Tone classes in Wan Japanese

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1 Wan dialect of Japanese

Wan Japanese is a dialect of Japanese spoken in Wan village on Kikaijima, an island in southern Japan. The dialect has two noun classes with different tonal melodies. The two classes also differ in the way they assign tone to suffixes. The language constitutes a puzzle bearing on the division of labor between phonology and morphology.

There are two primary data sources: Kibe et al. (2011) and Uwano (2012). Both sources are written in Japanese. The sources agree on the data, and both offer an analysis (Kubozono 2011). A third analysis is offered in an English, unpublished MA thesis (Breteler 2013). Dissemination of the data to English-speaking audiences has been limited. Consequently, for the purposes of the present workshop, it is considered new data.

2 Two tonal classes

Nouns in Wan Japanese belong to one of two classes, traditionally 'type α' and 'type β'. Membership of a class is unpredictable. The classes differ in their tonal contour. Examples for both types are shown in (1). High pitch is marked with uppercase, low pitch with lowercase.

	Type α		Type β	
(1)	miZU	L_1H_2	NAbi	H_2L_2
	TAtaMI	$H_1L_1H_2$	haTAna	$L_1H_2L_2$
	MIZUkuMI	$H_1H_1L_1H_2$	MUciGUmi	$H_1L_1H_2L_2$
	TAKARAmuN	$H_1..H_1L_1H_2$	HANSUUbaTEe	$H_1..H_1L_1H_2L_2$

Type α nouns carry a $H_1L_1H_2$ melody, and type β nouns carry $H_1L_1H_2L_2$. Descriptively speaking, the tones of these melodies are assigned to moras from right to left. In shorter words, leftmost tones do not surface. In longer words, H_1 extends to surplus moras.

The tonal contour covers not just the noun itself, but the full noun phrase, which may include suffixes. However, the two classes handle suffixes differently. The situation is demonstrated in (2), where noun+suffix phrases are compared with equal length bare nouns. A dash denotes the word-suffix boundary.

	Type α			Type β		
(2)	ka-GA	$\approx$	miZU	NABI-ga	$\neq$	haTAna
	MIzu-GA	$\approx$	TAtaMI	haTANA-ga	$\neq$	MUciGUmi
	TATAmi-GA	$\approx$	MIZUkuMI	MUciGUMI-KARAmu	$\neq$	HANSUUbaTEe

For type α, the boundary is irrelevant. As long as forms are of equal mora count, their tonal contours are identical. New tones may surface if the domain is extended, and H_1 spreads if needed. However, in type β, additional tones cannot surface through suffixation. Rather, H_2 spreads to fill any extra space, pushing L_2 to the right edge.

3 Lexicon vs. grammar

It is appealing to analyse the data with a single HLH melody. Type β could then give special status to H_2, e.g. accent. However, this does not derive L_2. If the accent initiates a fall, this does not derive H_2 spreading. Alternatively, deriving the data through cophonologies seems excessive, since the two classes share many properties. Consequently, an analysis of Wan Japanese must balance lexical and grammatical specification. The full presentation will discuss the approaches taken by previous analyses.

There are two further asymmetries not discussed here: only type β shows alternations for utterance (non)finality, and the two classes differ with regards to tone on nasal codas. These facts will also be part of the full presentation.

In summary, the tonal classes of Wan Japanese are both strikingly similar and different from each other. An analysis must bear on both morphological and phonological specifications in the language. This paper will present this relatively unknown paradox, offering data and analyses up for scrutiny, to further our understanding of the interaction between tone and morphology.

References

Breteler, Jeroen, 2013. A Stratal OT analysis of the intonation of Japanese dialects with multiple intonational classes. MA thesis.

Kibe, Nobuko, Kubozono, Haruo, Shimoji, Kayoko, Lawrence, Wayne, Matsumori, Akiko, and Takeda, Koko, 2011. *General Study for Research and Conservation of Endangered Dialects in Japan: Research Report on the Kikaijima Dialects*. National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics, Tokyo.

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Uwano, Zendo, 2012. Accent in Some Kikai-jima Dialects of Ryukyuan with Particular Reference to Nouns in Central and Southern Dialects. *Gengō Kenkyū [Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan]*, 142:45–75.

Glosses and notes on data

Glosses for nouns: *ka* = 'child', *mizu* = 'water', *tatami* = 'tatami mat', *mizukumi** = 'drawing water', *nabi* = 'saucepan', *hatana* = 'knife', *mucigumi** = 'glutinous rice', *hansuubatee** = 'sweet potato field'.

Glosses for suffixes: *ga* = '+NOM', *kara* = 'from', *mu* = 'too'.

The forms marked with an asterisk are potentially treated by speakers as compound structures. However, their behavior does not deviate from other words in their tonal class.

The data has been abstracted with regards to consonant quality. Consequently, the forms cannot be taken exactly as IPA transcriptions. Since neither data source mentions a relation between consonant quality and tone, it is assumed that consonant quality is orthogonal to the present issue.