



SARAH HODGES

FROM MY WORD PROCESSOR TO YOUR EARS
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OMG! Stop, you sound like an idiot

We've moved far from the five-paragraph essays and diagramming sentences of middle school, and our parents are no longer around to correct our grammar (except maybe when we're home for the holidays). We need to remember, though, not to slip too far from the rigidity that our teachers instilled in us or else we will become dependent on the lowest form of language: Internet slang.

Linguists have long tried to keep up with changes in language. Many slang dictionaries have been published, and now lexicographers reference Web sites like Urban Dictionary to uncover the latest additions to popular vocabulary. Some words are assimilated into everyday language and a few are even finding their way into the elusive Oxford English Dictionary. Of course, by the time a word is accepted into the general language, the founding group has already coined multiple new terms.

Slang plays an important role in language. Different social groups use slang to distinguish themselves from others. Young people are especially apt to distance themselves from their elders with their vocabulary. We've already set ourselves apart from our parents with our rapid acquisition of technological skills, and now we are widening the gap with the use of Internet slang.

The advent of quickly typed messages, such as instant messages and text messages, created a perceived need for abbreviations and acronyms. But misspellings like "sux" and "kewl" serve no purpose. These imposters include close to the same number of letters as the real word, providing no benefit for those at risk of carpal tunnel syndrome.

These shortcuts and synonyms are fine when used in conversation between close friends, but a problem arises when people begin to use these terms outside the acceptable media.

While some teachers hail the Internet as a fabulous tool for research, others fear that it encourages poor grammar, improper capitalization and misspelled words.

Research shows that people are more likely to misspell a word after seeing it spelled incorrectly elsewhere. These innocent shortcuts we use in typed conversation could easily find their way into our midterm papers, and the way our generation relies blindly on spell check, it's not impossible to end up with a few typos in the final draft.

While advertisements for text messaging plans are far fetched to portray teens talking solely in acronyms, people do use the occasional "jk" or "wtf?" in spoken conversations.

Scientists have been conducting research into the use of the word "like" as slang for more than a decade now. While the word seems to be associated with friendliness, people also view the speaker as less educated. I imagine the same stereotypes fly through many people's heads when they hear "OMG!" aloud, and rightly so.

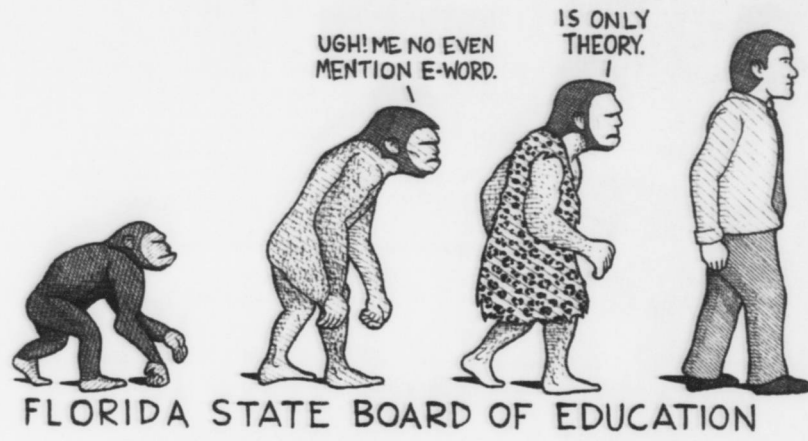
Slang usually serves a purpose, but these acronyms don't add anything to the conversation except confusion.

Are we really so lazy that we need to abbreviate our verbal output? Or are we just so paranoid about global warming that we are trying to curb our release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere?

Your brain needs to be exercised just like any other muscle. Save your temporal lobe from atrophy by making good use of the extensive English vocabulary and not just the old fallbacks of Internet slang. And try to capitalize and punctuate your instant messages because, as our elementary school teachers always said, practice makes perfect.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Mason Phillips, mphil@email.unc.edu

EVOLUTION IN ACTION



FLORIDA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

On their honor

Universities should hear about cheaters at CHHS

Apparently, the UNC men's basketball team is not the only group feeling pressure during the winter-time in Chapel Hill.

As Roy's boys try to impress the tournament selection committee, upperclassmen in local high schools vie to dazzle college admissions officers with essays, applications and most importantly, grades.

The cheating scandal uncovered at Chapel Hill High School shows that this cutthroat race for college application supremacy has all the competitive spirit of the ACC basketball season but none of its integrity.

Unfortunately, the school's administrators were too lenient in punishing the cheaters.

The students used a copied master key to enter the school and acquire answers to an upcoming midterm test.

Thus far only four students have been officially suspended,

but 20 or more others could be tangled up in this embarrassing mess of academic dishonesty that dates back several years as students reportedly passed the key down to the next class.

While it is still early in the investigation process, it seems that the offending students will get off with only short suspensions and zeroes on the exam. Spokeswoman Stephanie Knott also said that there had been no discussion about contacting the universities that had accepted these students.

If these were in fact seniors, as other students and faculty indicated, then a short suspension and a zero at that point in their educational careers are meaningless.

Rather than doling out a few weak slaps on the wrist, Chapel Hill High principal Jackie Ellis should use the incident as an example and severely punish the students involved.

This is the perfect time to send these students a painful message about the dangers of academic dishonesty, especially if many more were involved and it stretched over several years.

In college, where a number of these students might still head next fall, cheating is basically an academic death sentence.

Cheating also puts the honest students at a disadvantage, which is important when college admission is so competitive.

The school should notify any universities to which the guilty students are applying or attending of the scandal. Also, the suspensions should be longer term, and the students could be assigned after school cleanup or other community service.

Any other students caught having participated should also face the same harsher consequences. Better that students learn early to be accountable for their actions.

The longest yard

Student fee burden a hitch in UNC-C football plan

UNC-Charlotte wants its shot at gridiron glory. Students are pushing a proposal to establish a football program at the university.

We understand the desire — many UNC-Chapel Hill students enjoy spending warm fall afternoons in Kenan Stadium, even if our team doesn't always win — but we wonder about the financial feasibility.

UNC-Charlotte's football feasibility committee released its report Feb. 15, which recommended that the university establish a football program by 2012, with two-thirds of the cost of the program coming from student fees.

The burden of the program shouldn't fall so squarely on the students, and UNC-C would be wise to make sure it secures long-term private donations to help sustain the program.

In order to start the program, UNC-C would have to pony up about \$10 million. Only a small portion of this budget — \$196,000 — will go toward a place for the team to play.

This is actually one of the bigger sticking points of the whole thing. The team could work out a deal with Mecklenburg County to play in Memorial Stadium for a minimum of about \$37,000 per year for six home games, which is reasonable.

However, the stadium is nearly 10 miles from campus and would require some renovations to make it suitable for use as a Division 1-AA or Division 1-A football facility.

Other options are to try to get access to Bank of America Stadium or to build its own facility, which would cost in the ballpark of \$60 million to \$75 million to build.

Besides putting the majority of the financial burden on the students, there are other problems with the fee increase proposal, primarily the 6.5 percent cap on fee increases instituted by the UNC-system Board of Governors.

In order to raise the requisite funds from student fees, they would have to be increased by \$120 for just the football fee in its first year. But the cap only

allows fees to rise by \$85, meaning that UNC-C would need an exemption from the BOG.

We urge the board not to make an exception to the rule until all other funding possibilities have been exhausted.

The report set aside a maximum of 5,000 seats for students, which means that for every game, assuming six home games, students will be paying \$50 per seat when only about a quarter of UNC-C students would be able to attend the game.

The report recommends that the public pay \$15 per ticket.

The need for sustainable investment is absolutely vital, given the fact that football programs don't actually make money. According to the Knight Commission, only six of the 119 Division 1-A football programs are consistently profitable — i.e. they made money every year over a five-year period.

If UNC-C goes ahead with getting a football team, which certainly has its advantages, it needs to make sure that the burden of getting it doesn't fall wholly on the students.

Now it's even more sketchy

Facebook posts might come back to haunt you

The rapid expansion of new technology presents complex legal questions that sometimes cannot be answered before someone suffers the consequences. Facebook is proving itself to be no exception.

Career services officials are becoming increasingly concerned with the site's impact on students as more and more employers use Facebook to screen applicants.

The legal privacy issues are still murky, which is even more reason why users should remain cautious about what they post online and even what they do elsewhere online while logged on to Facebook.

Perhaps the greatest risks faced by members are their prospects for employment or

admission to graduate schools.

Kara Lombardi, the senior associate director at Duke University Career Center, said young alumni often examine job applicants' profiles from their alma mater and send their findings to their company's human resource department.

Some law schools also want to use the site to screen potential candidates for admission.

No less alarming is a feature, added in November, that tracks members' activities at other Web sites and posts that information on the news feed.

Known as Beacon, the program posts information about what members are buying and was formerly difficult for Facebook users to terminate.

Facebook has since added an

easier opt-out feature, but only after more than 50,000 users signed a MoveOn.org petition in protest.

What is most disturbing about these trends is the fact that there is so little transparency in how member information is used.

For instance, good luck finding info on Beacon on Facebook's Web site. (Try the "Businesses" link at the bottom of the page.)

With that in mind, be careful about what you are doing and posting online. You never know who might be looking at those drunken pictures of you from last Thursday night.

Although Facebook is a convenient social networking tool, only informed users will be able to fight back against these gross invasions of privacy.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"Folks won't look at the water coming out of the tap the way they'll look at filling up their car with gasoline."

RANDEE HAVEN-O'DONNELL, CARRBORO ALDERMAN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Due to space constraints, letters are sometimes cut. Read the full-length versions, or post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online. VISIT www.dailytarheel.com/feedback

Alumni have really good reasons to leave early

TO THE EDITOR:

Gary Kaye's unresolved parental issues notwithstanding, I can only hope his call for greater efforts to keep people from leaving games early goes unheeded ("Students, stop alumni from leaving basketball games," Feb. 26).

What already goes on is shameful and disrespectful enough as it is, and I'm not talking about the people who leave early.

I fail to see a problem with people leaving early. They are not taking away seats that would otherwise be yours. They are not blocking your view of the game. They are not increasing the chances we will lose.

Nor is leaving early necessarily a sign of disrespect to the team. Indeed, when the Heels are up by 25 with three minutes left, for all practical purposes it is over, and the people who leave early know this. It is the students who chant "It's not over" who disrespect the team by assuming there remains any doubt about the result.

Alumni do not have the luxury of walking 10 minutes across campus to their dorms. Leaving three minutes early can be the difference between a 30-minute trip and an hour and 30 minute trip home, and few people other than undergraduates can afford an extra hour sitting in traffic.

The resulting efforts to shame people into staying are themselves shameful. The people who leave early are equally members of the Carolina family, and booing them is a disrespect to them, to your school and to the team as you divert your attention away from the game and onto the crowd.

Like it or not, these are people whose donations largely paid for the seats you sit in. By booing them, you prove yourselves to be the spoiled, ungrateful brats they (probably) already think you are.

Stay focused on the game, let people leave in peace and take their seats when they're gone. It's a free country, and they paid for their tickets, so leave them to use them or not.

Seth Bordner
Graduate Student
Philosophy

Crowd was very rude at Will Ferrell performance

TO THE EDITOR:

As a recent attendee to the Will Ferrell show at the Smith Center, I was delighted to be present for Ferrell's Ron Burgundy interview of Roy Williams. How awesome to see Roy and Will together on stage.

If only I could have heard them over the constant catcalling, screeching and yelling from the audience. I could not believe the barrage of interruptions screamed from the stands throughout the show nor did I think it fair for drunk or simply rude audience members to distract the performers and ruin the experience of everyone else who also paid \$45 to get in.

I suspect that after the show the performers talked about how obnoxious the crowd was, and I'm ashamed that it will be a Tar Heel crowd of which they are speaking.

Kirsten Moe
Class of 1999

SPEAK OUT

WRITING GUIDELINES:

- Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.
- Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.
- Students: Include your year, major and phone number.
- Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.
- Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.

SUBMISSION:

- Drop-off: at our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union.
- E-mail: to editdesk@unc.edu
- Send: to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Columns, cartoons and letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Daily Tar Heel or its staff. Editorials are the opinions solely of The Daily Tar Heel editorial board. The board consists of eight board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor. The 2007-08 editor decided not to vote on the board.

SDS activities were useful but also misrepresented

TO THE EDITOR:

Charles Dahan's column, "Real SDS didn't need childish gimmicks" (Feb. 26), amounts to another personal attack against UNC Students for a Democratic Society by The Daily Tar Heel (the fourth in a row for those keeping score at home).

Dahan expresses outrage at our use of theatrics and "publicity stunts," alleging that they detracted from the messages of Thursday's two speakers: Dr. Dahlia Wasfi, an Iraq-American, and Jason Hurd, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

I've personally talked with many of the folks, new and old, who were present at Thursday's events, and almost everyone found the activities to be positive, educational and, in the case of the teach-in (which was again ignored by the DTH), moving.

The bulk of the criticism and misunderstandings come from the pages of this publication. The unfortunate fact is that the UNC community is not engaged with what's happening in Iraq; most students have no direct stake in it, even though we are very much responsible for the atrocities there.

We are charged then with finding ways to attract their attention while still being informative and persuasive.

Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't. But the reality is that we need peace now. If you have any suggestions, come talk to us. We're not going anywhere.

Clint Johnson
Member, Students for a
Democratic Society

Editor's note: Clint Johnson is a former DTH summer editor.

Americans should know the definition of 'theory'

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm elated that the Florida State Board of Education has decided to include evolution in the curriculum as a "scientific theory" ("Fla. reopens evolution debate," Feb. 25).

Given that there is no classification for a concept that unifies natural phenomena above that of theory, I'm curious as to what they might have termed it were it not for the outrage of scientifically minded school boards statewide.

Less sarcastically, the fact that so many Americans have no idea what the scientific definition of "theory" is is extremely unnerving.

Something that one observes in nature (gravity, natural selection) is a law, the ideas and concepts that attempt to explain said laws comprise a theory.

To attempt to denigrate the theory of evolution by calling it a theory only reveals additional ignorance regarding the subject.

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The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
115 years
of editorial freedom

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