

The Current Development of CAI Material

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This paper introduces two independent curricular systems, listening-skill training courses and pronunciation practice programs, that I and my collaborators have developed, and it discusses how these courses need to be designed to enhance their use by learners.

Because human speech is a difficult resource for personal computers to handle, in the field of Japanese language teaching, CAI (computer-assisted instruction) materials for listening or pronunciation practice have been rather underdeveloped. However, now, when "hypermedia" and "multimedia" environments are at hand, CAI materials must be designed to use as fully as possible information from various media.

Although the two systems introduced here proved in the trials to be effective, they have quite different methods of reinforcement. The listening courses use traditional feedback styles, and the pronunciation programs allow the learners themselves to evaluate their performance.

After observing preliminary use of the two systems, I believe that to be successful, a course must be designed to raise the learners' awareness of their weak points, not just to tell them whether they are "right" or "wrong". It is important to present sufficient information in a well-ordered form to enable the learners to interact with the CAI systems, that is, to permit them to recognize their own problems, set their own goals, and evaluate not only their performance, but also the whole process of learning.