

A. Overview

■ History of Grammar Study of the Japanese Language

● Grammar Study in Pre-Meiji Era

When a language comes in contact with another language, it is known that the language goes through a period of reflective self-awareness. Contact with Chinese was a major influence on the grammar study of the Japanese language. One example of what this contact brought was the definition of 詞 (*shi*) as 実質語 *jisshitsu-go* (substance word) versus *te, ni, wo, ha* as functional vocabulary. *Te-ni-ha taigai shoo* [*Annotated Summary of Te-Ni-Ha*], which is estimated to have been written at the end of the Kamakura period or as late as the beginning of the Muromachi period, has the following description, “詞 (*shi*) is like a temple or shrine, and *te, ni, ha* organize and decorate this temple or shrine beautifully.” This is an example of emerging awareness of word classification. It expresses that 詞 (*shi*) and *te, ni, wo, ha* have separate functions. This awareness influenced and furthered the field for generations to come.

The two giants of grammar study in the Edo period are Motoori Norinaga and Fujitani Nariakira. Moto'ori wrote *Te-ni-wo-ha himo kagami* [*Hand-Held Mirror for Te-Ni-Wo-Ha*] (1771) and *Kotoba no tama no o* [*Precious String of Words*] (1785). In the former he classifies *kakari* (relation opener) into three 行 (*gyō*, column in this context), *ha, mo, tada, zo, no, ya, nani*, and *koso*, and creates a single chart that lists the *musubi* (tying, conclusion) in 43 rows. This relatively simple chart succinctly captures the regularity of the rules of *kakari-musubi*. In the latter he explicates in great detail the rules of *kakari-musubi* which he captures in *Te-ni-wo-ha himo kagami* with numerous citations of poems.

Fujitani wrote *Kazashi shoo* [*Annotated Hair Ornaments*] (completed 1767) and *Ayuhi shoo* [*Annotated Leggings*] (1778), among others. He classifies words into four classes: *na, yosohi, kazashi*, and *ayuhi*, and explains the fundamental characteristics of these four classes as follows: *na* explains things, *yosohi* defines events, and *kazashi* and *ayuhi* are entrusted with these words” (*Ayuhi shoo*). Roughly, *na* corresponds to indeclinable words, *yosohi* to declinable words, *kazashi* to pronouns, adverbs, connectives, interjection, affixes, and *ayuhi* to particles, auxiliary verbs and suffixes.

Other books worth noting from this era are Suzuki Akira's *Gengyo shishu ron* [*Four Types of Words*] (1824), and Motoori Haruniwa's *Kotoba no yachimata* [*Eight Forks in Language*] (1808) and *Kotoba no kayoiji* [*Paths in Language*] (completed in 1828).

● Grammar Study in Early Meiji Era

In the early part of Meiji the modality of grammar study of the Japanese language was called Western-style 模倣 *mohō* (imitative) grammar book. Works adopting this modality include Tanaka Yoshikado's *Shōgaku nihon bunten* [*Elementary Japanese Grammar Book*] (1874) and Nakane Kiyoshi's *Nihon bunten* [*Japanese Grammar Book*] (1876). Baba Tatsui published *An Elementary Grammar of the Japanese Language* in London, 1873. Tanaka did not recognize particles (*joshi*) as words (*go*); rather, he treated them as relating to case, and explained them in the noun section. Nakane explained the underlined items in *asaki kawa*, *hana no inochi*, *asaku horu*,

and *hayaku kuru* in the adjective and adverb sections.

- Ōtsuki Grammar

Ōtsuki Fumihiko tried to integrate Western-style imitative grammar books and the Yachimata School of grammar study in *Kō nihon bunten* [*Large Japanese Grammar Book*] (1897). He classifies words into eight types: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, connective, interjection, auxiliary verb, and *te-ni-wo-ha*. He also correctly points out the differences between adjectives in Western languages and those in the Japanese language. *Kō nihon bunten* is the first systematic modern grammar book that was written using the Western grammar book framework, which the author adopted with a critical attitude.

- Yamada Grammar

Yamada Yoshio constructed a unique and large-scale logical framework, taking in full consideration both traditional grammar study and works of Sweet and Heyse, and even western psychology.

Yamada's representative works include *Nihon bunpō ron* [*Study of Japanese Grammar*] (1908) and *Nihon bunpōgaku gairon* [*Survey of the Study of Japanese Grammar*] (1936).

Yamada's grammar theory deals with two major categories: word (*go*) study and phrase (*ku*) study. His word study examines the characteristics and usage of words, which he considers to be the building material for thought expressions. Words are categorized into four main types: indeclinable words, declinable words, adverbs, and particles. So-called auxiliary verbs are considered as compound word endings, and they are placed below word level. Phrase study deals with the rules of sentence formation. According to Yamada, a phrase is "the linguistic presentation of thoughts, which has been organized through a one-time apperceptive activity" (*Nihon bunpōgaku gairon*). Further, declaration (*chinjutsu*) is a term that explains this apperception as a function of declinable words. The concept of declaration would later develop into one of the important points of discussion in the grammar study of the Japanese language.

- Matsushita Grammar

Matsushita Daisaburō pursued universal grammar with his own brand of terminology and strong scientific spirit. His most representative work is *Kaisen hyōjun nihongo bunpō* [*Revised Standard Japanese Grammar*] (1928). His earlier works include *Nihon Zokugo Bunten* [*Grammar of Colloquial Japanese*] (1901) and *Hyōjun kan-bunpō* "Standard Grammar of Classical Chinese" (1927).

Matsushita separates grammar rules into internal rules that deal with thoughts and the external rules that deal with sounds and external forms. He states that the former are universal and the latter are individual. He further sets up three levels of linguistic units: 原辞 *genji* ('morpheme' in this context), 詞 *shi* (roughly 'parts of speech,' or components of a sentence, in this context), and 断句 *danku* ('sentence' in this context). 原辞 *genji* are the building material for a 詞 *shi*, and generally correspond to morphemes in structural linguistics. 詞 *shi* is a component of a 断句 *danku*. *Hon* and *hon o* are respectively one 詞 *shi*. What must be particularly noted is the distinction between the study of aspect (*sō*) and that of case (*kaku*) in his study of 詞. The study of aspect deals with paradigmatic relationship while the study of case deals with syntagmatic relationship.

- Hashimoto Grammar

Hashimoto Shinkichi placed an emphasis on form in his study of grammar. He wrote *Kokugo-hō yōsetsu* [*The Essentials of Japanese Grammar*] (1934). The concept of 文節 *bunsetsu* (roughly ‘phrase’ in this context) is at the core of his grammar study. 文節 *bunsetsu* is defined as follows in *Kokugo-hō yōsetsu*: “When one divides a sentence into as many segments of 実際の言語 *jissai no gengo* (meaningful units) as possible, one obtains 文節 *bunsetsu*.” He analyzes sentence structure using the concept of 連文節 *renbunsetsu* (collection of phrases). This method shares similarity with IC analysis in structural linguistics. Hashimoto’s work on grammar has long formed the basis for school grammar instruction.

- Tokieda Grammar

Tokieda Motoki attempted to construct a grammar system using a unique theory called the theory of language process. His representative works are *Kokugogaku genron* [*Principles of the Study of Japanese*] (1941) and *Nihongo bunpō kōgo hen* [*Japanese Grammar: Colloquial Language*] (1950). The most prominent characteristic of this approach is evident in his categorization of 詞 *shi* (roughly ‘free/substance word’) and 辭 *ji* (roughly particle/bound word). 詞 *shi* is an objective, conceptual expression of things and events, and is an objectivized expression vis-à-vis the subject. 辭 *ji* is an expression void of conceptualization process, and is a direct expression of the speaker’s perspective toward what is expressed. He proposes to set up a 句 *ku* that is made up with 詞 *shi* and 辭 *ji*, and to analyze the sentence using the 句 *ku*-nesting method.

- Further Development

Two topics of controversy have been *wa* and the study of sentence formation. Works on *wa* include Mikami Akira’s *Gendai gohō josetsu* [*Introduction to Contemporary Grammar*] (1953) and *Zō wa hana ga nagai* [*Elephants Have Long Noses*] (1960). In the area of the study of sentence formation is Watanabe Minoru’s *Kokugo kōbunron* [*Study of Japanese Syntax*] (1971), in which he further develops Yamada’s and Tokieda’s sentence formation theories by introducing the concepts of predication (*jojutsu*) vs. declaration (*chinjutsu*). Scientific studies have resulted in such works as Suzuki Shigeyuki’s *Nihongo bunpō: keitairon* [*Japanese Grammar: Study of Morphology*] (1972) and Okuda Yasuo (et al.)’s *Nihongo bunpō: rengo-ron (shiryō hen)* [*Japanese Grammar: Study of Collocations: Materials Collection*] (1983). Teramura Hideo’s *Nihongo no shintakusu to imi*, I, II, and III [*Japanese Syntax and Meaning*, I, II & III] (1982, 1984, 1991) was born out of Japanese instruction in classrooms. It is a meticulously written book of descriptive grammar. Currently, more and more research is being done based on meticulous analyses of grammatical phenomena, and researchers look at language research done overseas as well.

- References

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