

THE CREATIVITY OF JAPANESE THEORIES
OF GRAMMAR :
STARTING FROM THE ICU TEXTBOOK

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The main theme of this paper, which limits itself to the period preceding contemporary Japanese linguistics, is the existence in Japan of a number of unique theories of Japanese grammar. These theories are of considerable interest because they do not depend on any outside tradition but build directly on native consciousness of the Japanese language. Time has come to describe these theories and analyse their roots.

The theories listed in this paper include:

- (1) Contributions from the area of TJFL, such as the treatment of devoicing of vowels in *Modern Japanese for University Students* (ICU)
- (2) Contributions from *Japanese School Grammar* (with concepts such as *tango*, *bunsetsu* or *katsuyookei*)
- (3) Outside the area of *Japanese School Grammar*, theories such as that of the Japanese accent
- (4) Non-traditional grammatical theories of Shiro Hattori, *Gengogaku kenkyukai* and others.

The paper also mentions unique non-grammatical theories represented by the theory of *gengo seikatsu* ("linguistic life").

Within the first category the ICU textbook, *Modern Japanese for University Students*, published in 1963, is given particular attention. The paper discusses the contribution of the textbook to our thinking about Japanese accentuation, devoicing of vowels, sentence final particles and honorifics.

As examples of the second group some issues of Japanese conjugation and the concept of *bunsetsu* are discussed.

The third group deals with traditional Japanese accent theories which consider the accentuation of all syllables of the word as a single unit (*akusento no kata*), rather than treating the prosodic features of the "accented" syllable as the only object of attention.

The aim of this paper is not to claim that contemporary theories should automatically be replaced by those discussed in this paper. The issue is that in order to develop a dynamic theory of Japanese grammar,

we must take account of all possible interpretations. For example, it will not suffice to analyze *taberu* as consisting of *tabe* and *ru*, but it is also necessary to accept the possibility of treating *taberu* as a single unit (as in the School Grammar). The Japanese linguistic tradition, whether highly theoretical or not, is welcome to contribute to the development of the future dynamic theory of Japanese grammatical competence.