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be interesting to carry out such detailed contrastive studies of languages that are highly diverse. Ideally, the contrastive and the typological approaches should be combined, and we will probably see a number of such studies in the future. It is also interesting to compare multilingual corpora with other sources of crosslinguistic data, such as elicitation with picture stories such as the famous 'Frog, where are you?' (Berman & Slobin 1994) and other types of nonlinguistic stimuli, such as the picture series and specially designed films used to elicit spatial expressions in Levinson & Wilkins 2006. Data collected in this way is a good complement to data even from languages for which it is possible to obtain large corpora.

As for applications, the book is particularly important as a theoretical foundation for several aspects of translator training, with its general attention to translation strategies and its many examples of language-specific elements that lack clear correspondences in the target language. As a general background, the book is of interest also for foreign language teaching, since advanced learners in particular tend to have problems with the language-specific structures dealt with in the case studies (see the comments on Ch. 12 above), but language learning is not dealt with in the bulk of the book the way translation is.

The major contribution lies on the theoretical and methodological planes. As argued in the very title, multilingual corpora provide a new way of seeing, and J's book is an important introduction to the emerging field of corpus-based contrastive studies. The case studies cover many fascinating topics and are likely to serve as an impetus for much further work.

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The handbook of East Asian psycholinguistics. Vol. 1: Chinese. Ed. by PING LI, LI HAI TAN, ELIZABETH BATES, and OVID J. L. TZENG. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 476. ISBN 0521833337. \$176 (Hb).

The handbook of East Asian psycholinguistics. Vol. 2: Japanese. Ed. by MINEHARU NAKAYAMA, REIKO MAZUKA, and YASUHIRO SHIRAI. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 428. ISBN 0521833345. \$147 (Hb).

Reviewed by NATSUKO TSUJIMURA, *Indiana University*

The handbook of East Asian psycholinguistics is an ambitious enterprise whose scope can be paralleled to that of an encyclopedia on psycholinguistic research focusing on Chinese, Japanese,

and Korean.¹ It seems, at least to those who are outside of mainstream psycholinguistic research, that the field is only vaguely defined and that the nature of its research is viewed only as falling somewhere between linguistics and psychology. *The handbook* serves the ideal purpose to those nonspecialists by providing overviews of a broad range of topics that collectively represent the nature of the field. While Chinese, Japanese, and Korean have increasingly gained attention over the past several decades in our understanding of language and cognition on empirical and theoretical grounds, the extent of this attention is still not comparable to other, often western, languages that count as more frequent bases for research investigations. The potential contribution that an examination of these East Asian languages could make, however, is immense, and *The handbook* helps the reader realize the richness of the resources that East Asian psycholinguistics can offer through the languages' typological similarities and unique characteristics.

Volume 1 is dedicated to Chinese psycholinguistics, and is divided into three parts: Part 1, 'Language acquisition' (thirteen chapters), Part 2, 'Language processing' (eleven chapters), and Part 3, 'Language and the brain' (eight chapters). The topics in 'Language acquisition' include the relationship between phonology and orthography/reading, classifiers, verbs, lexical and grammatical aspects, and binding principles. In addition to the discussions on L1 acquisition, Part 1 offers chapters on L2 and bilingual acquisition. Many of the chapters in Part 2, 'Language processing', are concerned with Chinese characters in their connection to the processing of phonological and semantic properties. Perception of tones, comprehension of referential items, and ambiguity resolutions are also discussed in this part. The chapters in Part 3 report on language-related research in neuroscience that utilizes positron emission tomography (PET) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). These are able to help detect which parts of the brain are responsible for language-related activities. Studies on aphasia and impairments as well as on computer modeling are included in Part 3. A total of fifty-four scholars contributed to this volume. The length of the chapters ranges from six to sixteen pages.

Volume 2 contains forty-four chapters on Japanese psycholinguistics and consists of two parts, Part 1, 'Language acquisition' (twenty-five chapters), and Part 2, 'Language processing' (nineteen chapters). Part 1 gives overviews of a wide variety of topics in L1 and L2 acquisition, ranging from phonology, morphology (e.g. lexical categories, tense/aspect, negative, passives), syntax (e.g. numeral quantifiers, binding theory), to pragmatics and discourse. The L1-L2 ratio of the coverage is five to one. The choice of the topics included in Part 2 is equally diverse, inclusive of not only standard topics such as speech prosody, sentence processing (involving syntactic issues like scrambling and empty categories), and embedding, but also discussions focusing on orthography, brain-language relations, computer modeling, and gesture. Fifty-four scholars contributed to Vol. 2, and the length of each chapter ranges between five and ten pages.

The quality of chapters throughout the two volumes varies, as would be expected of a work of this size. There are chapters that are well written in their own right but are not explicitly positioned in the context of psycholinguistics enough to make the reader understand their relevance and significance. It also seems that within each volume, some chapters on similar topics could have been more effective if they had been combined or at least better coordinated, so that a fuller discussion could have resulted without giving repetitive background information. For example, in Vol. 1, Ch. 19 ('Phonological mediation in visual word recognition in English and Chinese' by IN-MAO LIU, JEI-TUN WU, IUE-RUEY SUE, and SAU-CHIN CHEN), Ch. 20 ('Reading Chinese characters: Orthography, phonology, meaning, and the textual constituency model' by CHARLES A. PERFETTI and YING LIU), and Ch. 21 ('Processing of characters by native Chinese readers' by MARCUS TAFT) are all concerned with reading—orthography, phonology, and meaning—and I find the introduction to the issue given in Ch. 21 very helpful for all three of these chapters. Similarly, in Vol. 2, Ch. 6 ('The mechanism of lexical development: Implications from Japanese children's word learning' by MUTSUMI IMAI), Ch. 7 ('The acquisition of nouns and verbs in Japanese' by YURIKO OSHIMA-TAKANE), and Ch. 8 ('The acquisition of verbal nouns' by YUTAKA SATO and YOSHI YAMASHITA) uniformly touch on the question of category; Ch. 31

¹ The third volume on Korean will be available beginning June 2009.

(‘Orthographic processing’ by HIROFUMI SAITO) and Ch. 32 (‘Lexical access’ by TAEKO WYDELL) discuss the relation between orthography and processing, and both refer to the same set of models. Consolidating these chapters might have led to a deeper and more comprehensive guide to each topic.

As diverse and challenging as the range of subjects in these volumes is, the overall selection of topics is coherent, and more importantly, successfully illustrates the very interdisciplinary nature of psycholinguistics research. The reader will find most benefit in reading chapters that discuss subjects that are outside her/his expertise. From the viewpoints of readability and informativeness, and also from the perspective of how much an overview piques the reader’s curiosity and interest, there are indeed several excellent chapters in both volumes. For illustration I would like to comment on four chapters, but wish to underscore that readers with different research backgrounds will certainly find other sets of chapters more illuminating.

Ch. 13 in Vol. 1, ‘Early bilingual acquisition in the Chinese context’ by VIRGINIA YIP, gives a superb introduction to bilingual acquisition. It touches on a wide range of intriguing issues, not simply in language acquisition but also in a sociolinguistic context with the role of language contact. The discussion is inspiring particularly because it explicitly puts Chinese in theoretical and comparative frames, thereby highlighting the contribution that the language makes to linguistic research. The chapter refers to a number of existing works and provides a thorough list of references, rather than focusing on the author’s research.

Also in Vol. 1, Ch. 21, ‘Processing of characters by native Chinese readers’ by Marcus Taft, shows in clear, easy-to-follow language why Chinese characters pose linguistically relevant problems to investigate. For those who have training and expertise in most schools of descriptive and theoretical linguistics, orthography normally seems to fall outside the spotlight, leaving its research to disciplines that deal more directly with reading. This chapter informs the reader that the relationship among orthographical, phonological, and semantic features that each character has and the form-meaning relation in a word that consists of one or more characters raise a series of questions that are unique to languages with nonalphabetic writing systems. There are several chapters in Vol. 1 that focus on orthography, and Ch. 21 is particularly helpful to understand why processing Chinese characters should be of interest to linguists. The summary provided in the concluding section contains constructive future directions. This chapter may be most useful and gives a more complete idea of the topic when read with another very good chapter on the same topic, Ch. 20, ‘Reading Chinese characters: Orthography, phonology, meaning, and the textual constituency model’ by Charles A. Perfetti and Ying Liu.

A Japanese counterpart of Ch. 21 both in content and quality is found in Ch. 31 of Vol. 2, ‘Orthographic processing’ by Hirofumi Saito (to which I might add Ch. 32, ‘Lexical access’ by Taeko Wydell, as its accompaniment on the same topic). One of the primary goals of research on orthographic processing in languages with logographic writing systems like Chinese and Japanese is the question of how the visual image of a character leads to its semantic properties and whether or how phonology plays a role in such processing. In Japanese, furthermore, the access to meaning from orthography increases its complexity due to the fact that the writing system additionally employs syllabic (i.e. moraic) scripts. The chapters expose the reader to scientific approaches to these questions, and explain empirical and theoretical motivations for the line of study for which Japanese is in a unique position to provide a testing ground.

Ch. 40 in Vol. 2, ‘The neural basis of syntactic processing in Japanese’ by HIROKO HAGIWARA, presents an inspiring overview of the role that neuroscience plays in the exploration of the brain-language relation. Its concise and comprehensible description of the range of investigations in this area elucidates the interdisciplinary nature of the research. What makes this chapter particularly intriguing to theoretical linguists is the illustration of how linguistic theories are applied to neurological experiments to understand the mechanisms of syntactic processing observed in both normal and impaired brain activities.

The handbook collectively serves its purpose as a compilation of introductions to various research aspects that constitute psycholinguistics focusing on East Asian languages, Chinese and

Japanese (and eventually Korean upon the publication of Volume 3). In reflecting upon the motivations for launching the project with the given title, however, it seems that the work could have benefited from a few considerations. Questions concerning cohesion and coordination have recurred throughout my reading of *The handbook*. I initially received the impression that the series under the given title would promise an outlook of psycholinguistics that is unique to 'East Asian' languages. Under such a premise some remarks by the general editor would have been desirable that describe an intellectual thread that holds the two volumes together beyond the reason that Chinese and Japanese (as well as Korean) fall under the common label of the geographical area. On the one hand, it is sometimes pointed out that research in linguistics and related disciplines that examine East Asian languages is not always presented on the center stage of the theoretical forum, and *The handbook* definitely puts forward not only its presence but also its significance and its contribution to language-related scientific investigations in general. On the other, there seems to be a more important justification for the collaboration since Chinese and Japanese provide sources to examine specific aspects of human languages that would not be possible in more frequently discussed languages such as English. For example, we notice that there are a number of chapters in Vol. 1 that introduce research in reading and orthography in Chinese. As the editors of Vol. 1 effectively spell out, this is because Chinese characters present a series of questions pertinent to lexical processing. With logographic writing systems, Chinese and Japanese provide favorable and indeed indispensable grounds in which logography-based processing issues are explained. In the case of Japanese, furthermore, Chinese characters are not the exclusive part of its writing system. It must be natural to think, then, that similarities and differences in processing mechanisms between the two languages would lead to deepening our understanding in this area of exploration. A general statement from the editors concerning what connects the East Asian languages in the context of psycholinguistic research seems to be missing in this regard and on similar aspects. A broad conception of why East Asian languages are not only accessible but also desirable for psycholinguistic examination would have enriched the purpose of putting these two volumes under a single title.

A similar trend of thought applies to the extent to which the volumes are coordinated. The volumes appear to be parallel in structure, but various parts of them, especially the introductory chapters, could have been sharpened by better synchronization, again considered from the perspective of a multivolume project with a precise theme. The introduction of Vol. 1 briefly presents a principal set of theoretical issues that constitute the backbone of psycholinguistic examination relevant to Chinese, and organizes the content of the volume according to those issues. Vol. 2, in contrast, gives a short descriptive survey of linguistic phenomena that are characteristic of Japanese, and introduces each chapter in line with it. The choice between the two may well be a personal preference of each volume's editors, but it seems to me that the style adopted in Vol. 1, that is, based on a conceptualization of underlying research questions, is more effective in preparing the audience for the nature of the inquiry that captures what psycholinguistic investigations are all about. Other minor areas such as the average length of each chapter (chapters in Vol. 2 could have used a few additional pages for further details) and notes on contributors (the contributors to Vol. 1 are introduced with their specializations while those to Vol. 2 are listed only with their institutional affiliations) may have been better coordinated. In the absence of better cohesion and coordination at the conceptual level, *The handbook* more or less stands as two independent publications rather than as a single set under a unified theme. Although the individual treatment may have been the editors' intention, a synchronized set would have made more explicit the fundamental purpose of this type of series and would have increased its meaning to the wider research community that is engaged in human language study.

The last remarks nevertheless should by no means be taken to undermine the level of accomplishment that the editors should be commended for. *The handbook* contains a tremendous number of resources taking the reader to the gateway of what is going on in psycholinguistic research in Chinese and Japanese. It is of particularly great use to those who wish to get acquainted with

the range of psycholinguistic research concerned with these languages and/or to examine how (language-)-specific phenomena are discussed from the psycholinguistic point of view.

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Language complexity: Typology, contact, change. Ed. by MATTI MIESTAMO, KAIUS SINNEMÄKI, and FRED KARLSSON. (Studies in language companion series 94.) Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008. Pp. xiv, 356. ISBN 9789027231048. \$165 (Hb).

Reviewed by ANDREW CARSTAIRS-McCARTHY, *University of Canterbury*

Here are four statements that reflect received opinion in linguistics sixty years ago:

- (i) Grammatical theory is purely a social-science or humanities discipline, having little or nothing to do with psychology and biology.
- (ii) Language change cannot be observed while it is taking place; only its effects can be observed later.
- (iii) Any attempt to investigate the origin of language is futile.
- (iv) Because anything can be said in any language (provided that appropriate terminology is available), there is no sense in which any language is fundamentally more complex than any other. Even with respect to superficial differences, apparent simplicity in one area (such as lack of morphological case marking) is usually compensated for by apparent complexity in another (such as rigid constituent order).

Opinions (i) and (ii) would now be rejected by nearly all readers of *Language*, having been undermined by the rise of generative grammar and sociolinguistics respectively. Opinion (iii), though no doubt still widely held, is rejected by many scholars today, both within linguistics and outside it. Opinion (iv), however, would probably still be accepted as true by most linguists. Yet *Language complexity*, a collection of papers based on a conference on ‘Approaches to Complexity in Language’ in Helsinki in August 2005, is part of a recent trend that questions it.

In their introductory chapter the editors offer a number of reasons why they regard the topic of language complexity as timely. In my view, three issues are especially important:

- (i) the controversy over whether creoles have unique typological characteristics, as opposed to being identifiable purely diachronically;
- (ii) the question of whether Riau Indonesian and some other isolating languages are especially ‘simple’;
- (iii) the question of whether there was once a time when human language in something like its modern form existed but ‘complexity’ had not yet entered it (Comrie 1992)—what Dahl (2004:109) calls ‘the quest for the “Garden-of-Eden” language’.

The third issue does not get discussed in this volume. I therefore concentrate on the six chapters that touch on issues (i) and (ii), before describing more briefly the remaining ten chapters.

JOHN McWHORTER (2005:9–71) has claimed that ‘the world’s simplest grammars are creole grammars’ in the sense that only creoles lack all of the following three ‘complex’ characteristics: (a) inflectional affixation, (b) lexical tone in monosyllables, and (c) noncompositional derivation. He does not say that creoles are for this reason defective (thus he does not deserve the sort of condemnation leveled at him and numerous other scholars by DeGraff (2003)); rather, he suggests that creoles are the outcome of second language acquisition by adults in the not-too-distant past, an untypical kind of transmission in the course of which ‘complex’ characteristics are lost, and these languages have not had time since then to