

Preface

Since the inception of the generative approach to linguistic research, the field of theoretical linguistics has made tremendous progress. Various theories have been proposed and developed to account for the universality of the human language faculty. At the same time and to the same end, researchers have made a remarkable contribution to this progress by investigating a wider range of languages, far beyond English and others in the Indo-European family. The field of Japanese linguistics has certainly followed this trend for the last thirty years. Japanese has become one of the most closely examined languages, and serves as a testing ground for theoretical developments in virtually all areas of linguistics. The examination of Japanese has revealed its differences from and similarities to other languages, and this indeed has contributed to the elucidation of linguistic phenomena at the descriptive level, and has led to developments and improvements at the theoretical level. As an example from phonology, the study of Japanese accentual patterns played an important role in the development of autosegmental theory. Moreover, numerous syntactic phenomena such as scrambling, pronominal reference, and passives received different treatments over the years, and a new perspective has emerged that Japanese phrase structure is not as drastically different from English as it was perceived as being before. Given the extent to which Japanese has contributed and continues to contribute to the field as a whole, it is timely to compile a volume summarizing the depth and breadth of the research that has made Japanese linguistics a thriving field.

This *Handbook* has come into existence in an attempt to bring together major aspects of Japanese linguistics, presenting an overview of relevant topics. The areas included in the *Handbook* are phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics, language acquisition, sentence processing, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. Chapters 1–4 deal with phonology including autosegmental theory, optimality theory, and phonological variation. Chapters 5–8 examine several topics in syntax that have made significant contributions to the development of syntactic theories. Chapters 9–12 present interface areas with aspects of syntax,

semantics, and morphology. Chapters 13–14 introduce psycholinguistics research ranging from first language acquisition to sentence processing. Chapters 15–16 consider discourse analysis and sociological aspects of the Japanese language. Each chapter contains an overview of the topic, current concerns, and future directions. Due to space limitations and unforeseeable predicaments beyond our control, we were unable to incorporate important topics including historical linguistics and various issues in syntax like pronominal reference and phrase structure matters. This *Handbook* is for those who are familiar with the topic at the basic level and wish to investigate it in more detail, but it is also to be used as a language-specific and typological reference.

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