

Listening Dictation as a Testing Device

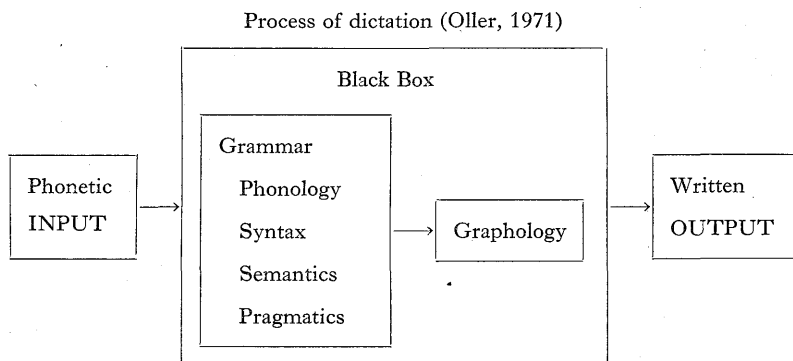
—based on Error Analysis—

Masako Isa

I Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to prove that dictation tests are valid and useful in examining students' errors by giving support from an error analysis based on a dictation.

In dictation, a rapid transition from listening skill to writing is performed and an active analysis is carried out based on the acoustic signs. Oller (1971) shows that the process of dictation as follows:¹⁾



Traditionally, dictation has been used as a method of teaching a language. There have been arguments for and against dictation.

Lado (1956) makes the criticism that dictation does not test the language abilities of students because sounds, vocabulary, and word order are all given in the slow reading of the text and the student is not likely to hear those incorrectly.²⁾

David Harris (1969) has remarked that as a testing device—dictation

must be regarded as generally both uneconomical and imprecise.³⁾

Anderson (1953) is dissatisfied with dictation as a testing device in that the script of dictation does not always represent how much the examinee comprehends the message.⁴⁾

However, Oller (1972) refutes Lado, pointing out that the student is not simply copying down words, but is involved in an active and complex process of analysis-by-synthesis.⁵⁾ He says that the students need not only a passive but also an active skill to cope with information from acoustic signals to generate some meaningful word, phrase, or sentence.

Sutherland (1967) accepts dictation as a test because it identifies specific problems of the students' abilities in comprehension, memory and spelling.⁶⁾

Cartledge (1968) and Valette (1964) agree that dictation can test the general comprehension of the examinee because it demands contextualization and discrimination.⁷⁾⁸⁾

II Error Analysis

1) Procedure

The following error analysis is based on a dictation test given to a sophomore. The total number of participants was 53.

According to Cartledge, sounds, vocabulary and sentence structure used in dictation should be what the examinees have already learned. The text of the present dictation was selected from *Listening and Learning in English* by Tetsuro Hayashi and Fumio Miyahara.

The whole passage recorded by a native speaker was first read through at a normal speed, not to write but just to listen to carefully. Then, the students were instructed to be ready to write and the passage was read a phrase at a time, rather slowly with pauses for them to write down what they had heard. Finally, the passage was read again at a normal speed for checking.

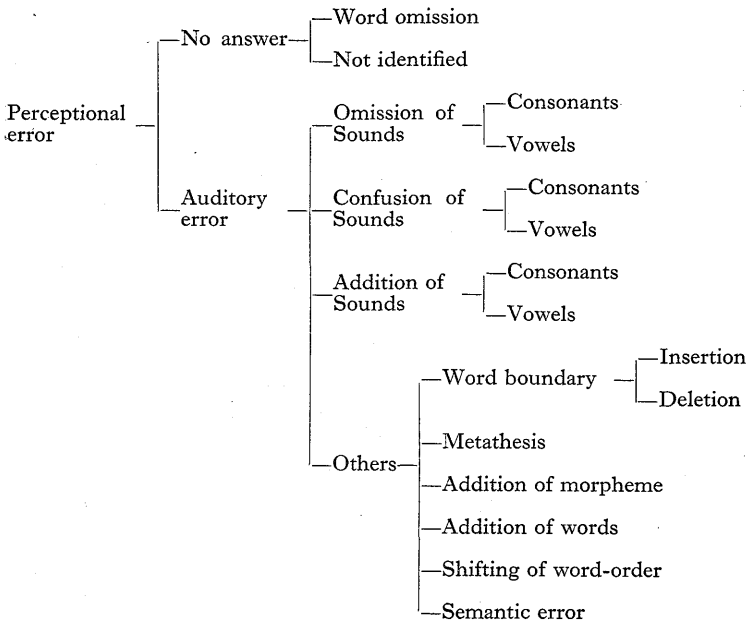
2) Classification of errors

Perception errors include omitted or incorrect words. According to

Miyahara (1984), they are divided into 'No Answer' and 'Auditory Errors.'⁹⁾ The former includes two cases such as 'Word Omission' and 'Not Identified.' 'Word omission' means the case in which the students miss a word, 'Not identified' occurs when the student hears the word, but can't identify it correctly. A blank space is left on the paper where the un-identified word occurs.

The latter (Auditory errors) are classified into four main parts such as 'Omission of sounds, 'Confusion of sounds,' 'Addition of sounds' and others. The first three are divided by Consonants and Vowels. The last is divided by 'Shifting of word boundary,' 'Metathesis,' 'Addition of morpheme,' 'Addition of words,' 'Shifting of word-order,' and 'Semantic errors.' The shifting of word boundary (w.b) occurs when students mistake one word for two words, or two words for one word. They hear two words, but the word boundary is shifted. The metathesis is the transposition of sounds in a word. Semantic error means auditory error related to semantic factors such as homonyms and synonyms.

The following is a classified table of perceptual errors by Miyahara.¹⁰⁾



Component	Girls	are	interested	/	in	clothes,
The rate of errors for 53 students	13%	30%	13%		4%	54%
The rate of "no answer"	Word omission	0%	5	0	4	2
	Not identified	4%	16	5	4	4
The rate of auditory errors	9	14	8		0	50
Samples of errors	Girl (5) Goes (2) God (2)	is (4) was (2) a (4) an (2) be (2)	interesting (2) interest (2) intelested (2) intrestead (2)			cloth (5) cloths (5) close (32) closed (2) clothe (2) clouth (2) clouse (2)
					include (4) inclose (9) increase (2)	
Omission of Consonants (OC)	/-z/ (5)		/-id/ (2)		/-z/ (7)	
Omission of Vowels (OV)						
Confusion of Consonants (CC)	/-d/ → /ŋ/ (2)				-θ- → -z-	
Confusion of Vowels (CV)	-ə:- → -ou- (2) → -a- (2) a: → ə (4)					
Addition of Consonants (AC)						
Addition of Vowels (AV)						
Others						word boundary in clothes → include inclose increase

and	looking	their	best	/	not	because
4%	0%	43%	2%		0%	0%
0	0	1	0		0	0
0	0	3	0		0	0
4	0	39	2		0	0
))		they (6) the (6) thire (2) there (13) ther (2) are (4) and (4) in (2)	bath (2)			

/-r/ (6)
/θ-/ (8)

(2)

/-ɛr-/→ei/ (6)

/-e-/→/-æ-/ (2)

semantic error
their→there (13)

Component	they	want	to	attract	boys,	/	but	because
Percentage rate of errors 53 students	0%	12%	19%	43%	20%		2%	0%
Percentage rate "no answer"	Word omission	0	2	17	2	0	0	0
	Not identified	0	4	19	6	1	0	0
Percentage rate of auditory errors	0	8	0	37	19		2	0
Samples of errors		wanted (4) went (2) what (2)		attractive (2) attract (20) attract (2) track (4) tract (5) truck (4)	boice (2) voice (13) boy (4)		that(2)	
			want to → wanted (4) won't (4)					
Deletion of Consonants (OC)	/-n/ (2)		/-z/ (4)					
Deletion of Vowels (OV)	/ə-/ (13)							
Confusion of Consonants (CC)	/-r-/ → /-l-/ (2) /b-/ → /v-/ (13) /z-/ → /-s/ (15) /b-/ → /θ-/ (2)							
Confusion of Vowels (CV)	/-a-/ → /-e-/ (2)		/-æ-/ → /-Λ-/ (4)			/-Λ-/ → /-æ-/ (2)		
Substitution of Consonants (AC)	/-id/ (4) /(h)-/ (2)		/-iv/ (2)					
Substitution of Vowels (AV)								
Reversals								

they	want	to	think	/	themselves	better
0%	4%	0%	0%		10%	0%
0	0	0	0		0	0
0	0	0	0		0	0
0	4	0	0		10	0
	went (2) whant (2)				themselves (2) them selves (2) their selves (2) them so (2)	

/-z/(2)
/-lvz/(2)

/-m-/→/-r-/(2)
/-v|→/-f/(2)

/-a-/→/-e-/(2)

/-e-/→/-ou-/(2)

word boundary
themselves→them selves(2)

Component	than	other	girls.	/	The	fact	that
Rate of errors 53 students	23%	4%	5%		4%	15%	2%
Rate of errors "no wer"	Word omission	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Not identified	4	0	0	2	0	2
Rate of auditory errors	19	4	5		2	15	0
Examples of errors	then (15) and (2) them (2)	others (2) rather (2)	goes (4) guys (1)		They (2)	fat (8) what (5) thought (2)	
Deletion of Consonants (OC)	/ð-/(2)		/-l-/(1)		/-k-/(13)		
Deletion of Vowels (OV)							
Confusion of Consonants (CC)	/-n/→/-m/(2)				/f- /→/hw-/(5) /f- /→/θ-/(2)		
Confusion of Vowels (CV)	/-æ- /→/-e-/(17)		/-ə:/→/-ou-/(4) →/-ai-/(2)		/-ə/→/-ei/(2) /-æ- /→/-ɔ:/(2)		
Substitution of Consonants (AC)	/-d/(2)	/-z/(2)					
Substitution of Vowels (AV)							
Reversals							

they	do	attract	boys	/	when	they	are
2%	7%	49%	13%		0%	15%	5%
0	7	0	0		0	2	0
0	7	0	0		0	4	1
0	0	0	0		0	2	1
2	0	49	13		0	11	4
ay (2)		atlack (2) attract (23) attractive (2) attracted (4) attract (2) a tract (5) act (2) tract (4) truck (5)	boy (2) the boys(7) voice (4)			I (6) we (4) you (1)	am (2) were (2)

/ətr-/(2)

/-z/(2)

/ð-/(6)

/ə-/(9)

/-r-/->/-l-/(4)

/b-/->/v-/(4)
/-z-/->/s-/(4)

/ð-/->/w-/(4)
->/j-/(1)

/-r-/->/-m/(2)

/-æ-/->/-ʌ-/(5)

/-ei-/->/-ai/(6)
->/-:/ (4)
->/-u:/ (1)

/ə:-/->/ə-/(2)

/-iv/(2)
/-id/(4)

/w-/(2)

addition of word
boys→the boys (7)

word boundary
attract→a tract (5)

Component	dressed	up	/	is	quite	incidental.
rate of errors 3 students	19%	11%		6%	17%	66%
rate of errors Word omission	0 2	0 2		2 4	0 4	2 9
rate of errors Not identified	2	2		2	4	7
rate of auditory s	17	9		2	13	57
types of errors	address (6) dress (11)	top (1) stop (8)		it (2)	quiet (2) quit (11)	incidental (2) idental (4) incident (4) incedental (4) insidental (32) dental (11)
substitution of Consonants (OC)	/t/(17)			/r/(4) /insi-/(11) /si-/(4)		
substitution of Vowels (OV)	/a-/(11)					
substitution of Consonants (CC)	/z/→/t/(2)					
substitution of Vowels (CV)	/Δ-/→/a-/(9)			/e-/→/ə-/(4)		
substitution of Consonants (AC)	/t-/(1) /st-/(8)					
substitution of Vowels (AV)	/ə-/(6)			/ə-/(2)		
substitution of						

Men	as	a	rule	/	are	much	more	quick
36%	9%	13%	47%		79%	0%	5%	11%
0	0	0	0		2	0	0	0
4	1	4	15		11	0	1	2
4	1	4	15		9	0	1	2
32	8	9	32		68	0	4	9
n (30)	in (2) is (4) has (2)	the (9)	law (2) rude (2) room (18) roof (2) rool (2) role (4) roe (2)		a (62) as (2) I (2) an (2)		mour (2) of (2)	qwike (2) qwick (3) quit (2) quik (2)
	other (17) and the (4) are the (2)							
	other room (2)							

/-r/(62)

/-l/→/-d/(2)
→/-m/(18)
→/-f/(2)
/r-|→/1-/(2)

/-r/→/-z/(2)
→/-n/(2)

/-k/→/-t/(2)

|->|-æ-/(30)
→|-ei-/(2)

/ə-|→/i-/(6)

/-u:|→/-ou/(6)

/ə-|→/ai/(2)

/h-/(2)

/ð-/(9)

word boundary
as a→other (17)

semantic error
rule→law (2)

Component	to	feel	/	sexual	attraction	/	than	girls	are
rate of errors 3 students	6%	15%		86%	49%		36%	15%	15%
rate to "er"	Word omission	0	0	0	0	2	0	8	
	Not identified	0	0	7	4	4	6	13	
rate of auditory errors	6	15		79	45		32	9	2
samples of errors	two (4) too (2)	fell (4) full (2) fill (7) few (2)		sectial (2) sexcial (9) sexial (9) sexy (11) sexcy (2) section (4) sexially (2) six (9) six your (9) sex your (4) sexiosisly (2) secsual (2) social (4) sextual (2) secks (2) sexual (2) sixer (2) sexial (2)	atraction (29) attractive (5) attraction (2) traction (5) the traction (2) trackson (2)		then (26) the (6)	goes (5) girl (4)	out (2)
								gose out (2)	
substitution of Consonants (OC)	/-k-/(4)			/-n/(6) /-z/(4) /-l-/(5)					
substitution of Vowels (OV)	/ə-/(7)								
fusion of consonants (CC)	/-fən/→/-tiv/(5)								
fusion of Vowels (CV)	/-u/→/-u:/(6) /-i:→/-i:/(7) /-u-/(2) /-e-/(4)			/-e-→/-i:/(20)			/-æ-→/-e-/(26) /a:→/au/ /-ə:→/-ou-/(5)		
substitution of Consonants (AC)	/ð-/(2)								/-t/(2)
substitution of Vowels (AV)	/-i/(4)								
errors	word boundary sexual→six your (9) sex your (4) addition of word attraction →the traction (2)								

nd	quite	often	/	a	girl	will	not	understand
7%	9%	2%		30%	19%	94%	5%	9%
5	0	0		2	0	51	2	0
	0	0		4	2	62	5	1
2	0	0		2	2	11	3	1
0	9	2		26	17	32	0	8
quit (3) quient (2) quite (2) quie (2)	ofen (2)			are (26)	girl (2) gruls (2) girls (9) go (4)	were (2) was (8) do (2) are (13) is (2) does (5)		undstand (2) standing (2) stand (2) on the stand (2)
				ago (2)		don't (2)		
				/-l/(4)				/ʌndə-/(4) /-ər/(2)
/-a/(3)								
						/l-/-r/(15) /w-/-d/(7) /l-/-z/(15)		
/-ai-/-i/(3)				/ə-/-a:/(26)				/ʌ-/-a/(2)
				/-ə-/-ou/(6)		/-i-/-a/(8) /-ə:/(2) /-ə-/(10) /-u:/(2)		
				/-z/(11)				/-iŋ/(2)
				word boundary a girl → ago (2)				word boundary understanding → on the stand (2)

Component	how	sexually	attractive	she	is	/	to	a	man.
rate of errors 13 students	5%	87%	71%	12%	5%		2%	4%	2%
rate no ver''	Word omission	0	4	9	4	1	0	2	0
	Not identified	1	17	22	8	5	0	4	0
rate of auditory rs	4	70	49	4	0		2	0	2
ples of errors	haw (2)	sexicial (2)	attractive (19)	it (2)			two (2)		men (2)
	her (2)	sexual (11)	attraction (5)	see (2)					
		sexual (7)	attractive (2)						
		sectionary (2)	atruct (2)						
		sexually (2)	atract (2)						
		sextion (2)	attraction (8)						
		sextonal (2)	atracts (2)						
		sectional (2)	atract (3)						
		sectuary (2)	tracktion (2)						
		sexiously (2)	atract (2)						
		sectionly (2)	atructive (2)						
		sectial (2)							
		sexsially (2)							
		sexially (2)							
		sexcial (9)							
	section (11)								
	sexcialy (2)								
	sexal (2)								
	sexually (2)								
ission of Consonants (OC)			/-iv/(9)	/f-/(2)					
ission of Vowels (OV)		/-i/(37)	/ə/(2)						
ifusions of isonants (CC)		/-l/->/-r-/(4)	/-tiv/->/-fən/(15)			/f-/->/s-/(2)			
ifusion of Vowels (CV)	/-au/->/-ə:/(2)			/-i:/->/-i/(2)		/-u/->/-u:/(2)		/-æ/->/-e-/	
lition of Consonants (AC)									
lition of Vowels (AV)									
iers									

	great	deal	of	/	misunderstanding	/	arises	from	this.
2%	4%	11%	11%		26%		38%	21%	2%
0	0	0	2		0		8	8	7
2	2	3	9		2		8	17	22
2	2	3	7		2		8	9	1:
0	2	8	2		24		30	4	2
	great (2)	dial (2) dear (6)	love (2)		miss understanding (9) misunderstanding (13) Ms. an standing (2)		alises (2) arises (2) arriis (2) arises (2) rises (2) arais (2) arised (2) a rises (7) arise (5) a rising (2) a lise (2)	farm (2) fun (2)	these (2)
		dialoge (2)							
					/-dər-(2)		/-iz/(9)	/-r-/(4)	
							/ə-(2)		
					/-l/->/-r/(6)		/-r/->/-l/(4) /-iz/>/-d/(2) ->/-iŋ/(2)	/-m/>/-n/(2)	
								/-s/>/-	
					/-i:-/>/-i-/(6) ->/-ai-/(2)			/-a-/>/-a:/(2) /-i-/>/-	
					/l-/(2)				
	word boundary deal of ->dialoge (2)	word boundary misunderstanding ->miss understandg (9) ->Ms. an standing (2)			w.b. arises ->a rises (7) ->a rising (2) ->a lise (2)		w.b. from this ->fromis (2)		

3) List of error analysis

The following is a list of the number of errors in each word, and samples of those errors. The number in each parenthesis indicates the percentage of students who made the errors. The total number of participants was 53. When the same words were repeated, the number on the top of the right side indicates the number of times the word is repeated as follows: a¹, a². The slanted lines show breath-groups.

Table 1

Words where the rate of errors is more than 20 percent

Content Words (CW)		Function Words (FW)	
sexually	(87)	will	(94)
sexual	(86)	are ³	(79)
attractive	(71)	their	(43)
incidental	(66)	than ²	(36)
clothes	(54)	are ¹	(30)
attraction	(49)	a ²	(30)
attract ²	(49)	than ¹	(23)
rule	(47)	from	(21)
attract ¹	(43)		
arises	(38)		
Men	(36)		
misunderstanding	(26)		
this	(24)		
boys	(20)		

Comment:

The number of errors of content words is larger than that of functional words. The derived and/or inflectional endings are used more than 50 percent in frequency.

Table 2

Words where the rate of no answer" is higher than that of auditory errors"

Content Words (CW)		Function Words (FW)	
this	(22)	will	(62)
		to	(19)
		from	(17)
		are ¹	(16)
		are ⁴	(13)

Word Omission		Not identified (blank)					
CW		FW		CW	FW		
this	(7)	will	(51)	this	(15)	will	(11)
		to	(17)			are ¹	(11)

Comment:

Most of the words in "No answer" are functional words which have a weak form.

Table 3

Words where the rate of auditory errors is more than 20 percent

Content Words	(CW)	Function Words	(FW)
sexual	(79)	are ³	(68)
sexually	(70)	their	(39)
incidental	(57)	than	(32)
clothes	(50)	will	(32)
attract ²	(49)	a ²	(26)
attractive	(49)		
attraction	(45)		
attract ¹	(37)		
Men	(32)		
rule	(32)		
arises	(30)		
misunderstanding	(24)		

Comment:

There are many content words in auditory errors. More than half of them include inflectional endings and derived endings.

Table 4

Omission of Sound

Omission of Consonants (OC)		Omission of Vowels (OV)	
Final Consonants		Final Vowel	
/-r/	(68)	/-i/	(37)
/-z/	(24)		
/-t/	(17)	Initial Vowel	
/-iv/	(9)	/ə-/	(35)
/-iz/	(9)		
/-n/	(8)		

/-l/	(8)	Medial Vowel	
/-vz/	(2)	/-a-/	(14)
Initial Consonant			
/ð-/	(16)		
Medial Consonants			
/-k-/	(17)		
/-r-/	(4)		
Syllable including consonants and vowels			
/insi-/	(11)		
/ʌndə-/	(4)		
/-si/	(4)		

Comment:

Omission of Consonants:

Most of the consonants are fricatives /z//ð/, glide/r/and plosives/t//k/. They are used in inflectional forms which show numerals and tenses.

Omission of Vowels:

There are a few vowels. Initial vowels /ə-/ are pronounced weak before accented syllables.

Table 5

Confusion of Sound

Confusion of Consonants (CC)

/-ð-/→/-z-/	(34)
/-l/→/-r/	(21)
/-z/→/-s/	(19)
/-l/→/-m/	(18)
/b-/→/v-/	(17)
/-tiv/→/-fən/	(15)
/-r-/→/-l-/	(10)
/-fən/→/-tiv/	(5)
/f-/→/hw-/	(5)
/ð-/→/w-/	(4)
/-l-/→/-r-/	(4)
/r-/→/l-/	(2)
/-v/→/-f/	(2)

Confusion of Vowes (CV)

/-æ-/→/-e-/	(45)
/-e-/→/-æ-/	(32)
/ə/→/a:/	(26)
/-e/→/-i-/	(20)
/-i-/→/-i-/	(13)
/ʌ-/→/a-/	(11)
/-ə:/→/-ou-/	(11)
/-æ-/→/-ʌ-/	(9)
/-u/→/-u:/	(8)
/-i-/→/-a-/	(8)
/ə/→/i-/	(6)
/-u:/→/-ou/	(6)
/-ɛr/→/-ei/	(6)
/-ə/→/-ou-/	(6)
/-i:/→/-e-/	(4)

/-e-/->/-ə-/	(4)
/-ei/->/-ai/	(4)
/-a-/->/-e-/	(4)
/a:/->/ə/	(4)
/-i:/->/-i/	(2)
/-i-/->/-i:-/	(2)
/-æ-/->/-ɔ:/	(2)
/ə:-/->/ə-/	(2)

Comment:

Confusion of Consonants:

The confusion of voiced linguapalatal glide/r/ with voiced alveolar lateral /l/ occurs four times. There are also difficulties in discriminating between fricatives /θ/z/; /z/s/, between fricative /v/ and plosive /b/.

Confusion of Vowels;

The confusion of low vowel /æ/ with mid vowel /e/ occurs twice. Both of them are examples of “than” and “then.” There are also difficulties in discriminating between the central vowel /ə/ and back vowel /a:/, between diphthong /ou/ and monophthong /ə:/; /u://ə/, between long vowels /u://i:/ and short vowels /u//i/.

Table 6

Addition of Sound

Addition of Consonants (AC)

Final Consonants

/-z/ (13)	girl	→	girls
/-id/ (8)	want	→	wanted
	attract	→	attracted
/-iv/ (4)	attract	→	attractive
/-d/ (2)	than	→	and
/-inj/ (2)	understand	→	standing

Initial Consonants

/θ-/ (11)	a	→	the
/st-/ (8)	up	→	stop
/h-/ (4)	as	→	has
/l-/ (2)	of	→	love
/w-/ (2)	are	→	were
/t-/ (1)	up	→	top

Addition of Vowels(AV)

Initial Vowel

/ə-/ (6)	dressed
	→address

Final Vowel

/-i/(4)	sexual
	→sexially

Medial Vowel

/-ə-/ (2)	quite
	→quiet

Comment:

Addition of consonants is seen frequently in the initial and final position of a word. In the final consonant, the flatness juncture after the word is perceived wrongly as voiced alveolar groove fricative /z/.

The initial consonant /ð/ is an example where the final consonant/z/ of the preceding word "as" is left and perceived /z/ as /ð/.

Table 7

Others

Word Boundary

(Insertion)

sexual→six your (13)

misunderstanding→miss understanding and so on (11)

arises→a rises and so on (11)

attract→a tract (5)

themselves→them selves (2)

understanding→on the stand (2)

(Deletion)

as a→other (17)

in clothes→inclose and so on (15)

deal of→dialogue (2)

from this→fromis (2)

a girl→ago (2)

Addition of Morpheme

girl→girls (9)

attract→attractive (2)

understand→standing (2)

other→others (2)

interested→interesting (2)

Addition of Word

boys→the boys (7)

attraction

→the traction (2)

Comment:

The examples above are caused not only by phonological errors but also by the student's limited vocabulary and insufficient mastery of grammatical rules.

Semantic Error

their→there (13)

rule→law (2)

Comment:

The words 'their' and 'there' are homonyms, but can not be accepted as semantically correct. The word 'rule' has the same meaning as the word 'law' and semantically they can be interchanged.

III Summary

The results of this error analysis in dictation are summarized as follows:

1) **Wrong Answer:**

The number of errors of content words is larger than that of functional words. Some of the content words are those which are unfamiliar to students. It is very important to know that students are wrong in the words composed of derived and/or inflectional endings by more than 50 percent in frequency. Most of the wrong answers are not 'No answer', but auditory errors.

2) **No Answer:**

Most of the words are functional words which include auxiliary verbs and prepositions. This is because the Japanese language is a pitch-accent language, while the English language is a stress-accent one.¹¹⁾ Sentence stress is put on content words and rarely on functional words. Many functional words take the form of mono-syllables which are generally not stressed. In the ordinary conversation of native speakers, these words are compressed between the words on both side of them, Then they are apt to be weak forms and are easily missed.

The use of weak forms is an essential part of English speech¹²⁾ and students must learn how to use the weak forms of English words.

3) **Auditory Errors:**

The errors are more often found with content words composed of derived and/or inflectional endings, especially of derived endings *-ly* in adverbs and *-al* in adjectives.

The most frequently occurring words by the type of auditory error are ranked as follows: confusion of sound, deletion of sound, addition of sound, word boundary, addition of morpheme, and addition of word.

In each type, the number of consonant errors is larger than that of

vowel errors.

4) Omission of Sound:

There are many deletions of consonants but there are few deletions of vowels. Most deletions of consonants are fricatives /z//ð/, glide/r/ and plosives/t//k/, which have inflectional endings showing numerals and tense.

Initial vowel /ə-/, medial vowel /-a-/ and final vowel /-i/ are perceived weakly in the unstressed syllables, and they are easily missed.

5) Confusion of Sound:

The number of vowels is larger than that of consonants. In the consonants, voiced linguapalatal glide /r/ and voiced alveolar lateral /l/ are seen in the initial, medial and final position of the word. There are also difficulties in hearing final consonants, i.e., confusion of voiced alveolar lateral /l/ with voiced bilabial nasal/m/, and problems in discriminating between fricatives /ð//z//z//s/, between voiced labio-dental slit fricative /v/ and voiced bilabial stop /b/.

In Lado's Aural-Perception Test¹³⁾, /r/-/l/ and /v/-/b/ are the two most difficult consonant contrasts for Japanese students of English. It is possibly due to the influence of the Japanese language. The error of /r/ and /l/ has a higher frequency than that of the /v/-/b/ contrast in my test. The glide/r/ represents an especially serious stumbling block in teaching English to the Japanese.

In the vowels, the frequency of error of low vowel /æ/ and mid vowel /e/ is high. Other error patterns are central vowel /ə/ and back vowel /a:/, diphthong /ou/ and monophthongs /ə://u://ə/, and long vowels /u://i:/ and short vowels/u//i/.

Some of them will be corrected by the student himself by the necessary linguistic and semantic context in the process of learning.

6) Addition fo Sound:

The number of errors of consonants is greater than that of vowels. Consonants are mostly added in the initial and final position of the words. The addition of final consonants/z/ is due to the fact that flatness juncture after the word is perceived wrongly as if there were voiced alveolar groove fricatives/z/.

When consonants are added in the initial position of the word, the

frequency that "a" is mistaken for "the" is high, because the final consonant of the preceding word is left and perceived wrong.

7) Word Boundary:

Insertion and deletion of word boundary are caused by the confusion of sounds and by having mistaken as if there was a space between stressed syllable and unstressed syllable.

8) Addition of Morpheme, Addition of Word, and Semantic Errors:

The addition of morpheme-s, -ing, -iv and definite article 'the' are triggered not only by phonological errors, but also by the lack of mastering grammatical rules.

If students have acquired enough vocabulary and have mastered grammatical rules, the right prediction will be made and the possibility of auditory errors will decrease.

The words 'their' and 'there' are homonyms, but can be accepted as semantically correct. The words 'rule' and 'law' are synonyms.

According to the results of the error analysis, we can recognize that dictation, unfavorably labeled as simply a spelling test by Lado, gives us much more information about the students' overall language proficiency:

1) Dictation shows whether the students can identify a sound in context.

2) Dictation indicates how much the students acquire proficiencies of morphological, morphophonemic and syntactic rules.

3) Dictation shows whether the context was comprehended by the students.

Therefore, it is a valid testing device and helpful for teachers in finding a better way of teaching and for improving the students' language abilities.

Notes

- 1) John W. Oller, "Dictation as a device for teaching foreign language proficiency," *ELT*, 25,3, 1971, p. 254-259
- 2) Robert Lado, *Language Testing* (Longman, 1965)
- 3) David P. Harris, *Testing English as a Second Language* (McGraw-Hill, 1963)
- 4) D. F. Anderson "Test of Achievement in the English Language," *ELT*, 7-2 Winter, 1953, p. 37-69

- 5) John W Oller, "Assessing Competence in ESL: Reading," *TESOL Q*, 6,4, 1972, p.313-323
- 6) Kenten K Sutherland, "Dictation in the Language Classroom," *ETF*, 5,2,1967,p. 10-14.
- 7) H A Cartledge, "A Defence of Dictation," *ELT*, 22, 3 May, 1968, p.226-231
- 8) Rebecca M Valette, "The use of the dictee in the French Language Classroom," *MJL*, 48, 1, 1964, p. 39-43
- 9) Fumio Miyahara, "A Error Analysis in Dictation," Address presented at Seinan College LLA, Fukuoka, 1984
- 10) Fumio Miyahara, "Study for listening English," *Studies in English Language* (Kyushu Univ., 1972)
- 11) Tsunejiro Nakaba, *Study-Guide for English News Broadcasts* (Kenkyusha, 1982) p.20-21
- 12) J D O'Connor, *Better English Pronunciation* (Seibido, 1983) p. 92-93
- 13) Robert Lado, "An Analysis of Errors in Listening Dictation with Specific Reference to the Casue of Misperception of English Pronunciation by Akira Hagiwara and Yukinori Kazumaki, *SYSTEM*, Vol. 10

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