

## Word accent and vowel length in the postlexical phonology of Japanese

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(Tokyo) Japanese has contrasts both in word accent (accented vs. unaccented words) and vowel length (long vs. short vowels), both of which are supposed to be well preserved in spontaneous speech. However, relatively little is known in the literature about what happens to these contrasts in the postlexical phonology of the language. With this background, this talk looks at vocative intonation in the language, i.e. intonation used when calling someone by name to attract his/her attention. It discusses how the two types of phonological contrasts are preserved (or lost) and how they interact with each other in two types of vocative constructions, one in natural speech and the other in a baseball chant used by baseball fans.

Based on the observations from our original fieldwork and phonetic experiments, we first report that vocative constructions in spontaneous speech exhibit three intonational patterns, which we call Patterns  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ . Contrasts in vowel length are often lost, i.e. neutralized, in the final position of the relevant noun/name, particularly when used with Patterns  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , where final vowels are phonetically lengthened to accommodate boundary tones signaling vocative meaning. On the other hand, contrasts in vowel length are always preserved in non-final positions, which are free from the effect of vocative intonation. As for word accent, the distinction between accented and unaccented words is pretty well preserved in spontaneous vocative sentences, with only one notable exception: accented words lose their accent if they are accented on their final heavy syllable and if they are produced with Pattern  $\beta$ . In sum, vowel length in word-final position is most unstable, vowel length in non-final positions is most stable, and word accent comes in between.

Basically the same results were obtained from our study of vocative intonation in the baseball chant, which takes the same intonational pattern as Pattern  $\gamma$  above. In this vocative construction, too, vowel length contrasts are almost always lost in word-final position, whereas they tend to be preserved in non-final positions. Contrasts in word accent are well preserved, but are lost in some specific contexts: accented words are deaccented (and consequently neutralized with their unaccented counterparts) if they are accented near the end of the word where their accent clashes with the pitch fall required by vocative intonation. Very interestingly, loss of word accent in these cases often saves the contrast in word-medial vowel length contrast that would otherwise be lost.