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Topics in Middle Mekong Linguistics 2



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Preface

The editor is delighted to announce that we are publishing another special linguistics volume that focuses on the languages around the area of Middle Mekong river. This volume presents some of the research results of our project entitled “A Study of Languages and Linguistic Change in Middle-Mekong Region” (JSPS Kaken #JP17H02335; Principal Investigator: Norihiko Hayashi, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies) which started in 2017 and will end in March 2022.

This research project is working to document lesser-known and/or underdescribed languages in Middle-Mekong region and its surrounding areas, as well as analyzing the linguistic features from typological and historical aspects. The last volume we published in 2019, entitled *Topics in Middle Mekong Linguistics* (edited by Norihiko Hayashi, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies), focused on faunal nomenclature and various topics of historical and descriptive linguistics in the languages of this region.

As in the last volume, this volume also focuses on two aspects: faunal terms, and grammatical description and historical analysis, the former of which comprises **Part A** and the latter of which is slotted as **Part B** of this book.

Part A includes five papers on faunal terms. **CHAMBERLAIN**'s paper compares the terms for softshell turtles and tortoises in Kra-Dai and Austronesian languages from macrolinguistic and paleo-ethnoherpetological perspectives. **BADENOCH**'s paper analyzes fish names in the Bit language [Austroasiatic; Luang Namtha, Laos] from both linguistic and anthropological viewpoints with much commentary on their fishing culture. **KURABE, IWASA** and **HAYASHI** describe the faunal terms in Burmese [Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan; Myanmar], Sani Yi [Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan; Yunnan, China] and Akha Buli [Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan; Luang Namtha, Laos], respectively. Kurabe's and Hayashi's papers deal with the full range of faunal terms, while Iwasa's paper focuses on the entomological terms in Sani from Yi philological and comparative linguistic perspectives. This volume treats multi-dimensional aspects of fauna in this region, such as descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, archaeology, linguistic anthropology, philology, zoology, etc. Thus, we believe it will be of great interest to many readers in both academic and non-academic fields.

The other area covered by the volume is Part B's grammatical description and historical analysis. **HIRANO**'s paper describes and analyzes the grammaticalization of some verbs in the serial verb constructions in the Nung language [Central Tai, Tai-Kadai; Lan Song, Vietnam]. **KATO**'s paper describes the impersonal constructions in Pwo Karen [Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan; Eastern Myanmar], which relates to the agent defocusing phenomenon. These two papers are important in that detailed grammatical studies of less described languages provide us with many valuable insights in descriptive linguistics, areal linguistics and linguistic typology.

We would like to thank all the speakers of the languages treated in this volume and to express our sincere gratitude to the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for their financial support. The editor would like to appreciate all kinds of assistance

from the following members and colleagues: Aung Si, Nathan Badenoch, James Chamberlain, Nishaant Choksi, Kazue Iwasa, Atsuhiko Kato, Keita Kurabe, Ayaka Hirano, Keisuke Huziwara, James A. Matisoff, Weera Ostapirat, Yoshihisa Taguchi, and others. Last but not least, we wish to express our appreciation for the academic and financial assistance generously provided by the Research Institute of Foreign Studies, at the Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. Without the help of all the people and institutions above, our project and the publication of this volume would not have been possible.

Following from the last volume, we wish this volume also make a worthwhile and substantial contribution to the field of areal linguistics and language documentation in Southeast Asia.

Norihiko HAYASHI
Kobe City University of Foreign Studies
September, 2020

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Part A

Faunal Terms in Middle-Mekong Region
and Southeast Asia

Part B

Descriptive and Historical Linguistics
in Middle-Mekong Region
and Southeast Asia

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