

[Article]

Countability of Abstract Nouns in English: ‘Silence’ in Temporal, Quality, Type and Physical Spaces

KODERA, Masahiro

Abstract

Dictionaries and grammars claim that an abstract noun takes *a/an* when it is modified by an adjective, phrase or clause. Cognitive linguists argue that an abstract noun is used as a count noun when a referent is bounded in time. This paper will examine the validity of these arguments and see if they apply to ‘silence.’ It will be shown, with the data collected from various linguistic corpora (Google Books, COCA, BNC), that neither syntax (i.e. modification) nor semantics (i.e. meaning) nor objective reality (i.e. spatio-temporal bounding) nor context determines the use of an indefinite article (*a/an*) or a zero article (\emptyset). It is the speaker’s construal of a referent that determines which article to be used. \emptyset is chosen when the focus of attention is on the quality of a referent, whether the referent is spatio-temporally bounded or unbounded in objective reality. ‘Silence’ can be used as a count noun when a referent is construed as bounded in temporal, physical or type space. It takes *a/an* when it refers to a bounded instance in each space, and a plural form when referring to more than one bounded instance.

I Introduction

Abstract nouns in English are basically non-count and used with a zero article (\emptyset). Most of them can also be used as count nouns. Dictionaries and grammars provide information about the conditions that allow abstract nouns to take an indefinite article (*a/an*) or a plural form. The conditions are of three types: semantic, syntactic and cognitive. *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (OALD) defines ‘silence’ as non-count in the sense of a complete lack of noise or sound, while both count and non-count in the sense of a situation when nobody is speaking. It claims that a non-count noun takes *a/an* when they have an adjective in front of them, or a phrase following them. Cognitive linguists claim that abstract nouns are count when they refer to episodic events (Radden and Dirven 2007: 81–82).

Corpus data provides many examples against these claims. (See (a) – (f) below. Boldfaces are mine.) In (a), ‘silence’ is used three times (‘ \emptyset silence,’ ‘*a* silence,’ ‘ \emptyset utter silence’), all of which refer to the same state of complete absence of sound. According to OALD, ‘silence’ in (a) should be non-count, but the same silence is also referred to as ‘*a* silence’ with *a/an*. It is also referred to as ‘ \emptyset utter silence’ with an adjective, which should force the use of *a/an* according to OALD. This suggests that neither semantics nor syntax determines the use of *a/*

an or \emptyset .

The silence in (b) continues for about five seconds, which means the silence is temporally bounded with a beginning and an end, and it should be treated as a count noun. It is, however, referred to with \emptyset . ‘*Stunned silence*’ in (c) and (d) is in a similar situation, where every individual in a group is stunned by someone’s remark and lapses into an instance of silence. Each instance of silence is spatially bounded, but ‘*stunned silence*’ in (c) takes \emptyset while that in (d) takes a plural form. These examples show that neither temporal nor spatial bounding in objective reality determines the use of *a/an* or \emptyset . Context does not determine the use of *a/an* or \emptyset either. The context of (e) and that of (f) are quite similar, where an instance of silence comes up after a surprising fact is revealed, but ‘*absolute silence*’ in (e) takes \emptyset while that in (f) takes *a/an*.

- (a) I had a dream once that still troubles me, I was driving fast along a road bordering a cliff and missed a turn and went over the cliff. I expected to die in the impact, but when it came, there was nothing but **silence, a silence** such as I have only experienced in the wilderness. I thought, this is what death is, **utter silence**, nothingness.
- (b) He said, ‘Is Derrick there?’ I asked, ‘Who’s calling?’ There was **silence for about five seconds**, and then he said, ‘Derrick isn’t there?’
- (c) There was **stunned silence** and then a flurry of questions. He answered them all patiently. Then he left and went home.
- (d) Canine excrement, I have learned, is referred to only as “poop” by the dog people. I once made the mistake of using a more colorful term, and was met by **stunned silences** all around. But now that I’ve got the lingo straight, the other dog people and I talk every morning.
- (e) ‘We know who was in her apartment the night she was killed. And he’s lied, not admitting that he was there. His name is Paul Hughes. He’s an American economist, her superior at the embassy.’
There was **absolute silence** in the room, each of the other three men staring fixedly at Danilov. The American’s face was impassive.
- (f) “[...] He was concerned that in the event of his death, the policy might not benefit his wife and family. That it might go to Lloyd’s, as part of his estate.” There was **an absolute silence** in the courtroom. Nobody moved, nobody looked at anyone else.

The purpose of this paper is to show with the data collected from the *British National Corpus* (BNC), the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) and *Google Books* that neither syntax (i.e. modification) nor semantics (i.e. meaning) nor objective reality (i.e. spatio-temporal bounding) nor context determines the use of *a/an* or \emptyset with an abstract noun ‘*silence*’ and that the speaker’s construal of a referent determines their use.

Note: Nouns that take \emptyset are often called ‘mass’ or ‘uncountable’ nouns, but in this paper, ‘non-count’ is used, following Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 340).

II Dictionary definition and grammatical labeling

English learner’s dictionaries give four meanings for ‘*silence*’ and their grammatical labeling is similar except for CALD (Table 1). ‘*Silence*’ in the sense of complete absence of sound or noise is non-count (Meaning 1), both count and non-count in the sense of complete quiet (Meaning 2), basically non-count in the sense of failure or refusal to discuss something although it may take *a/an* (Meaning 3), basically non-count in the sense of failure to write a letter although it may take *a/an* or a plural form (Meaning 4). These grammatical labels of count/non-count distinction are not very helpful for learners of English because the difference between the meaning 1 and 2 is not clear and the grammatical label of the meaning 2, which lists both the count and non-count use, is confusing. Also, dictionaries confuse English learners by providing example sentences that contradict their grammatical labeling. For instance, LDOCE gives a sentence ‘*After the explosion, an eerie silence fell upon the scene.*’ to illustrate Meaning 1, which is labeled as uncountable. Grammatical labeling of count/non-count distinction is not very helpful and sometimes confusing to learners of English.

Table 1. Meanings of ‘*silence*’ and grammatical labeling

	DEFINITION	LAAD	LDOCE	OALD	CALD	MEDAL	COBUILD
1	complete absence of sound or noise	U	U	U	U (?)	U	U
2	complete quiet because no one is talking, or a period of complete quiet	CU	UC	CU	C (?)	CU	UC
3	failure or refusal to discuss something or answer questions about something	U	U	U Sing.	N/A	Sing. U	U
4	failure to write a letter to someone, call them on the telephone etc.	CU	U	U	U (?)	Sing. U	N/A

Note: N/A: Not Available

U: Uncountable, C: Countable, Sing.: Singular

?: CALD’s way of defining ‘*silence*’ does not match that of the other five dictionaries.

LAAD: *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*, 2nd Ed.

LDOCE: *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 5th Ed.

OALD: *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 8th Ed.

CALD: *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 3rd Ed.

MEDAL: *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*.

COBUILD: *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary*, 5th Ed.

III Modification and the use of *a/an* and Ø

Learner’s dictionaries claim that a non-count noun takes *a/an* when it is modified by an adjective to describe the quality of a referent. This explanation misleads learners into believing that non-count nouns automatically take *a/an* when they are modified by adjectives. Non-count nouns may take *a/an* under certain conditions, but the descriptions of those conditions are not clear and vary from dictionary to dictionary (Table 2).

Table 2. Meaning of *a/an* with non-count nouns

OALD	2. used before uncountable nouns when these have an adjective in front of them, or phrase following them
MEDAL	11. used before a noun that means a particular quality or feeling when the quality or feeling is described in some way
CALD	4. used before some uncountable nouns when you want to limit their meaning in some way, such as when describing them more completely or referring to one example of them
LDOCE	10. used before nouns that are usually uncountable when other information about the quality, feeling etc is added by an adjective, phrase, or clause
COBUILD	3. You use <i>a</i> or <i>an</i> in front of an uncount noun when that noun follows an adjective, or when the noun is followed by words that describe it more fully.

Note: Numbers (e.g. 2, 11, etc.) represent the meaning numbers given by each dictionary.

OALD mentions only syntactic conditions: ‘to have an adjective in front of them, or phrase following them.’ This description is misleading in that it gives the impression that a non-count noun automatically takes *a/an* when pre-modified by an adjective and/or post-modified by a phrase (e.g. ‘*a good knowledge of French*’). OALD does not mention the case of a noun followed by a clause, but it gives an example ‘*a sadness that won’t go away.*’ OALD may find it unnecessary to mention semantic conditions because modification, be it a word, phrase or clause, limits the meaning of a noun. MEDAL and CALD mention only semantic conditions: ‘when the quality or feeling is described in some way’ (MEDAL), ‘when you want to limit their meaning in some way’ (CALD). LDOCE and COBUILD mention both syntactic and semantic conditions. CALD is different from the other dictionaries in that it mentions the case of ‘referring to one example.’ The conditions which allow non-count nouns to take *a/an* can be summarized as follows:

Syntactic conditions: a. The noun is pre-modified by an adjective.

b. The noun is post-modified by a phrase or a clause.

Semantic conditions: c. The meaning of a noun is limited in some way.

d. The particular quality or feeling of a referent is described.

e. The noun refers to one example.

The syntactic conditions (a, b) and the semantic condition (c) mean the same since modification is used to limit the meaning of a noun. The syntactic conditions are not essential to the use of *a/an* since modification alone does not make *a/an* acceptable with non-count nouns. Non-count nouns can still be used with \emptyset when modified by a word, phrase or clause. Table 3 shows that some phrases are more likely to be used with *a/an* and others with \emptyset . For instance, ‘*long silence,*’ ‘*brief silence*’ and ‘*short silence*’ are highly likely to be used with *a/an* (91.4%, 92.0%, 100% respectively with gray shading), while ‘*dead silence,*’ ‘*total silence,*’ ‘*complete silence,*’ ‘*absolute silence*’ and ‘*utter silence*’ with \emptyset (93.0%, 96.7%, 96.0%, 97.5%, 100% respectively with gray shading). The data in Table 3 indicates that modification by

Mar. 2016

Countability of Abstract Nouns in English

adjectives alone is not a determining factor in the use of *a/an* and refute the claim that a non-count noun takes *a/an* when modified by an adjective. The use of *a/an* in front of '*silence*' cannot be explained syntactically.

Table 3. Count and non-count use of '*silence*' and modifying adjectives

	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
<i>long silence</i>	430	27	1	43	0	501
	458			43		501
	91.4%			8.6%		
<i>stunned silence</i>	35	1	0	158	0	194
	36			158		194
	18.6%			81.4%		
<i>awkward silence</i>	114	8	0	66	1	189
	122			67		189
	64.6%			35.4%		
<i>dead silence</i>	10	0	0	132	0	142
	10			132		142
	7.0%			93.0%		
<i>total silence</i>	4	0	0	117	0	121
	4			117		121
	3.3%			96.7%		
<i>uncomfortable silence</i>	73	5	0	27	0	105
	78			27		105
	74.3%			25.7%		

<i>complete silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	4	0	0	95	0	
	4			95		
4.0%			96.0%			

<i>absolute silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	2	0	0	77	0	
	2			77		
2.5%			97.5%			

<i>brief silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	64	5	0	6	0	
	69			6		
92.0%			8.0%			

<i>eerie silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	47	0	0	23	0	
	47			23		
67.1%			32.9%			

<i>utter silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	0	0	0	58	0	
	0			58		
0.0%			100.0%			

<i>stony silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	17	0	0	38	0	
	17			38		
30.9%			69.1%			

<i>uneasy silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	34	0	0	11	0	
	34			11		
75.6%			24.4%			

Mar. 2016

Countability of Abstract Nouns in English

<i>deafening silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	21	0	0	19	0	
	21			19		40
	52.5%			47.5%		

<i>sudden silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	22	0	0	17	0	
	22			17		39
	56.4%			43.6%		

<i>tense silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	21	0	0	17	0	
	21			17		38
	55.3%			44.7%		

<i>embarrassed silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	22	0	0	14	0	
	22			14		36
	61.1%			38.9%		

<i>short silence</i>	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a/an</i>	<i>another, every, each</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	∅	QUANTIFIER	
	34	0	0	0	0	
	34			0		34
	100.0%			0.0%		

Note: Twenty-three adjectives that most often combine with 'silence' (singular form) are chosen from the *British National Corpus* (BNC), and among these 23 adjectives, 18 noun phrases of 'silence' immediately preceded by an adjective with more than 30 instances are chosen from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA). The instances of those noun phrases modified by possessives (e.g. 'his,' 'her,' 'Tom's,' etc.) and determiners that make the count/non-count distinction difficult (e.g. definite article 'the,' demonstrative pronouns such as 'this' and 'that') are excluded. Also excluded is 'a little' since it is difficult to judge whether 'little' is an adjective with the meaning of 'short in time' or a quantifier with the meaning of 'a small amount.' In the case of 'long silence' as a count noun, COCA finds 430 instances of 'a long silence,' 27 instances of 'another/every/each/ long silence,' and one instance of 'one long silence,' while, as a non-count noun, 43 instances of '∅ long silence' and 0 instance of 'Quantifier + long silence' are found.

IV Meaning and the use of *a/an* and \emptyset

Noun phrases listed in Table 3 can be divided into three types depending on the meaning of adjectives: emphasizing adjectives that stress the intrinsic nature of silence (*dead, total, complete, absolute, utter*), qualitative adjectives that indicate a length of time (*long, brief, short*), and qualitative adjectives that describe feelings someone experiences toward a particular instance of silence (*uneasy, uncomfortable, eerie, awkward, embarrassed, sudden, tense, deafening, stony, stunned*). Table 4 shows that the noun phrases with emphasizing adjectives are most likely to be used with \emptyset (93.0–100.0%), while those with adjectives indicating a length of time are highly likely to be used with *a/an* (91.4–100.0%). ‘*Silence*’ with qualitative adjectives that describe feelings may be used with or without an article, and their chances of taking *a/an* vary from 75.6% (*uneasy silence*) to 18.6% (*stunned silence*). This data suggests that ‘*silence*’ takes *a/an* when it refers to a temporally bounded instance of silence, and takes \emptyset when the focus of attention is on the intrinsic nature of silence (i.e. stillness).

The data in Table 4 shows that ‘*silence*’ modified by emphasizing adjectives can still take *a/an* and that modified by adjectives indicating a length of time can still take \emptyset . 1) -14) below

Table 4. Types of modifying adjectives and ‘*silence*’ with *a/an* and \emptyset

Types of Adjectives	adjective + <i>silence</i>	<i>a/an</i>	\emptyset
Emphasizing Adjectives	<i>utter silence</i>	0%	100.0%
	<i>absolute silence</i>	2.5%	97.5%
	<i>total silence</i>	3.3%	96.7%
	<i>complete silence</i>	4.0%	96.0%
	<i>dead silence</i>	7.0%	93.0%
Qualitative Adjectives (Length of Time)	<i>short silence</i>	100.0%	0.0%
	<i>brief silence</i>	92.0%	8.0%
	<i>long silence</i>	91.4%	8.6%
Qualitative Adjectives (Feelings)	<i>uneasy silence</i>	75.6%	24.4%
	<i>uncomfortable silence</i>	74.3%	25.7%
	<i>eerie silence</i>	67.1%	32.9%
	<i>awkward silence</i>	64.6%	35.4%
	<i>embarrassed silence</i>	61.1%	38.9%
	<i>sudden silence</i>	56.4%	43.6%
	<i>tense silence</i>	55.3%	44.7%
	<i>deafening silence</i>	52.5%	47.5%
	<i>stony silence</i>	30.9%	69.1%
<i>stunned silence</i>	18.6%	81.4%	

are examples of noun phrases modified by these two types of adjectives used with *a/an* and \emptyset . They are cited from books written by the authors whose native language is assumed to be English according to their biographical information available on the Internet. All the noun phrases are in a clause ‘*there was* + NOUN PHRASE.’ (Boldfaces and underlines are mine.) These examples indicate that ‘*silence*’ can be used with either *a/an* or \emptyset whether it is modified by an emphasizing adjective or an adjective describing a length of time. Modification may influence but does not determine the use of *a/an* or \emptyset with ‘*silence*.’

complete silence

- (1) The son of the king was told that a great princess, whom nobody knew, had arrived, and he ran out to welcome her. He gave her his hand as she climbed out of the coach, and he took her into the hall where everyone was. At once **there was a complete silence**, everyone stopped dancing, and the violins stopped playing, everyone was so keen to look at the amazing beauty of this stranger.

(*Cinderella In Modern English* by Charles Perrault, translated by KidLit-O)

- (2) After the kiss, her eyes again slowly filled with tears. She sat still, away from him, with her face drooped aside, and her hands folded in her lap. The tears fell very slowly. **There was complete silence**. He too sat there motionless and silent on the hearthrug.

(*The Horse Dealer’s Daughter* by D.H. Lawrence)

utter silence

- (3) Then the guns stopped and **there was an utter silence**. The Lieutenant looked at his watch and then blew the whistle. (*Ghost Man of Mars* by Gary Budgen)
- (4) The music and the stamping suddenly stopped. **There was utter silence** for a minute, then ‘Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday, dear Cormac...’

(*Ten Great Novels* by Maureen Lee)

total silence

- (5) He heard a thump on the floor and a tap on the wall—probably Helma setting the scythe to rest, leaning it against the wall, he thought. Then it seemed like a long time passed, and **there was a total silence**. He expected to hear footsteps across the floor, after she leaned the scythe against the wall, but **there was just silence**. A cold stillness.

(*The Ruby* by Leland Nichols)

- (6) For half an hour, **there was total silence**, broken only by the occasional, slightly apologetic cough. It was **a thoughtful, reverent silence**. Some sat with eyes closed. There was very little movement, an almost complete lack of restlessness.

(*The Power of Silence: The Riches That Lie Within* by Graham Turner)

absolute silence

- (7) “[...] He was concerned that in the event of his death, the policy might not benefit his wife and family. That it might go to Lloyd’s, as part of his estate.” **There was an absolute silence** in the courtroom. Nobody moved, nobody looked at anyone else.

(*An Absolute Scandal: A Novel* by Penny Vincenzi)

- (8) ‘We know who was in her apartment the night she was killed. And he’s lied, not

admitting that he was there. His name is Paul Hughes. He’s an American economist, her superior at the embassy.’

There was absolute silence in the room, each of the other three men staring fixedly at Danilov. The American’s face was impassive.

(*In the Name of a Killer* by Brian Freemantle)

brief silence

(9) “Stop it!” Susan interrupted him. **There was brief silence** in the wagon. Susan tried to calm herself down before continuing, but her emotion still showed in her voice.

(*The Tale of the Comet* by David George Richards)

(10) “Charlie,” Galloway said, quickly, “could you show me what you have there on the table?” **There was a brief silence** in the room. Several people turned to look at Galloway, but nobody said anything.

(*The John Varley Reader: Thirty Years of Short Fiction* by John Varley)

long silence

(11) “[...] I’m sorry, Manuela. I thought I could, but it turned out to be so much harder than I expected. I’m sorry.” **There was long silence** on the other end of the line. Deidre nervously waited for Manuela to say something. “You know I’ve gone to bat for you, Deidre,” Manuela finally said slowly.

(*Table Manners* by Mia King)

(12) “...I think I might be getting a promotion.” **There was a long silence** on the other end of the line. Then... “That’s great, son. Really great.” Something in Dad’s voice didn’t sound right.

(*On a Someday* by Roxanne Henke)

short silence

(13) “You won’t get through. The Osiris is restricted to an official channel only,” Cavan said. “I know, I already tried calling. But Amspace can bypass the regular net and get it on a direct beam when it’s above the horizon. We’ve still got the access protocols they gave us to get into their file system. It might be possible to create a message link from there.”

There was short silence. Then, “Give it a try, Landen. Keep me posted. [...]” Cavan hung up.

(*Cradle of Saturn* by James Patrick Hogan)

(14) ‘By the way, sir – what were you doing yesterday evening?’
‘Why?’

There was a short silence. Then Kirby said, ‘We’re trying to build up a general picture of what was happening in the area during the evening. It may help us work out Miss Caswell’s movements.’

(*Death’s Own Door* by Andrew Taylor)

V Temporal bounding and the use of *a/an* and \emptyset

Cognitive grammars argue that the count/non-count distinction depends on whether a referent is construed as being bounded (Langacker 1991, 2008, Talmy 2000, Radden and Dirven 2007, Lee 2001, Croft and Cruse 2004), and it applies to abstract nouns (Langacker 1987: 207). Abstract nouns describing episodic events are count nouns (e.g. *jump*, *walk*),

while those that do not describe a single episode of the process are non-count (e.g. *jumping, walking*). Radden and Dirven (2007: 81) argue that abstract nouns that describe episodic situations are seen as discrete episodes and are used as count nouns because they are thought of as holding for a limited time. Episodic situations include events that take place or come up (e.g. *attack, protest, objection*) and certain states that can suddenly arise (e.g. *disease, idea, doubt*). On the other hand, abstract nouns that describe steady situations (e.g. *knowledge*), which are seen as lasting indefinitely, are mostly used as non-count nouns. This theory of bounding as a determining factor in count/non-count distinction suggests that 'silence' is used as a count noun when a referent is temporally bounded with a beginning and an end.

Koizumi (1989: 175) gives the following sentences (g-i) to argue that 'silence' takes *a/an* or a plural form when it refers to a temporally bounded instance/s. Ishida (2012: 18) makes a similar argument with a pair of sentences (j, k): *A/an* is used in (j) because the silence is temporally bounded, continuing for a moment, and \emptyset is used in (k) because the silence is seen as lasting indefinitely without interruption.

- (g) There was **a silence**.
- (h) There was **silence**.
- (i) There were **silences**.
- (j) For a moment, there was **a silence** in the car.
- (k) There was nothing but **silence** in the house.

Searching *Google Books* for 'silence' used in a similar context to (j) finds 11 hits of '*For a moment, there was \emptyset silence in the car*' and 26 hits of '*There was \emptyset silence in the car for a moment*,' while only one hit of '*For a moment, there was a silence in the car*' and '*There was a silence in the car for a moment*' (as of September 1, 2015). These search results indicate that \emptyset is more likely to be used in this context even though the silence is temporally bounded, which suggests that temporal bounding is not a determining factor in count/non-count distinction.

Higuchi (2003: 183) gives the following pair of sentences to argue that 'silence' in (m) takes *a/an* because '*for a few seconds*' is more specific than '*for a moment*' in (l), which contradicts Ishida's example (j). Higuchi's argument means that it needs not only temporal bounding but also a specific length of time for 'silence' to take *a/an*, at least as specific as '*for a few seconds*.'

- (l) There was **silence** for a moment.
- (m) There was **a silence** for a few seconds.

Corpus data does not support his claim. An instance of silence that lasts for a few seconds can be referred to with or without an article as in (15). Making the length of time more specific does not change this situation. An instance of silence that lasts for about five seconds can be referred to as either '*a silence*' or ' *\emptyset silence*' as in (16) and (17). It is not temporal

bounding, let alone specificity of time length that determines the use of *a/an* or \emptyset .

(15) “Hi Darren, it’s me.”

There was **silence** at the other end of the line for a few seconds, before I heard his sleepy tones. “I wasn’t expecting you to call this early, Cathy ...”

“I know. I’m sorry, I realise you probably wanted a lie-in, but I had to let you know. I’ve been thinking about it all night, and yes, I will go away with you this weekend.”

Again, there was **a silence** for a few seconds, but whereas the first one had been expected, this absence of speech was a bit unnerving.

(*Spoilt for Choice* by Steve Wilson)

(16) There was **a silence** for about five seconds, until I said, “David, I really don’t know how I feel. [...]”

(*For All We Know* by Bernard Henry)

(17) He said, ‘Is Derrick there?’ I asked, ‘Who’s calling?’ There was **silence** for about five seconds, and then he said, ‘Derrick isn’t there?’

(*Dreams* by Derrick Jensen)

Searching *Google Books* for ‘*silence*’ used in a similar context to (k) finds 447 hits of ‘*nothing but \emptyset silence*’ and one hit of ‘*nothing but a silence*’ (18). The meaning of ‘*silence*’ in (18) is limited by the following adjective clause, and it could be argued that modification by the adjective clause makes the silence temporally bounded and forces the use of *a/an*. If it is the case, the search results agree with Ishida’s argument that ‘*silence*’ takes \emptyset when a referent is temporally unbounded. This analysis, however, does not explain the example (19), in which the same silence is referred to with both *a/an* and \emptyset . The case similar to (19) is often found, in which ‘*silence*’ is introduced with \emptyset and the same referent is later referred to with *a/an* when its particular nature is described as in (20). To explain these cases, it is often said that describing the particular nature of a referent limits the meaning of the noun and makes the referent bounded in either temporal or type space, which forces the use of *a/an*. This, however, does not explain why the same instance of silence can be referred to with either *a/an* or \emptyset as in (19–21). These examples indicate that the objective reality of a referent, being temporally bounded or unbounded, does not determine the use of *a/an* or \emptyset .

(18) Then there is **nothing but a silence** that drowns out the infinitely painful thunder that carries across the whole city and on across the newly awakened forests and sprouting fields, open water and dwellings of Östergötland.

(*Spring Remains* by Mons Kallentoft, translation by Neil Smith)

(19) I went into prayer again, and again there was nothing, only silence. I repeated that process for some time. Each time I asked the Lord to answer my questions, and each time there was **nothing but silence—a terrible, loud silence**. What was I going to do? Each time I prayed, there was no answer—only silence.

(*This Jesus We Talk About: Answers to Questions from a Doubter* by Bill King)

(20) For half an hour, **there was total silence**, broken only by the occasional, slightly apologetic cough. It was **a thoughtful, reverent silence**. Some sat with eyes closed.

Mar. 2016

Countability of Abstract Nouns in English

There was very little movement, an almost complete lack of restlessness.

(*The Power of Silence: The Riches That Lie Within* by Graham Turner)

- (21) He heard a thump on the floor and a tap on the wall—probably Helma setting the scythe to rest, leaning it against the wall, he thought. Then it seemed like a long time passed, and **there was a total silence**. He expected to hear footsteps across the floor, after she leaned the scythe against the wall, but **there was just silence**. A cold stillness.

(*The Ruby* by Leland Nichols)

In (22), two instances of silence are experienced and each continues for a few seconds, but the first one is referred to with \emptyset and the second with *a/an*. In (23), the absolute silence continues for a moment and is temporally bounded, but it is referred to with \emptyset . It is also referred to as ‘*a silence*,’ although it is ‘*with no time*’ and temporally unbounded. ‘*Absolute silence*’ in (24) refers to the state of no sound that continues ‘*for all eternity*,’ which indicates the silence is temporally unbounded, but the same silence is also referred to as ‘*a silence*.’ These examples indicate that temporal bounding in objective reality does not determine the use of *a/an* or \emptyset .

- (22) “Hi Darren, it’s me.”

There was **silence** at the other end of the line for a few seconds, before I heard his sleepy tones. “I wasn’t expecting you to call this early, Cathy...”

“I know. I’m sorry, I realise you probably wanted a lie-in, but I had to let you know. I’ve been thinking about it all night, and yes, I will go away with you this weekend.”

Again, there was **a silence** for a few seconds, but whereas the first one had been expected, this absence of speech was a bit unnerving.

(*Spoilt for Choice* by Steve Wilson)

- (23) There was **absolute silence** for a moment, **a silence** with no time and no feeling. I could hear the world ticking inside my head—*tick, tick, tick*...

(*The Road of the Dead* by Kevin Brooks)

- (24) There was only peace — deep, deep peace. And there was **absolute silence**, **a silence** that nothing could possibly disturb. It was so still that perhaps there had never ever been any sound here for all eternity. It was like outer space where there is no atmosphere, so there can be no sound. Sound requires a medium in which to travel. In the place I returned to, there was no such medium. I was truly experiencing the sound of silence.

(*The Surrender Experiment: My Journey into Life’s Perfection* by Michael A. Singer)

VI Prepositional phrases and the use of *a/an* and \emptyset

Higuchi (2002: 130) gives the following pair of examples (n, o) to argue that ‘*stunned silence*’ in (n) takes \emptyset because the preposition ‘*in*’ indicates that ‘*silence*’ refers to a temporally unbounded state of stillness, while that in (o) takes *a/an* because ‘*after*’ suggests

that the silence is temporally bounded.

- (n) “He was killed by his own father!” Aguilar listened in **stunned silence** as the woman told onlookers that the boy’s father regularly tied him up and beat him.
- (o) After **a stunned silence**, the daughter piped up, “Mommy, do hookers have children?”

The data in Table 5 supports Higuchi’s argument. COCA finds 943 instances of ‘ \emptyset *silence*’ and 35 instances of ‘*a/an silence*’ in the prepositional phrase of ‘*in* + up to 4 words + *silence*,’ while 3 instances with \emptyset and 203 instances with *a/an* in the phrase ‘*after* + up to 4 words + *silence*.’ It is highly likely that ‘*silence*’ takes \emptyset in the prepositional phrase with ‘*in*’ and *a/an* in the phrase with ‘*after*.’ This data, however, does not preclude the possibility of ‘*silence*’ taking *a/an* in an *in*-phrase or taking \emptyset in an *after*-phrase. *Google Books* finds 9 instances of ‘*after* \emptyset *stunned silence*’ as in (25), and 20 instances of ‘*in a stunned silence*’ as in (26). The corpus data shows that ‘*silence*’ can be used with or without an article in a prepositional phrase with ‘*after*’ or ‘*in*.’

Table 5. Count and non-count use of ‘*silence*’ in prepositional phrases with ‘*in*’ and ‘*after*’

	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a</i>	<i>another</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	\emptyset	QUANTIFIER	
<i>in</i> +4+ <i>silence</i>	35	1	0	943	0	979
	36			943		979
	3.7%			96.3%		
	COUNT			NONCOUNT		Total
	<i>a</i>	<i>another</i>	NUMERAL (<i>one</i>)	\emptyset	QUANTIFIER (<i>some, much, more, a lot of</i>)	
<i>after</i> +4+ <i>silence</i>	193	10	0	3	7	213
	203			10		213
	95.3%			4.7%		

Note: Those phrases in which *a/an* or \emptyset does not directly modify ‘*silence*’ (e.g. ‘*after* + *a moment/moments/a period* + *of silence*’) are excluded.

- (25) Just as I was becoming somewhat comfortable with them, Joe informed me that he used to be a wife-beating alcoholic. **After stunned silence**, I stuttered a few unintelligible words.
(*Condo Shock: A Short Novel About Condo Life in New Jersey in the 1970s* by A. J. Whitton)
- (26) They ate **in a stunned silence** over the news of Walt Brigham’s murder.
(*Merciless: A Novel of Suspense* by Richard Montanari)

‘*Silence*’ preceding a conjunction ‘*before*’ and that in an *after*-phrase refer to a temporally

Mar. 2016

Countability of Abstract Nouns in English

bounded instance, but can be used with or without an article as in (27–30). The examples (31–34) show that ‘*silence*’ in an *in*-phrase can be used with or without an article even when the meaning of the silence is limited by an adjective clause ‘*broken only by ...*’

- (27) “[...] I’m sorry, Rachel. Can you feel it in your heart to forgive me?” There was **momentary silence before** Rachel replied, “Only if you now do the right thing. [...]”
(*An Affair of the Heart* by David George Richards)
- (28) “Is everything OK David?” he enquired. There was **a momentary silence before** David replied. “I don’t know Peter. Perhaps you had better tell me.”
(*Deadlier Than The Male* by Fred Maddox)
- (29) They all tumbled out together with the lamp, and there found Halward dead in his blood. He was stiffening already. Then, **after silence**, all began to talk at once.
(*Frey and his Wife* by Maurice Hewlett)
- (30) ‘As for me, I’m a lost soul. I’ve neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister, nor wife, nor children, nor God.’ He added, **after a silence**: ‘I’ve nothing but poetry.’
(*Bel-Ami* by Guy de Maupassant, translated by Douglas Parmee)

in (a) silence broken only by ...

- (31) Twenty minutes passed **in silence broken only by the ticking of the clock**, Mr. Doane waiting, Fanny Crosby thinking.
(*One Perfect Word* by Debbie Macomber)
- (32) So the two of them waited **in a silence broken only by the ticking of the clock** above the door.
(*The Promises of Dr. Sigmundus: The Hollow People* by Brian Keane)
- (33) They **waited in silence broken only by** the breathing of five anxious people. Nothing moved and nothing else sounded.
(*To Lead the Way: A Fantasy Journey Into Leadership Development* by D.B. Clark)
- (34) She stood alone at the roadside in front of the station and **waited in a silence broken only by** the stir of leaves as a light breeze lifted them.
(*A Patient Wolf* by Aline Riva)

Koizumi (1989: 176) is puzzled to find ‘*silence*’ used with \emptyset in the following sentence (p). He expects ‘*silence*’ to take *a/an* because he believes that ‘*silence*’ is count when it is temporally bounded.

- (p) I put my finger to my lips for **silence**.

It is reasonable to assume that the silence demanded in (g) is limited in duration, perhaps for a few minutes. The objective reality, however, does not force the interpretation of ‘*silence*’ as count or non-count. The speaker’s focused viewing is more important than objective reality. What is demanded in (g) is not a particular period of silence, but the shift from the state of hearing sound (or noise) to the state of no sound. The focus of attention is not on time, which makes temporal bounding irrelevant, and \emptyset is chosen. There is nothing puzzling in using \emptyset in this context.

Searching *Google Books* finds more than 80 instances of ‘*lips for \emptyset silence*’ as in (35), but

not a single instance of ‘*lips for a silence*’ is found. Neither BNC nor COCA finds a single instance of ‘*for a silence*’ with ‘*for*’ used in the sense of ‘in order to obtain something,’ while both corpora find at least 32 instances (BNC) and 113 (COCA) of ‘*for Ø silence*’ in the following phrases: *ask/beg/call/gesture/long/motion/need/plea/shout/sign/signal/wave/wait/yearn/yell + for Ø silence, hold up/clap/raise one’s hand (s) + for Ø silence, in exchange/return + for Ø silence*, etc., as in (36) and (37). It is possible, however, for ‘*silence*’ to take *a/an* when it means a period of silence as in (38). These examples show that prepositional phrases do not determine the use of *a/an* or \emptyset .

- (35) She needed to concentrate and held her finger to her **lips for silence**.
(*The Fallen Prince* by Shea Berkley)
- (36) He **asked for silence** while he delivered the news. He said, “There has been another sudden and unfortunate death, one that will touch each of you in a profound way.”
(*Charms for the Easy Life* by Kaye Gibbons)
- (37) Then she did something she had never done before—she announced a surprise. There was a lot of squealing and giggling from the girls, and she smiled and **waited for silence** before she told us what it was. (*The Colorado Quarterly*, Vol 9. University of Colorado)
- (38) Sally leaned against the column opposite Anne and **waited impatiently for a silence** into which she could drop her news. (*A Dedicated Man* by Peter Robinson)

VII Construal and objective reality

Syntax and temporal bounding in objective reality may influence the use of *a/an* and \emptyset , but they do not determine which article to be used. It is first and foremost the speaker’s focus of attention that determines the use of *a/an* and \emptyset . The article usage depends on ‘the representation sought by the speaker.’ Hewson (1972: 94) argues on the indefinite article as follows:

The bare noun, calling into play as it does the great extensivity of notion belonging to the potential significate, presents the limitless, formless, continue entity; when this vague representation must be limited, reduced, clarified, defined, redefined, restricted, the article comes into play. *This is not dependent on ‘rules’, but on the representation sought by the speaker.*

With the following pair of sentences (q, r), Hewson (1972: 90–91) describes the contrast between *a/an* and the zero article as follows:

- (q) There was **absolute silence**.
(r) There was **a short silence**.

We may observe here a frequent effect provided by the contrast between the use of the

article and article zero. The article introduces a unit reference, which gives an exterior, numerical view and therefore has overtones of quantity. The zero article presentation, on the other hand, gives an internal, non-numerical view which has overtones of quality. These overtones are normal effects of internal and external views, regardless of the subject matter. [...]

An internal view will reveal the contents, the principle aspect of which is type or quality; an external view will reveal the container, the principle aspect of which is size or quantity. We therefore tend to associate these aspects with these particular views. As a result it is natural to leave out the article with *absolute silence* and equally natural to add it in the phrase *a short silence*.

Using *a/an* means that the focus of attention is on the size of a referent, while using \emptyset means the focus is on the quality. This explains why '*silence*' is likely to take *a/an* when modified by adjectives indicating a length of time (e.g. *short, long*), which gives an exterior view and makes the referent temporally bounded, and why take \emptyset when modified by emphasizing adjectives (e.g. *utter, absolute*), which gives an internal view and makes temporal bounding irrelevant. '*Utter silence*' and '*absolute silence*' are highly likely to take \emptyset because the focus of attention is on the intrinsic nature of silence, i.e. stillness as in (39, 40). It is possible, however, for them to take *a/an* (41, 42) when the speaker refers to a particular instance of silence that s/he experiences at a particular time and location, which makes the referent temporally bounded. It is not objective reality but the speaker's construal that determines the use of *a/an* and \emptyset (Taylor 2002: 368).

- (39) My teaching assistant does remember me having to leave class for restroom breaks, and she reports that there was **utter silence** in the room while I was gone.
(*The Teacher's Body: Embodiment, Authority, and Identity in the Academy*, Edited by Diane P. Freedman and Martha Stoddard Holmes)
- (40) 'We know who was in her apartment the night she was killed. And he's lied, not admitting that he was there. His name is Paul Hughes. He's an American economist, her superior at the embassy.'
There was **absolute silence** in the room, each of the other three men staring fixedly at Danilov. The American's face was impassive.
(*In the Name of a Killer* by Brian Freemantle)
- (41) There was **an utter silence** in the room. Looks of surprise and doubt were quickly exchanged.
(*Midnight Lace* by Elizabeth Kary)
- (42) "[...] He was concerned that in the event of his death, the policy might not benefit his wife and family. That it might go to Lloyd's, as part of his estate."
There was **an absolute silence** in the courtroom. Nobody moved, nobody looked at anyone else.
(*An Absolute Scandal* by Penny Vincenzi)

VIII Generic indefinite *a/an*

The indefinite article has two types: specific indefinite *a/an* (e.g. ‘*a book*’ in ‘*Joseph bought a book for his girlfriend.*’) and generic indefinite *a/an* (e.g. ‘*a book*’ in ‘*A book makes a great gift.*’) (Master 1995: 219). ‘*Silence*’ with *a/an* means ‘a period of silence,’ whether *a/an* is specific or generic. ‘*Silence*’ with specific indefinite *a/an* refers to a particular instance of silence that someone experiences at a particular time and location, which is bounded in temporal space as in (43). ‘*Silence*’ with generic indefinite *a/an* means just a period of silence of no particular nature as in (44). ‘*Silence*’ takes a plural form when it refers to more than one instance in temporal space whether each instance of silence is of a particular or general nature (45, 46). ‘*Silence*’ is used with \emptyset when a referent is conceptualized in quality space, referring to the state of no sound as opposed to sound or chatter as in ‘*silence can be productive*’ (45). The plural form does not necessarily mean that each instance of silence is temporally bounded. Each instance may refer to the state of no sound in quality space (47).

(43) **A silence** fell between them as they walked.

(*Breaking The Silence* by Diane Chamberlain)

(44) It takes four seconds for **a silence** to become awkward.

(<http://uberfacts.tumblr.com/post/14167011682/it-takes-4-seconds-for-a-silence-to-become>)

(45) Many people speak out in discussion too quickly because they are anxious about leaving **a silence**. When questioned, people often acknowledge that they spoke early in order to ensure there was no gap in the discussion. They are not used to **silences** in conversation and don’t know how to manage them skilfully. They can find **silences** in discussion to be unnerving and embarrassing. However, **silence** can be productive. First of all, it allows time for reflection so that speakers can construct a more considered and accurate response, making a more useful contribution to the debate. Secondly, it gives more people the opportunity to speak first. For more productive discussions, we need to be skilled in managing **silences**.

(*Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument*, 2nd Edition by Stella Cottrell)

(46) She frequently fell silent as they listened for sounds that might warn of danger. In between **those silences**, she told him that she used to walk along the beach near St. Augustine and had collected a large number of the seemingly endless seashells.

(*Seminole Song* by Vella Munn)

(47) Time passed. There were **silences**, then talk would start up. Then die down. Someone found something to say, then there was **silence** again. Suddenly Flutey said, ‘What’s going on at the boathouse? Some lights went on, but now they’re flicking off and on.’

(*Life Itself!: An Autobiography* by Elaine Dundy)

‘*A Silence*’ in (48) and (49), being construed in temporal space, refers to a pause in

Mar. 2016

Countability of Abstract Nouns in English

conversation, while ‘ \emptyset *silence*’ in (50) and (51), conceptualized in quality space, refers to the state of no sound. ‘*After five seconds*’ (48) and ‘*in a conversation or a negotiation*’ (49) indicate that ‘*silence*’ refers to a temporally bounded instance that interrupts the flow of conversation. On the other hand, ‘*words or music*’ (50) and ‘*nervous chatter*’ (51) suggest that ‘*silence*’ refers to the state of no sound as opposed to the state in which somebody is talking or music is being played.

- (48) In Western societies, silence makes people uncomfortable. After five seconds, most people feel pressure **to fill a silence** by saying something.

(*Interviewing for Solutions* by Peter De Jong and Insoo Kim Berg)

- (49) The human tendency to want **to fill a silence** in a conversation or a negotiation is well-documented in the literature and studies of speech communications and psychology.

(*Deal Maker: Lessons From the Blind Master Negotiator* by Joseph Dean Klatt PhD, Michael M. Forbes MBA)

- (50) In the West, there appears to be a compelling need **to fill silence**, whether it be with words or music.

(*Prescriptive Communication for the Healthcare Provider* by Abné M. Eisenberg, Ph.D)

- (51) It is the tendency of most of us human beings to **fill silence** with nervous chatter. This is the case around a dinner table or in the context of a support group, and it seems to be especially rampant in hospital rooms.

(*When Faith Is Tested: Pastoral Responses to Suffering and Tragic Death* by Jeffrey R. Zurheide)

IX Silence in type and physical space

‘*Silence*’ may be conceptualized in type space, and it is used as a count noun when each type of silence (e.g. the silence of rebuke, the silence of defiance, etc.) occupies a particular, distinguishing location in type space as in (52). A type of silence, i.e. an instance of silence bounded in type space, is usually referred to with a definite article as in ‘the silence of defiance’ or with \emptyset when listing various types of silence, but it may be used with *a/an* when emphasizing its particular nature as in (53).

‘*Silence*’ can also be conceptualized in physical space where it can be used as a count noun (54–56). ‘*Silence*’ takes a plural form when a referent occupies different spatial locations at a given moment (54). When conceptualized in physical space, it is irrelevant whether the silence is temporally bounded or not. In objective reality, ‘*a silence*’ in (55) is bounded in time with a beginning and an end, while ‘*a silence*’ in (56) is unbounded with no end because the source of the silence is dead.

- (52) The catalogue of **silences** includes **the silence of rebuke** and **the silence of defiance**.

(*The Social Work Interview: A Guide for Human Service Professionals*, 4th Edition by Alfred Kadushin and Goldie Kadushin)

(53) *The wise or virtuous silent*

This is a **quiet and gentle silence**. It does not arise from a sense of superiority and is one of the signs of compassion.

(*The Power of Silence: Silent Communication in Daily Life* by Colum Kenny)

(54) Canine excrement, I have learned, is referred to only as “poop” by the dog people. I once made the mistake of using a more colorful term, and was met by **stunned silences** all around. But now that I’ve got the lingo straight, the other dog people and I talk every morning.

(*Howl: A Collection of the Best Contemporary Dog Wit* by Bark Editors)

(55) Hirst retorts with uncharacteristic obscenity: “Hazel shit,” eliciting an overstated harangue from Spooner and a **silence** from Hirst.

(*The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama* by Leslie Kane)

(56) I couldn’t see him as his curtains were pulled, but I could hear him breathing. Tom was sleeping a lot today, I sat holding his hand waiting for him to wake and have a chat, whilst sitting there I felt a **silence** from behind the curtains, I spoke to another visitor Lorna, whom I had got to know whilst visiting her father Fred, I said “I can’t hear George breathing?” I stood up; she said “what are you going to do?” I said “I am going to look and see if he is okay” no staff were around. I opened the curtains and went to his side, I called his name gently, he didn’t move, I could tell he had passed away.

(*Sudden Exit* by Tommy Sampson)

X Concluding remarks

The corpus data shows that neither syntax (i.e. modification) nor semantics (i.e. meaning) nor objective reality (i.e. spatio-temporal bounding) nor context determines the use of *a/an* or \emptyset with ‘*silence*.’ It is the speaker’s construal that determines the use of *a/an* and \emptyset . The speaker chooses \emptyset when his/her focus of attention is on the quality of the referent (i.e. stillness), regardless of the state of the referent in objective reality, whether spatio-temporally bounded or unbounded. ‘*Silence*’ can be used as a count noun when a referent is construed as bounded in temporal, physical or type space. It takes *a/an* when it refers to a bounded instance in each space, and a plural form when referring to more than one bounded instance.

With silence being conceptualized in temporal space, specific indefinite *a/an* sends the message that the speaker construes a referent (i.e. an instance of silence) as a temporally bounded event that s/he experiences at a certain time and location. Generic indefinite *a/an* is used to simply mean ‘a period of silence,’ referring to an instance of silence that anyone can experience at any time and any place.

References

Berry, Roger (1993) *Collins COBUILD English Guides 3: Articles*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.

Mar. 2016

Countability of Abstract Nouns in English

- Croft, William and D. Alan Cruse (2004) *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hewson, John (1972) *Article and Noun in English*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Higuchi, Masayuki (2003) *An Illustrative Guide to English Article Usage*. Tokyo: Taishukan. (樋口昌幸 (2003) 『例解 現代英語冠詞事典』東京 大修館書店)
- Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey Pullum (2002) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ishida, Hideo (2012) *Korenara Wakaru! Eigo Kanshi Toreningu (A foolproof Guide to Understanding English Article Usage)*. Tokyo: DHC. (石田秀雄 (2012) 『これならわかる! 英語冠詞トレーニング』東京 DHC)
- Koizumi, Kenkichi (1989) *Plural and Articles in English*. Tokyo: The Japan Times. (小泉賢吉郎 (1989) 『英語のなかの複数と冠詞』東京 ジャパンタイムズ)
- Langacker, Ronald W. (1987) *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar* (Vol. 1). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. (1991) *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Langacker, Ronald W. (1991) *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar* (Vol. 2). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. (2008) *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, David (2001) *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Radden, Günter and René Dirven (2007) *Cognitive English Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Talmy, Leonard (2000) *Toward a Cognitive Semantics* (Vol. 1): *Concept Structuring Systems*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Taylor, John R. (2002) *Cognitive Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(2015年11月20日掲載決定)