Vance, Timothy J. (2008) *The Sounds of Japanese*. Cambridge University Press. Pp. xx + 263. Audio CD (attachment).

Reviewed by Tsutomu Akamatsu

The book being reviewed here is the latest (as I write these lines) in Cambridge University Press's *The Sounds of* series. The titles already published in the series include *The Sounds of French* (Tranel 1988), *The Sounds of Spanish* (Hualde 2005) and *The Sounds of Chinese* (Lin 2007). The author is an American who currently teaches in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Arizona. His previous book on a kindred subject, *An Introduction to Japanese Phonology* (Vance 1987) is well known to those who are interested in the phonic aspects of contemporary Japanese. *The Sounds of Japanese* is aimed at English-speaking readers with "a fairly high level of Japanese language proficiency" (p. xvii). By 'proficiency' Vance means both spoken and written Japanese. Compatible with this assumption on his part, examples from Japanese are regularly given in *kanji* (Chinese characters) or *kana* (*hiragana*, *katakana*) rather than only in *rômaji* (romanization) as is often done in most other books on the Japanese language on the market, though the phonetic or phonological notation additionally provided by Vance for each example will help the reader to easily identify the example concerned. *The Sounds of Japanese* is explicitly intended to be a "textbook", unlike *An Introduction to Japanese Phonology*. The book is accompanied by an audio CD which is attached to the inside of the back cover.

This book is definitely not for teaching or learning how to pronounce the Japanese sounds, as the title might mislead prospective readers at first sight. The principal preoccupation of the author is with a phonology (or phonemics as he chooses to call it) of "Tokyo Japanese" as spoken today. Circumstantially explained and densely argued, the book requires concentration and patience on the readers' part in following what the author has to say on the various aspects of "the sounds of Japanese".

The book falls into two parts of unequal lengths, the first, the short part, being an introductory exposition of phonetics and phonology, and the second, the long part, a full presentation of the sounds (i.e. the segmentals) and sound attributes (i.e. the suprasegmentals) of Japanese. Following the Preface (pp. xvii–xx), there are what one may understand as eight chapters, though the author does not call them such. The eight chapters are: Phonetics (pp. 1–25), Phonemics (pp. 26–52), Vowels (pp. 53–73), Syllable-initial consonants (pp. 74–95), Syllable-final consonants

(pp. 96–114), Syllables and moras (pp. 115–141), Accent and intonation (pp. 142–205), and Other topics (pp. 206–236). These are followed by three Appendixes (A, B, and C), References, and finally Index. Exercises are provided at the end of each of the eight chapters. Some of the exercises will be fairly tough and prove quite a challenge to not a few of the readers.

Vance's exposition of phonetics is largely in terms of articulatory phonetics rather than acoustic phonetics or auditory phonetics. This is appropriate for the majority of the readers who will find his explanation of the sounds (of English and Japanese) easy to understand. There is one point that puzzles me in Vance's explanation of the organs of speech. He consistently talks about the velum being "open (lowered)" or "closed (raised)" (p. 4). It seems that the appropriate words should be "lowered" or "raised", not "open" or "closed" as well. What is opened (open??) or closed is the entrance to the nasal cavity and the oral cavity from the pharynx.

The variety of Japanese pronunciation that Vance chooses to discuss in his book is "Tokyo Japanese" which happens to be the variety spoken by the present reviewer. The variety of English Vance chooses in explaining the English sounds is what he calls "United States newscaster English" (p. xviii *et passim*) which is close to the variety of English he himself speaks. Those readers who speak British English will encounter a few somewhat surprising statements. One such occurs in connection with the pronunciation of *coated* and *coded*. Vance writes: "(…) the pronunciations with [t] and [d] strike many native English speakers as unnaturally precise, that is, elaborated rather than careful" (p. 48). He makes this statement because he regards the pronunciations with [ɾ] (an alveolar flap) as natural in the pronunciation of this pair of words. One could think, in this connection, of other relevant pairs of words such as *writer* vs. *rider*, *atom* vs. *Adam*, etc. This may well be the case with "United States newscaster English" but certainly not with British English in which [t] and [d] are normally retained. It goes without saying that such pronunciations with [ɾ] relate to what Vance considers as the neutralization of the opposition /t/ vs. /d/.

It is from Chapter 3 onward that Vance fully embarks on his exposition on Japanese phonetics and phonology.

Vance explains the concept of the phoneme and, in conjunction with it, the criteria of 'phonetic similarity' and 'complementary distribution', and 'free variation'. This is, to a certain extent, a standard practice we all know from Bloomfieldians and Jonesians. However, Vance regards the phoneme as an abstract entity, which is realized by its allophones. This is

not in accord with the Bloomfieldians' or Jonesians' view, according to which a phoneme is essentially a family of phonetically similar sounds in complementary distribution. Also, unlike Bloomfieldians or Jonesians, Vance brings in the concept of distinctive features as applicable to the phoneme.

In giving examples in broad phonetic notation, Vance nearly consistently indicates a vowel occurring before a nasal consonant in the same syllable as nasalized. He notates, for example, [tʰɛ̃ns] (or perhaps [tʰɛ̃n$^{(t)}$s]) rather than [tɛns] for *tense* (p. 28). Notice also, in this connection, his indicating aspiration ([tʰ…]). I do not question that the nasalization of the vowel and the aspiration occur in these cases. It is a matter of what degree of broadness (or narrowness) of phonetic notation a particular writer aims at in such a phonetic notation. It would seem to me that most writers choose a broader phonetic notation, say [tɛns] instead, unless they specifically wish to draw special attention to the fact that the vowel is nasalized and [t] is aspirated in the phonetic context in question, which is not Vance's intention. He extends this practice to the phonetic notation of Japanese words as well, writing e.g. [hõɴː] (p. 17) rather than [hoɴ] for *hon* 'book'. However, we find him notating [kʰən'vɪktəd] (p. 69) rather than [kʰə̃n'vɪktəd], or ['kʰɑnvɪkt] (p. 69) rather than ['kʰɑ̃nvɪkt]. Consistency is thus not always observed. At any rate, one may wonder if a less than broad phonetic notation (as exemplified by [tʰɛ̃ns]) is specifically necessary for the purpose that Vance has in mind.

One specific point Vance discusses at great length in Phonemics (pp. 26–52) and Vowels (pp. 53–73) is how to phonologically analyze "(phonetically) long vowels", i.e. [iː], [eː], [aː], [oː], and [uː] in Japanese. (Vance is not to be flawed for conveniently using the phonetic symbol "u" (in [u] and [uː]). He is fully aware and explicitly notes that [ɯ] not [u], and [ɯː] not [uː], occur in Japanese. He takes the readers through a number of different phonological analyses that lead to different phonological notations of the long vowels but, at the end of the day, he is left with two options for himself, i.e. /ii/, /ee/, /aa/, /oo/, and /uu/ ("double-vowel analysis" as he calls it) and /iH/, /eH/, /aH/, /oH/, and /uH/ where /H/ is a "lengthening phoneme" which has multiple realizations, depending on different phonological contexts. Vance prefers the latter type of phonological notation, which he consistently employs in his book.

It is my personal experience that when foreigners wrongly choose short vowels instead of long vowels, or vice versa, in spoken Japanese there occurs a hiatus in my comprehension of their Japanese. This type of

mistake is probably the biggest factor that creates an obstacle to smooth comprehension. Vance, however, has other ideas and considers that "Anecdotes about length mistakes by hapless foreigners are part of Japanese language-teaching folklore…" (p. 56) and cites in support of his view two other authors (Seward 1968: 26–27; Asano 2007: 252). I would seriously disagree with Vance here. He is of the view that the functional load of the opposition between a short vowel and a long vowel in Japanese is low and that the alleged low functional load only leads to an insignificant degree of intercommunication problems. Vance seems to erroneously minimize the gravity of the problems in question. The number of minimal pairs that are distinguished from each other through the opposition short vowel vs. long vowel in Japanese is actually not negligible. This opposition in Japanese is just as essential in Japanese as it is in some other languages such as Finnish and Czech. One could perhaps argue that co-context helps to solve any difficulty caused by the mistakes concerned, but it is true that some precious few moments are lost in a natural flow of dialogue in Japanese till native speakers identify the Japanese word the foreigners mean but failed to deliver. Besides, it is well known that a phonological opposition (e.g. /ɵ/ vs. /ð/ in English) with a low functional load may be sustained if it is well anchored in a correlation (voiceless vs. voiced in this case). In other words, a low functional load does not necessarily lead to instability of the opposition. The opposition between short vowels and long vowels in Japanese is highly utilized, and even if, as Vance suggests, the functional load of the opposition were low, the very fact of the opposition being well anchored in the correlation short vs. long promotes and guarantees its stability.

Vance brings up for discussion the much-cited case of the difference in the vowels [oo] between *satooya* 'foster parent' and (*)*satôya* 'sugar dealer'. In my view, first of all, *satôya* 'sugar dealer' is a pseudo-word; the word should be indicated with an asterisk, at best within parentheses as I have done. On the other hand, *satooya* 'foster parent' is an attested word. The two cited items do not constitute a minimal pair, and therefore the comparison between the two words loses its validity. I imagine that one could find another pair of words that is acceptable as a minimal pair. However, there is a general point I wish to make. In my view, the two words are different in respect of their composition, i.e. *satooya* (< *sato* 'one's native village' + *oya* 'parent') and *satôya* (< *satô* 'sugar' + *ya* 'shop'), with the internal boundary in different places, and consequently constitute a pseudo-minimal pair. One may be reminded of the well-known

case of *black tie* [-t^{h}-] vs. *blacked eye* [-t-], which warns us not to establish /t^{h}/ and /t/ in English. There is a boundary between *black* and *tie* in the former case and between *blacked* and *eye* in the latter. It is important to be aware that, of [-oo-] in *satooya* 'foster parent', the first [o] belongs to one constituent (*sato*) and the second [o] to another constituent (*oya*), whereas this is not the case with [-oo-] in *satôya* 'sugar dealer' as both [o]'s belong to one and the same constituent, namely *satô*. Vance expresses this difference in terms of "separate syllables" (p. 58) whereas I express it in terms of "separate constituents" of the compounds. It is well known that, in a number of languages, different phonetic phenomena are often to be observed to occur at the boundary between adjacent constituents of compound words of different composition. What occurs in the case of *satooya* is vowel rearticulation, which Vance rightly refers to and I agree with him. I am also in agreement with the spectrographic evidence that he presents (p. 59) in which the dip in amplitude is unmistakably shown. Vance uses the difference between [oo] (with vowel rearticulation) in *satooya* and [oo] (without it) in *satôya* as an argument against the double-vowel phonemic analysis for both [oo]'s and in favour of the phonemic analysis incorporating a lengthening phoneme /H/ for the latter [oo]. Phonologically, he notates [satooya] (*satooya*) as /satooya/ and [satooya] (*satôya*) as /satoHya/. Vance's is an example of a phonological analysis in which the synthematic information (i.e. composition, derivation, etc.) is not allowed to influence and decide the establishment of phonemes. I hold that, *phonologically*, [oo]'s in both *satooya* and *satôya* are /oo/, and we have /t/ in both *black tie* [-t^{h}-] and *blacked eye* [-t-], not /t^{h}/ and /t/. The point mentioned here is somewhat reminiscent of Bloomfieldians setting up the "juncture" phoneme by considering such cases as *night rate*, *nitrate* and *Nye trait*, or *I scream* and *ice cream*. It is recommended that, in establishing the phonemes of a language, we should work on cases that do not involve a boundary between constituents.

As we move on to syllable-initial consonants, we learn that Vance analyzes a pair of non-palatalized consonant (e.g. [k]) and palatalized consonant (e.g. [k^{j}]) in Japanese as allophones of a single phoneme (i.e. /k/) (p. 76). This analysis by him applies *mutatis mutandis* to /p/, /b/, /g/, /r/, and /m/, and /t/ and /d/ in renditions of loanwords, as well. According to him, the palatalized consonants occur before /i/ or /y/ (i.e. /j/) while the non-palatalized ones occur elsewhere, notably before /e/, /a/, /o/, and /u/. Thus, for example, /ki/ is realized by [k^{j}i], and /kya/ by [k^{j}a]. Vance's analysis contrasts with a well-known alternative functionalist analysis

whereby two different phonemes, i.e. /k/ and /kʲ/, are set up through the commutation test and the archiphoneme /k-kʲ/ (or /K/ as others including Vance prefer to note) occurs before /i/ or /e/, and is realized by [kʲ] or [k], respectively, as a result of the neutralization of the opposition /k/ vs. / kʲ/. Vance is perfectly aware of this other analysis (p. 232) where he actually mentions "neutralization" if not "archiphoneme". In this respect I go along with Trubetzkoy's view (1939: 208) on this aspect of Japanese. Vance wonders, in connection with this functionalist analysis, "whether the intuition of a Tokyo Japanese native speaker [this can be the present reviewer's] can be reconciled with any analysis that treats the initial consonants of [kʲi] (…) and [ka] (…) as phonemically different" (p. 232), to which I am bound to say that the native speaker of Japanese always *globally* grasps the whole of what I call "moraic units" (e.g. [kʲ i] , [ka]) and that the consonantal part ([kʲ], [k]) as such is below his perceptual and analytical threshold.

This leads me to another point. Vance is given to referring here and there throughout his book to the "intuition" of native speakers of Japanese as one of the critical justifications in clinching phonological solutions. I happen to be on my guard against using intuition as a crucial tool in linguistic analyses, phonology included. If the "intuition" in question is to be understood in terms of 'linguistic feeling' or 'Sprachgefühl', recourse to intuition seems to be putting the horse before the cart and is better avoided. It is worth recalling what Martinet said as follows.

> (…) linguistic feeling is a result of the functioning of the system. It is an effect and not a cause (…) (Martinet 1949: 6)

I disagree with Vance who thinks that the semivowel [j] occurs after [ç] and cites *hyō* [çjoː] 'chart' (p. 78). I believe that no [j] intervenes between [ç] and [oː] and that the word is pronounced [çoː]. The non-intervention of [j] here is reminiscent of the same in the pronunciation [çuː] (see Jones 1964: 203) of the English word *huge* which is otherwise normally pronounced [hjuːʤ]. I further disagree with Vance who thinks that [ç] is followed by [i] only (he cites *hin* 'dignity' (p. 78)). I believe that [ç] can be followed by [a] (cf. *hyaku* [ça-] 'hundred'), [o] (cf. hyō [ço-], see above), and [ɯ] (cf. *hyutte* [çɯ-] 'cabin'). This affects part of his Table 4-4 (Distribution of phonetic voiceless fricatives) given on p. 78 where he shows that [ç] and [h] are in complementary distribution before [i], [e], [a], and [o].

Vance mentions [ʔ] (glottal stop) in Japanese when it occurs, in emphatic speech, between a vowel and either a semivowel (e.g. *hayai* [hɑʔːjɑi]) or a consonant (e.g. *samui* [sɑʔːmɯi] – his phonetic notation) (pp. 222–225), or following a vowel in prepausal position (e.g. *A!* [ʔaʔ]; *Dame!* [dɑmeʔ]) (pp. 110–112). His phonological analysis of the glottal stop occurring in these cases is that it is interpreted as an allophone of /Q/ (mora obstruent), so that [hɑʔːjɑi] represents /haQjai/, [sɑʔːmɯi] /saQmui/, [ʔaʔ] /aQ/, and [dɑmeʔ] /dameQ/. In the same vein, he phonologically notates /harasaNQ/ (*Harasan!* when pronounced [haɾasanʔ]) (p. 225). I have a two-fold objection to this analysis. First, the presence or absence of the glottal stop in all such cases in Japanese is phonologically not distinctive, and should not be understood as a realization of a distinctive unit, be it a phoneme or an archiphoneme. What the glottal stop does in such cases is to fulfil the expressive function. Second, according to Vance, /Q/ occurs fundamentally before consonant phonemes and is accordingly realized by appropriate consonants (but not [ʔ]), and I agree with him. There is, however, no reasonable justification to provide some additional contexts where /Q/ allegedly occurs by bringing in such occurrences of the glottal stop as does not function distinctively and therefore is not an allophone of any distinctive unit including /Q/.

Misprints are rare, but read *adapted* for *dapted* (p. 4) and Akamatsu 2000: 132–4 for Akamatsu 2001: 132–4.

The References are excellent and up-to-date. Vance is very well read on a wide range of literature on Japanese phonetics and phonology.

This is a most challenging book on the subject and I recommend it without hesitation to all who are interested in Japanese phonology, irrespective of whether they agree or disagree on specific points of Vance's analysis. The readers will surely find a number of theoretical points thought-provoking.

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