

Acknowledgments

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Editors

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discusses data from native English-speaking children attempting to play a Japanese syllable insertion language game for the first time. This Japanese language game was also the focus of an investigation by Sauer (1991) and Haraguchi (1991). In their experiments Japanese speakers' production patterns were consistent with moraic segmentation. Since Japanese is a mora-based language, it contains the syllable structure. A mora is defined by Han (1982, in Hoopuit 1987) as a unit of timing. Each mora takes about the same length of time to say (p.62). In Japanese, all vowels (including those developed by phonological rules), geminate consonants, and the syllable-final *h* are said to be moraic. Since linguists generally define English as a syllable-based language, the theoretical question I ask is this: will these children interpret Japanese as a mora-based or syllable-based language?

Kubozono (1989) states that if standard syllable structure cannot express Japanese word production, the only way to account for speech behavior is to assume the mora as a relevant unit in the speech production of Japanese. He defines the mora as an intermediate level between syllable and segment, vowel-consonant interaction such as CV-insertion can be described not as segmental, but as moraic productions. Kubozono also pointed out that in English, there is reportedly a set of general constraints that hold between the peak and the coda, whereas constraints between the onset and the peak are relatively weak (cf. Fudge 1989, 1987). In Japanese, by contrast, co-occurrence restrictions operating between onset and peak are at least as strong as those holding between peak and coda" (p. 289). In other words, in English, there is a special association between the nucleus (peak) and the coda, which are said to form a constituent called the "rhyme". In Japanese, there is no special relationship between the nucleus and the coda. The association between the onset and nucleus is usually weak. The mora has therefore often been recognized as a relevant unit in phonological description. However, unlike a language such as English, the evidence of the Japanese mora suggests that there is no syllable unit rhyme which is often implied to be a universal syllable constituent (see Ho 1988). The present study found clear evidence of language transfer from the native language syllable structure in the

