhat more interest are what they call (5) **sentence builders** and (6) **situational utterances**. The former category includes

lexical phrases up to sentence length, highly variable, containing slots for parameters or arguments. These provide a skeleton for the expression of the entire idea. They are often non-canonical and discontinuous, and are used in a wide variety of social contexts ('not only X but also Y,' 'if I X then I Y,' 'the _____er X, the _____er Y'). Situational utterances provide the framework for particular social interactions...[including]...questions ('could you tell me X') and much of the language of social maintenance ('what's new,' 'cold enough for you,' 'I won't tell another living soul,' 'how have you

been getting along with X').

(p. 119)

Both these "sentence builders" and "situational utterances" seem to be good examples of the fifteenth characteristic of fused structures: "supralexicals seem to create conceptual patterns in which multiple slots for various arguments can be filled" (p. 196).

SPECULATIVE CONTEXTS

Near the beginning of this study, I informed the reader that I would, in Chapter Four, entertain speculations that might add to the context of fusion theory in general. For the next ten or so pages, I will be so engaged. I will then return and close this section, mainly by reviewing briefly the relevant work of Diana Van Lancker who shares with Dwight Bolinger the distinction of being the foremost scholars working in preformulated language.

I

From a broad perspective, generative theory has sought to develop a systematic account of language that was approached as though it were (1) virtually independent of the individual speaker and of the existential process of speech; and (2) essentially one, unified system with a great many divisions and subdivisions, each of which could, however, be ultimately analyzed according to one set of algorithmic

rules which would be identified as the grammar of that language.

In this paper, we are considering a hypothesis that is perhaps not in close keeping with these assumptions. It is certainly not my main intention to point out deficiencies in generative theory or to integrate notions of fusion with that or any other larger theory. On the other hand, in order to fully make my case, I find it necessary to consider the supralexicical hypothesis in terms that might initially seem too broad and nebulous to really be taken seriously. For a moment, the willing suspension of disbelief is all that I ask.

In this reference, it is interesting to consider the possibility that the act of fusing does not exist primarily as a structural feature of the system of language itself, but rather as an integral part of the operations involved in the processing of that system as well as performance. This would lead to a conception of language as a dynamic interaction in which speaker and system are both necessary for realization. This, in turn, entails certain alterations in the broad, traditional notion of syntax. Before elaborating a bit further on processing, let us consider some of these alterations.

We have said that one main reason for suggesting a modification of the conception of syntax as the unified, coherent, "internally" motivated core of the system of language is that it does not sufficiently account for the phenomena of fusion and fused structures. To do so, the rules of syntax would have to proliferate into a vast body of

seemingly ad hoc stipulations concerning each supralexical unit and specifying the conditions under which that unit will or will not become productive (as a supralexical set). Without such a body, generative syntax is unable (1) to substantially differentiate between seemingly ungrammatical structures like "*He went working" and grammatical structures like "He went fishing," "*I had a right idea" and "I had the right idea," "*I had the good idea" and "I had a good idea," and "*Don't give it any thoughts" and "Don't give it a thought"; and (2) to allow seemingly ungrammatical structures like "gotcha," "trip the light fantastic," "Long time no see," and "Not to worry" the status of acceptability and presumably syntacticality.

In a discussion of a closely related issue, Levinson (1983) draws our attention to the meaning of "and" in the following sentences:

- (A) The Lone Ranger jumped on his horse and rode into the sunset.
- (B) The capital of France is Paris and the capital of England is London.
- (C) ??The Lone Ranger rode into the sunset and jumped on his horse.
- (D) The capital of England is London and the capital of France is Paris.

The sense of "and" in (A) and (B) seems to be rather different: in (A) it seems to mean "and then" and thus (C) is strange in that it is hard to imagine the reverse ordering of the two events....Faced with examples like this, the semanticist has traditionally taken one of two tacks: he can either

hold that there are two distinct senses of the word "and," which is thus simply ambiguous, or he can claim that the meanings of words are in general vague and protean and are influenced by collocational environments....If the semanticist takes the first tack, he soon finds himself in the business of adducing an apparently endless proliferation of senses of the simplest looking words....The semanticist who takes the other tack, that natural language senses are protean, sloppy and variable, is hardly in a better position.

(pp. 98-100)

Although Levinson presents both alternatives as unacceptable, it is quite possible to maintain, as I am doing, that distinct senses of lexical items are influenced by "collocational environments." Nevertheless, as a third possibility, Levinson turns to Gricean implicature for a way out of this puzzle. For the case here of "and/and then", implicature might well be the answer. But it does not cap the Pandora's box of "endless proliferation of senses of the simplest looking words," such as the very widespread preference of the verbal proform "did" over "wrote" in "I did/*wrote my homework" and of the feature addition of "leisure" in "go dancing:" this latter feature is clearly the result of two specified lexical forms in sequence and has nothing to do with implicature.

INTUITIONS

Levinson seems to imply that distinctions such as "and/and then" have to do both with grammar--the system that provides the structural basis for expressing shades of

meaning--and implicature, which provides interpretive and expressive guidelines for choosing from among various implications of syntactic structures. He does not factor in the role of intuition in determining just what it is that a particular grammatical structure does or is intended by a given speaker to do. He seems to assume--as do many others--that there is one basic function of Grammatical Structure X that is fixed in the system of language and does not vary from speaker to speaker as do the implications of that structure.

Such determination has, of course, been considered (Coppieters, 1987; Carroll et al, 1981; Gass, 1983; Spencer, 1973). The main interest to us is the possible variability in the content of underlying forms and the resulting influence on "competence." Carroll et al point out that:

...use of personal intuitions about sentences is not simple at all: the mental basis of such linguistic intuitions is obscure both with respect to how they relate to other aspects of language behavior, such as speaking and listening, and how they relate to an hypothesized epistemological structure such as a 'grammar'.

Linguists have made the initial assumption that clear intuitions about sentence acceptability and relatedness directly correspond to distinctions made within a grammar, and that such intuitions are related to speaking and listening by way of distinct 'performance' theories which operate on grammatical knowledge. But there is no empirical basis for these assumptions, except the independently verified psychological extensions of the grammar they yield. Unfortunately, behavioral extensions of any currently available grammar beyond the original kind of intuitions which it describes are rare indeed.

In this paper, we consider the implications

of the fact that linguistic intuitions are themselves produced by performance mechanisms...[and]...show that experimentally manipulated differences in mental state can systematically alter the linguistic intuitions which speakers render about sentences [emphasis mine].

(pp. 368-9)

Through careful analysis of questionnaires given to nonnative but highly fluent speakers of French concerning specific structures such as those involving "il" and "ce", Coppieters (1987) found that:

[native speakers and non-native speakers]... have developed significantly different grammars for French. In other words, a given language--French, in this case--does not impose a specific underlying grammar on its speakers. ...The extent of the gap between NS's and NNS's, particularly in the interpretation of basic grammatical constraints, points to qualitative, not simply quantitative, differences between the two groups. It offers a particularly striking illustration of the relatively independent status of two linguistic planes: language use and language form. It also provides a fairly unsettling example of the uncertain status of our concept of 'language'. Homogeneity of language form (in the sense of underlying grammar as reflected in a speaker's intuitions) appears to be as problematic as homogeneity of language use among speakers of a language (p. 555)

THE SYSTEM AND THE SPEAKER

The hypothesis of a dichotomy between system and speaker, the assumptions it is based on, and the ramifications it has in theoretical approaches are absolutely fundamental. In philosophical orientation, this approach is Platonic as contrasted to existential. In general, the existential orientation maintains

that men and women are engaged in an ongoing creation of themselves and of their capacities through a combination of innate potential and conscious choices and decisions. While that proposition itself is quite clearly out of our purview, it is often relevant to the type of questions one asks in setting out basic theory--be it linguistic, scientific, religious, philosophical or humanist--because it helps to establish the parameters of answers that might be regarded as acceptable.

For example, if one assumes--as do most generativists--that language can be considered with primary reference to structure and not communication, then primary emphasis on the system itself (and not on the performance of the users of that system) will be acceptable if not expected.

In order to preserve the integrity of this view of language, Chomsky drew upon the langue/parole distinction which he elaborated into a view that language is a relatively independent system that is complete and whole unto itself, while performance is concerned with communication, which involves the tactical deployment of elements accounted for within that system, including unprincipled deviations of the moment. The assumption that syntactic operations are at the center of the system itself and that performance-related phenomena are incidental creates an essentially ideal, non-empirical and at times almost circular

dialectic that maintains the following: "Performance phenomena are non-systematic because the system does not depend on performance for an attainable definition and description of itself. We know that the system is generally independent of performance because we have proceeded on the assumption that it is so." That is what generative theory has looked for, and it is not really surprising that that is what has been found.

In this dichotomy between ontological system and human realization, one is inclined to think in terms of mathematical models of that system and of idealizations of the human realization. The difficulty with idealizations is that they inevitably and inherently reflect the epistemological assumptions of the idealizer. For example, generative theory assumes that the sentence is a basic structural unit underlying virtually all linguistic expressions, yet it tends to ignore existential phenomena such as the relevance of the other person at any particular moment in the use of language. Basically, both points have to do with the observation of linguistic phenomena, and both involve theoretical assumptions. A primary generative assumption is that syntax can be described, essentially without reference to performance. Once that assumption has been made, the parameters of subsequent hypotheses will tend to exclude suggestions of the interrelatedness of the two.

It would seem that the presence of the "other" might well constitute a basic phenomenon that is distinct from both syntax and semantics, a phenomenon that cannot be accounted for in grammar-based theory, but that affects the syntactic and semantic integrity of independent lexical items. In Chapter Five (Characteristics of Fused Structures), we discuss several ways in which such integrity is compromised in the process of fusion, which seems to be an existential property of language in that it occurs--not primarily as a structural feature, but as a result of processing operations. Generally, these operations are discourse-related and involve communication between two or more speakers--between the subject and the other.

In fact, the "relevance of the other" was central to philosopher-linguist M.M. Bakhtin (1986), whom I cite not only because many of his views are antithetical to the competence/performance dichotomy, but because they are relevant to our present discussion, and particularly to the canonical/functional distinction I draw in this paper. (I have suggested (p. 99) that the "canonical" content of a lexical item is essentially all senses that the lexicon stores, while the "functional" content of a lexical item is the part of the canon that is drawn upon in the formation of communicative language. Both of these phases seem to be dynamic in nature; that is, the functional draws on the canonical, which in turn often receives new fused structures

(via song lyrics, public speeches, television commercials, and the like) that are relatively whole, intact and with novel semantic and suprasegmental specifications.)

Bakhtin says:

...the sort of relations that exist among rejoinders of dialogue--relations between question and answer, assertion and agreement, suggestion and acceptance, order and execution, and so forth--are impossible among units of language (words and sentences), either in the system of language...or within the utterance....These specific relations among rejoinders in a dialogue are only subcategories of specific relations among whole utterances in the process of speech communication. These relations are possible only among utterances of different speech subjects; they presuppose other (with respect to the speaker) participants in speech communication. The relations among whole utterances cannot be treated grammatically since, we repeat, such relations are impossible among units of language, and not only in the system of language, but within the utterances as well.

(p. 72)

THE UNIFIED SYSTEM

The issue of Platonist and existentialist orientations seems quite relevant to the supralexicl hypothesis in that although the capacity for fusion seems to be an innate part of linguistic-cognitive operations, fused structures in the form of supralexicl units seem to be realized only or at least primarily in language as it is used, that is, in performance.

We are suggesting in this paper that the phenomena of fusion is a basic operation that is relatively distinct from syntax, one that is not limited to particular linguistic forms. Indeed, it seems that any sequence of linguistic or

non-linguistic sounds that can be uttered can be fused with the same ease. While I have been unable to find that suggestion in the literature, I have come across more limited accounts that are in harmony with this notion. For example, in an unpublished paper on second language acquisition, Susan Kesner Bland proposes a

lexical framework within which much of the necessary information about grammatical structures can be organized....The approach entails treating syntactic forms (e.g. the progressive, future constructions, there constructions, etc.) much the same way that we treat lexical items in lexical semantic analyses. That is, we describe the meaning, list the most typical uses, and we ask how it is used appropriately, namely: What are the presuppositions and other appropriacy conditions for use? In a lexical semantic analysis, we assume that some basic or core meaning interacts with knowledge of the world and other linguistic knowledge. We assume [that] knowledge of the appropriate use of a lexical item involves a whole array of semantic networks which plug the item into all sorts of contexts, that it involves paraphrase rules of synonymy and hyponymy relations, and that it also involves sociolinguistic conditions on use, etc. I contend that adequate descriptions of grammatical structures look very similar to such lexical semantic analyses.

(pp. 1-2)

This seems to be reflected in the results of the Supralexical Task, namely, that as second language learners progress in their acquisition, they become incrementally more aware of supralexical configurations, and that native speakers of different varieties of a particular language (e.g., Black English, Standard English) apparently fuse different lexical items to trigger a particular concept in

that language. The latter point is certainly not new but has rather been widely suggested (without reference to the present notion of fusion, however) in contrastive analysis.

II

The fact that a given phenomenon is intractable in no way makes it permanently outside the gates of that which might be accounted for through the scientific method. Only if one can make a principled assumption that a particular account of an observation is essentially ungrounded can one ignore it--or more precisely, can one ignore it and yet claim to be describing a model that is generally sufficient for the understanding of the larger system.

It seems to me obvious that generative theory has produced invaluable insights, and I do not want to question these: I merely wish to suggest, first, that assumptions made in a predominant theory can lead to neglect of observations that do not seem to fit into that theory, and second, that the role of fusion in language is an example of such an observation.

We have already commented on other aspects of fusion that seem to weaken the competence/performance dichotomy--namely, (1) asyntactic apprehension and production, which seem to interweave linguistic and non-linguistic cognition without making significant reference to syntactic

structures, (2) the loss of semantic and syntactic identity that characterizes supralexical units, and (3) the unitary nature of fused structures themselves, which is minimally accounted for in generative theory. That theory has not even named the entity that we are referring to as the "supralexical unit." The principles involved in asyntactic apprehension and in semantic-syntactic loss point to some degree of an extremely close and intricate interaction at the center of the relation between system and speaker. If, as I believe, supralexical formation and structure are in many ways identical to lexical formation and structure, then this would seem to justify an attempt to at least characterize fused structures and suggest that they be considered in terms of a basic approach to language.

III

Having indulged ourselves in speculation and having cited sources related to a broad frame in which we might locate supralexical units, we will now return to the matter of the present status of notions about supralexicals. Briefly, there has been little attempt to formulate a broad hypothesis concerning the role that fusion plays in language. The need for such a hypothesis, however, has been recognized. For example, speaking in terms of propositional (analytic with freely combining units) and nonpropositional (holistic

and unanalyzable) structures, Van Lancker (1975) says:

[The] interplay between new and old [propositional and nonpropositional] is a dynamic and pervasive feature of language ability. These facts...lead us to the conclusion that aspects of nonpropositional speech modes ought not to be conceived as a closed list appended to the grammar, but as abstract properties inhering in underlying competence for language.

(p. 135)

Van Lancker's seminal work, Heterogeneity in Language and Speech (1975), together with a seventy-page article (1987) entitled "Nonpropositional Speech: Neurolinguistic Studies," seem to comprise the most coherent body of discussion available on the neurolinguistic implications of nonpropositional speech. It is perhaps interesting to note that fused structures in the form of idioms, routines, chunks, etc. seem to have received more attention in neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and language acquisition than in the more theoretically oriented writings in linguistics--if that distinction is possible. We have mentioned Yorio's (1989) brief but very interesting suggestion that idiomaticity is related to fluency in fixed phrases, and that idiomaticity might be useful in assessing second language acquisition. I hope that the thrust of this study will further the development of such an instrument and generally promote any other efforts that might be underway in this area.

It seems that the exploration of what Van Lancker calls "abstract properties" themselves is not her main concern.

However, she does include (1975) (1) a brief discussion of several of the more theoretical "properties of automatic language" (pp. 130-48) similar to three of the fifteen Characteristics of Fused Structures presented earlier in this paper, and (2) a summary of some of the main positions taken on the issue of what we are calling "fused structures."

The first property of nonpropositional speech that Van Lancker mentions is "low content, or lack of referential meaning...which characterizes many types of automatic language" (p. 145). She does not give examples or further describe this feature, other than to say that:

People often do not 'hear' each other respond during an interchange of social formulas. Even further, some instances resemble reflexive behavior, in the sense of being stimulus-bound. Evidence for this comes from varying the expected linguistic performance in a highly structured situation context, such as saying anything other than hello upon answering the telephone.

(p. 145)

The second property she mentions is "...cohesion, or high transitional probability across parts of a unit construction" (p. 146). Citing Bolinger (1974), she makes the point that variations make up a range of frozenness and adds that "...all construction-types are describable in terms of degrees of cohesion." She does not, however, attempt to closely describe the construction-types.

Van Lancker (1975) comments that "Automaticity correlates with frequency in some cases. Some subsets, such as greetings, idioms, conventional phrases, and social formulas can be explained almost primarily in terms of frequency: that is they are constantly used, they become 'overlearned' and therefore automatic, because they are experienced often. [However], some highly frequent items in a language cannot be considered candidates for automatic use of language" (p. 146). Unfortunately, the examples of such items that she provides are generally limited to prepositions, "[which] are the most commonly lost [in fluent aphasia], except in unanalyzed, automatic phrases."

Another feature that she claims is associated with non-propositional speech is affective strength. "Emotional subsets may be described by being associated with an increase in intensity or vividness (analogous to the imprinting effect observed in animals). Certain emotional utterances, such as swear words, may not be frequently heard or uttered, but indeed may occur "automatically" when stimulated by high affect" (p. 147; cf. aurictic values, Chapter Three of this paper).

Because her research into the relationship between nonpropositional speech and aphasia in general tends to support the supralexical hypothesis, we will consider more of her comments briefly. Below, Van Lancker (1987) expands

upon the distinction between propositional and nonpropositional speech we cited earlier:

Propositional utterances have a full 'analyticity'--the meaning follows from an analysis of the meaning of the component parts of the utterance. Familiar phrases of all kinds--idioms, greetings, speech formulas, proverbs--have a meaning that flows from the utterance as a whole...Propositional speech is made up of newly-created, original, novel utterances. Nonpropositional speech includes conventional and overlearned expressions of all kinds, including idioms, speech formulas, proverbs, expletives, serial lists, rhymes, song titles, sayings, quotations: in fact any expression which a group of native speakers would reliably rate as 'familiar.'...Evidence from aphasia, from psycholinguistic studies in normal subjects, and from linguistic analysis [shows] that these are processed differently from propositional, newly generated language. In addition, the neurolinguistic hypothesis...states that there is a neurophysiological basis to the propositional/nonpropositional dimension.

(p. 65-6, emphasis mine)

It flows from our remarks that there is a possibility that syntax is a manifestation of the patterning in cognition that results in language. Perhaps it is not trivial to observe that it is patterning that is the essence of syntax from the arrangement of subject, verb and object to Pied Piping to the various constraints on Islands. It is a small extension to suggest that that patterning is closely involved in the formation and interpretation of supralelexical units. Patterns are, by definition, composed of elements that recur according to some preformulated plan.

The existence of any pattern suggests two points of view: the analytical and the holistic. What generative theory has seemed to do is (1) infer an hierarchial superiority of the analytical and (2) neglect the operations of the holistic. In a system as complex as language, one might expect an intricate process in which several things might happen: (1) two or more elements enter a relationship, (2) that co-presence itself becomes a third component, (3) the two original elements experience an irreversible change, and (4) the perception of the new entity becomes unitary. This holistic perspective might be useful in that the change would be more easily perceived.

CHAPTER FIVE
CHARACTERISTICS OF FUSED STRUCTURES

According to the supralexical hypothesis, the process of fusion in language results in the formation of discrete phrasal forms that are linked to specific concepts and that recur with a minimum of variation. These forms seem to share several and sometimes all of the characteristics listed and discussed below.

1. Specific lexical items recur with a minimum of variation and in a fixed sequence.

EXAMPLES:

1-A. We took a train.

1-B. ?A train was taken.

1-C. ?A train was taken by us.

1-D. ?We got a train.

1-E. ?We took three trains to get to Texas by June 5.

1-F. John studied hard until the end of the term.

1-G. ?John studied hard until the term's end.

1-H. *John studied hard until the tip of the term.

1-I. ?John studied hard until the last of the term.

1-J. Earl Long was the last of the red hot papas.

1-K. I'm afraid that we haven't seen the last of him.

- 1-L. Last time, you said you were not married.
 1-M. That was last time: I'll tell you the truth from
 this time on.
 1-N. *That was last time I'll ever lie to you.
 1-O. *That was the last I'll ever lie to you.
 1-P. ?That was the last you'll hear of my lies.
 1-Q. ?We were friends to the last.
 1-R. We were friends to the end.

Although sentence 1-A is potentially ambiguous between traveling by train and seizing a train, the primary interpretation would very likely be "traveling." This probability of interpretation is lessened in 1-B and 1-C when the sequence "take + a + train" is altered, and in 1-D when "got" replaces "took."

The "end of the term" (1-F) seems to be a supralexicale set; the "last of the term" and the "tip of the term" do not, at least not in my idiolect. It might be suggested that "last of ..." is used only with countable nouns ("Sam ate the last of the candy bars"). Item 1-K is counter-evidence. In this item, "last" does not seem to imply a countable: "last occasion" suggests itself but is not, on reflection, salient. Items 1-L through 1-P demonstrate the great difficulty in setting parameters on individual lexical items and claiming that they can be effectively shuttled into terminal nodes of phrase structure trees.

2. Component lexical items lose their ability to combine with seemingly acceptable alternates in reference to a specific concept.

EXAMPLES:

- 2-A. She *WORKED HER BEST / DID HER BEST.
- 2-B. I will DO WHATEVER IS *WANTED / NEEDED to get her back.
- 2-C. I will DO WHATEVER IT *NEEDS / TAKES to get her back.
- 2-D. Jane *LEFT THE BED / GOT OUT OF BED at 8 a.m.
- 2-E. John *STARTED SLEEPING / WENT TO SLEEP at 10 p.m.
- 2-F. *DON'T FORGET THE ALAMO! / REMEMBER THE ALAMO!
- 2-G. *DON'T FORGET THE ALAMO! / DON'T FORGET THE SANDWICHES!
- 2-H. I *HAD A HAIRCUT / I GOT A HAIRCUT yesterday.
- 2-I. Detectives should *PURSUE THEIR INSTINCTS / FOLLOW THEIR INSTINCTS in investigating a crime.
- 2-J. He *CUT THE LAWN / MOWED THE LAWN last week.
- 2-K. Please *LET'S / LET US out of prison.
- 2-L. She *GRASPED THE OPPORTUNITY / GRABBED THE OPPORTUNITY and left.
- 2-M. *SPEAK ABOUT STRONG! / TALK ABOUT STRONG! He can lift 1,000 pounds.
- 2-N. She works *AWAY FROM HOME / OUTSIDE THE HOME.
- 2-O. I had a *HAPPY TIME / GOOD TIME at the party.

3. Once fusion has occurred between two or more independent words, those words undergo a significant reduction and/or change in their referential capacity; that is, the range of their normal semantic function is constrained and/or altered within the fused structure.

This is different from the previous characteristic which makes reference to collocational use, not referential capacity. This characteristic subsumes the traditional definition of idioms, which we, on the other hand, consider a range of expressive forms in a larger continuum.

EXAMPLES:

3-A. He received a PURPLE HEART in Vietnam.

3-B. Sam hit a LINE DRIVE HOMERUN in the baseball game.

3-C. We are all born with ORIGINAL SIN.

3-D. LAME DUCK presidents are a PAIN IN THE NECK.

3-E. They'll call you "Superfrog" if you don't quit PUMPING IRON.

3-F. I don't want you HANGING AROUND the poolhall.

4. The syntactic constraints that normally apply to lexical items in phrases are often altered, diminished or lost once fusion has occurred.

What we are suggesting is that in undergoing fusion, lexical items become part of a structure that is unitary, island-like, and essentially morphological, and, as such, experience a diminished participation in sentential syntax. In the examples 4-A through 4-Q below, we observe that one syntactic form is considered idiomatic, while another, fully syntactic form would be classified as unidiomatic. If this is correct, then one implication would be that idiomaticity is to some degree independent of syntax.

If we consider the unit of fused lexical items to be

a trigger for a specific, already-formed concept, then the syntactic rules that enable us to articulate newly-formed concepts would seem to be of considerably diminished relevance.

4-A. *HOW DID IT COME TO BE THAT he left already?/
HOW COME he left already?

The starred phrase is speculative conjecture, mainly concerning the origin of "how come," which is a syntactically anomalous question form (semantically resembling "why,") not only in its a-syntactic internal structure but in its not extracting the past auxiliary "did" from the verb "left" and putting it before the subject. This would seem to pose a problem for generative theory. The supralelexical hypothesis, on the other hand, maintains that internal syntactic constraints are often reduced in fused structures.

4-B. The piano player *TICKLED KEYS / TICKLED THE KEYS
for fifteen minutes every day.

4-C. The little girl *JUMPED THE ROPE / JUMPED ROPE
for fifteen minutes every day.

In 4-B, "the" precedes the object "keys," while in 4-C, "the" is not used. Both "keys" and "rope" are material things, and the abstraction which would result in the dropping of "the" in "jumped rope" should apply in like manner to *"tickled keys." In fact, analagous expressions like "I fix drains for a living", "the" does not occur before the object. The fact that one is singular and one is plural does

not seem to be relevant. Whether or not "tickle the keys" is a traditional idiom is not clear: "tickle" means (A) to touch lightly (B) so as to cause laughter. If semantic feature (B) is considered dropped as a result of the narrowing from canonical to functional signification, then we cannot, in good conscience, dismiss "tickle the keys" as an idiom. In my opinion, a more useful classification is as a supralexical set; more precisely, as a fusion of the second order in which a minimum number of features in a given phrase is added or dropped (see p. 107).

4-D. DON'T GIVE IT *ANY THOUGHTS / A THOUGHT.

4-E. Don't get *A WRONG IDEA / THE WRONG IDEA about me.

4-F. THAT'S *THE GOOD IDEA / A GOOD IDEA.

Usually, syntax specifies a particular form for use in a particular higher form. In the case of a supralexical unit, however, it seems that often (1) a form is selected from among syntactic alternates (see 4-B/F) or from among less than syntactic alternates, and (2) the sense of grammatical acceptability frequently associated with syntax then becomes attributed to the selected form but not to the might-have-been alternates. An example of a less than syntactic form is "jingle bells," 4-G.

4-G. *JINGLE THE BELLS / JINGLE BELLS

"Jingle" had no difficulty at all in fusing with "bells" as the Christmas song became popular. But without this song, it seems most unlikely that the use of the phrase "jingle bells" would have occurred, particularly in the syntactically anomalous fashion that the phrase is constituted. Is "jingle" a verb? If so, who or what does the jingling? Are we addressing the bells, describing them, or proposing an action with them? "Jingle" is not otherwise construed as an adjective, which would take the form "jingling" or even "jingly." Or are we addressing a sleighing companion, encouraging him or her to shake a particular set of bells? In that case, we would probably say, "Jingle the bells." If there is an answer, it certainly is not clear. Yet that lack of clarity does not for a moment impede the fusion of the two items into a supralexical unit.

4-H. *ZIP A ZIP DO DAH, ZIP A ZIP AY /
ZIP A DEE DO DAH, ZIP A DEE AY

There seems far less semantic content in 4-H, yet these syllables also apparently underwent fusion with the greatest of ease. This would suggest that the formation of fused phrases occurs in part as a result of an extra-syntactic impulse to imitate non-linguistic as well as linguistic utterances that are holistically apprehended. A somewhat more extreme version of this suggestion would apply to the imitation of any sound, regardless of origin. This would help to account for the phenomenon of onomatopoeia.

This general argument would seem to be countered by the observation that people have the ability to memorize a sentence more easily than an equal number of nonsense syllables. One rather speculative response to this counter would be that, in the production of some holistic utterances (e.g., chants and mantras), the surface forms and even the semantics involved are primarily serving as a mnemonic device. Similar functions would also be found in the euphony and rhymed arrangement of syllables in holistic, essentially non-semantic utterances such as litanies, chants, and a wide variety of sounds produced in the pursuit of phatic communication.

This leads to the point that language is capable of serving two purposes: holistic communication and the communication of discrete bits of information. This seems to be close to what Malinowski (1968) was suggesting when he said that language functions as a link in human activity, as part of human behavior. As such, it is, he claims, a mode of action and not an instrument of reflection. Briefly listing such purposes of speech, Hudson (1980) adds "expressing emotions (e.g. 'What a lovely hat!') and [speech] for its own sake (e.g. 'She sells sea-shells by the sea-shore')." He also comments that "speech in social interactions does not have just one function, such as communicating propositions which the hearer does not already know" (p. 110).

It would seem that the supralexical hypothesis is in accord with these remarks, particularly in suggesting that the principled operation of fusion alters the nature of phrasal structures and makes them more accessible for unitary functions such as expressing good will and even conjuring spirits. In other words, fusion can be conceived of as a link between the structure of language and the purposes for which language is used.

Syntactic constraints are also altered in the following:

4-I. I won't go, *IF HELL OR HIGH WATER WERE TO
COME / COME HELL OR HIGH WATER.

4-J. *NOT TO CONCERN YOURSELF. / NOT TO WORRY.

4-K. *HOUSE, SWEET HOUSE. / HOME, SWEET HOME.

4-L. *THE MORE PEOPLE, THE MERRIER. /
THE MORE, THE MERRIER.

4-M. *TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTICALLY /
TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC.

4-O. *HAPPINESS TO THE WORLD. / JOY TO THE WORLD.

4-P. That's the VERY THING I was objecting to.

5. Semantic features not present in any of the component lexical items are often added to the phrase that becomes fused.

These added features often provide contrastive value and therefore increase the level of discrimination possible within a narrow range of lexical items. From a slightly different perspective, semantic value is added as a property of the whole phrase and not of single lexical items. Generative theory seems not to provide a sufficient basis of analysis at this level.

5-A. Needing to relax, Sam *WENT TO FISH / WENT FISHING.

5-B. Joe *TOOK A CAR / TOOK A BUS to his old hometown.

5-C. John *TOOK THE PATIENT'S WEIGHT / TOOK THE PATIENT'S BLOOD PRESSURE.

The supralexical unit "Go fishing" (5-A) carries the semantic feature "activity pursued in one's leisure" (see Characteristic 12 below). "Go to fish" is also a supralexical unit, but it carries the contrastive feature "related to purpose," and would answer a question like, "Why did Sam go to the lake?" The fused unit in 5-B "take a NP" carries the feature "travel by public transportation," and a bus fills the bill. On the other

hand, we do have another supralexical unit that is not constrained by this feature, but can include both public and private transportation: "go by NP." The supralexical unit in 5-C, "take one's NP" in the sense of "measure", carries the feature "measure a physiological process," such as blood pressure and pulse. Weight and height, being more static properties, are not usually used with "take."

There seems to be--if we follow the logic of this particular supralexical unit--an assumption that temperature is more a result of a physiological process than a static condition. Such an unconscious assumption would seem to help structure information on a language-specific basis, and would possibly be reflected in what the speakers of a language consider logical and what they consider not to be logical. Although this is not to claim that logic is language-specific, it does imply the possibility of some significant degree of linguistic relativity in the determination of logical processes.

6. Fused phrases undergo differing degrees of limitation in the ability to undergo transformational variation.

In his attempt to provide a generative account of idioms, Fraser (1970) recognizes that some of them resist certain transformations. He resolves the problem by pointing out that in his (traditional) definition,

no part of the idiom actually contributes to the semantic interpretation of the expression, once the idiom has been formed. It follows from this assumption that to topicalize one part of the idiom, in this instance a noun phrase [**It was the buck that John passed*], is to impute to the noun phrase some semantic integrity which it does not have. A clefted noun phrase must have some interpretation and this violates the notion of an idiom consisting of components without interpretation.

(p. 33)

Fraser goes into considerably more detail on the limitation of transformations, proposing an incremental hierarchy regarding the transformations that different idioms can undergo. "Completely frozen" idioms (e.g., *turn a deaf ear to*) at Level Zero can, he says, undergo no transformations, while Level One permits Adjunction; Level Two, Insertion; Three, Permutation; Four, Extraction; and Five, Reconstitution. He points out that "No idioms can be analyzed as belonging to Level Six [which is unrestricted], because this level presupposes operations such as topicalization, as in clefting, something impossible for an idiom" (p. 39).

Newmeyer (1974) makes virtually the same assumption concerning "full idioms" as contrasted to "semi-idioms." "Semi-idioms such as '*white lie*,' '*swallow one's pride*,' '*stir up trouble*,' and '*float a loan*,' where at least one formative contributes its ordinary lexical meaning (or some component thereof) present additional problems, although I believe that further study will reveal that their properties will be explicable given only a slight extension of the

mechanism I propose below" (pp. 327-28). Putting aside for the moment a comment on what Newmeyer proposes, I would simply like to point out that such well-defined notions of idioms and semi-idioms do not take into account the suggestion by Gibbs et al (1989)

...that idioms do not form a unique class of linguistic items, but share many of the properties of more literal language" (p.58)....Idioms lie on all parts of a continuum ranging from those phrases which are most lexicalized and nondecomposable to those idioms which are highly decomposable and most syntactically productive. There may be little utility, then, in maintaining the widely held belief that different processes drive the comprehension of idiomatic and literal language or idioms and metaphors.

(p. 132)

This last sentence is, from the point of view of the supralexicalex hypothesis, a non-sequitor. The device that is wired to react to a supralexicalex marking (such as semantic inexplicitness) seems quite different to one designed to perform the analysis of creatively generated structures. The relevant consideration, however, seems to be where to draw the parameters on the mechanism that is involved in interpretive processing: i.e., do we include the reaction to supralexicalex marking as part of the normal processing, or do we consider it a separate phase of the operation?

The following are examples of supralexicalex units that generally resist transformations:

6-A. ?THERE ISN'T A WAY to fix it. / THERE'S NO WAY
to fix it. (CONTRACTION, NON-IDIOM)

6-B. ?IT WAS THE FINGER THAT JOHN GAVE BILL. / JOHN
GAVE BILL THE FINGER. (CLEFT, IDIOM)

6-C. ?IT WAS A CHANCE THAT JOHN GAVE BILL. / JOHN
GAVE BILL A CHANCE. (CLEFT, NON-IDIOM)

6-D. ?THE BUCKET WAS KICKED by Sam. /
Sam KICKED THE BUCKET. (PASSIVE, IDIOM)

6-E. ?The more it was thought of by Joe, the less it
was liked by him. / The more Joe thought
of it, the less he liked it. (DISCONTINUOUS
COMPARATIVE, NON-IDIOM)

7. Fused phrases are restructured in terms of constituency.

When phrases undergo fusion, the syntactic relationships of the individual components undergo a change, possibly caused in part by a diminishing of their identity (see Characteristics 3, 4 and 5). In the following pages, I will consider several particular changes in the way these lexical items group with each other to form new constituents. We will start with an observation on heads.

If, before fusion, an element occupied the position of head of a phrase, it would seem of some advantage to replace the element that was head with another item. Recall that (1) "head" primarily represents a syntactical relationship between lexical items, and (2) fusion (of the lexical components to each other and of the new unit to a specific concept) significantly reduces reliance on syntax to indicate that relationship.

For some supralexical units, the pre-fusion unit looks exactly the same as the post-fusion unit: e.g., "don't worry about it." For others, the head is altered:

MEASURE HIS PULSE	----->	TAKE HIS PULSE
<u>pre-fusion</u>	fusion	<u>post-fusion</u>

One possible purpose of this is to avoid impeding the transition of the head element to an altered function in the restructured phrase. An example of such replacing would be "rode in a taxi" to "took a taxi."

Another way of expressing this change is the following. In "rode in a taxi," "rode" is the head of the verb phrase. It seems very possible that in the supralexical unit "took a taxi," "took" is not the underlying head, but rather part of a semantic configuration primarily related to "taxi." Because of analytic or isolating influences in the English language, there is a tendency for "taxi" not to become "taxi-fied" or "taxi-ized" in the post-fusion structure, but to retain at least the skeleton form of VERB + OBJECT.

Let us expand a bit. There is no morpheme in English meaning "traveled by" or "made the transition in physical location by." However, we do have "-ize," which means approximately "to cause to be or become; make conform with or resemble; make" (WNWD, p. 719). So that, in the supralexical restructuring of "make NP democratic", "democratize NP" comes into being. Analogously, "ride in a taxi" becomes "take a taxi."

Supralexical Marking

Another reason why this ride/take change occurs might be that it provides the marking that would trigger an appropriately programmed processor to switch from analytical processing to what could be called "holistic processing" (see Characteristic 8). Implied in holistic processing is access to an enormous lexicon of discrete supralexical units and productive supralexical sets. Apparently, such restructuring is a very common phenomenon, and could help account for the large number of supralexical constructions that employ words like "get," "give," and "go" in addition to "take."

Above, we said that sometimes the post-fusion product looks very much like the pre-fusion input. Items 7-B through 7-E are examples of such phrases. We will consider 7-A below. Now we will simply point out that there seems to be some

marking provided by the discrepancy between the abstract "home" and the concrete locative reference "outside."

- 7-A. She worked **OUTSIDE THE HOME**.
- 7-B. She worked **AWAY FROM THE HOUSE**.
- 7-C. She worked **OUTSIDE HER HOUSE**.
- 7-D. She worked **OUT OF HER HOUSE**.
- 7-E. She worked **OUT OF DOORS** (cf. OUTDOORS)

The transition noted in 7-E from the phrase "out of doors" to the individual lexical item "outdoors" indicates what I take to be the similarity between supralexical and lexical items. Of course, the compound noun (e.g. post man -----> post-man -----> postman) is an obvious recognition in orthography and phonology of the shift.

There are, I suspect, many analogous items that bear some of the other characteristics we are discussing. For example, the modal construction "may be" with stress on both syllables seems to undergo supralexicalization to form the adverb that is written as the single lexical item "maybe", with primary stress on the first syllable (see Characteristic 13). This shifting of stress could possibly constitute another form of supralexical marking. Relevant to this particular point is the finding by Van Lancker et al (1981b) that sentence duration, pause, open juncture, and pitch contour help disambiguate the literal from the figurative in ditropic sentences.

Recursive Formation

Recursive formation often seems to play an important part in the development of a supralexical unit. For example, the analytically combining verb forms "would" and the untensed verb "be" are first fused into the frequently encountered verb construction "would be," and then re-fused to yield the clearly restructured and restressed unitary adjective "would-be" in, for example, "the would-be king." This phrase acquires the semantic feature "dubious aspirant or pretender to a high position," which the original verb form shows little or no trace of. The recursive formation here is the supralexical set:

would-be + NP_x

where "NP_x" carries the semantic feature "rank of high position".

LOSE WEIGHT

7-F. He ((LOST) (SOME WEIGHTS)) and used heavy books to work out.

7-G. He (LOST WEIGHT) over the summer.

7-H. He *DISPLACED WEIGHT over the summer.
 *DISLODGED WEIGHT
 *UNPLACED WEIGHT
 *UNSEATED POUNDS
 *TRIMMED THE POUNDS
 *LOST SOME POUNDS

In Item 7-F, the lexical items "lost" and "weights"

come together analytically. "Lost" is the verb, and "weights" is the direct object, and as such can be elicited by the question, "What did he lose?" In 7-G the verb is not simply "lost," but the restructured "lost weight." The question "What did he lose?" cannot really be answered because the transitive construction "lose + weight" has been restructured into an intransitive supralexical unit. "What did he do over the summer?" is a question that can be answered.

We said that fusion often weakens the semantic identity of individual lexical items. This structure is a good example of that. The analytical semantic content of "lose" approximates "misplace." In "lose weight," however, nothing is misplaced. Decomposing into another paraphrase is, of course, possible: "to lose weight" is to experience the partial or total absence of gravitational pull against one's body. This will not work since the individual concerned is constantly experiencing the "absence" of weight that could be added to his or her body. Additional qualifications would likely result in additional obfuscations. For example, the loss of weight could be due to a severed limb. Essentially, the difficulty seems to be rooted in the fact that we are here trying to limit the canonical signification to a functional signification in the absence of a "real" sentence uttered in communication.

Possibly, a more accurate statement would be (1) that in fusion, the number of semantic features attached to a

phonological entity is selectively and automatically reduced in accord with the semantic content of the new multi-word entity, and (2) that fusion occurs only in language as it is realized in the existential condition of actual speech. If this is so, it supports the claim that to a significant degree, language is apprehended holistically and not analytically. One implication of this is that possibly, the canonical semantic content of the lexical item contrasts with the markedly reduced content of the lexical item in its new supralexical role, and this contrast enhances interpretation by helping trigger the memory of the particular fused lexical entry.

MUST HAVE

It would seem that restructuring and feature addition are parts of the explanation of the irregular properties of the modal "must have." Let us first observe that "must have" can contract to "must've" when followed by a past participle, but not when followed by a noun phrase. This is accounted for in supralexical theory by positing that the verb phrase

(MUST + HAVE) + (Past Participle)

is usually supralexically restructured into:

(MUST HAVE) + (Past Participle)

The semantic feature added to the restructured "must have" is "high probability," which is otherwise absent from "must" and "have".

7-I. Sam **MUST BUY** a candy bar.

7-J. Sam **MUST HAVE BOUGHT** a candy bar.

The present-future form "must buy" (7-I) carries the sense of obligation but definitely not probability. However, the past form "must have" (7-J) carries primarily a feature of probability. The sense of obligation can be teased out of our faculty of interpretation, but only with care and difficulty:

7-K. All passengers **MUST BE TICKETED** before exiting.

7-L. All passengers **MUST HAVE BOUGHT TICKETS** before exiting.

It is interesting to note that the analytically constructed "must have" will not allow the reduction to "must've":

7-M. **OBLIGATION:** *They must've bought tickets if they want to board the airplane.

7-N. **PROBABILITY:** They must've bought tickets already and gone to board the airplane.

The star would be eliminated with the feature of PROBABILITY (7-N). If this observation is valid, it would fulfill the thirteenth characteristic of fused elements which makes the general observation that supralexical units are good candidates for reductions.

In general, this change in semantic features marked by contraction would seem to present some difficulty to generative theory because that theory is generally not sensitive to such variations. Possibly more precisely, it does not provide a level of standard analysis at which combinations of lexical items that are used together often and with unique features can exit phrase structure analysis intact and without having to undergo further analysis in which the unique features of the phrase as a whole are lost.

GENITOR STRUCTURE

The analysis suggested by the supralexical hypothesis seems to be of relatively little depth, but it does help explain operations like feature addition: it maintains that any combination of lexical items can fuse and carry one or more features that are not found in the component items but that probably were in the broader context in which the fused items was originally located. Aware of the great difficulty in tracing most fused structures to their source, we nevertheless introduce the term "genitor structure" to

designate the hypothetical formulation in which items that were later fused first appeared in the sequence and semantic configuration present in the supralexical unit. We will look at an example of such a structure in our comments below on "How come?"

How Come?

We will now consider several more cases in which restructuring also appears to occur: "how come," "what for," "where to" and "what about." One hears "how come" and "what for" often in sentences such as "How come you didn't wait for me?" and "What did you hang up for?" However, these phrases have curiously never made it to full acceptability in formal writing. In English, they share this distinction with "ain't" and the double negative. Possibly, apparent syntactic irregularity has played a part in keeping these forms out of print.

The form "how come" seems to be a reduction of the question phrase "How did it come to pass?"--which is related to "Did it come to pass that (+ declarative sentence)" used today by lawyers in formal courtroom questioning. This would serve as a clear example of a "genitor structure" being reduced to a supralexical that retains the semantic features we have been calling "added." It would also motivate the disallowance of the auxiliary-main verb inversion and of the insertion of "did" in the "how come" question form:

- 7-O. Why aren't you going with John?
- 7-P. How come you aren't going with John?
- 7-Q. *How come aren't you going with John?
- 7-R. Why did you eat before me?
- 7-S. How come you ate before me?
- 7-T. *How come did you eat before me?

If we stipulate that the component parts of supralexicalized units occur with diminished reference to syntax, and if "how come" is indeed such a phrase, then the derivation of this phrase is of far more interest to a language historian than to a syntactician. In fact, to subject the components of the phrase to the same syntactic analysis used for analytic items strung together in sentences might well be counterproductive. A possibly more interesting alternative would be to study the relationship between reduction-formation and supralexicalization.

The forms "what for," "where to," "what about" and "what in," "what on" and "who to" seem to be good examples of the presence and the absence of fusion in similar phrases. "What for" has two senses, one asking about an object and one asking about a reason. Item 7-U below is ambiguous between "Which object are you seeking?" and "Why are you looking?" The ambiguity is partially a result of the fact that "look for" is itself a supralexical unit meaning "search." In other words, "look for" and the supralexical unit "What for? (WHY?)" collapse.

- 7-U. What are you looking for? (WHICH OBJECT/WHY)
- 7-V. What are you cutting the string for? (WHY)
- 7-W. *What **reason** are you cutting the string for?
- 7-X. What Coach Smith is good for for us is settling arguments.

An interesting case of restructured constituents is provided by the following sequence A-C terminating in D (identical to 7-X), which seems to be counterevidence to the **"FOR--FOR FILTER"** postulated by Chomsky and Lasnik (1977). This filter maintains that "Any Surface Structure containing the sequence 'for--for' is ungrammatical" (Radford, 1981, p. 299). Central to my argument here is the observation that "good for x" is a supralexical set: e.g. "No man is good for nothing; all men are good for something."

- A. We argue a lot and need someone to settle the arguments.
- B. Coach Smith is good at settling arguments.
- C. For us, Coach Smith is good for settling arguments.
- D. **What Coach Smith is good for for us is settling arguments.**

"Good" and "for" fuse and are restructured into a supralexical unit that reduces the syntactic identity of "for" in "good for" and allows it to precede the regular preposition "for" in "for us," in apparent violation of the syntactic rule. It seems to be the case that what makes the "violation" acceptable (albeit a little unusual) is the fact that the rule seems to have been formulated with only

analytically combining syntactic elements in mind.

What...for?

Apparently, restructuring is also involved in the phrase "What...for?" with the sense of "why". At surface structure, syntax calls for prepositions to at least have the option of preceding nouns: in "what for," this does not occur. Of course, "what" was originally positioned after "for," but movement to the front of the sentence apparently preceded the restructuring/fusion. Consider the following sentences:

7-Y. What are you coming for?

7-Z ?For what are you coming?

In 7-Z, the sense of "why" is lost or at least seriously impaired, according to my intuition: it would not probably be produced by a native speaker. The phrase "for what" seems to carry some vestige of the sense "for what object," which, in this sentence, seems quite unlikely as a surface structure. A probably preferred question would be, "What are you coming to get?" Unless we are willing to hypothesize a "reason" in 7-W (*"What **reason** are you cutting the string for"), semantic feature adding through supralexicalization seems a reasonable explanation. In fact, "reason" seems to be the very semantic feature added. This would mean that 7-W is just possibly the "genitor structure" from which the supralexical "what for" is derived.

Where to?

The taxicab driver's question "Where to, Lady?" exhibits perhaps even slightly more striking evidence of restructuring. The derivation of the phrase in terms of genitor structure is uncertain: "Where are you going?" does not call for the preposition "to" at the end. Nor does, "Where do you want me to drive you?" Indeed, the systematic rules of syntax do not seem in evidence. The semantically related preposition and question word--both are locative--seem to be an example of the juxtaposition of a-syntactically apprehended lexical items that have fused to form a supralexical unit. Another derivation would call for "Where are you going to?" being at one time acceptable. And in fact, Middle English did have the lexical item [hwerto] (WNWD, p. 1521). I suspect that both accounts are relevant in the derivation of "Where to, Lady?"

What about Joan?

Let us consider another such phrase that functions as a sentence: "What about NP?"

JOHN
That's everything. Let's go.

SAM
What about Joan?

JOHN
She's going in the other car.

It is virtually impossible to suggest a structure the reduction of which yields "What about Joan?" Sam is very likely asking why the group is leaving without Joan. "What are we going to do about Joan?" is hardly the thrust of Sam's sentence. However, Sam's meaning is fairly direct: (1) he thought Joan was going to go in a certain car, and (2) he is concerned that the group is leaving without her. This kind of presupposition and concern seems to be the semantic features--if we can call them that--involved in "what about?" Although the idea of a "genitor structure" seems often relevant, the supralexical hypothesis does not require derivation from a syntactical structure. The principle of a-syntactic apprehension is probably operative in this "deviant" form.

8. The nature of the neurolinguistic processing of supralexical units is apparently different from that of analytic phrases. For example, processing of supralexical units seems to be centered in the right hemisphere of the brain, whereas processing of independent lexical items seem to be centered in the left hemisphere.

Much of the work of Diana Van Lancker is concerned with the neurolinguistic implications of what she calls propositional and non-propositional speech. This distinction is subsumed by our distinction between the analytic and the

supralexical. She says:

Propositional speech is made up of newly-created, original, novel utterances. Non-propositional speech includes conventional and overlearned expressions of all kinds, including idioms, speech formulas, proverbs, expletives, serial lists, rhymes, song titles, sayings, quotations; in fact any expression which a group of native speakers would reliably rate as "familiar." The numbers of these expressions must reach several thousand, perhaps several hundred thousand; no upper limits has been seen in attempts to gather lists....For an operational definition, give a list of any of these phrases, each with a portion missing, to a group of native speakers, and have them fill in the blank. They will do flawlessly. There will be certain minor regional, age-related and socioeconomic variations, but overall subjects will accomplish this task and you will know they know the phrases you selected.

(1987a, p. 56)

This is as almost as far as she goes in considering the internal nature of these constructions. She does illustrate the continuum from propositional to non-propositional in a diagram presented on page 105 of this paper, and she does sketch (1975, 1987a and 1987b) the history of comment in the literature on these distinctions in language. Her remarks on the linguistics involved would probably be said to center around the place of these structures in speech act theory. In my opinion, her overwhelmingly major contribution has been in describing the neurolinguistic implications of recurring phrases in speech.

The position she has arrived at is fairly clear:

But the most striking incidence [of formulaic speech] is in the nonfluent and global aphasias, where,

despite severe impairment in production of words and novel utterances, these overlearned utterances are produced with normal prosody and fluent articulation, such that rudimentary communication is often achieved. In fact, the differences between formulaic and novel speech in fluency, articulatory precision, prosody, pragmatic characteristics, and communicative effectiveness are so striking as to suggest that different cerebral mechanisms are involved. (emphasis mine)

The theory that familiar phrases are processed differently from novel phrases agrees with data from psychological studies of normal subjects, which show systematic processing differences between novel and familiar expressions in children (Vihman, 1982; Pollio and Pollio, 1974; Wong Fillmore, 1979; Peters, 1977, 1985) and adults (Osgood and Hoosain, 1974; Horowitz and Manelis, 1973; Gibbs, 1980; Pickens and Pollio, 1979; Lieberman, 1963; Van Lancker, Canter and Terbeek, 1981b; and Simon, 1974). In all these studies, novel expressions were observed to be processed--categorized, recognized, learned, and/or remembered--in terms of their individual component parts and constituent structure, whereas familiar expressions presented in a same paradigm were processed as unitary wholes, without comparable attention to constituency. (emphasis mine)

These observations in normal and aphasic speakers suggest that familiar phrases are unlike novel phrases (1) in their linguistic structure and (2) in their cerebral representation. Because of their formal similarities--both words and familiar phrases constitute single, grammatically unanalyzed units--it has been proposed that familiar phrases are processed like single words. In support of this proposal, two studies using a lexical decision task, one of normal subjects (Swinney and Cutler, 1979) and the second conducted on aphasic patients (Dronkers, 1984), led to the conclusion that familiar phrases are processed more like single words than like syntactic phrases of comparable length and complexity. (1987b. p. 266)

Not factored into this research was the possibility that supralexic markers are part of the mechanism that processes all fused structures, including idioms. All of the studies that Van Lancker cites deal with specific types of formulaic language and do not go on to develop a

fundamental approach to fusion in general.

Blanken et al. (1989) also comment on differences in processing: "As Blanken et al. (1988) have shown, other severe aphasiacs, whose spontaneous language was characterised by the predominant production of syllabic speech automatisms, improved markedly when required to produce overlearned language material. This effect may be explained by the assumption of a separate processing routine for well learned verbal sequences" (p. 236). It is interesting that the European (German) Blanken cites none of the above studies in arriving at his suggestion of separate processing. It may be that at this point in time, similar conclusions regarding fused structures are being arrived at independently.

9. Supralexical sets seem to be marked.

We have already discussed supralexical marking in this paper (p. 170). We suggested that preference in the Supralexical Task was probably not based on conscious choice but was a result of linguistic marking by which the processor would choose the supralexical unit to express a specific concept if such a unit existed in a particular speaker's idiolect. The results of that Task experiment provide fairly

strong evidence that this is the case. With an extremely sparse context, subjects preferred the supralexical unit over its analytic near approximation. The main reason for this is apparently the fact that the fused unit bears marking that is internal to the system and that indicates its availability to the processor.

Just how supralexical units are marked is now a matter of speculation. We have suggested that it is possibly done through (1) a morphological change in head structure, (2) semantic indirectness, (3) a change in suprasegmental patterns, and (4) a canonical/functional contrast. It seems quite probable that other linguistic features are involved.

Most research that could be considered related to this marking of supralexical units seems to have been done in the area of differentiating between the ditropic (literal vs. figurative) interpretation of traditional idioms in which the total meaning is more than the sum of the components. We have spoken of such idioms in terms of a continuum between fused and non-fused elements. Nevertheless, it is relevant to mention it here. Cacciari and Levorato (1989) summarize it well:

The psycholinguistic literature offers three hypotheses about adult processing of idioms. The first one, the Idiom List Hypothesis (Bobrow and Bell, 1973), holds that idioms are stored in a separate list in memory and accessed via a special mode of processing (the idiom mode) that is different from the literal one; this takes place after the literal analysis has failed. According to the second and most influential hypothesis, the Lexical

Representation Hypothesis (Swinney and Cutler, 1979), idioms are units stored in and retrieved from the lexicon in the same way as any other word. There is no assumption about a special processing mode; rather, it is assumed that the computations of both idiomatic and literal meanings are simultaneously initiated upon the occurrence of the first word in the idiomatic sentence, and both continue until the emergence of one of the possible interpretations. The third hypothesis, proposed by Gibbs (1980, 1986), the Direct Access Hypothesis, claims that the analysis of the literal meaning is never attempted and the idiomatic meaning is retrieved directly.

(pp. 388-89)

None of these hypotheses takes into account either supralexical units or supralexical marking, whereby a category of preformulated constructions--supralexicals--is accessed. These constructions are by no means limited to traditional idioms, but rather span a continuum that extends from the literal to the semi-idiom to the full idiom to the metaphorical. This supralexical marking is apparently extremely effective in triggering the exact recall of an enormous number of phrasal structures and the conceptual content of each.

Arguments such as the three above would seem to have to make reference to (1) the syntactic component and to (2) the supralexical component of the processor. In other words, the analyses they present are somewhat incongruous with the Supralexical Hypothesis.

10. It seems that fusion occurs most often between lexical items constituting phrases that are at some distance from the most explicit, i.e. the most efficient means of reaching a semantic goal.

EXAMPLES:

- 10-A. ?travel on a highway / follow a highway
- 10-B. *measure his temperature / take his temperature
- 10-C. *write his homework / do his homework
- 10-D. *start sleeping / go to sleep
- 10-E. *have a happy life / lead a happy life

A phrase like "start sleeping" would seem to be more semantically exact and expressive than "go to sleep," in that "start" signals the beginning of an activity, which would seem well indicated by the present participle "sleeping." Yet "start sleeping" is supralexically unmarked and would seem to require pause and analysis on the part of the listener since the supralexical "go to sleep" is available in the lexicon.

The semantic explicitness of supralexical units can be conceived in terms of a broad continuum ranging from fused structures that are completely unanalyzable (e.g., "spic and span") to those that are virtually indistinguishable from analytic constructions (e.g., "Don't worry about it.") Within those parameters, we can distinguish several categories of supralexical units (see Figure 5).

-
- (1) **Completely analyzable and explicit** (e.g. "Don't worry about it)."
 - (2) **Only slightly less explicit than analytic constructions** (e.g. supralexicical: "follow the highway" vs. analytic: "travel along the highway", particularly in giving directions)
 - (3) **Remotely related to analytic constructions** (e.g., "She is in and out all day long" vs. "She departs and returns all day long.") Transparent idioms would fall in this category.
 - (4) **Unrelated to apparently synonymous analytic constructions** (e.g. opaque idioms like "kick the bucket" = highly informal reference to "die")
 - (5) **Completely unanalyzable.** The components of these supralexicical units now generally have little or no apparent meaning outside the supralexicical unit: e.g. "spic and span" and "tit for tat."
-

FIGURE 5: CONTINUUM OF FUSED STRUCTURES, differentiated by degrees of semantic explicitness.

This continuum would appear to be closely related to the continuum in which semantic features are added to phrases in the process of supralexicicalization (pp. 105-122).

11. Suprasegmental variations are often significantly reduced.

In analytical structures, suprasegmental variations play various roles related to emphasis, focus and foregrounding. Because of their unitary signification, supralexicical units make far less use of such variations. Instead, suprasegmentals seem to be as fixed as the lexical components of supralexicical units. This point is supported by Van Lancker and Galloway who comment that:

[one] error by an ESL speaker, a native speaker of German, illustrates that prosodic features are an integral part of such phrasal units: "I wouldn't want to be in his shoes like that," with the sentence accent on "shoes". For the native English speaker, not only would the expression end with "shoes," but it would probably have the sentence accent on "his"; the range of intonations is relatively restricted in idiomatic expressions (Bolinger, 1989, personal communication).

(p. 3)

In another study, Van Lancker et al (1981) found that:

Literal [analytically constructed] expressions had more pauses between key lexical items, more local pitch contours within the expression, longer duration overall and on lexical items, and higher mean pitch than their idiomatic counterparts. Ironical voice quality occurred more often on idiomatic productions, while emphatic intonation occurred more often on literal productions (Van Lancker and Galloway, p. 4).

EXAMPLES:

11-A. After ?SOME TIME / SOME TIME, he left.

4
3
2
1

11-B. He ?EATS LIKE A PIG. / EATS LIKE A PIG.

11-C. He's a ?GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR. /

GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR.

11-D. I ?TOLD YOU SO. / TOLD YOU SO.

in the distribution of take from "take his blood pressure" to "take a reading" to "take a sample and examine it" to "take a sample to Dr. Smith." This progression would imply that at no point can "take" be said to exist as a well defined lexical entry. Instead, it would seem that the lexicon is an enormous storehouse of entries for each extremely subtle variation in meaning and emphasis, according to which semantic features are added or dropped. Moreover, each of these entries is stored with specifications (1) concerning the particular lexical item(s) it can be used with, (2) concerning the situation(s) in which it can be used, and (3) concerning the conditions under which it is to become productive.

13. Supralexical units seem to be good candidates for ellipses, contractions, and similar reductions.

Some contracted forms of supralexical units acquire contrastive value in relation to their uncontracted derivations.

- EXAMPLES: 13-A. **LET'S** go to the prison.
 13-B. **LET US** out of prison, please.
 13-C. ***LET'S** out of prison, please.

Constructions with "let us" and "let's" provide a somewhat interesting example of one grammatical form being acceptable while a seemingly inconsequential contraction of that form would very probably be judged unacceptable (13-C). Also, we note the anomalous character of this form in terms of its use with another verb, adverb or preposition.

13-D. Let us .
 begin/eat/go/walk
 Let's .

13-E. Let us out/in/on *(away/to/there/here)

At first glance, there seems to be no significant difference between "let us" and the contracted form "let's"; however, in sentences 13-A/C, not only is there a difference, but that difference consists of the "interlocutor-inclusive first-person plural pronoun" and the "interlocutor-exclusive form," a distinction not often made in English. The contrastive value is apparently due to the addition of the semantic feature "interlocutor-inclusive" to the form "let's" during the process of supralexicalization. The uncontracted form "let us" is usually interlocutor-exclusive, and when it is interlocutor-inclusive, it is often relatively high in register: "let us pray," "let us give thanks." Semantically close lexical items such as "permit" and "allow" do not occur with "us" in contracted form (*permit's, *allow's) and are not usually interlocutor-inclusive.

In its productivity within this constrained pattern, "let's" is analogous to "take" in "take + one's + physiological process" (e.g. take blood pressure and pulse, but not weight and height). "Let us out/in/on" but not "Let us *(away/to/there/here)" points to the presence of another

supralexical set. The intricate explication of "let us / let's" seems to indicate that supralexical patterning is relatively distinct from syntax, a point we have made repeatedly.

14. Supralexical units often contain fewer lexical components than their analytic approximations.

EXAMPLES: (The underlined phrase is considered to be a supralexical unit.)

14-A. Sam works in an all-night cafe.
 Sam works in a cafe that is open all night.

14-B. Don't stay out late.
 Don't remain outside the house past the regular time.

One possible explanation of this is that in the supralexical unit, the entire concept itself (e.g. "all-night NP" = "a something that remains open all night") is accessed as a pre-formed semantic unit instead of analytically, that is assembled lexical item by lexical item. Evidence that "all-night NP" is a supralexical set is found in the probable rejection of a formulation in which we substitute "part" for "all": ?"part-night cafe" (the cafe remains open for part of the night). Similarly, exams can be "mid-term exams" or "final exams," but not "beginning-term exams." The latter phrase seems to be unacceptable, not because of syntactic or semantic anomaly but because the concept has not been formed and fitted into the supralexical set "mid-term/final exam." There would seem to be nothing illogical

about an exam at the beginning of the term to determine the student's existing knowledge about a given subject.

ENCAPSULATION

We have referred to one aspect of this process as "encapsulation" in which a set of inter-related features of varying complexity is accessed by a single lexical or supralexical item. It is quite conceivable that for different speakers, different amounts of information are encapsulated in the same item. For example, "schizophrenic" would not necessarily have contrastive values for a layman and a psychiatrist, but for the psychiatrist, that lexical item would label a complex store of information, whereas for the layman, the information encapsulated would be far less. It would seem that supralexical units would operate in the same manner, significantly multiplying, however, the amount of information normally encapsulated in a single lexical item. This complexity of information seems directly related to semantic stability and economic precision of reference.

Such lexical and supralexical encapsulations might be construed as constituting "semantic packets," access to which is possible only with the ability to unpack the recursive encapsulations at different levels. Or more precisely, the semantic significance of the packets varies according to the number of entities that are perceived as subject to unpacking. For example, a "bullet" for one person is the undifferentiated

object that is put in a gun and shot. For another, it is the cone-shaped lead projectile attached to a brass casing with firing cap and powder.

Carrying this a bit further, we might imagine language "A" encapsulating the notion of a concept like "noble" within the larger capsule of "wisdom," while language "B" would not have this implication. Of course, the notion of "nobility" in language "A" would be subject to identification as a semantic constituent, but isolating "nobility" would seemingly have little or no effect on the possible subjective feeling of native speakers of language "A" that "wisdom" without "nobility" is not logically possible. This observation echoes the Whorf-like theme that has been remarked on at several points in this paper.

15. In addition to creating slots for variations (e.g. "take a _____ [bus, train etc.]", supralexicals seem to create conceptual patterns in which multiple slots can be filled.

EXAMPLES:

15-A. The ADJ. PHRASE₁, the ADJ. PHRASE₂.
(The more, the merrier.)

15-B. What, Obj. Pronoun + Untensed Verb !
(What, me worry?)

15-C. NP₁ is one thing. NP₂ is (degree of difference).

(Passion is one thing.
 Marriage is another .)
 something else.
 something else entirely.
 quite different.

ABSTRACT SUPRALEXICALS

Thus far, we have spoken of fusion mostly in terms of specific lexical items being collocated and taking on one or more of fifteen characteristics, including a decreased reliance on syntactic rules. It would seem a possible extension of this theory to suggest that it is not only such lexical items that are subject to being stabilized and frozen, but also the abstract shape of the structure in which these items occur.

A possible salient example of such a shape is the existence in English of the balanced comparative (15-A) in which an increase or decrease in one function is countered by an increase or decrease in another. The causal relationship of increasing or decreasing increment between two noun phrases is not overtly stated in the surface structure, and the expression lacks a main verb (15-D).

15-D. The more you eat, the fatter you get.

15-E. If you eat more, you will get fatter.

As with the supralelexical units we have considered, 15-D has added features: "cause" and "incremental increase." The former becomes specified in 15-E, but the latter would have

to be specified in either the context or another phrase or sentence. That is, 15-E overtly proposes a one-time increase to a single "fatter" condition; nothing is stated concerning "incremental increase".

Rather than causing confusion, the absence of a main verb seems to serve to facilitate the rapid recognition of the abstract form of 15-D via the projection of the manner in which semantic information is being presented.

We have named this latter function the "Matrix Generating Device" (see p. 84).

CHAPTER SIX

THE SUPRALEXICAL TASK: AN EXPERIMENT

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of this experiment was to obtain evidence to support the hypothesis that fusion is a fundamental operation in language. It was reasoned that, because of (1) its internal structure, (2) its lexicalization as a relatively holistic entity, and (3) its linkage to a specific concept, a supralelexical unit would be immediately recognizable to a native speaker and more salient than an analytical approximation, constructed in accord with syntactic rules. Consequently, in sentences that are identical outside the target phrase, the presence of a supralelexical unit should be preferred over an analytically generated phrase in that same position. As discussed in Chapter Two, preference is here construed as not being based on personal whim or, as Levin puts it, "psychology," but on an ease of access related to principles of markedness.

RATIONALE

It is a general principle of generative theory that synonymy is not only possible but occurs frequently, e.g., as a property of transformations. On the other hand, the supralelexical hypothesis maintains that at least in cases where a specific concept is linked to a particular fused phrase, synonymy between that phrase and an analytic

approximation of that phrase is rare if not categorically impossible. If such linkage occurred infrequently, say only in idioms, then a claim about the fundamental importance of fusion could not be made. If, however, it could be demonstrated that fusion occurs in a vast number of non-idiom constructions that are somehow systematically tagged as preferable to their analytic counterparts, then such a claim might be entertained.

One way to support this claim would involve making a complete listing of hypothetical supralexical units. We would also have to furnish evidence to the effect that (1) all of these phrases are indeed the result of fusion, (2) that they are linked in the mind of a particular speaker to specific concepts, and (3) that this linkage makes them preferable to analytic synonyms or approximations of the supralexical units.

THE INSTRUMENT

Unable to undertake such encyclopedic work, I settled for a task involving forty items, each item consisting of a pair of sentences that were as close in meaning as possible. In all but one of these items, the sentences were identical outside the target phrase. In that target position, one of the sentences had what I judged to be a supralexical unit, and the other sentence had a phrase that was constructed analytically according to syntactic rules. Subjects were asked which sentence would they normally expect to hear and/or

to be comfortable with in their own speech. They were to write the letter ("A" or "B") of the preferred sentence on an answer sheet. If they saw no difference between the sentences, they were to write "S" for same.

ADMINISTRATION OF TASK

I personally administered all of the tests. The following three examples were given. The underlined words are assumed to constitute a supralexical unit:

100-A. I did my homework before I went to the movies.

100-B. I wrote my homework before I went to the movies.

200-A. I already ate lunch.

200-B. I already had lunch.

Where is Sam?

300-A. No one knows. He should be here by now.

300-B. No one knows. He ought to be here by now.

NOTE

All materials used in this experiment can be found in the appendix. This includes instructions, the Task itself, the demographic questionnaire, and a copy of the computer printout in eighty columns showing the choices made by each subject. The first part of this printout (40 columns) indicates all responses to the questionnaire given by each subject. This presentation of instruments and data might be of use, particularly to persons interested in running the experiment themselves.

I told the subjects that in the first item, the sentence that I happened to prefer was 100-A. I also said that both sentences in the two other examples were in fact so close that I had no preference. Such items were to be marked "S" for "same" on the answer sheet. In actuality, no such "same" pairs were in the task. The reason I provided an "S" choice in the task was the same as the reason I provided two "S" items in the instructions: I wanted to insure as far as possible that "A" or "B" responses would indeed indicate a strong preference. Presumably, informing subjects that "S" was a legitimate choice would draw off weak preferences.

All subjects were informed that there were no grammatical errors in any of the 80 sentences in the Task. This was made clear in the written instructions and repeated in the oral briefing preceeding each administration of the task.

Considerable effort was made to avoid awkwardness in the analytic phrase and to have it sound as feasible and as "natural" as possible. Possibly, this helps explain why quite a few native speakers of Standard English (as well as members of the other groups tested) made this "SAME" choice.

All sentences were kept short. The average number of words in each sentence containing an analytic construction in the target phrase was 8.2; in each sentence containing the supralexical, 8.3. The total number of words in the analytic sentences was 329; in the supralexical sentences,

333. The shortest sentence was three words long, and the longest contained thirteen words. Where possible, the two sentences in each pair contained an equal number of words. There were, however, 21 items in which the sentences were not of the same length in terms of number of words bounded by spaces. The sentence with the supralexicall was longer in 7 of these. Half of the forty items had the supralexicall unit in the "A" sentence; half, in "B". The arrangement of the sentences containing supralexicall units was random, that is, not all bunched up or alternating regularly.

The vocabulary used in all items was carefully controlled. None of the words was at a level higher than Intermediate ESL students might be expected to know. Students were asked to inquire about words that were unfamiliar to them: none of them did so. They were also encouraged to ask questions at any time about the test-taking procedure. All subjects were given the same version of the test and were closely monitored. Although no time limit was set, most subjects finished within 30-40 minutes and none took more than 50 minutes.

THE SUBJECTS

The 343 subjects were students at Jersey City State College, Rutgers University, and Kean College, all institutions in the state of New Jersey. The number of subjects tested was relatively large to insure that fine-grained statistical procedures could be used in the

interpretation of results. The designation of subjects as intermediate or advanced ESL students was made according to the placement criteria of the institutions. That is, if the student was studying in an intermediate class, he or she was identified as belonging to the Intermediate ESL group in the experiment.

There were 71 subjects in the Intermediate ESL group and 66 in the Advanced ESL group. The 94 subjects classified as Bilinguals were graduate students studying bilingual education whose first language was other than English. In most cases, it was Spanish. The 54 subjects classified as Native Speakers of Standard English were white freshmen and sophomores in regular English classes, or white graduate students studying the teaching of ESL. Their first language was English. The 39 subjects classified as Speakers of Black English were Black freshmen and sophomores in regular English classes.

In the demographic questionnaire, 19 subjects indicated that they were speakers of standard English, yet also reported that their parents were not native speakers and that English was not the primary language spoken in their homes as they were growing up. In my opinion, the language background of these subjects was clearly uncertain. Because of the possibility that they would blur the analysis, I did not include them in the presentation of overall results and of cross tabulations in Chapter Seven.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

A 26-item demographic questionnaire was completed by subjects before they began the task. Information sought in questions 1-10 included age, sex, education abroad and in the U.S.A., native language, and length of residence in the U.S.A. Questions 11-26 asked for self-assessments of (1) the subject's ability to read, write, speak, and understand spoken English, (2) the frequency with which these skills were practiced, (3) the subject's ability to handle these skills in his or her native language, (4) the subject's parents' ability to handle general English, and (5) the amount of English spoken in the home.

This profile was primarily intended to determine if there was a general correlation between (1) performance on the Task and (2) a history of meaningful exposure to English in the subjects' background. There is comparatively little explicit emphasis on fused structures in current ESL pedagogy. It was reasoned, therefore, that the ability to handle supralexical units was generally acquired through unintentional exposure both in and out of the classroom.

Although data from the demographic questionnaire is not analyzed in the present study, it is included in the appendix to facilitate additional research by persons who might be interested in the sequence of acquisition of supralexicals, the effects of age on acquisition, and similar topics.

PREDICTIONS OF "IDIOMATIC PROFICIENCY"

A "stepladder effect" was predicted, with native speakers

of Standard English at the top, followed by speakers of Black English, bilinguals, advanced ESL students, and intermediate ESL students--in that declining order. Performance was considered "good" and "at the top" if the choices made were for sentences containing what I had identified as supralelexical units. Because of the very close relationship between these units and speech that is idiomatic for a particular group of speakers, I will refer to the ability to recognize and produce the supralelexical units as "idiomatic proficiency" in a given dialect.

It was predicted that native speakers of Standard English would have higher idiomatic proficiency in that dialect than bilinguals whose first language was not English. This prediction was based on the assumption that few bilinguals have an equal ability in their first and second languages. High idiomatic proficiency would seem to be present in the dominant dialect; and a lower level of idiomatic proficiency in the second dialect.

Seemingly, such a prediction is painfully obvious and self-evident. It is, however, a necessary step in an argument made against a background in which idiomatic proficiency is generally considered to be related to stylistics and distinct from well-formedness: "A sentence is well formed if it can be generated by the rules of a grammar; it is ill formed if it cannot be. The term applies equally to syntax, semantics and phonology" (Crystal, 1985, p. 332). I would

suggest that this use of the term "well-formedness" misleadingly implies that, in general, judgments of acceptability can be adequately made in independent reference to syntactic rules or to semantics; I would hold that such judgments often entail the integration of syntax and semantics in supralexical units.

Another factor arises in making predictions regarding the performance of ESL students on the Task. That factor is the cumulative acquisition of individual supralexical units which results in idiomatic proficiency. To a large degree, the determination of which lexical items will be fused in what order and at what speed seems to be the result of (1) the quality and amount of personal exposure to speech in a given community, (2) the ability to comprehend the syntactical structures in that speech, and (3) familiarity with more basic supralexical units used in that speech. By "quality" of exposure, I mean exposure to language of different registers and of different conceptual complexity. Exchanges limited to the purchase of groceries, for example, would seem considerably less complex than those analyzing the attitudes of different social classes to each other.

Because of the controls of vocabulary, length of sentence, and complexity of sentence, any significant differences between the mean scores of each of the five groups would seem attributable to such exposure, comprehension, and familiarity. These three factors are, according to the

Supralexical Hypothesis, input into the Matrix Generating Device which participates in the process of locating and duplicating fused structures.

Task results indicate that native speakers of Black English have a lower idiomatic proficiency in Standard English than do native speakers of Standard English. It seems quite probable that (1) speakers of Black English would rank higher in idiomatic proficiency in their own dialect than they would in Standard English, and that speakers of Standard English would rank lower. Additional evidence of this general point could apparently be obtained through a similar task in which high performance is defined as the ability to recognize the supralexical units of Black English. We will mention several general educational implications of this situation in Chapter Eight.

MEASURING IDIOMATIC PROFICIENCY

I know of no discrete-item test or method designed specifically to measure idiomatic proficiency in ESL students. It is conceivable that, with revisions and refinements, the approach used in the Supralexical Task could be helpful in developing an instrument for that purpose.

EXAMINATION OF SENTENCES IN TASK

In Chapter Seven, I will attempt to demonstrate that none of the non-supralexical (analytic) phrases in this Task is ruled out by syntax, pragmatics or anything other than the fact that a specific fused structure has entered the

lexicon and gained priority linkage to the specific concept involved. In that chapter, I consider individually and at some length each of the items in this experiment.

A test developed by one person and based on supralexical units as he intuitively feels them will be a test of the extent to which that person and his subjects share the same fused structures. The results of such an experiment would possibly indicate differences in dialect, variety and even idiolect. This seems to be the case with our present Supralexical Task, which I wrote according to my personal intuition and not in collaboration with another person. The main reason for this was that I felt that the hypothesis was generally new and needed grounding. I was afraid that to use anything other than my intuition and instinct might have resulted in a more professional looking Task but one that did not reflect the substance that would result in that precious commodity--evidence. It has been my experience that collaboration usually if not always results in compromise. Now that the results of the Task have yielded at least tentative evidence, it would seem quite proper and feasible to add to the Task controls that derive from subjective and objective observations on other dialects and varieties.

Such adaptations could conceivably make the approach used in the Task suitable to measurements of different kinds of language change. For example, if speakers of Dialect "X" are known to have the supralexical "get the baby in the bed"

instead of "put the baby to bed," a paired-sentence item could be constructed that would tend to reveal whether or not a particular individual is a speaker of "X":

- A. After the baby's finished eating, get him in the bed.
- B. After the baby's finished eating, put him to bed.

I would think that a test consisting of as few as 30 to 50 such items would establish whether or not the subject's idiolect falls within the parameters of Dialect "X". Possibly, a slightly longer test would indicate where on the continuum identified as Dialect "X" the speaker fits. Cassette recordings of this material could be made to accomodate subjects of limited literacy. Such recordings might also make it possible to determine if vowel quality and intonation patterns known to exist in Dialect "X" are present in the individual being tested.

Since the Supralexical Task seems to discriminate between intermediate and advanced students of ESL, it is conceivable that the approach might be refined and developed as part of a placement test in the teaching of English as a second language.

RESULTS

Computed according to the Duncan Procedure and the more demanding Scheffe Procedure, a significant correlation at the $P < .05$ level was found between scores and levels of assumed proficiency in Standard English. (These "levels" refer to

Intermediate ESL, Advanced ESL, Bilingual, Native SE Speaker, and Native BE Speaker.) Rounded off to two decimal places, the group means were as Table 1.

<u>PERFECT SCORE.....</u>	<u>40</u>
INTERMEDIATE ESL.....	19.82
ADVANCED ESL.....	23.55
BILINGUAL.....	27.96
STANDARD ENGLISH.....	31.50
BLACK ENGLISH.....	25.46

TABLE 1. Mean scores of each group on the Supralexical Task. The scores are in terms of "correct" choices of supralexical units over (1) analytic approximations and (2) designations of "same" which indicated no preference between the supralexical and the analytic phrase in a given item.

For reasons discussed earlier in this chapter, the performance of the 19 subjects of uncertain language background is not represented. Scores of these subjects reflect no significant difference between this group and (1) bilingual subjects on the one hand, and (2)

native speakers of Standard English on the other. However, it is quite interesting to note that the mean of their scores was 29.95, which is almost exactly at the midpoint between bilinguals and native speakers. Apparently, their fluency in terms of supralexicals was greater than the former and less than the latter. This would support the observation that the method of testing represented by the Supralexical Task is sensitive to differences at the upper end of high fluency.

It will be noted that the mean of the scores of speakers of Black English (25.46) was between that of advanced students of ESL (23.55) and bilinguals (27.96). However, in terms of the range of significant difference, Black English speakers were grouped with advanced ESL students. This supports two predictions: (1) that supralexical units are a significant factor in dialect differences, and (2) that the design of the Supralexical Task is such that it can reflect these differences.

Table 2 presents a breakdown of scores according to the number of items answered "correctly" (left) and the number of subjects providing those correct answers (right) without reference to their grouping by levels (ESL, Bilingual, etc.). An answer was considered "correct" if it matched my intuition that the given sentence contained a supralexical unit. None of the 80 sentences in the experiment contained intentional syntactic errors.

SCORES		SUBJECTS	
<u>NO. OF CORRECT</u>		<u>NO. OF SUBJECTS</u>	
<u>ANSWERS GIVEN</u>		<u>MAKING THAT SCORE</u>	
8.....	3		
10.....	5		
11.....	4		
12.....	1		
13.....	6		
14.....	2		
15.....	7		
16.....	9		
17.....	5		
18.....	11		
19.....	10		
20.....	14		
21.....	10		
22.....	17		
23.....	23 (sic)		
24.....	24 (sic)		
25.....	13		
26.....	15		
27.....	20		
28.....	18		
29.....	13		
30.....	17		
31.....	15		
32.....	9		
33.....	16		
34.....	14		
35.....	15		
36.....	6		
37.....	7		
38.....	3		
39.....	6		
40.....	5		
TOTAL...		343	

TABLE 2. Scores indicating number of "correct" responses (left) and number of subjects making those scores (right).

TASK RESULTS ACCORDING TO LEVELS

Table 3 presents mean performances on all Task items by each group: Intermediate Students of ESL, Advanced Students of ESL, Bilinguals, Native Speakers of Black English, and Native Speakers of Standard English. The upper number in each cell is the number of responses to the type of phrase indicated on the left. The lower number is the percentage this represents of the particular group. "Same" indicates that subjects found both sentences acceptable, were equally comfortable with either, and would expect to encounter either in oral or written speech.

	INT.ESL		: ADV.ESL		: BILING:		BLACK		: STANDARD	
SUPRALEX	35	:	39	:	66	:	25	:	43	:
	49%	:	59%	:	70%	:	64%	:	79%	:
ANALYTIC	16	:	13	:	8	:	3	:	1	:
	23%	:	19%	:	9%	:	7%	:	3%	:
SAME	20	:	14	:	20	:	11	:	10	:
	28%	:	22%	:	21%	:	29%	:	18%	:
TOTAL										
SUBJECTS	71		66		94		39		54	
	100%		100%		100%		100%		100%	

TABLE 3. Mean of performances on all Supralexical Task items by each group. The upper number in each cell represents total number of responses to sentences containing the type of phrase indicated on the left. Lower number is the percentage this represents of the particular group. "Same" indicates no perceived difference.

I call attention to the percentage of preferences for analytic phrases made in the Intermediate and Advanced ESL groups. Subjects were directed to make choices based on which sentence they would expect to hear and be comfortable with in their speech. It

would be predicted, then, that if the subject had not internalized the supralexical unit, there would be no difference for him or her between the sentences, and a choice of "same" would be made. And indeed, many subjects at all levels chose "same." (Many of these can probably be attributed to the fact that the analytic sentences did make sense and were not grammatically wrong.)

Yet for a relatively large percentage of Intermediate ESL subjects and for a sizeable but not so large percentage of Advanced ESL subjects, it was the analytic sentence that was chosen over both the supralexical and the "same". One way of partially accounting for this is by referring to the tenth characteristic of fused structures, which suggests that supralexical units are often semantically indirect and not so explicit as analytical constructions. If the particular supralexical unit has been internalized, it will probably be chosen over its analytic counterpart. If, however, there has been no unitary internalization, the analytic construction might seem less irregular and more appealing.

In Intermediate ESL, the percentage of analytic choices was relatively high in Task items 5, 20, 29 and 33. In items 1, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, and 21, the percentage of analytic choices exceeded both the percentage of supralexical and of "same" choices. A close examination of all of these items reveals a relatively simple structural irregularity in the supralexical but not the analytic sentence. For example, in item 7, the choice is between the following

(supralexical underlined):

A. Let's run to that safe place.

B. Let's make a run for it.

"Make a run" might seem odd to the intermediate ESL student in comparison to "run," and the semantic feature of "safety" is encapsulated and "hidden" in "B". It might be argued that this supralexical unit is an idiom; however, "make a run" seems too close to "run" and would not qualify for idiom status. At most, it might conceivably be considered a "transparent" idiom. I would agree that the encapsulated features in this phrase make it idiom-like, but prefer the term "supralexical" which saves us the necessity of awkwardly fractioning the idiom into "half-idiom," "quarter-idiom," "eighth-idiom" and so on. In the terminology and hypothesis I am suggesting, idioms are subsumed into the classification "supralexical" by virtue of their possessing a certain number of the characteristics of fused structures.

For other analytic choices (here starred) made by the Intermediate ESL group, the question of idioms does not arise: e.g., "the wrong idea / * a wrong idea," "keep in mind / *keep in your mind," "to be a surprise / *to give a surprise," and "lost his way / *lost his direction."

Task items on which the Intermediate ESL subjects made

a relatively small number of "analytic" choices (less than 10 per cent) were 9, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 25, 28, 32, 36, 37, and 40. Most of these were based on what seem to be high-frequency and therefore apparently familiar phrases such as the following: "you lost some weight / *your weight became less," "most of the time / *during most hours," "working late / *working extra," "took photographs / *made photographs," and "went to sleep / *started sleeping."

CHAPTER SEVEN**EXAMINATION OF SENTENCES FROM SUPRALEXICAL TASK**

In this chapter, we will examine each of the paired sentences in the Supralexical Task. We will explore in some detail the constructions that we consider supralexical, and discuss the syntacticality of the hypothetically dispreferred analytic alternate. Such a treatment seems appropriate for two reasons. First, we wish to counter anticipated objections that some (or many) of the non-supralexical phrases are not syntactic. Those possible objections, we contend, are motivated by the very tightness of the link between the particular supralexical unit and the specific concept it expresses. According to the supralexical hypothesis, such a link establishes its own priority and tends to create an unacceptability in the alternate construction that is otherwise without syntactical error. Second, the opportunity to look closely at specific supralexical phrases will possibly yield additional insights into the general linguistic operations we are considering in this paper.

Immediately preceding the discussion of each item, we present a cross-tabulation grid that shows the mean of the preferences indicated for each Task item by each group of

subjects. The display of figures is identical to that described in Chapter Six (p. 214). The two sentences in boldface print immediately below the table constitute the item from the Task. Underlined phrases are supralexical units.

A total of 343 subjects were divided into different groups, primarily according to information from the demographic questionnaire. Nineteen subjects claimed to be native speakers of standard English, yet indicated that English was not the primary language of communication in their homes, and/or that their parents did not speak English as a native language. For the following cross-tabulations of level and performance on each sentence, it was thought advisable to eliminate these 19 subjects in order to get as precise a reading as possible. So that the total number of subjects represented here is 324.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 1

	INT.ESL		ADV.ESL		BILING:		BLACK		STANDARD	
SUPRALEX	25	:	26	:	55	:	17	:	40	:
	35.2%	:	39.4%	:	58.5%	:	43.6%	:	74.1%	:
ANALYTIC	28	:	24	:	19	:	8	:	6	:
	39.4%	:	36.4%	:	20.0%	:	20.5%	:	11.1%	:
SAME	18	:	16	:	20	:	14	:	8	:
	25.4%	:	24.2%	:	21.3%	:	35.9%	:	14.8%	:

1-A. At that time, few women worked outside the home.

1-B. At that time, few women worked outside their houses.

1-C. At that time, few women worked out of their houses.

1-D. At that time, few women worked away from home.

Analytically, these phrases are virtually synonymous: a small difference is that 1-A and 1-D use "home" instead of "house." The prepositional phrases "outside, out of, and away from" are locative and designate a place other than that referred to by the object of the preposition. Yet supralelexically, each of these phrases is a distinct unit with clear-cut differences in semantic content. "Outside the home" combines recursively with "work" to designate salaried employment away from a residence. Because "work inside the home" is probably not a supralexical unit, the phrase does not seem to carry additional features. Similarly, "work outside their houses" does not seem to be supralexicalized and carries no added feature. We will discuss 1-C and 1-D below.

The number of contrastive supralexical units that have developed with the concepts "out of" and "home/house" make it

a good example of the fine-grained distinctions that are yielded by fusion. More importantly, we will attempt to point out below that, in many supralexical units, meaning lies at least as much in features added to (and usually encapsulated in) the phrase as a whole as in the individual lexical components of that phrase. It is our argument that these individual components experience a reduction in semantic content as a result of fusion. This loss in meaning is counterbalanced, as it were, by an increase in the number of semantic features of the phrase as a supralexical unit.

HOMES AND HOUSES

The basic difference between "home" and "house" seems to be that the former is abstract, while the latter is concrete. Upon closer examination, however, we find that both "home" and "house" can be both abstract and concrete. For example, WNWD includes the following as various senses of "house": "people who live in a house, considered as a unit"; "social group"; and "a sign of the zodiac considered as the seat of a planet's greatest influence" (p. 654). However, the distinction in these meanings could result from context. We are more concerned with distinctions that arise from the specific lexical environment of a given word. Let us consider the following telephone inquiries:

- 1-E. Is John **at home** today?
- 1-F. ?Is John **in his house** today?
- 1-G. ?Is John **indoors at home** today?
- 1-H. ?Is John **inside his house** today?

Although 1-E is a perfectly idiomatic sentence, it does not include house and exclude grounds. We see this in the possible answer, "Yes. He's outside mowing the lawn." It seems that at present, there exists in the English language no supralexical unit that carries the distinction of being within one's residence and not outside on the grounds. Accordingly, if we want to ask question involving that distinction, we must formulate an analytical string. The trouble is that all options seem more or less equally clumsy and would thwart an attempt to formulate a natural-sounding question. More than simply sounding unusual, questions like the following (in addition to 1-F/H) would very likely impede communication.

- 1-I. ?Is John **within doors** today?
- 1-J. ?Is John **inside the home** today?
- 1-K. ?Is John **within his house** today?
- 1-L. ?Is John **anywhere in the house** today?
- 1-M. ?Is John **located in his house** now?

Indeed, the question, "Is John at home today?" with its grounds/house lack of precision seems to have pre-empted a more exact formulation. This would seem to indicate that supralexical units can influence not only what we say and the way we say it, but what we think of saying. In other words, the distinction

between abstract home and concrete house is, in this case, irrelevant: the semantic structure of the supralexical unit precludes the discrimination.

Another somewhat interesting phrase is "the home." In addition to its role as a marker of definite nouns, "the" participates in a fusion with "home" to form a supralexical unit, one which includes the features "non-material," "abstract, and "relatively high register." These features become "material," "concrete," and "of a slightly lower register" if a possessive is used instead of "the". Consider the following:

- 1-N. **Outside the home**, there is no trust.
- 1-O. ?**Outside one's home**, there is no trust.
- 1-P. ?**Outside home**, there is no trust.

The phrase "away from home" is itself a supralexical unit, with the main added feature being "not within the care, safety and convenience of family and residence." Partly because of this added feature, "away from home" does not seem capable of replacing "outside the home" in the sentence considered earlier:

- 1-Q. At that time, women seldom **worked outside the home**.
- 1-R. ?At that time, women seldom **worked away from home**.

Analytically, "away" means something like "at a distance from." In the phrase "away from home," we would seem to be confusing "house" which one can be at a distance from, with "home" which is more abstract. The lack of confusion in actual discourse seems to be due to the supralexicalization of "away

from home" in the same manner as "at home." On the basis of such observations, we find support for the general principle that there is rarely a question of grammatical or logical acceptability of the internal composition of supralexical units. This is in accord with our earlier observations (1) that supralexical units are island-like, (2) that semantic indirectness often characterizes supralexicals, and (3) that patterning is relatively independent of syntax.

FOR A SALARY

The feature "for a salary" is added to the phrase "work outside the home." The phrase "to work inside the home" does not seem to me to be supralexical but analytical: as such, it does not carry this additional feature. However, with the development of smaller computers that can be linked to large ones through telephone lines, it is more and more common to "work [for a salary] at home." This seems, in fact, to have become a supralexical unit, and does not allow the substitution in 1-T:

- 1-S. Computer programmers are encouraged to **work at home**.
 1-T. ?Computer programmers are encouraged to work **inside the home**.

Expressions of doing something "away from the house" or "outside the house" seem to carry the feature: "with some proximity to the house." "To work out of the house," however,

is a supralexical unit ironically adding the feature: "the house is a kind of headquarters with the worker frequently departing and returning." One can also have a material "home" as a physical destination. In fact, "go home" (1-U) seems to be a supralexical unit.

1-U. I'm going home at 4 p.m..

1-V. ?I'm going to my house at 4 p.m.

1-W. ?I'm going to my home at 4 p.m.

The choice of "house" or "home" seems to depend on the immediate lexical environment as much as on logical relationships involving concreteness and abstractness. For example, a "house" can be cleaned and painted, whereas those things do not seem to be said of "homes," even those we buy, go to, and sleep at, all of which seem quite concrete references. Although "I repaired my home" might possibly be regarded as pretentious and ambiguous, the sign "home repair" designating one section of a hardware store would raise no eyebrows. A sign "house repair" would, in such a store, probably strike one as odd: "home repair" seems to be a supralexical unit.

It is certainly not only in the material-abstract continuum that features can exhibit this seemingly incremental variation. For example, in baseball, a base is "touched" even if the runner's only contact with it is through the cleats on his shoes. To "open" a tin can requires cutting, while "opening" a book does not. If the book is wrapped and given as a gift, to "open the gift" is to open the wrapping and not the book although

the book is certainly as much a part of the gift as is the wrapping. One way to help account for this diversity is to consider "open a can," "open a book" and "open a gift" to be supralexical units in which each has arrived at a suitable narrowing of the canonical signification to a functional signification.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 2

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :									
SUPRALEX	33	:	54	:	77	:	31	:	50	:
	46.5%	:	81.8%	:	81.9%	:	79.5%	:	92.6%	:
ANALYTIC	14	:	3	:	6	:	2	:	0	:
	19.7%	:	4.5%	:	6.4%	:	5.1%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	24	:	9	:	11	:	6	:	4	:
	33.8%	:	13.6%	:	11.7%	:	15.4%	:	7.4%	:

2-A. At what time does it become night in July?

2-B. At what time does it get dark in July?

Because it is explicit, semantically direct, and syntactically straightforward, "to become night" might seem by far the more likely candidate for fusion. That is, "become" signals a change to another condition or state, and "night" is the name for the period of time in which no sunlight is seen. Similar arguments would seem to make good candidates of the following:

2-C. ?At what time does the sky darken in July?

2-D. ?At what time do things blacken in July?

2-E. ?At what time does night begin in July?

2-F. ?At what time does blackness begin in July?

Instead, however, we prefer "it gets dark," despite the lack of precision that should seemingly accompany yet another use of the ubiquitous "get" and the semantically empty "it."

CRITERIA FOR FUSION

There seem, then, to be several critical factors that help determine whether or not a phrase will be fused: (1) availability

of components, (2) salience, and (3) semantic indirection. First, is the configuration of lexical items relatively free? That is, has the particular combination of items--including their number (singular or plural), person, tense, and voice--been used in some other fused phrase? If it is "free," then the phrase is a good candidate for fusion.

A second possible factor in fusion is contextual salience. When Chamberlin waved an agreement with Hitler and said that there would be "peace in our time," the phrase was fused almost as soon as it was formulated, and shortly thereafter when Germany invaded Poland, it was engraved as part of the English language.

A third factor has to do with whether or not the phrase is semantically explicit or direct. We discussed this at some length as the tenth characteristic of fusion. Now, let us say only that it seems that semantically explicit or direct expressions often make poor candidates for fusion. By "semantically explicit or direct" I mean composed of lexical items that require as little interpretation as possible for understanding of the intended message. For example, "dead" is semantically direct, whereas "no longer with us" is indirect. "To become night" is direct; "to get dark" is indirect. "To measure one's blood pressure" is direct; "to take one's blood pressure" is indirect.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 3

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					
SUPRALEX	33	:	38	:	75	:
	46.5%	:	57.6%	:	79.8%	:
ANALYTIC	15	:	16	:	4	:
	21.1%	:	24.2%	:	4.3%	:
SAME	23	:	12	:	15	:
	32.4%	:	18.2%	:	16.0%	:

3-A. Mr. Simpson shot his own head.

3-B. Mr. Simpson shot himself in the head.

We have suggested that because the use of a supralelexical unit seems so "natural," one might be inclined to look for syntactic reasons for disallowing synonymous approximations for the expressions of a specific concept which would be called up by a supralelexical unit. Item 3-B is a good example of such a unit. We maintain that there is no violated selection restriction or other syntactic reason or principle of discourse why 3-B should be preferred to 3-A. Hopefully, the following paradigm (Figure 5) will support our claim.

It is interesting that in 3-O, "Joe cut his eye," there is some uncertainty over whether the eye he cut was his own or that of another person. Yet in 3-R, "Joe cut his finger" the familiarity with the expression of this action disambiguates the reference and makes the finger Joe's. Very possibly, this familiarity serves to make "cut one's finger" a supralelexical unit or at least further along the path of

supralexicalization than "cut one's eye."

- 3-C. Joe painted his foot.
- 3-D. Joe painted his own foot.
- 3-E. Joe painted himself on the foot.

- 3-F. Joe washed his foot.
- 3-G. Joe washed his own foot.
- 3-H. Joe washed himself on the foot.

- 3-I. Joe stepped on his foot.
- 3-J. Joe stepped on his own foot.
- 3-K. Joe stepped on himself on the foot.

- 3-L. Joe injured his foot.
- 3-M. Joe injured his own foot.
- 3-N. Joe injured himself on the foot.

- 3-O. Joe cut his eye.
- 3-P. Joe cut his own eye.
- 3-Q. Joe cut himself in the eye.

- 3-R. Joe cut his finger.
- 3-S. Joe cut his own finger.
- 3-T. Joe cut himself on the finger.

- 3-U. Joe shot his foot.
- 3-V. Joe shot his own foot.
- 3-W. Joe shot himself in the foot.

- 3-X. Joe shot his head.
- 3-Y. Joe shot his own head.
- 3-Z. Joe shot himself in the head.

FIGURE 6. REFLEXIVE PARADIGM of structures similar to "SHOT HIMSELF." Generally, these appear to be equally acceptable from the perspective of syntax.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 4

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :				
SUPRALEX	36	:	36	:	65 : 25 : 48
	50.7%	:	54.5%	:	69.1% : 64.1% : 88.9%
ANALYTIC	9	:	10	:	5 : 0 : 0
	12.7%	:	15.2%	:	5.3% : 0.0% : 0.0%
SAME	26	:	20	:	24 : 14 : 6
	36.6%	:	30.3%	:	25.5% : 35.9% : 11.1%

4-A. Bob woke up at 6 a.m. but didn't get out of bed
until 7 a.m.

4-B. Bob woke up at 6 a.m. but didn't leave the bed
until 7 a.m.

4-C. ?He became angry and got away from the table immediately.

4-D. He became angry and left the table immediately.

In both 4-B and 4-D, "leave" is followed by "the" and the names of pieces of household furniture, yet 4-D seems clearly the formulation of choice, while 4-B seems just as clearly to be dispreferred. On the other hand, "get out of" (4-A) is similar to "get away from" (4-C) in that both structures use "get" followed by adverbs of "motion away," followed by the name of a piece of furniture. Yet again, one (4-A) is preferred, and the other, very probably dispreferred.

The first question for us is, is the analytical phrase (4-B) as "well formed" syntactically as the supralelexical (4-A)? The answer is clearly affirmative. Rising from a lower position is implied in both, and "left the table" is indeed preferred to "got away from the table." Accounting for these preferences without reference to added features and supralexicals would seem to be difficult if not impossible.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 5

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	28	:	20	:	48	:
	39.4%	:	30.3%	:	51.1%	:
ANALYTIC	24	:	27	:	13	:
	33.8%	:	40.9%	:	13.8%	:
SAME	19	:	19	:	33	:
	26.8%	:	28.8%	:	35.1%	:

- 5-A. Skill in hunting was passed along from father to son.
 5-B. Skill in hunting was taught by fathers to their sons.

Item 5-A contains a supralelexical unit of a somewhat literary register, one that seems quite clearly to be semantically indirect. This indirectness, however, does not seem to make "pass along" a traditional idiom for several reasons. First, "pass along" does not have a literal counterpart like "kick the bucket" does in "die". "Taught" does not involve the sequential transfer from one agent to the next as does "pass along." We can of course construct an analytic phrase with roughly the same meaning such as "to cause something to be conveyed by giving it to one agent who gives it to another agent and so on, with the intention either of having that thing reach a destination or of having it shared by the various agents." Rather than an analytic alternate, however, this seems to be a rather formal definition. Second, the semantic content of "pass" seems so close to "pass along" that it would be difficult to

construe the phrase as an idiom. It makes more sense, we are claiming, to argue that this phrase and traditional idioms in general share, in different degrees, the characteristic we have called "feature addition."

It is interesting to note that the groups I-ESL and A-ESL (see table above) gave a relatively high preference to 5-B over 5-A, whereas very few speakers of Standard English considered it such. One explanation of this would be that 5-B seems more semantically direct and explicit than 5-A. Since neither phrase had apparently undergone supralexicalization by the ESL students in question, they opted for the explicit choice.

An argument based on the principle of selection restriction might conceivably maintain that "teach" and not "pass along" is the verb of choice to refer to development of a skill, and that the construction "pass along a skill" is therefore an idiom. But if we think of a skill as "the high ability to manipulate objects purposefully," the implications of "teach" seem somehow inappropriate as they seem more related to intellectual abstractions. That is, does logic permit us to say "teach a skill"? Or would "inculcate a skill" be better? Hardly. How about "help develop a skill"? On the other hand, "learn a skill" seems to present no problem at all, although "acquire a skill" is also fine. We might suggest that both of these latter phrases seem to have undergone fusion, and that the difference between them

is one of register. "Teach a skill," on the other hand, does not seem to me to be deeply fused, creating an uneasiness in some speakers when they are asked to make an evaluation.

Logic and proper meshing of the features of lexical items no doubt play a part in stringing words together: one can sharpen a bone but not a marshmallow. Yet this meshing is certainly not the only factor involved. For example, "drill a hole" would surely be preferred to "make a hole by drilling." This is, however, a curious combination of actions and objects since a hole is an opening in, say, a block of wood: it is not the opening we drill but the wood. Would we say, then, that we are dealing with an idiom? A similar situation exists in "bake a cake." It is not the cake that we bake; it is the dough. More precisely, we cook dough to make a cake. But then no one says "cook dough." What, one might ask, does one do to dough in order to make a cake? Is one to say "bake dough," or "heat dough"?

It seems fairly clear that some sort of lexical gap is involved. There is a word--"bake"--that captures the thing that we do to dough to turn it into a cake; but there is no way to use that word with "dough" in a real sentence. Possibly, the main reason why we feel that "bake dough" is odd and unacceptable is that there is, in our lexicons, a supralexical unit "bake a cake" that has captured the idea and staked out the semantic ground. This interaction between lexical gaps and supralexical units is an interesting one,

and would seem to be deserving of close study.

Sentence 5-B was carefully constructed so as to be very close to the supralexical unit. This proximity probably explains the relatively high number of all subjects--including speakers of Standard English--choosing "same". It flows from the supralexical hypothesis, however, that in those unusual instances in which a supralexical and an analytic construction both closely approximate the needs involved, the supralexical unit will be chosen. The pattern of increasing scores as one proceeds from the ESL groups to the bilinguals to the speakers of Standard English seem to support this explanation.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 6

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	37	:	47	:	77	:	34	:	51	:
	52.1%	:	71.2%	:	81.9%	:	87.2%	:	94.4%	:
ANALYTIC	13	:	7	:	3	:	1	:	0	:
	18.3%	:	10.6%	:	3.2%	:	2.6%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	21	:	12	:	14	:	4	:	3	:
	29.6%	:	18.2%	:	14.9%	:	10.3%	:	5.6%	:

6-A. I enjoy thinking that he is an equal.

6-B. I like to think of him as an equal.

6-C. I like to think that he is an equal.

Contained in 6-B is the idea that the speaker is expressing virtually complete acceptance of "him" as an equal in some aspect of life. According to my intuition, the acceptance in 6-C is somewhat less complete than in 6-B. The difference seems to lie in the two supralelexical units involved: "like to think that (CLAUSE)" and "like to think of (NP) as (NP)". The former (6-C) seems to have as a feature "very slight indulgence in a slight misconception." In the latter (6-B), this feature is replaced by one of "virtually complete acceptance." Of course, this distinction might exist only in my idiolect.

Common to 6-B and 6-C is the feature of "estimation and evaluation": both supralelexical units in those items can carry that feature, whereas "enjoy thinking" has difficulty in handling features related to "estimation and evaluation." Item 6-A attempts to force that feature onto "enjoy thinking."

The difference in acceptability does not seem due to the "stative/dynamic" dichotomy alone: the slot in "enjoy NP" can be filled by the stative "thinking" (6-D) just as it can by the dynamic "skiing" and "teaching." But as the object of "enjoy" approaches estimation and evaluation, this structure begins to falter:

- 6-D. I enjoy thinking that one day I will be free.
- 6-E. He enjoys imagining that he is a high-ranking spy.
- 6-F. I enjoyed making an estimate of his craftsmanship.
- 6-G. ?I enjoyed estimating his craftsmanship.
- 6-H. *I enjoy considering him a good teacher.

Possibly, what keeps us from questioning 6-F while we do question 6-G is not primarily related to features of evaluation but to the presence of "making," which is normally associated more closely with dynamics and not with statives, which are in turn associated with mental activities. When we eliminate "making" in 6-G, we are in closer touch with statives of evaluation, and the prohibition of "enjoy" in such situations is felt. The reason I question 6-G and star 6-H is that the features of "estimating" seem somewhat closer to being dynamic than do the features of the stative "consider." This would imply a continuum between stative and dynamic, which I believe is the case.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 7

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	22	:	14	:	43	:	29	:	49	:
	31.0%	:	21.2%	:	45.7%	:	74.4%	:	90.7%	:
ANALYTIC	44	:	41	:	34	:	8	:	2	:
	62.0%	:	62.1%	:	36.2%	:	20.5%	:	3.7%	:
SAME	5	:	11	:	17	:	2	:	3	:
	7.0%	:	16.7%	:	18.1%	:	5.1%	:	5.6%	:

7-A. Let's run to that safe place.

7-B. Let's make a run for it.

The physical act of running is expressed in 7-A. In 7-B, the attempt to reach safety can be made by literally running or by using any other means of conveyance such as a car, motorcycle, boat, airplane or even by swimming or crawling. This generalizing of the mode of movement, however, would not seem to categorize "make a run for it" as a traditional idiom since literal running is not excluded by the phrase and since that seems to be as close to the exact sum of the lexical components as is possible. The phrase might be characterized as an "idiom-like" formulation , which--as we have seen--is true of most supralelexical units. "Make a run for it" is discussed at greater length on page 89.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 8

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	29	:	39	:	77	:	29	:	47	:
	40.8%	:	59.1%	:	81.9%	:	74.4%	:	87.0%	:
ANALYTIC	16	:	8	:	4	:	3	:	0	:
	22.5%	:	12.1%	:	4.3%	:	7.7%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	26	:	19	:	13	:	7	:	7	:
	36.6%	:	28.8%	:	13.8%	:	17.9%	:	13.0%	:

8-A. This box is heavy. Lend me a hand.

8-B. This box is heavy. Lend me your hand.

"Lend me a hand" does not seem to be a traditional idiom in that the sum of the lexical items could somewhat easily be construed as, say, "let me use the physical assistance you can offer mainly through the use of your hands." If that is true, then what is the basis for a native speaker choosing "a hand" over "your hand." Here again, we see a quite straightforward advantage to positing the supralelexical hypothesis which maintains that phrases will probably recur once they have been fused in the lexicon and regardless of the position they occupy in the continuum from literal to metaphorical.

In the process of fusion, semantic features are usually added: here, the feature added would be something like "short-term assistance in general and not limited to that in which focus is on the physical." Once this concept is linked to a specific phrase (e.g., "lend me a hand"), that phrase will generally have priority in analogous situations.

This would help explain why **"Lend me an eye"* is unacceptable, even if the speaker is a proofreader.

The objection might be made that since assistance can be given to help someone move something but normally not to help someone "see," the phrase "lend me an eye" would be ruled out by the situation and not by any property of supralexic units. In my opinion, this kind of argument is somewhat simplistic. For example, it could be held that pushing something in conjunction with another person is not participating in his performance: only he can participate in his own performance, therefore, it is inconceivable to help someone do something. This is similar to Zeno's fallacious theorem in which movement is impossible because movement involves reducing distance by smaller and smaller fractions which only get smaller and never reach zero. The implication for us seems to be that language is, to some degree, gestalt in nature, and that there is a point beyond which language cannot function as an analytic tool.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 9

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	52	:	51	:	75	:
	73.2%	:	77.3%	:	79.8%	:
ANALYTIC	4	:	4	:	2	:
	5.6%	:	6.1%	:	2.1%	:
SAME	15	:	11	:	17	:
	21.1%	:	16.7%	:	41.0%	:

9-A. You have a future with this company.

9-B. A future for you is with this company.

9-C. A future for you and your family is with this company.

9-D. The future for you and your family is with this company.

9-E. The future for you is with this company.

9-F. A future for you is with this company.

9-G. ?The future of Jane is bleak.

9-H. The future of Jane Margaret Flanahan is bleak.

9-I. The future for Jane Margaret Flanahan is bleak.

It is my observation that reading 9-C through 9-E before 9-F (which is identical to 9-B) will render 9-F considerably more acceptable than it would be if this preliminary sequence were omitted. As far as the Supralexical Task goes, this seems to be prima facie evidence that 9-B is a legitimate syntactic choice in terms of the validity of the experiment.

The fact--if it is such--that the reading in sequence increases acceptability seems to support the suggestion of Carroll et al (1981) that intuitions of acceptability can

be manipulated. In addition to that, the patterns of usage represented by all of the above items strike me as extremely complex. To fully address them, a rather extended discussion would be in order. While this is not the place for such an investigation, I would like to make the following observations.

The lexical items "a future" and "a past" but not "a present" fuse with "have" to form a supralexical set with the added semantic feature of "personal time," that is time as experienced by a particular subject and not simply as an element in the universe.

The possibility that this "personal time" is conceived of in English as something possessed is supported by the similarity of the form "have a future" to "have a car." Both "future" and "car" reject "of + PERSONAL PRONOUN": "*The future of him is bleak" and "*The car of him is black."

Substituting "for" in place of "of" results in a form that is decidedly different from "of + NP", yet capable of indicating possession (9-N):

- 9-J. That Ford is the car for Sam. (suitable for Sam)
- 9-K. *That Ford is the car for Sam. (possessive intended)
- 9-L. *That Ford is the car of Sam.
- 9-M. That Ford is Sam's car. (possessive)
- 9-N. The old Ford is for my son. The new one is for my wife and me. (possessive)

Several possibilities are suggested, one of which helps account for the discrepancy between 9-J and 9-K. The form

THE NP FOR NP
(the car for Sam)

is a supralexical unit with the added semantic feature of "suitable". Once this supralexical has been formed, it locks out the semantic feature "possessive." "Suitability" is a property of the entire supralexical and not only of "for + Sam". This is seen in 9-N, where the supralexical has been broken and the restriction lifted.

The value of this supralexical analysis is that it allows us to call upon distinctions that previously were associated with traditional idioms in their seeming arbitrariness. The high rate of preference by all subjects for 9-A (see table) tends to confirm (1) our classification of "have a future" as a supralexical unit, and (2) our prediction that supralexicals are chosen over synonymous analytic constructions that are fully syntactic. (Quite interesting but out of our purview is the role of euphony or "NP weight" which seems to make 9-G questionable but not 9-H and 9-I.)

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 10

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	17	:	27	:	49	:
	23.9%	:	40.9%	:	52.1%	:
ANALYTIC	40	:	28	:	8	:
	56.3%	:	42.4%	:	8.5%	:
SAME	14	:	11	:	37	:
	19.7%	:	16.7%	:	39.4%	:

- 10-A. Does he think that he is the President of the United States.
 10-B. Who does he think he is--the President of the United States.

As in Items 5-A and 5-B, this pair of sentences was used in the experimental task to determine if the saliency of a supralelexical unit was sufficient to make it preferable to the analytic and fully idiomatic 10-A. Reading the incrementally increasing percentages of supralelexical choices from group I-ESL through group SE (Standard English), this suggestion regarding salience seems supported. One might also note that the two groups of ESL students ranked 10-A fairly high in preference. One explanation of this is that they preferred syntactic regularity over the supralelexical unit which is lodged in a declarative sentence that is composed of a question and answer. This structure, rarely seen in written English but fairly common in colloquial conversation, did not at all serve as an effective distractor for 70 per cent of the SE group.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 11

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	10	:		14	:		44	:		27	:		39	:	
	14.1%	:		21.2%	:		46.8%	:		69.2%	:		72.2%	:	
ANALYTIC	36	:		36	:		18	:		0	:		2	:	
	50.7%	:		54.5%	:		19.1%	:		0.0%	:		3.7%	:	
SAME	25	:		16	:		32	:		12	:		13	:	
	35.2%	:		24.2%	:		34.0%	:		30.8%	:		24.1%	:	

11-A. You have the wrong idea about me.

11-B. You have a wrong idea about me.

Other than the possibility that 11-A contains a supralelexical unit ("the wrong idea"), there seems to be nothing about the syntax, structure or logic of these sentences that would make them anything but synonymous. Consider these sentences:

11-C. You have the right idea about me.

11-D. ?You have the good idea about me.

11-E. You seem to have a good idea about what we should do.

11-F. That's a bad idea.

According to my intuition, 11-C, 11-E and 11-F contain supralelexical units (underlined), whereas 11-D does not. It seems quite unlikely that a native speaker would ever formulate 11-B or 11-D. The reason seems to be that "the + wrong/right + idea" constitute a supralelexical set and as such carry a semantic feature related to "correctness of impression," whereas replacing "the" with "a" breaks the

integrity of the unit.

In sentence 11-E, the idea is not "good" in the sense of well formed or helpful to others or morally correct: one special feature carried by the supralexical unit "a good idea" is "completeness of impression." For example, "Sam has a good idea of what happens in the daily life of the President." Interestingly enough, if we replace "a" with "the," we will break the integrity of this particular unit. Although most supralexical units do not seem to be ambiguous, "a good idea" is: it can also mean "an imaginative idea."

The supralexical unit "a bad idea" (11-F) does not imply incomplete impression (e.g., *"Hal has a good idea of what goes on here, but Edgar only has a bad idea of it"). Rather, the added feature of "a bad idea" involves "unfeasibility of a suggested resolution to a problem."

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 12

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	18	:	34	:	77	:	26	:	42	:
	25.4%	:	51.5%	:	81.9%	:	66.7%	:	77.8%	:
ANALYTIC	30	:	13	:	2	:	1	:	1	:
	42.3%	:	19.7%	:	2.1%	:	2.6%	:	1.9%	:
SAME	23	:	19	:	15	:	12	:	11	:
	32.4%	:	28.8%	:	16.0%	:	30.8%	:	20.4%	:

12-A. Keep in your mind that it is very late.

12-B. Keep in mind that it is very late.

A close paraphrase of "keep in mind" is "don't forget." The semantic sum of the lexical components of the phrase in 12-A would seem even more exactly the equivalent of "don't forget" or "please remember." There is, in other words, nothing of the traditional idiom involved in either sentence, other than the absence of "your" in 12-B. This absence, which results in a certain degree of semantic indirectness, would seem to serve the purpose of marking the phrase as a supralexical unit. Ironically, it is the presence of "your" in 12-A that apparently makes it unacceptable.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 13

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	21	:	16	:	47	:	23	:	44	:
	29.6%	:	24.2%	:	50.0%	:	59.0%	:	81.5%	:
ANALYTIC	26	:	30	:	11	:	1	:	0	:
	36.6%	:	45.5%	:	11.7%	:	2.6%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	24	:	20	:	36	:	15	:	10	:
	33.8%	:	30.3%	:	38.3%	:	38.5%	:	18.5%	:

13-A. Do it, or else!

13-B. Do it, otherwise!

13-C. Do it, or else you will fail the course.

13-D. Do it, otherwise you will fail the course.

"Else" is a peculiar adjective in that it follows the word it modifies (e.g., "Is anyone else going?"), and is used only with a limited number of lexical items such as someone, anyone, where, who, what, how, and when. What seems to be the case is that, in English, "else" exists primarily as a member of one supralelexical unit or another. We might, then, consider it a "supralelexically bound morpheme" of sorts.

As a conjunctive adverb, it fuses with "or" to form a supralelexical unit that serves to introduce a negative foil for a preceding admonition: "Do X or else you will suffer." That--the notice that a negative foil is coming--seems essentially a syntactic feature that is analogous to the semantic features commonly added in fused units. This syntactic function seems to become more semantic when the foil is not specified but only implied, as in 13-A.

While "otherwise" can perform as a negative conjunct, it can also occur in a wider range of formulations: "The man is otherwise intelligent"; "I don't see how the answer can be otherwise." Unlike "or else," however, "otherwise" is not normally used to introduce an implied but unspecified consequence. According to our hypothesis, the reason for this is that "or else" is available to do that particular job.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 14

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	18	:	11	:	46	:	12	:	36	:
	25.4%	:	16.7%	:	48.9%	:	30.8%	:	66.7%	:
ANALYTIC	38	:	31	:	20	:	8	:	6	:
	53.5%	:	47.0%	:	21.3%	:	20.5%	:	11.1%	:
SAME	15	:	24	:	28	:	19	:	12	:
	21.1%	:	36.4%	:	29.8%	:	48.7%	:	22.2%	:

14-A. Don't give it a thought.

14-B. Don't give it any thoughts.

Central to this knotty nucleus of acceptability and unacceptability seems to be that "thought" can be construed and treated both as a countable and an uncountable noun. It is quite conceivable that syntactic rules would govern in the matter of which should be used and under what conditions. For example, the countable form seems to be used in verb constructions that are negative, as in 14-A. However, 14-C through 14-E seem questionable.

14-C. ?I didn't give it a thought.

14-D. ?I don't have a thought about that.

14-E. ?I won't give that matter a thought.

We might propose that only negative, second person expressions use the countable. This rule would apply to 14-A. However, 14-F seems to be a counterexample.

14-F. ?Don't have a thought about that.

We might consider the possibility that "give" controls this structure and excludes "have". However, 14-G is a counterexample.

14-G. Do you have any thoughts on that matter?

We might suggest that a stative/dynamic distinction is relevant: i.e. "have thoughts" is stative, and "give thought" is dynamic. Another counterexample presents itself in 14-H, where "had some second thoughts" seems to mean something like "mentally processed some additional factors and arrived at a different conclusion."

14-H. I have had some second thoughts about that.

If we had space, we could possibly go on to construct an intricate set of syntactic rules that would provide the necessary constraints for the preceding and following examples:

14-I. ?Please give it a thought.

14-J. Please give it some thought.

14-K. ?I won't give it a thought.

14-L. ?Don't have a thought about it.

However, two considerations seem relevant. First, I

am possibly missing a generalization that would efficiently govern 14-A through 14-L. If I am not, would the required set of highly specific constraints be within the spirit of legitimate syntax which is supposed to apply systematically? I think not. Second, would such constraints lead to our missing coherent observations about possible supralexical units such as "have second thoughts about X" and "Don't give it a thought"? I think it would. I will make one more closing point about the following exchange:

14-M. SAM: Don't give it a thought.

14-N. JOE: Okay, I won't.

14-O. JOE: ?Okay, I won't give it a thought.

14-P. JOE: ?Okay, I won't give it any thoughts.

Is Joe's concurring response to Sam limited to the reduction in 14-N? I think that it is. Item 14-M (identical to 14-A) seems to involve a supralexical unit which will not undergo the transformation necessary to a concurring full expression in the negative (14-O, 14-P). We have pointed out that resistance to transformations is one of the basic characteristics of fused units, and this seems to be a case in point.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 15

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	48	:	61	:	88	:	31	:	49	:
	67.6%	:	92.4%	:	93.6%	:	79.5%	:	90.7%	:
ANALYTIC	6	:	0	:	2	:	0	:	0	:
	8.5%	:	0.0%	:	2.1%	:	0.0%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	17	:	5	:	4	:	8	:	5	:
	23.9%	:	7.6%	:	4.3	:	20.5%	:	9.3%	:

15-A. Your weight became less during the summer.

15-B. You lost some weight during the summer.

Item 15-A seems considerably more explicit and semantically direct than 15-B, which employs the lexical item "lost." One implication of "lose" is a regrettable inability to locate an object or a more abstract entity such as one's train of thought. While for a very thin person, to "lose weight" can be regrettable, the dominant implication here is the opposite of regrettable. Since "lose weight" seems to be a figurative expression, one might suppose that the figure would coincide with the attitude toward the incident. Yet "lose weight" seems usually very positive, at least in our society.

A second implication of "lose" is more relevant: "to cease having," as in "lose the Presidency" and "lose one's looks." This sense would seem to rule out the classification of "lose weight" as an idiom. Although there is some degree of semantic indirectness involved, it can hardly be said

that the sum of "lose" plus "weight" results in a "semantic interpretation [that] is not a compositional function of the formatives of which [the phrase] is composed" (Fraser). Several seemingly good candidates for this idea of becoming thinner come to mind:

15-C. You became thinner during the summer.

15-D. You have become more shapely during the summer.

15-E. The shape of your physical form improved during the summer.

However, no matter how seemingly good these candidates (as well as 15-A) are, they are pre-empted by "lose some weight" because this is the phrase that has become supralexically linked to the specific concept "come to be thinner and therefore to weigh less." Accordingly, they will be inappropriate or clumsy or even confusing, no matter how precise and syntactic they seem.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 16

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	57	:	59	:	83	:	32	:	50	:
	80.3%	:	89.4%	:	88.3%	:	82.1%	:	92.6%	:
ANALYTIC	7	:	1	:	1	:	2	:	1	:
	9.9%	:	1.5%	:	1.1%	:	5.1%	:	1.9%	:
SAME	7	:	6	:	10	:	5	:	3	:
	9.9%	:	9.1%	:	10.6%	:	12.8%	:	5.6%	:

16-A. The baby sleeps most of the time.

16-B. The baby sleeps during most hours.

"Most of the time (or unit of time)" is a supralelexical set commonly accepting the following as the variable unit: "hour," "morning," "afternoon," "evening," "night," "week," "month," and "year." Despite the definite article "the," the various periods of time are not specified as to which night, month, etc. is involved. The construction "during most hours" is analytical and seemingly synonymous with "most of the time." However, it is my intuition that the latter phrase is supralelexical, by virtue of which it seems more idiomatic. This intuition seems to be supported by the fact that a very high percentage of all Task subjects made this choice.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 17

	INT.ESL		ADV.ESL		BILING:		BLACK		STANDARD	
SUPRALEX	32	:	34	:	53	:	18	:	40	:
	45.1%	:	51.5%	:	56.4%	:	46.7%	:	74.1%	:
ANALYTIC	12	:	10	:	8	:	0	:	1	:
	16.9%	:	15.2%	:	8.5%	:	0.0%	:	1.9%	:
SAME	27	:	22	:	33	:	21	:	13	:
	38.0%	:	33.3%	:	35.1%	:	53.8%	:	24.1%	:

17-A. The accident wasn't caused by me.

17-B. The accident wasn't my fault.

The main difference between these sentences seems to be that 17-B is more salient due to the presence of the supralelexical unit "to be one's fault." As an individual lexical item, "fault" is interesting in the number of divergent semantic features it seems to encapsulate: (1) guilt due to (2) failed responsibility (3) to do or not do something (4) resulting in (5) an undesirable outcome.

This complexity of encapsulation is not reflected in the apparent ease with which the phrase apparently becomes supralelexicalized at a fairly early stage of second language acquisition. Some 45 per cent of Intermediate ESL students and 51 per cent of the Advanced ESL group preferred 17-B, while 74 per cent of SE speakers made that choice. The phrase "wasn't my fault" would seem to be of a very high frequency, occurring in situations of fairly intense personal involvement: these qualities--high frequency and intensity of exposure--would seem closely related to supralelexicalization.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 18

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	20	:	18	:	47	:	25	:	37	:
	28.2%	:	27.3%	:	50.0%	:	64.1%	:	68.5%	:
ANALYTIC	34	:	34	:	25	:	5	:	2	:
	47.9%	:	51.5%	:	26.6%	:	12.8%	:	3.7%	:
SAME	17	:	14	:	22	:	9	:	15	:
	23.9%	:	21.2%	:	23.4%	:	23.1%	:	27.8%	:

18-A. Tom was so surprised by the news that he couldn't produce any words.

18-B. Tom was so surprised by the news that he was at a loss for words.

Item 18-A seems explicit and semantically direct. At first glance, the phrase in 18-B seems to approach the status of traditional idiom. However, this impression is probably due to the somewhat unusual syntax and not to the semantic content of the lexical items as strung in the phrase. The phrase "at a loss" implies "absence" which, combined with "for words" would seem to rule out classification as a traditional idiom for the underlined phrase in 18-B.

There would seem to be no question that 18-A is a well formed sentence. The preference, however, of 68 per cent of the SE group would support classification of "be at a loss for words" as a supralexical unit. It is interesting to note that an unusually large number of ESL students opted for the analytic "couldn't produce any words," probably because the syntax is more regular and the semantic content

more direct--and of course because they had not internalized "at a loss for words" as a supralexical unit.

It is also interesting to consider very briefly another aspect of the preposition and the article in "at a loss." The phrase "at a time" is used in expressions of sequence and occasion:

18-C. The students entered one at a time. (SEQUENCE)

18-D. Don't bother me at a time like this. (OCCASION)

In both of these constructions, "at a time" seems part of a recursively formed supralexical unit. This would suggest that some specified prepositions, sometimes followed by specified articles, occur with a slot to be filled by semantically related lexical items. This would result in a supralexical set that is appropriate in delineated situations.

EXAMPLES:

18-E. by + the + dozen/pound/bushel/ounce (SELLING UNITS)

18-F. by + a + nose/neck (HORSERACING)

18-G. one by one
two by two (SIZE OF SEQUENTIAL UNITS)
three by three

18-H. one by one
one by three (SIZE OF PIECES OF LUMBER)
two by four

If the phrases pointed out in 18-C through 18-H are

indeed supralexical units and sets, then this structural unit might play an interesting role in the nature of prepositions. I suspect that in many phrases, prepositions are generated independently but in relation to the particular NP that follows them.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 19

	INT.ESL		ADV.ESL		BILING:		BLACK		STANDARD	
SUPRALEX	51	:	50	:	82	:	29	:	47	:
	71.8%	:	75.8%	:	87.2%	:	74.4%	:	87.0%	:
ANALYTIC	5	:	2	:	2	:	1	:	0	:
	7.0%	:	3.0%	:	2.1%	:	2.6%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	15	:	14	:	10	:	9	:	7	:
	21.1%	:	21.2%	:	10.6%	:	23.1%	:	13.0%	:

When will Mary be home?

19-A. I'm not sure. She's working extra tonight.

19-B. I'm not sure. She's working late tonight.

Analytically, "extra" is properly used in 19-A in the sense of "more than usual," and would seem to be more explicit than "working late." That logic, however, apparently did not have much effect on subjects in all groups, even the Intermediate ESL students, 72 per cent of whom chose "working late" over "working extra." The high frequency and the personal relevance of the former probably accounts for this.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 20

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	34	:	46	:	79	:	33	:	54	:
	47.9%	:	69.7%	:	84.0%	:	84.6%	:	100.0%	:
ANALYTIC	22	:	11	:	6	:	0	:	0	:
	31.0%	:	16.7%	:	6.4%	:	0.0%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	15	:	9	:	9	:	6	:	0	:
	21.1%	:	13.6%	:	9.6%	:	15.4%	:	0.0%	:

Why did you hide the present that you bought for Mary?

20-A. Because I want it to be a surprise.

20-B. Because I want it to give a surprise.

20-C. The shadow of that tree gave me quite a start.

20-D. It gives me pleasure to present President Bush.

20-E. His long speech gave me a headache.

20-F. These tight shoes are causing me a lot of discomfort.

Analytically, there seems no reason why "surprise" cannot be given, "pleasure" cannot be caused, and "pain" cannot be brought about. Surprise has no features or parameters that do not fit the specifications of "give," yet "give" does not collocate with "surprise". On the other hand, we have talked extensively about this sort of exclusion in this paper and propose that "be a surprise" is simply another supralexical unit.

For reasons that I do not fully understand, the insertion of words between "give" and "surprise" in English seem to render the construction less objectionable (20-G, 20-H)). Possibly, this is caused by the simple presence of lexical mass (a heavy noun phrase) which blocks or attenuates the

mental alarm set off by the mismatch.

Frazier and Fodor (1978) suggest that units consisting of approximately seven words each are taken up at one time for processing. Perhaps that theory is relevant, for if the number of words between "give" and "surprise" is approximately less than that, I, at least, am bothered (20-I). If the number is more, the uneasiness decreases noticeably (20-G, 20-H).

20-G. ?The presents gave her and all of her friends a great big surprise.

20-H. ?The gift gave my old friend who had been travelling a special surprise.

20-I. *The presents gave her and her friends a surprise.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 21

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	9	:		3	:		32	:		19	:		31	:	
	12.7%	:		4.5%	:		34.0%	:		48.7%	:		57.4%	:	
ANALYTIC	48	:		54	:		36	:		6	:		1	:	
	67.6%	:		81.8%	:		38.3%	:		15.4%	:		1.9%	:	
SAME	14	:		9	:		26	:		14	:		22	:	
	19.7%	:		13.6%	:		27.7%	:		35.9%	:		40.7%	:	

21-A. She is having a happy life in Spain.

21-B. She is leading a happy life in Spain.

If the sentence is making reference to the quality of ongoing life, the collocation of choice is "leading a ADJ life".

21-C. They were leading miserable lives in Spain.

21-D. ?They were having miserable lives in Spain.

21-E. She will be leading a glorious life in Spain.

If the reference is to a completed life or residence, "have" becomes acceptable, possibly because the structure becomes analytical because of the absence of the feature "ongoingness".

21-F. They had a good life in Spain.

If "led" is used with "good life," the article of preference seems to be "the". "The good life" seems to be a supralelexical unit, (21-G) whereas "a happy life" seems to be more analytical.

- 21-G. They led the good life in Spain.
21-H. ?They had the good life in Spain.
21-I. ?They led the happy life in Spain.

It will be noted that ESL students were quite definite in their choice of the analytic phrase over the supralexicale, whereas virtually no SE speakers chose the analytic construction. It will also be noted, however, that only 57 per cent of the SE group went for the supralexicale: approximately 41 per cent indicated that they saw no significant difference. Possibly, the ESL choice was motivated by analogous phrases that are supralexicale in their first language, and by a lack of familiarity with this item, which is probably low in frequency. Possibly, this last explanation also applies to the SE group.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 22

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	35	:	42	:	74	:	35	:	48	:
	49.3%	:	63.6%	:	78.7%	:	89.7%	:	88.9%	:
ANALYTIC	3	:	5	:	2	:	0	:	1	:
	4.2%	:	7.6%	:	2.1%	:	0.0%	:	1.9%	:
SAME	33	:	19	:	18	:	4	:	5	:
	46.5%	:	28.8%	:	19.1%	:	10.3%	:	9.3%	:

22-A. I slept well. I didn't get any bad dreams.

22-B. I slept well. I didn't have any bad dreams.

22-C. Did you get any good ideas when you were in Paris?

22-D. Do you have any good ideas about how to get out of this?

Analytically, there seems to be no reason why "get" should not be used with "dream." In 22-C and 22-D, we see that both "get" and "have" are used with "idea," which seems semantically close to "dream." A high percentage of all subjects chose 22-B, including ESL students. The probably high frequency of the supralelexical unit and its relevance to personal life suggest themselves as important factors with that group.

Whereas the target phrase in neither 22-C nor 22-D seem to be supralelexical units, the one in 22-B might be so classified. In such a case, the supralelexical hypothesis seems to account for the lack of idiomaticity in 22-A. That is, because 22-B has been supralelexically linked to the concept "experience an unpleasant dream," 22-A is dispreferred in the expression of that concept. Incidentally, 22-B seems

to be an example of what we called "First Order Fusion" (p. 106) in that, while "to have bad dreams" is supralexicalized, it adds no semantic features.

A few additional comments seem not out of place. The difference between "get" and "have" in constructions like the above seems to be that "get" emphasizes contracting in the sense of "start to have," while "have" refers to the experiencing of a condition without emphasizing the beginning or end of that experience. There is, then, potential contrast between these two lexical items. I suggest, however, that this potential contrast is often irrelevant and unrealized in actual formulations. In this regard, consider the following.

22-E. Did you get any new ideas about teaching? If you did, tell me about them.

22-F. Do you have any new ideas about teaching? If you do, tell me about them.

23-G. ?Did you have any new ideas about teaching? If so, tell me about them.

One difference between 22-E and 22-F is that "get" is usually formulated in the past tense, and "have" in the present. These variations accomodate the verbs "have" and "get," but do not reflect any substantial semantic contrast, in which case the difference seems only formal. The present argument is that if the ideas are new, they must have been recently acquired, and the speaker is apparently concerned

not with the inception of the ideas but whether or not they are now in the mind of his interlocutor. So that 22-E and 22-F are essentially synonymous, as are 22-A and 22-B. The difference between these latter items is, of course, that 22-B is fused. Item 22-G seems unacceptable because it attempts to combine "did you get" with "do you have".

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 23

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	55	:	56	:	83	:	34	:	52	:
	77.5%	:	84.8%	:	88.3%	:	87.2%	:	96.3%	:
ANALYTIC	5	:	3	:	4	:	1	:	0	:
	7.0%	:	4.5%	:	4.3%	:	2.6%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	11	:	7	:	7	:	4	:	2	:
	15.5%	:	10.6%	:	7.4%	:	10.3%	:	3.7%	:

23-A. The students on the picnic took photographs of the lake.

23-B. The students on the picnic made photographs of the lake.

It is rather speculative but somewhat interesting to consider that part of the multitude and complexity of supralelexical units in English might be due to some propensity in that language to form expressions using isolating morphological units. This would be counter to the basically agglutinative nature of English. Supporting that observation is the productiveness of words like "took," "get," "give," "run," "go," and "fix." There seems to be some parallel between such monomorphemic lexemes and traditional bound morphemes. For example, it would seem that the supralelexical unit "take a photograph (picture)" might otherwise just as easily have taken or evolved into the shape of "photoize," "photogrize," or even the longish "photographize".

Supralelexical units also tend to behave like lexical items in the evolution of different senses out of what would seem to have been synonyms. Once "take" was used with

"photograph" to indicate the action of snapping the shutter of a camera, "make" was free to develop a different meaning, which it seems to have done. "Make a photograph," while still not supralexicalized, seems to refer to the process of not only snapping the shutter, but also developing the film and printing the image on paper.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 24

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	43	:		46	:		62	:		22	:		37	:	
	60.6%	:		69.7%	:		66.0%	:		56.4%	:		68.5%	:	
ANALYTIC	9	:		3	:		4	:		1	:		2	:	
	12.7%	:		4.5%	:		4.3%	:		2.6%	:		3.7%	:	
SAME	19	:		17	:		28	:		16	:		15	:	
	26.8%	:		25.8%	:		29.8%	:		41.0%	:		27.8%	:	

24-A. Each of the two artists painted a picture of the other.

24-B. The two artists painted pictures of each other.

The construction "of each other" involves a reciprocal action that has as the agent and patient both members of a pair. If three or more subjects are involved, "one another" becomes the construction of choice. Partly because of these complexities, I thought that this item would be the most difficult in the Supralexical Task. I included it because I thought it would help distinguish between native speakers of standard and black English on the one hand, and bilinguals on the other. I also thought that ESL students would generally be unable to distinguish between 24-A and 24-B and would respond with "S" for same. The surprisingly clear preference of these students for the sentence with "of each other" indicates that this supralexical unit is probably internalized early in language acquisition.

WHORF REVISITED

One effect of supralexical units like "of each other" is the elimination of that part of the need to be specific that is structurally induced. For example, in 24-A, the distinction between "painted a (one) picture" and "painted pictures" (more than one) must be made. In 24-B, there is no such need, despite the fact that the number of pictures painted by each artist is not indicated. This is similar to the situation involved in the question "Is John at home?" The supralexical unit "at home" does not distinguish between "in his house" and "in his yard"

The important point for us to note is the relationship between the felt need for information and the structure of linguistic formulations. Different structures of information result in different assumptions of what is and what is not necessary in a well-formed sentence, and by extension, a coherent thought. Generally, this seems to be in accord with observations made by Whorf.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 25

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	43	:	47	:	61	:
	60.6%	:	71.2%	:	64.9%	:
ANALYTIC	7	:	6	:	2	:
	9.9%	:	9.1%	:	2.1%	:
SAME	21	:	13	:	31	:
	29.6%	:	19.7%	:	33.0%	:

25-A. The more I think of it, the less I like it.

25-B. The more I give it thought, the less I like it.

In this item, the "balanced comparative" form is used in both sentences, and the variable "think of it" is well formed in all respects and can occur alone. The construction "give it thought" seems equally acceptable syntactically. However, it is itself a supralexical unit with the added feature "consider carefully," which distinguishes it from the phrase "think of it." There seems clearly one more element involved. When the phrase was supralexicalized, it apparently contained an adjective before "thought," and this adjectival element is required whenever the phrase is used. That is, the phrase without "some" (or a similar modification like "a lot of" or "a little") is objectionable.

Although the presence of "some" would make the phrase supralexically acceptable in itself, consider 25-E:

25-E. The more I **give it some thought**, the less I like it.

The trouble here seems to be that we are trying to fit "Give it some thought" recursively into an already existing supralexical structure--the balanced comparative--that is structurally specified. That specification does not call for "give it some thought" but rather "think of it." It will not accept the former.

The presence of "a" in "*the more I give it a thought" would probably tend to call up the supralexical unit "Don't give it a thought," which is different from the unit discussed above, "Give it some thought." This last point indicates two things: First, that native speakers have a formidable sensitivity to very small variations in supralexical units. Second, that the extent of this sensitivity and the enormous number of supralexical units are evidence that fusion is fundamental in language, probably equal in importance to syntax.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 26

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	33	:	40	:	46	:
	46.5%	:	60.6%	:	48.9%	:
ANALYTIC	12	:	8	:	12	:
	16.9%	:	12.1%	:	12.8%	:
SAME	26	:	18	:	36	:
	36.6%	:	27.3%	:	56.4%	:

26-A. He is drunk more often than not.

26-B. He is drunk more times than not.

The objection might be raised that "often" encapsulates the notion of "times" or "instances" plus the notion of "during an extended period. Item 26-B does not seem to bring out that feature of "extended period." I maintain that this objection does not invalidate the task decision regarding this pair of sentences for several reasons, one of which we will consider.

"Time" has a recognized sense of "any one of a series of moments at which the same or nearly the same thing recurs; repeated occasion [told for the fifth time, time and time again]" (WNWD, 1400-1401). Item 26-C is an example of this usage:

26-C. This is the second time I've visited New York City.

In this case, "time" occurs with an enumerating adjective

("second") to form a supralexical unit of its own. "More" can be substituted for an enumerating adjective without breaking the integrity of this supralexical:

26-D. He has struck out **more times** than anyone else on the team.

There seems then no syntactic or logical reason why "more times" could not have combined with "than not" to form the supralexical "more times than not." However, it so happens that this possibility has not occurred, probably because "more often than not" had already established dominance through linkage to the underlying specific concept.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 27

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	34	:	39	:	59	:
	47.9%	:	59.1%	:	62.8%	:
ANALYTIC	17	:	6	:	7	:
	23.9%	:	9.1%	:	7.4%	:
SAME	20	:	21	:	28	:
	28.2%	:	31.8%	:	29.8%	:

27-A. She worked her best every day, but she still lost the job.

27-B. She did her best every day, but she still lost the job.

In the above pair, the pro-form "do", despite its lack of apparent reference, seems clearly to be preferred to the far more specific "worked." The dependence of this supralelexical unit on context in no apparent way reflects what might seem to be an impaired semantic content. It seems more likely that some delay in processing would result from the actual use of the word "worked" as in 27-A.

27-C. She did her homework.

27-D. She ?(wrote/studied/memorized/learned) her homework.

27-E. He did the dishes.

27-F. He washed the dishes.

27-G. ?He cleaned the dishes.

In 27-C and 27-D, we have a situation exactly like that in 27-A and 27-B. According to my intuition, "do" is preferable to any of the specific alternates in 27-D. It

is interesting that in 27-E and 27-F, both forms are current in English spoken by natives and apparently are supralexical units. The cause of this is possibly that "did" came into usage here as an alternative fairly recently. Perhaps in the future, "do" will be considered as the verb of choice with "dishes" and "wash" will join dispreferred specific verbs such as "clean" with "dishes," "write" with "homework" and "worked" with "best."

An interesting variation of the above is present in the following:

- 27-H. The butler did it.
- 27-I. ?The butler did the murder.
- 27-J. The butler committed the murder.
- 27-K. The butler did the job.

In 27-H, "did" is acceptable if the action done--murder--is not specified at surface level. However, compare 27-K, where the action is specified. Again, we see that acceptability does not depend on syntax alone but must include considerations of supralexicality.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 28

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	59	:		63	:		85	:		21	:		43	:	
	83.1%	:		95.5%	:		90.4%	:		53.8%	:		79.6%	:	
ANALYTIC	3	:		2	:		2	:		3	:		2	:	
	4.2%	:		3.0%	:		2.1%	:		7.7%	:		3.7%	:	
SAME	9	:		1	:		7	:		15	:		9	:	
	12.7%	:		1.5%	:		7.4%	:		38.5%	:		16.7%	:	

How did you get here?

28-A. I took a taxi.

28-B. I rode in a taxi.

Although item 28-B would seem to be less ambiguous and more semantically direct and explicit, the preferred form—according to my intuition—is 28-A. In a remarkable response by ESL subjects as well as bilinguals, their choices met my predictions in percentages (83%, 95%, 90%) that substantially exceeded that of the SE group (79%). A two-part explanation seems relevant. The very high frequency with which ESL students hear "take a taxi" and the seemingly great relevance to their everyday life probably combined to result in nearly unanimous preference for this supralelexical unit over its analytic mate.

A number of SE speakers, on the other hand, were possibly reacting to the syntactic and general idiomatic plausibility of "rode in a taxi" in their judgment that there is little or no difference between the phrases.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 29

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	30	:	38	:	87	:	28	:	51	:
	42.3%	:	57.6%	:	92.6%	:	71.8%	:	94.4%	:
ANALYTIC	25	:	12	:	2	:	1	:	0	:
	35.2%	:	18.2%	:	2.1%	:	2.6%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	16	:	16	:	5	:	10	:	3	:
	22.5%	:	24.2%	:	5.3%	:	25.6%	:	5.6%	:

When will you tell me about your accident?

29-A. I'll get to that in a minute.

29-B. I'll go to that in a minute.

The acceptability of a sentence like "Let's go to the next item on the agenda" would seem to establish that "go" like "get" can be used to signify not only a change in topics but a progression in a pre-arranged sequence. However, "get to that" and "go to that" do not seem to be interchangeable.

It is possible that "get to that" seems preferable to "go to that" for two reasons. First, "get to that" here seems to indicate a negative response to a request for a topic change that Interlocutor "A" wants to make. Interlocutor "B" indicates that such a change is forthcoming, but that a slight delay will, with justification, occur before the change. A slightly broader set of semantic features seems bound to the supralelexical unit "get to that." For example, "get to that" need not occur as a response to interlocutor request, but as a more general comment occasioned by some

factor that threatens to tend to change an agenda. The phrase "go to that" does not seem to be a supralexical unit and does not carry the preceding features. These observations seem to be supported by very high percentage of SE and bilingual speakers choosing the supralexical "get to that."

29-C. Get to that point.

29-D. Get to the point.

With the presence of "the" (29-D) instead of "that" (29-C) before "point," a related but different supralexical unit is formed. The variable in "get to that point/issue/topic/matter/business, etc." disappears, and "the point" becomes fixed. The semantic features added in "get to the point" are "begin discussing the issue and quit talking about related matters" plus "impatience or irritation on the part of the speaker."

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 30

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	37	:	40	:	61	:	21	:	34	:
	52.1%	:	60.6%	:	64.9%	:	53.8%	:	63.0%	:
ANALYTIC	9	:	6	:	2	:	1	:	1	:
	12.7%	:	9.1%	:	2.1%	:	2.6%	:	1.9%	:
SAME	25	:	20	:	31	:	17	:	19	:
	35.2%	:	30.3%	:	33.0%	:	43.6%	:	35.2%	:

Where was Henry last night?

30-A. In his hotel room. He had a pain in the stomach.

30-B. In his hotel room. He had a stomach ache.

One can "have a stomach ache" or "have a headache," but one cannot--or does not--express a pain in the chest, leg, neck, eye or foot as a "chest ache / leg ache / neck ache / eye ache / foot ache." A "heartache" is not a pain in the heart, nor is a "pain in the neck" a "neckache." Since "stomach ache" captures a cramp in the stomach, a "pain in the stomach" would likely be interpreted as the expression of a non-native speaker of English or as some unusual, possibly severe pain in the torso that is somehow different from a "stomach ache."

This intricate pattern is partially accounted for by the notion that because they are frequently used to denote a common occurrence, "stomach ache" and "headache" have entered into supralelexical union.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 31

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	35	:		35	:		58	:		26	:		39	:	
	49.3%	:		53.0%	:		61.7%	:		66.7%	:		72.2%	:	
ANALYTIC	14	:		11	:		11	:		2	:		1	:	
	19.7%	:		16.7%	:		11.7%	:		5.1%	:		1.9%	:	
SAME	22	:		20	:		25	:		11	:		14	:	
	31.0%	:		30.3%	:		26.6%	:		28.2%	:		25.9%	:	

How is the chair I fixed?

31-A. Not too good. That repair failed after a short period.

31-B. Not too good. Your work didn't hold up very long

31-C. ?Very good. Your work has held up very long.

31-D. Very good. Your work has held up.

Item 31-A seems syntactically regular and semantically explicit. Item 31-B, however, contains the supralelexical unit and was predicted to be the preferred sentence.

It is my intuition that "held up" and "very long" are two separate supralelexical units that themselves become restructured with the addition of the negative "didn't" (or "has not") to form a new supralelexical unit. We call attention to 31-C, which deletes the negative and thereby seems to break the integrity of the unit found in 31-B. Closer examination indicates, however, that "very long" is the troubling member of "*has held up very long." In the absence of "very long" (31-D), the supralelexical "has held up" seems

acceptable. It appears that we have here a supralexical set in which the variables are "POSITIVE/NEGATIVE AUXILIARY + hold up." The negative accepts "very long" as a final element; the affirmative does not.

Unless we are willing to classify two-word verbs like "put on" and "take out" in generally the same category as constructions like "kick the bucket," we cannot really call "hold up" an idiom. Two observations are relevant. First, the sum of the individual lexical items seems very close to the meaning of the phrase as a whole: one sense of "hold" is to "remain unbroken" (WNWD, p. 643). Second, "holds up" seems to be the most precise expression in English of a condition in which a repair does not fail. In other words, there is a lexical gap that is filled by this supralexical unit. Perhaps a more accurate way of expressing this is to say that there is no lexical gap--the meaning is simply to be found in a supralexical unit instead of a single lexical item.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 32

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	49	:		62	:		84	:		29	:		48	:	
	69.0%	:		93.9%	:		89.4%	:		74.4%	:		88.9%	:	
ANALYTIC	5	:		2	:		2	:		3	:		0	:	
	7.0%	:		3.0%	:		2.1%	:		7.7%	:		0.0%	:	
SAME	17	:		2	:		8	:		7	:		6	:	
	23.9%	:		3.0%	:		8.5%	:		17.9%	:		11.1%	:	

32-A. John started sleeping at 10 p.m. last night.

32-B. John went to sleep at 10 p.m. last night.

We have already discussed this pair in some detail. Here we will summarize that discussion by noting that analytically, "started sleeping" seems to be synonymous with "went to sleep." The latter structure, however, was designated as the preferred expression for the concept "begin to sleep" in our supralelexical task. The performance of subjects in all groups indicates their general agreement with this analysis.

Unless we restrict "go" to signify physical movement, we cannot classify "go to sleep" as a traditional idiom. If we insist on doing that, we will have a quite transparent idiom functioning as the formulation of choice in the absence of an acceptable analytical equivalent. It is doubtful how long—even in traditional terms--the classification of idiom would make any sense under these conditions.

An equally dubious alternative is to insist that "start sleeping" is an acceptable but rarely-used equivalent. The

danger here is with slipping into fairly gross error for the sake of maintaining an idealized generality that is not in keeping with the parameters of usage. "Start sleeping" can be used, but it will not convey the semantic features of "go to sleep," which include "begin to sleep under normal conditions and without the use of strong drugs or alcohol." In situations where these features are not desired, as for example in laboratory studies of insomnia, "start sleeping" would probably be, therefore, a phrase of choice.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 33

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	22	:	19	:	37	:
	31.0%	:	28.8%	:	39.4%	:
ANALYTIC	19	:	15	:	18	:
	26.8%	:	22.7%	:	19.1%	:
SAME	30	:	32	:	39	:
	42.3%	:	48.5%	:	41.5%	:

33-A. Tom lost his way and was about two hours late.

33-B. Tom lost his direction and was about two hours late.

The supralelexical hypothesis maintains that there is a close relationship between fused lexical items and bound morphemes in that it is the whole unit that (1) limits the canonical frame in which the part exists in abstraction, and (2) facilitates interpretation in generated speech. "Way" seems quite dependent on specific lexical and supralelexical environments to constrain its semantic canon in order to yield functional signification. "Direction," on the other hand, seems to be more semantically independent than "way."

"Lost his direction" would appear to be more direct and explicit than "lost his way." Based on the strong tendency of supralelexical units to incorporate the less explicit lexical item, we might predict that "lost his way" would become supralelexicalized more readily than "lost his direction." (The phrase "lost his directions" seems to refer to written materials.)

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 34

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	32	:	43	:	60	:	22	:	36	:
	45.1%	:	65.2%	:	63.8%	:	56.4%	:	66.7%	:
ANALYTIC	10	:	5	:	8	:	4	:	4	:
	14.1%	:	7.6%	:	8.5%	:	10.3%	:	7.4%	:
SAME	29	:	18	:	26	:	13	:	14	:
	40.8%	:	27.3%	:	27.7%	:	33.3%	:	25.9%	:

What did John do after he found the nail in his tire?

34-A. He repaired the hole and went to New York City.

34-B. He fixed the flat and went to New York City.

We have suggested that the functional semantic content of lexical items is achieved partly by virtue of context and of the existential act of communicating. Often that content seems to be present only to the point where it is sufficient to trigger the specific concept that is encapsulated in a particular lexical or supralexical item. To attempt lexical analysis beyond this point seems counterproductive.

Items 34-A and 34-B are both cases in point. To "repair" something is to restore it to a condition preceding deterioration or damage. In this sense, it is not the hole that is repaired but the tire, assuming that it is of the tubeless variety. However, if we were to reject formulations for such inaccuracies, we would have to address the problem

that the repair is to the inner seal, not to the outer site of the puncture, which often does not need attending to. Would we, for reasons of logical accuracy, have to specify this? If we were to operate on this principle of required dis-encapsulation or deconstruction, discourse would become impossibly dilated and never terminated.

This limitation on specificity also applies to "fix a flat." "A flat" seems to refer to more than a puncture in a tire. The phrase "fix a flat" brings up the whole schema of jacking up the car, removing the lug nuts, replacing the punctured tire with a spare, using a tire iron to tighten the nuts, and usually banging the hub cap back into place. This schema constitutes an unusually elaborate example of an encapsulation of a specific concept, but the linguistic operation is typical.

In short, to "fix a flat" would seem to mean something like "restoring the flat to the condition before damage." This is confusing since "flat" seems to be the name of the overall difficulty involving a punctured tire.

If this kind of reasoning were to apply, then both 34-A and 34-B would be equally unlikely, which is not the case. In fact, most people say "fix a flat" and not "repair a hole." The reason they do is not because "repair a hole" is not logical or because that latter phrase refers to only the tire, but because "fix a flat" accesses the necessary concept.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 35

	INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD :					:
SUPRALEX	43	:	44	:	76	:
	60.6%	:	66.7%	:	80.9%	:
ANALYTIC	16	:	11	:	2	:
	22.5%	:	16.7%	:	2.1%	:
SAME	12	:	11	:	16	:
	16.9%	:	16.7%	:	17.0%	:

Where's Bill?

35-A. At the lake. He's gone fishing.

35-B. At the lake. He's gone to fish.

We have suggested that "go + VERB + -ing" is a supralelexical set with the added feature "activity pursued in leisure." The supralelexical construction "go fishing" has that feature and includes the notion of purpose expressed by the infinitive in 35-B.

Item 35 intentionally presented virtually no context in an attempt to have the subjects' responses motivated mostly if not entirely by saliency, which is one characteristic of supralelexical units. Both 35-A and 35-B are idiomatic. According to nominalization transformation analysis, these two sentences are synonymous: "to fish" is transformed to "fishing." Supralelexical notions concerning added features, however, enable us to differentiate the two: one implies "leisure"; one does not.

The presence of such differentiation does not invalidate

the item in terms of the Task, which generally requires choices between sentences that seem to be near approximations of one another. One of the central points in this paper is that there is, between supralexicals and analytic phrases, a fundamental, meaningful difference and not simply a matter of whimsical intuitions of salience or what Levin calls preference based on psychology.

Another way of expressing this is to say that salience often seems to be a term used to refer to undiscovered principles. Possibly, the supralexical hypothesis would help account for classifying one structure salient and another non-salient.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 36

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	54	:		57	:		85	:		30	:		50	:	
	76.1%	:		86.4%	:		90.4%	:		70.9%	:		92.6%	:	
ANALYTIC	4	:		2	:		3	:		2	:		0	:	
	5.6%	:		3.0%	:		3.2%	:		5.1%	:		0.0%	:	
SAME	13	:		7	:		6	:		7	:		4	:	
	18.3%	:		10.6%	:		6.4%	:		17.9%	:		7.4%	:	

36-A. Guess what happened! I won.

36-B. Guess what took place! I won.

"Take place" is a supralelexical unit with the dictionary meaning "happen" or "occur". However, a closer consideration leads me to suggest that "take place" is used to express a degree of formality and planning, while "happen" has the feature of "occurring without planning or formality." The observation would tend to help to account for "happen" being fused into the supralelexical unit "guess what happened," which is a good example of a whole sentence that is not a traditional idiom becoming supralelexicalized. This formulation also has the feature of "mild to high excitement." We have, in discussing "aurictic value" mentioned the incorporation of emotive value into fused phrases, and this would seem to instantiate such a feature.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 37

	INT.ESL	:	ADV.ESL	:	BILING:	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	54	:	44	:	68	:	23	:	40	:
	76.1%	:	66.7%	:	72.3%	:	59.0%	:	74.1%	:
ANALYTIC	1	:	4	:	2	:	3	:	1	:
	1.4%	:	6.1%	:	2.1%	:	7.7%	:	1.9%	:
SAME	16	:	18	:	24	:	13	:	13	:
	22.5%	:	27.3%	:	25.5%	:	33.3%	:	24.1%	:

37-A. I've had eight hard hours at the office.

37-B. I've had a hard day at the office.

The senses of "day" given in WNWD (p. 353) include "the period of light between sunrise and sunset" and "one's lifetime" with various other measures indicated. Considering this variable length indicated by "day," it might safely be assumed that eight hours can be considered to constitute a "day at the office." So that a preference for 37-B over 37-A would probably not be accounted for by confusion between "eight hours" and "day."

One more promising way of accounting for the preference is by classifying "a hard day at the office" as a supralelexical unit and positing more salience for it than for the analytical construction "eight hard hours at the office." It may be noted that performance on this item was quite similar across all groups. This would seem to be due to (1) the possible frequency with which this expression had been encountered by ESL subjects, and (2) the lure of analysis for subjects who are more advanced in their English language ability.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 38

 INT.ESL : ADV.ESL : BILING: BLACK : STANDARD

SUPRALEX	25	:	36	:	69	:	32	:	48	:
	35.2%	:	54.5%	:	73.4%	:	82.1%	:	88.9%	:
ANALYTIC	8	:	5	:	0	:	0	:	2	:
	11.3%	:	7.6%	:	0.0%	:	0.0%	:	3.7%	:
SAME	38	:	25	:	25	:	7	:	4	:
	53.5%	:	37.9%	:	26.6%	:	17.9%	:	7.4%	:

38-A. Don't bother her during her working time.

38-B. Don't bother her while she's working.

"While she's working" would seem to be an example of what we are calling "First Order Fusion": no semantic features are added, yet the phrase is apparently preferred to "during her working time" (38-A) or any other analytic approximation such as "while she's at work" or "while she's on the job." All three of these options seem quite syntactic. "While she's working" also seems interesting as an example of the very close relationship between syntax and fusion. The larger pattern "WHILE + ONE + IS + (verb) + -ING" might be seen as an example of a supralexic set in which given lexical items constitute the preferred way of calling up both a specific concept and a large number of slot-filling verbs.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 39

	INT ENG	:	ADV ENG	:	BILING	:	BLACK	:	STANDARD	:
SUPRALEX	44	:	51	:	78	:	31	:	46	:
	62.0%	:	77.3%	:	83.0%	:	79.5%	:	85.2%	:
ANALYTIC	9	:	5	:	4	:	1	:	0	:
	12.7%	:	7.6%	:	4.3%	:	2.6%	:	0.0%	:
SAME	18	:	10	:	12	:	7	:	8	:
	25.4%	:	15.2%	:	12.8%	:	17.9%	:	14.8%	:

39-A. Adam complained that his neighbor's TV had too much volume.

39-B. Adam complained that his neighbor's TV was too loud.

Aside from the fact that "too loud" has fewer syllables than "too much volume," there seems to be no reason that native speakers should favor the former phrase and virtually never generate the latter (despite the fact that radios, television sets, etc. use "volume" to mark the sound level control).

It might be contended that "too loud" is preferred because it is an adjective phrase, while "have too much volume" is a verb phrase and, as such, requires additional processing. However, there are counter-examples:

39-C. That car's got power.

39-D. That car's got too much power.

39-E. That car is powerful.

39-F. That car is too powerful.

39-G. That child has got rhythm.

39-H. *That child is rhythmic.

The verbal constructions in 39-C and 39-D seem to be as acceptable as the adjective constructions in 39-E and 39F. In 39-H, however, the adjective construction seems decidedly less acceptable than the verbal construction in 39-G.

SUPRALEXICAL TASK ITEM No. 40

	INT.ESL		:	ADV.ESL		:	BILING:		:	BLACK		:	STANDARD		:
SUPRALEX	50	:		54	:		76	:		24	:		45	:	
	70.4%	:		81.8%	:		80.9%	:		61.5%	:		83.3%	:	
ANALYTIC	3	:		4	:		0	:		3	:		0	:	
	4.2%	:		6.1%	:		0.0%	:		7.7%	:		0.0%	:	
SAME	18	:		8	:		18	:		12	:		9	:	
	25.4%	:		12.1%	:		19.1%	:		30.8%	:		16.7%	:	

40-A. There's no way to get her out of the house.

40-B. There's no method of getting her out of the house.

40-C. There's no method of converting lead to gold.

40-D. There's no way to convert lead to gold.

40-E. I saw the accident on the way to work.

40-F. I'm trying to find a way to lose weight.

One difference between 40-C and 40-D is register. A native speaker would probably be inclined to consider 40-D too colloquial to use in, say, presenting a paper. However, he or she would seemingly be quite comfortable in using that construction in casual conversation. In terms of acceptability, this optional formal-informal pattern apparently does not extend to 40-A and 40-B. Possibly, this is because there is something inherently quotidinal about the proposition of getting a woman to leave her house, and this quotidinal aspect is, in effect, a semantic feature that is added to the supralexical unit "There's no way to...".

While this quotidinal aspect would be called up in the "way" phrase in 40-D, there seems nothing inherently quotidinal about the alchemical notion of transmutation. Accordingly, the analytic structure "there's no method" would not be objectionable. I tend to think that structures like 40-C and 40-D are unusual in that the analytic phrase is, to some degree, an acceptable alternate to the supralexic unit.

What suggests itself is a close relationship between register and supralexic units. Present syntactic theory does not generally allow us to distinguish between structures that are syntactic in one situation but not in another. Considering the critical role of intuition in acceptability and of acceptability in syntactic theory, it would seem justifiable to consider the proposition that supralexic structures participate in determining whether or not a given formulation is indeed "syntactic" in a given situation. A broader advantage would be to free the concept of syntax somewhat from algorithmic constraints, which, as we have seen in this paper, are part of a model that does not seem to work too well. The proposition would imply support for the observation that language has an existential dimension that must be considered in any theory of a basic nature.

NOTE

"Way" is like "home" in that the relationship between

its abstract (40-F) and more concrete (40-E) senses might be said to be fluid or, possibly more precisely, to describe a continuum between "method" and "road." However, unlike "home," "method," and "road," "way" does not seem to be used as an independent lexical item but rather only as a fused element in supralexicical units. That is to say, "way" behaves like a bound morpheme in that all uses of the item seem to be specified in definite, realized surface structures. This account of the status of "way" would tend to support the notion of fusion in that, following supralexicalization, all elements tend to behave like "way", i.e., with diminished syntactical properties and contributing in a unique fashion to a fixed semantic configuration.

###

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

I

SYNONYMY AND SEMANTIC FEATURES

Two things about the Supralexical Task should be kept in mind. First, in supralexical units in which no semantic feature was added in the process of supralexicalization, choices that matched predictions would clearly seem to be based on the subject's having been exposed to the supralexical unit and having internalized that structure as such. However, it might be argued that where semantic features were added to the fused unit, the choice was not between synonymous constructions but between structures that, to some degree, contrasted. This would seem in no way to invalidate the Supralexical Task: the addition of semantic features to phrases occurs in the act of fusion. That addition is part of the process itself.

At present, there is general recognition neither for fusion as I have described it in this paper nor for the addition of semantic features that are an integral part of fusion. So that, if this hypothesis makes it possible to see contrast where no contrast had been seen, this newly perceived contrast can hardly invalidate an experiment designed to prove that the contrast indeed exists. Quite

the opposite: the perception of contrast where it was not seen before supports the supralexicalexical hypothesis.

If, on the other hand, we reject the notion that semantic features are added to specific phrases, we must say that those phrases (e.g. "start sleeping / go to sleep") are essentially synonymous. If we do that, we simply deny outright distinctions that seem well grounded. If we say that they are not synonymous, we must explain why not. In many cases, an explanation will inevitably make reference to implications involving the addition of features. We will then be left to account for these implications. One very substantial way of so accounting, I hold, is provided by the notion of fusion.

Another objection could be that it is not fusion but simple association that explains the fact that no native speaker would say "start sleeping" and that virtually all such speakers say "go to sleep." In rebuttal, I point out that the supralexicalexical hypothesis attempts to account specifically for one class of associations, and not simply to replace one general concept with another concept of equal generality. In other words, we are attempting to provide part of an analysis of the concept of "association."

II HOLISTIC/SYNTACTIC DISTINCTIONS

It would seem that idiomatic proficiency increases

incrementally in the process of language acquisition. Let us examine this notion. The supralexical hypothesis maintains that linguistic structures are produced as a result of internalized fusions as well as of syntactical principles. These would seem to be quite different in fundamental thrust. While syntax actively specifies the inflective construction of phonological strings, fusion posits the uniting of elements to form holistic units of cognition that can be accessed in the process of communication. In syntax, predictions of form can be made: acquisition is in terms of analogues that can be used to process incoming data and to generate structures. In fusion, however, prediction is not a major operative principle. Instead, it provides a fundamental means of synthesizing phonological and abstract forms. Generally speaking, there is no analogue for the interpretation or production of these synthetic units: they must be remembered, one by one. (An exception to this observation is in supralexical sets, in which limited production does seem to occur on a semantic basis.) Accordingly, the individual must depend on repeated and meaningful exposure as the primary source of specific structures that are to become supralexicalized in his idiolect. This seems true of first as well as second language learners.

"Repeated" and "meaningful" seem very important in the type of exposure that results in supralexicalization. For example, consider the phrase "fresh complaint rule," a

supralexical unit used in legal terminology in reference to the recency or "freshness" of a complaint. A child of ten years who hears his lawyer father use this phrase once or twice in conversation would probably not register it as a fused phrase although the concepts involved seem relatively simple and the component lexical elements are within his grasp. What is missing is repetition.

On the other hand, failure of the child to supralexicalize "cumulative legacies," another legal phrase, might well involve the relative infrequency of the lexical items as well as the conceptual complexity involved. However, over a period of time, the child would probably internalize and fuse both of the above phrases if they were repeated in a more or less comprehensible context. It is interesting to speculate that cognitive development might be enhanced by the introduction of more and more complex concepts made somewhat more available through the process of linguistic fusion.

III INFLUENCES ON SUPRALEXICAL DEVELOPMENT

This general principle leads to an assumption that the acquisition of specific supralexical units will reflect (1) the kind of language that the language learner hears, and (2) the complexity of concepts present in his environment. We would expect, then, differences such as age, syntactic ability, and environment to affect the order and extent of

the acquisition of supralexicals by any individuals--including the test maker and the test taker. It would be most unfortunate and very probably disastrous to confuse (1) differences in specific structures that happen to have entered the idiolect through fusion with (2) differences in basic linguistic ability, despite the possible acceleration and enrichment of language development occasioned by environment in relation to fusion.

Speakers of Black English as a first dialect are often at a disadvantage closely related to this. Many such speakers come from communities and schools where their dialect is used throughout the day. They enter college and find themselves placed in remedial classes as a result of a placement test that is usually graded according to the structures and arguments of Standard English. They are then taught by SE speakers who (1) often assume that most of their "deficit" is somehow due to poverty and an inferior education, and (2) attempt to instill in them the proper principles of composition. Possibly, the Supralexical Hypothesis will contribute to a more realistic assessment and addressing of the problems that speakers of other dialects face in our educational system.

IV IDIOMATICITY

Among the main goals of the Supralexical Hypothesis in

general and of the experimental Task in particular was devising a type of test that would indicate the extent of the subject's internalization of supralexical units. As we have described and characterized them, these units seem to be critical if not central to constructions formulated in the manner of native speakers of a language. That is to say, one implication of the theory of fusion presented in this paper is in the area of understanding idiomaticity.

The analysis of this aspect of language use as a fundamental linguistic feature has received relatively little attention. Possibly because of a very deep internalization of supralexical units, the preference of these structures over their near approximations in terms of markedness might seem due to their being more syntactically motivated or to their being essentially like traditional idioms in nature, i.e. like anomalies that have little or no role in the system of language.

As such, little or no effort has been made to quantify supralexical units as relatively independent linguistic entities, despite the fact that they are extremely important to students who are attempting to acquire a second language. By "quantifying supralexical units," I mean counting them, classifying them, listing their basic semantic features, determining their frequency, the age at which they are acquired, a possible sequence of acquisition, and the like. Such undertakings might be extensive, resulting, for example,

in a new kind of dictionary. To be sure, dictionaries of idioms and specialized terminology do exist, but not of fused structures as basic units of language in general.

V THE SUPRALEXICAL TASK

The Supralexical Task is at best a crude model guided mostly by my intuition and experience in the teaching of ESL. It has, however, successfully discriminated between three groups of speakers of English as a second language and between speakers of Black English and of Standard English. It has done this not by having subjects distinguish between syntactic and non-syntactic structures, but by having them indicate their preference between syntactic phrases, both of which seem to be near approximations of one specific concept. The most cogent account of this preference seems to be that it is based on the internalization of holistic supralexical units into the lexicon.

Judging from the results of the experiment that was conducted, it would seem that if such a supralexical unit is already linked to a specific concept in a given idiolect, another phrase constructed from scratch and apparently synonymous will be rejected, often as awkward and confusing or simply as unidiomatic. At present, that latter term remains loosely and impressionistically defined. The notion that supralexical units constitute a large part of idiomaticity would seemingly provide for a more grounded definition.

The method of testing used in the Supralexical Task is apparently extremely sensitive to very subtle differences in the phrasal patterns that have been incorporated into the lexicon of different speakers. The number of such patterns is probably enormous. Each of them is formed not as a direct result of innate abilities or syntactic properties, but as a result of communicative interaction with one or more other interlocutors. This dimension of language difference has been implied by lexicographers such as Mathiot (1967), but, to my knowledge, remains basically unexplored. The method used in the Task--the indication of structural preference related to markedness--would seem to constitute a potentially useful means of measuring subtle differences in idiolect, which could be related to varieties and dialects.

It is conceivable, for instance, that phrases known to be supralexicalized in a given creole at a given time could be paired with different expressions of the specific concept involved. The result might be a test that is quite sensitive to the different stages of decreolization. Such a method--streamlined and redesigned as necessary--might also be useful in determining structural and functional changes in language development and acquisition.

VI IMPLICATIONS FOR ESL

Within the past twenty years, there has been an explosion

in the study of English as a second language, the number of ESL teachers, and the amount of materials written and published for use in ESL classes, ranging from the beginning level in elementary school to advanced ESL courses in college. Most of the pedagogical innovations in that field, however, have been limited to methodology. That is, the goals of research have had to do with developing new techniques and not with undertaking new linguistic analyses. For instance, different forms of communicative practice (Widdowson, 1972; Asher, 1977) have replaced older approaches related to discrete grammar points and dialogue memorization (Rivers, 1968; Fries, 1945). One possible exception to this has been an emphasis on a notional-functional component which focuses on the functions of language: how to make requests, apologize, ask for permission, etc., in the second language (See Celce-Murcia and McIntosh, 1979; Wilkins, 1972). Applications of this method often involve the lexical items and specific structures used in particular situations such as buying airline tickets and ordering a meal in a restaurant.

In the very recent past, say four or five years, publishers have been turning out very many texts on academic writing for ESL students. This reflects great interest on the part of language programs in "mainstreaming" students, that is, getting them to perform on a par with native speakers in regular lecture classes.

All of these approaches to language instruction are

acutely aware of the importance of idiomaticity and of a strong tendency of ESL students at all levels to come out with un-idiomatic expressions in speech and writing. One possible reason for this is that the appropriate supralexical units have not been satisfactorily internalized, even by advanced students. This explanation would not seem improbable and ungrounded, especially if we consider (1) the arguments presented in this paper, and (2) the great probability that fused structures were not emphasized in the students' language training. (This latter point is, of course, speculation. On the other hand, however, I find no reason to assume otherwise.) Instead, the concentration was probably on vocabulary, discrete grammar points, sentence structure, practice in communication through language, and practice in the syntactic forms acceptable in formal written English. Generally, the main types of supralexical units that are systematically taught are traditional idioms and two-word verbs.

This is unfortunate since fused structures seem eminently teachable in formal classroom situations: they are stable and relatively free of the countless variations possible but unacceptable in algorithmically generated language. It has been my personal observation that ESL students quickly understand the notion of fused structures and are able to successfully integrate them into the sentences they construct. Often, they are also able to identify them

in written texts. I have also observed that adult ESL students whose employment involves communicating in English tend to have considerable control over specific groups of supralexical units in their speech. This general ability to handle supralexical units is not surprising, since such units would seem to be found in all language, including, of course, their own.

What I am leading to, of course, is the suggestion that training in ESL would possibly benefit significantly from the addition of a focus on supralexical units. Basically, an awareness of the phenomenon would be instilled in the student. This could be done through several means including but not limited to

- (1) Overt discussion of supralexical units,
- (2) The memorization of short lists and short sentences containing fused structures,
- (3) Practice in identifying these structures in native-speaker talk and in written texts, and
- (4) Practice in incorporating them in student-generated sentences.

Hopefully, these units would enter the student's lexicon and be available when he or she is formulating new sentences in which the supralexicalized concept is to occur.

One painfully ironic twist is related to the notion that it is better to expose the ESL student to speech and written texts that have been simplified in vocabulary and structural complexity. The positive aspect of such editing

is that it seems to make encountered language more comprehensible to beginning and intermediate students. The possibly unfortunate aspect of this simplification is that it is done with little apparent consideration for supralexical units. These are often, I suspect, eliminated or reduced to single words or to syntactically and/or semantically more transparent near-approximations. As a result, the relevant ideas are perceived by the student, but not the fixed phrases in which the conceptual components of the ideas are housed in the language as it is spoken and written by native speakers. In short, the development of idiomaticity seems not to be maximally developed in simplified structures as they are presently conceived.

VII

AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

I will close by summarizing several of the more significant areas that might lend themselves to further research as a result of this study. First, if fusion of lexical items does indeed occur as I have suggested, there is a possibility that the internal structure of supralexical units somehow contributes to a sequence of acquisition, which might differ in native and non-native speakers. Even if this sequence is not due to such structure, the relevant factors

in acquisition--if there are such--deserve attention.

Second, the Supralexical Task seems to bear out Yorio's (1989) suggestion that the level of proficiency in a given language is closely related to the ability to use idiomatic constructions. In turn, this ability seems closely related to the degree to which supralexical units are internalized by the individual speaker. Accordingly, it would seem possible to develop extremely sensitive tests that would indicate the level of language proficiency. Third, another application of this principle would be a direct approach to teaching second language students to recognize and use supralexicals in their speech and writing.

Fourth, tests based on the model of the Supralexical Task could be developed for measuring both small and large differences between any two dialects. Presumably, such tests would be useful in the study of language attrition, loss and change. Fifth, somewhat more speculatively, the supralexical units that are internalized by a given speaker would seem to play a significant part in the composition of the idiolect of that speaker. It would, accordingly, seem interesting to analyze these supralexical components to determine possibly more quantifiable patterns in idiolects. Sixth, extremely useful in all these areas of research and development would be a dictionary of Supralexical Units that would list each of the more frequently encountered fused phrases of a more general nature, possibly cross-referencing

each of the lexical components. It would be a formidable task, but probably no less feasible than other specialized dictionaries such as those treating legal terms and idioms.

Finally, if supralexicals are all that I have made them out to be in this paper, careful studies would seem to be in order to determine the relation between fusion and syntax. I am, of course, biased, but it is my hunch that these two principles are of roughly equal importance, and that theoretical studies integrating the two would be interesting and useful in linguistic inquiry.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I**SUPRALEXICAL TASK: TEST ITEMS**

In each of the 40 pairs below, both sentences have the same meaning. Also, all of the 80 sentences are grammatically correct. There are no errors in any of them. However, some people think that one expression is used more often than the other, or that they would feel more comfortable expressing an idea one way instead of the other. We would like to know what you think about these sentences.

Read both sentences. You might think that you are more likely to hear one expression than the other, or that you are more comfortable with one than the other. If so, write the letter "A" or "B" of the sentence you prefer after the number on your answer sheet. If you don't see any difference between the sentences, write "S" for "SAME" after the number.

We want your first impression. Don't try to figure anything out. This is NOT a test of your ability to speak English. No grades are given.

Please turn the page and look at an example.

EXAMPLE 1.

100-A. I did my homework before I went to the movies.

100-B. I wrote my homework before I went to the movies.

We are more comfortable with sentence 100-A than with 100-B. We rarely hear anyone say, "I **WROTE** my homework." We would mark the answer sheet as follows?

100. A

Let's look at another example:

EXAMPLE 2.

200-A. I already ate lunch.

200-B. I already had lunch.

We are equally comfortable with 200-A and 200-B. We see no difference between the sentences. We would mark the answer sheet as follows:

200. S

Some of the pairs of sentences have questions before the numbered answers. In such cases, we are interested in your opinion of those numbered answers, not of the questions. Let's turn the page and look at an example:

EXAMPLE 3.

Where is Sam?

300-A. No one knows. He should be here by now.

300-B. No one knows. He ought to be here by now.

We think that we would hear 300-A as often as 300-B. Again, we see no difference between the sentences. We would mark the answer sheet as follows:

300. S

On the next page, you will find item number one. Please take out your answer sheet, write your name on it, and get ready to begin.

SENTENCES

1-A. At that time, few women worked outside the home.

1-B. At that time, few women worked outside their houses.

2-A. At what time does it become night in July?

2-B. At what time does it get dark in July?

3-A. Mr. Simpson shot his own head.

3-B. Mr. Simpson shot himself in the head.

4-A. Bob woke up at 6 a.m. but didn't get out of bed until 7 a.m.

4-B. Bob woke up at 6 a.m. but didn't leave the bed until 7 a.m.

5-A. Skill in hunting was passed along from father to son.

5-B. Skill in hunting was taught by fathers to their sons.

6-A. I enjoy thinking that he is an equal.

6-B. I like to think of him as an equal.

7-A. Let's run to that safe place.

7-B. Let's make a run for it.

8-A. This box is heavy. Lend me a hand.

8-B. This box is heavy. Lend me your hand.

9-A. You have a future with this company.

9-B. A future for you is with this company.

10-A. Does he think that he is the President of the United States?

10-B. Who does he think he is--the President of the United States?

11-A. You have the wrong idea about me.

11-B. You have a wrong idea about me.

12-A. Keep in your mind that it is very late.

12-B. Keep in mind that it is very late.

13-A. Do it, or else!

13-B. Do it, otherwise!

14-A. Don't give it a thought.

14-B. Don't give it any thoughts.

15-A. Your weight became less during the summer.

15-B. You lost some weight during the summer.

16-A. The baby sleeps most of the time.

16-B. The baby sleeps during most hours.

17-A. The accident wasn't caused by me.

17-B. The accident wasn't my fault.

18-A. Tom was so surprised by the news that he couldn't produce any words.

18-B. Tom was so surprised by the news that he was at a loss for words.

When will Mary be home?

19-A. I'm not sure. She's working extra tonight.

19-B. I'm not sure. She's working late tonight.

Why did you hide the present that you bought for Mary?

20-A. Because I want it to be a surprise.

20-B. Because I want it to give a surprise.

21-A. She is having a happy life in Spain.

21-B. She is leading a happy life in Spain.

22-A. I slept well. I didn't get any bad dreams.

22-B. I slept well. I didn't have any bad dreams.

23-A. The students on the picnic took photographs of the lake.

23-B. The students on the picnic made photographs of the lake.

24-A. Each of the two artists painted a picture of the other.

24-B. The two artists painted pictures of each other.

25-A. The more I think of it, the less I like it.

25-B. The more I give it thought, the less I like it.

26-A. He is drunk more often than not.

26-B. He is drunk more times than not.

27-A. She worked her best every day, but she still lost the job.

27-B. She did her best every day, but she still lost the job.

How did you get here?

28-A. I took a taxi.

28-B. I rode in a taxi.

When will you tell me about your accident?

29-A. I'll get to that in a minute.

29-B. I'll go to that in a minute.

Where was Henry last night?

30-A. In his hotel room. He had a pain in his stomach.

30-B. In his hotel room. He had a stomach ache.

How is the chair I fixed?

31-A. Not too good. That repair failed after a short period.

31-B. Not too good. Your work didn't hold up very long.

32-A. John started sleeping at 10 p.m. last night.

32-B. John went to sleep at 10 p.m. last night.

33-A. Tom lost his way and was two hours late.

33-B. Tom lost his direction and was two hours late.

What did John do after he found the nail in his tire?

34-A. He repaired the hole and went to New York City.

34-B. He fixed the flat and went to New York City.

Where's Bill?

35-A. At the lake. He's gone fishing.

35-B. At the lake. He's gone to fish.

36-A. Guess what happened! I won.

36-B. Guess what took place! I won.

37-A. I've had eight hard hours at the office.

37-B. I've had a hard day at the office.

38-A. Don't bother her during her working time.

38-B. Don't bother her while she's working.

39-A. Adam complained that his neighbor's TV had too much volume.

39-B. Adam complained that his neighbor's TV was too loud.

40-A. There's no way to get her out of the house.

40-B. There's no method of getting her out of the house.

THE END

APPENDIX II

SUPRALEXICAL TASK: CODES AND DATA

<u>COLUMN</u> <u>NUMBER</u>	<u>QUESTIONNAIRE</u> <u>ITEM</u> <u>NO.</u>	<u>CONTENTS</u>
	.	
1-2.....		Source of subjects (school, class, teacher)
3-4.....		Case within source (individual subject)
5.....		Level (1=INTERMEDIATE ESL; 2=ADVANCED ESL; 3=NATIVE SPEAKER ENGLISH; 4=BILINGUAL)
6.....	1.....	Gender (1=MALE, 2=FEMALE)
7-8.....	2.....	Age in years
9.....	3.....	Native language (from code: 1-9, A-Q, U-Z)

LANGUAGE CODE

NOTE: V = ASIAN-AMERICAN NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH
W = HISPANIC NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH
X = AFRICAN-AMERICAN NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH
Y = NATIVE AMERICAN NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH
Z = WHITE NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH
U = OTHER NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH

1 = SPANISH
2 = ARABIC
3 = TURKISH
4 = CHINESE
5 = JAPANESE
6 = KOREAN
7 = POLISH
8 = VIETNAMESE
9 = HINDI

A = GUJARATI
B = PORTUGUESE
C = URDU
D = FRENCH CREOLE
E = TAGALOG
F = LUGANDA
G = SWAHILI
H = GREEK
I = SINHALESE
J = GERMAN

K = FRENCH
 L = THAI
 M = HUNGARIAN
 N = RUSSIAN
 O = RUMANIAN
 P = PERSIAN
 Q = OTHER LANGUAGE

10,11,12,...4....Time in USA in months
 13,14.....5....Length of study in American high school (months)
 15,16,17....6....Length of study of English in USA (months)
 18,19,20....7....Length of study of English abroad (months)
 21.....8....Completed element. school abroad? (1=YES 2=NO)
 22.....9....Completed high school abroad? (1=YES 2=NO)
 23,24.....10....Length of study in college abroad (months)
 25-40.....Questionnaire items 11-26. Each item calls
 for answers on a scale of 0 through 9.
 41-80.....Sentence Choice Task (A,B or S)

A = Sentence "A"
 B = Sentence "B"
 S = SAME (NO PREFERENCE)

NOTE: - = NO RESPONSE

DATA

PREDICTED RESPONSES: ABBAABBAABABAABABBBABBABAABAABBBABAABBBA

COLUMNS

```

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APPENDIX III

SUPRALEXICAL TASK: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

BACKGROUND INFORMATIONDO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

S# _____

STUDENT'S TEACHER: _____

P# _____

LEVEL: (Circle only one)

INTERMEDIATE ESL ADVANCED ESL NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH BILINGUAL

IF NATIVE SPEAKER
OF ENGLISH, CIRCLE
ETHNIC ORIGIN

ASIAN-AMERICAN

HISPANIC

AFRICAN-AMERICAN

NATIVE AMERICAN

WHITE

OTHER

Please write answers to questions 1-10 on the blank lines.

EXAMPLE: 1. Are you MALE or FEMALE? _____

2. What is your AGE? _____

For questions 11-26, you should choose a number from "0" to "9" and draw a circle around it. "0" means none or very little; "9" means very much.

EXAMPLE:

11. How much English is spoken in your home in the USA?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
None.		Two or three sentences every day.				A lot. We use both English and our native language very often.			Only English is used.

The student has circled number 4. About 8 or 9 times a day, someone in the home says something in English instead of the native language.

.....

1. Are you MALE or FEMALE? _____

2. What is your AGE? _____

3. What is your NATIVE LANGUAGE? _____

4. How long have you been in the USA? _____ YEARS and _____ MONTHS

5. How long did you study in an American high school? _____ YEARS, _____ MONTHS

6. How long have you studied English in the USA? _____YEARS, _____MONTHS
7. How long did you study English outside the USA? _____YEARS, _____MONTHS
8. Did you finish elementary school outside the USA? (YES or NO) _____
9. Did you finish high school outside the USA? (YES or NO)? _____
10. How many months did you study in college outside the USA? _____

11. How much English is spoken in your home in the USA?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
None.		Two or three sentences every day.				A lot. We use both English and our native language very often.			Only English is used.

12. In your opinion, how well do you SPEAK English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't speak any English.					Fairly well. I make mis- takes, but people usually understand and don't ask me to repeat.				I have no trouble I speak English like an American.

13. In your opinion how well do you WRITE English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't write any English.					Fairly well. My teachers usually understand my compositions.				I have no trouble I write like an American.

14. In your opinion, how well do you READ English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't read any English.					Fairly well. I can understand many newspaper stories.				I usually understand everything I read.

15. In your opinion, how well do you understand SPOKEN English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't understand any spoken English.					Fairly well. I can usually understand 60% of many television programs.				I understand everything I hear in English

16. How often do you SPEAK English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I never speak English.					A total of about 30 minutes every day.				I speak only English now.

17. How often do you READ English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I never read English.					A total of about 30 minutes every day.				A total of about two hours every day.

18. How often do you WRITE English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I never write English.					I write an average of about 5 sentences every day.				I write an average of more than 25 sentences every day.

19. How often do you NEED TO UNDERSTAND spoken English? For example, in class, at work, shopping, speaking with friends, watching television.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I never need to understand spoken English.		About 10 minutes every day.		About one hour every day.		About 3 hours every day.		About 8 hours every day.	More than 8 hour every day.

20. How well do your parents speak English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
They don't speak any English.					Fairly well. They make many mistakes, but everyone understands them.				They speak English like Americans.

21. How well do your close friends speak English?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
They don't speak any English.					Fairly well. They make many mistakes, but everyone understands them.				They speak English like Americans.

22. How often do you listen to English on a tape recorder?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I never listen to English on a tape recorder.					I listen for a total of about one hour every week.				I listen for about one hour every day.

23. How well do you read your native language?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't read my native language at all.			I can read it, but not as well as English.			I read it as easily as I read English.			I read it very well, much better than English

24. How well do you write your native language?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't write my native language at all.			I can write it, but not as well as English.			I write it as well as English.			I write it very well, much better than English.

25. How well do you speak your native language?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't speak my native language at all.			I can speak it, but not as well as English.			I speak it as well as English.			I speak it very well, much better than English.

26. How well do you understand people when they speak your native language?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I can't understand them at all.			I can understand them but not as well as when they speak English.			I understand them equally well in English and in my native language.			I understand them perfectly much better than in English.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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