

Re: Chinese dictation

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>>>> "Richard" == Richard Herring <[junk@\[127.0.0.1\]](mailto:junk@[127.0.0.1])> writes:

>> *What are the difference that you think would necessitate a
>> radically different way of jotting down things?*

Richard> The differences between an alphabetic writing system and
Richard> a character-based one, of course. If I'm hurriedly
Richard> jotting down an English sentence, I cn omit sm vwls nd
Richard> fill them in later. Can you do that sort of ad-hoc
Richard> shorthand in Chinese?

Why not? We can jot down the key words and then fill in the
prepositions and various particles later. I don't think that's a
difficult skill, is it?

Richard> What I'm asking, if it still isn't clear to you, is how
Richard> you do it with a character-based system. Is this really
Richard> so hard?

No. We can simply "borrow" homonymous characters, correcting them
later on.

Richard> For alphabetic writing systems, there's spelling.
>> *But the spelling often doesn't transcribe the sounds, as in
>> the case of English.*

Richard> Yes, so what?

That's the point. Both Chinese and English writings systems are
mnemonic. What you do with the English script, we often do with the
Chinese script in a similar way. There is nothing magical.

>> *How do you write [huz sOrd] in English?*

Richard> I don't know. Please spell it for me.

So, you can't do a dictation? You should then first ask the English

speakers who can dictate, how they do it.

>> *How can you use a 5-vowel alphabet (or 6 if you include "y") to
>> write English, which has more than a dozen of distinctive
>> vowels?*

Richard> What has that to do with anything?

That means, the spelling is pretty mnemonic in nature.

Richard> I'm trying to write these words, not pronounce them.

We also write our Chinese words in our Chinese script. So, what's the difference?

Richard> For Chinese, what's the equivalent?
>> *Chinese is a very mnemonical script, just like English.*
>> *English spellings show hints about the pronunciations; so
>> does Chinese characters.*

Richard> Yes, so? I'm not asking about pronunciation but about
Richard> writing.

So, we write our words in our script, which is mnemonic. You write English words in the English script, which is also mnemonic. What's the real difference?

>> *We don't count the strokes when we write or dictate.*

Richard> So how do you resolve ambiguities?

>> *Do you count the length of words when you write English?*

Richard> Only when doing crosswords. When dictating, I don't need
Richard> to, because I can refer to the individual letters of the
Richard> word when necessary.

We do the same for Chinese. We can refer to the components and basic stroke shapes of Chinese characters, when the need arises. That's how we teach people on the other side of the telephone to write characters they don't know how to write (which happens most frequently with "difficult" personal names). Treat it as the Chinese analogy of "spelling".

If I didn't know the Latin script, you'd have a hard time explaining me what "spelling" is and how it works in your script. Similarly, since you don't know Chinese characters, it's difficult to explain to you how this "spelling a Chinese character" works. It has things to do with the structure (the characters, despite common belief in the West, aren't arbitrary shapes, but are a well structured set of symbols). If you don't know the structure, it's hard to explain it to

