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Visiting Professor April – June 2024
Faculty of Global Communication
Kobe Gakuin University

Secondment Report, Tuesday 2nd July 2024

At the invitation of Professor Noriko Nakanishi from the Faculty of Global Communication, endorsed by Professor Megumi Nakamura, President of Kobe Gakuin University, I came to KGU for three months from April to June 2024 as a Visiting Professor, on secondment from my UK institution, the University of Reading, where I am Professor of Phonetics.

My main duties have been team-teaching students from the Faculty of Global Communication in their English Conversation classes, together with Prof Nakanishi and Ms Shirley Tam Shuet Ying. My focus has been on pronunciation. I have mostly taught First Year students and have also contributed to Second Year classes.

Prof Nakanishi and I have discussed aspects of research and the possibility of joint research and pedagogical publications. I have assisted Prof Nakanishi's research teams with the preparation of conference papers and presentations.

In addition, I have had several external engagements, which are detailed below. Prof Nakanishi and I also visited Emeritus Professor Masaki Taniguchi in Fukuoka on 25th and 26th May in order to re-establish communication and collaboration.

For my external talks, I have presented on "English Pronunciation for a Global World: Priorities and Practicalities".

All files and some images related to external talks and to materials produced for KGU can be found in the following Google Drive for a period of six months (until 31 December 2024):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xmplOrcX7kL85l3C7r7Bx6j87p2LK4kJ?usp=sharing>

External talks

Visit to Kyoto Prefectural University, Thursday 30th May 2024

On 30th May, I visited Kyoto Prefectural University at the invitation of Professor Michiyo Yamaguchi to speak to her students about English pronunciation and study abroad in the UK. I first met Prof Yamaguchi at the University College London (UCL) Summer Course in English Phonetics (SCEP) in London, on which I am a regular teacher.

The presentation I gave on study abroad looked at two aspects: 1) what the University of Reading has to offer – in particular the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics, where I am Professor of Phonetics; and 2) the UCL SCEP.

I first spoke about the University of Reading by giving an overview and some statistical information, and then introduced my Department and colleagues, speaking about their specialisms. Then, I moved on to the UCL SCEP, which returns to having a face-to-face component this year for the first time since the Covid restrictions were lifted.

The talk on English pronunciation covers communication in Global settings and refers to the position paper I co-authored with colleagues Robin Walker (freelance, Spain) and Professor Low Ee Ling (National Institute of Education, Singapore). This generated a lot of questions from the students, including the issue of intelligibility as a goal rather than native-likeness, and whether there are materials available for students which use a range of accents of English from around the world. I was pleased to be able to tell them of Professor Noriko Nakanishi and colleagues' excellent series of textbooks for the Japanese market, *Global Perspectives*, which use recordings of speakers from around the world in its dialogues, including African, Chinese, Irish and Indian English speakers.

After the talk, I was treated to lunch with Prof Yamaguchi and her PhD student, Yu Pingcheng, before returning to Kobe in time for dinner.

[Invited Lecture for the 348th Regular Meeting of the Phonetic Society of Japan, Saturday 8th June, 2024 \(online\)](#)

The meeting was held on Zoom and included members from the Language Communication Section of the Japan Acoustical Society. The URL can be found here:

<http://www.psj.gr.jp/jpn/regular-meeting>

At 15:30, I was introduced by Professor Mariko Kondo of Waseda University and spoke for 60 minutes on English pronunciation for a Global world.

Questions raised at the end included how to assess intelligibility in English as an International Language and how to encourage our students to speak in class. I was again able to highlight Prof Nakanishi's co-authored textbook series and speak about good practice I had observed in her class for getting students to practise speaking in English to build up their confidence and spoken communication skills.

I also mentioned the upcoming UCL SCEP in case people were interested in that.

[Invited Lecture for The Centre for Language Studies, Radboud Universiteit, The Netherlands, Thursday 13th June, 2024 \(online\)](#)

The meeting was held on Zoom. More information about The Centre can be found here:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/cls>

At 18:00 Japan time / 11:00 Central European Time, I was introduced by Professor Amalia Arvaniti from Radboud University, and spoke for 45 minutes on English pronunciation for a Global world.

Questions raised at the end included how to support students who are at a very advanced stage of English pronunciation learning, as most of them are in The Netherlands, and issues surrounding the training of English language teachers to support migrant populations, of which The Netherlands has a considerable number.

Keynote Lecture for the 6th Annual Meeting of the Practical English Phonetic Society of Japan (Kansai Chapter), Osaka Seikei University, Saturday 15th June, 2024

Professor Tamikazu Date (retired) kindly escorted me from Sannomiya to Osaka to meet with Professor Yoshiki Nagase of Kansai University of International Studies for lunch ahead of the conference. We then proceeded to Osaka Seikei University for the conference. At 14:40, I was introduced by Professor Nagase and spoke for 60 minutes on English pronunciation for a Global world. Information about and a report on the meeting can be found here:

<https://pepsikansai.home.blog/>

There was discussion at the end of the session about the content of the Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins 2000), its suitability as a pronunciation teaching model, and whether it was too narrow to meet requirements. Questions raised included what I considered the role of AI to be in pronunciation teaching and learning going forward. Once again, I was again able to highlight Prof Nakanishi's co-authored textbook series and speak about good practice I had observed in her class for encouraging students to speak in English.

At the end of the meeting, I accompanied some of the delegates and organising team to Jusho for the conference party.

Invited Lecture for the 101st meeting of the Modern English Circle, Senri Asahi Hankyu Building, Toyonaka City, Osaka-ken, Sunday 23rd June, 2024

Professor Nobuo Yuzawa, whom I have known for many years through my connection with Emeritus Professor Peter Roach (University of Reading, UK), kindly met me at Sannomiya JR station and accompanied me to the meeting in Toyonaka. At 15:30, I was introduced by Professor Kyoko Izumi of Kobe International University and spoke for one hour on English pronunciation for a Global world. The meeting was held in the presence of Emeritus Professor Masanori Toyota (Kansai Gaidai University) who is a long-time friend and acquaintance through the UCL SCEP.

As before, I was able to highlight Prof Nakanishi's co-authored textbook series.

There was lively discussion at the end. One point raised in particular concerned the English pronunciation differences between Chinese and Japanese speakers; it was a good demonstration of why it is important for teachers of English to understand the phonology/phonologies of the language spoken by learners in order to address pronunciation differences.

Following the meeting, the group enjoyed a delicious traditional Japanese meal in a nearby restaurant.

Other academic activities

I have also undertaken numerous other activities during this period. I have:

- completed and submitted the manuscript to Oxford University Press for a 36-chapter handbook project I am co-editing;
- produced teaching materials for a Macmillan English language textbook series;
- produced two articles for *Babel*, the language magazine (<https://babelzine.co.uk/>), on features of Japanese phonology;
- appeared on BBC Radio Berkshire (UK) on 15th May, commenting on the Reading and Berkshire accents;
- provided comments on committee documents for the English Speaking Union (<https://www.esu.org/>), of which I am a Trustee;
- sent communications out for the Vice President of the International Phonetic Association Permanent Council for the Organisation of the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences (<https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/permanent-council-organisation-icphs>), of which I am the Secretary, and;
- collaborated on a big team science research paper with colleagues across the world.

I have also continued to work on and coordinate some aspects of my duties for the University of Reading, including commenting on a document concerning reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities in my capacity as School of Humanities Director of Academic Tutoring, producing a report for a funded student partnership project on first-generation students (for the pilot podcast, see <https://youtu.be/mxBLePua52I?si=xXDSvHW0yKsWIA> O), applying to a conference to present on that project with one of the student partners, and coordinating the INSET for A level English Language teachers (<https://www.reading.ac.uk/elal/outreach/inset>), which I have run since 2004 and will take place from 8th – 11th July 2024.

My time at KGU has been extremely enjoyable and productive. I am very grateful for the initial invitation from Prof Nakanishi, for KGU for agreeing to host me as a Visiting Professor, and for the support of colleagues in the International Office who have been patient, kind and informative, particularly Ms Kasumi Nabata and her line manager, Mr Osamu Takayama. Prof Nakanishi herself has been a superb support throughout my time at KGU, and I look forward to continuing our professional and personal relationship.