

## Tokai University European Center (TUEC)

### Japanese Language Education Workshop Fall 2015



A two-day Japanese language education workshop was held at TUEC on the weekend of Oct. 31-Nov. 1. The workshop was the twelfth, so far, in TUEC's series of Japanese language education workshops aimed at Japanese language teachers in the Nordic countries, and held twice annually (in the spring and fall) since 2010. The workshop series targets institutions offering Japanese language education with primary focus being on universities with Japan studies programs.

The twelfth workshop, entitled "*Considering Prosody in Japanese Language Education*" examined approaches to prosody and related teaching methods. Little attention has been paid, so far, to the elements of accent and intonation in conventional language education. However, the prosody produced by a sequence of sounds is intimately related to the intended meaning of the utterance as well as to the emotional tenor of the speaker, and is therefore an important function in conversation and communication. In overseas Japanese language education, where native speakers and conversation partners are in short supply, it is all the more important to focus attention on this aspect of language learning.

Professor Takako Ayusawa of Akita International University was featured as main speaker and contributed with a lecture, "*Accent Types, Intonation and Pitch Patterns,*" and two subsequent work sessions. The lecture focused on the importance of the "pitch-accent" in Japanese, and the language's characteristic rise in intonation at the end of interrogative sentences. Techniques for teaching students how to acquire correct accents and intonation were presented, based on eliminating interference by a student's native language.

Supplementing the featured lecture and its related work sessions, two participants also contributed with presentations. The topics were 1) the relation between intonation and word structure in Japanese, and 2) rethinking prosodic modules and starting to learn Japanese through questions.

The fall 2015 workshop also introduced a new element to the program in the shape of a session for freely discussing teaching experiences and sharing teaching tips. Here two shorter presentations initiated the discussion; one introducing useful teaching materials from the ‘NHK School’ website and recommending the ‘*Kanji Ninja*’ app for learning Chinese characters; the other discussing the utilization of human resources in overseas Japanese language education. Tokai University’s Professor Fusato Taniguchi, organizer of the workshop series and former director of TUEC, also contributed with teaching tips and experiences, and conducted a separate session on listening comprehension and accent training.

As with previous workshop, participants were divided into both regulars and newcomers. From university level institutions participants came from the University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School and Aarhus University in Denmark; Lund University in Sweden; the University of Erfurt in Germany; and the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. In addition, teachers from language schools, secondary educational institutions, adult education centers, as well as freelance language teachers also attended.

TUEC is currently in the process of producing the workshop proceedings which will report in more detail on the content of the workshop (please direct any inquiries in this regard to TUEC). The proceedings will be made available on TUEC’s website upon completion ([www.u-tokai.dk](http://www.u-tokai.dk)), alongside all previous Japanese language education workshop proceedings already available online.

TUEC’s fall 2015 Japanese language education workshop was supported by the Japan Foundation.



*Professor Takako Ayusawa.*



*Work Session.*



*Presentation.*



*All Workshop Participants.*