

DICTATION:

WHAT AND HOW STUDENTS LEARN FROM IT

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING  
DEGREE AT THE SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING  
BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

BY

MARILYN C. FISHER

AUGUST 2001

© MARILYN C. FISHER 2001

Copyright Notice

The author grants to the School for International Training permission to reproduce and to distribute papers and electronic copies (for CD ROM and the internet) of this document in whole or in part.

Copyright: Marilyn C. Fisher 2001

All rights reserved.





This project by Marilyn C. Fisher is accepted in its present form.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Project Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Project Reader \_\_\_\_\_

## ABSTRACT

In the cycle of preferred English language teaching techniques, dictation is currently out of favor. Today, anything inviting the term “old-fashioned” is passed over without consideration as to what qualities made it popular in the past.

This paper reconsiders the merits of dictation use in the classroom, pedagogical theory, and supportive research, and the author’s experimental work with student group dynamics centered on dictation exercises.

My own classroom research shows interesting ways students catch or miss language clues and meaning in dictation exercises and how their minds are directed to analyze the incoming language both during the exercise and after, aiding self-correction and helping student development of strategies for understanding spoken foreign language.

### ERIC descriptors:

- Classroom Techniques
- Communication Skills
- Diagnostic Teaching
- Dictation
- Language Processing

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter

#### 1. THEORIES AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF DICTATION.....1

Reemergence of Dictation as a Testing Technique.....3

Theory of How Language Is Processed.....4

#### 2. STUDENTS' LANGUAGE ANALYTICAL PROCESSES DURING DICTATION.....7

The Experiments –Background.....7

Classroom Experiment #1.....9

Classroom Experiment #2.....13

Classroom Experiment #3.....16

What Was Happening Here / Analysis.....18

Students' Own Perceptions of Their Performance.....20

Classroom Experiment #4.....24

Hypothesis.....24

Method.....25

Transcript of the Student Group Correction and Discussion.....27

Analysis.....35

Individuals' Language Concerns.....35

Group Concerns.....	44
Conclusion.....	47
3. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING.....	49
Conclusion.....	59
<u>APPENDIX.....</u>	<u>61</u>
Original Student Transcript for “The Rabbit and the Dog” in Japanese.....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	.....66





## CHAPTER ONE

### Theories and Historical Perspective of Dictation

Dictation has a history stretching back to ancient times. Imitation and repetition were historically the classic methods of studying any subject matter in the first language. In the Middle Ages dictation was used to transmit course content of various subjects from master to pupil. Books were dictated to scribes in scriptoria as a way to publish books. By the sixteenth century dictation was being used in the study of foreign languages. In the nineteenth century dictation was used extensively in teaching foreign language in conjunction with the grammar-translation method (Stansfield 1985). In 1900 Edward Joynes waxed rhapsodic about the pedagogical merits of dictation:

In dictation we have the most perfect combination of faculties and functions. There is the accurate tongue, speaking to the listening and discriminating ear; there is the reproductive hand, bringing back to the intelligent and critical eye that which the mind has heard by ear --all the faculties of perception, conception, and expression are alert and in harmonious cooperation (Joynes as cited by Sawyer and Silver, 1961: 40).

Yet Rollo Brown observed in 1915 in How the French Boy Learns to Write that dictation was already passé in American schools. Brown was a college professor of English rhetoric and composition who spent a year in France

observing classes where he found that students there were given daily dictation in their first language, French, from primary school onwards, the dictated passages taken from famous French literary works and representing all the major French writers. Brown was impressed with what he saw in France and dismayed that his American colleagues were losing a significant teaching technique. He wrote: "In America, dictation seems to have been put aside to make way for something new. French teachers, however, do not hesitate to use an old-fashioned method or device if they believe it is good" (Brown 1915: 57). Their pedagogical rationale for making extensive use of dictation in teaching language skills at all levels in the students' native language was:

It gives the pupil much practice in the handling of the sentence; it directs his attention to grammatical constructions; it helps him to learn to spell, to punctuate, and to capitalize; it enlarges his vocabulary and gives him practice in the use of words already known to him; and it fills his mind with good standards of speech. To these should be added one value that the thoughtful teacher must regard as greatest of all; namely that dictation prevents the pupil from separating spoken language and writing (Brown 1915: 57-58).

Although the French teachers were teaching the students' mother tongue, their rationale for the use of dictation, point by point, aptly applies for the use of dictation in second language education.

Brown's book acclaiming the positive benefits of the beleaguered dictation practice helped it become popular again. It was extensively used in tandem with the grammar-translation method which was popular in the United States until WWII as well as with the direct and reading methods. However

after World War II, schools adopted the US army's new method for training translators and interpreters quickly, in less than one year, for the war effort, the method now known as the audio-lingual method. The audio-lingual method stressed aural

and oral skills by focusing on oral repetition. As the audio-lingual method became more popular in foreign language teaching during the 1960's, dictation as a teaching tool, considered "non-communicative", slipped out of favor once again. It was resurrected as a testing tool, however, for evaluating overall language proficiency, which will be discussed in the next section.

An oft-cited quote by Robert Lado in 1961 captures the profession-wide view of the time deriding dictation in his scathing criticism:

. . . [O]n critical inspection [dictation] appears to measure very little of language. Since the word order is given by the examiner as he reads the material, it does not test word order. Since the words are given by the examiner, it does not test vocabulary. It hardly tests aural perception of the examiner's pronunciation because the words can in many cases be identified by context if the student does not hear the sounds correctly (Lado 1961: 34).

Is dictation, then, merely an elaborate spelling test? Many research studies, described in the next section, would argue not, that student errors on dictation show that much is happening in the space between hearing and writing. A quite complex process is taking place in the students' language apparatus.

### Reemergence of dictation as a testing technique

An interesting study done in 1968 would seem to show that the simple effort of dictation belies the depth and complexity of the understanding of language, that proficiency in dictation is a powerful indicator of language skills as a whole. The study, published by John Oller in 1971, which results were

reevaluated by him and Virginia Streiff in 1975, showed a correlation of .94 between the dictation scores on the UCLA English as a Second Language Placement Examination (ESLPE) to the total ESLPE score, a correlation much higher than any other part of the test to the whole. Dictation proved more indicative of overall language competency than vocabulary, grammar, composition, and phonology. In the words of Oller and Streiff, “The data indicate that the dictation by itself could validly be substituted for the total” (Oller & Streiff 1975: 32). This was a startling finding about such a simple and maligned teaching chestnut. Oller’s results proved Lado wrong.

What then makes dictation, a simple oral reading by the teacher and silent writing of the same by the student, so potent an indicator of overall language proficiency? What is happening in the act of writing out what the teacher is saying that separates those with high language proficiency from intermediate, those with intermediate language proficiency from low?

### Theory of how language is processed

Ferdinand de Saussure contended that for the listener language is a chain of sounds. “. . . [T]he main characteristic of the sound chain is that it is linear. Considered by itself it is only a line, a continuous ribbon along which the ear perceives no self-sufficient and clear-cut division. . . .” He theorized that “A succession of sounds is linguistic only if it supports an idea,” therefore “to divide

the chain, we must call in meanings” (Saussure 1959: 103). Oller expanded on this:

In order to segment the chain an active process of analysis is necessary. . . . While the words and word-order may be 'given' from the viewpoint of the speaker (who knows what message he has encoded), they are not in the same sense 'given' from the vantage-point of the listener. He must discover them. . . . This is by no means the simple activity that Lado's statement implies. It is in fact one of the most complex processes known to man --a process which to date is not fully understood. In fact, all attempts to simulate it have failed in important respects (Oller 1971: 256-257).

If language is a chain of sounds, then dictation is a measure of how well this sound chain is understood, an indicator of how this sound chain is interpreted. Scholars in the field have theorized on what cognitive faculties are at work during this supposed simple task of writing down word for word a text that the teacher reads aloud. John Oller, cited above, regarded the taking down of dictation by a student and his trying to make sense of the stream of sounds as a dynamic process, which he called "analysis-by-synthesis" (Oller 1971: 257). Later, Oller with Streiff further postulated that "the perceiver formulates expectancies (or hypotheses) concerning the sound stream based on his internalized grammar of the language", and it is this "grammar of expectancy", the "central component of his language competence", which is activated in dictation (Oller and Streiff 1975: 33-34).

The theorists conclude, then, that some complex mental process is at work to write a dictated passage. But what are the mental processes in play during dictation that then produce a display of a student's proficiency? The analyzing and synthesizing processes show up in black and white in a dictation

exercise. It is the intention of this paper to explore this territory.

Four classroom experiments detailed in the following chapter explore the way students process language in dictation exercises and why dictation is an excellent indicator of language proficiency.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Students' Language Analytical Processes During Dictation

What mental processes are in play during dictation? Would that we could see into the workings of the students' minds to see how they process the "chain of sounds" coming at them in dictation.

#### The Experiments -- Background

To better understand the classroom experiments with my students, it would be helpful for me to introduce them. My students are all university students in Japanese private four-year universities or women's junior colleges. They range in age from eighteen years old to twenty-two years old. All of them have had compulsory English classes from junior high school on, for at least six years of English study before university, all of them studying by the grammar-translation method, the government-approved method of language instruction in Japan. Despite these six years of English study, the listening comprehension of most of the students is low, and the students generally are shy at speaking, rarely comfortable even responding to "How are you?" or "What is

your name?” However, their reading and writing levels are better. These students are classic false beginners.

It would be well to also include some cultural notes. In general, Japanese people prefer working in groups to working solo. The Japanese as a society value harmony and conformity in their interactions and do not feel comfortable openly disagreeing. The Japanese do not approve of anyone who stands out, or is different, and often ostracize or punish him/her, as evidenced in their saying, “The nail that sticks up gets hammered down.” They are also hesitant to express their own opinion on any topic, preferring to get a sense of the general consensus whereupon they can mold their responses to fit the general thinking of the group. The Japanese society as a whole respects and values this withholding of personal opinion, of keeping one’s thoughts in one’s heart while saying what is expected or what one thinks others want to hear in the situation, in order to keep group harmony. There are special terms in Japanese for what one truly thinks, “honne”, and what one publicly voices, “tatemae”.

These values are evident in the Japanese classroom, from aversion to volunteering an answer, delayed response to answer when called upon while the student consults one to three other students before answering, a preference for collaborative work rather than individual work. The work I have done in my classrooms with dictation has therefore usually included a group work component in order to tap into Japanese students’ comfort in working in groups,

their preferring to hash out language choices with others rather than struggle alone. So for the classroom experiments discussed in this paper, there were two stages to every dictation: a component for working alone to write down what each student had heard and understood (to develop their own recognition of their strengths and weaknesses), and a second component of collaboration within a group of their peers to compare and contrast their individual writings, and within that group to negotiate the best choices from among their individual papers (to learn from their peers).

#### Classroom experiment #1

Let me present some samples of a student dictation. I chose a short passage, just two sentences, from an article from an English language newspaper and dictated them to classes of first year Japanese university students. The dictation was given in the traditional style of reading the passage three times, the first time at a normal speaking speed with the students only listening to get the general meaning of the passage, the second time slowly enough for the students to write, presenting the passage in word groupings or “chunks”, the third time at normal speed, but allowing pauses between sentences to allow the students to fill in any words or to correct any errors they perceived from the second reading. The phrasing in giving the dictation is connoted in the passage with slashes. The two sentences were:



“Senior citizens/ who live alone/ spend an average/ of twelve waking hours a day/ without seeing anyone/ according to a survey/ released Tuesday./ Those who have children nearby/ spend an average/ of fifty-two minutes each day/ with their families.”

To one class I gave the dictation without any vocabulary preparation. I expected that certain words in the passage might cause problems for this level of students, and they did. With another class, I prepared the students for the dictation by putting four vocabulary words which would appear in the dictation on the blackboard and explaining them. These words were those noted by the students of the first class as unfamiliar vocabulary words: senior, survey, released, nearby.

Expectedly, students in the first group who indicated afterwards they were unfamiliar with the words senior, survey, released and nearby could not incorporate them successfully into their story. One typical student writing follows.

“Seeing your citizen Who live alone spend a village of twelve waking along a day without seeing animals according to a survey we least Tuesday those who have children near by spend a village of fifty-two minutes each day with their families.”

Although this student heard sounds very similar to what she wrote on her paper, she could not correctly identify the four difficult vocabulary words nor the meanings attached. Since she didn't know the word “senior”, instead of the correct “senior citizens”, her mind took the same or similar sounds and

processed them into words that she could understand: “seeing your citizen”. Having missed the vital clue of elderly people, the topic of the passage, it became exceedingly harder for her to process the subsequent stream of sounds into cohesive discourse. In this way she made mistakes with vocabulary she ordinarily would know but did not recognize or expect in this oral presentation. This Japanese student could not aurally distinguish r’s from l’s nor r’s from w’s in many words, difficult distinctions for native Japanese speakers; consequently she transposed “a village” for “average”, and “we least” for “released”. It is clear that these are not merely spelling mistakes, but phonological mistakes, yet phonic errors of a type which were filtered, transformed, and woven into her understanding of the piece. She had “citizen” as a reference point, but she misheard “average” and wrote the similar sounding “a village”. Now in this rural scene, “anyone” became “animals”, logical in her own scenario of a “village”.

Vocabulary recognition was not the only type of error in this writing.

This student did not recognize what makes a complete sentence, nor how to punctuate one, as evidenced by her capitalization of “Who”, not recognizing that her proceeding “Seeing your citizen” is not a complete sentence requiring that the first word of the following sentence be capitalized, yet she did not put a period after “citizen”. Perhaps, then, she thought “Who” was a proper noun. But she also missed recognizing the end of the second sentence after the word

“Tuesday”. So basic sentence structure, what components constitute a complete sentence, perplexes her. Indeed, to this student, the dictation was one long sentence.

Stansfield expounds on Oller’s theory of analysis-by-synthesis to explain what is happening within the students’ minds.

During comprehension, the listener continuously synthesizes speech into “chunks” and formulates hypotheses about what is said in each. This process is known as analysis-by-synthesis. If the perceived speech matches the hypothesis, the meaning is understood. If not, the internalized expectancy grammar formulates a new hypothesis about the input heard (Stansfield 1985: 126).

Oller and Streiff further elaborate:

Of course, if the student’s (or listener’s) grammar of expectancy is incomplete, the kinds of hypotheses that he will accept will deviate substantially from the actual sequences of elements in the dictation. When students convert a phrase like ‘scientists from many nations’ into ‘scientists’ imaginations’ and ‘scientist’s examinations’ an active analysis-by-synthesis is clearly apparent. On a dictation given at UCLA, not long ago, one student converted an entire paragraph on ‘brain cells’ into a fairly readable and phonetically similar paragraph on ‘brand sales’. It would be absurd to suggest that the process of analysis-by-synthesis is only taking place when students make errors. It is the process underlying their listening behaviour in general and is only more obvious in the case of creative errors (Oller & Streiff 1975: 34).

Natalicio likens dictation errors to children who in their first language very creatively recite the Pledge of Allegiance as “. . . and to the public for witches stand, one nation invisible . . .” (Natalicio 1979: 169). Their choice of words are errors, but errors which make sense to children whose play and imagination are bent to witches and magic and invisible friends and who have not yet learned the more sophisticated vocabulary of government and politics, of “. . . republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible . . . .” For these children, their version makes sense. The children are not just repeating

the exact sounds they have heard and tried to imitate, they are literally “making

meaning” from the sounds, altering them consciously or unconsciously in order that it make sense to them. The analogy is that the same is happening with second language learners all the time.

### Classroom experiment #2

Having read the class’ papers and having seen what kinds of errors the students were making, I wanted to continue the dictation analysis. I wanted to know if students, properly coached, could understand the types of errors they had made. So to the second class, after presenting the dictation, and after the students had compared their versions to the original version on the blackboard and circled their mistakes, I asked them to determine the type of mistake of each circled word.

I chose three categories of mistakes and explained them by example. The three types of mistakes I asked the students to distinguish were spelling, grammar, and meaning. After circling their mistakes, their task was to identify the type of mistake using the following abbreviations: sp=spelling; gr=grammar; mn=meaning.

Some students thought all of their mistakes were spelling, even though many were phonic or comprehension. But I was delighted to find that many of the students could categorize their mistakes. The student work below, while confusing categories sometimes and also missing some errors, has a grasp of the

kinds of mistakes she made. The errors the student caught are underlined here.

“Senior citizens who leave (mn) alone spend and (mn) abrage (sp) of twelve waking hours a day without seeing anyone a colding (mn) to survey released tuesday (sp) those (sp) who have children nearby spend and (mn) abrage (sp) of fifty two minuts (sp) eatch (sp) day is (mn) their family.”

This student wrote “leave alone” for “live alone”, a common problem of distinguishing between a short i sound and a long e sound. It becomes a problem of meaning when it does not make sense in the passage, which she was able to see by doing this exercise. Similarly, she wrote “abrage” for “average”, a problem of distinguishing v and b, which she categorized as a spelling mistake. It would depend upon whether in her mind she understood the meaning to be “average” but just could not correctly choose between the b or v letter, or she tried to phonetically write a word she had heard but hadn’t understood. Another difficulty in sound discrimination was “a colding” for “according”, an r - l differentiating problem, which here became a problem of meaning, which she correctly labels. Other mistakes in meaning were “and” for “an”, twice, and “is” for “in”, problems in hearing these words correctly, but then not identifying them correctly from the context. She identifies all the other mistakes as spelling: not capitalizing “Tuesday”, leaving out a silent e in “minuts”, adding an extra consonant to “eatch”. She also missed an article, “a” before “survey”, which she

did not catch. She characterizes not capitalizing “those” as a spelling error, though she has actually missed the beginning word of what should be the second sentence, a grammar mistake. Despite some mistakes in categories, this student substantially understood the types of errors she made.

This exercise whereby the students categorized their discrepancies with the original text, pushed them beyond thinking, “Oh, another mistake” into “What kind of mistake is that?” It forced them to consciously analyze the kind of mistakes they uniquely made, hopefully to see a pattern in their repeated mistakes. It is consciousness-raising. With experience doing a few more exercises like the one above, this same student would become more facile at categorizing her circled errors, more alert in a suspenseful way of catching potential misunderstandings by using contextual clues, such as theme, surrounding vocabulary, and subject-verb agreement to identify sounds as meaningful narration -- to identify where the word or phrase which she heard makes no sense and to think of other sound-alike possibilities which fit logically and grammatically.

This was an ongoing experiment: at first for the students to recognize what kinds of errors were being made, and then for the students to be alert to these troublesome areas in subsequent dictations. This is a continuing process of developing students’ linguistic processing skills which reaches beyond a ten-minute dictation exercise of error recognition and analysis into the larger

world of real comprehension and communication in the second language. Although the mistakes/deviations from the dictated text tell the teacher much about the students' transitional language competence, it is better for the students to discover for themselves their error patterns, learn by themselves their language competencies and weaknesses to be better able to self-correct in the wider sphere outside the classroom. Dictation and dictation analysis by the student can be a powerful tool in this discovery.

### Classroom experiment #3

With my lowest level English students I tried a traditional dictation of a story I knew they would be familiar with. The fact that they already knew the story, I thought, would help them recognize and make correct vocabulary choices for the story. I chose the Aesop fable "The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf". The version I dictated was taken from the book Story Cards: Aesop Fables by Raymond Clark (1995). Before starting the dictation I put three difficult vocabulary words on the blackboard: "shepherd", with its root "sheep" and accompanied by a very poor but fluffy drawing of a sheep, "bored" and "amused", and then explained their meanings.

The students heard the dictated fable three times, writing and modifying their papers individually. After finishing their dictations individually, the students were put quickly into groups of four to compare their individual

writings and to ask each other questions *before* the correct version of the story was put on the blackboard. I wanted to give the students a chance to share what each thought she had heard and to connect it with their individual and pooled grasp of spelling and grammar. I felt this strategy of small group work would coax out of them a synthesis of listening and an alertness to grammar and meaning. They did fairly well helping each other. Afterwards, upon viewing the correct version displayed on the blackboard, they circled in red pencil only the errors they missed after their group efforts. This process made it easy for me as the teacher to see what areas were generally missed as a class, valuable information in planning follow-up lessons.

This lower level class did very well on the relatively easy and short dictation. The students seemed very pleased. A typical student sample follows. The student's errors, though not omissions, are underlined.

#### Shepherd boy and wolf

A young shepherd boy was bored with his work.

One day he cried "Wolf wolf!"

to see what sill happened.

All the peopel working in the field went to help  
but there was no wolf.

The young shepherd \_ very pleased with all the  
excitement. A few days later he did it again  
but people who came was not amuze.

The next day a wolf came. The boy cried

“Wolf wolf!” but nobody came, and wolf enjoyed a fine meal.

### What was happening here/Analysis

Before even reading the text of this student's dictated classwork, three things struck me: the need for centering and capitalization of the title, and lack of margins. It really surprised me that this student, along with many, many other students, completely neglected to center and properly capitalize the title, something the class had studied and the students had consistently been doing correctly with their periodic written book reports. Perhaps the class had not learned to extend the format rules they knew for book reports to that of other genres, such as stories; or perhaps they didn't think they needed to apply them in a classroom exercise.

Also this student relapsed into a previous common disregard, that of ending a written line arbitrarily to start a new line. Again, the students in this class had been careful about aligning paragraphs and margins in their periodic book reports. Perhaps the act of writing down a dictation -- writing quickly, missing words, leaving blank spaces to come back to -- made keeping margins impractical. It is of interest to me that this student and others did not apply writing forms previously studied and used. However, the formatting and capitalization here were not my primary focus.

The punctuation of "Wolf! Wolf!" was a problem I had expected, two capital W's, two exclamation points, all enclosed in quotation marks, being a challenge for this level. But I was pleasantly surprised that this student and

most of the other students had used quotation marks well. Spelling was not a big problem. This student misspelled “people” once, but spelled it correctly in its second appearance. But more seriously, the student misspelled “amused”, ignoring the correct spelling still on the blackboard, and apparently forgetting my pre-dictation explanation.

A more important grammatical error is “sill happened”, instead of the correct “would happen”. Did she mishear “sill” with no idea as to its meaning, and did she really hear “happen” with a final “ed” or is this her understanding of the verb form needed here? Perhaps the student intended to have written “will happened”, which would be mixing the auxiliary verb for the future tense with a past participle. She wrote “the young shepherd very pleased”, omitting a state of being verb, in this case in the past tense, “was”, although she had correctly transcribed the prior “was bored”. She inserted the past tense state of being verb in “people who came was not amuze”, but erred in the agreement of the subject and that verb, “people were”, and also showed a lack of understanding of the form of the predicate adjective, “amused” (which was still on the blackboard), although, again, she correctly had transcribed the previous “was bored”. She also missed the article “the” before “people” in its second appearance, although she correctly wrote in all the rest of the proper articles for “a young shepherd boy”, “the field”, “the young shepherd”, “the excitement”, “a wolf”, and “a fine meal”.

This is the most interesting phenomenon of dictation, the fact that although the dictated piece is presented in grammatically correct form in all its elements, the students are reconstructing it differently, hearing it differently, mixing the grammar pieces differently in their minds. In this student dictation sample, one can see her strengths in the language, and her weaknesses in verb tense construction, subject-verb agreement, and grammar formation for predicate adjectives.

#### Students' own perceptions of their performance

After this experimental activity with dictation, I wanted to see if the students had been able to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in the above dictation exercise, and also to find out what areas they had concentrated on individually and as a group. Additionally I wanted to know whether the peer group support had been a successful teaching technique. Therefore, I gave out a simple and quick five-item questionnaire. The five questions were:

1. When you were in your group, what did you discuss?
2. What was the easiest thing about the English dictation?
3. What was the most difficult thing about the dictation exercise?
4. What did you learn from your classmates?

There were certainly amusing answers to the questions, and I sometimes puzzled at the students' own perceptions of their abilities and areas of difficulties

versus my teacher's perception. For example, in answer to the second question, "What was the easiest thing about the English dictation?" one student ironically wrote "Speling is easy."

By far, the students found "hearing" (their word) their most serious challenge. Dictation is an exercise in listening comprehension (among other skills), but this dictation exercise seemed to point out *to them* their gaps in listening comprehension. In answer to question #3 regarding the most difficult thing about the dictation exercise, one student could have spoken for the entire class when she wrote, "I learned that I couldn't hear clearly."

The students' most noticed listening difficulty was with articles. There are no definite or indefinite articles in the Japanese language. Not only is it difficult for Japanese students to use "a", "an", and "the" properly, they cannot hear them when spoken, especially since they are usually unstressed in speech, as the students themselves point out below. On paper after paper, the students replied to the question about the most difficult thing about the dictation exercise with:

"articles (a, the)"

"listing 'the', 'an'"

"listening (for example 'a' or 'the')"

"listening (ex. a, an, the, -s, ed)"

But articles were not the only noticed listening problem. One student

articulated her listening comprehension dilemmas on her feedback questionnaire in a list: “listening: work or walk? learn or run? field, meal? a or the?” This student was straining to “hear” the correct words to write down. She saw that many words can sound similar but have very different meanings. She was having difficulty choosing among the sound-alikes. Did she use the context to test, either during or after the dictation, the chosen vocabulary to see if it made sense? Perhaps in the rush to write what she heard, she couldn’t. But that is the point of this lesson and experiment: to help students become aware that they are choosing, and that they can choose appropriate vocabulary that makes sense using the context. Sometimes they will only see it afterwards, but the time lag can be shortened by practice and awareness of the choosing process.

A good example of where not using context to select among sound-alike vocabulary choices can completely alter the story comes from the same student who found “speling” easy. She wrote, “Hearling is difficult.” Her self-assessment was accurately displayed when she changed the fable totally with a misinterpretation of just two words. Where the midpoint of the fable reinforces the shepherd boy’s constant, ominously dangerous misbehavior with “A few days later he did it again, but people who came were not amused,” this student wrote, “A few days later he *didn’t* again” (italics mine). The student did not catch that had the boy not done “it” again, the townspeople would have had no need to come and therefore become displeased. She did not notice her

mistake even after the group consultation, and even after the correct version was put on the blackboard. Susan Morris would understand this topsy-turvy reinvention of the dictated piece. Of her own experimentations with dictation analysis she wrote in the ELT Journal,

These errors suggest that . . . these dictations have involved the students in an active reinterpretation of material presented to them aurally. The most astonishing mistakes are those that result in distortions of meaning, especially where there has been a failure to utilize the context to help arrive at the meaning . . . (Morris 1983: 124).

One student who was conscious of using context while taking the dictation was the student whose full version appears as the student sample above.

She wrote:

“I listen a word ‘learn’ but I think this word mean is not match in there. I ask my classmate. She say ‘May be went’. But colect answer is ‘ran’.”

This student articulates her inner confusion of hearing a word that is actually a word, but then seeing that the meaning of the perceived vocabulary does not make sense in the context of the sentence/story. Her classmate didn’t hear the word correctly either, but she had guessed at a word whose meaning more closely fit the sentence. This student understands the importance of context, choosing correctly among vocabulary sound-alikes. This student is conscious of the choices, conscious that she must use context as the environment into which the vocabulary must fit.

These choices, a scanning through the student’s competence and awareness, are constantly going on in the learner’s mind in deciphering a foreign language. This active attention to meaning is exactly what the research scholars were referring to when they wrote: “. . . [S]entence recognition and imitation are filtered through the individual’s productive linguistic system” (Slobin and Welsh (1973: 496); and that in dictation “the student is not simply copying down words but is involved in an active and complex process of anaysis-by-synthesis”

(Oller 1973: 196-197).

#### Classroom experiment #4

For the following classroom experiment I observed the students during the dictation, and afterwards recorded their group deliberations in perfecting their dictation pieces. I collected their written efforts to analyze with the recordings.

#### Hypothesis

I hypothesized that what language choices evidenced themselves in the group reconstructions of the given dictation were probably the same choices that had presented themselves to the students individually during the silent taking down of the dictation. One could assume from collecting their first draft papers what their points of confusion were. They showed up as mistakes. Their papers would not show the points of confusion which were guessed correctly, however. As a possible way of illustrating more of the inner choices, I thought it would be interesting to hear the voices of this inner mental dialogue being expressed among the various members, my thinking being that if one student questioned or missed a piece of the dictation, probably the others had also questioned it fleetingly during the speedy writing of the piece.

To try to make visible these invisible thought processes during dictation, I recorded students collaborating on a dictation to the class. I was very curious

to see and analyze their perceptions of how the dictation was put together, a microcosm of their perceptions of how the English language is composed. By listening to the students' discussions within groups -- questioning, suggesting, doubting the various facets of the writing and what they had heard -- I sought to discern the students' concerns and language processing method, and thereby gain a window into the students' interlanguage competence. The recordings of the students working out the sound-meaning-grammar intricacies, I hoped, would in some way reveal the thinking processes that are usually carried out silently and more rapidly within students' minds during a traditional dictation exercise.

### Method

With the same lower-level language class I tried a second dictation of a story I thought they probably would not know. It was also an Aesop fable from Story Cards: Aesop's Fables by Raymond C. Clark (1995). One vocabulary word was introduced before the dictation started, the word "breathless", although in hindsight I should have added "teased". The story follows:

#### The Rabbit and the Dog

A hunting dog found a fine rabbit in a field. Immediately it began to chase the rabbit. But the rabbit was an excellent runner, and in a short time the dog gave up, breathless.

The dog's master came up to the dog and teased it because it

was didn't catch the rabbit. "Master," said the dog, "you may laugh at me, but please remember, the rabbit was running for its life, while I running for your dinner."

The dictation was given in the classic manner of reading it three times. After the third reading, and after the students had added or changed what they wanted, but without further help or correction from me, I arranged them in groups of four or five students for the purpose of comparing their papers with each other and creating a master story, the best compilation of their pooled listening comprehension, grammar, and spelling. I recorded their interactions in assembling their group master copy. As stated above, by observing and recording for further study the student's comments and questions in reconstructing the dictation, I hoped to understand their awareness of English language structure. It proved to be quite interesting.

The students used both English and their first language, Japanese (Kansai dialect) during this exercise, using Japanese as their medium of communication (since this was a lower level English class), and proffering English words and phrases to reconstruct the dictated story. The transcript of their exchange is therefore tricky. The original Japanese transcript is provided in the Appendix, while an English translation of their discussion in Japanese is used here. Because the students were taped aurally and there was much over-talking and interrupting, it is not possible to positively identify the student speaking, therefore I have simply indicated where the speaker changes. The recorded group consisted of four women. The complete transcript as translated into English is found on the following page.

## Transcript of the Student Group Correction and Discussion

<u>Students'</u>	<u>Dialogue</u>
<u>Point under Discussion</u>	
1. "The rabbit and the . . . This 'the' begins with a capital letter, doesn't it?"	capitalization
2. "Generally . . ."	
3. "Oh, we don't need (to capitalize) it?"	
4. "'Dog' is capitalized." capitalization	
5. "A hunting dog found a find rabbit in a . . ."	
6. "a <u>fine</u> rabbit in the . . ." discrimination grammar	sound
7. ". . . a fine rabbit in <u>the</u> ?"	article
8. "field. f-i-e-l-d, isn't it?"	spelling
9. "Immediately?"	
10. "I-m-m . . ."	spelling
11. "Wait. I-m-m . . ."	
12. "e-d-i . . ."	
13. "e-d-i . . ."	
14. "t-e-l-y."	
15. "t-e-l-y."	
16. "It begin . . ."	

17. "began"

verb tense

18. "Oh, 'began'."

19. “A new sentence starts here?” sentence structure
20. “The new sentence started with ‘it’?”
21. “With ‘immediately’.”
22. “So ‘immediately’ starts with a capital letter, right?” capitalization
23. “After that, ‘it began to chase?’”
24. “chase?”
25. “cheese?” sound  
discrimination
26. “‘Chase’, isn’t it?”
27. “c-h-a-s-e.” spelling
28. “Oh, ‘s’.”
29. “the rabbit”
30. “Oh, ‘the’.” article
31. “What comes next?”
32. “Next what did you put? Next is ‘but’, isn’t it?”
33. “Did you capitalize ‘but’?”  
capitalization
34. “‘But’ is capitalized?”
35. “Probably.”
36. “the rabbit . . .”
37. “‘the rabbit’ . . . So, shouldn’t it be  
capitalization

capitalized?”

38. “Oh, I get it.”

39. "... the rabbit was an ..."
40. "an?" article
41. "The (next) word is 'excellent', so it's got to be 'an'."
42. "How did you spell 'excellent'?" spelling
43. "e-x ..."
44. "... x-c-e ..."
45. "... l-l ..."
46. "l-l?"
47. "l-l-e-n-t."
48. "... l-l-e-n-t ... excellent. My spelling was totally wrong. What comes after 'excellent'?"
49. "runner."
50. "Runner? A person who runs?" meaning
51. "'Runner' is spelled r-u?" spelling
52. "and ... short time?"
53. "... in a ..."  
discrimination sound  
preposition,  
article
54. "in a short time?"
55. "After that, it's 'dog give up', right?"
56. "Yeah."
57. "dog ... give up?" verb tense

58. “After ‘a short time’, ‘the dog give up’?”

59. “gave, gave.” verb tense
60. “Then the sentence ends, right?  
Probably with ‘short time’.” sentence structure
61. “It ends with ‘short time’?”
62. “It ends with ‘short time’,  
and then . . .”
63. “The sentence still continues,  
don’t you think?” sentence structure
64. “After ‘short time’ . . .”
65. “The sentence continues, right,  
on to ‘the dog’?”
66. “. . . the dog . . .”
67. “. . . give up . . .”
68. “‘breathless’, isn’t it?”
69. “Then a period, right?” punctuation  
sentence  
structure
70. “Then, ‘the dog’s master’?”
71. “‘Master’ as in ‘Hey, master’?” meaning
72. “m-a-s-t-e-r” spelling
73. “m-a-s-t-e-r”
74. “. . . ‘master’ . . . Is it ‘can up’?”
75. “came.” sound  
discrimination  
meaning
76. “Oh, ‘came’ . . . came up to the dog and . . .”
77. “Is it ‘tease’?”

78. “‘Tease’? What does ‘tease’ mean?” meaning
79. “I’ll look it up in the dictionary.”
80. “t-e-a-s-e . . .” spelling
81. “t-e-a-s-e . . .”
82. “because . . .”
83. “The sentence doesn’t end with ‘it’,  
structure  
but continues with ‘because’?” sentence
84. “I don’t know.”
85. “Yeah, it continues.”
86. “Then, there’s another ‘it’.”
87. “. . . because it . . .”
88. “After ‘because’, did you write ‘it’?  
You’ve written ‘because didn’t’, but the  
subject is missing.” sentence structure  
grammar
89. “Oh, I see.”
90. “After ‘it’, the sentence continues with  
‘because it didn’t’?” sentence structure
91. “it because it?”
92. “After ‘it because’ there’s another ‘it’;  
otherwise there’s no subject.” sentence structure  
grammar
93. “Oh, yeah.”
94. “. . . it didn’t catch the rabbit?”
95. “It always sounds like ‘a’ somehow.” sound

discrimination

article

96. “And then ‘master’?”

97. “Master, said dog . . . ? You may . . .”

98. “I think we need to add ‘the’ here, too.” article
99. “‘You may’ . . . ‘*warau*’ (laugh), isn’t it?” sound  
discrimination
100. “Yeah.” grammar
101. “Oh, that’s ‘laugh’?” sound  
discrimination
102. “I didn’t understand it was ‘*warau*’ (laugh) either, so I wrote it in *katakana*<sup>1</sup>. . . ‘laugh at me’.” meaning
103. “laugh . . . me?”
104. “at me.” sound  
discrimination
105. “Then a period, right? . . . Or is it a comma?” preposition  
punctuation  
sentence  
structure
106. “Comma, isn’t it?”
107. “Then, ‘but . . . please . . . remember’ . . .”
108. “Does the sentence continue?” sentence structure
109. “Where do we end the sentence?” sentence  
structure
110. “. . . please remember . . . the rabbit was . . .”
111. “. . . was . . . for?”
112. “for it life, its life?” sound  
discrimination
113. “I put ‘for its life’.” pronoun  
possessive
114. “the rabbit was . . . for its life . . .”

115. “What?”
116. “the rabbit . . . was . . .”
117. “It’s ‘was’? Wasn’t there something  
discrimination  
like ‘with running’ in there?”
118. “is”  
discrimination
119. “It’s ‘is’, isn’t it? ‘With’ doesn’t  
meaning  
make sense.”
120. “Eh? What about ‘for its life’?”
121. “It comes after that.”
122. “. . . you may laugh at me, but please  
remember the rabbit . . .”
123. “What comes next?”
124. “was”
125. “with”  
discrimination
126. “It doesn’t make sense, does it?  
It’s ‘-ing’, therefore there’s got to be a  
‘be’ verb. Is this sentence in the past tense?”
127. “*hashitte* (running) . . .”
128. “please remember . . .”
129. “*omoidashite kudasai* (please remember)”
130. “the rabbit . . .”

sound

meaning

sound

verb tense,

grammar,

sound

grammar

verb tense

verb tense

meaning



## Analysis

Of error analysis in her work with dictation, Natalicio has stated, comes

[T]he realization that the structure of repetition and dictation tasks does not eliminate or preclude learner errors; that is, despite the fact that the examiner “gives” subjects everything required for complete and accurate responses, deviations from model stimuli regularly occur, and these deviations often follow systematic patterns which in turn tell us a great deal about the learner’s transitional language competence (Natalicio 1979: 169).

Upon reading this transcript of the dictated story by these four junior college women, one can see the systematic patterns. Taken together their concerns are representative of those of the entire class. However, one can separate out individual emphases. Even without knowing any of them, one can guess which of the four women is speaking and what her language concerns and weaknesses are. Each student has a unique personality, a unique voice, and specific areas of language inquisitiveness or focus which come through in the transcript. What are these concerns?

### Individuals’ language concerns

Student #1. It is clear from the interaction that one member of the group has a clearer grasp of English grammar than the others, and while she allowed the others to ask their questions of clarification to each other, she never asked a question herself. She was sure of her own work on her material. She acted as an instructor in discussions of what the proper grammar was. When

the others became confused, she articulated the appropriate rule of grammar to clarify. The manner of her contribution in which she gives the rules of grammar highlights her education in learning English by the grammar-translation method.

She voices her tutorial style on line #17 when she succinctly corrects another student who has mistaken the verb tense in “It begin” with a sole word: “*began*”. It is the same confident spare style on line #59, where after a classmate tentatively offers “After ‘a short time’ ‘the dog give up?’”, she corrects the verb tense with a concise “gave, gave”. However, she also gives lengthier contributions. On line #41, when one group member wonders whether the article dictated was “a” or “an”, this student quickly responds to the query with “The (next) word is ‘excellent’, so it’s got to be ‘an’.” Her style of contributing is more instructing, informing.

She gives her grammar tutorial other places as well. Regarding the line “the rabbit was running for its life”, when one group member on line #117 contributes “with running”, and two students think it is “is running”, student number one again economically delivers the correct verb in the correct tense: “was” (line #124). Her group still floundering with the was/with choice, she more specifically interjects the rule of grammar on line #126: “It doesn’t make sense, does it? It’s ‘-ing’, therefore there’s got to be a ‘be’ verb. Is this sentence in the past tense?” Again she knows her grammar rule and she is confident in delivering it. The group trusts her or acquiesces to her assuredness

as they accept her version.

There are two points of confusion over the part of the dictation which reads, “Then the dog’s master came up to the dog and teased it because it didn’t catch the rabbit.” The first confusion is whether or not the sentence ends after “teased it”, (line #83, “The sentence doesn’t end with ‘it’, but continues with ‘because?’”) Two students are not sure, and one student says it continues. Student number one answers the question decisively on line #86, “Then there’s another ‘it’.” Then she seems to be looking over at another student’s paper where she catches an error; apparently a student wrote “because didn’t”, omitting the “it” before “didn’t”. This tutoring member schools her on a grammatical point with line #88: “After ‘because’, did you write ‘it’? You’ve written ‘because didn’t’, but the subject is missing.” The lesson seems to have been received as the student responds, “Oh, I see,” hopefully not a merely polite “Oh I see,” but an expression that she has actually absorbed the point that a subject is needed. However now other students express their continuing confusion over whether the sentence continues and over the inclusion of two “it”s so close together in the same sentence: “After ‘it’, the sentence continues with ‘because it didn’t?’ and “it because it?” (lines #90 and #91). So student number one reiterates the grammar rule on line #92: “After ‘it because’ there’s another ‘it’; otherwise there’s no subject.” She is correct in her grammar instruction to her classmates. She has instructed them well. At least one more

student now seems to grasp it, sighing “Oh, yeah.”

Student number one has a good grasp of English grammar. She knows how and when to apply the rules she knows in her head. She also articulates these rules solidly, surely, confidently to help others when they appear to need guidance.

Student #2. Another voice which takes on a personality is one young woman who concerns herself with capitalization and the beginning points and ending points of sentences. She has written down the words of the dictation, but from her participation and questions in the ensuing discussion it is clear she is concerned about dividing this stream of words into sentences. Her participation also shows she knows the rule that the first word in a sentence begins with a capital letter. Her native language, Japanese, has no corresponding rule, since it is written in always uniformly-sized *kanji*, Chinese characters. But her comments on punctuation are really questions as to where to establish divisions between sentences.

A cursory reading of only her questions might lead one to think she could not make meaning or discern sentence boundaries: (line #19) “A new sentence starts here?”; (line #33) “Did you capitalize ‘but?’”; (line #69) “Then a period, right?”; (line #83) “The sentence doesn’t end with ‘it’, but continues with ‘because?’”; (line #90) “After ‘it’, the sentence continues with ‘because it didn’t?’”; (line #105) “Then a period, right? . . . Or is it a comma?”; and either

(line #108) “Does the sentence continue?” or (line #109) “Where do we end the sentence?” But upon closer inspection of the context of her questions, one sees that her seeming problem with knowing where a completed sentence ends is not a simple one. Where she asks her questions shows a sophisticated s-v-o knowledge and an understanding of clauses. Her questions are very pertinent and trigger much discussion in the group, others then realizing that the delineation is not clear.

She displays her concerns for both sentence completion and capitalizing the first word of the new sentence early on. After the group completes the first sentence of the story and starts the second rather ambiguously, she asks on line #19, “A new sentence starts here?” Another student answering that the new sentence starts with the word “immediately”, she offers line #22: “So ‘immediately’ starts with a capital letter, right?” Then where the group is not yet sure where to end the second sentence of the tale (“Immediately [the dog] began to chase the rabbit”) and begin the third (“But the rabbit was an excellent runner”), this student recognizes that after the word “rabbit” the sentence could be considered complete and therefore end, or it could continue as a compound sentence with a dependent clause starting with “but”, so that the apparent capitalization dilemma of her next line (line #33, “Did you capitalize ‘but?’”) really focuses the question on where to end one sentence and begin the next. In fact the students never resolve where this sentence ends. It is only left with

“but” is “probably” capitalized, therefore “but” *probably* starts a new sentence.

She was not alone in her confusion over where sentences begin and end, however. There is much confusion among the group members concerning the section of the fable “and in a short time the dog gave up, breathless.” Does the sentence end after “a short time”, or after “the dog gave up”, or after “breathless”? This student is certainly part of this volley of questions, though which one is not certain. It probably is not her on line #60, “Then the sentence ends, right? Probably with ‘short time’,” as “and in a short time” does not make a complete sentence, which student number two would realize. It is more likely her question of doubt and incredulity on line #61, “It ends with ‘short time’?” And it is probably her voice which adds the punctuation after the group affirms that the sentence continues to “the dog gave up, breathless”: “Then a period, right?” (line #69).

It is probably student number two on line #83 who, of the story line “The dog’s master came up to the dog and teased it because it didn’t catch the rabbit,” asks the pertinent question “The sentence doesn’t end with ‘it’, but continues with ‘because’?” which starts off the previously discussed long process to resolve exactly where the sentence ends. Here again the difficulty of deciding whether or not the sentence ends after “teased it” is due to student number two recognizing the completion of an independent clause, what could be a free-standing sentence, “The dog’s master came up to the dog and teased it . . . .”

However the deciding factor is whether or not the next part, “because it didn’t catch the rabbit”, is considered a complete sentence, as English sentences can and do often start with “because”, or it is seen as merely a dependent clause. Again this sophisticated question is not immediately clearly answered. One student states that it continues (line #85), but another still-disbelieving student asks the question again on line #90, “After ‘it’, the sentence continues with ‘because it didn’t’?” After some discussion it is finally passively accepted that the sentence continues.

The confusion may stem from the disparity between English sentence structure and Japanese sentence structure. Japanese sentences can and regularly do begin with “but” and “because” followed by what would be only a dependent clause in English, like the above “because it didn’t catch the rabbit”. Japanese would see that clause and consider/make it a sentence, capitalizing “because” and putting a period after “rabbit”. This would be an excellent example, therefore, for the teacher to use afterwards to illustrate how English sentence structure differs from that of Japanese, how dependent clauses, though containing a subject and a verb and even an object, need independent clauses to lean on, to attach themselves to.

The same structural point is raised again for the same reason regarding “‘Master,’ said the dog, ‘you may laugh at me, but please remember . . . .’” Student number two and the others are again confused over whether the

sentence continues or ends after “at me”. It is student number two whose question crystallizes the quandary with her line #105, “Then a period, right? . . . Or is it a comma?” She recognizes that the first clause could be a free-standing sentence. Then she sees the following word “but”, which in Japanese could correctly be the beginning of a new sentence but in English rarely is, and she is confused. Indeed, the word “but” has started the third sentence of this fable: “But the rabbit was an excellent runner . . .” We can infer by her waffling that she suspects the second clause may be merely a dependent clause which need be appended to the first clause. However, she is understandably bewildered. Again this lucid question sets off debate, whereupon she again, even more pointedly asks the same question with either line #108, “Does the sentence continue?” or line #109, “Where do we end the sentence?” The students avoid answering and the issue remains unresolved, the students left to individually punctuate this part until line #122, where one student puts the two clauses of the sentence together, “you may laugh at me, but please remember the rabbit . . .”, and no one further questions the separation or juncture of these clauses.

Student #3. Another student’s concern is spelling. She has taken the dictation as best she could phonetically, but is not sure of her spelling. English phonology is infamous for its difficulty, and she double checks many words. This student asks for spelling help for “field” (“f-i-e-l-d, isn’t it?”, line #8), “excellent” (“How did you spell ‘excellent’?”, line #42), “runner” (“‘Runner’ is

spelled r-u . . . ?”, line #51), and “master” (line #73). The words “immediately” and “tease” are also spelled out. This student is no doubt contributing other pieces to this dialogue, but her distinct discernible concern is her need to know the correct spelling of the words the group has accepted as part of their amalgamated dictation.

Student #4. One student always questions whether the article before a noun is “a”, “an”, or “the”. In the transcript her lines are: (line #7) “a fine rabbit in the [field]?”; and after another student offers “the rabbit” (line #29), she lets out the realization: “Oh, ‘the’.” (line #30). When another student offers, on line #39, “the rabbit was an . . .”, this student queries “an?” (line #40), whereupon she is answered by a classmate, (line # 41) “The (next) word is ‘excellent’, so it’s got to be ‘an’,” an instruction that “an” precedes words starting with a vowel, a point which a teacher hopes she learns in this peer learning exercise. Finally she admits she could not distinguish between “an” and “the” when listening to the dictation, when just after another student gives the line “. . . it didn’t catch the rabbit?” (line #94), she sighs on line #95, “It always sounds like ‘a’ somehow.” She shows that she is now conscious of this problem, perhaps stimulated to awareness by this very interaction of piecing together a dictation with her peers. Perhaps it is she on line #97 who misses the article altogether in the suggested line, “Master, said dog . . . ?” But here again, peer group dynamics provide the tutelage of “I think we need to add ‘the’ here, too,” (line

#98), reinforcing the focus on article usage and placement.

Student number four is getting immediate correction, immediate feedback, immediate answers in an area she realizes she has trouble with, an area which she sees her peers understand better, and it is a non-threatening atmosphere in which to learn. At least she doesn't feel too embarrassed to admit her difficulty in the group or to ask for help from her peers.

Many Japanese students have this difficulty with articles. Firstly there are no articles in the Japanese language. Along with grasping the concept of articles, the students must also learn to differentiate definite from indefinite: "a" versus "the"; then, further, "a" versus "an". Secondly, compounding this dissimilarity between native and second language, in conversation articles are usually unstressed, which makes hearing their differences most difficult, throwing the students back to reliance on grammar rules. But dictation can aid in the perception of articles in speech and their usage. It has been noted by Kenton Sutherland that:

[M]any students begin to realize -- after a short exposure to dictated material -- that the omission or misuse of small function words is a serious error, that such devices are highly important to the grammatical signalling system of the language. Many students actually never hear certain unstressed syllables and one-syllable function words . . . (Sutherland 1967: 25).

Sawyer and Silver are more specific: "[A] foreign student of English tends not to hear articles when they occur in unstressed position." They conclude that, as may have happened here, in text dictation the student

“discovers the things he doesn’t hear” (Sawyer and Silver 1961: 41).

### Group concerns

In the transcript it is noted that meaning was important as the students’ group version of the dictation was negotiated, as I had hoped. “Find” is corrected to “fine” from the students’ initial “A hunting dog found a ‘find’ rabbit in the field.” “Cheese” is changed to “chase” from the originally offered “it began to ‘cheese’ the rabbit.” In each case a student heard a word that sounded similar to that in the story, but which does not make sense in the context. “It

began to 'cheese' the rabbit" not only doesn't make sense (as student number one points out), but "cheese" is a noun, where the sentence needs a verb. For the line "But the rabbit was an excellent runner", one student, who asks on line #50, "Runner? A person who runs?" suddenly understands the word and the meaning that she had not gotten correctly earlier on her own paper. But upon hearing her peers say "runner", the appropriateness of this word in the sentence becomes clear to her. For the line "The dog's master came up to the dog . . ." one student questioned or hesitantly offered her understanding on line #74 as "'master' . . . Is it 'can up'?" One of her peers replies, "came," and she immediately sees that the meaning fits in her next comment on line #76, "Oh, 'came' . . . came up to the dog and . . ." And the teacher's pride on line #79: When a student unabashedly asks, "'Tease'? What does 'tease' mean?" (and as a teacher I am pleased that this kind of unselfconscious questioning and trust arises in the group), one angel volunteers, "I'll look it up in the dictionary."

Verb tense was also discussed in this group. The fable starts out, as fables do, in the past tense: "A hunting dog found a fine rabbit in the field." The next line starts, "Immediately . . ." and a student continued the line with her contribution on line #16 of "it begin". Here another student picks up the error in the use of the present tense, having understood that the story is set in the past, and offers her correction, "began". The first student yields to this suggestion with, "Oh, 'began'," which the reader may assume indicates a quiet realization of

the mistake, but it is not certain that the student knows why the verb is in the past tense. “Oh” as an exclamation usually shows sudden awareness. Perhaps she snaps the pieces together that the verb in the first sentence is in the past tense to set the time of the story, and that subsequent sentences should follow within the past time frame; but perhaps she is just demurring.

There is a similar error on line #58 where one student contributes, “After ‘a short time’, ‘the dog give up’?”, generally catching the dictated words, but mistaking the verb tense (and third person singular form). She is corrected by a classmate who is very sure that it’s the past tense, “gave, gave”. There is no further discussion, indicating that the first student conceded, hopefully by understanding why the tense was changed.

In the students’ discussion of the word “tease” from lines #77 to #81, spelling it, and questioning its meaning, and even looking it up in the dictionary, none of them commented on the tense, which they mistake. Perhaps that is because this is a new vocabulary word for them, and whereas the dictionary would state that it is a verb, the students seemed busy enough with spelling and meaning to not notice what tense it should have been in.

All of the students had trouble distinguishing dependent clauses from complete sentences, which was discussed at length above, and capitalization of the title was never resolved.

## Conclusion

From reading the transcript of the students' discussion and negotiation in reconstructing the dictation given by the teacher, one can see by their questions and comments their areas of weakness and their language concerns. Their comments and questions reveal their areas of assuredness and insecurity in the target language. This is a rich source for the teacher in preparing subsequent class materials.

There were punctuations of the aha! button, where a piece of the story wording given by one student sparked a reaction of a sudden exclamation of understanding in another, where perhaps an abstract rule was seen to fit a real use situation. These announcements of understanding were usually signalled by "Oh!": the "Oh, I see" of the student needing a subject on line #89; her classmate's "Oh, yeah" over the same point on line #93; the "Oh, I get it" of line #38. Where a student suddenly realized that a suggested word fit into the context or the grammar, there were also exclamations of "Oh". There was the "Oh, 'began'" of line #18, the "Oh, 'the'" of line #30, the "Oh, it's 'dinner'" of line #138. These and the few other "Oh, yeah's" are evidence of what Sharwood Smith (1981) and others have called "language consciousness-raising."

In addition to the more subtle but potent learning in the group story reconstruction suggestion free-for-alls, the transcript also shows that much overt teaching has taken place. Direct student instruction is conspicuous on line #41,

where one student explained the need for the article “an” over “a”: “The (next) word is ‘excellent’, so it’s got to be ‘an’”; lines #88 and #92, where one student reminded the group of the need for a subject in the clause; and on line #126, where one member tells the others that an “--ing” ending of a verb requires an accompanying “be” verb in the appropriate tense.

It is for just such glimmerings of understanding which I, as a teacher, put them to work together, peers questioning and helping peers. Each student contributes in the restoration of the dictated piece, and their interaction produces a synergy of learning. The tumbling of suggestions by the entire group, both correct and incorrect, each of which the group members must consider and assess, affects powerful learning.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Implications for Teaching

Dictation with its subsequent group work, as seen in the previous chapters, offers five major pedagogical benefits for foreign language learning:

1) it offers reinforcement and practice in a roster of skills; 2) it offers context for learning and practice; 3) it offers important information to the teacher on the language proficiency of the students; 4) it gives the students immediate feedback on their own abilities and areas of weakness; and 5) it facilitates active (conscious) learning of structures, and it has been asserted their subconscious acquisition as well.

Firstly, and most obviously, dictation requires the students to call on many skills. The most evident are listening, spelling, and the discrimination of sounds. But it also allows practice and reinforcement in handwriting, punctuation, capitalization, vocabulary already known, and sentence and paragraph formation. It commands general comprehension, but also requires focus on the structure of the language in details such as grammatical agreement and verb conjugation. It attunes the students to the rhythm and harmonies of

the language while giving students access to interesting, authentic text. All of these benefits which Rollo Brown found so compelling back in 1915, still apply.

Secondly, dictation provides high context for utilizing these skills. It involves the students in working with a self-contained capsule of thought, comprised of distinct, complete sentences woven grammatically and stylistically to express that thought. The students work with it as a synthesis of meaning, grammar, and structure, usually at a more complex level of multi-sentenced text, or even whole stories. This is, *a priori*, whole context, what many educators and scholars stress as an important element in students' lessons. Richard Kidd, draws on Diane Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia to conclude:

Dictation . . . promotes grammatical competence in a holistic fashion, not as an isolated component of the learner's overall proficiency. This approach accords with the modern view that the learning of grammatical forms must always occur in association with semantic and/or pragmatic factors, the latter including both sociolinguistic and discourse-related meanings (Richard Kidd 1992: 50-51).

In the task of taking down a reading given orally, dictation incorporates the skills of listening comprehension, writing, and the understanding of grammar and structure, eliciting from the students all of the these. One might believe that free writing would do the same eliciting, only better. While free writing, journal writing, and composition are also wonderful learning tools, they work differently.

Dictation takes away the doubt of word order, the confusion of each verb conjugation, of searching for vocabulary, which features Lado characterized as

deficiencies in his criticism cited in Chapter One. These “deficiencies” are in fact its strength. Dictation removes the pressure of creating prose while still keeping the focus on the elements of good writing. As Sawyer and Silver (1961) see it:

In the paragraph dictation situation [the student] is not responsible for the construction of grammatical patterns, he does not have to make vocabulary choices, he is not forced to make decisions concerning stylistic patterns he may not be aware of, and yet he is writing meaningfully in this second language in a manner approximating the way a native speaker would write (Sawyer and Silver 1961: 40).

Dictation works with language holistically, but does not demand invention. Put more succinctly:

[Dictation exercises] should . . . be seen as a way of contextualizing the skill practice that most students seem to need no matter how much free writing practice they have and they certainly can be a substitute for isolated drill in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage (Stotsky 1983: 11).

So dictation obliges the students to contextualize and distinguish their knowledge of the target language, without the pressure of creating it. Whether they know grammar rules by rote (explicit knowledge) or just have a feel for what sounds right (implicit knowledge), dictation works with the structure of the language as a whole. This is the simple beauty of dictation, that in its unpretentious and focused way, it works with language as a whole in a context.

A third benefit of dictation is that it gives teachers invaluable information on their students’ individual or class level areas of proficiency in an uncomplicated and time-efficient way. As Oller discovered in his research, discussed in Chapter One, dictation worked as well as the ESLPE in showing the

students' grasp of a whole range of language skills: vocabulary, grammar, composition and phonology. Natalicio also found simple dictation to be profound in its capacity as an assessment tool:

[L]inguistic processing requirements of a far from superficial nature are involved in repetition and dictation, and that these tasks may be considered to be as adequate and appropriate as other measures of linguistic competence. . . . [D]ictation may be one of the most efficient means of obtaining information about literate students' overall language proficiency" (Natalicio 1979: 170).

In one simple exercise, then, time-pressed teachers can quickly discern their students' language strengths and problems.

Knowing what areas students need help and practice with allows the teacher to further develop class lessons and materials to give the students more confidence in those trouble areas or to evolve the lesson by extending the complexity to incorporate new material.

As an example, from the class whose group transcript was analyzed in the previous chapter come rich opportunities for the teacher to design lessons around the areas discussed therein. Seeing the group-wide, and probably class-wide, problem with differentiating clauses from complete sentences, the teacher could review the English subject-verb-object structure of both clauses and sentences as a mini-lesson. She could have the students quickly pick out the subjects, verbs, and objects in the sentences of the just-dictated fable, differentiating them by symbols on their papers or writing them in columns on

the blackboard. After the students were solid in this phase, the teacher could focus on conjunctions, which are the lead-ins for the students in recognizing dependent clauses. The teacher could then explain that a dependent clause, wherever found, must be attached to an independent clause, a clause that can stand on its own as a sentence. Then the lesson could go back to the dictated

piece to pick out where this is found. In this way the grammar review would both flow from the dictated piece, organically, holistically, from finding the students' problem areas, then return to the dictated piece after the mini grammar lesson for integration.

As a further example, in the long transcript in Chapter Two, one student showed and stated she could not distinguish between "a" and "the" from the teacher's dictation, and she also had trouble correctly placing "a" and "an". If this is a class-wide problem, again in a mini grammar lesson, students could be asked to circle all the articles in the dictation with its subsequent noun. Then as a class lesson, students could discuss why it should be "a" or "an", or "the". This would be an excellent and relevant way for a teacher to explain and demonstrate definite and indefinite articles. Again the lesson would be contextualized, not abstract.

Students can also be trained in dictation to look at the logical clues as well as the linguistic clues in the high context of a dictated piece. For example, one student heard the word "cheese" in the dictation of the fable "The Rabbit and the Dog", writing "the dog began to 'cheese' the rabbit", though the dictated word was "chase". "Cheese" is logically totally out of place in this tale of a hunting dog running after a rabbit, as well as grammatically wrong as the sentence would suffer lack of a verb. The teacher can use this example to coach the students to look at the meaning in context, to check themselves for

vocabulary misfits. In the same story, the teacher can point out the clues for choosing “fine” rather than “find” in “A hunting dog found a fine rabbit in the field.” Although the student who confused them may have been connecting “find” with the previous verb “found”, it can be pointed out in this whole context that “A hunting dog found a find rabbit” makes neither logical nor linguistic sense.

The dictation can be the presented piece, which is then examined more closely in mini-lesson format to note the grammatical components. Or dictation can be the culminating exercise after the grammar lesson, the exercise that pulls the pieces together for the students and activates the aha! button when the students see the point used in context. Or it can be used as both.

Fourthly, dictation “provides a means of exact, immediate and simple feedback” to the students on their points of competence and weakness when the errors are carefully checked (Hagiwara and Kuzumaki 1982: 59). This speed of feedback to the students is priceless in the learning process. And in dictation this feedback doesn’t come from the teacher, it comes from the material itself. This eliminates the perceived middle authority, giving the students more immediacy, more intimacy with the material.

The act of writing a dictation forces students to react in the second language quickly, their hesitancy showing them which areas they are unsure of. This stimulation of the students’ self-awareness of their language strengths and

weaknesses is one of the major gifts of dictation use.

Having the students work in groups to perfect the dictated piece without yet having seen the original is my own modification on how to extend the benefits of self-awareness, individual language strengths, comfort level within groups, and lack of shame working with peers. In this classroom variation of dictation I sought to mix up and multiply the students' talents and expertise for the synergistic reaction they have in the learning experience.

As seen in the group correction process transcript in Chapter Two, the students received instant and direct feedback line by line by their peers to their questions, to their hesitant offerings, to their errors, feedback mere nanoseconds from their spoken wonderings. Sometimes the feedback was another confused voice, giving reassurance to the original questioner that she was not alone in her bewilderment. Yet speedily the group would reach consensus on a choice and move on to the next perplexing word or phrase. Students helping students in group work accelerated and amplified the feedback process.

And finally, as simply and beautifully as dictation works in contextualizing skills, and reinforcing those language areas the students have already studied, dictation can also promote both the conscious learning and the subconscious acquisition of new structures/material.

When students come across an unknown in their taking down of a dictation, this becomes an opportunity for questioning and learning in the

correction follow-up phase. The students themselves see their own gaps and errors. The combined transcription and correction activities direct the students' attention to those forms they missed, both areas that the students need more practice with and new material. A dictation passage can therefore be aimed at the students' level with just a little challenge included in it (i+1) to activate the conscious learning of the newly introduced material, the teacher making this an opportunity for explanation.

Richard Kidd, however, goes beyond commending the conscious learning capabilities of dictation, and theorizes that dictation can also foster the subconscious acquisition of language.

[D]ictation passages may qualify as good comprehensible input, and therefore promote the subconscious *acquisition* of structure. Well-chosen texts that challenge ESL students are bound to contain a few structures at the "i+1" level. Dictation also demands active involvement and attention to meaning. According to Krashen[’s model of language acquisition], comprehensible input becomes "intake" under such conditions, and acquisition occurs automatically (Kidd 1992: 51).

Kidd continues:

On the other hand, dictation activities also promote the conscious *learning* of structures. . . . Although Krashen insists that learning cannot become acquisition, many have argued that structures which are analyzed and understood on a conscious level can ultimately, through practice and experience, become implicit ("acquired") as well. This process of "rule internalization", as it is sometimes called, may in fact be nothing more than the development of "automaticity" or "control". If so, dictation may provide useful practice, both receptive (listening) and productive (writing), for acquiring such control (Kidd 1992: 51).

Kidd distinguishes between the theory of active (conscious) learning

versus subconscious language acquisition, but he espouses that both kinds of language assimilation are occurring in the practice of dictation. He is so enthusiastic about dictation in its many variants (he examines four), he proposes that “dictation should be regarded as a general method that permits a wide variety of different techniques . . .” (Kidd 1992: 49). His theory describing dictation as activating dual pathways for language learning/acquisition persuades me to conclude that dictation is a doubly potent resource in the classroom repertoire.

Dictation is also of great benefit to the teacher for reasons other than the five pedagogical reasons discussed above. It is a flexible resource, as the dictated material can be literary or informational, poetic, or even rules of grammar. It is learner-centered. It can be used with any level. It can be used with a class of any size, a useful tool for teachers working with large classes. The students are active for the full time of dictation, and they are also active during the correction phase.

It provides context for various activities. It can be the lead-in to oral exercises. It can calm down a class. If used as the first exercise of the class session, it can discourage tardiness. It is safe for a non-native teacher. It is easy to correct. It can be used with little preparation time. It gives shy students a safe way to participate. It demonstrates that the process is more important than the product. All these rationales and more have been offered for dictation use throughout its

history by such educators as Brown (1915), Sawyer and Silver (1961), Brown and Barnard (1975), Davis and Rinvoluceri (1988), and Kidd (1992). Leavenworth adds that it also appeals to “the audile, the visual, and the motile types of minds” (Leavenworth 1926: 484). Furthermore, “the difficulty of the task of dictation for the student can be controlled in at least five ways, lexically, structurally, in the complexity of the ideas expressed, in the number of words dictated between pauses, and in the speed of dictation” (Brown and Barnard 1975: 57-58).

For variety, the dictation needn't be the “classic” type of dictation. The teacher doesn't have to be the reader, nor does the teacher have to choose the text. Three books present numerous variations, new exercises and new slants on dictation. Dictation: New Methods, New Possibilities by Paul Davis and Mario Rinvoluceri (1988) offers 69 variations on dictation for use in the classroom. Grammar Dictation by Ruth Wajnryb (1990) gives graded exercises for the classroom by grammar focus in the “dictogloss” semi-dictation, semi-composition technique. A third book is Listening Dictation by Joan Morley (1976), which gives classroom-ready dictation exercises based on grammar, intended for the language laboratory but which can also be given “live” to the class.

Among the variations are: picture dictation, messenger and scribe, whisper lines, relay dictation, using students' texts, scrambled text, embellishing the teacher's text, cloze dictations, and dictogloss, all of which I have used in my

classrooms. My students favored relay dictation, wherein one student of a group memorizes one line of a posted text, runs back to his/her group and dictates it, being allowed to return to the text as many times as is necessary to complete the line. Then the next member of the group goes up to the posted text to memorize and dictate the second line, etc. There was always a lot of expectation or even trepidation on the part of the subsequent runners, a pressure to be quick and accurate, not only for themselves but for their teams. This pressure or danger excited the class. Their voices rose in volume and pitch. In this exercise the students' pronunciation is important for their groups' understanding, and I heard multiple repetitions of certain words, followed sometimes by pantomimes, spellings, and even the Japanese translation of the word. Amid squeals and giggles, the women's classes completed their dictations, and this teacher was happy that all the students had participated actively during the entire exercise.

### Conclusion

Dictation has had its detractors. Perhaps it is for the reason Corbett states, that “the emphasis now is on creativity, self-expression, individuality, . . . [that] there is the suspicion among us that imitation stultifies and inhibits the writer rather than empowers and liberates him” (Corbett 1971: 249). But researchers, like Oller have debunked the suspicions that the ancient, staid tool of

dictation does nothing positive for the students' learning, as seen. Even those who do not see beyond dictation as merely imitative see its benefits. Corbett (1971) cites Ross Winterowd in his support of the value of imitative exercises:

In this sense, stylistic exercises enable. That is, "mere" exercises in style allow the student to internalize structures that make his own grammar a more flexible instrument for combining and hence enable the student to take experience apart and put it together again in new ways, which is, after all, the generative function of language. . . . Such imitation is not slavish, for it brings about a mix that equals individuality: the resources of the language per se and the individual sensibility that will use them (Winterowd 1970: 164, 167).

Besides its reinforcement and practice value and its affirmative teaching

efficacy, dictation brings a homely satisfaction in its use, as Leavenworth articulates: “In a dictation exercise I always feel that the time is being used to the full by every pupil and that it is being filled with the use of the foreign tongue exclusively. . .” (Leavenworth 1926: 489).

Dictation, then, with all its qualities for stimulating true learning in the students, both individually and in groups, and in its ease of use for the teacher, warrants due attention as a timeless, flexible pedagogical tool.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, D. and Barnard, H. (1975). Dictation as a Learning Experience. RELC Journal, 6(2) (December 1975), 42-62.
- Brown, R. W. (1915). How the French Boy Learns to Write. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Cartledge, H. A. (1968). A Defence of Dictation. English Language Teaching, 22(3), 226-231.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). Grammar Pedagogy in Second and Foreign Language Teaching. TESOL Quarterly, 25(3), 459-480.
- Clark, R. C. (1995). Story Cards: Aesop's Fables. Vermont: Pro Lingua Associates.
- Clark, S. (1995). Story Cards: North American Indian Tales. Vermont: Pro Lingua Associates.
- Corbett, E. P. (1971). The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric. College Composition and Communication, 22, 243-250.
- Corder, S. P. (1967). The Significance of Learner's Errors. IRAL, 5(4) (November 1967), 161-170.
- Davis, P. and Rinvoluceri, M. (1988). Dictation: New Methods, New Possibilities. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dusková L. (1969). On Sources of Errors in Foreign Language Learning. IRAL, 7(1) (February 1969), 11-36.
- Fachrurrazy. (1989). Dictation as a Device for Testing English as a Foreign

Language. Guidelines, 11(2) (December 1989), 48-60.

Fishman, M. (1980). We All Make the Same Mistakes: A Comparative Study of Native and Nonnative Errors in Taking Dictation. In Oller, J. W., Jr. and Perkins, K. (Eds.) Research in Language Testing. Massachusetts: Newbury House, 187-194.

- Hagiwara, A. and Kuzumaki, Y. (1982). An Analysis of Errors in Listening Dictation with Specific Reference to the Cause of Misperception of English Pronunciation. System, 10(1), 53-60.
- Hall, S. E. M. (1986). An Approach to Dictation with Young Children. Insights into Open Education, 18(7) (April 1986), 2-7, ED267426.
- Heath, R. (1988). Developing Listening Comprehension Materials for ESL Learners in the Pacific Area. Guidelines, 10(2) (December 1988), 41-61.
- Irvine, P., Atai, P., and Oller, J. W., Jr. (1974). Cloze, Dictation, and the Test of English as a Foreign Language. Language Learning, 24(2) (December 1974), 245-252.
- Jafarpur, A. and Yamini, M. (1993). Does Practice with Dictation Improve Language Skills? System, 21(3), 359-369.
- Joynes, E. (1900). Dictation and Composition in Modern Language Teaching. PMLA, 15(1), xxv-xxx.
- Kaga, M. (1991). Dictation as a Measure of Japanese Proficiency. Language Testing, 8(2), 112-124.
- Keh, C. L. (1989). The Use of Dicto-Comp in Form Six. Guidelines, 11(1) (June 1989), 19-22.
- Kidd, R. (1992). Teaching ESL Grammar Through Dictation. TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL du Canada, 10(1) (Fall 1992), 49-61.
- Krashen, S. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Lado, R. (1961). Language Testing. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1991). Teaching Grammar. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.) Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. New York: Newbury House, 279-296.
- Lawrence, P. M., and Levinson, B. F. (1987). Dictation - Alive and Well. English Journal, 76(6) (October 1987), 49-50.
- Leavenworth, C. E. (1926). The Dictation Exercise - Its Variations and Values. Modern Language Journal, 10, 483-490.
- McComish, J. (1982). Listening to Pictures. Modern English Teacher, 10(2), 4-8.
- Morley, J. (1976). Listening Dictation. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Morris, S. (1983). Dictation - A Technique in Need of Reappraisal. ELT Journal, 37(2) (April 1983), 121-126.
- Natalicio, D. S. (1979). Repetition and Dictation as Language Testing Techniques. Modern Language Journal, 63(4), 165-176.
- Neisser, U. (1967). Cognitive Psychology. New York: Appleton Century.
- Oller, J. W., Jr. (1971). Dictation as a Device for Testing Foreign-Language Proficiency. English Language Teaching, 25(3), 254-259.
- Oller, J. W., Jr. (1972). Scoring Methods and Difficulty Levels for Tests of Proficiency in English as a Second Language. Modern Language Journal, 56, 184-199.
- Oller, J. W., Jr. (1973). Discrete-Point Tests Versus Tests of Integrative Skills. In Oller, J. W., Jr. and Richards, J. C. (Eds.) Focus on the Learner. Massachusetts: Newbury House, 184-199.

- Oller, J. W., Jr. and Streiff, V. (1975). Dictation: A Test of Grammar-Based Expectancies. English Language Teaching Journal, 30(1), 25-36.
- Pappas, G. S. (1977). You Mean You Still Give Dictation? Language Arts, 54(1) (January 1977), 936-939.
- Read, J. (1997). Teaching Grammar Through Grammar Dictation.  
<http://info.utas.edu.au/docs/humsoc/humanities/read.html>.
- Richards, J. C. (1973). Error Analysis and Second Language Strategies. In Oller, J. W., Jr. and Richards, J. C. (Eds.) Focus on the Learner. Massachusetts: Newbury House, 114-135.
- Richards, J. C. (1973). A Noncontrastive Approach to Error Analysis. In Oller, J. W., Jr. and Richards, J. C. (Eds.) Focus on the Learner. Massachusetts: Newbury House, 96-113.
- Riley, P. M. (1972). The Dicto-Comp. English Teaching Forum, 10(1) (January-February 1972), 21-23.

- Saussure, F. (1959). Course in General Linguistics. Bally, C. and Sechehaye, A. (Eds.), Baslom, W (Tr.). New York: The Philosophical Library.
- Sawyer, J. and Silver, S. (1961). Dictation in Language Learning. Language Learning, 11(1-2), 33-42.
- Schofer, G. (1977). Teachers Should Be Dictators. Language Arts, 54(4) (April 1977), 401-402.
- Sharwood Smith, M. (1981). Consciousness-Raising and the Second Language Learner. Applied Linguistics, 2(2), 159-168.
- Slobin, D. I. and Welsh, C. A. (1973). Elicited Imitation as a Research Tool in Developmental Psycholinguistics. In Ferguson, C. A. and Slobin, D. I. (Eds.) Studies of Child Language Development. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 485-497.
- Speer, T. M. (1980). Putting Variety into Dictation. English Teaching Forum, 18(3) (July 1980), 28-30, 35.
- Stansfield, C. W. (1985). A History of Dictation in Foreign Language Teaching and Testing. Modern Language Journal, 69( 2), 121-128.
- Stephen, P. (1984). Language Code Acquisition Through Written-Oral Dictation: A New Tool. The Canadian Modern Language Review, 40(2), 264-273.
- Stotsky, S. (1977). Dictating Literature in the Language Arts Class. The Leaflet, 76, 9-12. ED143006.
- Stotsky, S. (1983). Dictation: Building Listening, Writing, and Reading Skills Together. The Leaflet, 82(2) (Spring 1983), 6-12. ED262420.
- Suenobu, M., Kanzaki, K., Yamane, S., and Young, R. (1986). Listening

Comprehension and the Process of Information Acquisition by Non-native Speakers of English. IRAL, 24(3) (August 1986), 239-248.

Sutherland, K. K. (1967). The Place of Dictation in the Language Classroom. TESOL Quarterly, 1 (March 1967), 24-29.

Valette, R. M. (1964). The Use of the Dictée in the French Language Classroom. Modern Language Journal, 48, 431-434.

Wajnryb, R. (1988). The Dictogloss Method of Language Teaching: A Text-based, Communicative Approach to Grammar. English Teaching Forum, 26(3) (July 1988), 35-38.

Wajnryb, R. (1990). Grammar Dictation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wajnryb, R. (1988). The Information Gap - the Role of Memory and Creativity in the Dictogloss Method. Guidelines, 10(1) (June 1988), 63-66.

Winterowd, W. R. (1970). Style: A Matter of Manner. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56, 164, 167.

Wu, Z. (1989). Dictation: A Great Help in Language Learning. Guidelines, 11(2) (December 1989), 61-66.

Wu, Z. (1989). Possible Aural Activities in the Listening Class. Guidelines, 11(1) (June 1989), 33-41.

## APPENDIX

### Original Student Transcript for “The Rabbit and the Dog”

1. 「The rabbit and the ... the の the は大文字やな。」
2. 「一応は...」
3. 「あ、いらんの？」
4. 「dog は大文字やろ。」
5. 「A hunting dog found a find rabbit in a ...」
6. 「a fine rabbit in the ...」
7. 「... a fine rabbit in the ?」
8. 「field, f, i, e, l, d やろ。」
9. 「Immediately?」
10. 「I, m, m」
11. 「待って、i, m, m」
12. 「e, d, i」
13. 「e, d, i ...」
14. 「t, e, l, y」
15. 「t, e, l, y」
16. 「It begin ...」
17. 「began」
18. 「began か。」
19. 「ここから大文字？」
20. 「it から大文字だった？」
21. 「Immediately から。」
22. 「Immediately が大文字やな。」
23. 「で、it began to chase?」
24. 「chase?」
25. 「cheese?」
26. 「chase やろ？」
27. 「c, h, a, s, e」
28. 「s かー。」
29. 「the rabbit」

30. 「the かー。」
31. 「次は？」
32. 「次、何にした？ 次、but やな。」
33. 「but は大文字にしたな？」
34. 「but は大文字なんか。」
35. 「多分ね。」
36. 「the rabbit ...」
37. 「the rabbit ... だから、大文字なんとちゃう？」
38. 「あっ、そうか。」
39. 「... the rabbit was an ...」
40. 「an？」
41. 「excellent やろ。だから an ちゃう。」
42. 「excellent ってどう書いた？」
43. 「e, x ...」
44. 「... x, c, e ...」
45. 「l, l ...」
46. 「l, l ?」
47. 「l, l, e, n, t」
48. 「... l, l, e, n, t ... excellent ... 全然違う... excellent の次は何が入る？」
49. 「runner」
50. 「runner? 走る人の runner やな？」
51. 「runner って、r, u?」
52. 「and ... short time?」
53. 「... in a ...」
54. 「in a short time?」
55. 「で、dog が give up しはるんやな？」
56. 「うん。」
57. 「dog が give up?」
58. 「... a short time で the dog が give up か。」
59. 「gave, gave」
60. 「で、終わりやな？ 多分、short time で。」
61. 「short time で終わり？」
62. 「short time で終わって...」
63. 「このまま、続いているんちゃう。」

64. 「short time で...」
65. 「そのまま続けたらいいんちゃう、... the dog って。」
66. 「... the dog ...」
67. 「... give up ...」
68. 「breathless やな。」
69. 「で、マルやな。」
70. 「で、the dog's master?」
71. 「master ってな、『へイ、マスター』のマスター？」
72. 「m, a, s, t, e, r」
73. 「m, a, s, t, e, r」
74. 「... master ... can up か？」
75. 「came」
76. 「came か ... came up to the dog and ...」
77. 「tease かな。」
78. 「tease? tease って何？」
79. 「辞書引くね。」
80. 「t, e, a, s, e...」
81. 「t, e, a, s, e...」
82. 「because ...」
83. 「it で終わりじゃなくて、because が続き？」
84. 「わからん。」
85. 「うん、続き。」
86. 「で、また it やで。」
87. 「... because it ...」
88. 「because のあとに it 書いた？ Because didn't と書いてあるけど、主語がないよ。」
89. 「なるほど。」
90. 「it で because it didn't と続くんか。」
91. 「it because it?」
92. 「it because でもう 1 回 it が来るんや、主語がないから。」
93. 「ああ、そうか。」
94. 「... it didn't catch the rabbit?」
95. 「なんかいつも a に聞こえる。」
96. 「で、master?」

97. 「Master, said dog ...? You may ...」  
98. 「ここも the がいるんとちゃう。」  
99. 「You may ... 笑うんやろ？」  
100. 「うん。」  
101. 「あー、その laugh?」  
102. 「私も『笑う』がわからなかったから、カタカナで書いた... laugh at me。」  
103. 「laugh ... me?」  
104. 「at me」  
105. 「ほんで、マルやな? ... え、コンマ?」  
106. 「コンマやな。」  
107. 「で、but ... please ... remember ...」  
108. 「続いているの、これ?」  
109. 「どこで切ったらいいの?」  
110. 「... please remember ... the rabbit was ...」  
111. 「... was ... for?」  
112. 「for it life, its life?」  
113. 「for its life にした。」  
114. 「the rabbit was ... for its life ...」  
115. 「えっ?」  
116. 「the rabbit ... was ...」  
117. 「was だった? 'with running' とか入らなかった?」  
118. 「is」  
119. 「is だよ、with なんておかしい ね。」  
120. 「えっ、for its life は?」  
121. 「そのあと。」  
122. 「... you may laugh at me, but please remember the rabbit ...」  
123. 「何になってる?」  
124. 「was」  
125. 「with」  
126. 「おかしくない? -ing だから be 動詞でないといけないよ... これは過去の話か?」  
127. 「... 走って ...」  
128. 「please remember ...」  
129. 「思い出してください」

130. 「the rabbit ...」  
131. 「was?」  
132. 「was running ... for its life ...」  
133. 「で聞こえなかった。」  
134. 「well?」  
135. 「何だろ?」  
136. 「well か。私は but になってる。」  
137. 「I was running only for your dinner.」  
138. 「dinner かー。」  
139. 「この間に入っているのは?」  
140. 「わからん。」  
141. 「ま、いいか。みんなわかっていないんだよね、ここは。」  
142. 「完璧ってわけにはいかないよね。」  
143. 「そろそろ先生に終わったことを伝えるべきやろうか。」