

Capturing Coalescence in Owari Japanese through Government Phonology

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In this poster, I present a formal analysis of vocalic coalescence in one variety of Japanese, namely that spoken in the Owari region. Vocalic coalescence is a common phonological process in which adjacent vowels share features and become either a long or short vowel which consist of the merged features. It is most common across morpheme boundaries (e.g. Ancient Greek, Old Portuguese, Quebec French and others in de Haas 1988) though in Owari Japanese, the language in question here, coalescence occurs within a monomorphemic word as well as across morpheme boundaries. Consider the following monomorphemic data from Owari Japanese in (1) and the poly-morphemic forms in (2).

(1) Monomorphemic Vowel Coalescence in Owari Japanese

<u>Standard</u>	<u>OJ</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
oi	[ø:]	‘nephew’
koi	[kø:]	‘fish’
aibiki	[æ:biki]	‘affair’
hai	[hæ:]	‘ashes’
hae	[hæ:]	‘fly’
sui	[sy:]	‘sour/vinegar’

(2) Polymorphemic Vowel Coalescence in Owari Japanese

<u>Standard</u>	<u>OJ</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
ja-ita	[jæ:ta]	‘cook-PAST’ verb
nozo-ite	[nozø:te]	‘remove-GER’ verb
çiro-i	[çirø:]	‘white-PRES’ adj.
shibu-i	[shiby:]	‘bitter-PRES’ adj.

Coalescence is always triggered by the presence of /i/ or /e/ in the V² position of a vowel sequence. The reverse vowel sequences do not create vowel coalescence contexts e.g. /i-u/ ‘to say’ surfaces as [ju:] in both Standard and Owari Japanese. Why does this occur coalescence occur in only some vowel pairs (namely /ai/, /ae/, /oi/, /oe/ and /ui/) and other pairs have historically had other repair strategies?

Using unary features in frameworks such as Element Theory (Kaye, Lowenstamm and Vergnaud 1985), Dependency Phonology (Anderson & Jones 1974, Anderson & Ewen 1987) and Particle Phonology (Schane 1984), coalescence has been described for some Japanese dialects (Yoshida 1996), Chumburung (Snider 1989) and Bemba (Kula 2002) among others. In this presentation, I will develop formal mechanisms for coalescence presented in Yoshida (1996), Kula (2002) and Youngberg (2013) in an attempt to explain the facts of Owari Japanese, which exhibits vocalic coalescence to two environments: vowel sequences which may be described diphthongs in monomorphemic contexts and polymorphemic vowel sequences in a morphological licensing relation. Government Phonology and Element Theory frameworks (Kaye, Lowenstamm and Vergnaud 1985, 1990) are applied as explanatory tools.

After a presentation of the data and historical facts regarding other coalescence processes (e.g. Modern Japanese [e:] < Late Middle Japanese [ei]), two formal analyses will be presented. One is based upon notions of constituent government with the assumption that vowel sequences in both monomorphemic and polymorphemic forms behave as if they are in a governing relation. In this part of the analysis, coalescence is analyzed as a method of constituent government satisfaction. A merger of identity is necessary to repair the disallowed vowel sequence, which is argued to have a failing governing relation. Considerations upon the Licensing Constraints of Owari Japanese and headedness are also included in a discussion of government satisfaction. Drawbacks of this analysis in relation to behavior of the sequences are also presented.

A second portion of the analysis will focus on the behavior of the [I] and [A] elements. The spreading of [I] Owari Japanese, Kyoto Japanese (Yoshida Y. 2006) and Standard Japanese as well as historical [A] spread will be examined. Licensing capabilities for the [I] element is argued to be integral to the process of coalescence and must be considered in addition to any discussion of possible government. The poster concludes with comparison with coalescence in Tohoku and Okayama Japanese as reported in NHK (1966) and Iitoyo et al (1982-1986).

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