

# TEACHING OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION A CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Most Japanese study English as a first foreign language throughout high school years. Despite the great amount of time spent on the study, many Japanese have difficulties in making themselves understood in spoken English. Much has to do with the insufficient articulation of phonemes and the use of wrong stress and intonation patterns. In short, a learner speaks English with a Japanese accent; the accent comes from the habit of producing sounds within the phonological system of Japanese. Likewise an English speaking learner of Japanese may speak Japanese with an English accent.

As we know that a foreign accent is caused by one's native language, we can predict and describe the patterns which will cause difficulties by comparing English with Japanese systematically. Once the problem is analyzed, we will be better equipped for teaching. The rationale for analysis is found in a remark by Charles C. Fries:

'The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner.'<sup>1</sup>

On this paper, I would like to contrast the sound systems of Japanese and English to analyze the interference of the Japanese system with the English. For a reference, I have interviewed four subjects who seem to

demonstrate the typical foreign accent in the target language; two Japanese and two Americans.

I will try to illustrate the differences of Japanese and English sounds with the emphasis on the phonetic level first, then I will contrast the features of Japanese syllables with those of English. The different distribution of phonemes in the two languages suggests the problem area. Next, I will classify the patterns in which certain phonemes of English are substituted by Japanese phonemes. First, consonants and vowels, then consonant clusters.

Thereafter, I will examine the suprasegmental features of Japanese and English. The features which characterize each language are the pitch accent in Japanese and stress accent in English.

Lastly, I will suggest the strategies for teaching; I believe that effective teaching should focus on weak points of students rather than going through the all aspects of pronunciation with equal emphasis. I will list examples of classroom teaching methods and useful materials.

## II. JAPANESE PHONEMES IN CONTRAST WITH ENGLISH PHONEMES

### *Consonants*

Some English phonemes are almost identical with Japanese ones. These phonemes themselves are not difficult to articulate nor hinder the intelligibility of speeches. Those which are different from native sounds cause the difficulties for students. Often such sounds are substituted by native phonemes.

I have made a table of English and Japanese consonants on the next page. As shown in the table, the significant English consonants which are absent in Japanese are [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [l] and [r]. These consonants are often substituted by similar Japanese sounds: [ϕ] or [h] + [u] for [f]; [β] for [v]; [s] for [θ]; and [dz] or [z] for [ð]. [ɾ] for [r] and [l].

The Japanese phoneme [ɾ] has the characteristics of both [l] and [r]. The first position of articulation for [ɾ] is similar to [r]; the tip of tongue rolled backward and raised against hard-palate, then it stretches

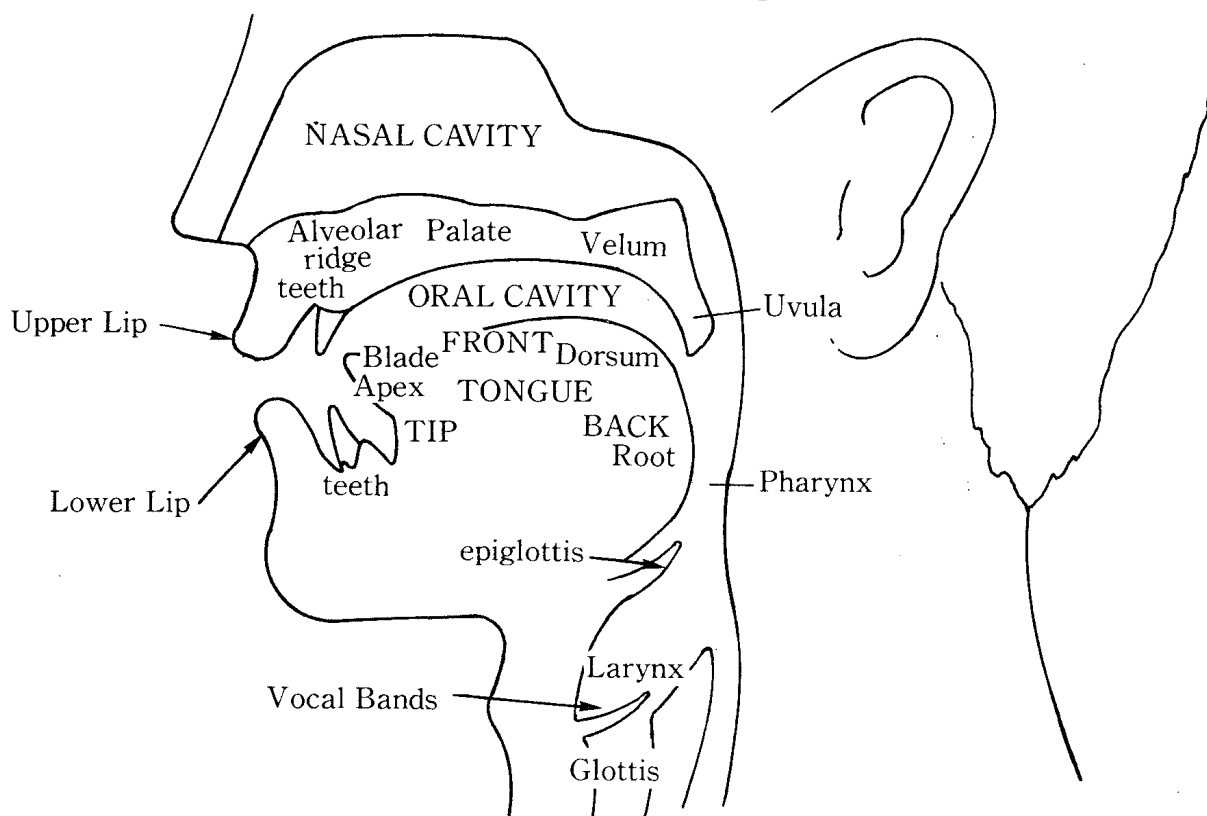
and strikes the teeth-ridge, when the cavity forms just like [l], and immediately after it the tongue draws back to the position of [r].

Table. 1 English and Japanese Consonants

(Based on I. P. A. Symbols)

pl. : plain ; pal : palatalized		unmarked: shared phonemes						
vl. : voiceless ; vd. : voiced		{ }		: English phoneme				
		[ ]		: Japanese phoneme				
		Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
PLOSIVE	vl.	p			{t}[t]		k	
	vd.	b			{d}[d]		g	
FRICATIVE	vl.	[ϕ]	{f}	{θ}s		{ç}		h
	vd.	[β]	{v}	{ð}z		ʒ		
AFFRICATIVE	vl.			[ts]		tʃ		
	vd.			[ds]		dʒ		
NASAL	pl.	m			n		{ŋ}	
	pal.						[ɲ][N]	
LATERAL	vd.				{l}			
LIQUID	vd.					{r}		
FLAP	vd.				[ɾ][ɽ]			
GLIDE	vd.	w				j		

Figure 1. Human Articulatory Organs and Areas



It is much more backward than French [ɫ] and a little forward than English [r]<sup>2</sup>. [ɫ] and [r] are absent in Japanese, and thus perceived as allophones of [ɾ]. The substitution of one with another does not change the meaning of Japanese words. In English, however, [ɫ] and [r] are contrastive phonemes responsible for the difference in the meaning of a given word. A pair of words, “rice” and “lice”, are distinguished by the difference of initial consonants. Generally speaking, Japanese speakers have difficulties both in discriminating and in producing these sounds.

Other English phonemes indistinctive to Japanese ears are [f] and [h]. The same applies to voiced sounds [v] and [b]. [f] and [v] are absent in Japanese phonology. In stead of these labiodental fricatives, there are [ɸ] and [β], voiceless and voiced bilabial fricatives. [ɸ] is conceived as an allophone of [h] in Japanese. [ɸ] occurs before vowel [w] due to lip rounding and narrower oral cavity, resulting turbulent air stream produced at the mouth. Thus different English words, “who’d”/huwd/and “food”/fuwd/ are likely to be pronounced identically as/ɸuwd/by Japanese learners.

English [θ] and [ð] are articulated by touching the tips of the upper teeth with the tip of the flattened tongue. Although these sounds do not exist in Japanese, it seems learners can perceive these phonemes. When it comes to the articulation, they are not as capable. For example, the sentence, “That’t the one I wanted” pronounced by a Japanese subject sounded as follows:

/zattsu za wan ai wonteddu/

Japanese consonant [t] is slightly different from the English counterpart. In English, [t] is articulated with the apex of tongue slightly bent upward, touching upper gum ridge. Japanese [t] involves the tongue blade, area further back. The same applies to the voiced sound [d]. Japanese [t] and [d] change into palatalized [tʃ] and [dʃ] before vowel [i], and become [ts] and [ds] before [u] because opening of jaws get shallower. On the other hand, Japanese [t] pronounced by an American sounded as if semivowel [w] was inserted right after the consonant. Word “tsukue” (desk) was pronounced [tswukwue]. This is due to lip rounding and lack of puff.

[ɾ], voiced alveolar flap, is English allophone of [t] as heard in the words with -tt- spelling such as “better” in normal speech. The manner of articulations is quite similar to Japanese flap sound [ɾ]. However the point of articulation for Japanese [ɾ] is further back of gum-ridge.

English consonant [ŋ], although absent in Japanese, does not pose much problem to Japanese learners because there are similar nasal sounds such as [ɲ] and [N] in Japanese. [ɲ] is articulated more in front of the mouth than [N] and [g]. [N] is produced when the breath is emitted both through nasal and oral cavities.

### *Vowels*

Japanese has five distinctive vowels which are transcribed as [a], [i], [ɯ], [e], and [o]. The absence of other vowels which exist in English inevitably causes the difficulties for Japanese learners. For Americans, the pronunciation of Japanese long vowels are difficult because these prolonged vocalization of the five sounds not happen in English. English long vowels are diphthongs; vocalization with a glide of tongue. On the other hand, Japanese speakers tend to use Japanese long vowels for English ones. The pronunciation of the following loan words from English demonstrate the different realization of long vowels in the two languages :

Table 2. Examples of Loan Words with Long Vowels

Vowel		word	Pronunciation	
Eng.	Jap.		Eng.	Jap.
[iy]	[ii]	beet	/biyt/	/biito/
[uw]	[uu]	boot	/buwt/	/buutsu/
[ow]	[oo]	boat	/bowt/	/booto/
[ey]	[ee]	game	/geym/	/geemu/
[ar]	[aa]	card	/kard/	/kaado/

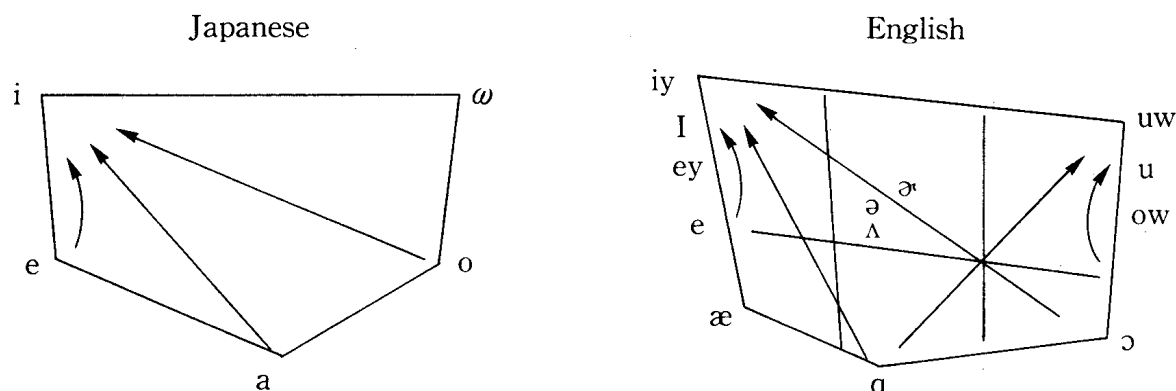
### Japanese 5 vowels in contrast with English vowels

- [a] : Maximum opening of jaws. The Japanese /a/ is articulated with the tongue position further back than for English /a/. The long vowel [a:] can be divided into two syllables such /a : a/ in which the first syllable has the accent.
- [i] : Produced with jaws almost closed and lips spread. The long vowel [i] tends to be divided into two syllables. In the articulation of long

[ii], the tongue rises little by little and the resulting sound approximate the semivowel [j]. The middle of the tongue is closer to palate than in English [i]. Because of this Japanese consonants followed by [i] are palatalized.

- [ω]: Jaws slightly open. Compared to the articulation for English [u], lips are less rounded.
- [e]: There are two allophones for Japanese [e] sound; tense [e] and lax [ɛ]. Although the diphthong [ei] exist in Japanese, it is often changed into long vowel [e:] in spoken Japanese.
- [o]: jaws half open as in the initial half of English diphthong [ow]. English [ow] is followed by further lip rounding and the glide of the tongue upward toward the back. [ow] is absent in Japanese phonological system. English [ɔ] requires wider opening of jaws.

Figure 2. Japanese and English vowels  
(Based on the Trager-Smith Symbols)



### *Diphthongs*

Both English and Japanese have vowels with the movement of the tongue up and forward such as [ei, ai, oi] and [ey, ay, iy]. The difference between the two groups is that Japanese diphthongs tend to become two syllables while English vowels remain mono syllable with glide. Beside these three diphthongs, there are glides of the tongue up and backward which accompany lip rounding in English.

### *English Vowels Difficult for Japanese*

[ɔɹ, or, ar]: Vowels with Curling of Tongue Tip.

[ɔɹ]: Made with curling of the tongue tip with jaws slightly open.

[or]: Start with the position for [ow] then curl the tip of tongue toward

[r] position.

[ar] : Start with the position for [a] and the curling of the tongue upward.

#### *Other Vowels*

[æ] : The jaws quite open and the tongue low and slightly forward like [e]. Lips slightly spread. TEFL teacher may describe this to students as the articulation done with the manner for [e] but jaws open.

[ʌ] : Jaws half open and the tongue halfway up in the center.

[ɔ] : Jaws wider open and lips less round than Japanese [o]. Tongue low and pulled back.

### III. DISTRIBUTION OF PHONEMES

Although some English phonemes themselves are present in Japanese, learners cannot always pronounce such phonemes properly in the speech. It seems that those difficulties come from the interference of Japanese phonological system. Therefore, it will be necessary to analyze the distributions of phonemes in Japanese and in English.

#### *Basic Unit of Sound System in Japanese and in English.*

The concept of sounds in Japanese is different from those of English or other Indo-European languages with alphabet systems in which each letter represents one phoneme. The Japanese writing system consists of ideograms and syllabaries. There are two sets of syllabaries ; “hiragana” for ordinary words and “katakana” for loan words from occidental languages. In each set of syllabaries, there are 76 letters representing Japanese sounds. These syllabaries are categorized systematically by the quality of vowels. The followings are the sounds transcribed by “kana” letters.

Table 3. Syllables of Japanese<sup>3</sup>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
a	ka	ga	ga	sa	za	ta	da	na	ha	pa	ba	ma	ya	ra	wa	n*
i	ki	gi	gi	shi	dzi	chi	dzi	ni	hi	pi	bi	mi		ri		
u	ku	gu	gu	su	zu	tsu	dzu	nu	fu	pu	bu	mu	yu	ru		
e	ke	ge	ge	se	ze	te	de	ne	he	pe	be	me		re		
o	ko	go	go	so	zo	to	do	no	ho	po	bo	mo	yo	ro	wo	

/h/	befor /i/ becomes	/ç/	/h/	before /u/ becomes	/ϕ/
/s/	„	/ʃ/	/t/	„	/ts/
/t/	„	/tʃ/	/d/	„	/dz/
/d/	„	/dʒ/	letter 'wo' is pronounced like /o/ 'n' is for middle or final /n/		

The Basic components of the Japanese sound system are not independent consonants and vowels but those syllables transcribed by 76 letters. A Japanese syllable consists of a consonant and a vowel, (C+V). In other word, a consonant always accompanies a vowel except for the middle and final /n/ sound, (C+V+/n/). This particular consonant, /n/, is represented independently by one 'kana'.

There exist certain irregular syllables with semivowels such as (C+/y/+V) combinations. This type of middle semivowel insertion is transcribed by a small letter of 'ya' column, 'ya', 'yu' and 'yo'. For example, /kya/ for /kyaputen/, a loan word from English "captain", is transcribed by two letters; 'ki' plus small 'ya', to indicate coalescence.

ex.	キャシー	/kyaʃi:/	<Cathy
	キュート	/kyu:to/	<cute
	ショー	/ʃyo:/	<show

Other exceptions are geminate consonants with sound quality finely explained and represented by an Italian word "staccato". Japanese geminate consonants between two syllables such as /-tt-/, /-pp-/, /-ss-/, /-kk-/ and /-gg-/ are derived from the elimination of weak syllable. These forms are used for loan words as well. Geminate consonants are transcribed by a small size letter 'tsu' to imply the instantaneous freeze of articulators, usually with the tongue touching the alveolar ridge.

ex.	とって	/totte/	>torite (verb 'toru': to take)
	トップ	/toppu/	: 'top' (English)
	バック	/bakku/	: 'back' (English)
	ホットドッグ	/hottodoggu/	: 'hot dog' (English)

#### *Sequence of Phonemes in Japanese and in English*

As evident from the foregoing analysis, there are certain restrictions in the sequences of phonemes in Japanese. The following chart illustrates the combinations of phonemes in Japanese:



Table 4. Japanese Sequence of Phonemes

Basic unit		Bearer of highest sonority		
1	V		V	
2	CV (CyV)		V	
3	-C (/n/, -cc-)		-	
combination	word	Pronunciation	meaning	
V	え	/e/	picture	
CV	め	/me/	eye	
VV	あい	/ai/	love	
VC	えん	/en/	yen	
VCV	あき	/aki/	autumn	
CVV	こえ	/koe/	voice	
CVC	てん	/ten/	sky	
CVCV	これ	/kore/	this	
VCCV	あんき	/anki/	memorize	
VVCV	あいて	/aite/	partner	
CVVV	しあい	/jiai/	match	
CVCCV	きっぷ	/kippu/	ticket	
CVCVV	とけい	/tokei/	clock	
VCVVV	おきあい	/okiai/	off shore	
CVCVCV	ことば	/kotoba/	language	
CVCVVV	たちあい	/tatjiai/	presence	
VVCVCV	あいさつ	/aisatsu/	greetings	

Beside consonant clusters with /n/, there are practically no clusters of different consonants in Japanese phonological system. However, there are elisions of unaccented vowels /i/ and /u/ between voiceless consonants. The ellision is the utterance without sufficient vibration of the vocal cord similar to a whisper.

ex.       きた   /k i̥ ta/ (north)

      つき   /ts u̥ ki/ (moon)

Elision may also occur to a final unaccented vowel following a voiceless consonant :

      ていこく   /teikokʏ/ (empire)

Next, I will show the distribution of phonemes in English to make a comparison with the Japanese system. As mentioned earlier, the English writing system with the alphabet represents consonants and vowels independently. That is to say, the minimum unit of sound in English is smaller than in Japanese. Here is the table to illustrate the distribution

of phonemes in English :

Table 5. English Sequence of Phonemes		
Basic Unit		Sonority
1	V	+
2	C	$\pm$ + : voiced - : voiceless
Combination	pronunciation	word
V	/ow/	Oh!
VC	/ʌp/	up
CV	/hiy/	he
CVC	/hiy/	he
VCC	/ækt/	act
CCV	/triɪ/	tree
VCV	/əbey/	obey
CVCC	/help/	help
CCVC	/treɪn/	train
CCCV	/strɔ/	straw
VCCC	/æskt/	asked
VCCV	/æzm/	asthma
VCVC	/æst/	asset
CVCCC	/desks/	desks
CCVCC	/drɪŋk/	drink
CCCVC	/skræp/	scrap
VCCCV	/æŋgri/	angry
VCCVC	/æktiv/	active
VCVCC	/ədæpt/	adapt
CVCVC	/hevən/	heaven
CVCCV	/silki/	silky
VCCVCC	/əksept/	accept
CVCVCV	/beykəri/	bakery
CVCCVC	/hektik/	hectic
CCVCVC	/prɒfit/	profit
VCVCVC	/æniməl/	animal
CCCVCC	/strikt/	strict

Comparison of the sound systems makes it evident that Japanese language has much higher sonority because it abounds in vowels. Conversely English abounds in consonant clusters.

Also remarkable are the final phonemes of the two languages. Most of Japanese words end with a vowel, while English words tend to end with

consonant clusters.

The above explains why some Japanese speakers tend to articulate a vowel between consonants and after the final consonant such as /doggu/ for English 'dog', and /twelubu/ for 'twelve'.

#### IV. SUBSTITUTION OF ENGLISH PHONEMES BY JAPANESE

What we call Japanese accent is the way Japanese speakers pronounce English with the movement of articulatory organs programmed for Japanese phonology. The speakers are restricted by the habit of producing Japanese sounds. This tendency can be illustrated by the pronunciation of loan words from English :

Table 6. Pronunciation of Loan Words

Loan words	English	
Pronunciation	Pronunciation	
/koppu/	/kʌp/	cup
/kyatto/	/kæt/	cat
/kuiz/	/kwiz/	quiz
/gal asu/	/glæs/	glass
/suku : ru/	/skuwl/	school
/tsu : /	/tuw/	two
/suteisyon/	/steɪʃən/	station
/ka : ten/	/kərtən/	curtain
/ϕul eʃu/	/freʃ/	fresh

##### *Substitution of English Consonants*

The substitutions of English consonants occur where the equivalent phonemes are absent in Japanese. These consonants are substituted by similar Japanese phonemes and thus substitutions are systematic. The

Table 7. Substitution of English Consonants

/f/ labio-dental fricative	→	/ϕ/ bilabial fricative
/h/ glottal fricative	→	
/v/ glottal fricative	→	/β/ bilabial fricative
/θ/ dental fricative	→	/s/ alveolar sibilant
/ð/ dental fricative	→	/z/ alveolar sibilant
	→	/dʒ/ dental affricative

/l/ alveolar lateral	—————→	/ɾ/ dental alveolar alveolar flap
/r/ alveolar liquid	—————→	
/w/ bilabial glide	—————→	/ɔ̃/ vowel
/ŋ/ velar nasal	—————→	/N/ velar nasal + /g/ velar plosive

following is the list of such phonemes :

### *Substitution of Vowels*

The absence of mid-vowels in Japanese causes the deficiency in English articulation. These vowels are often substituted by similar Japanese sounds. Thus “can” [kæn] is likely to be pronounced /kjan/, and “vacation” [vəkeiʃən] as /bakeiʃon/. Both “barn” [barn] and “burn” [bɜrn] are likely to be pronounced as [baan]. The words, “coat”, [kɔwt] “caught” [kɔt], and “court” [kɔrt] may be all pronounced as /ko : to/. The following is the list of such substitutions :

Table 8. Substitution of English Vowels				
Phonemes		Pronunciation		
Eng.	Jap.	word	English	Japanese
ʌ	a	but	/bat/	/batto/
æ	a+CC	bat	/bæt/	/batto/
æ	ya+CC	cap	/kæp/	/kyappu/
ar	aa	Bart	/bart/	/baato/
ər	aa	Bert	/bært/	/baato/
or	oa	more	/mor/	moa/
or	oo	cord	/kord/	/koodo/
ow	oo	code	/kowd/	/koodo/

### *Substitution of Consonants by Syllables*

Table 9. Substitution of English Consonants by Japanese Syllables					
English	Japanese	ex.	pronunciation	word	
final -C	-CV-	/ðæt/	/zattsu/	that	
CVC	CVCCV	/dag/	/doggu/	dog	
(short vowel)					
initial CC-	CVC-	/triɪ/	/tsuri : /	tree	
final -CC	-CVCV	/piɪpl/	/pi : pulu/	people	
initial -CCC	CVCVC-	/strɔberiɪz/	/sutoroberi : z/	strawberries	
final CCC-	-CVCVCV	/mowstli/	/mo : sutoli : /	mostly	

On morpheme level, less trained students are likely to replace English

consonant with a Japanese syllable. This can be regarded as the transfer of Japanese phonological constraint into English.

It seems that final single voiceless consonants are easier to articulate than voiced consonants because there exist voiceless consonants with aspirated vowels in Japanese ; Certain voiceless consonants are articulated with the residue of an unaccented vowel. The result is somewhat similar to English final consonants. For example, /kæt/ is pronounced /kyattu/, and /kæts/ as /kyattsu/.

## V. ACCENTUATION : PITCH, STRESS, RHYTHM

The practice in articulation of phonemes alone is not sufficient for the improvement of pronunciation. The tone of voice is an important factor for comprehensibility of the speech. It is related to the facility of articulation as well. Elements involved are the tone (pitch direction), pitch range, tension, loudness, rhythm, tempo, pause and reduction.

English words in general have accents on the first syllable. Result is the sonority of vowel and the weakness in the final consonant or consonant clusters.

In Japanese, there isn't so much difference in the intensity or length of syllables, and thus each syllable has certain sonority expressed by a vowel.

It seems to me that the articulation of phonemes and their length and intensity are like two sides of a coin. In order to effectuate the good articulation, intensity and pitch need to be realized within the framework of the target language.

### *Accent*

There are roughly two types of accent systems for languages : Stress accent in languages like English and German, and pitch accent in languages like Japanese and Chinese<sup>4</sup>.

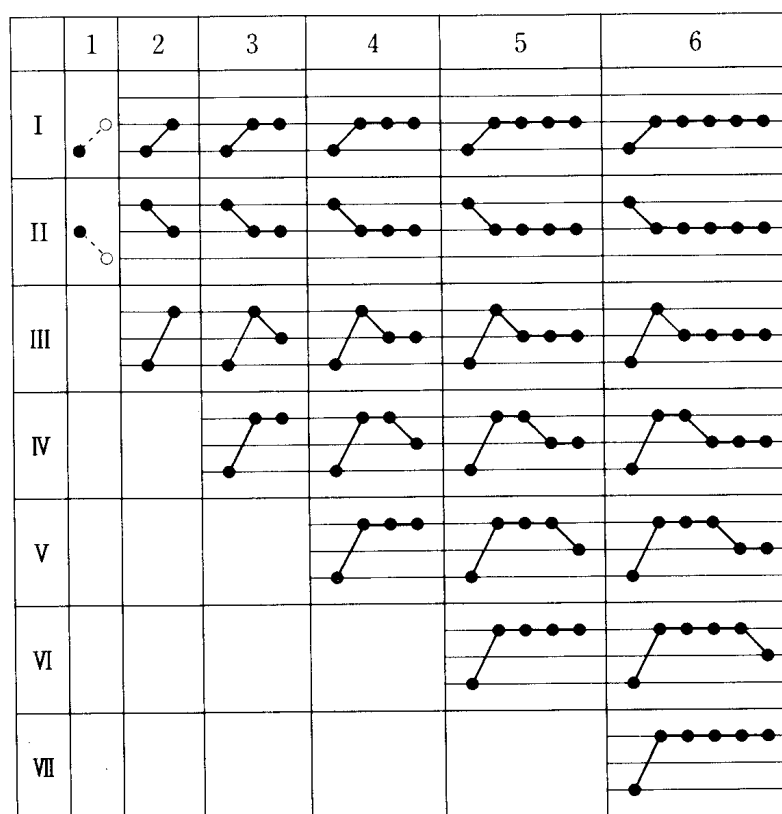
In Japanese, the pitch is the most important feature decisive of meaning. Chinese, one of the pitch accent languages, is called a tone language. Is Japanese also a tone language? According to Kenneth L. Pike's definition, Japanese is not.<sup>5</sup> In tone languages, a syllable is fairly independent of the pitches of adjacent syllables. Every syllable has basic pitch, its tone



in Chinese as follows :

In case of Chinese, one syllable is equivalent of a morpheme, while in Japanese, one syllable, called 'mora' or 'haku', is not a morpheme. Japanese pitch does not exist on each syllable but on morpheme level, on word or phrase level. The following diagram illustrates the patterns of pitch accent in standard Japanese.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 3. Pitch Accent of Standard Japanese

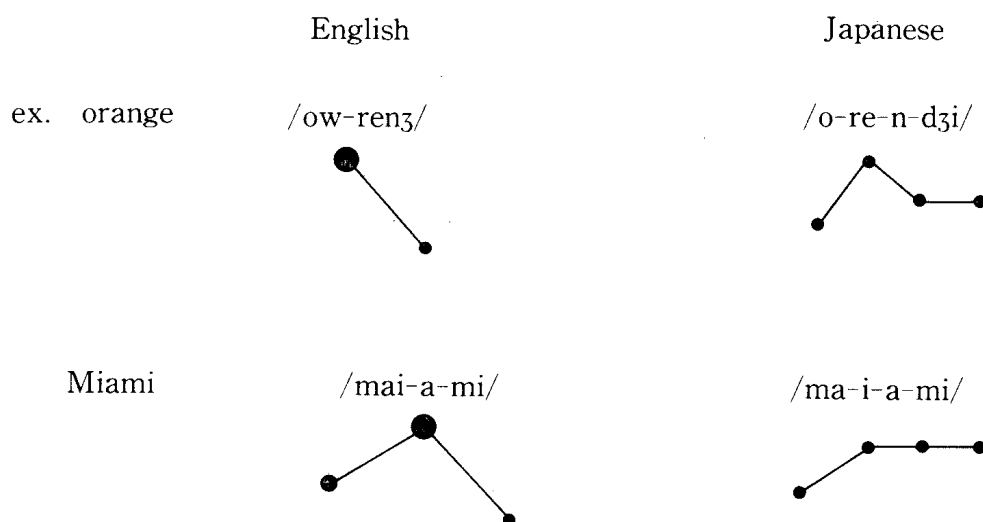


- |     |      |       |        |      |             |                   |
|-----|------|-------|--------|------|-------------|-------------------|
| ex. | 1I   | Hí    | sun    | 2I   | Hí ga dèta. | The sun rose.     |
|     | 1II  | Hì    | fire   | 2II  | Hì ga dèta. | A fire broke out. |
|     | 2I   | háshi | edge   | 3I   | Háshi wa :  | The edge is       |
|     | 2II  | hàshi | edge   | 3II  | Hàshi wa :  | Chopsticks are    |
|     | 2III | háshi | bridge | 3III | Háshi wa :  | The bridge is     |

In Japanese there is only slight difference of intensity between syllables. Japanese language has incorporated a large number of English words into its vocabulary. These loan words are, pronounced following the Japanese

pitch pattern rules dropping English stress accent.

First acquired in Japanese as loan words, Some students pronounce these English words with Japanese pitch pattern. Then the words would sound gibberish to English speakers ; the utterance incommunicable.



In the above, not only is pitch and stress incorrect, but also the numbers of syllables are different. Accented syllables in English are longer than the other syllables. In Japanese the length of moras, syllables, are quite even ; the same tempo for all the moras.

English is a stress accent language. There are wider variations in the intensity and loudness, and length between syllables. English being a stress accent language does not mean that it has no significant pitch tone to attend. On the contrary, first stress syllable tend to receive much higher tone than others. On the sentence level, a word of importance among content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs and not articles and prepositions) receives accent to emphasize the message.

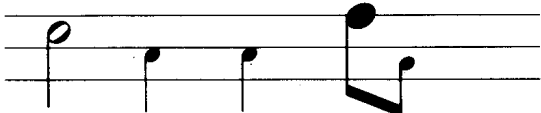


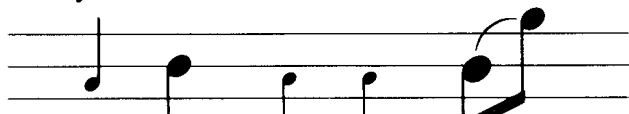
### *Intonation*

Intonation is the tone superposed on the sentence level. Overall rules of intonation are universal. Falling intonation marks statements, commands, WH questions or sentences with interrogative pronouns. The rising intonation marks interrogative sentences.

In the realization of intonation contour, there are partial differences between English and Japanese.

English adopt higher pitch on the last word. Generally the voice begins

on a middle level, then at the last word, it rises and then falls to a lower level. If the sentence stress is on the last syllable (one syllable word), the tone of voice glides down. If there are syllables after the strong stress, it steps down. Yes-no questions have rising tone on the last word. Here are some examples of intonation patterns with modified musical notation.

Glide	She's at the store.	
Shift	John will be com — ing .	
	What will you be do — ing ?	
Rise	Do you drive a car ?	

Japanese students often neglect the rise of pitch at the last word in English. This may show the lack of conceptualizing the English tone patterns. In Japanese there isn't such pitch rise at the end of a sentence. Rather, pitch emphasis is at the beginning of a sentence where we find the message, for example complement or object. Whereas in English, such a word comes at the end of a sentence, hence emphasized by intonational accent. It should be also noted that intonation cannot change basic pitch patterns of Japanese mora accent.

### *Rhythm*

The timing of syllables gives each language its characteristic rhythm. English is a stress timed language. The juxtaposition of syllables with strong and with weak or medium stress creates the characteristic rhythm of English speech. On the other hand, Japanese is called a syllable-timed language with regular intervals of equally stressed syllables. My personal



experiences of monitoring numerous students have convinced me that the majority of the students apply Japanese intonation and rhythm to English. This is why their English speeches sound monotonous. Those who have successfully incorporated English stress and rhythm generally demonstrated fluency.

## VI. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Children who are exposed to a second language can learn to speak like a native speaker. However, adult learners who passed the age of puberty have difficulties to be free from their accent. This is because the neuro-psychic circuits in our brains which control our speech are completed around the age of puberty. Passed this stage, neurons are no longer as plastic as those of children<sup>7</sup>.

Then will it be impossible for adult learners to acquire the accuracy and fluency in speech? Yes, it is possible provided the learners work conscientiously on the phonology. Objectives of TEFL teachers are to help students achieve their goals efficiently.

In many aspects, language is comparable to music. The study of a foreign language should be treated like learning of a musical instrument, perhaps more comparable to a wind instrument.

### *Pronunciation*

The pronunciation is similar to the tune. Practices are necessary for the mastery of basic skills to play the right tune. Kinesthetic control of the articulatory organs may be improved by practice. Form of the mouth, opening of jaws, and movement of the tongue, these three are the elements to distinguish different phonemes. These three organs coordinate automatically to produce native sounds. However they are not going to work for a foreign sound. Hence conscious effort to move the muscles to produce a required sound is necessary. After certain amount of training, the new habit should be formed.

Forms of the articulators should be explained with the help of diagram or illustration. A mirror can be useful to check the lip forms. Tape recorder is an integral instrument for adult learners. They should be given the time to record and listen their own voice to evaluate their

performance themselves.

In order to eliminate substitutions of Japanese sounds for English, a teacher may contrast English phoneme with a similar Japanese sound. For example, he may ask a class to articulate Japanese [ $\phi$ u] first, then English [f]. Next he may ask them to go on contrasting [f] with [h]. Contrast exercises are effective to improve the articulation. Here are some examples :

[f] : food fuse force fool fall

[h] : who'd Hughes horse who'll hole

[f] : It would be foolish to fool with the food supply.

[h] : Hood's been hooked on Haydn since childhood.

[f; h] : Hooper's foolish to hold Foley responsible.

For the articulation of consonant clusters, Buildup Exercises are helpful :

[r] : ride reek rate round wrench

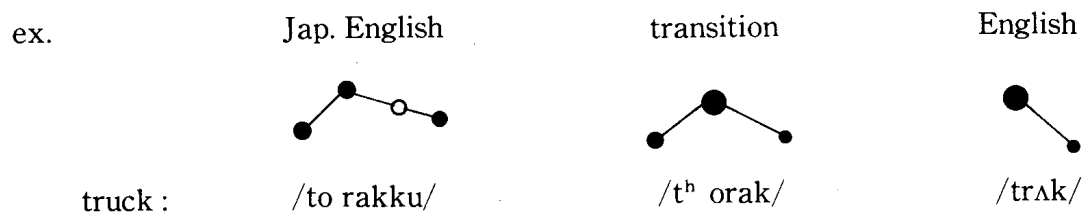
[fr] : fried freek freight frowned French

[r/fr] : Rose froze the rest of the fresh meat.

The above exercises are taken from "English Pronunciation Exercises for Japanese Students."<sup>8</sup> This book has many more contrastive exercises.

### *Stress Accent*

Stress accent is as important as pronunciation for the intelligibility of a speech. In one syllable words, stress accent on the initial part of syllable



makes the articulation of consonants easier.

As I mentioned earlier, Japanese language does not have stress accent, and thus its syllables are pronounced with equal intensity. Because of this background, Japanese students usually do not express stress accent adequately. It is possible that they do not notice the importance of stress accent. Therefore a teacher needs to draw their attention to the variation of intensity so that they would identify the stress patterns. Here are some

examples from "Sounds and Rhythm".<sup>9</sup>

One Stress :	I know hím.
	He's a stúdent.
Two Stresses :	She's léarning Spánish.
	She's góing to México.
Three Stresses :	I bóught a tícket for Ítaly.
	I'm léaving for Róme tomórrrow.

In order to get students fully express the variation, the teacher may emphasize or even exaggerate the stress and rhythm.

#### *Variety of Classroom Activities*

Although the hearing and speaking practices using L. L. are necessary for the improvement of fluency, continuous exercises with tape recorder can be tedious for students. Improvement of pronunciation per se is not the aim of language learning. Rather the ability to communicate, whether passively or positively, through a foreign language should be the goal.

Children acquiring languages are working simultaneously on the hearing and pronunciation of sounds, on vocabulary and on sentence construction.<sup>10</sup> They are acquiring languages through total involvement to the environment. Adult learners in the classrooms are often deprived of meaningful context that nurtures the language development.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the importance of rich language environment and effective materials for better pronunciation. The amount of time adult learners can devote for a language learning is limited. Thus stimuli to enhance the learning process are desirable. For this reason, the use of audio-visual materials and videos are recommended. Other activities which stimulate the five senses may be effective for memory retention and for internalization of new set of linguistic rules. Beside tapes and videos, tapping the rhythm and jazz chants, nursery rhymes are useful. For the sake of students' interactions, pair practices, role plays and skits may be employed in large size classes.

#### REFERENCE

Interviewer A : American TESOL Teacher

Subject S1: Japanese Male about 30

A: ...Now, I'll tell you colors, you tell me which color do you like better. Green and brown.

S: /meibi gurin. aim not juar. ai dont kea, so:/

A: Maybe green. O. K. How about green and purple?

S: /samutaimus gul in, samutaimus paapul/

A: How about brown and violet?

S: /bul aon an vaiiolet? meibi vaiiolett'/

A: What about purple and blue?

S: /seimu/

A: What about blue and green?

S: /buluu ando gurin? samutaimus guin, samutaimus buluu/

A: O. K. Where would you like to go if you had time?

S: /in za unaitedu sutetsu, meibi sausu/

A: Where?

S: /diipu sausu/

A: O. K. Which do you like better, dogs or cats?

S: /no: difalansu/

A: Which do you like as pet, dog or bird?

S: /doggu ando bard? no: difalansu/

A: What kind of music do you like?

S: /eni kaindo, owlmosto eni kaindo/

A: What kind of instrument do you like?

S: /meibi suturings oa paaka<sup>h</sup>on/

A: What? Oh, percussion. O. K. What kind of fruits do you like?

S: / $\phi$ urdzu?/ A: Fruits.

S: /ai laiku eni kaind o $\beta$   $\phi$ ul uutsu/

A: How about grapes and plums?

S: /gureipus and pulamu. meibi pulamu/

A: What did you do for the last vacation?

S: /lasto bakeison! ai didn't ha $\beta$  bakeison foa long taim/

A: No, you didn't go any where?

S: /juw min bakei on laiku...ai min laiku ameikan pipulu?/

A: Yeah.

S : /no:/

## READING

He's about thirty.	/hiyz abautu θartiy/
Sit down!	/ʃitt daʊn/
Why did you do it?	/wai didju duw itt?/
I can't imagine.	/ai kyantu imadzɪn/
It's ridiculous!	/itsu lidɪkjulasu/
No, that won't matter.	/no, ðat wont mataa/
Will you be staying to lunch?	wɪl juw bi suteɪŋ tu lantʃi?/
Sugar? Is this the one?	/ʃugar? ɪz zɪs zə wʌn?/
Possibly. Some people can do it.	/pɒʰʃɪbulɪy. sʌmu piɪpulu kyan duw it/
You can try.	/juɪ kyan turai/
That's the one I wanted.	/zʌtsu zə wʌn aɪ wʌntɪd/

Interviewer A : American TESOL Teacher

Subject S2 : Japanese Female about 40

A : Which do you prefer, dog or cat?

S : /ai pʰiϕaa doggu/

A : Why?

S : /wai? bikouzu aɪ laiku doggu/

A : Loyal?

S : /βeri.../

A : Now, I'll say two colors, you tell me which one you like better, O. K.  
Green and brown.

S : /ittsu zə seimu. aɪ laiku oreŋgi endu buluu. aɪ prɪfaa oreɪndʒi, buluu,  
bʌtt gurɪn, buraʊn zʌsʊt zʌseimu/

A : All right. What about green and purple?

S : /paapulu? Paapulu<sup>h</sup>tte?/

B : Murasaki.

S : /murasaki? aɪ prɪfaa grɪn/

A : What about violet and blue?

S : /ai prifaa buluu/  
 A : Always blue/  
 S : /jea, buluw/  
 A : O. K. What kind of music do you like?  
 S : /ai laiku kulaʃikalʌ mjuzik, battu ittsu modarn, juw no : laiku  
 barutooku, beruberun/  
 A : What kind of fruits do you like?  
 S : /appulu endu orenzi...endo/  
 A : Do you like berries?  
 S : /behi:zu tte sutorobeli?  
 A : What about grapes?  
 S : /ai laiku gureypus/  
 A : Do you know what plums are?  
 S : /pulumu? ai dontu laiku matti/  
 A : Where did you go the last vacation you had?  
 S : /ai don' hab bakeiʃon mattʃi, juw now, itsu raafu/  
 A : O. K. Where did you go?  
 S : /ai wentutu za conetʃikatt kaledʒ butt it za kaind of wark, juw now./

## READING

He's about thirty.	/hiyz about θartiy/
Sit down.	/ʃit daʊn/
Why did you do it?	/wai didju duw itt?/
I can't imagine.	/ai kyant imadzɪn/
It's ridiculous!	/itsu ridikjulasu/
No, that won't matter.	/no, ðat wont mataa/
Will you be staying to lunch?	/wiljuw bi stein tu lantʃi/
Sugar? Is this the one?	/ʃufaa? iz zis za wan?
Possibly. Some people can do it.	/po <sup>h</sup> ʃibuliy. samu piypulu kyan duw it.
You can try.	/juy kyan trai/
That's the one I wanted.	/zattsu zattsu za wan ai wontedu/

Interviewer B : Japanese

Subject S3 : American Male, 23 years old

B : Kore wa nani iro desuka?  
 S : /órewnzi desu/  
 B : Kore wa?  
 S : /buluw desu/  
 B : Ao ne. Buluu mo iidesu kedo. Kore wa?  
 S : /gu... midwōri desu/  
 B : Kore wa tomato desu. Repeat.  
 S : /korey wa tomáto desu/  
 B : Sore wa remon desu.  
 S : /sorey wa lémon desu/  
 B : Kore ha nan desu ka? Repeat.  
 S : /korey wa nan desu ka/  
 B : Tomato desu. Repeat  
 S : /Tomato desu/  
 B : Sore wa nan desu ka?  
 S : /remon desu/  
 B : Are wa nan desu ka/  
 S : /banāna desu/  
 B : Kore wa nan desu ka?  
 S : /empitsu desu/  
 B : (Put the pen on the table. Then point to the pencil.)  
 S : /empitsu wa téybulu no wue ni arimasu/  
 B : (Put the pencil in her bag)  
 S : /empitsu wa bæg no naka ni arimasu  
 B : (Show him a notebook and put it on the desk) No:to ha tsukue no ue  
 ni arimasu.  
 S : /nowto wa twúkue no ue ni arimasu/  
 B : (Put the notebook in the bag.)  
 S : /nowto wa bæg no naka ni arimasu/

Interviewer B : Japanese

Subject S4 : American Female, 25 years old

B : Kore wa nani iro desuka?  
 S : /owrendʒi/  
 B : Kore wa?  
 S : /ah...awoi/  
 B : Kore wa?  
 S : /midori/  
 B : Kore wa tomato desu. Hai, Repeat.  
 S : /kôwre wa tomato desu/  
 B : Kore wa remon desu.  
 S : /kowre wa ljemon desu/  
 B : Kore ha nan desuka? Repeat.  
 S : /kowre wa nân desuka?/  
 B : Tomato desu.  
 S : /tomatwo desu/  
 B : Sore ha nan desuka?  
 S : /solje wa ljemon desu/  
 B : Are wa nan desuka?  
 S : /Alje wa bânana desu/  
 B : (Put the pen on the table)  
     Empitsu wa teeburu no ue ni arimasu. Repeat/  
 S : /empitsu wa téybulu no wué ni arimasu/  
 B : (Put the pencil in her bag)  
 S : /empitsu wa bákku no naka ni arimasu

## NOTES

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