

EALL TALK SERIES

Floating Numeral Quantifiers as an Unaccusative Diagnostic in Native, Heritage and L2 Japanese Speakers

Dr. Shinichiro Fukuda

(Assistant Professor, Japanese Program in the Department of EALL)

Friday, September 26, 2014, 3:00-4:00 PM

Moore Hall 258

Unaccusativity refers to the generalization that intransitive verbs divide into two subclasses, unaccusatives and unergatives. While the core arguments of unaccusatives share common properties with direct objects of transitive verbs, the core arguments of unergatives do so with transitive subjects. This study investigates the knowledge of unaccusativity in Japanese native, heritage, and second/foreign language speakers with respect to licensing of floating numeral quantifiers (FNQs) by unaccusative and unergative subjects, as it has been claimed that unaccusative subjects readily license FNQs while unergative subjects do not (the FNQ paradigm). Two acceptability judgment experiments were conducted to examine (i) whether and how judgments of the three populations differ with respect to the FNQ paradigm and (ii) whether and how manipulations of agentivity of subjects and telicity of events affect their judgments of the FNQ paradigm. Our findings suggest that (i) the native and heritage speakers' knowledge about the FNQ paradigm are largely indistinguishable from each other, (ii) the knowledge of the FNQ paradigm may be achievable in L2 speakers with a considerable amount of exposure to the language, and (iii) telicity has clear effects on the FNQ paradigm with all three groups, with the effects being especially robust with the heritage and L2 speakers, whereas the effects of agentivity are subtle and detectible only with the native and heritage speakers. The talk will discuss implications of these findings for the status of the grammar of unaccusativity and FNQ in the three different populations.

Dr. Shin Fukuda is an Assistant Professor of Japanese Linguistics in the Department of EALL. He earned his degree from the Department of Linguistics in University of California, San Diego (UCSD) in 2009. Before he joined EALL in 2010, he briefly taught in the Department of Liberal Studies in California State University San Marcos and in the Department of Linguistics in UCSD. His research interests include syntax, lexical semantics, syntax-lexical semantic interface phenomena and their acquisition, Japanese Linguistics and experimental approaches to syntactic research.

The talk is open to the public, and light refreshments will be served.

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