Japanese Modality
Also by Barbara Pizziconi

TAIGUU HYOOGEN KARA MITA NIHONGO KYOOKASHO – KYOOKASHO 5 SHU NO BUNSEKI TO HIHAN [Politeness Expressions in Japanese Textbooks – an Analysis and Critique of Five Textbook Types]

Also by Mika Kizu

CLEFT CONSTRUCTIONS IN JAPANESE SYNTAX
Japanese Modality
Exploring its Scope and Interpretation

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Preface

Introducing a book on modality is not an easy task. As a cursory look at the content of this volume concisely demonstrates, the concept of ‘modality’ is relevant to very many aspects of language, and is an object of interest to a broad range of disciplinary fields. But the very definition of modality is a contentious issue, which reflects the plasticity (and therefore the vagueness) of this ‘umbrella’ term, and at the same time, the elusiveness and huge variety of the phenomena that research aims to capture. The editors of this volume do not intend to ‘take sides’. Instead, we wish to present a non-dogmatic overview of modality studies, to put this very diversity on display, provide food for thought, and let readers make up their minds as to the most effective and fruitful approach, to pursue much needed further research.

But this book, the first collection on Japanese modality (or rather ‘Japanese Modariti’) in the English language, also intends to be a display of modality research on Japanese, a considerable amount of which has only appeared in Japanese, and is unknown or little known to the worldwide academic community. Some of the chapters in this collection not only reference but address issues emerging from the traditions of Nihongogaku (‘Japanese linguistics’) or Kokugogaku (‘Japanese philology’), which we hope will provide a glimpse of their very rich landscapes.

This volume is the offspring of the international conference Revisiting Japanese Modality, held on 24 and 25 June 2006, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Two of the most prominent authorities in the field, professors Takashi Masuoka and Yukinori Takubo, provided thoughtful and thought-provoking plenary sessions. Over 50 participants from Japan, America and other European countries contributed to two days of insightful and constructive discussion across disciplinary borders. The chapters in this volume (with the exception of those of the editors, which are later additions) represent a selection of the conference papers, and we thank all the contributors for their continued enthusiasm and collaboration throughout the serpentine journey to publication.

The success of the conference led to an additional workshop on Japanese modality for Japanese language teachers held in London in October 2007, and eventually to this publication. Our project would not have materialized without the generous financial support of the Japan
Foundation, the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, whom we thank sincerely.

We also wish to acknowledge our gratitude to David Bennett, Giovanna Ceroni, Aki Hedigan and Peter Sells for reviewing and assisting with the editorial work.

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