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AN ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN THE USE OF THE
ENGLISH ARTICLES IN THE COMPOSITION
OF IRAQI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

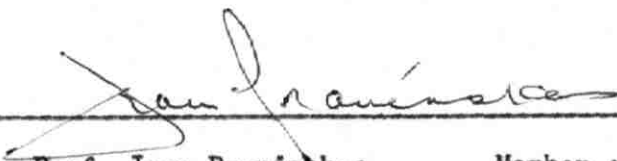
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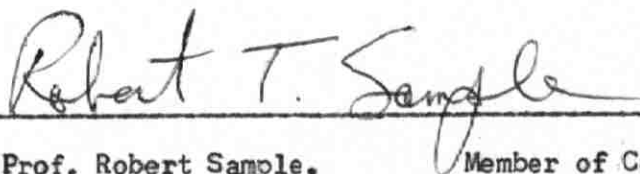
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AN ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN THE USE OF
THE ENGLISH ARTICLES IN THE
COMPOSITION OF IRAQI
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By

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A THESIS

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To
The Memory of My Mother
and to S.K.

ABSTRACT

Frequent misuse of the articles is a problem for every teacher of English as a foreign language. The error analysis in this paper was performed to find the high frequency contexts of errors in order to select and grade some of the uses of a, the and \emptyset in the light of the findings.

The first chapter presents the problem and the goals of this paper. The second presents the procedures followed in collecting the data and in identifying and classifying the errors. A discussion of the English article system is presented in the third chapter. An effort has been made to present a clear picture of the Arabic article system and how it works in the fourth chapter. The findings of the error analysis are presented in raw scores and percentages in the first part of the fifth chapter. It was found that the errors formed 19% of the total usages and that 38.5% of the total errors were made in the use of a with count nouns, where a was replaced by the or \emptyset . A positive correlation was discovered between error areas and linguistic differences between the English and Arabic article systems. This is presented in the second part of the chapter. Conclusions and implications relevant to teaching are drawn in the sixth chapter. Some of the problems that arose in the course of writing this paper were left unsolved. These are presented at the end of the last chapter. Appendix A presents a number of unclassified errors and Appendix B presents a sample of five composition papers, chosen from the corpus to give the reader an idea about the nature of the errors and the procedure followed in identifying them.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

The articles in English are both difficult to describe and difficult to learn. They are the source of many errors because they form a very complex system. Even after a considerable amount of formal study, errors in the use of a, the and \emptyset have been observed to persist. Consequently, corrective teaching is inevitable. A systematic analysis of errors that students have made in their writing might form a sound basis for such corrective teaching.

This paper has been written with three goals in mind. The first goal is to identify the areas of use of the articles in which Arabic speaking students make most errors. The second goal is to find out whether there is any correlation between these areas and areas where the English and Arabic article systems differ. The third goal is to draw implications relevant to teaching.

B. Definitions

The following terminological conventions have been adopted in this paper:

1. Classical Arabic (Classical): That form of Arabic which is seen in the Koran and older literature and spoken only when these are recited.

2. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA): That form of Arabic spoken by educated people on formal occasions, heard on the radio and television, and read in the press.

3. Iraqi Colloquial Arabic (Iraqi): That form of Arabic spoken, but rarely written, in Iraq.

4. The English article system: The distribution of the three English articles generally known as the indefinite article, a, the definite article, the, and the zero article, \emptyset .

5. The zero article (English): This paper takes the position that it is useful to describe an entity, symbolized by \emptyset , that does not simply represent the omission of a or the, but which is an article contributing to the meaning of the noun it precedes and contrasting with a and the, as in these examples: God created man in his image. God created a man in his image. God created the man in his image.

6. The Arabic article system: The distribution of the defining suffix, -n, the defining prefix, al-, and the zero prefix, \emptyset . The article system of both Classical and MSA consists of -n and al-. The article system of Iraqi consists of al- and \emptyset .

7. The suffix -n: This is the Arabic suffix attached to stems of nouns, adjectives, and some adverbs

when fully vowelized for case endings, e.g. rajul: rajulu-n, rajula-n, rajuli-n. It is never attached directly to a stem without a case ending vowel. It contrasts with al- and the two are mutually exclusive in both Classical and MSA. It may sometimes, but not always, be identified with a or \emptyset in English.

8. The prefix al-: This is the Arabic prefix attached to nouns, adjectives, and some adverbs. It prevails in all forms of Arabic. It is generally called the definite article in foreign texts and translated as the. Although it is identical with the in some of its uses, it differs in others.

9. The zero article (Iraqi): This linguistic designation, symbolized by \emptyset , does not refer to the omission of -n or al-. It contrasts with al- in Iraqi and is considered a prefix in this paper. It may sometimes, but not always, be identified with a or \emptyset in English.

TABLE 1
TRANSCRIPTION OF ARABIC (IRAQI PRONUNCIATION)

Arabic Letter	IPA Symbol	Trans. Symbol		Arabic Letter	IPA Symbol	Trans. Symbol
ف	f	f		ب	b	b
ث	θ	θ		ز	ð	†
ت	t	t		د	d	d
س	s	s		ز	z	z
ش	ʃ	ʃ		ج	dʒ	j
ك	k	k		ق	q	q
خ	x	x		غ	ɣ	G
ح	ħ	H		ع	ʕ	9
هـ	h	h		ء	ʔ	ʔ
ط	t̤	T		ض } ظ }	ð	ð
ص	s̤	S				
م	m	m		ل	l	l
ن	n	n		ر	r	r
و	w	w		ي	y	y
و	u	u		و	u:	uu
ا	a	a		ا	a:	aa
ي	i	i		ي	i:	ii
ا	aw	aw		ا	ay	ay
Additional Iraqi Sounds						
پ	p	p		چ	tʃ	ʃ
گ	g	g				
ی	e	e		و	o:	o

II. PROCEDURES

A. Acquisition of Data

The corpus of data for this study has come from the eleventh grade of Al-Kadhimiyya High School for Girls, Baghdad, Iraq. It consists of 219 free compositions. The girls (aged seventeen to nineteen) who wrote these compositions have been studying English for seven years for an average of six hours a week. For the last five years of study, their teachers of English have been graduates of the Department of English of the College of Education, the University of Baghdad. The composition topics were suggested by this writer who intended them to cover as many uses of the English articles as possible. Here they are:

1. Basra is the Capital of the South
2. Iraq is the Gift of the Two Rivers
3. Petroleum in Iraq
4. Why we Learn English
5. A Short Story
6. The Illegal Existence of Israel

The teacher concerned was instructed to choose one of these topics, discuss it with her students and let them write on it in the classroom, not at home. The students

were instructed to write briefly so that they would not get tired and make unnecessary errors. The composition was given as an ordinary assignment, and the students did not know the real purpose of the task. This writer did not attend the classes. The majority of the students chose the fifth topic. Only one student each wrote on the third and sixth topics.

B. Identification and Classification
of Errors

The composition papers were read and the errors in the use of the English articles were marked. The errors were copied with context on data cards bearing a serial number for each paper and a serial number for each error on that paper. Each error was classified semantically and structurally, and these classifications were noted down on the data cards in front of each error. As a step towards objectifying the results, errors and their classifications were checked in the corpus by Mr. Robert Sample, a native speaker and a member of the Advisory Committee of this paper. Data charts were constructed on the semantic basis of Jespersen's theory of stages of familiarity, and the errors were tallied under each stage. An attempt was made to classify the errors syntactically but that attempt failed. The syntactic classes did not prove to be useful and were abandoned. Correct uses have been counted for the sake of

working out percentages.

C. Semantic Classes

Nouns were sub-categorized according to their general semantic characteristics. A two-fold criterion was used:

1) Jespersen's scale of familiarity (1961, Part VII, p. 417) which attempts to include the extra-linguistic context), and

2) Jespersen's and other linguist's division of nouns into semantic/structural types, i.e. mass, count singular, count plural, and "fixed usage". Let us show how this procedure works:

He eats an apple every day.

Apple is singular, apples may be counted, two apples, three apples. In addition, the sentence does not refer to a specific apple already alluded to, or one with which the speaker has prior familiarity; thus, complete unfamiliarity.

Mother poured me some milk.

I drank the milk quickly.

Milk in the second sentence is mass (uncountable), referring to a specific quantity of milk already mentioned, thus, the speaker or writer has greater familiarity with it.

John, I want to talk to you.

John refers to a person with whom the speaker or writer is completely familiar.

If the student used any article other than an in the first example, the in the second and \emptyset in the third, that would be counted an error.

D. Structural Classes

Errors have been classified structurally into six classes on the basis of what article actually preceded the noun in the corpus and what article would have preceded that noun in correct usage. Six possible combinations have been set out. An arrow has been used to denote that the first article has been replaced incorrectly by the second. Here are these structural classes with examples from the corpus:

1. a \rightarrow the: An event happened to (the)¹ poor man who worked on the sea (paper 200)².
2. a \rightarrow \emptyset : I saw (\emptyset) river on my right and (\emptyset) thick forest on my left (paper 198).
3. the \rightarrow a: He surprised to find something which was (a) last thing he expected to find (paper 200).
4. the \rightarrow \emptyset : In (\emptyset) same city there was another merchant (paper 174).

¹Erroneous articles are enclosed in parentheses.

²Errors from the corpus are cited verbatim. Reference to composition papers are cited in parentheses after each example.

5. $\emptyset \rightarrow$ a : He was a bad man for sometimes he was drank (a) wine (paper 173).
6. $\emptyset \rightarrow$ the: The king gave to (the) Marco many goods and many pearls (paper 197).

In the first example, a is the correct article because man has not been previously mentioned since this is the beginning of the story. In the second, a is the correct article because both river and forest are count singulars that have not been previously mentioned in the story. In the third, the is the correct article because thing is preceded by a superlative adjective. In the fourth, the is the correct article because city is preceded by same, showing that it is familiar, i.e., has already been mentioned. In the fifth, \emptyset is the correct article because wine is a mass noun that has not been previously mentioned in the story. In the sixth, \emptyset is the correct article because Marco is a proper name of a person.

E. Unclassified Errors

The designation "Unclassified" refers to those errors which defied analysis under the present system of semantic or structural classification. Most of these errors have the pattern "a plus adjective" or "one plus count singular" such as She loved a man ... but he was (a) poor (paper 2) ; There was an old king ruled (one) country (paper 16). A complete list of these unclassified errors is presented in Appendix A.

III. THE ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM

This chapter is intended to provide a theoretical base for my classification system by summarizing in some detail the analysis of the English article system by three representative linguists. My own system is then to be seen, in part at least, as a modification of the first of these. The traditional point of view is represented by Jespersen in his Modern English Grammar (1961, Part VII); a structural point of view is presented in Strang's Modern English Structure (1965); and a transformational point of view is presented in Hill's "Re-Examination of the English Articles" (1966).

Each of these three authors deals with and attempts to solve the same problem while using a quite different approach. Jespersen builds up his theory of "familiarity" on a semantic basis and supports it with hundreds of examples from English writers dating from Chaucer to G.B. Shaw. Strang builds up her theory of "contrast" on a structural basis and concludes that the meaning contributed by the article to the following noun results from contrast with the other articles that may be used with that noun in varying contexts. Hill's theory of "first-second mention" has its roots in Jespersen's semantic classes of nouns and

Strang's theory of "contrast" yet his transformational approach has very little in common with them.

In these three summaries, interest has been focused on three main points: (a) the theory each writer advocates, (b) how each theory explains the uses of the English articles that lie within its boundaries, and (c) how each author explains "exceptional" uses.

A. Jespersen's Modern English Grammar¹

Before presenting Jespersen's theory of "familiarity", let us briefly examine his semantic classes of nouns and the articles that go with each class as shown in Table 2 below, which he presents in a later section of his book.

TABLE 2

JESPERSEN'S CLASSES OF NOUNS AND
DISTRIBUTION OF ARTICLES[★]

Noun Type	Indefinite	Definite	Zero
Unit-word	x	x	
Mass-word		x	x
Proper Name			x

★ (p. 437)

¹Most of the examples and quotations in this summary are from Jespersen (1961, Part VII) and page references to that book are indicated in parentheses after each citation. The examples not so designated are mine. Other sources for quotations are indicated by the date of publication as well as page references.

The term "unit-word" stands for count nouns that can be modified by words like one, two, many, and (a) few and may occur in the plural: He has one daughter and two sons. The term "mass", according to Jespersen, "only refers to a certain function of substantives" (p. 437). A word may function as a count or a mass noun in different contexts. When a word functions as a mass noun, it can be modified by words like much and (a) little and does not occur in the plural: He drank a little beer. In a sentence such as He drank two beers the word beer is not a mass noun but a count noun meaning "bottles" or "pints of beer".

The term "indefinite" in Table 2 refers to a, and the term "definite" refers to the, and the term "zero" refers to the absence of article or no article in Jespersen's interpretation.

The significance of Table 2 is that it establishes noun classes with which Jespersen constructed his "theory of stages of familiarity, i.e. knowledge of what item of the class denoted by the word is meant in the case concerned" (p. 417). Nouns appearing with a or zero are placed in Stage One, complete unfamiliarity, in Table 3; those appearing with the fall into Stage Two, greater familiarity; and all others, including proper names are residuals that take zero and fall under Stage Three, complete familiarity. The writer has designed Table 3 to present Jespersen's "theory of stages of familiarity"

as it will be used as the basis for Chapter IV of this paper.

Adjectives that might have fallen into Stage Two, in Table 3, have been excluded as they are not discussed in the error analysis in Chapter IV. What Jespersen calls "junctions", (i.e. noun constructions in this case), have been excluded from this summary because he treats "junctions" according to their head noun types as if they were single nouns. To discuss them would be a duplication of what has been said about single nouns.

As the terms "unit-word" and "mass-word" which appear in Table 2 will not be used in this paper, they have been replaced by "count" and "mass" in Table 3.

Stage One - Complete Unfamiliarity

As shown in Table 3, Stage One of Jespersen's theory involves two articles: a, the indefinite article, which precedes singular count nouns, and the zero article, which precedes both mass nouns and plural count nouns.

1. The Indefinite Article A: According to Jespersen, a is used before a singular count noun to indicate that the noun denotes an individual member of a class, but it does not indicate which member. The noun referent is definite but unknown: There comes a soldier marching on the high road (p. 419); Can a boy carry that plank? (p. 420).

TABLE 3

JESPERSEN'S THEORY OF FAMILIARITY

Stage	Kind of Noun	Article	Examples of Uses
I Complete un- familiarity	1.Count Singular	a	He eats an apple every day.
	2.Mass	∅	He drinks milk every day.
	3.Count plural	∅	He eats apples every day.
II Greater familiarity	1.Count singular	the	I saw a boy but the boy disappeared.
	2.Mass		I drank the milk.
	3.Count plural		The children went to bed.
III Complete familiarity	1.Vocatives	∅	Come along, boy.
	2.Proper names		John, Baghdad.
	3.God		Moslims believe in God.
	4.Members of immediate household		Father, mother, uncle, baby.
	5.Names of meals		Dinner is ready.
	6.Place-names		Church, prison, school, town, etc.

The introductory use of a and its use in book-titles are related to this function: I will write you a cheque but you will take the cheque to the bank (p. 420); A Modern English Grammar.

A is sometimes used before a noun that "vaguely refers to a member of a class, but especially indicating the typical qualities of the person or the thing in question" (p. 423); She had never yet been inside a theater (p. 423). Predicative nouns and nouns in apposition preceded by a belong in this group, where we think of the typical qualities of the noun referent rather than its membership in a particular class: He is a fool (p. 423); Mr. Jones, a physician and a teacher, is visiting us tonight.

A is sometimes used before a noun referring "to all (or any number) of the class or species it denotes, but only as a representative of the members" (p. 424). This is often called the generic use of a. Jespersen calls it the "all-representative use" of a (p. 424): A man has a right to think as his reason directs (p. 424).

Jespersen mentions some secondary uses of a; among these are the following:

A may be used distributively meaning "each" and indicating an indefinite member of a class: A smile a day is all I require (p. 426); About half-a-guinea a-day (p. 425); Five shillings a-mile (p. 426).

A may be used before a proper name "to denote a

member of the bearer of the name is a typical representative" (p. 426). The proper name in this case is treated as a common noun: He was not a Mozart (p. 427); His mother was a Donne; A Mr. Smith proposed to her; He bought a new Ford.

A is used before quantifiers and cardinals whether they are used as adjectivals or pronominals: I bought a few books; I bought a few; (But: He has seen many a battle); There is a little milk in that bottle; I have counted a hundred (thousand, million) stars.

"A is frequently used to denote unification of something uncountable" (p. 432): It put me into an Agony (p. 432); She has a headache (p. 433); I have no objection to an ice (p. 435).

2. The Zero Article: The term "mass" which appears in Tables 2 and 3 is designed to cover both material and abstract nouns because both of these are uncountable. Jespersen divides nouns into count and mass and states that "a word... cannot once for all be reckoned as belonging to any of the two groups," because a word may function now as count and now as mass. Consequently the meaning of a noun preceded by a is different from that of a noun preceded by zero. "In other words, a difference on the plane of expression is accompanied by a difference on the plane of contents" (p. 419). Thus, (He drinks milk every morning) is different from (He drinks two milks every morning) in that in the first

example the quantity of the material spoken of is left indefinite while in the second example the quantity is definite, referring to cups or glasses of milk.

When the zero article precedes a mass noun, that noun may denote an undefined quantity of the thing meant (partial generic) or the whole genus (total generic): He took bread (p. 438); He yielded to pressure; Success is success (p. 439); Money begets money (p. 440). Some names of diseases are considered mass and belong here: He died of cancer; He had an attack of hysteria.

When the zero article precedes a plural count noun "the number of items denoted by the plural word is left indefinite and thus there can be no knowledge of what items of the class denoted by the word is meant" (p. 442). Jespersen states that "plurals are semantically related to mass-words. Both of these in themselves denote an indefinite quantity, the difference being that mass-words denote uncountable, plurals countable quantities" (p. 442).

The zero article before plurals indicates that the noun denotes part of or the total of its genus: The night I spend in sighs - partial generic (p. 444); Ships are but boards - total generic (p. 443). Some names of diseases that occur in the plural only are used with zero: He has got measles.

Jespersen considers the names of languages mass nouns and lists them under the zero article: He knows a

little English; He speaks German fluently. But the is used when speaking of translations or asking about the meaning of a word: Translated from the German; What is the Arabic for water? The use of the in these examples may be the result of omission of part of the expression, i.e. The German of Goethe and the Arabic word.

Jespersen traces the zero article in certain grammatical functions of nouns. He notes that the zero article appears before the objects of transitive verbs like get, do, make, have, keep, etc. The chief reference here is to the quality of the individual or to an indefinite quantity: Beg pardon; change color; declare war; make haste; take rest; pay attention; play football; shake hands.

He also notes that zero appears before nouns used predicatively where "prominence is given to the quality inherent in the sb (substantive) in question while familiarity and reference to a definite individual is left out of consideration" (p. 450): He will be communist next (p. 450); I am not philosopher enough (p. 450). Predicative nouns denoting the holder of a job, office or profession are preceded by zero if the position may be held by one person only: He was king of England; I am head of the the family. The zero article appears before mass nouns used predicatively to denote an indefinite quantity: All is vanity (p. 455); Science is rather rot (p. 455); It might be good policy (p. 456).

Finally, he notes that zero is frequent before all kinds of nouns in prepositional phrases. Here are some examples chosen at random: Stratford-on-Avon; from end to end; day by day; at night; at home; sick at heart; by land; by bus; in time; in secret; out of barracks; set on fire; on purpose; go to pieces; go to prison; in place of; go up (down) stream; go up (down) hill; etc. (pp. 459-468).

Stage Two - Greater Familiarity

This stage is marked by only one form, the definite article which can precede singular and plural count nouns, and mass nouns, as shown in Table 3 above. The most important uses of the mentioned by Jespersen are the following:

1. Contextual - Situational THE: "The definite article plus a substantive in the singular denotes one individual more or less known to the speaker or writer ... before he makes the statement" (p. 479). This pre-knowledge can be indicated by the context explicitly or implicitly: Once upon a time there lived an old tailor in a small village. The tailor was known all over the village as "Old Harry" (p. 479). On the other hand, this pre-knowledge can be given by the whole situation. Thus we have: The door (in a room), the mayor (in a town), the king (in a kingdom), the wind (in the open), etc.

The same can be said of the Creator, the creature, the Lord, the earth, the sun, the moon, etc.

2. Typical THE: After verbs like act and play, the denotes the typical or characteristic specimen of the noun it precedes: Olivia acted the coquet to perfection (p. 485), He played the fool. This use of the extends to predicative nouns: He is quite the gentlemen (p. 486); She was the child again (p. 486).

3. Generic THE: The theory behind the generic use of the is more psychological than grammatical. Jespersen explains this cognitive process when he states "... in the speaker's or writer's mind there is a more or less vague image of one member of the species in question and this is taken as representing the whole species. As the species is presupposed to be known to the speaker or writer, we must have the definite article to denote it" (p. 492): The Anarchist, the Fabian, the Salvationist, the Vegetarian, the doctor, the lawyer, the parson ... all have some prescription for bettering us (p. 493).

Man needs special mention. Jespersen states that "man generally takes the zero article when referring to human beings in general, but referring to the male whether individually or generically it usually takes the" (p. 494); Man has been described as an animal ... (p. 494); Men are weak but man is strong (p. 494); The child is father of

the man — in contrast with the woman (p. 495). On the analogy of man, woman has come to be used generically with zero: The role of each was clear: man the pursuer, woman the victim (p. 496).

The precedes names of animals, plants and things when used generically: He came to see the cedar (p. 496); The fox is an animal to be envied; He plays the piano; I hate the Court and like the Camp (p. 499).

4. Distributive THE: Jespersen relates the distributive use of the to its generic function: It sold at ten shillings the bushel (p. 503); You should have taken the rooms by the month (p. 504).

5. THE in Exclamations: The is used here in the sense of "what (a)." An emotional element in the statement is essential: The villain! Oh, the wretch! (p. 506).

6. THE Before Comparatives: "In modern usage the with comparatives has a distinctly adverbial function" (p. 509). The ... the means "by how much ... by so much". The ... the indicates "a parallel increase in two independent cases" (p. 509); The smaller the unit the better its performance (p. 510). Single the may be seen before comparatives meaning "in or by that" or "in or by so much": I hope men will be the better for remembering me (p. 511).

7. THE Before Superlatives and Ordinals: The as

a rule precedes superlatives and ordinals, the noun referent being in the highest degree or in a definite place in a series of numbers: He was one of the best (p. 513); So the last shall be the first and the first last (p. 513); ... You are the best of wives (p. 513). Superlative most means "the greatest number of" when used alone; when preceded by the it means "the highest degree of the adjective that follows it": Most generous men were there; The most generous men were there. Yet the following example seems ambiguous unless stress is indicated: Most horrible things happen in war-time (p. 518).

Some superlative constructions may, however, involve zero. Superlative last is used with words expressing time in two ways. It is either preceded by zero and thus refers to the time at its most recent previous occurrence or by the and thus refers to some other date: I saw him last Friday (last week, month, year, etc.); He spent the last Friday (of his vacation) in Paris. Both zero and the are found with next in connection with time: Next moment we were both groping downstairs ... and the next we opened the door (p. 520). When next modifies the name of a day it takes zero: We shall meet again next Sunday.

8. THE Before Adjectives as Primaries: The precedes adjectives occupying nominal positions. They mostly have a generic sense in this case, referring

either to the whole class or to the individual concerned: The rich must help the poor; We must start with the known and go on to the unknown; There is but one step from the grotesque to the horrible (p. 522). Both zero and the may appear before most when used nominally: But most found the attempt beyond their strength (p. 525); The most lay silent (p. 525). The often follows all: She did all the talking (p. 526). In modern American usage the zero article follows all in expressions of time: They had been playing all day ... (p. 526).

Stage Three - Complete Familiarity

This stage is marked by only one form, the zero article. Jespersen states that "here we have a familiarity so complete that no article (determinative) is needed" (p. 529). He enters six categories of nouns under this stage.

1. Address (Vocative): Zero precedes a noun in the vocative case because it is either a proper name (see below) or "has much the same function as a proper name" (p. 529). Moreover a vocative "is in the second person and the article is generally employed in the third person" (p. 530); Nurse! Mother! Oh, is anybody there? (p. 531); Yes, Beauty, I see ... (p. 531).

2. Members of Immediate Household: Zero precedes names of members of immediate household when used in the

family circle: "How is mother? and how is father?" said Sam (p. 531); Nurse is not in bed; Cook said so; Baby is crying.

3. Public Institutions: Zero precedes names of public institutions "when the purpose for which they are meant is thought of rather than the actual building" (p. 535). In the last case a or the is used. These names include church, chapel, school, prison, college, hospital (England), Parliament (England), Congress (U.S.A.) and many others: Of course we all liked Church better than Chapel (p. 535); School is over.

Zero precedes town if it is the one with which the person is connected. I spent all yesterday in town; They live in town.

4. Names of Periods, Dates and Holidays: Zero precedes names of periods and dates because they are thought of as proper names. The same applies to names of holidays like Christmas and Easter: Not till Monday, my dear son (p. 537); See you on Sunday; I saw him on Friday; March is cold. Christmas comes but once a year (p. 538).

Both zero and the may precede names of seasons; Here is spring come (p. 540); The spring is passing through the land (p. 541).

5. Names of Meals: Zero generally precedes names of meals, but the is used if the reference is to food or

the meal is particularized: At lunch he was silent (p. 534); Dinner is ready; The dinner is on the table (p. 534); There was a doctor at the dinner (p. 534).

6. God: Zero generally precedes the name of God, but the is used if it is particularized: God is almighty; The God of Israel.

7. Proper Names: According to Jespersen's theory of stages of familiarity, a proper name needs no article, i.e. it is preceded by zero because it involves some degree of familiarity with the referent on the part of the speaker or writer. Most proper names are either personal or place names. Zero precedes a personal name applied to one definite person, but the precedes it when modified by a restrictive adjective or a title: John told me so; John Smith did it; The younger John Smith did it. Both zero and the may precede singular place names. The precedes plural place names regularly, where "the word denotes a plurality of units (p. 545), and consequently is a kind of count noun: Washington; the Hague; the United States.

The generally precedes names of rivers with or without the word river: The Nile; the River Nile. The precedes names of oceans, seas, and straits: The Atlantic; The Atlantic Ocean; The Marmora, The Red Sea; The Bosphorus. Zero precedes names of lakes: Lake Michigan.

Zero precedes most singular names of countries;

the precedes plurals regularly: England; France; the Balkans, the Netherlands. Exceptions with the among singulars are: The Sudan; the Crimea, the Yemen, the Congo.

Zero precedes singular names of islands; the precedes plurals regularly: Cyprus; Bermuda; the Philippines; the Bahamas.

Zero generally precedes names of towns, but exceptions with the are not infrequent; London; Baghdad; the Hague; the Bronx.

Zero precedes compound proper names of adjective plus noun: New York; New South Wales; New England.

Zero also precedes names with non-restrictive adjectives: Old England; Rare Ben Johnson. The precedes names with restrictive adjectives; The melancholy Jaques (p. 575); The Roman Jupiter (p. 575).

Exceptional Uses

Jespersen treats of the exceptional uses before he presents his theory. Let us listen to him (p. 410):

"As such we may denote those cases in which the and a are not completely 'articles' as used in the functions to be dealt with in the rest of this chapter, but retain much of the demonstrative and numerative quality inherent in that or this or one, respectively."

Examples are: I am occupied for the moment (p. 410); Lend you money? No I shall do nothing of the

kind (p. 410); A stitch in time saves nine (p. 411); We should go in a body (p. 411).

Jespersen also treats of what he terms "prosiopesis," i.e. the omission of a and the at the beginning of an utterance in informal speech and newspaper headlines: Bottle of wine for the gentleman on the box (p. 413); Quarter to eight (p. 413); Coach is ready, Sir (p. 414); Headmaster killed (p. 416).

Jespersen's division of nouns (See Table 2 above) into unit-word, mass-word and proper names does not classify those categories which he lists under Stage Three, nouns like dinner, father, God, and school. He does not tell us why Dinner is ready, Sir is different from Coach is ready, Sir; why dinner is preceded by zero and coach by the which is omitted?

He does not, in fact, deal adequately with many moot points like mass nouns used as count, superlatives with zero, and proper names with the. He either refers to these points without explanation or analysis or else gives lists of examples most of which are out of date. One may be tempted to think of his work as a thoroughly organized list of uses and examples, but not a rigorous analysis that tries to solve the many problems involved in the uses of the English articles. His list, however, is of considerable use as a source for teachers.

B. Strang's Modern English Structure²

Strang treats of the problem of English articles on a purely structural basis. She recognizes three articles, a, the and zero and divides nouns into two categories, singular and plural. The present writer has designed Table 4 to elucidate Strang's idea of the distribution of the articles in English.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF ARTICLES IN ENGLISH

Noun Type	Zero	the	a
Singular	x	x	x
Plural	x	x	

Strang states that (p. 108):

"The most central type of determiner is that to which traditionally the name article is given: it is so central because its only function is as adjunct to a following noun or noun-like word or sequence which is its head; it is therefore a marker of the following noun; lexically empty itself, it indicates the noun-ness of its head and contributes to its meaning as a noun."

²Most of the examples are from Strang (1965) and page references to that book are indicated in parentheses after each citation. Other examples are mine.

She adds that "the kind of meaning contributed by any one term³ is determined in relation to the other terms available with the given noun-form" (p. 109). In other words, the meaning contributed by any one article springs from contrast with the other articles that may precede the given noun in other contexts.

She sets up five possible combinations of article + noun to explain her theory of contrast, choosing what she calls "homonymous forms" of the word cake, countable and uncountable, for her examples:

1. Zero + noun singular, cake
2. the + noun singular, the cake
3. a + noun singular, a cake
4. Zero + noun plural, cakes
5. the + noun plural, the cakes

Strang explains these five possibilities as follows (p. 109):

"The kind of meaning contributed by any one term is determined in relation to the other terms available with the given noun-form. 1., in fact, indicates that the noun is an uncountable; it is a pattern that does not occur with what we have called the central type of noun. 2. does not distinguish countable from uncountable, but adds one of a range of specifying meanings, which will be examined in §102. 3. indicates that the head is a countable, and adds one of a range of specifying meanings to be considered in §103. 4., which occurs only with plurals, does not distinguish countables from uncountables, and points a purely lexical contrast

³The word "term" means article in this quotation.

(cakes, not sugar, bread, biscuits, etc.). 5., mostly used with countables, adds a specifying meaning (in contrast with 4.) to be considered in § 102; it is also used with plural uncountables, and with a few uncountables it is indispensable (e.g., the intelligentsia) - where this is so the the cannot be contrastive, and so is more like a part of a name than a true article."

Strang goes on to discuss the specifying meanings contributed by a and the.

The Indefinite Article:

A can only be used before singular countables.

"It indicates that the noun is being used of one, or some(one), or any(one) or a particular instance of the referent of that noun" (p. 111): A pound isn't enough; A child turned the corner and came into view; A child could do it; They were talking to a man I know well (p. 111).

A is also used idiomatically in stating rates, (A shilling a pound - p. 111), and in to a as in: They all gave their permission - to a man (p. 111).

The Definite Article:

The has two main uses: Particularization and non-particularization.

Particularization: The precedes "an individual instance or individual instances of the referent of a noun, making it or them as before mentioned or already known or contextually particularized" (p. 109): We keep a dog; We are fond of the dog (p. 109); The Queen opens

the Parliament today; The poet Homer was blind. Contextual particularization may take one of two forms. First, subsequent specification in the utterance by means of a relative construction: The passage I have quoted [is long] (p. 109). Second, implicit situational reference; Pass the butter; The Queen will visit India soon; He will be hanged by the neck; The sun is rising; The world is a bubble. Particularizing the may also be found before superlative adjectives used nominally: He is the best. It is also found in apposition, i.e. in such constructions as Alfred the Great (pp. 109-110).

Non-particularization: The is used as a non-particularizing article preceding "a noun used generically or universally or as a type of its class; or with a plural noun used universally or a de-adjectival class-noun (p. 110)": The whale is threatened with extinction; Playing the piano; The World, the Flesh and the Devil; The sublime; The French; The Joneses (p. 110).

The Zero Article:

In a brief passing note (p. 109), Strang mentions that "predicatively the zero form is more freely used, especially in words for occupations (He is more artist than businessman); also with certain characterizing words, usually predicatives (more knave than fool)."

Exceptional Uses:

There are several uses of the that lie beyond the

boundaries of Strang's theory of contrast such as its use in stating rates: Two shillings the pound (p. 110). The is also used with linked comparatives as well as single comparatives: The more he drinks the merrier he becomes; The worse for a drink (p. 110).

Strang's particularizing and non-particularizing uses of the do not constitute an analysis on any linguistic level, but an extremely arbitrary list, much more arbitrary than Jespersen's, with only two inadequate categories. Her theory of contrast does not work all the way through. She herself says that the in the cake and zero in cakes does not distinguish a count from a mass noun (p. 109). Although she admits that her handling of the articles is short, she does not deal with great majority of examples such as proper names, the many different uses of zero with such nouns as man when used generically. Her recognition of singular and plural nouns is no excuse for excluding mass nouns and proper names and the uses of the with adjectives from the discussion.

C. Hill's "Re-Examination of the English Articles":⁴

Hill commences with a brief evaluation of the theories concerning the uses of the English articles advanced or advocated by Henry Sweet, Poutsma, George

⁴Most examples are from Hill (1966) and page references to that article are indicated in Parentheses after each citation, Other examples are mine.

O. Curme, Kruisinga, Paul Christophersen, Jespersen, J. Barton, Barbara Strang and Paul Roberts. He then adapts Jespersen's theory of stages of familiarity and his semantic classes of nouns and Strang's theory of contrast. He advances a theory of first-second mention as the sole theory that explains the uses of the English articles and claims to solve the problem transformationally. He accepts Jespersen's division of nouns into "unit-word", "mass-word" and "proper name" (See Table 2 above). Yet he relabels them according to the number of articles associated with each category as shown in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5

HILL'S CLASSES OF NOUNS

Noun Type	a	the	zero
Two-Article Nouns	x	x	(x) ⁵
One-Article Nouns		x	(x)
Fixed One-Article Nouns		x OR	(x)

⁵ Parentheses denote that Hill does not recognize \emptyset as an article.

Two-article Nouns:

These consist of count nouns that can be preceded by a and the. He claims that the plural of "a + noun" is "zero + noun" and the plural of "the + noun" is "the + noun": a book - books; the book - the books (p. 223).

One-article Nouns:

These consist of mass/abstract nouns. Their main characteristics are that they do not appear with a or plural and that they have the normally: We want money and we want the money for a good reason (p. 223). He claims that abstract nouns take the usually when followed by a relative construction: Man pursues happiness, but the happiness he gets is little enough (p. 223).

Fixed One-article Nouns:⁶

These are nouns either unmarked or marked by one fixed form of article, the. Hill includes here several subclasses, the most important of which are place names that appear with or without the: Harlem, the Bronx. Another subclass is that of personal names which appear with zero regularly but irregular forms with the are not infrequent: John; the Cid, the McGregor. He includes here one-member classes of nouns like the sun, the moon and the generic use of man, which he thinks can be extended to the generic use of other nouns which always appear with the, as in: The horse is a quadruped (p. 224).

⁶Hill calls this category "Fixed-Usage Nouns". The present writer changed Hill's terminology in accordance with the first two categories.

Hill points out that "the impossibility of contrast makes the use or absence of the article in some sense meaningless, though it is obvious that often enough the presence or absence of the article identifies the noun expression as being a noun of one class or another" (p. 224). Thus he calls the absence of article and the in the following examples "meaningless identifiers":
John never read Hamlet (p. 224); John read the Tempest.

Hill adopts Jespersen's definition of the articles as "markers of three stages of familiarity" (p. 224). He begins his transformational discussion to prove his theory of first-second mention with the two-article class of nouns "where there is full contrast" (p. 224). A precedes the noun when first mentioned. The precedes the noun in the second mention: I tried a door, but the door was locked (p. 224). Hill emphasizes that the often defines two nouns as strictly synonymous: A dog bit me, but the wretched little creature ran away (p. 225). He emphasizes that the determination of the span over which previous mention of an item is effective in demanding the use of the can go beyond the sentence boundary: This is a book. I put the book on the table. Where is the book now? He emphasizes these two points to make use of them later in embedding sentences and in deleting nouns and articles. He states that the "second mention usage of the definite article is the fundamental one, that many of the other, even the more special, uses of

the definite article can be so explained as to be referred to second mention" (p. 225). He derives, for example, nicknames like Eric the Red and Alfred the Great from the first and second mentions by deleting the second: Eric + the Red Eric ⇒ Eric the Red (p. 225).

Hill goes on to discuss the before a noun followed by a relative clause with or without a wh- form. He objects to the assumption that "the article is required by the relative construction" (p. 225), and rejects the alternative assumption that "the relative specifies" (p. 225), because both a and the can precede such constructions. He claims that a or the in such constructions are the result of embedding the second mention into the first mention, or the first mention into the second mention. He cites two examples in support of this point and gives directions as to possible derivations. This writer will tabulate these examples for the sake of clarity (p. 226):

1. A man who refuses alcohol is a teetotaler.
2. The man who refuses alcohol is a teetotaler.

Hill gives these source sentences for the first example:

- (a) A man is a teetotaler. (first mention)
- (b) The man refuses alcohol. (second mention)

If we embed (b) in (a) and replace the man (second mention) by who, the first mention will remain:

A man (the man refuses alcohol) is a teetotaler ⇒
A man who refuses alcohol is a teetotaler.

He gives these source sentences for the second example:

(a) A man refuses alcohol. (first mention)

(b) The man is a teetotaler. (second mention).

If we embed (a) in (b) and replace a man (first mention) by who, the second mention will remain:

The man (a man refuses alcohol) is a teetotaler ⇒

The man who refuses alcohol is a teetotaler.

Hill goes on to support his theory of first-second mention by analyzing "subsequent specification" by means of prepositional phrases where again both a and the occur, giving these two examples (p. 227):

1. A book on the table fell off. (first mention).

2. The book on the table fell off. (second mention).

For the first example, he gives these source sentences:

(a) A book fell off.

(b) The book was on the table.

Embedding (b) in (a) and deleting the book (second mention) and verb to be, we get the first mention:

A book (the book was on the table) fell off ⇒

A book on the table fell off.

For the second example, he gives these source sentences:

(a) A book was on the table.

(b) The book fell off.

Embedding (a) in (b) and deleting a book (first mention) and verb to be, we get the second mention:

The book (a book was on the table) fell off. ⇒

The book on the table fell off.

Hill relates the use of the with one-article nouns to second mention too. When first mentioned, one-article nouns appear without any article, [i.e. with zero]. He cites the following examples (p. 228):

1. Mary bought butter because the butter was cheap.
2. Mary bought butter because butter was cheap.
3. Men pursue happiness, but happiness is not always reached.

In the first two examples, Hill claims that the is optional in second mention. In the third examples, he claims that the cannot be used at all. He comments that "for both the uncountable nouns and the abstract nouns, the distinction between definite and indefinite article appears clearly only if the noun is followed by a phrasal construction" (p. 228). He cites the following examples to illustrate this point:

4. Butter which is made of sweet cream is best.
5. The butter which is made of sweet cream is best.
6. Happiness which is purchased too dearly is worthless.
7. The happiness which is purchased too dearly is worthless.

Hill suggests that forms with the should be derived from second mention and those without the from first mention. He gives these source sentences for the fourth

example:

(a) Butter is best.

(b) The butter is made of sweet cream.

If we embed (b) in (a) and replace the second mention by which, we get the first mention:

Butter (the butter is made of sweet cream) is best ⇒

Butter which is made of sweet cream is best.

He gives these source sentences for the fifth example:

(a) Butter is made of sweet cream.

(b) The butter is best.

If we embed (a) in (b) and replace the first mention by which, we get the second mention:

The butter (butter is made of sweet cream) is best ⇒

The butter which is made of sweet cream is best.

What is traditionally called identification or particularization by means of context or situation, Hill terms "proximity". He explains "proximity" as follows (p. 228): "The item of the class mentioned which is nearest to the speaker, the person addressed, or the person or thing spoken of." Thus (p. 229): Please open a window (any window); Please open the window (nearest to me or to you); When I go home I cross an intersection (unspecified); When I go home I cross the intersection (nearest to the speaker or the home spoken of). Hill argues that since both a and the can be used in such constructions, "it is not the linguistic context, at least narrowly conceived, which gives the necessary spe-

cification," but "proximity". He thinks it is possible to link proximity uses of the with its second mention uses, but he goes no further to explain how.

Finally, Hill discusses what he calls "fixed-usage nouns" and what this writer calls "Fixed One-article nouns" that either occur always with the or never with the. Hill agrees with Paul Roberts and others in considering the as part of those names with which it occurs invariably. He suggests that the should simply be learned as part of such names. The pattern, the + name, includes personal and place names: The McGregor; the Sudan, the Hague. The Pattern, zero + name, is larger in scope and also includes personal and place names: Jill, Henry, London, Baghdad.

Hill thinks that in some cases like Queen Mary and the Queen Mary, the article is only an identifier of the following name. Here the identifies the ship from the queen as does the phoneme /g/ which identifies goat from oat.

Hill concludes that the use of the with names follows certain patterns. Plural names, for example, take the and so do compound names with of: The United States; the Netherlands, the University of Chicago. But compound names of noun plus noun take zero: Georgetown University; London University.

Exceptional Uses:

To sum up, Hill recognizes three class of nouns, two according to the number of articles associated with them, and one according to usage (See Table 5 above):

1. Two-article nouns (countables)
2. One-article nouns (uncountables)
3. Fixed-usage nouns (proper names and others).

His labels lack some logic since they do not all refer to the number of articles. Moreover he recognizes the zero article with indefinite plurals only and denies its existence with count singular, mass and abstract nouns and proper names. He would have done better if he had stuck to Jespersen's classification of nouns and fully recognized the zero article, especially with his second and third classes; for then he would have made full use of Strang's theory of "contrast" in his transformational explanation of the first-second mention uses of the with mass/abstract nouns. He would not have said "for both the uncountable nouns and abstract nouns, the distinction between the definite and indefinite article appears clearly only if the noun is followed by a phrasal construction" (p. 228). This writer is not sure what Hill means by the word "indefinite" in this quotation. The distinction or the contrast here is between the and no-the or zero but never between the and a except if he means zero by the term "indefinite article" which he recognizes with indefinite plurals, but again mass and

abstract nouns lack both a and the plural, as he claims before.

He advances a theory of "first-second mention" to explain the different uses of a and the with his first two classes of nouns. His transformational approach reflects his attempt to explain his examples from his understanding of them as an experienced native speaker of the language. He refrains from attempting to link the "proximity" uses of the with those of its second mention. "Fixed-usage nouns" that lie beyond the boundaries of his theory of first-second mention or beyond the "proximity" uses of the, he simply dismisses noting that they either appear always with the or never with the and that the is simply part of those names it appears with, forgetting all about such examples as these: Mr. Robert asked about you; A Mr. Robert asked about you; The Roberts asked about you, where the differences in expression are accompanied by differences in content.

D. Conclusion:

As stated in the introduction to this Chapter, the three writers whose works have been summarized represent three schools of grammar. Jespersen, a traditionalist, builds up his theory of "the three stages of familiarity" on semantic bases. Strang, a structuralist, builds up her theory of "contrast" on structural bases. Hill, a transformationalist, builds up his theory of "first-second mention" on transformational bases. These

three writers differ not only in their approaches to the problem but also in what they recognize and in what they claim. Jespersen recognizes three articles, so does Strang; but Hill recognizes only two and makes a hint at zero with the plural of "a plus noun." He does not recognize the use of zero with count singular, mass and proper nouns. Jespersen recognizes three classes of nouns, "unit-word", "mass-word" and proper names besides singular and plural. Strang recognizes two classes of nouns only, singular and plural. Hill adapts Jespersen classes of nouns, two in terms of articles, "two-article nouns" and "one-article nouns", and one in terms of usage, "fixed-usage nouns". Strang speaks of "subsequent specification" by means of relative clauses. Hill rejects her assumption and relates the use of the to "second mention". Jespersen and Strang relate the use of particularizing the to the linguistic context or situation. Hill rejects their claim and relates the use of particularizing the to "proximity".

Although these three writers attack the same problem and, in some cases, use the same noun classes and the same number of articles and even the same examples as does Hill who quotes Strang's example the passage I have quoted and analyzes it in his own way, yet none of them has found a satisfactory solution to some challenging problems such as the use of a before collective nouns (e.g. a people, a family), or the problem of proper names

or the use of both a and the before nouns followed by relative or phrasal constructions. Even Jespersen's most comprehensive theory fails to account for the use of the before proper names, as shown in Table 2 above.

All three writers fail to establish a universal theory of uses of the articles in English to incorporate all that is in real use. Whenever their theories fail to account for a use, they relate it to idiomatic usage.

A universal theory of definiteness and indefiniteness of nouns that can be applied to more than one language seems beyond the hope of grammarians for the time being.

The consequence of this is that there is no easy way for the teacher of English to supply his students with comprehensive rules for the articles. Rather he must distinguish among types of uses, teaching first the higher frequency ones and those which display the greatest regularity, and only later coming to the more exceptional ones.

IV. THE ARABIC ARTICLE SYSTEM

Introductory Remarks

The Classical article system consists of two affixes which, for lack of better terms, will be designated as follows: "the defining suffix" -n, and "the defining prefix" ʔal-. The two are mutually exclusive: raʔaytu walada-n 'I saw a boy' and raʔaytu l-walada 'I saw the boy,' (but never *raʔaytu l-walada-n)¹. -n is frequently deleted before a pause, as in: ʔinna l-laaha Gafuuru-n raHiim 'God is forgiving and merciful.'

MSA is nearly the same as Classical insofar as the uses of -n and ʔal- are concerned. However, there is an increasing tendency among MSA speakers to minimize the use of -n by deletion, as in: ʔištaraa haašim sayyaara 'Hashim bought a car,' instead of ʔištaraa haašimu-n sayyaarata-n.

In the long course of its development from Classical and MSA, Iraqi lost the suffix -n. This phenomenon is part of a larger historical phenomenon in Iraqi, whereby all kinds of suffixes have been lost or simplified: štiret ktaab jdiid 'I bought a new book', instead of ʔištaraytu kitaaba-n jadiida-n in the other two dialects.

¹Asterisk before construction indicates that it is non-grammatical.

As Classical is now spoken only in religious circles and as students are exposed to it only in their studies of the Koran and literary texts, this paper will not be concerned with its article system and will concentrate on MSA and Iraqi.

This writer does not claim that he will solve any challenging problems of the Arabic article system or that he will deal with all the uses of -n and ?al- in MSA, and \emptyset and ?il- in Iraqi. Only some of the uses will be discussed, insofar as they compare with the uses of a, the and \emptyset in English, in order to shed light on the errors that will be analyzed in the next **Chapter**. The use of ?al- as a relative pronoun as in: maa ?anta bil-Hakami t-turDaa Hukumatuhu 'You are not the judge whose sentence is approved,' or its use as a superfluous prefix attached to proper names as in: jaa?a l-Hasanu wal-Husaynu 'Hasan and Husayn came' will not be discussed as they have no bearing on the errors committed in the corpus. The distribution of these affixes in both MSA and Iraqi is shown in the following table.

TABLE 6a

DISTRIBUTION OF -n, ?al- and \emptyset

Kinds of Nouns	Affixes		Examples		Glosses
	MSA	Iraqi	MSA	Iraqi	
A. Count	-n	\emptyset	kitaabu-n	ktaab	'a book'
Singular	?al-	?il-	?al-kitaabu	?il-ktaab	'the book'
A. Count	-n	\emptyset	kutubu-n	kutub	'books'
Plural	?al-	?il-	?al-kutubu	?il-kutub	'the books'
C. Mass	-n	\emptyset	Haliibu-n	Haliib	'milk'
	?al-	?il-	?al-Haliibu	?il-Haliib	'the milk'
D. Proper	-n	\emptyset	Hasanu-n	Hasan	'Hasan'
	?al-	?il-	?al-Hasanu	?il-Hasan	'the Hasan'

A. The Defining Suffix and the Zero Prefix

The Forms, -n and \emptyset

The defining suffix -n of MSA is known by the Arabs as "tanwiin" 'suffixing a word-form with -n.' Al-Jarim and Amin (1965, Vol. 2, p. 160) state that "-n is suffixed to nouns and adjectives orally, except before a pause, and is omitted in writing". Wright (1964, Vol. 1, p. 235) states that -n is suffixed to fully inflected nouns in the singular and pluralis fractus 'broken plurals', to feminine plurals, and to indeclinable proper names to distinguish

TABLE 6a

DISTRIBUTION OF -n, ?al- and \emptyset

Kinds of Nouns	Affixes		Examples		Glosses
	MSA	Iraqi	MSA	Iraqi	
A. Count	-n	\emptyset	kitaabu-n	ktaab	'a book'
Singular	?al-	?il-	?al-kitaabu	?il-ktaab	'the book'
A. Count	-n	\emptyset	kutubu-n	kutub	'books'
Plural	?al-	?il-	?al-kutubu	?il-kutub	'the books'
C. Mass	-n	\emptyset	Haliibu-n	Haliib	'milk'
	?al-	?il-	?al-Haliibu	?il-Haliib	'the milk'
D. Proper	-n	\emptyset	Hasanu-n	Hasan	'Hasan'
	?al-	?il-	?al-Hasanu	?il-Hasan	'★the Hasan'

A. The Defining Suffix and the Zero Prefix

The Forms, -n and \emptyset

The defining suffix -n of MSA is known by the Arabs as "tanwiin" 'suffixing a word-form with -n.' Al-Jarim and Amin (1965, Vol. 2, p. 160) state that "-n is suffixed to nouns and adjectives orally, except before a pause, and is omitted in writing". Wright (1964, Vol. 1, p. 235) states that -n is suffixed to fully inflected nouns in the singular and pluralis fractus 'broken plurals', to feminine plurals, and to indeclinable proper names to distinguish

between a definite person and an indefinite person. The following are examples of these usages in MSA: rajulu-n 'man'; rijaalu-n 'men; muslimaatu-n 'Muslim women'; marartu bi-siibawayhi wa siibawayhi-n aaxara² 'I passed by Siibawayh and another (man called) Siibawayh.'

The zero prefix of Iraqi contrasts with the defining prefix il-. As such, \emptyset appears before every noun or adjective that is not prefixed with il-, as in the following example from Iraqi: šifit walad Tuwill biida ktaab šibiir 'I saw a boy with a big book in his hand.'

The Meaning of -n and \emptyset

The defining suffix -n and the zero prefix are lexically empty but they contribute to the meaning of the word they are affixed to. They generally indicate that the speaker or writer is not familiar with the noun referent. Sometimes they are used generically to indicate that an individual member is a representative of a class. The following are examples to illustrate these points. They are from MSA and Iraqi respectively: rakibtu qiTaara-n min baGdaad ?ila l-bašra 'I took a train from Baghdad to Basra.' ?aani ?aakul purtaqaala kul yom 'I eat an apple a day'.

The Uses of -n and \emptyset

Al-Jarim and Amin (1965, Vol. 2, pp. 158-162) give

²The first Siibawayh, referring to a well-known Arab grammarian, is definite. The second, referring to an unknown person by the name Siibawayh, is indefinite.

an account of those cases of common nouns, proper names and adjectives in MSA where -n is strictly prohibited. -n cannot be suffixed to common nouns ending in the feminine suffix -aa, such as bušraa 'good news' (never *bušra-n), or if they are in the "closed plural"³ form as in: taHtaaju miSra ?ilaa maSaani9a 'Egypt needs factories' (never *maSaani9a-n). -n cannot be suffixed to feminine proper names or proper names ending in the feminine suffix -at or in the superfluous suffix -aan, as in: jaa?at zaynabu 'Zaynab came' (never *zaynabu-n); ra?aytu faTimata 'I saw Fatima' (never *faTimata-n); ra?aytu 9iOmaana 'I saw Othman' (never *9iOmaana-n). -n cannot be suffixed to foreign proper names or proper names that have verb-like forms such as jaa?a yuusufu 'Joseph came' (never *yuusufu-n); ra?aytu yaziida 'I saw Yazeed' (never *yaziida-n). Feminine proper names, and foreign proper names with three radicals ending in a consonant cluster permit the suffixing of -n: ra?aytu hinda-n wa nuwHa-n 'I saw Hind and Noah.'

-n cannot be suffixed to adjectives having the same number of consonants and the same vowel quality of the two grammatical forms fa9laan (CaCCaaC) and ?af9al (CaCCaC), as in these examples from MSA: laa tu9aaqib wa ?anta za9laanu 'Don't punish when you are angry' (never *za9laanu-n);

³"Closed plurals" are those forms that cannot be pluralized again and "open plurals" are those forms that can be pluralized again such as miftaaH -mafaatiiH 'Key-keys' and rajul-rijaal-rijaalaat 'man-men-groups of men'.

al-wardu ?aSfaru 'The roses are yellow' (never *?aSfaru-n).

As shown in Table 6a above, MSA has -n where Iraqi has \emptyset . To the best knowledge of this writer as a native speaker of Iraqi, the two affixes are used with the same kinds of nouns to denote the same meaning. Although \emptyset in Iraqi is the historical result of deleting or dropping -n, it is considered here as a prefix for convenience in contrasting it with il-. The following uses are the writer's explanation of Table 6a.

1. -n and \emptyset are used with count singulars in the sense of one implied, or expressed by the word waaHid 'one' which follows the noun directly: (MSA) ?ištara^vytu kitaaba-n or ?ištara^vytu kitaaba-n waaHida-n 'I bought a book' or 'I bought one book;' (Iraqi) štiret qalam or štiret qalam waaHid 'I bought a pencil' or 'I bought one pencil.'

2. -n and \emptyset are used with count plurals to denote an indefinite number: (MSA) ?ištara^vytu kutuba-n 'I bought books;' (Iraqi) štiret qlaam 'I bought pencils.'

3. -n and \emptyset are used with mass nouns to denote an indefinite quantity: (MSA) šaribtu Haliiba-n wa ?akaltu xubza-n 'I drank milk and ate bread.'

4. Proper names, in all forms of Arabic, waver between common nouns and proper nouns, now taking -n, now taking al-, now taking neither. Some derivative personal names are so irregular as to take -n and remain definite: (MSA) jaa?a muHammadu-n wa 9aliyu-n 'Muhammad and Ali came'. Three-radical personal names ending with a consonant

cluster take -n: (MSA) raʔaytu šiyta-n 'I saw Shiyt'.

An indeclinable personal name that is indefinite takes -n when used in a contrastive context. It is usually followed by the word aaxar or uxraa 'another' (masculine or feminine):

(MSA) raʔaytu ibraahiima wa ibraahiima-n aaxar 'I saw Ibrahim and another (man called) Ibrahim;' (Iraqi) šifit su9aad w su9aad uxra 'I saw su9ad and another (woman called) su9ad.'

C. The Defining Prefix

The Forms of al-

The defining prefix has the form ʔal- in Classical and MSA and ʔil- in Iraqi. The Arabs divide their letters, and thus sounds, into sun-letters and moon-letters, i.e. š-like sounds and q-like sounds, š being the initial sound of the word šams 'sun' and q being the initial sound of the word qamar 'moon'. These are designated as "sun-sounds" and "moon-sounds" respectively in the chart on the following page. Basically, sun-sounds are apicals. The l of the defining prefix ʔal- being itself apical assimilates to the following sun-sounds, a consequent doubling of the initial consonant takes place, as in MSA *ʔal-rajulu ʔar-rajulu 'the man.' The l of ʔal- does not assimilate to following moon-sounds, these being basically the labials and the dorsals, as in MSA ʔal-kitaabu 'the book' (never *ak-kitaabu), (Iraqi) ʔil-baab 'the door' (never *ib-baab).

Chart 1

The Sun and Moon Sounds⁴

	<u>Voiceless</u>	<u>Voiced</u>	
Moon-Sounds	p	b	bilabial
		m	
		w	labio-dental
	f		
Sun-Sounds	t	d	apico-dental (or apico-alveolar)
	θ	ð	
	s	z	
	T		apico-dental/alveolar "emphatic" (pharyngalized)
		L	
		ɖ	
	S		apico-alveolar (or lamino-alveolar)
		n	
		r	
		ɳ	lamino-palatal
	ç		
Moon-Sounds		y	dorso-velar (or dorso-uvular)
	k	g	
	x	ŋ	
	q		dorso-uvular
	H	ʁ	Pharyngal
	ʔ		glottal
	h		

⁴Chart based on the analysis and terminology of Gairdner (1925).

On the other hand, when ?al- occurs initially or after a pause the full form with glottal stop, ʔ, appears. In continuous speech ?al- loses its first element and only the l or the doubling remains. Compare: (MSA) ?al-waladu T-Tawiilu mujiddu-n 'The tall boy is studious'; (MSA) ra?aytu l-walada T-Tawiila. In continuous speech "the final vowel of a preceding word or particle forms a syllable with the definite article" (Abdo, 1962, p. 14): ra?aytus-sansa wal- qamara 'I saw the sun and the moon.'

The Meanings of ?al-

The prefix ?al- does not seem to have a lexical meaning by itself. Rather, it contributes to the meaning of the noun to which it is prefixed. It has two principal meanings: Particularization and generalization.

Particularization: The main use of ?al- is for particularization. It moves the noun from the general to the particular. A noun is particularized if the speaker has previous knowledge of its referent, if it is in the second mention, or if it is unique in its sphere or situation: (MSA) jaa?a l-waladu mina s-suuqi 'The boy came from the market'. (Iraqi) xallet ktaab fog l-mez; minu saal l-i-ktaab? 'I put a book on the desk; who took the book?' (Iraqi) sid l-baab 'shut the door'. (MSA) qara?tu l-qur?aana 'I read the Koran.' (MSA) aamantu bil-laah 'I believed in God.' (Iraqi) Gaabat s-samis 'The sun has set.' ?al- particularizes a noun used with

a superlative adjective or a relative clause: (Iraqi)

šawufni l-qalam l-aṭwal 'Show me the longer pencil.'

(MSA) ʔarini l-kitaaba llaḥii bi-yadika 'Show me the book which is in your hand.'

Generalization: Another principal use of ʔal- is for generalization, primarily in connection with nouns used generically, whether they be count singular, count plural or mass: (MSA) ʔaḥ-rajulu ʔaqwa mina l-marʔa 'Man is stronger than woman.' (MSA) ʔar-rijaalu ʔaqwaa mina l-nisaaʔ 'Men are stronger than women.' (MSA) yustaḡmalu l-Hibru fi l-kitaaba 'Ink is used in writing.'

The Uses of ʔal-

As a Semantic Signal: Referring once again to Table 6a, let us discuss briefly the possible combinations of ʔal- plus various types of noun.

1. ʔal- is prefixed to a count singular noun to indicate that it refers to a particular referent or that it refers to a class and stands as its representative. (MSA) ʔaṭṭamtu l-bulbula 'I fed the nightingale;' (MSA) yaḡiisu l-bulbulu fawqa l-ʔaṣjaari 'The nightingale lives in the trees.'

2. ʔal- is prefixed to a count plural noun to indicate that it refers to a particular number of referents or that it refers to the entire group of referents: (MSA) ʔiṣṭaraytu l-kutuba 'I bought the books'; (MSA) tuṣnaḡu l-kutubu min-l-waraq 'Books are made of paper.'

3. A mass noun, to an Arab, may refer to a substance or to a definite or indefinite quantity of that substance. If it refers to a substance as a whole genus, ?al- is prefixed to it because the genus is known by everybody. If it refers to a definite or particular quantity of a substance, ?al- is prefixed to it also. If it refers to an indefinite quantity, it takes -n in MSA and \emptyset in Iraqi. Examples are: (MSA) ?aHibul-Haliiba 'I like milk (the whole genus)'; (MSA) Ṣaribtu l-Haliiba 'I drank the milk (particular quantity)'; (MSA) Ṣaribtu Haliiban 'I drank milk (indefinite quantity).' Abstract nouns are included in mass nouns in Table 6a because they behave in the same way towards ?al-, -n and \emptyset . ?al- is prefixed to an abstract noun used generically or when it is particular. An abstract noun is only rarely indefinite. If it is, it takes -n in MSA and \emptyset in Iraqi: (MSA) ?ar-raHmatu fawqa l-9adl 'Mercy is before justice'; (MSA) sayaḥkuruhu t-taariix 'History will remember him'; (MSA) ?antaDiru raHmata-n min LLaahi 'I am waiting for mercy from God.'

4. Proper names appear both with ?al- and -n in MSA and both with ?il- and \emptyset in Iraqi. Speakers of MSA tend always to drop -n and to use \emptyset instead. Personal names rarely occur with ?al-. Family names nearly always appear with ?al-. Place names may occur with ?al- or -n in a rather balanced proportion. The names of the months never take ?al-. The names of the days always take ?al- except when they refer to a day in the far past or far

future. Here are some examples from MSA and Iraqi:

a. With al-: ?al-baHraani 'Al-Bahrani'; ?al-baSra 'Basra'; ?al-furaatu 'the Euphrates'; ?al-baHru l-?aHmar 'The Red Sea'; ?aS-SaHraa?u l-kubra 'the Sahara Desert'; ?as-sabt 'Saturday'.

b. With -n or Ø: Muhammadu-n 'Muhammad'; hindu-n 'Hind' (a girl's name); Ø-jamaal 'Jamal'; Ø-baGdaad 'Baghdad'; Ø-dijla 'The Tigres'; Ø-tamuuz 'July'; Ø-ramaDaan 'Ramadan'.

As a Syntactic Signal: ?al- has a twofold function in that its presence signals a nominal sentence and its absence signals a genitive construct. It denotes that the noun is particular or a representative of a class and it distinguishes between a nominal sentence and a nominal phrase, or a genitive construct and a nominal phrase.

1. A nominal sentence is composed of a nominal phrase plus a predicate, which Arabs call mubtada? 'beginning' and xabar 'information' respectively. They insist that the mubtada? must be definite and the xabar must be indefinite with only a few exceptions (Matar, 1385 H., p. 56). This paper is concerned with nominal sentences that have the patterns: ?al- + Noun + Ø + Adjective or Name + Ø + Adjective, contrasted with nominal phrases that have the patterns: ?al- + Noun + al- + Adjective or Name + ?al- + Adjective. Examples in MSA are:

a. ?al-kitaabu jadiidun 'The book is new.' Sentence

b. ?al-kitaabu j-jadiidu 'The new book.' Phrase

- c. kitaabun jadiidun 'a new book' . ' Phrase
d. 9aliyun Tawiilun 'Ali is tall' . ' Sentence
e. 9aliyun T-Tawiilu 'the tall Ali' . ' Phrase

It is necessary to mention here, before discussing the examples above, that "adjectives as attributes are placed after the noun they qualify. If the noun has the article ?al-, the adjective also must have it, e.g. baytun SaGiirun, a small house, but ?al-baytu S-SaGiiru, the small house"(Haywood and Nahmad, 1962, p. 23) . In other words, adjectives, in nominal phrases, agree with their head nouns in definiteness and indefiniteness. Proper names are already definite and adjectives referring to them attributively take ?al-.

Examples a and d, above, are sentences because of the lack of grammatical agreement of definition between adjectives and nouns. Examples b, c and e are nominal phrases because of agreement between adjectives and their head nouns in definiteness or indefiniteness.

To conclude, grammatical agreement of definition signals a nominal phrase and disagreement signals a nominal sentence, i.e. ?al- in the mubtada? and -n in the xabar signal a sentence, and ?al- or -n on both noun and adjective signals a phrase (Cf. Mitchell, 1960, pp. 15-16).

2. In a genitive construct, which Arabs call ?iDaafa 'addition,' two or more nouns are annexed to express the possession of the referent of the first part by that of the second. When a genitive construct is

translated into English of or 's is seen between the two parts (Cf. Mitchell, 1960, pp. 15-16). "A noun which takes a genitive after it is automatically definite and loses its nunation, but it MUST NOT TAKE THE ARTICLE ?al" (Haywood and Nahmad, 1962, p. 36). A genitive construct may have one of the following patterns in MSA:

- a. Noun + Noun + -n: kitaabu waladi-n 'a boy's book.'
- b. Noun + ?al- + Noun: kitaabu l-waladi 'the boy's book.'
- c. Noun + Name + -n: kitaabu 9aliyi-n 'Ali's book.'
- d. Noun + Noun + ?al- + Noun: baabu bayti l-mudiri
'the door of the manager's house.'
- e. Noun + Noun + Name + -n: baabu bayti 9aliyi-n
'the door of Ali's house.'

In pattern a, the construct is indefinite, as -n is seen in the second part which is a common noun, but it is not present in the first. In pattern b, the construct is definite as al- is seen in the second part, but not present in the first. In c, the construct is definite as the second part is a proper name with -n, but al- is not present in the first part. In d, there are two constructs, baabu bayti-n and baytu l-mudiri. When put together the second form of bayt is dropped and the first loses its -n. The construct is definite as al- is seen on the third part, but dropped from the first and the second. In e, there is the same construct as in d, except that the third part is a name. As seen in these examples, the absence of article on the first part and the presence of article on

the second or third part marks a genitive construct and distinguishes it from a nominal sentence, or a nominal phrase of apposition, where the two parts must agree in definiteness or indefiniteness, as in: (MSA) ra?aytu š-šaa9ira l-mutanabbi or jaa?a T-Tabiibu 9aliyun 'I saw the poet Al-Mutanabbi' or 'The doctor Ali came.'

V. ERROR ANALYSIS

A. Results

The results of this investigation are presented in raw scores and percentages in Tables 6 and 7. Errors have been classified semantically to find out under which class or classes of nouns most errors fall and structurally to find out under which article or articles most errors fall.

1. Semantic Classes

As shown in Tables 6 and 7 below, the total number of usages was 3600 and the total number of errors was 685 or 19.0% of total usages. Errors under Stage One were 445 or 65.1% of the total errors. Of these 264 errors or 38.5% of the total errors were in singular count nouns with replacement of a by the or omission of it: One day in the night when she slept the thief entered the house and stole the money (pap. 10); The father was ___ poor man (pap.40). Errors in the use of \emptyset with mass nouns were 75 or 11.0% of the total errors and consist of the use of a or the instead of \emptyset : He asked him about the reason with a great surprise (pap. 78). The death was the end of his life (pap. 7). Errors in the use of \emptyset with count plurals were 106 or 15.6% of the total errors and consist of the use of a or the instead of \emptyset : He had a children

TABLE 6

SEMANTIC AND STRUCTURAL CLASSES OF ERRORS

Semantic Classes		Article	Structural Classes						Semantic
Stages	Nouns		a → *the	a → ∅	the → a	the → ∅	∅ → a	∅ → the	Total
I. Complete Unfamiliarity	Count Singular	a	106	158					264
	Mass	∅					10	65	75
	Count Plural						16	90	106
	Total of I								445
II. Greater Familiarity	Count Singular				11	72			83
	Mass	the			2	4			6
	Count Plural					17			17
	Total of II					Y			106

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Semantic Classes		Article	Structural Classes						Semantic
Stages	Nouns		a → *the	a → ∅	the → a	the → ∅	∅ → a	∅ → the	Total
III. COMPLETE FAMILIARITY	Unique Jobs	∅					10	1	11
	Public Institutions	∅						13	21
		the				8			
	Vocatives	∅					2		2
	Proper Nouns	∅					2	20	34
		the				12			
	Total of III								68
Structural Total			106	158	13	113	40	189	619
Unclassified Errors									66
Total No. of Errors									685
Total No. of Correct Usages									2915
Total No. of Usages									3600

* The arrow means that a is misplaced by the.

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGES OF ERRORS, SEMANTICLY CLASSIFIED

Stages	Nouns	Articles	% within Stages	% Out of Total Errors	% Out of Total Usages
I. Complete Unfamiliarity	Count singular	a	59.4	38.5	7.4
	Mass	∅	17.0	11.0	2.0
	Count Plural	∅	23.6	15.6	2.9
	Total		100.0	65.1	12.3
II. Greater Familiarity	Count Singular		78.3	12.1	2.3
	Mass	the	5.7	0.9	0.2
	Count Plural		16.0	2.5	0.5
	Total		100.0	15.5	3.0
III. Complete Familiarity	Unique Jobs	∅	16.0	1.6	0.3
	Public Institutions	∅	31.0	3.0	0.6
	Vocatives	∅	3.0	0.2	0.05
	Proper	∅/the	50.0	5.0	0.9
	Total		100.0	9.8	1.85
	Unclassified			9.8	1.8
Total No. of Errors				100.0	19.0
Total No. of Correct Usages					81.0

and wife (pap. 37); In the Shat Arab the large ships drive and the hunters ride the boats to hunt the birds and fish (pap. 24).

Errors under Stage Two were 106 or 15.5% of the total errors . Of these 83 errors or 12.1% of the total error were in count singulars with replacement of the by a or \emptyset : He was surprised to find something which was a last thing he expected to find (pap. 200); English language is very useful for we because ... (pap. 2).

Errors under Stage Three were 68 or 9.8% of total ^{errors} errors . Of these 34 errors or 5.0% of the total errors were in proper names with replacement of \emptyset by the or replacement of the by \emptyset : This story spoke about one of the nobel men in the Denmark (pap. 11); It is famous for the river named Shat Arab (pap. 25).

2. Structural Classes

As shown in Table 8 below, the total number of errors in the uses of a with count singular nouns was 264 or 38.5% of the total errors. The total number of errors in the uses of the with count and mass nouns, public institutions and proper names was 126 or 18.4% of the total errors. The total number of errors in the uses of \emptyset with count and mass nouns, and proper names was 229 or 33.5% of the total errors. Here are some illustrative examples: Many years age ... the story happened about the man who spent his time foolishly (a replaced by the, pap. 178); Macbeth was Scottish nobleman (a replace by \emptyset ,

pap. 6); After a long time the father died and her daughter took a money of her father (the replaced by a, pap. 64); English language is very useful (the replaced by \emptyset , pap. 2); It contains a petrol (\emptyset replaced by a, pap. 60); They were going to the school (\emptyset replaced by the, pap. 72)

TABLE 8

ERRORS IN a, the, and \emptyset

Articles	No. of Errors	% Out of Total Errors
a	264	38.5
the	126	18.4
\emptyset	229	33.5
Unclassified	66	9.6
Total	685	100.0

The semantic and structural classes of errors are, of course, related to each other as they are only two different classifications of the same errors, but they do not correlate since any of the three articles may be used with any of the noun classes set up in this paper. Nonetheless, there is perfect correlation, in this analysis, between

the number of errors in count singulars and that in a. No correlation could be established between \emptyset or the and any class of nouns.

3. Unclassified Errors

Sixty-six errors or 9.6% of the total errors defied classification. They did not fit under either semantic classes or structural classes. A complete list of these is present in Appendix A.

B. Comparison Between Error Areas and Corresponding Areas in MSA and Iraqi

On the semantic level, as shown in Tables 6, 7 and 8, most errors were made in the uses of the English articles with count nouns and fewer errors with mass nouns and nouns grouped under Stage Three. Specifically, 470 errors or 68.6% of the total errors were made in articles used with count nouns. Errors with mass nouns were 81 or 11.8% of the total errors. Errors with nouns under Stage Three were 68 or 10.0% of the total errors. This big difference in percentages might be related to; (a) the high frequency of count nouns in usage, and (b) the lack of a clear-cut indefinite article in MSA and the use of \emptyset in Iraqi on one hand, and the differences in usage between English and MSA and Iraqi on the other.

TABLE 9

NO. OF ERRORS AND PERCENTAGE UNDER
EACH KIND OF NOUN

Kinds of Nouns	Total No. of Errors	% Out of Total Errors	% Out of Total Usage
Count	470	68.6	13.0
Mass	81	11.8	2.3
Proper & Others	68	10.0	1.9
Unclassified	66	9.6	1.8
Total	685	100.0	19.0

The English article system differs from that of MSA and Iraqi. English and MSA Iraqi use different articles with noun classes that seem to^{be} wholly or partially identical, as shown in Table 10 below. But before explaining Table 10, a word should be said about the nominal suffix -n in MSA. The suffix -n is spoken and not written. Arabs do not generally consider -n to be an indefinite article, a defining suffix, or a counterpart of al- corresponding to the English concept of a and the. MSA speakers have the tendency to drop -n except on very formal occasions. Thus it may be said that the Iraqi girls who provided the corpus for this paper had no idea of -n as a defining suffix that has sometimes some identity with a. Probably, all they had

in mind was al- versus \emptyset . Bearing these notes in mind, let us comment on Table 10.

The 158 errors in the use of a with singular count nouns under a \rightarrow \emptyset correspond to the decreasing oral use of -n in MSA and the use of \emptyset in Iraqi. Consequently one may infer that these errors, or at least some of them, were caused by interference from MSA and Iraqi, as in: The two lived happy life (pap. 42); He was sick man (pap. 82). These may be translated into Iraqi as follows:¹ 9aašaw l-i-θnen 9iiša sa9iida; ʕaan rajjaal mariiθ. One notes the absence of any article or suffix associated with either 9iiša or rajjaal.

The next error area that corresponds to a linguistic difference between English and MSA and Iraqi is that of mass nouns in Stage One under $\emptyset \rightarrow$ the. While the English speak of a mass noun referring to a material as indefinite and use \emptyset before it, Arabs speak of such a noun as definite and use al- before it. This linguistic difference in usage may account for many of the 65 errors in this area as in: The man saw the beautiful girl and fell in the love with her (pap. 53), which may be translated into MSA as follows: raʔa r-rajulu l-fataata j-jamila fa-waqa9a fi-l-Hubi ma9ahaa, where the English error corresponds with the use of al- before Hubi.

¹Translation is mine.

TABLE 10
ARTICLE SYSTEMS IN ENGLISH, MSA AND IRAQI

Semantic Classes				Structural Classes							
Stages	Nouns	Articles			a→the	a→∅	the→a	the→∅	∅→a	∅→the	Total
		English	MSA	Iraqi							
I	Count Singular	a	n	∅	106	158					264
	Mass	∅	al	al					10	65	75
	Count Plural	∅	al	al					16	90	106
II	Count Singular	the	al	al			11	72			83
	Mass	the	al	al			2	4			6
	Count Plural	the	al	al				17			17
III	Unique Jobs	∅	∅	∅					10	1	11
	Public	∅	al	al						13	13
	Institutions	the	al	al				8			8
	Vocatives	∅	∅	∅					2		2
	Proper: Persons	∅	∅	∅						2	2
	Towns	∅	al	al					1	7	8
	Countries	∅	al	al					1	9	10
Rivers	the	∅	∅				12			12	
Others	∅	al	al						2	2	

The last suspect error area in Stage One that corresponds to a linguistic difference between the two languages is that of count plurals; for while the English use \emptyset before a count plural used generically to refer to all the members of its class, Arabs use al- with the same kind of noun. This may account, at least, for some of the 90 errors in count plurals under $\emptyset \rightarrow$ the, as in: The hunters ride the boats to hunt the birds and fish (pap. 34), where hunters, boats and birds are used generically. The use of the article here parallels MSA usage: yarkabu S-Sayyaduun z-zawaariqa li-yaSTaadu T-Tiyuura.

Native language interference might be held responsible for the 13 errors in public institutions under $\emptyset \rightarrow$ the in Stage Three, where English has \emptyset and MSA and Iraqi have al-, as in: They were going to the school (pap. 72), which would appear in Iraqi with the article: Caanaw raayHiin li-1-madrasa.

The next and last error area that corresponds to linguistic differences between the two languages is that of proper names, where 34 errors were made. It is probable that the 7 errors in towns and the 9 errors in countries under $\emptyset \rightarrow$ the are caused by Arabic interference. The same may be said of the 12 errors in the names of rivers under the $\rightarrow \emptyset$. These errors were made in the use of Arabic proper names which students might have transliterated into English verbatim. These were al-Basra (town), al-qurna (town), al-9raq (country), and Shat-al-Arab (river). The last takes \emptyset because it is a definite genitive construct.

This linguistic native habit was carried out beyond Arabic proper names to cover two more names Paris and Denmark.

Examples:are: The government takes care in the Basra (pap. 9); Many countries buy the dates from the Iraq (pap. 18), This story speaks of the nobel men in the Denmark (pap. 11); If we looke to Shat Al-Arab at day we shall see the large ships (pap. 75).

Students may sometimes be confused, not knowing what to do when a linguistic difference exists and thus they ~~res~~place the English article which has no equivalent in their native language by any article that comes to mind. This confusion may account for the 106 errors in the use of a with singular count nouns in Stage One under a → the. But this is only an assumption.

Other errors cannot be accounted for linguistically. They may be caused by confusion, student's negligence, the teaching method or some other factors that lie beyond the scope of this paper.

VI. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

In the fifth chapter, where the results of the error analysis have been presented quantitatively, the following points have been made:

1) The results of error analysis have pinpointed the semantic and structural areas in the corpus where most errors were made, i.e. in the use of a with count singular nouns and \emptyset with mass nouns, count singular nouns, and nouns under Stage Three.

2) The contrast of the article systems of English and Arabic has revealed that they are widely different. It has also revealed that the two languages sometimes use different articles with noun classes that appear to be wholly or at least partially identical in both languages.

3) It has been found that the areas where most errors were committed in the corpus correspond in general to the areas where the two languages show structural or semantic differences. It seems at least probable that the differences contributed to the commission of certain classes of errors that were identified in the corpus and analyzed in this paper. In other words, a positive correlation has been found between error areas and areas

where English and Arabic differ in their article systems.

B. Implications Relevant to Teaching

Teachers of English who are native speakers of Arabic (MSA and Iraqi) are advised to make use of the contrastive study of the article systems of English and Arabic presented in the fifth chapter of this paper, or to make their own contrastive analysis before planning to teach the English articles. This would help them to find out where the two systems differ so that they may be able to predict where their students will most frequently err as a result of native language interference. A contrastive analysis based on an error count could provide a basis for planning a teaching unit on the articles and illuminate the problems which arise. Planning such a teaching unit involves selection, gradation, presentation and practice. These should all be directed to counterattack native language interference.

On the semantic level, teachers are advised to plan to teach the noun classes in English in the order: singular count nouns, plural count nouns, mass nouns, proper names. Other subclasses of nouns grouped with proper names under Stage Three, complete familiarity, can be taught later so that they will not be confused with other count nouns that take a. Teachers are warned to bear in mind that "mass" is a grammatical concept, not a semantic one, and that a word

which is "mass" in one language may very well be structurally treated as "count" in another. They are also advised to teach proper names and other subclasses of nouns under Stage Three in such a way as to show their students the differences of usage in English and Arabic. They should make it clear also that these English subclasses of nouns may be used as count nouns and thus be preceded by a or the (if the is not already there) and have plural forms like regular count nouns.

When students have mastered these facts about nouns, teachers are advised to present the English articles graded according to the findings of this study from the highest percentage of errors to the lowest as follows:

1. A with count singular nouns, selecting¹ these uses and presenting them in the order: (a) numerical a, (b) introductory a, (c) a with an individual member of a class, (d) generic a.

2. Zero with mass nouns, selecting these uses and presenting them in the order: (a) zero with an indefinite quantity of material, (b) zero with a material as a genus.

3. Zero with count plural nouns, selecting its use with indefinite plurals.

4. The with nouns under Stage Two, greater familiarity, presenting the uses in the order: (a) the with

¹Selection here is made from Jespersen's summary, presented in the third Chapter, and is based on the increasing frequency of erroneous usages, as shown in Table 7 above.

count singulars, (b) the with count plurals, (c) the with a definite quantity of material.

5. Zero with nouns under Stage Three, selecting these uses and presenting them in the order: (a) zero with proper names, (b) zero with public institutions, (c) zero with unique jobs.

6. The with nouns under Stage Three, selecting these uses and presenting them in the order: (a) the with singular proper names, (b) the with plural proper names.

C. Suggestions for Further Study

None of the English grammars examined in the course of writing this paper makes the distinction between "mass" and "count", clear enough to be depended on in any discussion of the English article system. A monograph is needed to show that the distinction is very fine and that "mass" and "count" in English are grammatical concepts, not semantic ones. Another monograph is needed on the uses of articles with adjectives.

A tremendous amount of research needs to be done on the Arabic article system. Field work needs to be done on the uses of ?al- and zero in MSA and Iraqi respectively. A monograph is needed on the suffix -n in MSA to decide whether it is a defining or a case-ending suffix. Research needs be done on the uses of ?al- with adjectives and adverbs, and on its uses as a "relative pronoun" prefixed to nouns

and verbs in all three forms of Arabic. A monograph needs to be written on what a proper name is in Arabic.

Another error analysis paper is needed based on compositions written on different topics from those that contributed errors to this paper. The results would probably be somewhat different, but they would supplement the results obtained in this paper. The combined results might give a clear and rather complete picture of the correlation between error areas and areas of linguistic differences between the English and Arabic article systems, and thus supply teachers with a useful body of data on which they can base their teaching plans and drills.

APPENDIX A

UNCLASSIFIED ERRORS

PAPER NO.	POSSIBLE CORRECT ARTICLE	ERRORS
1	a	She had <u>one</u> child.
1	a	One day when she slept <u>some of</u> thief came to her house.
2	? ¹	English language is very useful for we because it is <u>an</u> international.
4	a	She has <u>one</u> child.
8	?	... he was <u>a</u> poor.
12	?	... if the film was <u>a</u> forigne and we know its language, we will understand it more.
17	a	In one day <u>one</u> woman was live in house.
17	a	She lived with <u>one</u> brother and <u>one</u> son.
26	?	... he became <u>a</u> very bad and wicked.
29	?	Zeki was playing near the river with <u>his a</u> friend.
34	?	... his family was <u>a</u> poor.
37	a	There was <u>one</u> girl lived alone with her grand mother.
40	a	One day he brought <u>one</u> fish to the house
43	some	One day the king decided to do <u>a</u> thing.
44	∅	When he entered <u>the</u> Layla's house, he saw Layla read book.

¹A question mark indicates more than one possibility.

PAPER NO.	POSSIBLE CORRECT ARTICLE	ERRORS
46	?	He gave the daughter of chinese king to <u>the her</u> husband
51	a	... after along time he found <u>one</u> fish in it.
51	a	So in <u>One</u> moment they found their house change to a new big house.
51	?	She became the queen of <u>the all</u> fish.
51A	?	along ago there was a young grile her name was Seham.
51A	a	She made <u>any</u> plan to kill her but all these failed.
53	Ø/Ø	The gost gived <u>the</u> enough <u>of the</u> money.
55	the	In that time <u>one</u> judge was very wicked and treated his people badly.
60	Ø	And <u>this</u> petrol contains many other things.
66	a	There were a family lived in <u>one</u> town.
67	the	... but you cannot cheat <u>some</u> people for along time.
68	a	There was an old king ruled <u>one</u> country.
68	a	<u>One</u> man was arrived he so her and took her to his house.
69	some	It is used in <u>the some</u> business.
70	a	<u>The Short</u> <u>a</u> Story
70	?	He made me <u>a</u> good with my people.
73	Ø	Selma died after many months of <u>her</u> illness.
77	a	Ali was <u>one</u> person who lived as the poor people <u>live</u> ..
79	?	I said good by to my family and left them <u>a</u> very sad.

PAPER No.	POSSIBLE CORRECT ARTICLE	ERRORS
83	a	We can read <u>some</u> story.
88	a	Zeki had <u>one</u> daughter.
89	?	He went to <u>his</u> sister with <u>the another</u> boy.
91	?	He is <u>a</u> rich.
93	every	We asked a man to explain <u>the every</u> word.
99	a	At <u>one</u> hot day of summer, three merchants set out ...
99	each	<u>The each</u> one must help other people.
110	the	We can speak from <u>these</u> people.
110	the	We could understand when <u>this</u> film began and
110	the	understan when <u>these</u> actors began.
110	the	We could understand <u>this</u> play.
113	?	He was <u>a</u> famous and very rich.
113	a	In <u>one</u> holiday ...
114	a	One evening after hunting in <u>the a</u> thick forest all day.
116	another	<u>The another</u> reason why ...
118	?	We do not go <u>to the</u> abroad.
132	Ø	The man went to the river to bring <u>some</u> food.
133	Ø	It learn all over the world in <u>their</u> schools.
155	?	The three friends lived <u>a</u> happy after that.
155	this	We learn English in order to know <u>this the</u> language.

PAPER NO.	POSSIBLE CORRECT ARTICLE	ERRORS
161	a	She ordered her faithful made to take the daughter ² to <u>one</u> place in order to get (rid) ² of her.
163	?	He became <u>a</u> famous.
173	?	This woman was <u>a</u> good.
178	this	Many years ago <u>that the</u> story happened
181	?	It is natural to be <u>a</u> bald.
181	some	The peer man asked him strongly to give <u>him</u> ^{the} <u>the</u> medicin.
184	his	So he ordered one of <u>the</u> followers to <u>put</u> a rock in the middle of the road.
195	some	Jeha went after them in order to get <u>_____</u> sweets.
205	the	The man went on <u>his</u> read.

² Parentheses are mine.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE COMPOSITION PAPERS

Five composition papers are presented here to give the reader a clear idea about the errors and how they were identified in the corpus. In the opinion of the writer these papers are a representative sample of the total composition papers. Errors are underlined twice and correct usages once only. The articles listed on the margin were misplaced by the articles underlined in the papers.

Pap. 1:

There was an old woman; she had a child and she and her son lived in a village. Her husband had died many years ago. When her son became seven years put him in the school. many month's ago her son became ill and she bring the doctor for her son. The doctor asked to her, she must take her son to the country and she did not work that. In the end her son died. She collected the money in the small box. One day when she slept some of thief come to her house and stolen the wooden box. Whe she learn that she became very had and. In the end she died from her sadness.

aⁿ, a

∅
a

a
a

Pap. 54:

~~When~~ the poor man lived in villeg with two duaters. He worked every day in order he got the money so he was buying the food and brought the food to their girls. onday the poor man had died so he left girls. on of the girls was very sorry about her father and died. at that time good looking man loved the eldest girls because she was clever beautiful and he was marge her and lived happley.

a, a

∅, ∅

the

a

Pap. 106:

English is one of the language spoken all over the world.
We learn the foreign languages because they are used in business and trade and they are the languages which in the best book on science, medicine and enginreeing.
The foreign language is valuable and desirable.
When we travel to foreign countries we can speake with them.
When we go to cinema we can understand the films. We can understand the English news by broadcasting station.
We can understand the film which appear on the Television screen.
We learn the foreign language even we can read the works of the great writers like Shakespear and Shaw.

Ø

a

the

the

a

Ø

Pap. 154:

Iraq is rich and very rich in petrole and Iraq agered between conterouys is threed exporte of petrole, then the garden of petrol in the north of a Iraq it's very large and gives a good wealth every gear spashal gardens of kercok and Basrah, then the wealt whose gets it from petrole used in many way to buled schools, hospitals, open the streats and maney wants eles.
The Iraq import to England, M.U.S. and Uorop.

the

Ø

the

the

Ø the

Pap. 202:

Layla wrote the letter to her family toled them. She arrived in England yesterday. She discribe her journey.
She left Baghdad in eleven oclock in night. She slept in the comfortable seat. When the sun was shining she got up from her slept and she looked out through the window of Aeroplane. when the Aeroplane was flying over the france. she saw fields, roads, rivers, hills and mountains. After ashort time she had breakfast. After she finished she look out again. She cride. 'I could see nothing only abeautiful clouds, the clouds was blow us, not above." After that the captain told them the Aeuroplane go down in the paris

a

a

the

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/...

they wanted to see paris and when the plane
go dwon the travellers left the Airport.
the weather of paris was cold and rain. After
one oclock they left paris and they were
flying to London.

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