**Perception of accented speeches and its relationship with processing difficulty:  
Do Japanese learners have intelligibility benefits over Japanese English?**

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Our research project has examined potential influences of foreign accents on L2 listening comprehension performance. In a previous presentation (Hashimoto, Takeyama, & Yamato, 2015), we reported that reaction times — measuring processing difficulty to understand accented speeches — can be a better predictor of the comprehension performance of the accented speeches than a questionnaire-based measure (i.e., comprehensibility).

In the present presentation, we will report the results of a follow-up reaction time study, which aims to a) replicate our previous findings and b) further examine the relationship between the processing difficulty measure (reaction time) and listeners’ perception toward accented speeches. The main experimental task remains the same as Hashimoto, Takeyama, and Yamato (2015). We measured response latencies for Japanese learners of English to make truth-value judgments for sentences produced by L2 English speakers from China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand. Unlike Hashimoto et al.'s study, we asked the participants to make judgments on the likelihood of an L2 English utterance to have been produced by an L2 English learner whose L1 is Japanese. Initial results suggest that Japanese listeners comprehend accented speeches by Japanese and Korean speakers, who also received the equally high degree of "Japanese-English-likeness," better than the other two speakers.

**Keywords:** Foreign accents, listening, processing difficulty

**Reference**

Hashimoto, K., Takeyama, T., & Yamato, K. (2015). *What "time" tells us about L2 comprehension of accented speeches: A reaction time study*. Paper presented at the 4th combined conference of ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ, Adelaide, Australia.