Welcome to the Seventh International Conference on Practical Linguistics of Japanese (ICPLJ)

It is a great honor for me to extend a warm welcome to all of you in San Francisco, as we begin the Seventh International Conference on Practical Linguistics of Japanese (ICPLJ7) at San Francisco State University (SFSU). This book of abstracts, terminology, and presentation materials contains the works that will be presented by the participants in the conference. The language used in presentations for the conference can be either English or Japanese. The data, ideas, and overviews contained in the book represent the leading edge of research on Japanese linguistics. One of the main purposes of the book is to provide a forum in which to examine contributions in a variety of areas of Japanese linguistics to the teaching and learning of Japanese in the second- or foreign-language (L2) classroom. The book has at least two continuing interrelated areas of benefit. To begin with, both researchers and teachers benefit from each other’s expertise and receive new insights that are applicable to their respective fields. Second and more important, the book serves as a forum to promote ways in which we can apply linguistic theory to the learning of Japanese as an L2. That is, what researchers have learned from both theory and practice can suggest what is important for the teaching of language; conversely, language educators have a great deal to offer linguists regarding the phenomenon of language. For that reason, the book’s main orientation is the integration of theoretical and empirical research findings in L2 development (including bilingualism) for application to educational practices so that the book appeals to researchers as well as practitioners.

Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in language education and language learning/acquisition due in part to increasing economic globalization. This focus on language learning encompasses recent efforts to categorize various aspects of language competence into grammar, sociolinguistics, discourse, and other linguistic areas. This is evidenced by the fact that, in the last few decades in particular, the field of applied linguistics has flourished. We consequently find ourselves immersed in the publication of an impressive number of books, encyclopedias, and handbooks, as well as the inauguration of several academic and professional conferences, societies, and journals. One such conference is the International Conference on Practical Linguistics of Japanese (ICPLJ), which has provided 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. Continuing over a long period of time and in many venues, language studies have increased in scope and quality, and the studies presented at ICPLJ have made significant contributions to language-related science, particularly in the area of Japanese.

As the keynote speaker for our seventh conference, we are extremely honored to be able to invite Dr. Taro Kageyama of the National Institute of Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL), an eminent scholar who has been working extensively on the universality and language-particularity of the lexicon and lexical knowledge as reflected in morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology. Furthermore, Dr. Masayoshi Shibatani of Rice University and Dr. Kumiko Sakoda of Hiroshima University/NINJAL, both of
whom were keynote speakers at our previous conferences, agreed to give a special joint lecture.

Because SFSU is located in a city where a variety of Japanese — both Japanese Americans and newcomers from Japan — reside, we are especially cognizant of the importance of teaching Japanese as an L2. In fact, at SFSU we often encounter students of Japanese heritage in our Japanese-language classes. Some were born in the United States, but their mothers are Japanese. Others were born in Japan and brought to the United States when they were very young. Sadly, many of these students do not speak fluent Japanese or have simply forgotten their mother tongue. In many bilingual and multilingual societies, a language shift in immigrant families takes place rapidly, with a prevalent pattern of a total shift to the dominant or prestige language within two to four generations. Unfortunately, parents’ desperate endeavor to maintain their native language and cultural heritage is often unsuccessful. To make matters worse, in U.S. society, in which English is the dominant and prestigious language, children of immigrant families tend to be critical of their parents’ efforts to maintain their native language. In order to raise awareness of the importance of the heritage language, therefore, we would like to make the conference beneficial not only to teachers and researchers in linguistics, but also to the public in general.

Since the inception of ICPLJ in 1998, it has maintained close relationships with the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ) [http://www.aatj.org/atj/index.html]. Dr. Susumu Kuno of Harvard University and Dr. Seiichi Makino of Princeton University, who were both past ATJ Presidents, attended the first conference, which took place in May 1998. The conferees agreed that there were significant gaps in the literature that should be addressed in future writings and conferences. The agreement led to the decision of ICPLJ to convene a second conference in April 2000 and to invite Dr. Masayoshi Shibatani (then, Kobe University) and Dr. Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku of the University of California, San Diego, to deliver the keynote addresses (note that Dr. Tohsaku was also past ATJ President). In the third conference, held in March 2002, Dr. Wesley M. Jacobsen of Harvard University (and past ATJ President as well) and Dr. Kumiko Sakoda of Japan’s Hiroshima University delivered the keynote addresses. We were also honored to be able to invite Dr. Harumi Befu of Stanford University, a distinguished cultural anthropologist, and Dr. Timothy J. Vance of the University of Arizona to the fourth conference held in April 2004 (note that Dr. Vance, who is now at NINJAL, served as an editor of Japanese Language and Literature, the ATJ Journal for many years). In March 2006 we invited Dr. Naomi Hanaoka McGloin of the University of Wisconsin-Madison (and also past ATJ President) and Dr. Mineharu Nakayama of the Ohio State University to deliver the plenary lectures at the fifth conference. The sixth conference in 2008 commemorated ICPLJ’s 10-year anniversary, and, for this celebration, we invited Dr. Satoshi Kinsui of Osaka University, Japan, an eminent scholar investigating historical changes in the Japanese language, to deliver the keynote and plenary lectures. Note that both Dr. Kageyama, the current conference’s keynote speaker, and Dr. Shibatani, a special lecturer, are current and past Presidents of the Linguistic Society of Japan [http://www3.nacos.com/lsj/index.php]. Now ICPLJ has close ties not only with ATJ but also with a prestigious linguistic society in Japan.
Each conference enjoyed an increasingly large attendance. We have also been fortunate to be able to publish books of selected papers presented at the aforementioned six conferences (Linguistics and Japanese Language Education: New Directions in Applied Linguistics of Japanese I, II, III, IV, V, and VI published by Kurosio Publishers, Japan, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2010 respectively). Here I need to mention another book project in English, Applying Theory and Research to Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language (2007), which was in collaboration with Cambridge Scholars Publishing, a product reflecting their belief that the Fifth ICPLJ could contribute to the advancement of the teaching of Japanese as well as Japanese linguistics. The publication of the papers both in English and Japanese has thus enabled the ideas presented at the conferences to reach an even larger audience around the world, further benefiting numerous researchers, teachers, and their students.

We are indebted to a large number of people who have supported this conference. First of all, special thanks go to the graduate students of Japanese at SFSU who have generously given time to help prepare for the conference. The Seventh ICPLJ is sponsored by the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, the Japan Foundation, the Northeast Asia Council (NEAC) of the Association of Asian Studies (AAS), the Japan-US Friendship Commission, the Foreign Language Association of Northern California (FLANC), and the Northern California Japanese Teachers’ Association (NCJTA), as well as the College of Humanities and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at SFSU.

In the new millennium, societal changes will continue to occur — societal changes in which language plays a role, including those involving bilingual education. We strongly believe that this conference is important for providing opportunities to consider future aspects of applied linguistics in the 21st century. We also believe that it is of particular value to hold this international conference on Japanese linguistics in San Francisco — a city where 12,000 Japanese Americans reside. Again, we welcome you to the Seventh ICPLJ. We are certain that this event will offer a rare opportunity for researchers and teachers to share their broad array of perspectives. We sincerely hope that the conference will not only be a great success but also a memorable event for all of you.

Masahiko Minami, on behalf of the Seventh ICPLJ Organizers