

Editors' Notes

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It gives us great pleasure to introduce this special issue, a collection of selected papers presented at the *Eleventh International Conference on Practical Linguistics of Japanese* (ICPLJ), an online virtual conference hosted by the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL) in Tokyo on December 19 and 20, 2020.

ICPLJ started in 1998 at San Francisco State University in commemoration of the late Professor Toshiko Mishima. Since then, ICPLJ has offered a forum for the display of learned contributions in a variety of Japanese language-related disciplines—linguistics, psychology, education, language teaching, and speech communication—and for fostering intellectual exchange, discussion, and increased knowledge among those who are interested in the Japanese language. ICPLJ has aimed to stimulate research in Japanese linguistics and serve as a bridge between theoretical and empirical research. Its scope covers a wide range of areas, such as second language (L2) acquisition, bilingualism, Japanese language education, and language production.

For several decades now, language studies have increased in scope and quality. The studies presented at ICPLJ have made significant contributions to language-related science, particularly in Japanese linguistics and Japanese-language teaching. What researchers learn from both theory and practice can suggest what is meaningful for teaching Japanese. An overarching goal for ICPLJ is to bring together researchers on the leading edge of Japanese linguistics and to offer a forum in which their research results can be made available to those desiring practical applications for teaching Japanese as an L2. ICPLJ is therefore highly significant in light of education in general and Japanese-as-an-L2 education in particular.

Books of selected papers presented at past ICPLJ conferences have appeared in Japanese (*Linguistics and Japanese Language Education: New Directions in Applied Linguistics of Japanese I, II, III, IV, V, and VI* published by Kurosio Publishers,

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Japan, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2010, respectively). English-language publications related to ICPLJ have appeared as well. *Applying Theory and Research to Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language* (2007), which was based on presentations at ICPLJ 5, was produced in collaboration with Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Special issues of the *Journal of Japanese Linguistics* (JLJ), Volume 28 (2012), Volume 30 (2014), Volume 33 (2017), and Volume 35 Issue 2 (2019) are from presentations at ICPLJ 7, 8, 9, and 10, respectively. These publications reflect our belief that ICPLJ can contribute to the advancement of the teaching of Japanese as well as Japanese linguistics. The publication of these papers both in English and in Japanese has enabled the ideas presented at the conferences to reach an even larger audience worldwide, benefiting numerous researchers, teachers, and students.

The current JLJ special issue joins this tradition with a distinct flavor: a combination of well-established, mid-career, and young researchers. Readers will recall that ICPLJ 11 embodied the spirit of showing our unwavering support for the profession. The lesson we learned from the coronavirus pandemic—first from the Delta variant and then from the Omicron variant—is the urgency of building an epistemic community where we can make linkages across disciplinary, geographic, and cultural boundaries.

For all of these reasons, once again, we would like to emphasize ICPLJ's goal of contributing to two continuing interrelated areas of benefit. We planned the conference so that researchers and teachers could learn from each other's expertise, and gain exposure to new insights applicable to their respective fields. In particular, the conference served as a forum where we could apply linguistic theory to learning Japanese as an L2. Given the high quality of the presenters' demonstrated expertise, the conference successfully integrated theoretical concepts and empirical research findings in L2 development for application to Japanese language education globally. As a fruit of this successful ICPLJ 11, we believe that this JLJ special issue creates a useful source where interested parties can find research that effectively addresses problems faced by L2 learners of Japanese. This JLJ special issue will open an in-depth discussion of theoretical and pedagogical issues and, as such, move the fields of Japanese linguistics and Japanese language education significantly forward.

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Finally, we would like to note here that the quality of this journal is largely attributable to the fine work of our expert group of reviewers. Without peer review and its high standard, a journal such as this one would, quite simply, not be possible. The following are the reviewers for manuscripts submitted for this JJJ special issue. A hearty thanks to all of them:

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