

Where does loanword prosody come from? Analysis of alphabetic acronyms in Japanese dialects

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This paper addresses a central question of loanword phonology, i.e. where loanword prosody comes, by analyzing loanword accent in a variety of Japanese dialects. On the basis of an analysis of loanword accent in Tokyo Japanese, Kubozono (2006) claimed that accent patterns of loanwords are determined by the interaction of two major factors, a perceptual factor and the phonology of the borrowing language (L1). The former factor determines the overall shape of the loanword form, i.e. the choice between accented and unaccented forms in the case of Tokyo Japanese. The latter factor, on the other hand, is responsible for the precise prosodic form of the loanword by specifying the location of lexical accent. In this paper we would like to develop this analysis by looking at loanword accent in a variety of Japanese dialects, including the Kagoshima, Koshikijima and Kikaijima dialects which all have different prosodic systems from Tokyo Japanese. Specifically, we would like to pay attention to so-called alphabetic acronyms such as *FBI* and *PTA* (cf. Kubozono 2010).

What is striking about the accent of alphabetic acronyms is that all dialects we examined predominantly prefer an accent pattern involving a pitch fall as opposed to a pattern without a fall. In this respect, alphabetic acronyms are similar to ordinary loanwords on the one hand, and remarkably different from native words, on the other hand, the latter tending to prefer the two accent patterns equally well. We claim that this is due to a perceptual factor by which listeners are sensitive (only) to the presence or absence of a pitch fall in the source word. On the other hand, the actual phonetic patterns differ greatly from one dialect to another. Take the word *FBI*, for example, which is pronounced in different ways depending on the dialect (capital letters denote high-pitched portions): e.FU.BII.Ai (Tokyo), E.FU.BII.Ai (Osaka), e.fu.BII.ai (Kagoshima), E.FU.bii.Ai (Koshikijima), E.FU.BIi.Ai (Kikaijima). We attribute these interdialectal differences to the differences in the prosodic organization of the dialects. In other words, the precise loanword form is constrained severely by the prosodic structure of the borrowing dialect.

Selected References :

- Kubozono, Haruo 2006. Where does loanword prosody come from? A case study of Japanese loanword accent. *Lingua* 116, 1140-1170.
- Kubozono, Haruo 2010. Accentuation of alphabetic acronyms in varieties of Japanese. *Lingua* 120, 2323-2335.