

Open Electives--Communicative English

CEOE 02: Puns, Puzzles & Game-building using Linguistics

Is it at all possible to focus a day's energy on one word? What can puzzles teach us about words and their relationship with design, and our relationship with words? Does learning how to make puns makes us tolerate social interactions even to the point of looking forward to them? How do we learn to associate words with sounds, songs, food, and noise?

Activity: Make 5 puns using a word in your language that you find puzzling. Puzzle-making, cryptic word games, make your own wordle with 2 clues.

Texts: [martin luther's wordle starter](#) - By Brandon Taylor, [Wordle, A Gentle Obsession](#) - By Mukul Kesavan, and [What all languages you speak?](#) – By Nisha Susan

CEOE 04: The Mistakes We Make—Some Experiments in Psycholinguistics

In 1954, Sylvia Wright, an American writer, published a piece where she admitted to a gross childhood mishearing. She loved this verse her mother would read her, “Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands / Oh, where hae ye been? / They hae slain the Earl Amurray, / And Lady Mondegreen.”

But who's Lady Mondegreen? She wasn't slain at all. The actual lines read “laid him on the green.”

Mondegreen is what we call the phenomenon of mishearing song lyrics, and is a good example of the curious connection between psychology and linguistics. Hearing works on two levels, one is the process of perceiving sound, and the other is when we attach meaning to sound. In Mondegreens, which part of this process fails? What makes it easy to mishear lyrics—or misunderstand them?

Rev. William Spooner taught at Oxford and became immortal on account of the speech errors he made in absent-mindedness. The term Spoonerism now describes a very specific kind of speech error such as 'The lord is a shoving leopard.' What mismatch between mental process and learnt rules causes loving shepherd to become shoving leopard?

How do you immediately hear your name being called out in a noisy room? If Yuo're Albe To Raed Tihs—how are you able to read it? Is the idea of predictability all that's needed to make sense of the phrase? Where indeed do spelling mistakes come from, and what do spelling bee champions learn to do?

The mistakes we make are useful. They are evidence for invisible things, for wheels within wheels deep within our minds. In this course, we will progress from entertainment to understanding as we look at ourselves, and at others.

Activities: Experiments in English and in available other languages/mother tongues