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### **On the accent of the plural morpheme [zu] in Japanese: The emergence of the unmarked**

Kawahara and Wolf (2010) analyzed the accent of nouns with a plural loan ending /zu/ in Tokyo Japanese. Paying attention to the fact that nouns tend to lengthen their final vowel before this ending, they argued (i) that the sequence of the second half of long vowels, /R/, and the ending is an independent morpheme in Japanese, e.g. /marina-Rzu/ ‘Mariners’, /yanagiba-Rzu/ ‘Yanagibas’ and (ii) that this morpheme exerts an initial-accenting effect on the root, e.g. /márinaRzu/, /yánagibaRzu/. In other words, they claimed that /Rzu/ is a non-local (*root-initial-accenting*) morpheme.

We conducted our own experiments with 24 native speakers of Japanese as subjects. We examined the accent of about 150 words, both existing and nonsense words, which included all the test words that were used in Kawahara and Wolf’s experiment. The results of our experiments can be summarized as follows:

1. K & W’s analysis is not empirically supported. Given the base form /yanagiba/, for example, /yanagibaRzu/ is not accented on their initial syllable (/yánagiba-Rzu/) as proposed by K & W (2010) but, rather, on the antepenultimate syllable in the real stem: /yanágibaR-zu/.
2. In general, .../Rzu/ words are accented on the syllable that would be accented in /...R/ stems according to the general accent rule of (Tokyo) Japanese.
3. Hence, the analysis of /Rzu/ as an independent, initial-accenting morpheme fails.
4. .../Rzu/ words should be morphologically analyzed as /...R/ + /zu/ as was implicitly assumed in the previous literature. Hence, .../zu/ and .../Rzu/ forms can be treated in the same way: they are both stem+/zu/ forms.
5. /zu/ is a morpheme that yields a default accent on the stem to which it is attached. /zu/ is not accent neutral to its stem, but is a morpheme that triggers the emergence of the unmarked.
6. Even unaccented words are potentially accented. They become unaccented for various reasons but they attract a default accent when followed by the plural morpheme /zu/. This implies that unaccentedness represents a ‘derived’ accent pattern in Japanese.

### **References**

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