Loanword adaptation in Japanese Kansai dialect

Yuki Hattori
The Ohio State University

Purpose:

Like many world languages, Japanese has many loanwords borrowed from different languages: Chinese, English, French, German, Portuguese, and so forth. These foreign loanwords are adopted using native phonological rules which determine pronunciation. Much like native words, Japanese loanwords are shortened or clipped using truncation styles. Regional dialects cause variations in these loanword abbreviations. The most distinctive regional dialect in Japan is Kansai-ben, also known as the Western dialect. The purpose of this study is to observe and determine if Japanese native speakers from the Kansai region apply their dialect's unique features when adopting loanwords. Japanese words have high and low pitches. Lexical accent is where pitch falls from high to low. Ramsey (1979) mentions how a low pitch in the Kansai dialect is more distinctive compared to Japanese standard speech. He also asserts pitch accentual patterns in Kansai dialect have a pitch fall in the middle of the word. The Kansai dialect is likely to place a pitch accent on the penultimate mora for 3-mora clippings (Kubozono 2008; Fudano 2019, Table 1). The antepenultimate mora is usually accented in 4-mora words in both standard and the Kansai dialects (Cutler and Otake 1998; Fukumori 2020); however, just like 3-mora words, the low pitch on the first syllable is more distinctive in the Kansai dialect (Ramsey 1979:158, Table 2). Therefore, it can be hypothesized that native Japanese speakers from the Kansai area should know how to apply their dialect's features to new loanwords.

Table 1: Accent Pitch in Kansai and Tokyo-speech: 3-mora words (Kubozono, 2012; bold type indicates the location of accent)

	Television	Hawaii
Kansai	te**re**bɪ	ha**wa**ɪ
Tokyo	**te**rebɪ	**ha**waɪ

Table 2: Accent Pitch in Kansai and Tokyo-speech: 4-mora words (Fukumori, 2020)

	Somen (white noodle)	Funny (slang)
Kansai	so**o**meN	o**mo**roi
Tokyo	**so**omeN	omo**ro**i

Design:

A speech production test was administered to 64 Japanese college students in the Kansai area. Although they were required to take basic English courses as a part of their university's curriculum, none of them majored in English. The participants' task was to shorten 20 English words that have not yet been adopted in Japanese. All English words on the list were written in Japanese based on Japanese phonological (transliteration) rules and sounds applied. All participants' performances were recorded and analyzed.

Results:

The data were examined in regard to two differing aspects: the number of morae and accentual patterns. As for the number of morae in clipped loanwords, no strong preference for 3-mora or 4-

mora clippings were found (45.31% for 3-mora words vs 48.37% for 4-mora words). However, when looking at the original loanwords' length, a clear tendency was observed: The current research discovered a tendency regarding how the Kansai dialect treated loanwords of a particular length. The original loanwords with applied Japanese phonological rules were divided into two categories: <7-mora and >=7words. Fourty-nine out of 64 participants (76.6%) made 3-mora clippings consistently (over 68%) for the loanwords with 5 or 6 morae. Yet only 23 out of 64 participants (35.9%) made 4-mora clippings (at least over 68% of the time) for the loanwords with 7 or more morae (Table 3). Regarding the accentual patterns, the productions were also divided into 3-mora and 4-mora clippings. In 3-mora clippings, LHL (penultimate) patterns were observed in 19 out of 20 words (Table 4). However, when looking at each word's LHL consistency, no clear tendency was detected. Four-mora clipping data evoked both antepenultimate and penultimate accentual patterns (Table 5), and the participants did not show a strong preference to either of them. Overall, the data revealed that Kansai speakers might not be conscientious of accentual patterns for both 3-mora and 4-mora clippings.

Table 3: Preferences based on the full-length word

Original Words	Japanese phonological features applied	3-mora (%)	4-mora (%)
<7 morae			
Apothecary	[aposɛkari:]	73.44	23.44
Eclipse	[ɛkɯrɪpɯsɯ]	65.63	32.81
Kidnap	[kɪdonap:ɯ]	90.63	6.25
Nobleman	[no:bɯrɯmaN]	6.25	90.63
Pavement	[pɛɪbɯmɛNto]	62.50	26.56
Witness	[wɪt:onɛsɯ]	89.06	10.94
Infection	[ɪNɸɛkɯʃoN]	53.13	46.88
Landlord	[raNdoro:do]	46.88	50.00
Yashmak	[jaʃɯmak:ɯ]	68.75	9.38
		49 out of 64 people (76.6%)	
>=7 morae			
Heterogeneous	[hɛtɛrod͡ʒɪnɪasɯ]	67.19	26.15
Manipulation	[manɪpjɯre:ʃoN]	60.94	35.94
Catastrophe	[katastoroɸi:]	9.38	85.94
fairground	[ɸɛagɯraɯNdo]	17.19	73.44
Registration	[rɛd͡ʒɪsɯtore:ʃoN]	35.94	59.38
Recommendation	[rɪkomɛNde:ʃoN]	26.56	66.15
Widespread	[waɪdosɯpɯrɛd:o]	28.13	65.63
Orthography	[o:sogɯraɸi:]	37.50	46.88
Dermatologist	[da:matorod͡ʒɪsɯto]	32.81	51.56
Governorship	[gabana:ʃɪp:ɯ]	23.44	73.44
Zoologist	[zɯ:orod͡ʒɪsɯto]	10.94	85.94 23 out of 64 people (35.9%)

Table 4: Penultimate accentual pattern in 3-mora clippings

	Penultimate (%)
Apothecary	38.30
Catastrophe	0
Dermatologist	9.52
Eclipse	37.21
Fairground	27.27
Governorship	20.00
Heterogenous	23.26
Infection	8.82
Kidnap	20.69
Landlord	8.70
Registration	26.09
Manipulation	30.77
Nobleman	25.00
Orthography	12.50
Pavement	17.50
Recommendation	23.53
Witness	1.75
Widespread	5.56
Yashmak	25.00
Zoologist	14.29

Table 5: Accentual patterns in 4-mora clippings

	Antepenultimate (%)	Penultimate (%)
Apothecary	26.67	28.57
Catastrophe	10.91	1.81
Dermatologist	9.52	3.03
Eclipse	9.52	9.52
Fairground	0	0
Governorship	8.51	2.13
Heterogenous	15.38	46.15
Infection	3.33	3.33
Kidnap	25	0
Landlord	6.25	6.25
Registration	7.89	0
Manipulation	4.35	0
Nobleman	3.45	3.45
Orthography	3.33	3.33
Pavement	0	13.33
Recommendation	11.63	13.95
Witness	0	0
Widespread	0	0
Yashmak	16.67	16.67
Zoologist	14.29	40

Conclusion:

Kansai speakers are likely to clip shorter English loanwords into 3 morae. However, 4-mora clippings were also observed, though the patterns were inconsistent. As for pitch accent patterns, no consistent pitch accent patterns were seen on both 3-mora and 4-mora clippings. This study revealed how in the modern society's rapidly changing vocabulary, the Kansai speakers retain the accent patterns of their traditional dialect. The standardization of Japanese dialects might be a reason for the lack of consistent trends from this study's results (Sanada 2018). In particular, the "standard" Japanese used in younger generations are heavily influenced by the Internet and digital multimedia, leading to an inconsistent use of dialectal phonological rules.

Selected References:

Cutler, A., & Otake, T. (1999). Pitch accent in spoken-word recognition in Japanese. *Acoustical Society of America., 105*(3), 1877-1888.

Fudano (2019)- Okayama University of Science professor, specializing in dialectology; these were personal communications that took place at Kansai Foreign Language University.

Fukumori, T. (2020). The List of Accent in Idiomatic Osaka Dialect, *The Hokkaido Linguistic Circle, 18*, 183-196

Kubozonzo, H. (2008). Japanese accent. In Shigeru Miyagawa and Mamoru Saito (eds.), *The \ Oxford handbook of Japanese Linguistics*, 165-191. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ramsey, S. (1979). The Old Kyoto Dialect and The Historical Development of Japanese Accent. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 39*(1), 157-175. doi:10.2307/2718816

Sugito, M. (2000). CD-ROM Accent Dictionary of Spoken Osaka and Tokyo Japanese. *Journal of the Phonetic Society of Japan, 4*(2), 36-43.

Yuki Hattori: hattori.12@osu.edu