

# 国立国語研究所学術情報リポジトリ

## Preface

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## Preface

From October 2009 to March 2012, I conducted two collaborative research projects at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics ('NINJAL') (Tachikawa City, Tokyo, Japan), where I served as the Director of the Department of Crosslinguistic Studies. The abbreviated titles of these projects are 'Mermaid construction' and 'Five levels in clause linkage', respectively. The present volume is the major outcome of the project 'Mermaid construction'. A crosslinguistic study of 'Five levels in clause linkage' is in preparation.

One of the most important goals of these projects is the following: contributions from Japanese linguistics to general linguistics. This goal is indeed the very title of the keynote speech I presented at the 11th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies, held at the University of Vienna, 31 August to 3 September 2005 (Tasaku Tsunoda 2005). What I mean by general linguistics is the kind of linguistic research that proposes an idea or framework that is useful for study of other languages, and hopefully, all human languages. In my view, general linguistics does not refer to any particular theory.

In spirit, these projects aspire to approach the level of the contributions made by Dixon (1972), based on data from Dyirbal of northeast Australia, and Hale (1983), based on data from Warlpiri of central Australia. Dixon's work on ergativity — syntactic ergativity, in particular — and Hale's work on configurationality provided invaluable frameworks and insights for study of other languages (including my own work, e.g. Tasaku Tsunoda (2011)).

Works on Japanese that are written in English — both books and papers — flourish. To the best of my knowledge, many of them examine whether a given theory may or may not apply to Japanese, how a certain phenomenon in Japanese may be analyzed employing a certain theory, or how a given theory may be modified on the basis of Japanese data. They (probably, not all of them) have made important contributions. One of the best such works is Harada's (1976), in which he put forward many important insights into the honorifics of Japanese.

In contrast with these works, the two projects mentioned above do not aim to look at Japanese in the light of a certain theory. They aim to propose — on the basis of Japanese data and analyses of Japanese — an idea or framework that is useful for study of other languages, and hopefully, all human languages. The inspiration for the project 'Mermaid construction' comes from Tasaku Tsunoda's (1996) study of a certain construction in Japanese. That for the project 'Five levels in clause linkage' is provided by Mie Tsunoda's (2004, 2012) work, which is based on Japanese data. It is hoped that the present volume constitutes a contribution from Japanese linguistics to general linguistics and that the same will apply to the proposed volume on 'Five levels in clause linkage'.

I mentioned above that works on Japanese that are written in English flourish. It is important to stress in this connection that there are works that are based on Japanese data, written in Japanese, published in Japanese, and

that have made important contributions to general linguistics (Tasaku Tsunoda 2005). Two of such works are Kindaichi (1950) and Mimami (1964), both of which are based on Japanese data. Kindaichi (1950) proposed a theory of aspect. It is seven years earlier than Vendler (1957), who put forward an almost identical theory of aspect, based on English data. Mimami (1964) submitted a theory of clause linkage. It is twelve years before Silverstein (1976) and twenty years before Foley and Van Valin (1984) advanced very similar theories of clause linkage. Unfortunately, works such as Kindaichi (1950) and Minami (1964) are not known overseas. It is hoped that works like theirs will be better known overseas. It is in view of this that the two projects mentioned above aim to make contributions to general linguistics, based on Japanese data. It should be added that there are attempts to make such a contribution, e.g. Tasaku Tsunoda's (1995) study of expressions of possession.

I have had the good fortune to have the participation of a large number of expert linguists in the two projects mentioned above. When selecting linguists to request to participate in the projects, the following two criteria were among the most important ones.

Criterion 1. The EUROTYP project examined the languages of Europe (and produced publications of superb quality) (<<http://www.degruyter.com/view/serial/16329?rskey=DwHMqK&result=1&q=EUROTYP>>) (8 March 2013). In view of this, and also in view of the location of Japan, I decided to mainly focus on languages of Asia and the Pacific. In addition, a small number of specialists in languages of North and Central Americas, Africa and Europe kindly agreed to participate. They added a welcome expansion of the area covered.

Criterion 2. Works on so-called major languages are well known and easily accessible. In contrast, those on so-called minority languages are little known and not easily accessible. In view of this, I made deliberate efforts to include the latter in the projects.

Finally I wish to thank all the people who contributed towards the completion of the present volume. In particular, (i) the authors of the contributions, who patiently revised their papers over and over, (ii) the reviewers, who — in their busy schedule — refereed the papers and provide very detailed and helpful comments, (iii) the other members of the projects who gave comments on the papers when they were presented at the project meetings, and (iv) the secretariat at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics, who provided much-needed assistance.

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