

Japanese vowel sequences

(Standard/Tokyo) Japanese has five vowels:

i u
e o
 a

([u] is a high back unrounded vowel)

All twenty possible sequences of V_1V_2 occur in Japanese words.

- How can we tell if they are syllabified as diphthongs, or if they are in separate syllables?
- If diphthongs are allowed in Japanese, are there any restrictions on possible diphthongs?

This data set begins to explore these questions.

- (1) When the suffix [-çi] ‘city’ is added to a place name, it adds a pitch accent (pitch fall, shown here with an accent mark [á]) on a fixed position in the place name. Where is that position?

([ç] is a voiceless alveopalatal fricative, similar to [ç])

(a)

[kuruéçi]	‘Kure city’
[akítáçi]	‘Akita city’
[kumamotóçi]	‘Kumamoto city’
[nikkó:çi]	‘Nikkō city’

(b)

[muuroránaçi]	‘Muroran city’
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- (2) Given your analysis in (1) above, what can we say about the following words?

(a)

[sendáçi]	‘Sendai city’
[muumbáçi]	‘Mumbai city’
[hanóçi]	‘Hanoi city’
[kurakáuçi]	‘Krakow city’ (Polish place name, but borrowed via English)
[bisáuçi]	‘Bissau city’

(b)

[managuáçi]	‘Managua city’
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(c)

[fukuíçi] ~ [fukúíçi]	‘Fukui city’
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