

## Deriving Accent from Structure: The case of Japanese verbs

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Nouns in Standard Japanese exhibit multiple pitch-accent patterns – a phenomenon, which has received numerous elaborate explanations in the literature. Verbs (as well as adjectives), on the other hand, seem to form a two-pattern system, only distinguishing between accented and unaccented stems. Within their inflectional paradigms, however, the accent kernel (i.e. the position after which the pitch contour falls) is not linked to a specific position in the stem but seems to shift depending on the suffix(es) attached. The accented stem *shime-* ‘to close’, for example, exhibits forms like *shiméru*, *shimemásu*, *shímeta*, *shimeraréru*, *shímechau*, etc.

Compared to the vast literature for nouns, previous accounts of the accentual behavior of Japanese verbs have been rather limited – often simply presenting the above-mentioned two-way distinction and adding that there must be “specific rules” (Labrune 2012) for the various suffixes. Some more detailed works focus on the behavior of specific suffixes – usually looking at the differences in the accent assignment of *-ru* and *-ta* (e.g. Y. Yoshida 1995). None of these accounts, however, present a model that is able to derive the assignment of the accent kernel throughout complete paradigms.

In this presentation, I move away from the idea of assigning individual rules to each suffix. Instead, I propose a typology classifying verbal suffixes based on their morphological properties. What results from this is a way to derive all accent patterns using only a single accent assignment rule, without making direct reference to any specific suffix. In this model, all the different accentual patterns within a paradigm are the direct result of the morphological structure of the specific form. Additionally, I want to address cases of verbs which do not seem to fit into the two-pattern system neatly, like *káeru* ‘to go back’ or *kotáeru~kotaéru* ‘to answer’ and present explanations for their seemingly different behavior. Finally, I will discuss possible ways to include Japanese adjectives into this system as well.

### Selected References

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