

Native Speaker Perception versus Writer Intent in Errors in Korean Students' Written English Discourse*

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Recent trends in the second language profession are characterized by an increased emphasis on communication skills (Brown, 1987: 198). The shift towards a more communicative view of second language learning has, among other things, affected research in error analysis. More specifically, errors have come to be investigated in terms of their effect on communicative success.

In studies designed to explore the communicative effect of errors, native speakers' perceptions of the target language have been employed to assess the effectiveness of second language ability. The rationale for using native speakers' reactions to evaluate the communicative effect of nonnative language can be summarized as follows: native speakers are knowledgeable about the language (Hughes and Lascaratou, 1982: 180); in judging the seriousness of errors, native speakers focus mainly on the effect of errors on communication (Galloway, 1980; Hughes and Lascaratou, 1982; Green and Hecht, 1985); and, in general, a major goal of learning a second language is to develop the ability to communicate in the target language with native speakers (Delisle, 1982: 39).

In native speaker reaction studies, three criteria are employed most widely to measure communicative gravity of errors: comprehensibility, irritation, and acceptability. Of these, comprehensibility, or "the degree to which the interlocutor understands what is said or written" (Ludwig, 1982: 275) is regarded as the most important criterion in a majority of

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studies. Considering that comprehension of the meaning intended is the bottom line for communication, it is only natural that many studies address the issue of comprehensibility.

The significance of comprehensibility as a measure of communicative effectiveness is also illustrated in the *ACTFL* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) *Proficiency Guidelines* for writing. The guidelines, which divide written foreign language proficiency into nine categories (i.e., novice-low, novice-mid, novice-high, intermediate-low, intermediate-mid, intermediate-high, advanced, advanced-plus, and superior), are concerned to a large degree with how comprehensible a learner's written second language is to native speakers of that language. For instance, comprehensibility for native speakers who are accustomed to nonnative writing is a major criterion that characterizes all intermediate levels of proficiency in writing. While at the advanced level, comprehensibility for native speakers who are unfamiliar with nonnative writing serves as an important yardstick. Considering the observation that "many instructors are pleased if their college majors can consistently produce writing on the advanced level" (Magnan, 1985: 114), it seems realistic that comprehensibility is a principal issue in judging the communicative effectiveness of nonnative writing in general.

Comprehensibility as a criterion takes on a particular relevance to foreign language learners vis-à-vis second language learners. Unlike the second language learning environment, learners generally do not feel the need to communicate in the foreign language within a foreign language context because their native language is the ordinary means of communication.¹ Such a lack of communicative necessity and the resultant lack of the communicative use of the foreign language make it all the more appropriate for concern to be centered on how comprehensible nonnative writing is in evaluating the written work of a foreign language learner. Of course, this does not imply that other criteria such as irritation and acceptability can be ig-

¹ Brown (1987: 135-36) discusses two different types of learning a second language: second language learning and foreign language learning. Second language learning refers to learning a second language in the culture of that language or in the culture where the language is a *lingua franca*. Foreign language learning, on the other hand, refers to learning a second language in one's native culture where there is no immediate need to communicate in the language.

nored in measuring written work. It means, rather, that a primary focus should be comprehensibility.

1. Statement of the Problem

In comprehensibility studies, no distinction is usually made between reader/listener perceptions of understanding and writer/speaker intent. In other words, the receiver's perceptions of comprehension are often equated with the actual understanding of the producer's intent. For example, of the twelve studies² which address the issue of comprehensibility one way or another, at least seven studies ask the respondents to rate comprehensibility on a scale. These ratings are then interpreted as accurately reflecting the respondent's comprehension of the producer's intent.

In this regard, Khalil (1985) raises an important concern about the validity of using the recipient's perceptions of understanding as a measure of genuine comprehension of the producer's intent. Pointing out the significance of validating evaluative judgments of native speakers, he attempts to investigate whether native speakers' perceptions of understanding validly reflect the comprehension of the meaning intended by a writer. In this investigation, he provides evidence that there is little association between the two measures, and concludes that native speakers' perceptions of comprehension are not good predictors of their actual comprehension of the intended meaning.

As Khalil (1985: 345) asserts, these findings have important implications for native speaker reaction studies dealing with comprehensibility. Most importantly, the findings point to the need to investigate further the common assumption that native speakers' perceptions of their own understanding are in fact congruent with the writer's intended meaning. The significance of the findings of comprehensibility studies will be greatly affected by the empirical evidence that future research will provide on how valid the assumption is that underlies many of these studies.

² These studies include works by Olsson (1973), Burt and Kiparsky (1974), Guntermann (1978), Tomiyana (1980), Piazza (1980), Galloway (1980), Albrechtsen, Henriksen, and Faerch (1980), Chastain (1980, 1981), Varonis and Gass (1983), Fayer and Krasinski (1987), and Santos (1988).

2. Method

2.1. Research Question

In view of the need to validate the subjective judgments of native speakers, the issue of whether native speakers' perceptions of their own understanding represent their actual comprehension of the producer's intent is addressed in this study.

2.2. Subjects

The subjects for this study, i.e., the judges of comprehensibility, were selected from undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Austin. Of the undergraduate students, the sixty subjects for this study were drawn from students enrolled in Computer Literacy in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Spring, 1990. They were selected on the basis of availability and willingness to participate.

The subjects ranged in age from nineteen to thirty-one. The majority of them, however, were between nineteen and twenty-two years old. In terms of gender, fifty-six were female and four were male. The preponderance of female subjects is a reflection of the composition of students in the course. The subjects came from seven academic disciplines. All of the subjects studied at least one foreign language for a period of one semester or more, most of them for more than two years. None of them had much exposure to the nonnative writing of English or to Koreans. None were familiar with the college entrance system in Korea, which was the topic of the English essays written by the Korean students.

2.3. Pilot Study

For the pilot study, five of the twenty English essays to be used in the main study were randomly selected. These language samples were used to ensure that the essays in the pilot study would be representative of the English essays intended for the main study.

Before distributing the five essays to native speaker judges at the University of Texas at Austin, the researcher identified 125 errors with the help

of some native speaking students at the same university. With the errors underlined, each essay was presented to a native speaker respondent, who was instructed to rate the comprehensibility of errors on a 4-point scale. On the scale, 1 indicated that an error was 'not intelligible at all,' 2 that it was 'barely intelligible,' 3 'mostly intelligible,' and 4 'totally intelligible.' The native speaker respondents were also instructed to correct the errors. The correction task was to determine if the writer's intended meaning, as indicated by the writer's own Korean translation of the English essay, was comprehended.

In the process of eliciting native speakers' responses, two significant problems arose. First, one of the respondents took the meaning of the numbers on the numeric scale inversely, interpreting 1 as 'totally intelligible' and 4 'not intelligible at all.' This suggested the need to give more explicit instructions in the main study as to the meaning of the numbers on the scale. Secondly, another respondent commented in an informal conversation after completing the pilot study that a few of the items underlined as errors looked grammatical to her. This comment highlighted the difficulty involved in establishing errors, and pointed to the need for identifying errors in cooperation with native speakers with ESL/EFL expertise.

Table 1. Reader Perception versus Writer Intent in 125 Errors in 5 Korean Students' English Essays

		Reader Perception				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	9*	3	5	2	19
	Match	2	6	29	69	106
Total		11	9	34	71	125

* The numerals represent numbers of errors in each cell.

In Table 1, the numbers on the reader perception scale represent the native speakers' perceptions of comprehension of each error; 1 meaning that the error is 'not intelligible at all,' 2 that the error is 'barely intelligible,' 3 that the error is 'mostly intelligible,' and 4 that the error is 'totally intelligible.' On the writer intent scale, 'Match' indicates that the writer's intent is comprehended whereas 'Mismatch' means the opposite.

As shown in the table, the findings of the pilot study indicated that the

respondent's perception of understanding does not always represent the correct understanding of the writer's intent. For example, there were seven instances in which errors thought to be at least 'mostly intelligible' were at odds with the writers' intention. Also, there were eight cases in which errors were considered at most 'barely intelligible,' but the writers' intent was comprehended. Put differently, 12% of the responses regarding perceptions were incongruent with the comprehension/incomprehension of the meaning intended by the writer. These findings confirmed that the research question, "Do reader perceptions of understanding represent an actual comprehension of the writer intent?," is worthy of further investigation.

2.4. Procedures

2.4.1. Language Samples

With the help of an English instructor at a university in Seoul, Korea, English language samples were collected from the undergraduates enrolled in his English Composition II course. To elicit analogous language samples, specific instructions for the essay assignment were given by the class instructor. The instructions included, among other things, guidelines regarding the topic and major points to be covered in the essay. Specifically, the students were instructed to write an English essay on the college entrance system in Korea, including a brief overview of the system, a discussion of its advantages and disadvantages, and suggestions for its improvement. This topic was selected for two main reasons. First, as undergraduates, they were well informed about the college entrance system in Korea and, as a result, were likely to have ideas about the topic. In addition, the topic was unlikely to be familiar to some of the native speaker subjects thus controlling for familiarity. The students were also instructed to answer background information questions and translate their English essay into Korean. The translation task was intended to measure the writer's intent accurately.

2.4.2. Error Identification

For error identification, the twenty English essays to be used in this study were typed and distributed to two ESL/EFL instructors who taught

English as a foreign language abroad.

The two ESL/EFL specialists were told to mark on the essays all instances of what they considered to be deviant uses of English. To ensure that both markers had the same set of criteria, the researcher specifically instructed that they mark all errors in grammar and in the use of vocabulary. Once the respondents located what they conceived of as errors, the researcher reviewed the marked items and made the final decision, referring to the Korean translation when necessary to understand the writer's intent. For those items on which the markers disagreed, opinions of other ESL/EFL instructors were sought. In such cases, the majority opinion was adopted.

Since there is no established error classification method, errors thus identified were classified by the researcher into various categories (i.e., lexical choice, sentence-level, and discourse-level errors) after consultation with the relevant literature. Since the errors were classified by the researcher, some degree of subjectivity was likely to be involved. To address the issue of subjectivity, judgments of another Korean with EFL experience were sought on the errors. Consequently, errors were classified into appropriate categories upon the consent of the two raters.

2.4.3. Data Collection

The English essays were distributed with the errors underlined to the subjects for their judgments. Each subject was presented with one English essay.³

Before the essays were presented to the subjects, errors in spelling and capitalization were corrected on the assumption that they were mechanical errors. Also, errors in articles were not underlined. Article errors, however, remained uncorrected to maintain the authenticity of the essays. Given the findings of the pilot study indicating that more than 20% of the total errors were article errors, correcting errors in articles would have considerably damaged the authenticity of the essays.

³ The decision to have each subject evaluate errors in one essay was made based mainly on the following two reasons: research findings (Gass and Varonis, 1984) indicate that familiarity with the topic may affect comprehensibility; Rating and correcting errors in more than one essay might negatively affect the subjects' willingness to cooperate.

Having been presented with an English essay on the college entrance system in Korea, the subjects were instructed to read the essay and then rate the degree to which each underlined error impeded their comprehension of the essay. Rating was a 4-point scale; the subjects wrote down a number under each error. On the scale, 1 meant that the error was 'not intelligible at all,' 2 that the error was 'barely intelligible,' 3 that the error was 'mostly intelligible,' and 4 that the error was 'totally intelligible.' On the assumption that the subjects' corrections would represent their perceptions of the meaning intended, the subjects were also instructed to correct each error to the best of their ability by writing a corrected version under the error.

After the subjects read these instructions, the researcher provided an oral summary to model the task and to emphasize the meaning of each number on the scale.

Although no time limit was given to the subjects for the completion of this task, the subjects were informed prior to the administration of the survey that it would take on average twenty to thirty minutes to complete the task. As it turned out, most subjects completed the assignment within the thirty minute period.

To investigate the accuracy of reader perceptions of comprehension as a measure for the actual comprehension of the writer's intent, the subjects' ratings on the numerical scale and their corrections were checked against the Korean translation of each language sample. A table was made to show the relationship between readers' perceptions and the writer's intended meaning.

2.4.4. Data Analysis

To address the research question, a chi-square statistic⁴ was employed. Specifically, chi-square analyses of readers' perceptions and the writer's intended meaning were made, with a significance level of .05.

⁴ The chi-square test is a non-parametric test designed to measure the statistical independence or association of nominal variables.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Distribution of Errors

The errors marked by the researcher on the English compositions were classified into various subcategories. These subcategories were then grouped as lexical choice errors, sentence-level errors, or discourse-level errors. The inclusion of discourse-level errors was motivated by the fact that in this study errors were evaluated in the context of real communication, that is, in written discourse. In this classification, discourse-level errors were confined to errors in expressing cohesive relations in the discourse. Specifically, errors in the use of reference, conjunction, ellipsis, and substitution were addressed following Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification of grammatical cohesive devices.

The following table gives a summary of the distribution of errors by category:

Table 2. Distribution of Errors by Error Type*

Error Types	Error Subtypes	Frequency
Errors in Lexical Choice	Adjective	25
	Adverb	10
	Noun	102
	Preposition	107
	Verb	52
	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>296</u>
Sentence-level Errors	Comparison	3
	Complementation	6
	Number Agreement	16
	Noun Phrase**	45
	Possessive	5
	Relative Clause	7
	Set Expression	11
	Singular/Plural	47
	Tense/Aspect	33
	Voice	7
	Word Order	8
Miscellaneous***	12	
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>200</u>	

Discourse-level Errors	Conjunction	19
	Ellipsis	10
	Reference	67
	Substitution	0
	Subtotal	<u>96</u>
	Total	<u>592</u>

*To group the errors for this study, error classification methods employed by Burt and Kiparsky (1974), James (1977), Green and Hecht (1985), Khalil (1985), Taylor (1986), Fayer and Krasinski (1987), and Santos (1988) were consulted. In addition, works of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) were used for reference.

**Noun phrase errors refer to the errors in the construction of noun phrases. These errors, which may be a result of transfer from the mother tongue, seem to be unique to Korean learners of English. Thus, these errors are included as a subcategory.

***There were a small number of sentence-level errors that did not adequately fit into one of the subcategories used in this study. Those errors were classified under 'Miscellaneous.'

In classifying the errors, subjective judgments were employed. Consequently, some of the judgments might be rather arbitrary. For example, errors in the use of prepositions could have gone under the category of sentence-level errors.⁵ In this corpus of data, however, it seemed more appropriate to classify them as errors in the choice of vocabulary. In addition, the inclusion of preposition errors as lexical choice errors seemed to be more consistent with Halliday and Hasan's (1976: 5) suggestion that more general meanings are conveyed through grammar while more specific meanings are expressed through vocabulary.

3.2. Data Analysis

In performing the tasks, some of the respondents failed to comply entirely with the instructions. As a result, some errors went unnoticed while others remained unmarked numerically or uncorrected. In addition, there were a small number of errors for which more than one correction was provided.

⁵ Relevant literature is divided as to the classification of preposition errors. For example, Green and Hecht (1985) regard them as grammatical errors. James (1977) and Taylor (1986), on the other hand, classify them as errors in the choice of vocabulary.

All instances of errors that fell into one of these categories were excluded from consideration in this study. Only those instances of errors that were properly rated and corrected were included for analysis.

As a preliminary step in studying the validity of reader perceptions of understanding as a measure of actual comprehension of the meaning intended by the writer, a summary of data regarding these two measures is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Reader Perception versus Writer Intent in Errors in Korean Students' English Essays*

		Reader Perception				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	72	63	79	65	278
	Match	54	157	490	634	1335
Total		126	220	569	634	1614

*As discussed in Table 2, there were 592 instances of errors in the English essay samples written by Koreans studying English. Since each essay was judged by three subjects, the total number of errors should amount to 1,776. The discrepancy resulted from the failure on the part of some of the respondents to adequately rate and correct the errors which has led to the exclusion of 163 instances of errors from consideration.

Table 3 above demonstrates, among other things, that reader comprehension might not be equated with comprehension of the intended meaning. For instance, there were fifty-four instances of errors that were perceived to be 'not intelligible at all,' but were comprehended. There also were sixty-five instances of errors considered to be 'totally intelligible,' but proved to be incomprehensible. In addition to these extreme cases of discrepancy, it was also noticeable that in quite a few instances, errors were considered to be 'barely intelligible' but were comprehended, or errors were perceived to be 'mostly intelligible' but were not comprehended.

Given these apparent differences, statistical analyses were attempted to investigate whether these differences suggested a real difference between the two measures. To test if the two measures were independent of or associated with each other, the chi-square statistic was employed. The non-parametric test was applied separately to different types of errors (i.e., lexical

choice, sentence-level, and discourse-level errors).

To calculate the value of chi-square, the data for different types of errors were arranged in the contingency table of observed and expected frequencies as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Reader Perception versus Writer Intent in Errors Classified by Error Type (4-point Scale)

(A). *Lexical Choice Errors*

		Reader Perception				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	43 (15.34)	40 (25.85)	47 (62.01)	39 (65.79)*	169
	Match	30 (57.66)	83 (97.15)	248 (232.99)	274 (247.21)	635
Total		73	123	295	313	804

(B). *Sentence-level Errors*

		Reader Perception				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	21 (4.82)	15 (8.23)	27 (26.66)	15 (38.29)	78
	Match	13 (29.18)	43 (49.77)	161 (161.34)	255 (231.71)	472
Total		34	58	188	270	550

(C). *Discourse-level Errors*

		Reader Perception				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	8 (2.34)	8 (4.8)	5 (10.58)	11 (14.28)	32
	Match	11 (16.66)	31 (34.2)	81 (75.42)	105 (101.72)	228
Total		19	39	86	116	260

*The numbers in parentheses represent expected frequencies in each cell.

As shown in Table 4, expected frequencies in some of the cells fell below five. Given the general understanding that all the expected frequencies should be five or more in order for the chi-square procedure to be reliable, the problem of small expected frequencies observed in some cells needed to be addressed.

To deal with this problem, the four categories on the reader perceptions scale were collapsed into two; that is, 'intelligible' and 'not intelligible,' with

categories 1 and 2 falling under 'not intelligible' and 3 and 4 under 'intelligible.' After the collapsing, Table 4 became Table 5 below.

Table 5. Reader Perception versus Writer Intent in Errors Classified by Error Type (2-point Scale)

(A). *Lexical Choice Errors*

		Reader Perception		Total
		Not Intelligible	Intelligible	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	83(41.2)	86(127.8)	169
	Match	113(154.8)	522(480.2)	635
Total		196	608	804

(B). *Sentence-level Errors*

		Reader Perception		Total
		Not Intelligible	Intelligible	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	36(13.05)	42(64.95)	78
	Match	56(78.95)	416(393.05)	472
Total		92	458	550

(C). *Discourse-level Errors*

		Reader Perception		Total
		Not Intelligible	Intelligible	
Writer Intent	Mismatch	16(7.14)	16(24.86)	32
	Match	42(50.86)	186(177.14)	228
Total		58	202	260

Table 5 shows that the problem of small expected frequencies has been resolved. One more problem remained, however; that is, the problem of chi-square test yielding more total deviance than can be justified in 2×2 contingency tables with one degree of freedom. To address this issue, a modification called Yate's correction⁶ was applied.

After these issues were dealt with, the chi-square scores were calculated. Table 6 gives a summary of the results of the chi-square tests for different

⁶ Yate's correction reduces the size of the chi-square by reducing by .5 the absolute value of the differences between observed and expected frequencies. That is, $(O-E)^2$ in the chi-square formula $\chi^2 = \sum(O-E)^2/E$ (where O = observed frequency and E = expected frequency) becomes $(|O-E| - 0.5)^2$ in the modified formula.

types of errors.

Table 6. Results of Chi-square Tests for Different Types of Errors

Error Type	DF	C ² w/correction	Significance	Phi*
Lexical Choice	1	69.322	p<.05	.297
Sentence-level	1	54.068	p<.05	.321
Discourse-level	1	14.376	p<.05	.249

*Pearson's phi coefficient is an index of the degree of relationship for frequency data well suited for 2 × 2 contingency tables.

The table above demonstrates that the chi-square values for all types of errors were significant at the 5% level (In fact, the chi-square scores were significant beyond the 1% level). Thus, the null hypothesis that no association exists between reader perceptions of comprehension and actual comprehension of the writer intent was rejected. In other words, the two measures exhibited a significant relationship of association, rather than being independent of each other. The existence of a statistically significant association between native speakers' perceptions of comprehension and their actual comprehension of the writer's intent runs counter to the somewhat counterintuitive findings of Khalil (1985) which indicated little or no association between the two measures. By strongly suggesting that the two measures are associated with each other, the findings of this study seem to indicate that native speakers' perceptions of understanding might represent their comprehension of the writer's intent.

Having found a significant relationship between the two measures, the phi coefficients were consulted to assess the degree or strength of the association. As shown in Table 6, the phi coefficients were .297, .321 and .249 for lexical choice errors, sentence-level errors, and discourse-level errors respectively. To interpret these values using the guidelines suggested by Lutz (1983, as cited from Smith, 1988: 152), the two measures have a 'weak relationship' for discourse-level errors and a 'moderate relationship' for lexical and sentence-level errors. The particularly low degree of association for discourse-level errors, which might be attributed at least to some extent to differences in the way cohesive devices are used in Korean and English, means that the judges' perceptions of comprehension/noncomprehension were especially incongruent with their actual under-

standing/misunderstanding of the writer's intended meaning for errors at the discourse level.

The generally low phi coefficients signal that the two measures are not so strongly associated as to lead one to believe that they are synonymous. Thus, the low correlation coefficients suggest that it is still problematic to use native speakers' perceptions of understanding as a measure of their actual comprehension. To put it another way, the findings of this study indicate that the widespread assumption that native speakers' perceptions of their own comprehension are congruent with the writer's intent is unwarranted. These findings are consistent with those of Khalil (1985), which, as discussed earlier, went so far as to suggest that little or no relationship exists between native speakers' perceptions of their comprehension and the meaning intended by the writer.

4. Conclusions

4.1. Limitations

As this research is confined to the study of errors in written discourse, discussions and findings are limited to written language. In addition, it is unknown if the respondents from other English speaking countries or, for that matter, from different segments of the American population, would yield the same research findings. As such, the generalizability of the present study is limited to the reactions of undergraduate students in colleges and universities in Texas or, at best, in the United States.

4.2. Implications

The findings of this study have some important research and pedagogical implications. From the research perspective, the results of this work imply that it would be unwarranted to use native speaker perceptions of comprehension as a measure of actual comprehension of the writer's intent. It follows that the findings of comprehensibility studies based on native speakers' perceptions need to be interpreted with some caution.

Pedagogically, the results of this study have important implications for the way errors are corrected in the classroom. In addition, given the finding that native speakers' perceptions of comprehension do not validly reflect

their comprehension of the writer intent, it would be advisable that native speaker second language teachers be trained in the culture and language of their students. By becoming more familiar with the experiences of their learners, the native speaker teachers might be able to better understand the meaning their students are trying to communicate. The need for training is especially acute when native speaker teachers teach in a country in which the culture and the native language of the learners are remote from those of their own.

By finding an especially low degree of association between reader perception and writer intent for discourse-level errors, this study also indicates that errors at the discourse level pose serious communication problems to native speakers of English. It follows that more attention needs to be paid in the English learning process to the way cohesiveness devices are used in the language.

4.3. Recommendation for Further Research

Firstly, the present study can be seen as one of the preliminary works which explore the relationship between reader perceptions and actual comprehension. As such, this study is exploratory in nature and its findings serve only to add to the scant research done in this field. Thus, much more research is needed before any definitive conclusions can be reached. In future studies, research should be conducted on English language samples produced by people whose first language is not Korean. Also, the number of language samples and subjects needs to be increased to expand the body of data. In addition, discourse-level errors should include more than cohesion errors. Specifically, the effect of discourse style, rhetoric, and discourse organization is in need of empirical research.

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ABSTRACT

Native Speaker Perception versus Writer Intent in Errors In Korean Students' Written English Discourse

Byung-Kyoo Ahn

The purpose of this study is to examine whether native speaker perceptions of understanding can be equated with the writers' intent. This investigation focuses on whether native speaker reader perceptions represent the actual comprehension of the writers' intent so far as errors in English com-

positions written by Korean students are concerned. The results reveal that a low degree of association exists between the two measures. Therefore the findings indicate that the widespread assumption that native speakers' perceptions of comprehension equal their real understanding of the writers' intent is unwarranted.

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