

Japanese as an Accent and Stress Language

Hisao Tokizaki *Sapporo University*

Oral presentation as first preference; poster presentation as second preference

It has been assumed that the pitch drop (HL) called ‘accent kernel’ on the (ante)penultimate mora in a word corresponds to stress in other languages. However, this idea has a problem in compounds. Based on Cinque’s (1993) rule, which assigns the main stress to the most deeply embedded element, Kubozono (1996) proposes a cross-linguistic generalization in (1).

- (1) The one-wordness of compounds is expressed by the reduction of word-stress/accent on the head.

For example, in English compounds, the first element (i.e. complement) keeps its stress while the stress on the second element (i.e. head) reduces, as shown in (2).

- (2) hóuse + kéeper = hóuse keeper

Kubozono claims that Japanese is the only exception to the generalization in (1). In (3) the head *seido* keeps its accent HL while the accent on the complement *shakai* is reduced.

- (3) *shakai* + *seido* = *shakai-seido*
society system social system
HLL HLL LHH-HLL

Kubozono argues that Japanese accent is not a real counterexample to (1) because it serves as a boundary marker rather than a stress showing one-wordness. However, he also points out that the head instead of the complement is deleted in the shortened form.

- (4) *koomori* + *kasa* = *koomori-gasa* → *koomori*
bat umbrella umbrella
HLLL HL LHHH HL HLLL

This fact shows that reduction takes place on the head in Japanese as well as in English.

In this paper, I argue that Japanese has stress on the initial mora of a word/compound as well as pitch accent on the (ante)penultimate mora. This idea of Japanese as an ‘accent and stress’ language straightforwardly solves the problem of abbreviation. In (4), the complement *koomori* is stressed as the initial element in the compound *koomori-gasa* to survive in the shortened form.

I show some arguments for the idea of Japanese as an accent and stress language. First, emphatic stress falls on the initial mora of a word/compound and not on the accented mora. In stress languages, emphasis is expressed by intensity on the stressed syllable (e.g. *lin-guis-tics!*). In Japanese, emphasized words have intensity on the first mora, as shown in (5).

- (5) a. *anata!* b. *ken-gikai!*
LHL LH-HLL (in non-contrastive reading)
You! Prefectural assembly!

Second, Turkish, another Altaic language, also has word-initial stress characterized by more energy of articulation in addition to pitch accent, which is on the final syllable in most words (Johanson (1998: 34-35), cf. Schiering and van der Hulst (2010: 536)).

Third, if we assume that Japanese is an initial-stress language, Japanese is no longer a counterexample to the generalization that leftward-stress languages have complement-head orders such as OV while rightward-stress languages have head-complement orders such as VO.

Thus, the idea of Japanese as an accent and stress language has a number of interesting consequences for the interface between phonology, morphology, syntax and linguistic typology.

References

- Cinque, Guglielmo. 1993. A Null Theory of Phrase and Compound Stress, *Linguistic Inquiry* 24, 239-298.
Johanson, Lars. 1998. The Structure of Turkic, *The Turkic Languages*, ed. by Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, 30-66, Routledge, London.
Kubozono, Haruo. 1996. Eigo-no hukugogo-kyosei-ni tsuite (On compound stress in English). *Gengo-no Shinso-o Tazunete*, ed. by Nakano Kozo hakushi kanreki kinen ronbunshu henshu iinkai, 3-17. Eichosha, Tokyo.
Schiering, René and Harry van der Hulst. 2010. Word Accent Systems in the Languages of Asia, *A Survey of Word Accentual Patterns in the Languages of the World*, ed. by Harry

van der Hulst, Rob Goedemans and Ellen van Zanten, 509-613, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.