Towards a Universal Framework of Pitch Accent Languages

Analyses of Tokyo Japanese (Haraguchi, 1977) have suggested that *pitch accent languages*, generally a linguistic rarity, typologically side more with tone languages than they do stress languages. These kinds of tonal (purely autosegmental) representations use a hybrid accentual/tonal analysis to make a transition from an underlying lexical "accent" in a word to a final, fully specified form:

(1)   a.   *Underlying*   b.   *Assoc. H tone to accent*   c.   *Other tones/Surface*
           a ta má   a ta má   a ta má
                                               │   │   ╲
                                               H   L   H

However, I will show that this is neither a complete nor accurate picture; in fact, languages such as Japanese and Biscayan Basque are better represented by a fully stress-based analysis, as supported by evidence based on computational, phonetic, and statistical data. The result is a more universal-friendly analysis that treats languages such as Japanese and Biscayan Basque as different from the norm but not extraordinary.

My suggested framework is based on Purnell's (1998) metrical analysis of Tokyo Japanese, with modifications to accommodate for problems such as the phonetic non-prominence of the accent in a word, as well as compound word accenting rules that better integrate with a metrical analysis.

This stress-centred framework is supported by not only the statistically predictable placement of accent, which patterns similarly to Latin (Kubozono, 2008), but also the more elegant cyclicity-based resolution of morphological accent clashes. Of particular interest is Purnell's [± cyclic] feature, which ascertains which accent "wins" when both a root word and particle bear an accent. An interesting phenomenon is that, in certain cases, a root is forced to lose its accent by negation of its [cyclic] feature, which is similar to the way the first noun in a compound noun loses its accent during compound word formation. I suggest that this is no coincidence and that these behaviours can be unified.

As a consequence of the *empirical support* and *unifying possibilities* presented above, we are able to incorporate pitch accent languages under a singular, universally friendly framework that depict pitch accent languages as "weak" stress languages without drastically modifying preestablished frameworks, which is what purely autosegmental analyses are forced to do.

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