

## **Absence of Developmental Change in Epenthetic Vowel Duration in Japanese Speakers' English**

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**Abstract :** This study examines developmental change in the production of epenthetic vowels by Japanese learners of English in relation to acquisition of L2 English speech rhythm. Seventy-two Japanese learners of English in the <em>J-AESOP</em> corpus were divided into lower- and higher-level learners according to their proficiency score and the frequency of vowel epenthesis. Three learners were excluded because no vowel epenthesis was observed in their utterances. The analysis of their read English speech data showed no statistical difference between lower- and higher-level learners, implying the absence of any developmental change in durations of epenthetic vowels. This result, together with the findings of previous studies, will be discussed in relation to the transfer of L1 phonology and manifestation of L2 English rhythm.

**Keywords :** vowel epenthesis, Japanese learners of English, L2 speech corpus, speech rhythm

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