APPLICATION OF DETERMINERS IN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS CONTAINING NAMES OF HUMAN BODY PARTS

The article deals with formal expressive means of the category of determination which are applied in phraseological units of the English language containing names of human body parts (nouns ear, eye, face, foot, hand, head, heart are the focus of our attention). At first, the article provides a brief introduction into the linguistic area of determination. Three types of determiners (predeterminers, central determiners, postdeterminers) are classified in order to provide background information for further research. Moreover, general rules dealing with the use of articles with reference to body parts are introduced. The above mentioned types of determiners find their realization also within the framework of the analysed phraseological units. Possessive pronouns, the definite, indefinite and zero articles represent the most spread types of determiners in the studied area.

Key words: phraseological unit, determination, determiner, article, pronoun.

1. Introduction

Linguistic determination is an analogical term with the scientific term determinism. Determination originates as a way of relations arrangement between communication activities and language systems. From the functional point of view, determination is to a certain level close to quantification.

A determinative structure is an expression form of functional and semantic meanings of language area informational surroundings. Determinative structures find their potential in a language system; they are activated during language operation and they may be directly expressed in a text. These aspects contribute to the fact that the category of determination belongs to evaluative and contextual categories [5].

The category of determination represents one of the most complex noun categories in languages of the world. Meanings which are transferred via the category are crucial for successful communication acts. Owing to this, the category has acquired the position of a universal semantic category and of a universal element of interpretation in most languages.

In individual languages there are numerous semantic elements that find their realization in the category of determination, but most generally, it is possible to state that the category is based on two basic semantic opposition systems: definite/indefinite, specific/general.

The category of determination has not acquired a grammatical status in all languages. Therefore the category is divided into grammaticalized and nongrammaticalized from the point of view of its formal expression.

In the frame of Germanic languages we talk about grammaticalized category of determination since they possess a system of formal expressive means on the surface linguistic structure in order to express the above mentioned meanings of the category.

We will base our research on the following classification of formal expressive means of the category of determination in the English language; in fact, we distinguish three basic types of determiners [6]:
1. predeterminers;
2. central determiners;
3. postdeterminers.

Predeterminers – all, both, half, double, three times, one third, what, such – appear before central determiners in a noun phrase.

Articles – the definite article the, the indefinite article a, an, the zero article – represent the most typical central determiners. Except for the articles, central determiners include:
- possessive pronouns as determiners my, our, your, his, her, its, their;
- relative determiners whose a which;
- wh-determiners in -ever, e.g. whichever;
- interrogative determiners what, which, whose;
- assertive determiner some, nonassertive determiner any and negative determiner no;
- quantitative determiner enough;
- demonstrative determiners this, that, these, those;

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https://doi.org/10.26552/com.C.2010.3.54-57
2. The use of determiners with reference to body parts

From the most general point of view, the nouns in our focus – ear, eye, face, foot, hand, head, heart – are countable nouns which mean that they are preceded by the indefinite article in singular and the zero article is acceptable only in plural. The definite article may also be used to mark the noun as definite.

It is also necessary to take into account specific issues connected with the use of determiners in this context [1].

The definite article the is often used instead of possessive pronouns when referring to parts of the body and clothes and following a preposition: He pulled her by the hair/the sleeve. He shook my hand.

There is a similar use of the in other impersonal contexts where the possessor is either irrelevant or already clear: You will feel much better if you keep the back straight when sitting.

It is not possible to use the (the possessive pronoun must be used) if the body part does not refer to what is denoted by the direct object: She plays tennis with her left hand. She plays tennis with the left hand. (she is left-handed)

The use of the is preferred when we describe unpleasant conditions of the body. Only verbs which can take the personal direct object without the prepositional phrase can occur in this construction: He turned red in the face when he heard the news.

The definite article the is sometimes used instead of possessives in a masculine style of speech [2]: How is the leg? (talking about an injury)

3. The use of determiners with reference to phraseological units containing body parts names

The following formal expressive means of the category of determination are applied in phraseological units containing the noun ear [3], [4]:

1. the quantifier all – be all ears;
2. the cardinal numeral one – go in through one ear and out of the other;
3. the zero article
   a) singular – after a preposition – play sth by ear, from ear to ear;
   b) plural – fall on deaf ears;
4. possessive pronouns – come to your ears;
   a) singular – after a preposition – cast eyes at sb;
   b) plural – after a verb – make eyes at sb;
   clap eyes on;
3. possessive pronouns – cannot take your eyes off;
4. the indefinite article – give sb a thick ear;
6. the definite article – plural – set sb/sth by the ears;
7. cataphoric reference – have the ear of sb.

When taking into account phraseological units containing the noun eye, these determiners are used [3], [4]:

1. the quantifier all – be all eyes;
2. the zero article
   a) singular – after a preposition – see eye to eye with sb;
   b) plural – after a verb – cast eyes at sb;
5. possessive pronouns + very – before your very eyes;
4. the indefinite article – give sb a black eye;
6. possessive pronouns + own – not believe your (own) eyes.
5. the definite article
   a) singular – do sb in the eye;
   the eye of the day;
   with the naked eye;
6. possessive pronouns + very – before your very eyes;
7. cataphoric reference meet the eye of sb = meet sb's eye;
8. the possessive pronoun my – my eye;
9. possessive pronouns + own – not believe your (own) eyes.

Analysing phraseological units containing the noun ear, the following means of determination are found [3], [4]:

1. the zero article – after a preposition – face to face;
2. possessive pronouns – cast sth in your face;
   fall flat on your face;
   fling sth in your face;
3. the indefinite article – have a face as long as a fiddle;
   pull a long face;
   keep a straight face;
4. the definite article
   a) singular – after a preposition – be black in the face;
The below listed forms of determination appear in phraseological units containing the noun foot [3], [4]:

1. the cardinal numeral one – have one foot in the grave;
2. the zero article
   a) singular – after a preposition – be on foot;
      set sth on foot;
   b) singular – after a verb – set foot on;
   c) plural – get cold feet;
      have feet of clay;
3. possessive pronouns – be run off your feet;
   carry sb off your feet;
   drag your feet;
4. the indefinite article – shake a foot;
   have a foot in both camps;
   not put a foot wrong;
5. the definite article
   a) singular – after a preposition –
      get off on the right/wrong foot
   b) singular – after a verb –
      have the face to do sth.
6. possessive pronouns +
5. the definite article
   a) singular – after a preposition –
      get off on the right/wrong foot
   b) singular – after a verb –
      have the face to do sth.
6. possessive pronouns +
   c) plural –
      get cold feet;
      have feet of clay;
7. the quantifier
   a) after a verb –
      bring sth to a head
   b) singular – after a verb –
      have a head like a sieve;
   by a short head
   c) plural –
      heads on;
      heads will roll;
8. possessive pronouns + own –
   a) singular –
      own – on/upon your own head
   b) singular – after your own heart
   c) plural –
      heads or tails;
   heads will roll;
9. possessive pronouns + own –
   a) singular –
      own – for your own hand
   b) plural –
      at the hands of
   c) plural – at the hands of
   d) before ordinal numerals –
      own – after your own heart;
10. the definite article
   a) singular – after a preposition –
      knock sth on the head
   by a short head
11. the possessive pronoun
   a) singular –
      my – my foot!
12. the quantifier
   a) after a verb –
      heart and soul
   heart of oak
   b) after a verb –
      eat out of your hand
      dip your hand in your pocket
      lose heart
      take heart
   c) heart and soul;
      heart of oak;
13. the possessive pronoun
   a) singular –
      bare your heart to
      cross your hand with silver;
      dip your hand in your pocket;
      eat out of your hand;
   b) plural –
      change hands;
      with clean hands;
   d) before ordinal numerals –
      at first hand;
      at second hand;
14. the indefinite article
   a) after a verb –
      bear a hand with;
      take a hand with;
      play a good hand;
   b) after a preposition –
      with a high hand;
   c) a fresh hand;
      an old hand;
15. the definite article
   a) singular –
      ask for the hand of;
      bite the hand that feeds one.

Phraseological units containing the noun heart offer these combinations of a determiner and the noun [3], [4]:

1. the zero article
   a) after a preposition –
      have sth at heart;
      be in (good) heart;
      be out of heart;
   b) after a verb –
      lose heart;
      take heart;
   c) heart and soul;
      heart of oak;
2. possessive pronouns + bare your heart to;
   break your heart;
   find it in your heart;
3. the indefinite article
   a) singular –
      have a heart of gold;
      have a heart of stone;
4. the definite article
   a) singular – from the heart;
   have the heart to do;
5. the quantifier
   a) singular –
   b) plural –
   c) plural –
   d) before ordinal numerals –
   e) plural –

4. Conclusion

There are several factors which influence the choice of a determiner in the studied fixed phrases. Semantics and communication goals are the aspects that determine this choice in the first place. Another one is frequency – the more frequently used noun we
take into account, the more petrified phraseological units it offers and the more constructions against the rules we can observe.

Only a limited number of determiners occur in phraseological units which contain names of human body parts. The definite article, the zero article, the indefinite article and possessive pronouns represent the most frequent ones; on the other hand, quantifiers, cardinal, ordinal numerals, assertive determiner some and negative determiner no are only marginally used; the remaining classes of determiners mentioned in Part 1 are not applied at all.

We analysed 440 phraseological units, only 6 of them are exceptions to the generally excepted rules concerning the usage of determiners, which represents 1.36%. The noun foot in set foot on; the noun hand in be hand in glove, at first hand, at second hand, and the noun heart in be in good heart, lose heart behave against the rules.

Approximately 15% of the studied phraseologisms allow a certain variation in the usage of a determiner within them; in these cases, it is possible to apply equally the definite article, the indefinite article/a possessive pronoun; the zero article/the definite article, the indefinite article (a slight variation in semantics may appear):
two equal determiners – make some/no head against;
three equal determiners – run an/the/your eye over.

Two determiners are combined in front of one noun in approximately 2% of the analysed fixed phrases:
the quantifier all + the possessive pronoun my - all my eye;
the quantifier all + possessive pronouns - with all your heart and soul;
the definite article + one/other - on (the) one hand/on the other hand.

References