

## 徳島大学のイングリッシュ・サポート・ルームにおける 特別プログラム「英語の発音」の実施とその結果について

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### Introduction

The following is an outline of a pronunciation course for Japanese learners of English. This course will be held in the ESR room over a period of 6 weeks starting November 11th 2011. The course draws on Jenkins' (2002) pronunciation syllabus for English as an international language. The six one hour periods focus only on those features considered essential to communication in an international environment.

### Background and context

Many students are learning English for international communication. As an element of English learning, pronunciation remains a key factor. Indeed in the words of Jenkins pronunciation alone has 'a greater potential to compromise mutual intelligibility than do the other linguistic levels' (Jenkins, 2002, p86)

In view of this a short course dedicated to pronunciation was considered important. In designing the course certain contextual elements were considered critical. Firstly there was the linguistic background of the students. In her study Jenkins found that all breakdowns in communication that could be attributed to pronunciation 'were caused by the transfer of L1 sounds (Jenkins, 2002). Therefore this course focuses only on issues pertinent to Japanese learners.

The second important contextual consideration was the changing context of use. Traditional pronunciation teaching is often associated with mimicking native speaker language; particularly Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) (Jenkins, 2002). However according to Crystal actual

speakers of RP number fewer than 3 per cent of British Speakers alone (1995, cited in Jenkins 2002, p105). In fact native speakers themselves now only make up one third of all English speakers worldwide (Pennycook, 1995, p78).

In view of this changing context Jenkins (2002) has proposed a 'lingua franca core'. This is a pronunciation syllabus for English as an International language and is based on her research of pronunciation features she observed as being essential to international intelligibility. This core was used to help prioritise the most crucial pronunciation characteristics for the course.

### Course content

Based on the above contextual considerations the following were considered the most fundamental pronunciation elements for Japanese speakers learning English as a lingua franca.

#### *Consonants*

In some cases Japanese does not have equivalent English consonant sounds, therefore these will be practiced. For example, the differentiation between /b/ and /v/ and between /ʒ/ and /dʒ/. These will be taught using the comparison of minimal pairs

#### *Consonant clusters*

Since there are no clusters in Japanese, students have a tendency to insert vowels which inhibits intelligibility (Walker, 2010) Japanese loan words will be contrasted with the English equivalent to raise awareness

**Vowels**

Vowel quality is not part of the lingua franca core, rather the ability to differentiate between vowel length is considered more critical. Therefore recognition and production of differing vowel lengths will be covered. For example students will be asked to differentiate between /e/, /i:/ and /ei/

**Tonic stress**

Japanese often have a difficulty with word grouping and find it difficult to decide where to place the nuclear stress (Walker, 2010) Therefore part of the course will be dedicated nuclear stress placement. Students will be shown how moving the tonic stress from an unmarked to marked position can alter meaning.

**Evaluation**

As part of the course a short initial evaluation of student needs plus a final evaluation are planned to monitor student progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the course

**Summary**

Taking into account relevant contextual factors has helped to produce an abbreviated and focused pronunciation course dedicated to Japanese learners of English.

**References**

- Jenkins, J. 2002. 'A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an international Language' *Applied Linguistics* 23/1: p83-103
- Walker, R. 2010. *Teaching the pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.