

# An Analysis of the English Articles

Hisayo Nishiyama

## Abstract

This thesis tries to describe the semantic category of English articles. The acquisition of the English article system is one of the biggest challenges for Japanese learners. Compared with major parts of speech such as nouns or verbs, Japanese feel the meanings of articles are fuzzy. Many English text books for Japanese learners give just a simple rule of article use, which does not explain why the article is used. So it is no wonder that EFL/ ESL students lose interest in studying articles. However, Petersen (1988: 16) provides a useful suggestion. He suggests that the thinking process of English is to make a semantic category by choice of an article at first, then find appropriate nouns to fit the category. And he observes that Japanese learners often have a different kind of idea that is “articles are decided by noun types.” But this idea is nonsense, rather, it would interfere the understanding of articles. Therefore, this thesis tries to describe the semantic categories of each article. Analyzing articles based on semantics must be an effective approach for learning. And this thesis treats five articles. Generally articles are divided into the definite article *the* and the indefinite article *a/an*. Many learners believe that articles consist of only these two terms. However, Chesterman (1991: 2) claims “the English article system consists of five terms: *the*, *a/an* and unstressed *some*, plus two ‘no article’ categories: zero and null. He says each of these five terms imposes a

distinct meaning on the NP.” So this thesis follows his idea and investigates the use of each article, zero, *some*, *a/an*, *the*, and null.

# African American Vernacular English in the Use of the

## Copula

Aiki Fujii

### Abstract

African American Vernacular English is not only a language spoken by African Americans, but it has a different grammar system from Standard English. The speakers purposely delete the copula *is* and *are* after the sentence subject. Also, they distinctively use copula *be* after subject in two ways: distributive *be*, and *will* deleted *be*. Furthermore, they distinctively use *ain't* and *not*. To discuss these grammar systems, I investigated copula sentences from the book *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. I found out that the copula is deleted by the connection between subject and predicate. Also, distributive *be* can be affected by frequency adverb and *will* deleted *be* is distinguished from contracted *will be*. Furthermore, the use of *ain't* and *not* is different depending on what the speaker wants to focus on. These findings reveal that African American Vernacular English have a more complex system than Standard English.

# Analysis of Request Expressions in American English

Ayano Sasaki

## Abstract

This thesis discussed requests in American English. Initially, the definition of requests is discussed. Requests actually do not have a particular form and what decides the meaning of an expression is in the context. This thesis presents expressions which can be used as a request with its context. Then, requests which are collected from an American novel (Paretsky 1990) are analyzed. This thesis categorizes the collected data according to Carrell & Konneker's theory (1981), which explains the degree of politeness in request sentences. This thesis discusses forms and meanings of request sentences in an American novel (Paretsky 1990) based on the theory. And then we see whether there is any pattern in its sentence form. Next, this thesis shows request sentences in each chapter in the novel, categorized according to Carrell & Konneker's theory (1981), and calculates their rates. Then we see what form is more common in each chapter through comparing them with the rate of the whole book. We think about the reason of it by looking at the context. Finally, this thesis states two things which we found from the data: there is a trend in request sentences, and people change the degree of politeness in making a request according to its context.

# The Ordering of Attributive Adjectives in English, French, and Japanese

Yuki HAYASHI

## Abstract

When there are two or more adjectives in a sequence modifying a noun, what factors decide the order of adjectives? English adjectives are said to have a fixed order and French adjectives seem to have certain rules like English but Japanese does not seem to have these kinds of rules. I discuss how the order of attributive adjectives is decided in English, French, and Japanese and find similarities among them. First of all, I introduce some orders in English different from grammarians and study their differences. I also investigate variable orders of English adjectives and suggest which order is preferred in which circumstances. Secondly, I explain the ordering of French adjectives and compare it to English in order to find similarities between them. Then, in the end, I propose some rules which are said to decide the order of Japanese adjectives and make a comparison between Japanese and English. Japanese adjectives seem to depend greatly on the speaker / writer's idea or meaning of the context for its order. Though some grammarians have suggested reasonable orders in English and French, I find they can also be much affected by the speaker / writer's view.

# Coordinating Conjunctions

Lei Fujita

## Abstract

Rules for coordinating conjunctions with punctuation marks tend not to be followed by native English speakers and ESL learners. The most unstable rule is in relation to the punctuation mark, the period, and is stated by the prescriptive English that prohibits beginning a sentence with coordinating conjunctions. The examination of this rule is the primary focus, with some rules about commas, and zero-punctuation discussed, and in association with those, semi-colons are also dealt with. The study is done with *The Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of British English, for use with Digital Computers* (1978). Therefore, the results and the findings from the study might be only true within the texts contained in the LOB Corpus.