

บทความรับเชิญ

แนวการสอนภาษาญี่ปุ่นแบบใหม่: การประยุกต์ใช้แหล่งการเรียนรู้ออนไลน์ เพื่อสอนการออกเสียงภาษาญี่ปุ่น

บทคัดย่อ

ในช่วงหลายปีมานี้ นวัตกรรมของเทคโนโลยีสารสนเทศและการสื่อสาร (ICT) ได้เปลี่ยนสภาพแวดล้อมการเรียนรู้แบบดั้งเดิม ICT ได้เปิดประตูสู่การเรียนรู้แนวใหม่ นอกเหนือจากการเรียนแบบเฉพาะหน้าในชั้นเรียนแล้ว ICT และอินเทอร์เน็ตยังเอื้อต่อการเรียนรู้ ทำให้ไร้ข้อจำกัดด้านสถานที่และเวลา ในบทความนี้ ช่วงแรกผู้เขียนอภิปรายเกี่ยวกับรูปแบบการเรียนรู้แนวใหม่ อาทิ การเรียนแบบลงมือปฏิบัติ การเรียนแบบกลับด้าน และการเรียนรู้แบบผสมผสาน ซึ่งโมเดลการเรียนรู้เหล่านี้มุ่งให้ผู้เรียนได้มีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการเรียนรู้ แทนที่จะเป็นผู้รับความรู้จากผู้สอนฝ่ายเดียว การที่จะส่งเสริมให้ผู้เรียนได้คิดวิเคราะห์อย่างลึกซึ้ง และประสบความสำเร็จในการเรียนรู้ระดับสูงนั้น เราจำเป็นต้องยืดหยุ่นและเปิดใจที่จะทดลองนำวิธีใหม่มาใช้เพื่ออนาคต ผู้เขียนแนะนำแหล่งข้อมูลออนไลน์ 3 ชิ้นงานที่ได้พัฒนาขึ้นและเปิดให้ผู้เรียนและผู้สอนภาษาญี่ปุ่นทั่วโลกสามารถเข้าถึงได้โดยไม่มีค่าใช้จ่าย จากนั้นเสนอแนวใหม่ในการสอนการออกเสียงภาษาญี่ปุ่นโดยแนะนำคอร์สที่ผู้เรียนออกแบบขึ้นโดยใช้แนวทาง ‘การเรียนรู้แบบผสมผสาน’ ควบคู่ไปกับการใช้แหล่งข้อมูลออนไลน์ทั้งสามที่ได้พัฒนาขึ้น และสุดท้ายผู้เขียนให้ข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับการสอนการออกเสียงภาษาญี่ปุ่นสำหรับผู้เรียนภาษาญี่ปุ่นชาวไทย

คำ

สำคัญ

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Invited Paper

New Approaches to Language Education: Utilizing Online Resources to Teach Japanese Pronunciation

Abstract

In recent years, the innovation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed traditional learning environments. ICT has also opened a door for new approaches to learning. In addition to face-to-face classroom instruction during class hours, ICT, with the internet in particular, enables us to study without constraints of physical space and time. In this paper, I will first discuss recent models of learning: ‘active learning’, ‘flipped-learning’ and ‘blended-learning’. These models aim to engage learners in their learning process as active participants, instead of passive recipients of knowledge from the instructor. In order to achieve deeper thinking and a higher level of learner achievement, we need to be flexible in our thinking and be positive about trying new approaches for the future. I will introduce three online resources that I have developed, all of which are open to learners and instructors of Japanese around the world at no charge. Then I will discuss new approaches to teaching Japanese pronunciation by introducing the course that I have designed using a ‘blended learning’ style, combining these three online resources. Finally, I will make suggestions on teaching/learning Japanese pronunciation for Thai learners of Japanese.

Key words

active learning, flipped-learning, blended-learning, online resources, Japanese pronunciation

1. Introduction

In recent years, the innovation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed traditional learning environments. ICT has also opened a door for new approaches to learning. In addition to face-to-face classroom instruction during class hours, ICT, with the internet in particular, enables us to study without constraints of physical space and time.

In this paper, I will first introduce three online resources that I have developed, all of which are open to learners and instructors of Japanese around the world at no charge. Then I will discuss new approaches to teaching Japanese pronunciation by introducing the course that I have designed using a ‘blended learning’ style, combining these three online resources. Finally, I will make suggestions on teaching/learning Japanese pronunciation for Thai learners of Japanese.

2. New approaches to language education

2.1 What is ‘active learning’, ‘flipped learning’ and ‘blended learning’?

Recent models of teaching aim to engage learners in their learning process as active participants, instead of passive recipients of knowledge from the instructor. In relation to new approaches of education, terms such as ‘active learning (AL)’, ‘flipped learning (FL)’ and ‘blended learning (BL)’ are used in this paper.

Firstly, the definition of AL is quite broad; it refers to any forms of learning where learners engage in their learning process, instead of just passively listening to the instructor’s lectures. AL is more than just conducting activities such as discussion, presentations and group projects in a classroom. The challenging part is to achieve deep thinking and a higher level of learner achievement through the implementation of AL.

Secondly, FL is a form of learning, where the traditional relationship between classwork and homework is flipped; learners acquire the basic knowledge using online resources before class, and use class hours for teacher-guided practice or conducting projects in order to achieve AL. The question is whether all learners complete their advance study before they come to class. Some of the learners who used online resources in advance may be well-prepared before class. However, other learners who did not have time for preparation, may not be ready to be active participants in class discussion and projects.

Finally, BL is a form of learning, where online instruction is integrated with face-to-face instruction in a ‘pedagogically appropriate’ way. BL is an educational approach to achieve a high quality of education by utilizing both ICT and the traditional style of instruction; there is no one BL model which is the most ‘pedagogically appropriate’. Instructors need to plan and implement BL carefully considering what is the most appropriate for their students according

to their educational environments, and thus it is again a challenging task for instructors. FL mentioned above, is considered as a sub-category of BL.

ICT innovation has brought such new approaches to our attention in the context of school education, particularly in the US: for example, the well-known Kahn Academy offers instructional math videos for kindergarten to high school education. Implementation of BL is now spread to foreign languages in higher education: for example, King's College London offers postgraduate pre-sessional English courses for EU and international students who hold an offer for a degree at King's. 6-week, 10-week and 15-week courses are available to learn academic English with a combination of face-to-face and online instructions. Only a few studies are conducted on the actual implementation of BL in Japanese language education.

Further study is needed to discuss issues

on these new approaches to language education, and to examine the educational effect for learners in order to improve education for the next generation. In the following sections, I will first introduce the definition and models of BL. Then I will explain the reasons why I have developed online resources and designed a BL course for teaching Japanese pronunciation.

2.2 The definition of BL

The definition of BL by Clayton Christensen Institute (2019) is a formal education program in which a student learns:

1. at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace;
2. at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home;
3. and the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.

Table 1 BL and Tech-rich instruction (Clayton Christensen Institute, 2019)

Blended Learning	Tech-rich Instruction
Students learn in part through online learning, and they have an element of control over where, when and how they work.	Students use technology to do the same work at the same place, time and pace.
Devices are used to leverage opportunity for personalization.	Devices are used to support traditional instruction.
Classrooms fundamentally shift instruction in a way that provides an integrated learning experience.	Classrooms may enhance traditional learning experience.

Tech-rich instructions, such as CALL (Computer Associated Language Learning), CAI (Computer Aided Instruction), CBT (Computer-based Training) apply technology in order to assist traditional styles of instruction; for example, instructors introduce sentence structures in class, and then learners use the computer to practice grammatical substitution drills prepared for them either in class or at home.

BL is fundamentally different from tech-rich instruction as shown in Table1. BL aims to create a new learning experience by providing students opportunities to have some control over their own learning. Technology is used to maximize personalization instead of just facilitating traditional instruction.

2.3 The models of BL

According to Clayton Christensen Institute, there are four typical models of BL: Rotation model, Flex model, A La Carte model and Enriched Virtual model. The Rotation model is implemented by rotation of online instruction, teacher-led instruction, and collaborative activities. There are four sub-categories in the Rotation model: Station Rotation model (students rotate several stations on a fixed schedule within a classroom or several classrooms), Lab Rotation model (online learning takes place in a computer lab), Flipped Classroom model (see below) and Individual Rotation model (students rotate several stations on individual schedules).

The Flipped Classroom (referred to as FL in this paper) is a sub-category of the Rotation model. This model is recently attracting the most attention in language education. It flips the traditional relationship between classwork and homework; using online resources, students acquire the basic knowledge, and use class hours for teacher-guided practice or conducting projects. It aims to engage learners in their learning process as active participants for effective and increased learning (AL): for example, students learn basic sentence structure online as a part of advance study before coming to class, and use the time in the classroom to apply the knowledge into practice such as conducting presentations, discussions or group project works.

2.4 Why use BL for teaching/learning Japanese pronunciation?

In 2012, I designed the first blended course, ‘Japanese Pronunciation for Communication 3-4’¹, which was offered in the Center for Japanese Language Education (CJL) at Waseda University. We have 15 weeks in one semester; there are 5 weeks of face-to-face instruction and 10 weeks of online instruction. In other words, the classroom disappeared in the middle of the semester. Students can be anywhere they choose to be and continue learning until the end of the semester. This style was called a ‘hybrid’ course at that time, and no other course was designed this way at CJL.

¹ 1st Waseda e-Teaching Award was granted in 2013.

The problems in traditional approaches of teaching pronunciation are: 1) physical limitation of time in class; instructors need to introduce many items such as new vocabulary, grammatical items, and writing systems, so there is little time left in the classroom to teach pronunciation. 2) difficulties in offering personalized instruction to meet variations in learners' pronunciation. The phonological systems of learners' first language (L1) and their dialects interfere with the pronunciation of the target language. Personalized instructions are required according to their L1 and dialects. 3) lack of teaching materials, textbooks and teaching methodology. In order to solve these problems, I decided to develop online resources utilizing ICT that anyone can use anywhere to learn/teach Japanese pronunciation.

3. Online resources

In this section, I will introduce three online resources that I have developed for my courses at Waseda University, all of which are distributed at no charge to all learners and instructors of Japanese around the world.

3.1 Waseda Course Channel

‘Japanese Pronunciation for Communication 3-5’ initially started in 2000 as a 15 weeks face - to - face course for international students who wished to improve their pronunciation. Using teaching materials and handouts developed for this course, the ‘Komyunikeeshon no tame no Nihongo Hatsuen Lesson (Japanese Pronunciation Exercises for Communication)’ was published (Toda, 2004). Based on the contents of this textbook, 15 weeks of online instructional videos were produced in 2007.

Initially, the online instructional videos were provided in the CourseN@vi, which is a Learning Management System (LMS) at Waseda University. We also provided access to partner universities such as Thammasat University (Methapisit, 2014), Peking University and Tsinghua University. Since 2015, the 15 weeks of online videos are open to the public on the website, Waseda Course Channel (<http://course-channel.waseda.jp/>), and have become the most frequently watched online videos of all the courses.



Fig.1 Waseda Course Channel

3.2 Japanese Pronunciation Practice through Shadowing

In 2012, I started a new course, ‘Pronunciation: Speaking with Fluency 3-4’ (the first Japanese BL course for international students). The details of the course are shown in Chapter 5.

The textbook ‘Japanese Pronunciation Practice through Shadowing’ was published and used for this course (Toda, Okubo, Kamiyama, Konishi & Fukui, 2012). This textbook focuses on the pronunciation practice using ‘shadowing’ method. English, Chinese, Korean translations are also provided in the textbook. Following the key points introduced in each lesson of this textbook, we produced 20 lessons of online instructional videos. They are open to the public in the publishers’ website (<http://www.3anet.co.jp/ja/2861/>).

3.3 Japanese Pronunciation for Communication (JPC)

A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), ‘Japanese Pronunciation for Communication (JPC)’ has been open to the public since November 2016. This course has been offered by edX, which is a global MOOC platform jointly developed by Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). JPC is the first Japanese language course offered by a global MOOC. It has been open repeatedly every half year to provide an opportunity to practice pronunciation for people who are interested in learning/teaching Japanese (<http://www.edx.org/course/japanese-pronunciation-for-communication-2>).

JPC is distributed worldwide to learners and instructors involved in Japanese language education. More than 50,000 people have registered from 170 countries and regions (as of May 26, 2019). The details of JPC is explained in the following chapter.



Fig.2 Japanese Pronunciation Practice through Shadowing

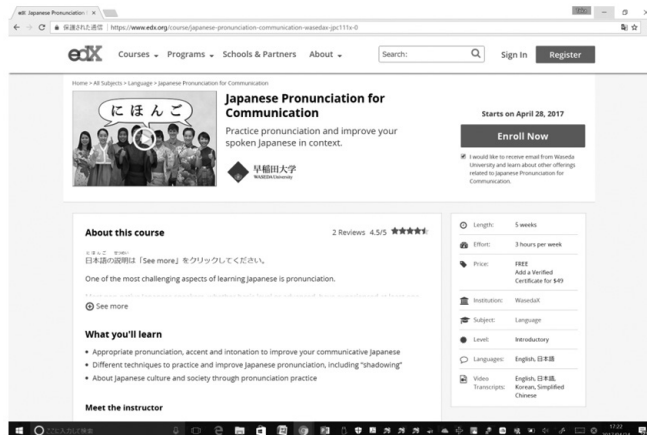


Fig.3 Japanese Pronunciation for Communication (JPC)

4. Course outline of JPC

JPC is designed to teach Japanese pronunciation so that learners can accurately get their message across and share their feelings. For this purpose, the course will present learners with pronunciation practice activities and methods for continued study. It allows learners to acquire essential knowledge to raise their consciousness about Japanese pronunciation, applying results obtained from my previous research project.²

4.1 The MOOC platforms

The MOOC is growing rapidly with an increasing need for open education globally and locally. There are many MOOC platforms: Coursera (Stanford University) and edX (Harvard University/MIT) are two well-known global MOOC platforms. The MOOC platforms are spread around the world: for example, FutureLearn (UK), iversity (Germany), FUN (France) and EduOpen (Italy) in Europe, and Thai

MOOC (Thailand), JMOOC (Japan), K-MOOC (Korea), XuetangX (China) in Asia.

Daphne Koller, Stanford University, explained the aim of starting Coursera as ‘to bring the best quality education to as many people as we could, so we formed Coursera, whose goal is to take the best courses from the best instructors at best universities and provide it to everyone around the world for free’ (TED, 1 August 2012).

Especially in the USA, MOOCs are recognized as valuable open educational resources, enhancing the job prospect for a better future. By being able to present verified certificates from the universities recognized all over the world such as Stanford, Harvard, and MIT, learners can demonstrate their motivation, dedication, and perseverance, in addition to their self-management and time-management skills.

According to a MocoLab report published in December 2017, the number of MOOC

² Research on Japanese Pronunciation Learning Support using e-Learning and Autonomous Learning Models’, Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) 26370616 (C) 2014-2016.

participants is estimated to be over 100 million worldwide. Carolyn McIntyre (Founder & CEO at Moolab & E-Learninglab) said in her article, 'being able to show physical evidence of your abilities is becoming increasingly important in recruitment, and MOOCs can play a key role in this.'

Also, there are people who take up MOOCs out of their personal interest. In a rapidly growing aging population, continuing education is an important issue to ensure the quality of life.

4.2 Course structure

Every section of JPC is arranged as follows:

1. Lectures: I explain the mechanisms of Japanese pronunciation and practice pronunciation together with learners. 2. Japanese Pronunciation and Culture through Conversation: This material focuses on phonetic sounds through conversation, and helps learners be aware of pronunciation in contexts. Further, 'Culture Introduction', which is related to the conversation content, will be useful to help understand cultural aspects. 3. Shadowing Practice Materials: This material contains audio files for shadowing practice. 4. Education of Japanese Pronunciation around the World: This material introduces different pronunciation characteristics, and relevant teaching and learning methods for English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Thai learners. 5. Pronunciation Forum: This is an open space to exchange opinions.

4.3 Course syllabus

JPC consists of six sections. 'Section 0' Course Overview: An Introduction to the course

including the course syllabus, course outline, learning objectives.

'Section 1' Pronunciation Points: Based on the learning objective to teach 'Japanese pronunciation to accurately convey messages and feelings', the following five pronunciation points will be introduced; 1. Learning Japanese rhythm by being conscious of the pronunciation of special morae (beats), 2. Focusing on tone by being aware of Japanese accent, 3. Being aware of the relationship between intention and intonation, 4. Being aware of thought groups for pronunciation, 5. Understanding how pronunciation corresponds to the relationship between speakers, content and/or scene.

'Section2' Accent: Learning the following three points while understanding that accent can change meaning; 1. Accent of nouns 2. Accent of compound nouns 3. Accent of names.

'Section 3' Intonation: Learning the following six points while understanding that intonation can change the intended meaning; 1. -ja nai, 2. -deshoo, 3. -deshoo ka, 4. Soo desu ne, 5. Soo desu ka, 6. Downstep intonation.

'Section 4' Pronunciation of Colloquial Japanese: The systematic changes to pronunciation for colloquial Japanese are categorized into the following four groups; 1. Contracted sounds 2. The omission of /i/ 3. The contracted vowel sound 4. The pronunciation of /N/. Further, the pronunciation changes to the following two groups are introduced: 1. Long vowel sound 2. The small /tsu/ sound.

‘Section 5’ Becoming a ‘Pronunciation Expert’: In order to attain high level of competence in pronunciation, and become a ‘Pronunciation Expert’, six points that became evident are introduced (Toda, 2008, 2012). In this section, interview videos with ‘Pronunciation Experts’ are presented and students learn how to become a ‘Pronunciation Expert’.

4.4 Grading policy and verified certificate

The passing grade for the course is 60%. To qualify for a verified certificate, learners must score at least 60%. There are two assignment types for the self-paced course: 1. Quiz (Section 1, 2, 3, 4) 50% 2. Final Test (Section 5) 50%.

JPC is a free course that aims to give everyone around the world opportunities to learn Japanese pronunciation, and thus not everyone needs to complete the course for a verified certificate. Parts of JPC can be used as an open educational resource; for example, showing Section 5 to students in order to share some tips to become a ‘Pronunciation Expert’, or just to encourage students by showing examples of learners who attained high level of proficiency. We suggest that the people who want to utilize JPC would audit the course (5 weeks access to complete the course from the date of registration).³

5. Course outline of PSF

In this chapter, I will explain the new pronunciation course in which I blended three online resources described in Chapter 3. The final goal of ‘Pronunciation: Speaking with

Fluency 3-4 (PSF)’ is to attain proficiency of Japanese pronunciation so that you can accurately get your message across and share your feelings’. The aims of this online course are as follows:

1. acquisition of phonological knowledge,
2. consciousness raising in pronunciation,
3. vocalization practice and continuation, all of which are vitally necessary to achieve proficient Japanese pronunciation.

5.1 The new model of BL

JPC is incorporated in the 4th to 8th week of the course, ‘Pronunciation: Speaking with Fluency 3-4’, that I coordinate at Waseda University. This is an application of JPC used locally for on-campus students for credit. This way of using MOOCs is called a Small Private Online Course (SPOC). In 2017, SPOCs had become a part of the curriculum at Harvard University.

Rotating online instruction and face-to-face instruction has its advantage: instructors can check their students understanding of the subject and their progress when they come to the classroom. Students tend to find keeping up a good pace difficult without face-to-face instruction and their instructors support, as self-management and time-management skills are required to continue learning in order to achieve their goals.

PSF, however, does not follow the typical Rotation model. Instead, I designed the course so that face-to-face instruction ends and

³ Only if you choose to receive a verified certificate (see 4.1) when you score above the passing grade, optional \$49 is charged by edX. The verification process requires your photo using a webcam and government-issued photo ID. Using face recognition technology, edX’s authorization service examines your identity and you will receive a message from edX to inform whether the verification process was successful.

transitions into online classes in the middle of the semester. Face-to-face instruction has its own advantages: one of them is that instructors can check students' understanding throughout the course in class. However, when the classroom disappears in the middle of the semester, we need to have a device that can check students' understanding and progress, instead of physically seeing students. By utilizing LMS, we can check students' progress, keep in touch with individual students, and give feedback to their assignments. Moreover, students seemed to feel more responsible for their own learning process after the classroom transitioned to online instruction. This course design is based on the concept of 'autonomous learning' (Dickinson 1995). Three important factors of autonomous learning are learner responsibility, learner independence, and learner choice.

Toda (in press) compared the course completion rate of 'Pronunciation: Speaking with Fluency 3-4' and another pronunciation course conducted only through face-to-face for 15 weeks (one semester). The results show that the completion rates of the two courses are not significantly different. The factors which caused positive effects for students' continuing motivation are 1. Motivation raising, 2. Consciousness raising, 3. Learning management and autonomous learning, 4. Learning support and rapport formation.

In order to maintain a good pace and achieve the goals after the classroom disappeared, it is very important to support individual students. I will describe the ways in which we support individual students utilizing ICT in the next chapter.

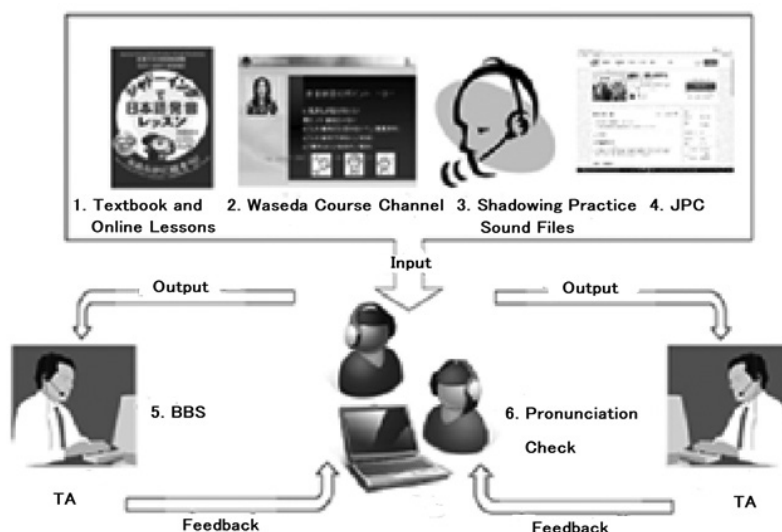


Fig.4 Pronunciation: Speaking with Fluency 3-4 (PSF)

5.2 Course structure

Face-to-face instructions are conducted from the 1st to the 5th week, then online instructions are offered from the 6th to the 15th week. Students continue practicing Japanese using the following materials (Fig.4):

1. Textbook and Online Lessons(<http://www.3anet.co.jp/ja/2861/>)
2. Waseda Course Channel (<http://course-channel.waseda.jp/>)
3. Shadowing Practice Sound Files (LMS)
4. JPC (<https://www.edx.org/school/wasedax>)
5. Bulletin Board System (LMS)
6. Pronunciation Check (LMS)

The Bulletin Board System (BBS) is used for discussing pronunciation with the others. This enhances learners' understanding of pronunciation. The 'Pronunciation check' is a unique system we have developed. Students record their own voice and submit sound files to LMS as a part of their assignment and receive feedback from teaching assistants (TA) every week. We have been able to improve the course by utilizing technology: Learning management has become more efficient throughout the course as all assignments are kept in LMS. Also,

we did not have to use various recording media such as MD, CD or mp4 as sound files are all kept and shared in LMS, and TA can give feedback to students anytime anywhere.⁴ In Toda, Odo & Takeuchi (in press), we reported the details of the 'Pronunciation Check' and the establishment of a close rapport between TA and students through feedback.

In order for the students to continue studying independently, we explain the details of the course outline, the aims of the course, how to record and submit their pronunciation as a part of the assessments 'Pronunciation Check', how to take part in the discussions in BBS, etc., while each student is using PC to access LMS. The guidance materials are prepared in Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean. In the 1st week of the semester, students who attend the guidance session are given the material written in the language they are most familiar with. If students are not comfortable with this unique style of instruction, they are able to choose another pronunciation course by 15 weeks of face-to-face instruction.

5.3 Course syllabus

The course syllabus of PSF is shown in Table2.

⁴ Waseda Teaching Award, the President Award was granted in 2015.

Table 2 Course syllabus

Class Style	Week	Contents	Class Style	Week	Contents
Face-to-face	1	Guidance week	Online	6	Sequential voicing, Numerals (JPC3)
	2	Greetings, Mora		7	Onomatopoeia, Clipped forms (JPC4)
	3	Rhythm		8	Loanwords (JPC5)
	4	Accent of nouns and names (JPC1)		9	Contracted forms
	5	Sentence-final intonation (JPC2)		10	Emphasis
				11	Vowel devoicing
				12	Accent of compound nouns
				13	Accent of verbs
				14	Intention and intonation, Downstep intonation
				15	Summary and review

5.4 Evaluation

1. 30% JPC (Quiz (Section 1, 2, 3, 4) and Final Test (Section 5))⁵
2. 45% Pronunciation check (3%, 15 times=45%)
3. 10% Attendance and participation to BBS
4. 15% Final report

6. Teaching Thai learners Japanese pronunciation using online resources

6.1 Online education in Thailand

According to Asadayuth (2017), Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) developed open educational resources in 2013, and Ramkhamhaeng University opened its resources ‘M-Learning’ to the public. In 2017, Thai MOOC was established by Thailand Cyber University Project. The number of courses and organizations are as follows:

Table 3 Thai MOOC (Asadayuth, 2017)

	Total courses	Language courses	Japanese language education	Organizations
Thai MOOC	145	13	0	40

⁵ No verified certificate is required for evaluation as a part of the course.

6.2 JPC ‘Education of Japanese Pronunciation around the World: Thailand’

JPC offers content such as ‘Education of Japanese Pronunciation around the World’ every week as explained in 4.2.

In Section 5, ‘Education of Japanese Pronunciation around the World’ is dedicated to Thai learners of Japanese (Fig.5). The distinction between ‘shi’ and ‘chi’, and the pronunciation of ‘tsu’ are introduced as Thai learners often find these sounds challenging to pronounce. Also, Japanese accents are introduced and explained in relation to Thai tones (Fig.6). This session aims to give opportunities to Thai learners to understand some of the phonological differences and similarities between Thai and Japanese.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I introduced three online resources that I have developed and discussed how to implement BL using those resources to teach Japanese pronunciation. These online resources can be used by Thai learners of Japanese who wish to learn Japanese pronunciation. In particular, ‘Education of Japanese Pronunciation around the World: Thailand’ in JPC is suitable as it focuses on the pronunciation problems often encountered by Thai learners. It draws learners’ awareness of the phonological differences and similarities between Thai and Japanese.

Utilizing ICT is one way to solve problems involved in traditional approaches of face-to-face instruction: it helps both learners who wish to improve pronunciation but do not have



Fig.5 Education of Japanese Pronunciation around the World: Thailand



Fig.6 Thai tones and Japanese accents

opportunities to practice, and instructors of Japanese who would like to teach pronunciation but do not have enough time left in the classroom. However, I believe that technology would never fully substitute instructors. As discussed in Toda (in press), the role and importance of face-to-face instruction remain in BL. We need to be flexible in our thinking and be positive about trying new approaches for the future. The quote by Dewey (1944), ‘if we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow’ may still be relevant now.

In order to make pedagogical suggestions to improve the quality of Japanese language education, we have been examining the educational effects of the new approaches

discussed in this paper. The results show empirical evidence on the effectiveness of utilizing ICT in teaching Japanese pronunciation (Toda & Odo, 2018; Toda et al., 2018; Toda in press). Further studies need to be conducted to examine how to integrate online instruction with face-to-face instruction, in pedagogically appropriate ways, to fit into various educational environments around the world.

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