

# Types Of Accents In Japanese Learners' Speech On Target Words In Medan City

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## Abstract

*This research aims to examine variations in speech accents in the context of Japanese language learning in Medan City. The main focus includes characteristics of Japanese accents, factors influencing the formation of speech accents, and implications of the findings for teaching methods. Through this approach, this research seeks to understand how Japanese language learners in Medan City face and overcome the challenges of speech accents. The research methodology uses a qualitative approach by interviewing students and analyzing recorded speech data. It is hoped that the results will contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Japanese language learning outside of its native environment.*

**Keywords:** *Speech accent, Japanese, Language learning, Medan City.*

## 1. Introduction

To understand and master Japanese, one crucial aspect is emphasizing the accent of speech. Speech accent is an important element in achieving effective and authentic communication in Japanese. This research focuses on variations in speech accents in target words taught in Japanese language learning in Medan City.

The city of Medan, as one of the educational and cultural centers in Indonesia, has an active Japanese language learning community. Various institutions and communities organize Japanese language courses to fulfill people's interest in Japanese culture and language. In this context, it is important to understand how speech accents are learned and applied by Japanese language learners in Medan City.

This research will explore various types of speech accents that may appear in target words in Japanese language teaching in Medan City. By understanding these variations, it is hoped that we can provide a more comprehensive view of the accent aspect in Japanese language learning outside of its native environment. Apart from that, this research can also provide valuable input for the development of teaching methods that are more effective and oriented to the needs of the Japanese language learning community in Medan City.

## 2. Theoretical basis

This study focuses on the important role of speech accents in Japanese language learning in Medan City. Japanese accent and intonation have distinctive characteristics, and understanding the factors that influence accent formation is key to achieving authentic communication. The city of Medan, as a center for cultural and educational activities, has

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an active community of Japanese language learners. Factors such as the instructor, learning environment, and communicative experience can influence speech accent. This research will explore the implications of the findings for Japanese language teaching methods in Medan City, to improve students' understanding and use of speech accents.

### 3. Data and Methodology

#### Types of accents on target words and methods

In the analysis of the type of accent on the target word in the research, Shun Shirota's concept of accent type was used in his book *Nihongo No Oto* (Onseigaku to On'inron). According to Shirota (1993:114) there are four types of accent according to the mora count in words, namely: (1) Heiban type, Heiban form (Heiban shiki, Heiban gata) in this type of accent, the mora/first syllable is only pronounced in a low tone, and for the next mora/syllable it is pronounced in a high tone; (2) Kifuku type, Odaka form (Kifuku shiki, Odaka gata). This type of accent is the same as the Heiban type, namely the mora/first syllable is only pronounced in a low tone, but if the vocabulary is followed by an auxiliary word (for example, the auxiliary word **ga**), then the auxiliary word **ga** from the vocabulary is pronounced in a low tone; (3) Kifuku type, Nakadaka form (Kifuku shiki, Nakadaka gata) this type of accent mora/the first syllable is pronounced in a low tone, the middle part is pronounced in a high tone and the next part is again pronounced in a low tone; and (4) Kifuku type, Atamadaka form (Kifuku shiki, Atamadaka gata) this type of accent is the opposite of the Heiban type accent, Heiban form, in this type only the first mora/syllable is pronounced in a high tone and the next is pronounced in a low tone.

Based on the opinion above, this analysis will refer to the concepts above, namely Heiban form (low to high), Odaka form (low-high on the next syllable-to low if followed by auxiliary words), Nakadaka form (low-high on the next syllable). middle- to low), and Atamadaka form (high to low).

### 4. Results

#### a) Vocal Tone Flow [i] and [u] In the Early Syllabus

**Table 1 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words iki and ufi**

No	SPEAKER	iki			ufi		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	16.09	11.45	Q	15.23	15.43	N
2	R1U	16.55	15.57	TN	15.81	13.67	NT
3	R2U	15.08	17.77	N	14.40	17.78	N
4	R1H	15.00	13.56	NT	15.63	-0.26	NT
5	R2H	12.55	17.05	TN	12.46	16.38	NT

**Table 2 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words ikiu and utsuruu**

No	SPEAKER	iki <u>u</u>			utsuru <u>u</u>		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	14.18	12.97	NT	2.17	11.13	NT
2	R1U	15.82	16.11	TN	17.33	19.52	TN
3	R2U	2.27	16.21	N	14.80	16.90	TN

4	R1H	15.76	27.32	TN	15.59	12.23	Q
5	R2H	12.33	15.94	TN	12.92	18.68	TN

**Table 3 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words ikimasu and utfikefi**

No	SPEAKER	ikimasu			utfikefi		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	11.88	14.74	NT	3.45	14.99	N.M
2	R1U	16.66	18.99	TN	5.42	19.77	N
3	R2U	14.47	15.06	N	15.04	12.24	Q
4	R1H	14.74	13.22	Q	14.04	11.81	Q
5	R2H	11.88	14.74	NT	12.62	17.69	N

**b) Vocal Tone Flow [i] and [u] In the Middle Syllable****Table 4 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words çikuu and fukuu**

No	SPEAKER	çikuu			fukuu		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	15.23	14.26	Q	16.09	13.33	Q
2	R1U	17.29	18.87	N	16.89	20.69	TN
3	R2U	15.04	17.91	TN	14.67	17.76	NT
4	R1H	16.76	14.56	NT	15.03	13.75	Q
5	R2H	13.30	18.72	TN	13.13	19.00	TN

**Table 5 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words pikaçi and takusan**

No	SPEAKER	pikaçi			takusan		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	11.54	8.35	NT	0.39	2.72	NTM
2	R1U	16.61	16.17	TN	16.19	19.81	NTN
3	R2U	15.11	3.49	NT	14.58	14.96	N
4	R1H	15.52	13.54	Q	15.20	15.24	N
5	R2H	13.52	15.61	TN	15.26	1.90	TNT

**Table 6 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words tsukaçeu and kapuseçu**

No	SPEAKER	tsukaçeu			kapuseçu		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	0.37	0.37	NMT	18.57	4.99	NT
2	R1U	17.37	19.16	NTN	15.55	21.40	NTN
3	R2U	14.30	5.91	NT	14.65	17.74	TN
4	R1H	15.11	14.49	TN	28.11	13.44	Q
5	R2H	13.89	18.80	TN	8.96	16.38	N

**c) Vocal Tone Flow [i] and [u] In Final Syllabus**

**Table 7 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words hafi and tatsuu**

No	SPEAKER	hafi			tatsuu		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	16.26	17.80	N	14.64	10.22	Q
2	R1U	18.19	17.80	NT N	15.06	21.53	NTN
3	R2U	13.84	3.84	NT	2.52	16.35	N
4	R1H	14.97	12.56	NT	15.26	13.00	NT
5	R2H	13.84	17.54	N	13.55	18.51	TN

**Table 8 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words ippiki and suka:φuu**

No	SPEAKER	ippiki			suka:φuu		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	10.68	11.06	NT	5.44	14.66	N.M
2	R1U	18.38	19.98	TN	15.76	19.98	NT N
3	R2U	15.76	18.03	NT	16.43	19.16	TN
4	R1H	15.55	11.29	Q	15.90	11.79	Q
5	R2H	12.16	17.93	TN	-0.34	18.43	N

**Table 9 Vowel Tone Flow [i] and [u] in the words sukijaki and aimasu**

No	SPEAKER	sukijaki			aimasu		
		Beginning	End	Position	Beginning	End	Position
1	RN	18.16	16.59	TM	16.79	13.83	Q
2	R1U	18.51	20.07	TN	16.79	13.83	Q
3	R2U	15.99	17.81	TN	13.92	12.72	Q
4	R1H	-0.26	0.27	NT	13.23	-0.01	Q
5	R2H	13.20	16.03	N	11.99	8.79	Q

**d) Types of vowel accents [i] and [u] in the initial syllable****Table 10 Vowel accents [i] and [u] in two syllables in the initial syllable**

No	Speaker	iki				uɸi			
		/i/		Accent	/u/		/ɸi/	Accent	
		Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone			
1	RN	16.09	16.19	11.45	high to low	15.23	15.23	15.43	low to high
2	R1U	16.55	12.69	15.57	high to low	15.81	16.70	13.67	high to low
3	R2U	15.08	15.08	17.77	low to high	14.40	14.56	17.78	low to high
4	R1H	15.00	17.50	13.56	high to low	15.63	16.79	-0.26	high to low
5	R2H	12.55	10.78	17.05	low to high	12.46	11.20	16.38	high to low

**Table 11 Three-syllable vowel accents [i] and [u] in the initial syllable**

No	Speaker	ikiɾu				utsuɾu			
		/i/	/ki/	/ɾu/	Accent	/u/	/tsu/	/ɾu/	Accent
		Tone	Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone	Tone	
1	RN	14.18	17.77	12.97	low to high	12.17	19.00	11.13	low to high
2	R1U	15.82	14.02	16.11	high to low	17.33	14.65	19.52	high to low
3	R2U	2.27	14.18	16.21	low to high	14.80	13.90	16.90	low to high
4	R1H	15.76	13.95	27.32	high to low	15.59	16.03	12.23	high to low
5	R2H	12.33	11.54	15.94	high to low	12.92	11.98	18.68	low to high

**Table 12 Vowel accents [i] and [u] of four syllables in the initial syllable**

No	Speaker	ikimasu					uɾiɾi				
		/i/	/ki/	/ma/	/su/	Accent	/u/	/ɾi/	/to/	/ɾi/	Accent
		Tone	Tone	Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone	Tone	Tone	
1	RN	11.88	12.63	16.93	14.74	low to high to low	3.45	14.78	15.44	15.66	low to high
2	R1U	16.66	16.96	14.66	18.99	low to high	5.42	5.42	16.58	19.77	low to high
3	R2U	14.47	14.47	14.47	15.06	low to high	15.04	15.04	15.23	12.24	high to low
4	R1H	14.74	14.74	15.01	13.22	low to high to low	14.04	14.04	13.28	11.81	high to low
5	R2H	11.88	13.06	16.93	14.74	low to high to low	12.62	12.62	13.28	17.69	low to high

**e) Types of vowel accents [i] and [u] in the middle syllable**

**Table 13 Vowel accents [i] and [u] in two syllables in the middle syllable**

No	Speaker	çiku				ɸuku			
		/çi/	/ku/		Accent	/ɸu/	/ku/		Accent
		Tone	Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone	Tone	
1	RN	15.23	14.76	14.26	high to low	16.09	15.51	13.33	high to low
2	R1U	17.29	18.04	18.87	low to high	16.89	13.46	20.69	low to high

3	R2U	15.04	28.06	17.91	low to high to low	14.67	26.27	17.76	low to high to low
4	R1H	16.76	12.75	14.56	high to low	15.03	15.66	13.75	high to low
5	R2H	13.30	0.66	18.72	low to high	13.13	12.47	19.00	low to high

**Table 14 Vowel accents [i] and [u] of three syllables in the middle syllable**

No	Speaker	ikiɽu				uɽsuɽu			
		/i/	/ki/	/ɽu/	Accent	/u/	/tsu/	/ɽu/	Accent
		Tone	Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone	Tone	
1	RN	14.18	17.77	12.97	low to high	12.17	19.00	11.13	low to high
2	R1U	15.82	14.02	16.11	high to low	17.33	14.65	19.52	high to low
3	R2U	2.27	14.18	16.21	low to high	14.80	13.90	16.90	low to high
4	R1H	15.76	13.95	27.32	high to low	15.59	16.03	12.23	high to low
5	R2H	12.33	11.54	15.94	high to low	12.92	11.98	18.68	low to high

**Table 15 Vowel accents [i] and [u] of four syllables in the middle syllable**

No	Speaker	tsukaɽɽu					kapuɽɽu				
		/tsu/	/ka/	/ɽe/	/ɽu/	Accent	/ka/	/pu/	/se/	/ɽu/	Accent
		Tone	Tone	Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone	Tone	Tone	
1	RN	0.38	12.99	11.96	0.37	low to high to low	18.57	18.67	4.40	4.99	low to high to low
2	R1U	17.37	19.11	14.30	19.16	low to high	15.55	13.03	16.62	21.40	high to low to high
3	R2U	14.30	14.79	16.34	5.91	high to low	14.65	16.62	14.11	17.74	low to high
4	R1H	15.11	15.01	11.90	14.49	high to low	28.11	28.11	22.56	13.44	high to low
5	R2H	13.89	14.36	12.69	18.80	low to high	8.96	8.96	11.98	16.38	low to high

**f) Types of vowel accents [i] and [u] in the final syllable****Table 16 Vowel accents [i] and [u] in two syllables in the final syllable**

No	Speaker	haɽi			tatsu		
		/ha/	/ɽi/	Accent	/ta/	/tsu/	Accent

		Tone	Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone	Tone	
1	RN	16.26	17.80	17.80	low to high	14.64	16.17	10.22	high to low
2	R1U	18.19	19.50	17.80	high to low	15.06	14.08	21.53	low to high
3	R2U	13.84	15.35	3.84	high to low	2.52	14.36	16.35	low to high
4	R1H	14.97	15.11	12.56	high to low	15.26	15.51	13.00	high to low
5	R2H	13.84	16.47	17.54	low to high	13.55	0.42	18.51	high to low to high

**Table 17 Three-syllable vowel accents [i] and [u] in final syllables**

No	Speaker	ippiki				suka:φu			
		/ip/ Tone	/pi/ Tone	/ki/ Tone	Accent	/su/ Tone	/ka: Tone	/φu/ Tone	Accent
1	RN	10.68	13.85	11.06		low to high to low	5.44	15.06	
2	R1U	18.38	13.15	19.98	low to high	15.76	18.29	19.98	low to high
3	R2U	15.76	27.23	18.03	low to high to low	16.43	14.26	19.16	low to high
4	R1H	15.55	15.39	11.29	high to low	15.90	18.90	11.79	high to low
5	R2H	12.16	1.66	17.93	high to low to high	-0.34	15.66	18.43	low to high

**Table 18 Vowel accents [i] and [u] of four syllables in the final syllable**

N o	Speak er	sukijaki					aimasu				
		/su/ Ton e	/ki/ Ton e	/ja/ Ton e	/ki/ Ton e	Accent	/a/ Tone	/i/ Tone	/ma/ Tone	/su/ Tone	Accent
1	RN	18.1 6	17.3 9	16.5 9	16.5 9		high to low	12.8 4	14.2 4	14.2 4	
2	R1U	18.5 1	17.8 2	14.2 5	20.0 7	low to high	16.7 9	16.7 9	13.8 3		
3	R2U	15.9 9	14.2 8	17.8 1	17.8 1	low to high	13.9 2	13.9 2	12.7 2		
4	R1H	- 0.26	13.4 5	7.44	0.27	low to high to low	13.2 3	13.2 3	-0.01		
5	R2H	13.2 0	15.5 3	15.5 3	16.0 3	low to high	11.9 9	11.9 9	8.79		

**Table 19 Target Word Accent Type**

No.	Say	Syllables	TypeAccent
1.	iki	i-ki	high to low
2.	ushi	u-shi	low to high
3.	ikiru	i-ki-ru	low to high
4.	utsuru	u-tsu-ru	low to high
5.	ikimasu	i-ki-ma-su	low to high to low
6.	uchikeshi	u-chi-ke-shi	low to high
7.	hiku	hi-ku	high to low
8.	fuku	fu-ku	high to low
9.	pikari	pi-ka-ri	low to high
10.	takusan	ta-ku-san	high to low
11.	tsukareru	tsu-ka-re-ru	low to high to low
12.	kapuseru	ka-pu-se-ru	low to high to low
13.	hashi	ha-shi	low to high
14.	tatsu	ta-tsu	high to low
15.	ippiki	ip-pi-ki	low to high to low
16.	sukaafu	su-kaa-fu	low to high
17.	sukiyaki	su-ki-ya-ki	high to low
18.	aimasu	ai-ma-su	high to low

The phonetic data from the table above shows that the type of Japanese accent is a tone accent, where only two tones are used, namely a high tone and a low tone. Tone accent can function as a differentiator of meaning.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the type of accent spoken by Japanese model speakers, of the 18 target words in this study, the results showed that there were six target words that had a type of accent form Atamadaka, namely high tone to low tone. The target words are: iki, hiku, fuku, takusan, tatsu, and sukiyaki. Meanwhile, the Heiban accent type, namely low tone to high tone, has four target words, namely: ushi, uchikeshi, hashi, and sukaafu. And the rest are types of Nakadaka form of accent, namely low to high to low, namely the words ikiru, utsuru, ikimasu, pikari, tsukareru, kapusan, ippiki, and aimasu.

So, based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that of the 18 target words spoken by speakers who were learning Japanese, the result was that for RIU speakers only three words had the correct accent type when referring to the accent type of Japanese speakers. The target words with the correct accent type are the words iki, uchikeshi, and sukaafu. Meanwhile, in other target words, RIU speakers have the wrong type of accent, namely the words ikiru, utsuru, hiku, fuku, takusan, kapuseru, tatsu, pikari, ippiki, sukiyaki, aimasu, ushi, hashi, ikimasu, and tsukareru.

Furthermore, speakers of R2U Japanese learners have five words with the correct accent type, namely the words ushi, ikiru, utsuru, ippiki, and like it. R1H Japanese language speakers also have five words that have the correct accent type, namely the words iki, ikimasu, hiku, fuku, and tatsu. Among R2H Japanese language speakers, the speakers with the most correct accent types were six words, namely utsuru, ikimasu, uchikeshi, pikari,



hashi, and sukaafu. Based on the analysis of the target words, the results also showed that there were five words for which all Japanese language learners did not have the correct accent type, namely the words takusan, sukareru, kapuseru, sukiyaki, and aimasu. Meanwhile, the target word with the most accent type correct by Japanese language learning speakers is the target word sukaafu, namely three Japanese language learning speakers said it correctly.

Thus, in principle, the sound control of word accent patterns for speakers of Japanese language is not correct, so appropriate teaching patterns are needed based on intonation and tone of pronunciation.

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