

Some prosodic traits in Taiwanese-Japanese bilingual speakers: A case study
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In this study, we report some preliminary results of prosodic traits found in one female young Taiwanese-Japanese bilingual speaker whose dominant language is Taiwanese Mandarin. She has been living in Taiwan after kindergarten (i.e., as an instantiation of the so-called “delayed bilingualism”). The data were transcribed and analyzed with the help of Praat. Of special interest are the following phenomena: pitch accent/tone patterns and intonation patterns in both Japanese and Taiwanese Mandarin. Results show that, interestingly enough, both of her native languages are not exactly the same as what have been reported in the literature, as far as prosodic properties are concerned, suggesting that bilingualism does not necessarily mean that a speaker simply speaks two native languages and his/her performance of the two languages are exactly the same as that of monolingual native speakers. Specifically, first of all, the “source” of her Japanese should be primarily Fukuoka Japanese (her mother’s dialect). In Kyushu dialects, unlike Standard Japanese, unaccented pitch accent patterns are not attested. But unaccented patterns are found in the recordings, indicating that her speech is heavily influenced by Standard Japanese. Likewise, one of the most interesting findings in this work is that her Tone 4 (a high falling tone) is often, if not always, completely flattened out in phrase-final position, resulting in a high level tone (i.e., Tone 1). Notice again that this is not expected because her dominant language is Mandarin Chinese and contour leveling of high falling tones has not been reported for Taiwanese Mandarin spoken in North Taiwan. Taken together, it is evident that at least from our preliminary results, her native languages cannot be really regarded as fully faithful renditions in these regards. Second, we found that many distinct features of Japanese intonation systems, be them Fukuoka Japanese or Standard Japanese, are not found in her speech, either. For example, one of the most salient traits in Fukuoka Japanese is that *wh*-words undergo a process dubbed *de-accenting*, meaning that F_0 peaks associated with a *wh*-word in Standard Japanese do not occur in Fukuoka Japanese. Yet *wh*-words are produced with an F_0 peak in the recordings, again, indicating the strong impact from Standard Japanese in her speech. Furthermore, the “ups and downs”, informally speaking, found in Japanese intonation patterns are absent in her speech as well. Rather, we found that the pitch range of her Japanese is often, if not always, within c. 150 Hz, which is considerably narrow, cross-linguistically speaking. In contrast, the “ups and downs” of F_0 contour are much more drastic (that is, having a much larger size of pitch excursion) in her Mandarin Chinese. The difference, as far as we can tell, cannot be merely attributed to the self-narrative nature of the recordings in both Japanese and Mandarin Chinese. Finally, we also managed to identify some sporadic phonetic traits in her Mandarin Chinese, for example, high vowel devoicing, higher degree of nasalization, and so on. It remains to be seen if the above-mentioned properties are due to individual difference and/or interactions between the two native languages she speaks. The present study, albeit inconclusive in many respects, does contribute to a growing body of recent work highlighting the understudied nature of bilingualism.