

Using 'A shadowing' technique' to improve english pronunciation deficient adult Japanese learners : An action research on expatriate japanese adult learners

Abstract

This action research aims to solve pressing day-to-day problems in communication faced by four expatriate Japanese adult learners who are residing in Sabah, Malaysia after retirement. The Japanese language sound system is different from that of the English Language. As such some of its prosodic features such as stress, intonation and rhythm interfere with Japanese learners' pronunciation of English connected speech. We embark on improving one of these factors, i.e. English rhythms, after conducting our initial action research. The intervention dealt with in this study is a shadowing technique which was originally developed as a training technique for simultaneous interpreting. It is embedded in an information-processing model propagated by McLaughlin (1978) who viewed second language learning as two performance behaviors i.e. controlled process, or automatic process. Four adult Japanese learners of English participated as the respondents in this study. Data was collected through learners' reflective journals, tape recordings of shadowing, and observation. Five action core research cycles were implemented until the learners achieved their goal. The finding shows recognizable improvement of the participants in their pronunciation namely English rhythms. This is to a large extent attributed to the effectiveness of 'shadowing' technique used under close scrutiny using action research that created phonological awareness among the Japanese adult learners in this study.