the child is on target. The psychologist Karin Stromswold analyzed sentences containing auxiliaries from the speech of thirteen preschoolers. The auxiliary system in English (including words like *can, should, must, be, have,* and *do*) is notorious among grammarians for its complexity. There are about twenty-four billion billion logically possible combinations of auxiliaries (for instance, *He have might eat; He did be eating*), of which only a hundred are grammatical (*He might have eaten; He has been eating*). Stromswold wanted to count how many times children were seduced by several dozen kinds of tempting errors in the auxiliary system—that is, errors that would be natural generalizations of the sentence patterns children heard from their parents:

PATTERN IN ADULT ENGLISH	ERROR THAT MIGHT TEMPT A CHILD
He seems happy. → Does he seem happy?	He is smiling. → Does he be smiling?
	She could go. → Does she could go?
He did eat. → He didn't eat.	He did a few things. → He didn't a few things.
He did eat. → Did he eat?	He did a few things. → Did he a few things?
I like going. → He likes going.	I can go. → He cans go.
	I am going. → He ams (*or* be's) going.
They want to sleep. → They wanted to sleep.	They are sleeping. → They are'd (*or* be'd) sleeping.
He is happy. → He is not happy.	He ate something. → He ate not something.
He is happy. → Is he happy?	He ate something. → Ate he something?