# Effective Pronunciation Materials and Curricula

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A renewed and increasing worldwide interest in the teaching of English pronunciation brings with it the harsh reality that effective and communicative approaches, methods, techniques, and materials are urgently needed. Additionally complicating the issue is the fact that designing and implementing curricular goals and guidelines requires planners to consider effective use of a range of available technologies. The English Pronunciation Project, Part III (being conducted at Matsuyama University) seeks to further identify specific solutions to this dilemma by analyzing and comparing temporal developments in (a) students' evaluations of curricular success and (b) standardized listening-test results for students who participate in courses with these four pronunciation-curriculum approaches: (1) a non-pronunciation-teaching curriculum (with 23 first-year students); (2) a CD-ROM/ Computer-based curriculum (with 20 first-year students); (3) a Textbook/ Audiocassette/Language Lab-based curriculum (with 18 second-year students); and (4) a curriculum which emphasizes both (2) and (3) (with 15 second-year students). The student evaluations will demonstrate which curricula more successfully meet students' needs. The listening-test results will indirectly demonstrate the effectiveness of each curriculum (listening tests are typically used because an objective, standardized, communicative pronunciation test does not exist). One of the main hypotheses to be tested is: The rank order of the most effective to the least effective curriculum is (4), (3), (2), (1). In order to assist professionals interested in the design and implementation of effective pronunciation curricula, this presentation will discuss details concerning: (a) all aspects of the research program and the data collected; (b) the relative strengths and weaknesses of the curricula; (c) motivational use of materials and technology; (d) assessing and utilizing learners' perceptions of curricular success; and (e) suggestions for materials development, placing particular emphasis upon textbooks, audiocassettes, CD-ROMs, and listening-based pronunciation tests.

The range of available technologies to be discussed include the use of

audiocassette recorders/players, language laboratories, and computers. Temporal developments will be analyzed by way of evaluating questionnaire and test results four times each throughout the '95-'96 academic year. Analysis of students' evaluations will consist of both individual and collective responses to an independently-created questionnaire. Analysis of standardized listening-test results will also consist of both individual and collective responses to two types of tests: (a) the *JACET Basic Listening Comprehension Test*, and (b) an independently-created 192-item listening-based pronunciation test. The CD-ROM/Computer-based curriculum concerns students' individual use of *Pronunciation Plus* software on Macintosh computers (available through DynEd Japan, Tokyo). The Textbook/Audiocassette/Language Laboratory-based curriculum concerns students' individual use of *The Complete Standard American English Pronunciation Course* (Mills, 1994) and "Native-like English Pronunciation through 'New Katakana'" (Mills, 1995), both of which have been independently created and developed specifically for the benefit of Japanese learners of English Pronunciation.

### Reference Sampling

Mills, S. 1994. *The Complete Standard American English Pronunciation Course.* Matsuyama: Nicholas Publishing.

Mills, S. 1995. Native-like English Pronunciation through "New Katakana." Originally presented at The JALT '95 Nagasaki Rainbow Seminar. Forthcoming in *The Language Teacher*'s Nov '96 Special Issue on *Learning and Teaching English Pronunciation.* Tokyo: JALT.

Morley, J. (ed.). 1987. *Current Perspectives On Pronunciation: Practices Anchored in Theory.* Washington, D. C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Richards, J. and T. Rogers. 1986. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A Description and Analysis.* NY: Cambridge University Press.