

## Book Review

# A Review of *Beyond Repeat After Me: Teaching Pronunciation to English Learners*

*Reviewed by Mika Sakai, Portland State University*

Yoshida, M. T. (2016). *Beyond repeat after me: Teaching pronunciation to English learners*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.

*Editors' Note: ORTESOL would like to thank TESOL Press for providing this book free of charge.*

“Repeat after me” used to be heard frequently in ESL or EFL classes. Students repeated after their teachers, trying to sound like them without knowing what they were doing. Back in the old days, from my personal experiences, it was very common that teachers did not spend a lot of time teaching pronunciation and could not explain how the English sounds were produced or why they sounded a certain way. Since the 1990s, the different approaches and methods of teaching pronunciation have been actively discussed, and currently one of the most prominent approaches is the Morley approach, which focuses more on three dimensions of learning: intellectual involvement, affective involvement, and physical or performative involvement (Morley, 1991). This book, *Beyond Repeat After Me: Teaching Pronunciation to English Learners*, is based on Morley’s approach. Marla Tritch Yoshida, whose experience includes over 28 years of English language teaching and teacher training, wrote the book for EFL or ESL teachers, including non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST), in order to help them learn about the basic American English phonology, typical problems that students may have, and effective teaching tools and activities. Additionally, an accompanying website that contains sound recordings and video tutorials as textbook supplements is available at [www.tesol.org/beyondrepearafterme](http://www.tesol.org/beyondrepearafterme) for no additional cost.

*Beyond repeat after me: Teaching Pronunciation to English Learners* has a total of 187 pages, which can be considered to be a concise textbook compared to other thick, heavy textbooks. It is organized in 15 chapters, starting with an introduction and ending with final thoughts and references. Overall, it is divided in three sections. The first section, from chapter 1 through chapter 7, focuses on sound production, including

phonology, articulatory system, consonants, and vowels. The second section, from chapter 8 through chapter 12, focuses on suprasegmental features. The final section covers activities, resources, teaching tips, the author's philosophy, and the English spelling system.

In the first section, the author gives teachers the basic concepts of phonology, and how to articulate English consonants and vowels using charts and pictures, which is effective for learners to develop their self-monitoring skills in pronunciation. Learning how to produce sounds that are different from their L1 is a cognitive process, and is the beginning of "Beyond Repeat After Me" teaching approach. Since pronunciation is instant and complex, sound production integrates cognitive, physical and communicative aspects, and the book's charts and pictures are useful materials for learners as quick references to figure out which part of articulatory system needs to be used and to create an accurate sound.

In the second section, suprasegmentals such as syllables, word stress, rhythm, thought groups, prominence, intonation, and connected speech are introduced as important features. Many activities, tips, examples and websites that teachers can use in the actual classes are also introduced here. The activities are arranged by three modes: imitated mode, guided mode, and extemporaneous mode (Morley, 1991), and this helps to teach pronunciation gradually according to learners' learning speeds and stages.

In the last section, the author encourages teachers to be creative and mindful in teaching pronunciation; there is no "the absolute way of teaching pronunciation." Teachers have to consider many factors such as learners' ages, skill levels, L1s, goals, available resources, constraints, and preferences. Importantly, she recommends finding a time to teach pronunciation, integrating a quick pronunciation lesson between activities, at the beginning or ending of a lesson, or as a part of other skills' exercises. As final thoughts, she suggests that pronunciation should be taught using a balanced approach of individual sounds and suprasegmental elements, with the final goal of pronunciation being intelligibility.

One concern is that at least one of the websites that she introduces is no longer available.

In conclusion, this is a handy, informative textbook that teachers will want to carry with them. It covers the key factors in teaching pronunciation in order to help learners to reach advanced intelligibility. Furthermore, it can be used as a reference textbook even for learners.

## References

- Morley, J. (1991). The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3) 481-520.
- Yoshida, M. T. (2016). *Beyond repeat after me: Teaching pronunciation to English learners*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.

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