Multibhashi

Introduction to the Japanese Language

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Class Objective

I will be able to understand the basics of the Japanese Language.

Concept A: General Features of Japanese

Japanese, with over 127 million speakers in Japan, large emigrant communities in North and South America, and a rapidly growing body of fluent non-native speakers, is one of the world's major languages.

1. Parts of Speech

The Japanese language consists of Verbs, Adjectives, Nouns, Adverbs, Conjunctions, and particles.

Concept A: General Features of Japanese

2. Word Order

A predicate always comes at the end of a sentence. A modifier always comes before the word or phrase to be modified.

3. Predicate

There are 3 types of predicates in Japanese: noun, verb, and adjective. A predicate inflicts according to whether it is (1) affirmative or negative and (2) non-past or past.

Concept A: General Features of Japanese

4. Particle

A particle is used to show the grammatical relation between words, to show the speaker's intention, or to connect sentences.

5. Omission

Words or phrases are often omitted if they are understood from the context. Even the subject and object of a sentence are often omitted.

Concept B: Pronunciation of Japanese Language

There are **three types of letters** in Japanese.

1. **Hiragana** (phonetic sounds) are basically used for particles, words and parts of words.
2. **Katakana** (phonetic sounds) are basically used for foreign/loan words.
3. **Kanji** (Chinese characters) are used for the stem of words and convey the meaning as well as sound.