

Vocative and question intonation in southern Japanese

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This paper discusses vocative (or calling) intonation in Japanese, a topic that has attracted very little attention in Japanese prosody. Unlike Latin and Korean, Japanese dialects generally do not use any morphological marker for vocative forms. Instead, they rely on prosody to distinguish vocative forms from citation or declarative forms.

This paper is concerned with two southern dialects of Japanese, Kagoshima and Koshikijima Japanese, which have prosodic systems distinct from that of standard Tokyo Japanese both at the lexical and postlexical levels. At the lexical level, they have ‘two-pattern’ accent systems with only two distinctive lexical pitch patterns irrespective of the length of words: Type A has a high tone on the penultimate syllable/mora, whereas Type B words have a high tone on the final syllable/mora. At the postlexical level, they both employ sentence-final pitch fall to signal questions, as opposed to sentence-final pitch rise as found in interrogative sentences in Tokyo. Despite these similarities, the two dialects differ from each other with respect to the basic unit in phonological organization: Kagoshima is a typical syllable-counting dialect, whereas Koshikijima is a mora-counting dialect.

An original fieldwork study has shown that both Kagoshima and Koshikijima Japanese use pitch fall in vocative forms like the following (underlined):

- a. obaatyan genki? ‘How are you, grandma?’
- b. otoosan tyotto tetudatte. ‘Give me a hand, Father’
- c. hanako konaide ‘Don’t come, Hanako’

The most interesting aspect of vocative intonation in these dialects is that the contrast in lexical accent is often lost. In Koshikijima, all vocative forms are pronounced with the original Type A pattern, i.e. with a pitch fall between the penultimate and final moras. Vocative intonation in Kagoshima is more complicated in that both Type A and Type B words can take two intonational patterns, one with a pitch fall between the final two *syllables*, like the original Type A pattern, and the other with a pitch fall between the final two *moras*. Since both Type A and Type B words can take these intonational patterns, the lexical pitch contrast is lost at the postlexical level.

Having established these basic patterns of vocative intonation, this paper also discusses the similarities and differences between vocative and question intonation in the two dialects as well as those between their vocative intonation and the corresponding phenomena in Tokyo and other Japanese dialects.