にほんご発音ラボ Introduction(2)

Translated by 松川 玲子 (MATSUKAWA Reiko)

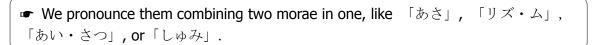
Rhythm of Japanese

Pronouncing two morae as one

- ★ Japanese is a **mora-timed rhythm** language.
- ♪ Each kana is pronounced at about the same length. This unit of length is "a mora". ex.) 「あさ」 is two morae, 「リズム」 is three morae, and 「あいさつ」 is four morae.
- ♪ As for contracted sounds, "a kana + a contracted sound" (「かな+ ゃ/ ゅ /ょ」) is one mora.

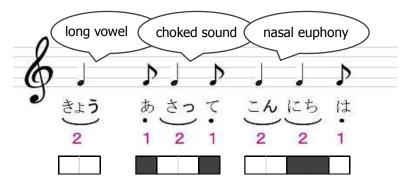
```
ex.)「しゅみ」 is two morae, 「かいしゃ」 is three morae.
```

```
But, we don't pronounce them like [b, c], [y, x, d], [b, c], [b, c], or [b, c].
```





- ♪ Special sounds, such as long vowels (-), choked sounds(つ), or nasal euphonies(ん), take one mora to pronounce.
- "A kana + a special sound" is also pronounced as one.



★ The above square-shaped objects are called **Rhythm Diagrams** or **RDs**.

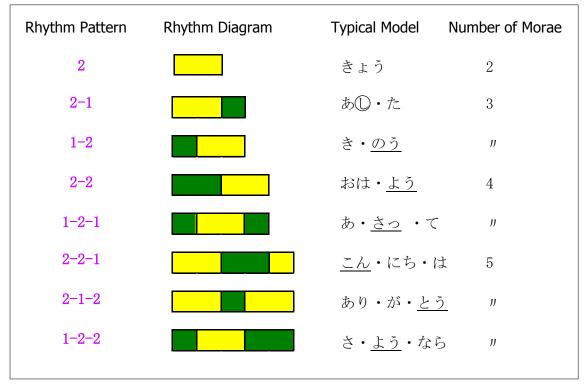
Rhythm Pattern and Typical Model

★ Rhythm Pattern shows the placement of length in the respective word.

ex.)「あさ」or 「しゅみ」belongs to Pattern 2, 「リズム」belongs to Pattern 2-1, 「あいさつ」belongs to Pattern 2-2.

Any word can be represented by these patterns.

★ The representative examples of rhythm patterns are called **Typical Models**. See Figure 1.



(The underlined parts indicate "a *kana* + a special sound", and the circled part "devocalized vowel".) Figure 1 Rhythm Pattern and Typical Models

Let's repeat each typical model above three times. By doing it, you understand the placement of length and how to pronounce in appropriate length. We call this Continuous Repeating Method. Please practice by using other words with the same rhythm pattern.

ex.)きょう (**Pattern 2**) →きょう | きょう | きょう→しゅみ | しゅみ | しゅみ

 \triangleright What's important is to feel the beat and practice at a constant speed.



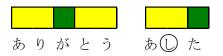
★ The vowel [i] of 「① (shi)」in 「あ①た」is not pronounced clearly. You pronounce it as if just breathing out the air like when you say 「静かに①てください。①~」. This is the "devocalization of vowels".

▶ Put your finger close to your mouth and say $\lceil \bigcirc \sim, \ b \bigcirc c \rceil$.

You can distinguish the Rhythm Pattern of the word from kana!

ex.) 「ありがとう」, 「あした」

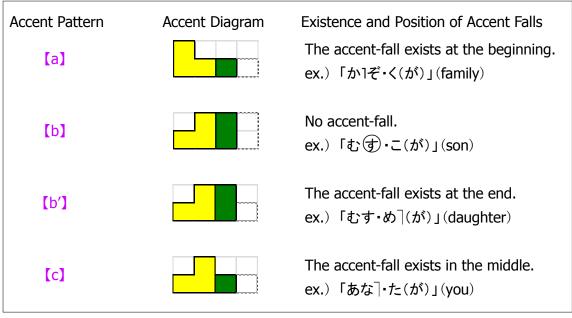
- ① At first, put "a *kana* + a special sound" together if special sounds are contained in the word. (「ありが・とう」)
- ② Next, combine two morae from the beginning of the word. (「<u>あり</u>・が・とう」) Even if no special sounds are contained, combine two morae from the beginning. (「<u>あし</u>・た」)
- ③ One mora may remain. (「あり・<u>が</u>・とう」→ 2-1-2 「あし・<u>た</u>」→ 2-1)
- Let's indicate the two morae you put together initially in yellow (or white), and color the others in green (or black), and arrange the two colors alternately.



Accent of Japanese

There are four patterns in Japanese accent

- ★ Japanese is also a **pitch-accented** language. In standard Japanese, each word has its own placement of pitch.
- ▶ The location where the pitch goes down suddenly is called an "accent-fall". For example, in the word 「カンぞく (family)」, the accent-fall exists between 「カン" (a high-pitched mora) and 「ぞ」 (a low-pitched mora). See Figure 2.
- All Japanese words can be divided into four accent patterns. In this site, we call them Accent Pattern [a], [b], [b'], and [c].
- Pattern [b] words have no accent-falls. While, Pattern [a], [b'], and [c] words have accent-falls, although the positions of falling differ.



(**shows a particle.**)

Figure 2 The accent of the nouns of Rhythm Pattern 2-1

★ The above step-shaped objects are called **Accent Diagrams** or **ADs**, which were created by Tanomu KASHIMA, emeritus professor of Nagoya University, in 2002.

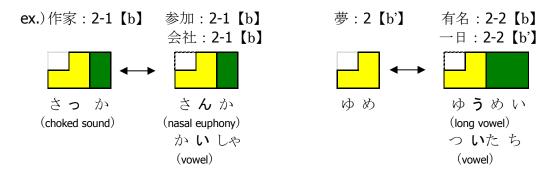
 \star The Japanese pitch accents have the following regular patterns.



Pay attention to the pitch level of dotted lines!

The difference in pitch between the first mora and the second mora is small except the words belonging to Pattern [a], when the second mora is a nasal euphony or a long vowel.

In addition, when the second mora is a vowel, the difference is also sometimes small.



2. Each word doesn't have more than two accent-falls.

3. Once the accent-pitch falls down in a word, it doesn't rise again.