

English Pronunciation for Japanese Speakers

Review by Keiko Okada

Ohio University

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION FOR JAPANESE SPEAKERS. Paulette Dale and Lillian Poms. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents, 1994. Book \$16.95, Cassettes \$35.00, Book/Cassette Package \$49.00.

English Pronunciation For Japanese Speakers is a well-written textbook for both Japanese students and the teachers who teach Japanese students. This book can be used both in ESL and EFL situations with students of any proficiency level. It also serves as a good resource book for ESL/EFL teachers.

This book consists of an introduction, three well-organized main sections, and two appendices for teachers. The introduction opens with a message from the authors clearly stating their standpoint that a foreign accent is nothing to be ashamed of. Accent reduction exercises should be used only to promote effective communication and to avoid misunderstanding. This message relieves the students who have constantly experienced a hard time because of their accents, and motivates them to acquire an effective means of communication.

There are three main sections, namely, "Consonants," "Vowels," and "Stress, Rhythm, and Intonation." The first two sections explain how to articulate a sound (with the help of understandable pictures), how the sound compares to the sound existing in Japanese, and how to avoid pronunciation problems. Each lesson is followed by exercises, self-tests, and reviews for practice and confirmation. Students can choose simple material or more difficult tasks according to their proficiency level. During the exercises, accompanying cassette tapes play an important role. Useful "notes" are offered to help students kick the habit of pronouncing English in a Japanese way. For example, on page 31, it says, "Many Japanese speakers tend to add the sound [o] to words ending in [t] (cuto, sito, cato). Be sure to avoid this extra vowel when practicing words with final [t]." This is a typical error that Japanese learners make, and this book is beneficial in that it clearly shows these errors and offers exercises to help the learners.

As an EFL teacher at a high school in Japan, I had to spend a long time teaching how to pronounce past verbs, or how to get rid of Japanese rhythm patterns. This is why I am

particularly impressed with such lessons as "Pronouncing past tense verbs, plurals and third-person verbs (Section I)," and "Stress within the sentence (Section III)."

Another noticeable merit of this book is that the authors are trying to make pronunciation exercises applicable to "real-life" situations. They do so by providing a number of common phrases and idiomatic expressions as sample sentences. They have also succeeded in making pronunciation exercises enjoyable.

English Pronunciation for Japanese Speakers casts a new light on teaching. By focusing on one particular language, it actually puts students in the center of learning. It will give a great deal of insight to all teachers who try to make ESL/EFL pronunciation classrooms more and more student-centered. *English Pronunciation for International Students* and *English Pronunciation for Spanish Speakers* are also available by the same authors.

About the Reviewer

Keiko Okada received her Master's degree in TESL/Applied Linguistics from Ohio University in June, and has just started her doctoral study in September at the Department of TESL/Applied Linguistics at UCLA.

Conference Announcements

Thai TESOL. International Conference, (JALT, Korea TESOL and IATEFL), the Ambassado Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. January 5-7, 1997. Contact Thai TESOL, c/o Naraporn Chan-Ocha, Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Phaya Thai Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand. Fax 662-2525978, 662-218-6031. E-mail fflnco@chulkn.car.chula.ac.th

TESOL. Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida. March 11-15, 1997. Contact TESOL Inc., 1600 Cameron St., Suite 300, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-518-2535.

RELC. Seminar on Learners and Language Learning, Singapore. April 21-23, 1997. To be held at the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. All communications regarding the Seminar should be addressed to: The Director, (Attention: Seminar Secretariat), SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 30 Orange Grove Road, Singapore 258352, Republic of Singapore. Tel. (65) 737 9044. Fax (65) 734 2753. E-mail tkhng@singnet.com.sg