

Re: Learning pronunciation

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On Mon, 25 Sep 2006 12:10:05 +0100, Mike Robinson wrote:

Any advice for learning pronunciation? Sound recordings only don't tell you how to move your mouth, and while I've found written descriptions of correct mouth position, diagrams or videos would be useful.

A couple of simple observations.

First, try to get access to video of people singing in Japanese. Pay particular attention to how the lips are shaped when voicing the vowels. For example, you will see a significant rounding of the lips when voicing the vowel 'o' much more so than when one does so with the equivalent English 'o'. Conversely, note the significant lack of rounding when voicing the vowel 'u' as opposed to an English speaker using approximately the same sound in English.

Second, pay attention to Japanese who are relatively fluent English speakers in English but speak with a Japanese accent. For example, an English speaker would immediately sense an oddity when the Japanese counts one, two, three. The lack of diphthongs in Japanese causes equivalent vowels to have a much different sound. Listening to a Japanese speaking English can give you insight into the intricacies of pronunciation that you cannot get from simply listening to Japanese speak Japanese. I'm sure you will be careful not to give offense. The Japanese learning English are in the same position as you are learning Japanese.

Phil Yff

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