

In the academic year of 2015, my article, “On the Development of *The Point Is* and Related Issues in the History of American English” published in *English Linguistics* 31.1 (2014), received the ELSJ Senior Researcher Award, for which I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the committee who reviewed my article for their warm treatment. Winning the award, an undeserved honor, creates a memorable experience in my academic life. I have now been a member of the English Linguistic Society of Japan (ELSJ) for about twenty years and have learned about a variety of issues in English linguistics beyond the realm of theoretical frameworks. Taking advantage of this particular opportunity, I would like to show my gratitude by making solid and positive contributions to promote the development of younger researchers, as well as in my research through the intellectual and social activities of, inter alia, ELSJ.

The awarded article investigates one specific interactional unit in spoken-oriented discourse, *the point is* and its variant forms, in the history of American English; I regarded them as one type of shell noun construction, i.e. constructions with formal or general nouns that serve in discourse to express speaker stance. The whole grammaticalization process of *the point is* reflects the emergence of various related constructions, not all of which have been equally entrenched: the determiner-modified *the point is* construction is highly frequent, and the development of the first person singular possessive construction, *my point is*, can be considered as a syntactic reflection of speaker stance.

I have ever reminded myself that I should have a broad area of research with the aim of exploring the frontiers of linguistics in general and opening up entirely new areas of research. Such an attitude toward language studies was formed for the following reasons. In the latter half of the 1990s, I enjoyed the privilege of pursuing high-level studies on Medieval English Language and Literature under the guidance of Yoshihiro Yoshino (Professor Emeritus) at Rikkyo (St. Paul) University, where I also studied French, Old French and Latin. In the early part of the first decade of the 2000s, I had a golden opportunity to expand my research horizons at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), where I studied field linguistics, discourse studies and transcription, linguistic typology, corpus linguistics, and non-Indo-European-based historical linguistics in addition to other well-known fields of research; I was also able to study Korean intensively, restudy German, and carry out a one-year survey of Dida, a previously unexplored African language. Needless to say, I had a variety of intellectual discussions with all the faculty members at the Department of Linguistics, UCSB. Such a wide range of skills and knowledge proved invaluable when I started my academic life at Okinawa International University, where I succeeded in laying a firm foundation in the study of language; studying some languages spoken there added further weight to what I have learned.

My experiences described above have borne fruit also in the form of obtaining a couple of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, which enable me to give presentations mainly at international conferences (more than sixty times now) and to make many acquaintances across the globe. Some of these give me regular and constructive advice, giving rise to some international joint research projects. The paper which is awarded the prize is one of the products that have been realized with the help and support of my acquaintances, friends, colleagues, advisors, and family members. Among those, I would like to mention the following three with sincere gratitude, although I have no adequate words to express my appreciation for their contribution to the development of my irrepressible intellectual curiosity: Yoshihiro Yoshino (Professor Emeritus at Rikkyo (St. Paul) University), Minoji Akimoto (Professor Emeritus at Aoyamagakuin University) and Masako K. Hiraga (Professor at Rikkyo (St. Paul) University). I will most definitely live in a state of constant gratitude.