

Tsujimura, Natsuko: *An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* (Second Edition). Malden et al.: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, 510 pp., \$ 49.95

*Reviewed by Peter Backhaus**

To start with a clarifying note, *An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* is not an introduction to the discipline of linguistics in Japan, but a linguistic introduction to the Japanese language. It is intended to serve “as a descriptive source and a theoretical foundation for an audience that includes students and scholars in linguistics as well as those who are interested in the Japanese language more generally” (xiii). The book was first published in 1996. The second edition, which is under review here, has been considerably revised and contains several new features. It is over 100 pages longer than the 1996 edition. It consists of an introductory chapter and seven main chapters on phonetics, phonology, morphology*, syntax, semantics*, linguistic variation*, and language acquisition** (* = considerably revised; ** = newly added). Each of the chapters ends with a list of suggested readings and an exercise section.

Chapter 2 provides a brief account of the phonetic inventory of Japanese and the basic phonetic terminology used to describe it. Consonants and vowels are discussed in separate sections, each starting with an account of the sounds of the English language.

Chapter 3 is about phonology. It discusses the most fundamental phonemic rules in Japanese such as the devoicing of high vowels, assimilation of syllabic /n/, different phonetic realizations of /s/ and /t/, and verbal conjugation rules. It also deals with the problem of sequential voicing (*rendaku*) and discusses at length the differences between mora and syllable, a topic that will recur on various occasions throughout the book. Other characteristics of the Japanese sound system discussed are accentuation, phonemic rules in forming mimetics, patterns of loan word integration, some properties of casual and fast speech, and constraints on word length.

Chapter 4 is an introduction to Japanese morphology. It starts with an account of the basic morphological categories. After a general introduction to morpheme types, Tsujimura discusses issues of word formation.

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These include affixation, compounding, reduplication, clipping, and borrowing. In this context, she also introduces the role of the head in word formation patterns (Righthand Head Rule). The second edition comprises additional sections on transitive and intransitive verb pairs, another topic to be taken up several times in the course of the book; nominalization of verbs, adjectives, and whole phrases; and formation rules for noun-verb and verb-verb compounds. Particularly this latter issue is discussed at some length with regard to morphosyntactic problems such as transitivity and argument structure. Despite some unavoidable redundancies, the new sections fit in well with the other parts of the chapter.

The subject matter of chapter 5 is syntax. Though in this chapter no noteworthy additions have been made, it remains the core chapter of the book, covering more than 120 pages in total. It starts with introducing some of the key notions in syntactic theory and exemplifies how they map Japanese syntactic structures. The second section briefly discusses transformational rules, mainly focusing on English. Word order and scrambling are examined in the next section, which revolves around differing theories concerning the hierarchical deepness of Japanese syntactic structure. Subsequent sections discuss null anaphora and zero pronouns; characteristics of the Japanese reflexives *zibun* and *zibun-zisin*; properties of the Japanese subject and two “diagnostic tests” to identify it; passives, causatives, and causative passives; relative clauses; unaccusative and unergative verbs; and light verb constructions (verbal noun + *-suru*). The closing section is intended as a brief update on more recent developments in phrase structure rules, mainly X' Theory and its application to Japanese. This section must be understood against the backdrop that, as Tsujimura acknowledges in her introduction to the chapter (206), the analyses provided do not always reflect the most current developments in syntactic theory. However, as a general introduction to the properties of Japanese syntax and its linguistic analysis, the chapter can be considered more than sufficient.

Chapter 6 deals with semantics. It has been completely revised and – as a result – is much more clearly structured than in the 1996 edition. The first section on word and sentence meaning is intended to introduce the reader to some semantic basics including meaning relationships between words (homonymy, polysemy, antonymy), truth conditions, metaphors and idioms, deictic expressions, and mimetics. The next section examines tense and, particularly, aspect. As a matter of fact, it focuses on verbs and verbal morphology, including forms such as *-te iru*, *-te aru* and *-te simau*, and compounds such as *-hajimaru/hazimeru* and *-owaru/oeru*, among others. The analysis also casts light on some interesting interfaces with syntax (argument structure) and morphology (verb inflections). The third section ex-

amines some more syntax-semantics relations of the Japanese verb and in cross-linguistic perspective. Most welcome in this chapter is a newly added section on pragmatics. It starts with Grice's cooperative principle and points out how intentional deviation from his four maxims can be construed as meaning beyond the sentence level. Pragmatic characteristics of Japanese that are discussed are the organization of information structure by means of the particles *-wa* (topic) and *-ga* (subject), among others, and the predicate morphology *desu* (formal) vs. *da* (informal). No direct reference to politeness phenomena is made at this point, probably because the issue is taken up in a separate section in the next chapter. The section ends with presenting some fascinating examples of relative clauses that demonstrate the relevance of contextual information with regard to both meaning construal and grammaticality of an utterance.

Chapter 7 is on language variation. It has been reorganized to some extent as well. It starts with a section on regional variation that reminds the reader that Japanese comprises much more than the so-called standard language spoken in the greater Tokyo area. The residuary two sections deal with sociolinguistic problems: "Styles and Levels of Speech" is an extended version of the section called "Honorifics" in the first edition. Particularly important are some new paragraphs commenting on the considerable gap between ideological norms about honorifics and their real usage. The concluding section on gender differences makes a similar point. After discussing the most frequently quoted gender markers (personal pronouns, sentence-final particles, beautification, etc.) Tsujimura refers to some recent empirical research suggesting that many of the classical gender differences in Japanese do not hold water when the linguistic practices of "real people" are considered.

The newly added Chapter 8 deals with language acquisition phenomena, i.e., how children learn to speak Japanese. The first section works out various regularities in Japanese children's language with regard to moraic structure, the lexicalization of mimetics, and the marking of tense and aspect. This theme is followed up in the next section, which is on speech errors resulting from overgeneralizations. Issues discussed include inflectional morphology in negation, case particles (indiscriminate use of *-ga* to mark the first NP in a sentence), and pronominal modification (over- and undergeneralization of *-no*). Theoretical approaches to verb acquisition are dealt with in the next section, which juxtaposes the syntactic and the semantic bootstrapping hypotheses and discusses problems of each of the two when applied to Japanese. The closing section is on acquisition phenomena in the realm of pragmatics that attest to children's amazingly high awareness of issues such as honorifics and gender distinctions from an early age on. Since this new chapter deals with issues from each of the

linguistic levels discussed in the previous chapters, its attachment at the end of the book has been a wise decision.

An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics is an extensive and well-organized linguistic account of the Japanese language that will serve as an extremely helpful source of reference to everyone interested in Japanese and its linguistic analysis. Among the many creditable points of the book is that the discussion frequently centers around some linguistic problem (e.g., mora vs. syllable, *rendaku* patterns, transitive vs. intransitive verbs) that re-occurs in the later parts of the book. This way of organization is very stimulating in that it invites the reader to look beyond one single linguistic level of analysis in order to understand a linguistic phenomenon. Another strength of the book is its well-balanced use of English examples and its general focus on common points rather than differences between the two languages.

With special regard to the second edition, I have already mentioned that the revisions, particularly in the chapters on semantics and on linguistic variation, clearly enhance the quality of the book as a whole. The same holds true for the new chapter on language acquisition. Further noteworthy in this respect is that the exercise sections and the lists of suggested readings have been updated and adapted to the new contents. The new edition thus is clearly more than a mere reprint of the 1996 version.

On a general note, some readers may be surprised by the striking differences in coverage of the linguistic subfields. Thus, syntactic problems are discussed on over 120 pages, whereas the language variation chapter covers only 20 pages, ten less even than in the first edition. However, since Tsujimura explicitly mentions this discrepancy in her new Preface (xiii), we may be looking forward to the book's third edition. In this context, it should also be mentioned that a brief introduction to the Japanese writing system would be highly welcome. Though the primary goal of the book is "to examine spoken Japanese" (xiii), many readers would certainly profit from some background information on its graphic representation as well. Moreover, this would considerably add to the general understanding of phenomena such as the moraic structure of Japanese, *rendaku* rules, or the integration of English loan words. The discussion of these issues at times appears unnecessarily complicated owing to missing references to the Japanese writing system.

In the same vein, it would be desirable to include a brief paragraph stating more explicitly that the Kunrei rather than the Hepburn transliteration system is used (mentioned only once on p. 5 in brackets), but that Japanese loan words in English are usually based on Hepburn rules. This would prevent confusing readers not too experienced with Japanese, who may be puzzled by the co-occurrence of terms like *susi* and *sushi* throughout the

book. One last suggestion for future editions of the book is a brief bilingual glossary of technical terms, which would no doubt be highly appreciated by both Japanese and English readers.

All in all, the second edition of *An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* is not only a stimulating and well-structured textbook, but an essential source of reference to everyone interested in the linguistic analysis of Japanese.