ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to have this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone that has contributed to and supported me to complete this work. First and foremost I must thank Professor Kazuhiro Hirasawa in the Institute of Information Sciences and Electronics at the University of Tsukuba. It would not have been possible to complete this dissertation without his supervision and a great deal of valuable advice. I must thank Visiting Professor Z. N. Chen in the Institute of Information Sciences and Electronics at the University of Tsukuba, for his great deal of helpful advice for my research work. I am also grateful to Professor Yukio Ishibashi, Professor Shojiro Nemoto, Associate Professor DongSheng Cai in the Institute of Information Sciences and Electronics and Professor Keinosuke Nagai in the Institute of Engineering Mechanics and Systems at the University of Tsukuba for their constructive and valuable advice and comments on the revision of this dissertation. Thanks to all of my friends who have supported me in many ways and who have worked together with me to fulfill this study.

Finally, special thank to my wife for her understanding, patience and encouragement throughout the completion of this dissertation.