

An Optimality Theory analysis of lexical accent as dynamic tones in several Japanese dialects

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A great number of studies have explained Japanese lexical tone patterns with the use of an accent kernel (McCawley 1968, Haraguchi 1977, Alderete 2001). However as Clark (1978) and Pierrehumbert & Beckman (1988) have shown; it is possible to analyze them in Tokyo dialect and Osaka dialect with a HL sequence instead.

In this work we show how the tone patterns of several Japanese dialects can be explained with dynamic tones. Contrary to Uwano (2012) who proposes three types of accent kernels (lowering, ascending and raising) to account for the tone patterns of accented dialects, we propose only two types of dynamic tones: HL and LH. Hirosaki dialect and Shizukuishi dialect that possess an ascending kernel in Uwano's typology can be explained as having respectively a falling tone and a rising tone.

The difference in surface tone patterns between Tokyo dialect and Hirosaki dialect that both have falling tones can be accounted for with alignment constraints on the initial rise. In Tokyo dialect the rise is left aligned. In Hirosaki dialect it is right aligned and Align(Fall,R,PWd,R) dominates Align(PWd,R,Rise,R).

While Narada dialect and Shizukuishi both make use of LH tone sequences, the rising pattern of Narada and the ascending pattern of Shizukuishi depend on which tone is linked in the underlying representation. In Narada dialect the L tone is linked and the following H is a floating tone whereas in Shizukuishi dialect it is the H tone that is linked and the preceding L tone a floating tone. In both dialect *H is active but dominated by FaithTone. In Narada dialect it is also dominated by Align(PWd,L,Fall,L).

Finally Kagoshima dialect (Kubozono: 2011) can be analyzed as possessing both types of dynamic tones and aligning them at the right edge of the phrase: Type A words (àkàgà 'red-nom') have a falling tone while Type B words (àògá 'blue-nom') have a rising tone.

References

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