THE USE OF THE ARTICLES IN ENGLISH AMONG SOME SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ZARIA

BY

CATHERINE OLUSHOLA AROKOYO (MRS)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POST-GRADUATE SCHOOL, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (LANGUAGE) .

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA.

DECEMBER, 1992 *m*

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations indicated and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references.

Catherine Olushola Arokoyo (Mrs)

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled **"The use of the articles in English among some Senior Secondary School students in Zaria"** by **Catherine Olushola Arokoyo** meets the regulation governing the award of the degree of M.A. (Language) of **Ahmadu Bello University**, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

DR(MRS) R. M. OLADIPO 19th Jan, 1993
CHAIRMAN, SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

P. V. GOMWALK
MEMBER, SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

17/1/96
DEAN, POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give the Almighty God the glory for providing me the strength, patience and endurance during the time this work was carried out.

I would like to thank my parents especially my father, Mr Clement Mejiyan, who made me to realize the importance of education which was denied him due to financial constraints.

I am deeply indebted to my major supervisor, Dr(Mrs) R.M. Oladipo, for her whole-hearted and patient supervision of this work. Mrs Oladipo aroused my interest in looking at the articles in English. She encouraged me at moments when I seemed to have lost confidence in myself. I thank her very much for the wonderful role she played to see me through and for making the materials she has available for me to use.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my second supervisor, Mr P.V. Gomwalk, for helping me read the first draft of this thesis. His comments and suggestions proved very useful and are highly appreciated.

The help and contributions of Professor Adeyanju, Dr Odumuh and Dr Olaofe is very much appreciated.

I thank Mr Yomi Arokoyo and Femi Obatunbi who helped me with the data analysis. There are other people who contributed in various ways to the success of this work such as our relations, family friends, colleagues and well wishers who gave me a lot of moral support. I also thank Mrs Patience Okogbue, who typed the manuscripts.

I must also express my sincere gratitude to my beloved husband, Dr J.O. Arokoyo, for his moral and financial support, and for his prayers and constant encouragement throughout the duration of this research.

Finally, I say 'thank you' to all my children and my sister, Iyabo, who waited patiently for me to finish this study. May God continue to be with you (Amen.)

ABSTRACT

It has often been claimed that users of English as a second language are never in full grasp of all the fundamentals of the language. The use of the English articles by many learners of English seems to lay credence to this claim. The problems often associated with the use of the articles have been rated high in different studies which makes the topic necessary for a detailed treatment. This study, therefore, set out to investigate the use of the articles among students in some secondary schools in Zaria.

Three categories of articles use which were investigated are:

a. the definite article
b. the indefinite article
c. zero article

Two hundred SS II students from four different secondary schools in Zaria were used. The subjects comprised four groups of fifty subjects from each school. The test instrument consisted of sixty test items of the three categories of articles mentioned above with two essay topics. Subjects were supposed to write on one of the essay topics. The tests administered in all the secondary schools used were done under the same condition.

The researcher was interested in finding out through the test administered the problems students have in using the articles in English. The findings revealed that many of the respondents had difficulty using the articles appropriately. The results showed that 50.5% of the students did not use the zero-form appropriately; 43.9% were unable to use the definite article while 36.4% could not use the

indefinite article in some correct situations. Based on these findings, we therefore, drew the conclusion that article usage constitutes a problem for many students in secondary schools in Zaria area.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to:

Yetunde

Mayowa

Babatunde

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ABBREVIATIONS OF TERMS

The following terms are defined and abbreviated as used in this study and as used in the literature;

NP	The noun phrase
VP	The verb phrase
Def. Art.	Definite article
Ind. Art.	Indefinite article
Art	Zero-form (articleless words)
Ref. obj.	Reference object
Ana. Def. Art	Anaphoric definite article
Ass. Def. Art.	Associative definite article
Sg. N.	Singular noun
Pl. N	Plural noun
Pr. N.	Proper noun
Abs. N.	Abstract noun
Ms. N.	Mass noun
Gen. ref.	Generic reference
N.	Noun
Comp.	Comparative
Partt.	Partitive
Vo.S.	Vowel sound
Con.S.	Consonant sound
Unsp. N.	Unspecified noun
Adj.	Adjective
Det.	Determiner
S.D.	Situationally determined

S.P.	Specific
Pref.	Prefixed
App.	Application
Dist.	Distributive
R.P.	Remote period
W.N.S.	Weekly numerical sense
Ana.	Substantive/substance
Pred. Sup	Predicate superlative
Cont.	Contrast
Pl. cl. N.	Plural class noun
Para. s.	Parallel structure
Unc.	Uncountable
SS II	Senior Secondary Two Students

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 PREAMBLE

In recent times, quite a number of writers have noted the need to improve the spoken and written English of students not only in the secondary schools but also in tertiary and other higher institutions in Nigeria.

Olayemi (1980), Obi (1982), Ayoko (1983) and Akoh (1989) among others, all agreed that students have difficulties in using the articles in English. Such studies are however, not primarily on article use and are therefore not indepth investigations of the articles and the problems associated with their use.

The present research has observed that many students in the secondary schools lack the ability to use the articles correctly both in written and spoken English. This might be due to lack of awareness of the rules guiding the use of all the categories involved, that is, the definite article, the indefinite article and zero article.

In a country such as Nigeria where English fulfills a major function (being the country's official language) the need to be proficient in it is great. To achieve high levels of proficiency in it, the language is used not only as a medium of instruction from lower primary school to the university level, but it is also taught as a subject at every level of eduction. It is little wonder then that English enjoys a pride of place in our educational system.

Against this background, it is pertinent that students at the secondary school level should be helped to attain proficiency in it

which will enable them to use the English language correctly and efficiently.

One of the problems with the use of English in Nigeria today is that students speak all kinds of what might be regarded as poor quality and uneducated English. While this appears to be an inevitable consequence of different speaker's competencies in the language, we are of the opinion that correct use of the language is not only desirable but is also possible.

The problem of article usage is a syntactic one. Although such syntactic deviations do not usually result in unintelligibility, they are indicative of the users' imperfect knowledge of the language.

1.1 NEED FOR THE STUDY

The use of the articles in English is a major grammatical problem among students at different levels of the educational system in Nigeria and probably also in other countries where English is used as a second language. We are aware of the fact that many researchers have noted this problem. But there is as yet no detailed investigation of the problem to the best of the present researcher's knowledge.

The rationale for this study derives from the fact that the English language has been bastardised by students at all levels of our educational system. This might explain the reason behind the recent emphasis on the teaching of grammatical categories in the new secondary school syllabus. The present researcher has observed that many secondary school students lack the ability to use the English articles which, as earlier noted, might be due to lack of the

knowledge of the rules of the articles and their functions within the noun phrase in which they occur.

The teaching of the articles to students in secondary schools may at first sight appear simplistic bearing in mind the fact that the articles are more likely to be regarded as an insignificant aspect of the grammar of English (because they are small in form). But the inability to master the system very well often kindles 'a large fire of ungrammaticality'. The recurrence of the problems associated with their use seem to support this fact. It would, therefore, be outright naivety to suppose that the articles are insignificant to the grammar of English. Many writers have noted the persistence of the problems being alluded to. Akoh (1989), for instance, noted the difficulty of article use not only among learners of English but also among teachers of English.

This study will, among other things, investigate the nature of the problems relating to article use and suggest possible reasons for their prevalence. It will also attempt to highlight many of the uses of the articles with the hope that their awareness will aid their effective teaching and reduce the problems associated with their uses among learners of English.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The traditional grammar has provided fairly detailed accounts of the functions of the articles in English. In other words, the accounts have made positive contributions to our understanding of their functions. This study has made use of a lot of insights from traditional grammar with the hope of throwing more light on article

use and consequently reducing the problems of wrong use which is common in the written and spoken English of many secondary school students. The examples below exemplify the three categories of articles identified in our discussion as constituting problems to many students in the secondary school.

A. Wrong use of the definite article.

i. The people are unhappy about the present economic
P. /N
in the country.

ii. Education is better than the business
Abs/.N

iii. My father said i should go and do holidays with my brother who is the doctor.
Unsp/. N

iv. Nigeria is the country blessed with many things.
/Intro.

B. Wrong use of the indefinite article.

i. My father wants me to become a accountant
Vo/.S

ii. Gari, beans, maize have become an essential commodities.
Pl. N/.

iii. I have never seen a Nile.
Pref/.

iv. It is hot around an equator.
SD/.

C Wrong inclusion and omission of articles.

Wrong inclusion:

i. The human life is very precious.

Unc/ + Adj.

ii. He takes a pride in all his children.

Abs/. N

Omission:

i. I am now in secondary school

ii. I applied for job during the holidays

Expressions such as the above examples make is necessary to investigate why students have problems using the articles in English correctly. This study, therefore, sets out to identify not only the nature of the problems but also some of the causes of these problems and suggest some solutions which could reduce their inappropriate use among learners of English.

1.3 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

This study makes the following basic assumptions.

i. The use of the articles in English is a major problem area for many secondary school students.

ii. Many secondary school students use the definite article in place of the indefinite article and vice-versa.

ii. Many secondary school students use the articles in contexts where they are not required and omit them where they are required.

1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

1. The major aim of the study is to investigate the use of the articles in English among some secondary school II students in Zaria.

Other aims are to:

2. find out the possible causes of these problems.
3. find out if the students' inability to use the articles is due to such factors as poor learning strategies, interference of mother tongue, faulty teaching and inadequate knowledge about the rules of article usage.
4. suggest ways of solving the problems identified and make recommendations that will lead to the proper teaching and learning of the articles in particular and English language in general.

1.5 SOURCES OF DATA

The data obtained for this study was from a formal source. Tests were administered to 200 students from four schools located in Zaria area.

The schools from which the subjects were drawn are Government Girls Day Secondary School, Samaru, Demonstration Secondary School, A.B.U., Barewa College, government Commercial college in Zaria (see 3.1.3).

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to some Senior Secondary II students in four selected secondary schools in Zaria. The focus was on the respondents ability to use the articles in English in appropriate situations. The test did not cover all the possible uses of the articles. More so, their oral use of the given articles was not tested either. It was felt that the subjects might easily provide the required information having been given enough time for the written tests administered for the collection of the necessary data for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 PREAMBLE

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first deals with the review of related literature on the functions of articles within the noun-phrase. The second part deals with the selected approaches adopted in treating article usage in English. The third part presents the choice of the model used in this study.

2.1 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Grammarians of different persuasions (traditionalists, transformationalists, structuralists, etc.) as well as logicians and philosophers have used different approaches in treating the articles and problems associated with their use. Each has contributed to the current available studies and descriptive insights on the articles. Some of the literature will be reviewed individually and chronologically in what follows.

2.1.1 Jespersen (1939)

One of the earliest of such works on articles is Jespersen's (1939) Essentials of English Grammar. In this book, the articles in English are presented under definite pronouns, but one cannot miss the clear line drawn in the treatment of the articles from that of definite pronouns.

Jespersen considers 'the' as a weakened 'that'. And as 'the; is phonetically a weakened 'that', its meaning is also weakened. In the opinion of Jespersen, instead of pointing out, 'the' serves to

designate or single out. Though it is generally called ' the definite article', Jespersen prefers to call it the defining or determining article. He further assigns two distinct functions to it - that of determining in itself, and that of determining in connection with a following word or words containing the essential specification. Thus, there are the categories of article of complete, and article of incomplete determination. The article of complete determination according to Jespersen refers to the definite article together with the 'zero' forms. It points out the chief use of the article which is to indicate the person or thing that at the moment is uppermost in the mind of the speaker and presumably in that of the hearer too. Thus it is said to recall what has just been mentioned or where the whole situation is sufficient to show what is meant. An instance of recalling what has been mentioned thus features in the following sentence:

(1) Once upon a time there lived an old tailor in a small village. The tailor was known all over the village as 'old Harry'.....

where 'the tailor' refers back to the earlier mentioned 'old tailor'.

If on the other hand, the whole situation shows what is meant, we will have something like:

(2) Shut the door please.

in which case the door to be shut is known to both the speaker and hearer and obviously the reference is to a specific door.

Jespersen contends that while 'king' in itself (ie. with no definite article) may be applied to hundreds of individuals, living or dead, 'the king' is as definite as a proper name because it refers to a particular king. 'Our king' simply means the present king in the

country in which we are living. If, however, the situation changes, the value of the definition contained in the article changes automatically as in

(3) The king is dead. Long live the king!

In the second sentence, 'the king' refers to the legal successor of the king who was mentioned in the first. Other specifications is also similar in words such as 'the sun'. 'the star'. 'the city', 'the wind', etc. This use is what Hawkins (1978) refers to as larger situation use based on general knowledge. Another significance which Jespersen notes in the use of the definite article is its use when the word without it would not be easily understood as sufficiently specialized. There is, therefore, a strong tendency to do without it in many cases where the individualization is self-evident as in:

'mother', 'uncle' and names of meals, etc.

This is not to say that the definite article cannot be used with these words but when it is used as in:

(4) The dinner was a frugal one.

It is the quality of the noun that is meant. Whether an article is used or not cannot be said to be a non-issue, since, either way, the overall meaning of the sentence is affected. As Jespersen notes, the use or non-use of the articles can result in change of meaning. It will make the difference between 'dinner' the name of a meal and 'the dinner' a particular meal.

Names of some public institutions are usually without the article if their purpose is thought of rather than the actual building. thus:

(5) Go to church

in which reference is to church as an institution, whereas

(6) We walked to the church and there took a bus

is a reference to the building.

Proper names do not usually require the definite article as they are definite in themselves. But when proper names occur in the plural, the definite article must be used.

Note the difference this makes between (7) and (8) below:

(7) Jones is now a driver.

(8) The Jones are now in London.

In (8) the proper name ceases to be a proper name in the fullest sense. This rule, therefore, accounts for such forms or plural words as 'the Stuarts', the 'Johnsons', the Tullivers' etc. This same rule applies to geographical names with the plural form: 'the West Indies', 'the Netherlands', 'the Alps' etc. So also are the names of oceans because they are still felt as adjectives to which the word sea or ocean may be added: 'the Pacific', 'the Baltic', 'the Atlantic' etc. In accordance with this rule, we have the article with river-names such as 'the Thames', the 'Rhine', 'the Benue' etc.

Among other uses of the definite article identified by Jespersen is its use with superlatives:

(9) He is the richest man in the town.

The superlative however ceases to be one when it occurs with the indefinite article or when it occurs without an article:

(10) The Bishop is a most learned gentleman.

(11) The procedure is most dangerous.

The definite article can also be used to denote the typical:

(12) He is quite the gentleman

The use of the article with a singular may have generic interpretation to denote the typical representative of the class:

(13) He plays the violin or the flute.

By contrast, a noun could be without an article as in:

(14) He plays football.

in (14) 'football' is considered a kind of mass word. More so, if the object of the play is the name of the game, there is no article. If however 'the; is used distributively, it is considered a kind of generic singular as in:

(15) We buy them by the hundred.

However, phrases consisting of a verb and its object do not take the article. By the same token, phrases consisting of two or three parallel members and in a great many prepositional combinations do not occur with the article. Examples such as (16) and (17) illustrate the point:

(16) I have lost sight of the location of the house.

(17) Her parents live from hand to mouth.

The article can be placed once with two or more parallel words especially, if they belong closely together as in:

(18) The bride and bridegroom stepped out of the church elegantly.

and not 'the bride and the bridegroom'. If the two words designate one and the same person, the article is not normally repeated. For example:

(19) He became the teacher and protector of the young man.

Where contrast is meant, two articles will then be used:

(20) The struggle between the Calvinists and the Papists.

Having discussed the definite article under the article of complete determination, Jespersen goes further to explain what he means by the article of incomplete determination. He states such cases as those in which the definite article is not in itself sufficient to determine what we are speaking about. He classifies all combinations in which the substantive has an adjective as belonging to this category. For example 'the grey horse'. He also cites examples of such cases where the complementary determination follows the substantive, with a prepositional group, and a relative clause, for example:

(21) The boy who showed us the way.

He observes that a genitive or possessive pronoun is enough to determine a word, for example 'Shelly's death;' 'my father'.

He is quick to note that such a group as 'my son' is not definite enough, because there is the tendency for one to have many sons, but sentences such as

(22) My son arrived yesterday

concerns only that son who is determined by the context.
Jespersen illustrates the article of incomplete determination with these examples.

(23) About that time he was starting business.

(24) About the time he was starting business, he became engaged.

He explains that while 'about that time' in (23) is a complete indication of time, the definite article in (24) is an article of incomplete determination supplemented by a clause 'he was starting business' to form a complete indication of the time of his engagement. Other words that take articles because of their qualifying restrictions include, mass words, proper names and analogues. Also the article + adjective could be put before a proper name in order to distinguish two or more bearers of such a name. Thus, in (25) 'the younger' occurs before the proper name Pitt:

(25) The younger Pitt against the elder Pitt,

In other cases, the general tendency is to do without the article before a proper name preceded by an adjective, especially if this is of an emotional or ornamental character, for example, 'little Mary' Immortal Shakespeare' etc. Fashion also requires the article before certain honorific adjectives such as 'the right Rev. Smith'.

In another Chapter of his book, Jespersen treats the indefinite article as 'an; before vowels and 'a' before consonants and gives it what he regards as a better name 'the article of indetermination' which is historically a weakened form of 'one'. This article is used in a few combinations:

(26) Rome was not built in a day.

and also in some set phrases to mean one and the same, e.g.

(27) Birds of a feather flock together .

The indefinite article is used not only in introductory remarks where we expect further information, but also in a great many other cases where the singular of a noun is required, for example:

(28) He wanted to sit quietly on an easy-chair with a good book

Most substantives as predicates are provided with the indefinite article though with some exceptions. Example of the regular usage:

(29) He was (became) a sailor.

The indefinite article is also seen in analogous cases and also in comparisons. Its distributive use makes it to approach the meaning of 'each', as in (30).

(30) He lives on two Naira a day.

Naturally, the indefinite article precedes an adjective. It is also placed between 'half' and a substantive as in the following:

(31) George drank half a bottle of wine with each of his meals.

With regard to the repetition of the indefinite article, the rule states that one indefinite suffices if the two items belong naturally together:

(32) At this moment a gentleman and lady entered together.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Jespersen has given the articles a fairly good, though by no means exhaustive treatment.

2.1.2 Zandvoort (1962)

Zandvoort (1962) states that a noun can be preceded by a monosyllable called a definite article. According to Zandvoort, the definite article is pronounced as [ðiˊ] before vowel sounds and as [ðə] in rapid speech and [ðˋ] in other cases.

Zandvoort recognises the functions of 'the' with singular and plural nouns. In his opinion, 'the' is also used with a noun in the

specifying genitive, but not with its headword as in 'the king's enemies'. The article in this example goes to 'king' not to 'enemies'. But if used with classifying genitive, the article denotes the whole group, that is, 'the barbers shop' in general. As we have in majority of cases, the noun can refer to a special person, animal and thing:

(33) The age of Elizabeth saw the defeat of the Armada and the rise of England as a great sea power.

The nouns 'age', 'defeat' and 'rise; are specified by the adjuncts 'of Elizabeth', 'of Armada', 'of England' respectively.

A singular class noun can be preceded by the definite article to denote a class of persons, animals, or things thought of as single entities, for instance;

(34) The early twentieth century was sometimes called the age of the child.

Zandvoort provides lists of words which can occur with 'the'. The lists include collective plural nouns suggesting the whole body. 'The' also has a classifying function found before adjectives used as nouns:

(35) 'The Catholics', 'the blind' and 'the unusual'.

Other cases where 'the' can feature are with uniques such as 'the sun', before adverbials as 'in the hall' and before comparatives indicating degree or amount as in 'the smaller' etc.

Zandvoort also gives the zero article a fair treatment. Although his treatment of the zero article does not come under a separate heading, he brings out some instances where the non-use of the articles feature. The article does not feature when 'man and woman'

is used in a collective abstract sense so also are the plural class-nouns used in general sense, as in the use of 'events' in (36):

(36) After the removal of the disturbers, events moved swiftly.

Compare:

(37) The events of the next three days are best described in his own words.

Other instances where the zero article is used are with names of localities to denote the use made of the building or object. These include 'school', 'church', 'hospital', 'court', 'prison' etc. The only instance where the article goes with these words is when we refer to the building as such. But when we think of the use we make of these things, there is usually no article. consider the use of 'bed'.

(38) I am getting old and bed is the place for me.

but when we refer to it as a physical object we have the following

(39) He put his clothes on the bed.

Zandvoort gives a list of other words with no article which include nouns denoting time, proper names denoting persons and places. Also names of countries preceded by adjectives usually take no article. Other words include concrete nouns, abstract nouns, names of building, etc.

He is quick to remind us of the impossibility of mentioning all cases as some belong to idiom rather than to grammar.

Zandvoort treats the indefinite article as a monosyllable that may precede a noun. He contends that its use in English is less restricted than in some other languages.

The indefinite article is realised as [ən] but written as 'an' before vowel sounds and [ə] written as 'a' in other environments.

Zandvoort identifies the principal function of the indefinite article as that of a single specimen of the class of persons, animals or things indicated by the noun (often with the implication that any other specimen of the same class would have done as well). He highlights its use before singular nouns which are plural in form. For example; 'alms', 'barracks', 'gallows', and 'gas-works'. The indefinite article can also perform (i) an individualizing function if a special name is needed as in:

(4) A young woman who hired a horse from a local rider.

All the three occurrences of the indefinite article in the above example have this function.

(ii) a classifying function

(41) On two previous visits, I had been given a dinner at the university club. A very jolly club.... at least for one evenining.

both occurrences of the indefinite article classify the nouns with which they occur - that is 'dinner' and 'club'.

The indefinite article goes with abstract nouns. It is also used before a personal proper name preceded by a title which is equivalent to 'a certain':

(42) A Mrs. Jones wants to see you.

Zandvoort also discusses instances when an English noun with a definite article corresponds to a noun without a definite article in

another language. Such cases are where a noun is qualified by an adjunct with an 'of' phrase. For example:

(43) At the request of his widow, there were no speeches.

Zandvoort, like other writers, has made significant contributions to our understanding of the use of the English articles especially in relation to the problems which non-native speakers of English have in using them. More often than not, they omit and misuse the articles.

2.1.3 Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968)

Jacobs and Rosenbaum discuss the function of article transformations in English. According to them sentences in English are composed of structured groups of words which fall into natural word classes. The two basic constituents of a sentence(s) are the noun-phrase (NP) and the verb-phrase (VP). The main constituent of (NP) is a noun. A noun can be common or proper. A common noun, for example, has the feature (+ common) while a proper noun has the feature (- common). Nouns can be either concrete or abstract. A concrete noun has the feature (+ concrete), an abstract noun has the feature (- concrete). If a concrete noun is animate we then have (+ animate). If animate, we have (-animate). Nouns can be human or non-human, if human (+ human) otherwise (- human).

Jacobs and Rosenbaum state that noun phrases contain, besides nouns, other constituents called determiners which could re-write as an article (ART). The article can be any of the following:
'the', 'a', 'this', 'that', 'those', or 'these' etc.

An example of a noun phrase with an article is 'the turkey'. In this phrase 'the' is an article and it is also a determiner, 'turkey' is a noun and 'the turkey' is a noun-phrase.

In transformational grammar, sentences have two structures.

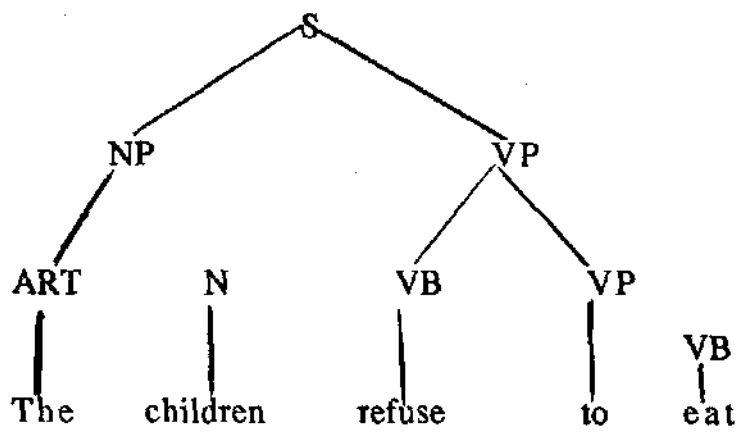
a. deep structure

b. surface structure

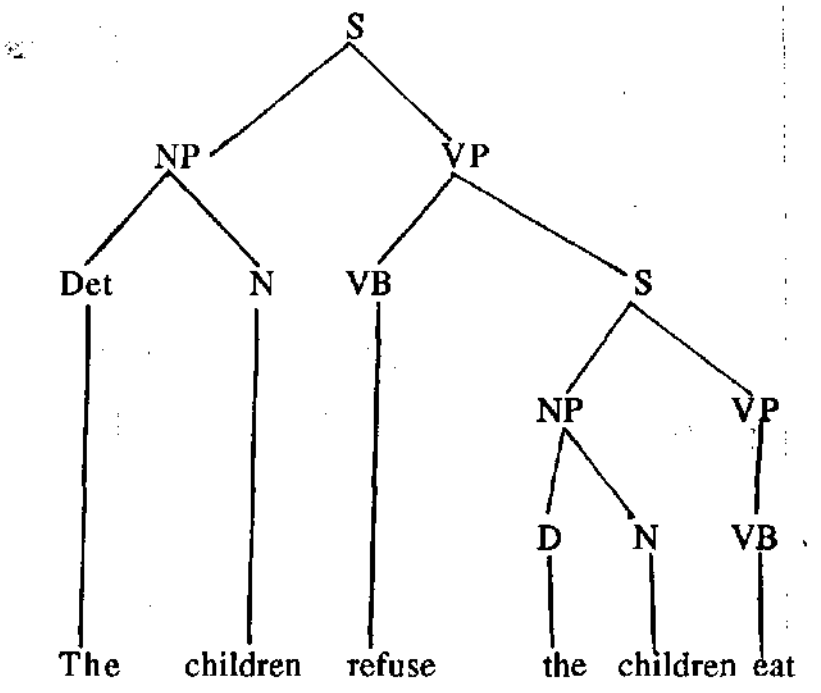
While the 'meaning' of a sentence is conveyed by its deep structure, the surface structure gives its written and spoken form. the deep structure is the abstract representation arrived at on the basis of the meaning of a sentence and its syntax. The surface structure is closer to physical reality in that it concretely specifies the syntactic structure necessary for spoken and written English. A sentence like (44)

(44) The children refuse to eat.

has the following surface structure



But in the deep structure, it will be:



According to Jacobs and Rosenbaum, the proper function of the article depends on the semantic feature categorization of the noun, especially definiteness: [+ definite] or indefiniteness [-definite] and number [+ singular] or [-singular]. Thus, if the features of a noun are [- definite] and [+ singular], the article transformation introduces the indefinite article 'a' or 'an'. If, on the other hand, the features of a noun are [+ definite] and [+singular] or [- singular] the definite article will be introduced by the article transformation. Articles are said not to be present in deep structure on the ground that we cannot know what form the noun-phrase contains. If the noun is marked [-definite] and [- singular] the determiner constituent will be deleted.

2.1.4 Christophersen and Sandved (1969).....

Christophersen and Sandved categorize the articles 'a' and 'the' as determiners with their zero-forms 'some', 'any', either', 'neither'.

According to them, the determiner 'a' which is usually called the indefinite article has four allomorphs, viz

(a) /ə/(spelt 'a')

(b) /ən/ (spelt 'an'

(c) /ə́/ (spelt 'a', normally italized or underlined)

(d) /əń/ (normally italized or underlined)

(a) is the form used normally before a consonant phoneme as in ' a hat', (b) is the form normally used before a vowel phoneme as in 'an island'. Christophersen and Sandved explain further that when 'an' occurs before words beginning with the letter 'h', the syllable will be unstressed as in ' an historical novel'. According to them this type of usage is outdated. While (c) is the emphatic form of the article used before consonants as in 'a man', not the man', (d) is the emphatic form of the article used before vowels.

(45) I said an hour ago, not the hour.

They also point out that 'a' is not found with countables nor with nominals in plural, although, words like 'gallows', 'barracks', 'innings' show individual features and are often used as singular or plural as the case may be. This is why we have the following possibilities:

(46) Barracks are large building accommodating troops (plural)

(47) I saw a large building looking like a barracks (singular)

According to Christophersen and Sandved, there are two meanings as to the use of the ' a - form' as (48a) and (48b) show:

(48a) On my way to the office this morning, I met an old friend..

(48b) A dog is more useful than a cat.

While the 'a - form' in sentence (48a) refers to one single unspecified member of a class of individual with the implication that there is a 'class' of old friends and the nominal preceded by 'a' refers to a particular member of this class, the use of 'a' in (48b) performs a different function. Here, the reference is not to one particular member of a class, but the individual is seen as a representative of the whole class.

To further show that there is really a difference between sentences (48a) and (48b), Christophersen and Sandved give the following examples:

(49) Last year we bought a cat and a dog.
We've still got the dog but the cat died after few weeks.

(50) A dog is a lot more useful than a cat.
A dog can be trained as a gun - dog. It is not much use trying to train a cat.

Other cases where 'a' could be used are also cited such as with proper names to denote:

A person or thing having the same qualities or characteristics as the individual bearing the name in question. For example.

(i) He is a Hitler

A person bearing the name in question:

(ii) I have a Daniel in my class

(iii) different aspects of one and the same individual
This is not the John we used to know in Britain

(iv) a thing made by the person bearing the name

This is a Ford

In discussing the use of article 'the', Christophersen and Sandved like Zandvoort (1962) and Close (1975) argued that the definite article has three allomorphs, viz:

(a) /ðə/

(b) /ði/

(c) /ði:/

While (a) is used before consonant(s), (b) is used before vowels and (c) is used when the article receives more emphasis, e.g. when distinguishing the 'form' from a construction with another determiner as in

(51) I said <u>the hall</u> not <u>a hall.</u>

They further explain that the 'the' form stands for a particular individual (or, in the plural, a group of individuals) known in some sort of way to both speaker (writer) and hearer (reader). Like Close (1962), Christopersen and Sandved maintain that introducing an item by 'a' or 'an' is not the only way of making it familiar. For instance, 'the sun', 'the bible', 'the king' or 'the president,' in a particular situation will usually have only one meaning, that is, the context 'supplies the justification of 'the' in these cases.

Another use made of 'the' is with uncountables in which 'the' stands for a definite part of the thing denoted by the nominal and this part is viewed as having precise 'limits.' For example:

(52) We have had a few reports, but the information is still very scanty.

In discussing the zero-form, they claim the extensive use of the zero-form in English. They cited the two most important uses of the zero-form in modern English which are with :

(i) Proper names such as 'the Wilsons'.

Words such as 'father', 'mother' and 'uncle' also fall into these categories. Nominals denoting people outside the family are also included as in

(53) Teacher was very angry this morning.

(ii) Other items that take the zero-form are uncountables and plurals, if the meaning of what is referred to is not generic, uncountables are accompanied by adjectivals as in 'the following:

(54) Human life is very precious.

Added to these are public institutions like 'schools,' 'church', ' hospitals', 'prison', 'market' which take the zero-form. If the purpose of the building is or the place is thought of rather than the building or place itself:

(55) Do you go to church? (purpose)

(56) Have you seen the church (building)

Also regularly, recurring events of an institutional kind are often used with zero-form:

(57) I will see you after school hours.

From the foregoing it is clear that Christophersen and Sandved have made tremendous contributions to our understanding of article use in English. Particular their eclectic approach which has enabled them to cover a wide scope of article use.

2.1.5 Close (1962, 1975)

Close, in his discussions on the articles cites the chief problems as

(a) no article versus 'a'

(b) no article versus 'the'

(c) 'a' versus 'the'

(d) 'singular' versus 'plural'

He goes on to discuss the primary distinction with the four problems mentioned above

(i) mass versus unit

(ii) general versus particular

(iii) unspecific versus specific

(iv) substance versus object consisting of that substance

(v) one versus more than one

In tackling the above problems enumerated, Close (1962) gives such examples as 'apple,' 'beauty,' 'child', 'eggs,' 'gas,' and 'iron,' as words which traditional grammar would classify as nouns and subdivide into proper nouns (Shakespeare), abstract nouns (beauty) and common nouns as (all the rest). According to Close these words are simply being divided up by modern grammarians as countables 'apples,' 'child,' 'man,' and so on and uncountables (beauty and Shakespeare) and all these classifications have at different times been used to formulate rules about the articles.

In order to make himself more explicit about the problems he presents, Close (1962) gives some examples to substantiate his claims about the rules on article formulation. He contends that modern grammar would refer to 'iron and stone' as uncountables when

referring to the substances, but uncountables when referring to objects consisting of these substances - 'water' for instance, according to him is normally an uncountable noun, although exceptionally countable in literary expressions such as 'still waters run deep,' 'gas' is uncountable, except when it refers to a kind of gas. In his opinion, such classifications work only within certain limits. Words appear under whatever category they are put, what we have in mind when we use them is what is important. English words today no longer fit into old Indo-European grammatical categories, therefore, classification into countable and uncountable is, according to Close, of limited validity and the term is therefore inaccurate.

Close notes that if 'iron' is a noun, it can also function as an adjective and as a verb, so also 'a beauty' could be a beautiful woman, or a fine specimen of anything.

Close further cites an example of the word 'apple' or 'language'. He states that each stands as undivided whole and as a mass. Each is also unmarked because it occurs, without an article so, the choice of 'apple' versus 'apples; is therefore a matter of mass in general versus units in general. By contrast, the plural 'apples' is marked as it suggests unlimited collection of units. If we have ' an apple' the noun marked with "a(n)' becomes independent, but unspecified - a complete example of the concept. Therefore, 'apple' versus 'an apple' is then seen as a concept in general versus one complete independent but unspecific example of it. So 'an' is (before a vowel sound) and a (before a consonant sound) which are unemphasized forms of one with a very weak pronunciation [ən,ə] In the pair 'a or an' versus one, the marked form is used to stress the idea of one and

not more than one or one and not another. 'An apple' is one of the things called by that name., e.g. one of a class or one thing in the class such as in the following:

(58) I am hungry - all I want is an apple or with something in that class and in no other such as:

(59) An apple is a kind of fruit.

According to Close, the importance of the above examples is not far-fetched especially in cases where a student compares the use of 'a' with a corresponding device in his own language or when he comes to the plural of the article in English. 'A' is called the indefinite article by tradition which can indicate both an indefinite and a definite one as in 'a pencil' and 'some man', Close therefore assigns what he regards as a better term for a(n) as a non specifying article which could either be quantitative or classifying, and applies only to a complete unit. The plural of 'an apple' then becomes apples' which expresses the idea of 'more than one'. Indications of quantity can be given in this instance by means of a number or an expression like 'some', 'a few' and 'a lot of'.

If, however one of the units is selected, it becomes a specified unit 'the apple', (this one which we are talking about and not any of the others). Once the unit has been identified, 'the' serves as a weak form of 'this' or 'that;. If it functions as a signal of specifications, as explained by close, the actual identification will then be provided by some restricting words or phrase which makes it clear which thing we mean:

(60) Take the apple

In (60) we assume that you know, from the context of situation, which apple we are referring to. In this case, it is the one we have chosen and no other. If however 'an apple' is placed among other kinds of fruits and we use sentence (60) above, we will be specifying that object called 'an apple', distinct from objects not belonging to that class. If all the objects were taken away except the one marked so that there was one object namely 'an apple,' then in saying 'Take the apple', we would obviously be specifying that object. This explains why 'the' appears to perform different but the same function. Where emphasis is on that member of a class distinct from others of the same class, the function of 'the; will be to signal specification within a class. If the object in the context stands 'a solitary' example of its kind which can bear a mark of distinction, that is if it is distinguished from others by its solitariness, it can have a distinction in the sense of prestige as noticeable in 'the king', 'the ruler' and 'the headmaster'.

Close explains that some objects, some points in space are specifically marked. In English, we are constantly referring to definite, marked objects and places on the map of our domestic, social and personal experiences, thus, we have 'the door.' 'the ceiling', the floor of a room, - 'the kitchen' the dining 'room' in the house - 'the garden,' 'the lawn' around the house. Where the house stands, we talk of the surroundings, e.g. the road, the pavement. In the district where we live - 'the post office', 'the market', 'the school'. If we talk of beyond, we will mention ' the sky,' 'the sun' etc.

The definite article can also go with the plural form of nouns, proper nouns, special names and geographical names.

By unit words unmarked with 'a' or 'the', Close is certainly referring to the zero-form. He gives such example as 'notices', 'signals,' 'telegrams', 'labels', 'newspapers'. He further adds the unit words to these examples which he claims fit into the zero-form pattern. These words according to him are words which when used, we are concerned not with a particular example of the concept but with:

(a) an action communally associated with the object reffered to such as - go to school (to learn), go to church (to pray), go to prison (as a punishment).

(b) with the class of object, rather than any particular example of it, by which something is conveyed as in 'to go by bus' ' send a letter by hand'.

(c) with ideas in general or the thing in abstract such as the following - 'at dawn,' 'in person', 'in question' and 'on record'.

Close maintains that care must be taken to distinguish between form and meaning in phrases beginning with 'of;', because, the word does not attract 'the' but the 'of phrase' serves to specify an example of the concept or to mark out a definite section of the field for instance 'the peace of Versailles' (specific) with 'peace of mind (peace in respect of the mind). In using 'the' with relative clause, Close points out the importance of making sure that the relative clause really identifies the object or sample as in:

(61) Nothing could be more agreeable with the life we are leading at the moment.

In summing up, Close notes that there remain in speech, and even more in writing, a wide scope for free use of the articles, so long

as one does not break the conventions of its usage and as long as one marks a socially - accepted correlation between meaning and form.

It is also noteworthy to look at Close's work in his (1975) book titled ' A reference Grammar for Students of English. In this book, he discusses the indefinite article under indefinite identifiers, while the definite article is discussed under definite identifiers. The zero article is also given a detailed treatment.

We also note the additional information he gives in this book about the definite article 'the' which he says is insufficient to identify a particular example or particular examples of a class and that identification can be made by:

(a) something already said - reference backwards

(b) something about to be said - reference forward and

(c) the context of situation.

On the whole, Close's treatment of the articles in his (1962) book is quite extensive. His respect for pedagogy as well as his detailed discussions and explanations about the functions of the articles is done in an elaborate manner. His examples are of great value and they have provided useful insight for the present study.

2.1.6 Quirk et al (1972, 1973)

Quirk et al make a distinction between:

(a) Specific reference

(b) Generic reference

in discussing the articles in English. They begin their discussions by citing examples to substantiate these distinctions. Suppose we say:

(62) A lion and two tigers are sleeping in the cage.

the reference is specific, since we have in mind specific specimens of the class 'tiger. If, on the other hand, we say:

(63) Tigers are dangerous animals

The reference is generic, since we are thinking of the class 'tiger; without special reference to tigers.

Quirk et al, therefore, posit that the distinction that are important for count nouns with specific reference between definite and indefinite and between singular and plural disappear because generic reference is used to denote what is typical for members of a class. They point out that the distinctions of number and definiteness become neutralized as they are no longer relevant for generic concept. Therefore, it is possible to use singular plural, definite and indefinite forms without change in the generic meaning. For example;

(64) The German)
A German) is a good musician
The Germans)
Germans) are good musicians

On the problems of article use, Quirk et al [(1972), (1973)] classify two different systems of article use according to the type of reference.

Definite specific reference

the tiger	the ink
the tigers	

Indefinite reference

a tiger	(some ink)
some tigers	

Generic reference

the tiger a tiger tigers	ink

With definite specific reference, the definite article becomes usable for all noun classes:

(65) Where is <u>the</u> pen? (singular count)
Where are <u>the</u> pens? (plural)
Where is <u>the</u> ink? (mass)

With indefinite specific reference, singular count nouns take the indefinite article 'a(n)' while plural count nouns and mass nouns take zero or what they call the 'light quantitative' article which are 'some' and 'any' in non-assertive contexts.

Quirk et al highlight the two types of reference with common nouns as specific and generic references, while the third type is classified as unique.

Generic reference goes with nationality words and adjectives as heads:

(66) The English are queer (generic)

The Englishmen wear suits most of the time (specific)

With plural personal, it is in this form

'the French/the poor'

while with singular non-personal abstract it is

'the devil/the *unusual*'.

Mass and plural count nouns with generic reference either concrete or abstract take the zero form:

(67) He likes wine

He likes music

He likes long walks

Zero article is also used when reference of the noun head is restricted by a premodification as in 'Canadian literature' where 'literature' is a mass noun.

Instances of zero with count nouns and plural nouns not unambiguously generic are also cited. For example:

(68) Oriental women are beautiful

(69) Appearances can be deceptive.

Quirk et al treat definite and indefinite reference under specific reference. They state that the indefinite is unmarked in the system of definite and they also assert that the indefinite is basic to definite:

(70) John bought a TV, a tape recorder and a radio, but returned the radio.

The definite noun phrase 'the radio' in the above example is dependent on the earlier mention of 'a radio'. Compare the following sentence:

(71) John came home from work. First, he read the paper for a while, got up from the chair and turned on the radio.

Despite the fact that the nouns in these examples have not been previously mentioned, we cannot say ' a paper' or 'a chair' because these things are part of the cultural situation and can be taken for granted.

Linguistic reference also features in Quirk et al's discussion. By this they mean the anaphoric or cataphoric 'the'. When 'the' is an anaphoric determiner, it is bound to an earlier mention of the same noun with a backward reference bringing about a co-reference between the two nouns as in:

(72) John ordered a book and the book has just arrived. Which cannot be said to be the same in meaning as

(73) John ordered a book and a book has just arrived

On the other hand, a cataphoric determiner could have a forward reference to a post modifying prepositional phrase or relative clause as in:

(74) The wine of France is very good.

Situational reference, as Quirk et al argue, involves the use of the nouns whose reference is immediately understood by the users of the language. It also includes concrete and abstract nouns:

(75) He turned on the radio (concrete)

(76) What is on the radio tonight / (abstract)

They also discuss the indexical 'the' which according to them is related to cataphoric 'the; by ellipsis in the sense that its concept is common to all mankind as a whole. Typical examples are:

'the sun', 'the wind', 'the moon' etc.

Side by side with the indexical 'the' is the specific indexical 'the' which is restricted to a particular location and creates such expressions as;

'the film', 'the press', 'the radio' etc.

Quirk et al round up their discussions under the point of reference with more examples of nouns with zero form which include common nouns with unique reference, and proper nouns reclassified as common, for example, 'a Shakespeare'.

As earlier mentioned, Quirk et al deal with article usage from the point of view of reference. Their materials on linguistic and situational reference though relevant to the present study cannot be said to have catered for all the relevant information needed for the research problem

2.1.7 Halliday and Hassan (1976)

Halliday and Hassan (1976) discuss the articles under the notion of reference which is similar in some ways to Quirk et al's. The definite article 'the' is set up as a unique member of a class, its relative being the indefinite article 'a'. According to them, no other item in English behaves exactly like 'the While 'a' is taken to be the reduced form of 'one', 'the' is classified with the specific determiners.

Halliday and Hassan refer to 'the' as a specifying agent. it serves to identify a particular individual subclass within the class designated by the noun, but does this through something else as it

does not contain a specifying element of its own. Furthermore, the definite article merely indicates that the item in question is specific and identifiable, and the information for identifying it is recoverable either from the situation or the text. The reference could be:

a. exophoric

b. endophoric

If exophoric, the reference would be identifiable in one of two ways, in which case, a particular individual or subclass is referred to and that individual or subclass is identifiable in a specific situation. For example:

(77) Don't go, the train is coming.

The most likely interpretation of 'the train' is the train both speaker and hearer are expecting.

In endophoric reference, the referent is identifiable on extra-linguistic grounds.

This can occur under two conditions, the first being if one member of the class is the one and the only one.

For example: 'the sun'. On the other hand, the referent could represent a whole class, as in (64):

(78) As the child grows, he learns to be independent.

The possibility of the use of 'the' to refer backward or forward is said to be limited to structural type. The tendency is that 'the' can only refer to a modifying element within the same nominal group as itself:

(79) The people who predicted a dry summer were mistaken.

The article 'the' in the structure above signals identity showing the criterion for identifying 'which people' while 'who predicted the dry summer' is taken as the defining element. The typical function of 'the', is thus, seen as anaphoric which could be termed 'second mention article'. Halliday and Hassan also note the possibility of 'the' having two or more functions at the same time as in the following:

(80) Look at the moon! The day-time moon always seems so sad.

The second occurrence of 'the' in the above example is cataphoric to 'day-time moon' because of its forward reference to day-time moon, anaphoric to the earlier moon because it has been previously mentioned, exophoric in the homophoric sense because there exists only one moon. The 'day-time' moon is said to be homophoric because it defers from the situationally specific type. It can also be thought of as situational because it is specifically the object of attention. All these instances of four-fold reference are said to be rare.

Although, 'the' has been given a fairly good treatment by Halliday and Hassan, it can hardly solve the present problem being investigated in this study. Its scope is not as broad as the present study intends to investigate.

2.1.8 Hawkins (1978)

Hawkins (1978) has the most substantial recent study on the articles, at least to the best of this present writer's knowledge. His analysis integrates and builds on much of earlier writers such as Christopersen (1939). and Jespersen (1939). Hawkins' account is a

pragmatic one sketched out within the framework of Speech Act Theory.

According to Hawkins, the use of the definite article involves the performance of three speech acts. Hawkins' location theory states that:

a. the speaker introduces a referent to the hearer
b. he instructs the hearer to locate the referent in some shared set of objects.
c. he refers to the totality of the object or mass within this set which satisfies the referring expression.

This explanation could be seen as a modified version of Christophersen's concept of familiarity. Hawkins offers a classification of the uses of the definite article based largely on Christopersen's own earlier account but, with some modifications. He gives eight usage types:

a. the anaphoric use
b. the visible situation use
c. the immediate situation use
d. the larger situation use based on specific knowledge
e. the larger situation use based on general knowledge
f. the associative anaphoric use
g. the unavailable use
h. the unexplainatory modifier use

Illustrated below are examples to substantiate a - h above.

(81) Bill was working at a lathe--- suddenly
the lathe stopped.

(82) Bill was working at a lathe---- suddenly

the machine stopped.

(83) Fred travelled to Murich ----- The journey was long and tiring.

(84) Pass me the book.

(85) Beware of the dog

(86) What is wrong with Bill? The woman he went out with was nasty to him

(87) The man to go and see is my friend Bill Smith.

(88) Will you get me the box over there in the corner?

(89) My wife and I share the same secret.

(90) The woman whom some sailor dated last night spread nasty rumour about Bill.

(91) The first person to sail to America was an Icelander.

Sentences (81-83) refers to anophoric use, in which the definite NPs recall some antecedents in the discourse. Anaphoric expressions are used to refer to things introduced previously. Having mentioned indefinite NP in (82) so also 'the journey' in (83) refers back to the act of travelling. According to Hawkins, associative anaphora is probably the most frequently used. Once reference is made to, say, 'a book', one can go on to speak of 'the author', 'the pages', 'the content' etc. These serve as the associates of the trigger. The book in (84) refers to the book known by the speaker and the hearer within the context. If sentence (85) acts as a warning sign on a particular gate, it then functions as an immediate situation use, the referent is in a situation in which the act of reference occurs, but it is not necessarily visible to both parties. The definite article informs the hearer of the existence of a dog and instructs him to use the situation

to find it. The larger situation use is where a definite NP serves as a first mention of some object in the village or country where the reference occurs. Members of a community share a body of knowledge of entities within the bounds of that community. This knowledge enables inhabitants of the same village for instance to speak of 'the church', 'the pub', 'the market' etc. This is also why inhabitants of this earth speak of 'the sun' without ambiguity.

General knowledge is used where a speaker lacks specific knowledge of the town (if he is a visitor) yet he can still refer successfully to the town clerk because he knows all towns tend to have one. Sentences (86 -90) relate the new definite reference to some previously known object, these are, 'the woman Bill went out with in (86), 'the men to go and see' in (87), 'the box' in (88), my wife and I in (89) and the woman in 90. We can say that (90) fails as a first mention definite reference because the woman is related in the modifier to an unknown object (some sailor). Hawkins' eighth usage type is the unexplanatory modifier use. 'The first person to sail to' in (91) substantiates the unexplanatory modifier use.

Hawkins opines that indefinites can be vague with respect to whether they are or they are not genuine associations of the trigger. In the following:

(92) Fred bought a car last week and then sold some tyres to his friends.

'some tyres' in the above may not be the tyres of the car that was bought. Hawkins cites three possibilities in which the context seems to determine how an indefinite reference is understood.

a. The context may force an indefinite reference to be assigned

to some speaker/hearer set.

b. It may force the indefinite reference not to be assigned to some potential available set.

c. It may leave the indefinite reference vague as in 'Fred bought a car'

The indefinite description can be understood as referring not to all objects of the required kind. For indefinite to refer, it must be possible for there to exist other potential referents of this kind in the shared set which are being excluded from the reference. Where the object to which 'a + singular count refers is unique within the shared set, the singularity of the noun would mean that reference is being made to one of such objects in the shared set. We can have 'a' + singular noun in a set as follows;

(93) A page was torn from the book I bought.

which refers to 'a page' in a book with some pages. What unites all cases of indefinite reference is the understanding of the reference as being a proper sub-set of the total numbers of the object in a share set. On a general note, the definite article refers inclusively, while the indefinite refers exclusively. Therefore, for a speaker to achieve a specific purpose when using an indefinite reference, the following speech acts are necessary.

(a) he introduces a referent or referents to the hearer.

(b) he refers to a proper sub-set i.e. not all the potential references of the referring expressions which are of course subject to the following conditions:

i. the referent of an indefinite description will not be locatable in a speaker/hearer shared set.

ii. the indefinite reference will be optionally locatable in a shared set.

iii. the indefinite referent must be located in a shared set.

(94) So you were in A.B.U., were you?

Then you must know a chap called John.

In the above sentences 'a chap called John' gives the information that the speaker has a very definite individual in mind and he is expression certainly that the hearer also knows exactly which individual is meant, yet an indefinite article is used. If the speaker is correct in his certainty, then both speaker and hearer will understand one and the same specific referent and not an arbitrary one.

An indefinite reference becomes arbitrary for the hearer when he has no means of knowing which of the infinite sets of potential referents is being included in the reference and which excluded. With indefinites, the speaker could as far as the hearer is concerned, be referring to any potential referent. The disjunctive aspect of indefiniteness therefore is a consequence of the hearer's inability to know which of the indefinite member of referents is being talked about or included in the speaker's reference and which is excluded.

Hawkins has treated the articles in English with clear explanations which have given us some understanding of the notion of articles and their functions. While some of his insights are relevant to the present study, it should be noted that the scope of this study addresses more fundamental problems than Hawkin's work.

2.2.0 Theoretical Framework

In the rest of this chapter, well shall consider some grammatical theories vis-a-vis their treatments of the articles. Their relevance or otherwise to the present study will also be assessed. At the end of the chapter we shall present the theoretical model for this study. The following grammatical theories are reviewed.

i. Traditional Grammar

ii. Systemic Functional Grammar

iii. Transformational Generative Grammar

The choice of these three theories is informed by the fact that the three have been used extensively in grammatical descriptions, and more importantly, because each of them has treated article usage in greater detail than other approaches.

2.2.1 Traditional Grammar

The traditional approach to grammar represents an attempt to prescribe rules for language use. Traditional grammar precedes what is now regarded as the scientific approach to the study of language. According to Crystal (1971), in traditional grammar, syntactic categories are described using features which have been identified in classical languages such as Greek and Latin. On the basis of these features, a universal grammar is worked out which is used as a descriptive model for all languages which the traditional grammarians wish to describe.

The traditional approach is said to be normative, definition oriented and prescriptive. It prescribes rather than merely describe

language. Emphasis is on correct usages, that is, what speakers should say rather than what speakers actually say. Traditional grammar has given us most of the notions that we use today in grammatical descriptions. Such terms as noun, verb, adverb, preposition, object, subject are due to traditional grammar. These are given formal and notional definitions which are sometimes imprecise and, in some cases, misleading. For instance, a noun is defined as the name of a person, place or thing. While the majority of nouns are covered by this definition, there are other examples such as 'honour', 'beauty', 'honesty' which are nouns but which cannot be defined as naming persons, places or things. Despite the flaws in traditional grammar, it is interesting to note that most of the terminologies of traditional grammar are still very much with us today, though some have been slightly modified.

Most accounts of the use of the articles make a distinction between the definite article 'the' and the indefinite article 'a(n)'. The indefinite article is said to signify an unspecified referent.

(95) I saw a man yesterday
/ / /
subj Ind Art N.

In traditional grammar, the above sentence will be analysed as a simple sentence having a subject 'I' and a predicate 'saw a man yesterday'. However, traditional grammar recognises different roles which the articles play within the sentence structure. We will use the following sentences to expand on this.

(96) I want a pencil.

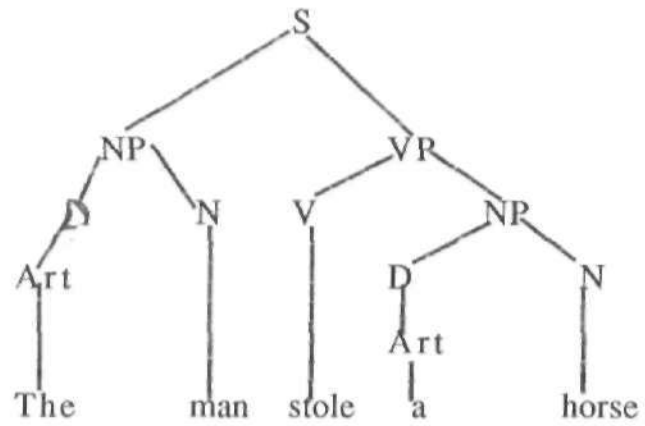
2.2.3 Transformational Generative Grammar

Transformational Grammar (TGG) was propounded by Chomsky (1957) based on phrase structure rules which is the first stage of the approach in which sentences are analysed into phrases as their immediate constituents. It also analyses syntax in terms of underlying structures.

Chomsky (1962) introduces a transformational rule to handle articles in English and suggests rewriting symbol 'T' as 'a' and 'the'. In Chomsky (1965), there is a rule which rewrites the article as plus or minus definite. To illustrate a sentence with a definite article such as:

(107) The man stole a horse.

is analysed as follows:



In this sentence, the article in the first Np 'the man' is assigned a feature marker [+ definite]. But in the second Np, 'a horse' the article is indefinite. It is then assigned the feature [- definite].

Sentences are said to have two structures - deep and surface structures. The surface structure is the overt (written or spoken)

contrast, Halliday (1985) does not see the articles as being different from the demonstratives. In (102) the use of 'the' with the unique is highlighted while (103) explains its use with superlatives, (104) illustrates its use with genitive 'of' phrases.

Traditional grammar which is claimed to be normative, prescriptive and definition-oriented has, however, provided a comprehensive account of the uses of the articles such as the foregoing. It is in the light of this extensive coverage that we consider the traditional grammatical model as a suitable model for the present study.

2.2.2 Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

Systemic grammarians have used meaning to describe language by relying greatly on the importance of the context of situation through meaning to form. Grammarians using the approach are of the opinion that for language study to be useful, it needs to be socially conditioned. Within systemic functional grammar (SFG) articles have been treated under the notion of reference [see Halliday and Hassan (1976), Halliday (1985)].

From the systemic perspective, 'the' is called a determiner, rank specific determiners such as the demonstratives and the possessives while 'a' as an indefinite determiner is said to be a reduced form of 'one'.

Adopting a typical systemic perspective, Halliday's treatment of the articles is not an indepth one. Halliday treats 'this; and 'that; as demonstratives from which 'the' evolved. He further states that 'the' is an unmarked form of a demonstrative while 'this; and 'that',

are marked. His examples illustrate just a few of the many uses of the articles in English.

SFG categorizes 'the' as a specifying agent because of its dependence on something else and its claim that 'the' has no specifying elements on its own is well placed, but 'the' has got its own unique role in many different contexts or situations. In SFG, 'the' is said to be similar to the specific determiner. However, it is said that no other item behaves exactly like 'the'.

As earlier mentioned, SFG describes the state of a language within the context of situation. The model can therefore not account for many of the uses of the articles in English because there are many cases where articles are used outside situational contexts.

The model draws a distinction between the exophoric use of 'the' as in:

(105) Don't go, the train is coming

'the' serves as reference to the train being expected, and endophoric use as in:

(106) I saw a train. the train was an intercity train which is reference to the train previously mentioned.

We however find SFG unsuitable for the present study not only because its treatment of the articles does not cover a wide range of article uses in English, but also, as noted above, many uses of the articles in the data for this present study do not require contexts of situation for their interpretation.

realisation while the deep structure is the abstract underlying representation of the structure. It is, however, the case that the information which is absent in SS is always present in DS. Thus the feature markers of [± definite) which are attached to the article in (93) will therefore be in the deep structure for that sentence.

TGG provides for the occurrence of articles in English sentence structures. It accounts on the basis of a restrictive relative clause as in (108):

(108) I saw the man (whom Albert told me about)

in this example, the restrictive relative clause gives additional information to the NP that is already made definite.

Secondly, it explains the occurrence of a definite article.

There is a man at the gate, the man ----

the use of the NP 'the man' here is anaphoric because it refers the noun previous mention 'a man'. TGG can however not account for the differences between sentences with identical restrictive relative clauses with definite article in one and the indefinite article in the other as in sentences (95) and (96).

(109) I saw a man whom Albert told me about.

(110) I saw the man whom Albert told me about.

TGG would merely attach + or - definite to the two articles.

Transformational grammar cannot be said to have adequately accounted for these two sentences by attributing the articles to a restrictive relative clause.

Within the transformational framework, the articles have not been given the adequate attention they deserve. An attempt to account for the definite article on the basis of a restrictive relative

clause and the case of a second mention have converted these usages into mechanical procedures with absolutely no explanatory value. A model which does not consider meaning adequately enough in its approach is simply inadequate in dealing in any but the most superficial terms with problems of reference, which is an important aspect of the present study.

2.3.0 Choice of a Model

As was mentioned earlier on, what we have tried to do in this section is to review some of the theoretical approaches to the use of the articles in English with the view of selecting a suitable descriptive model for the present study. In choosing a model, we have taken into consideration the data for the study and we have found that despite the inadequacies of traditional grammar it is the most suitable for this study. It must be said, though, that there is no single model that can adequately provide the answers to all the questions that have been raised concerning the uses of the articles. It is, however, our belief that the wide coverage which traditional grammar gives the articles makes it a suitable model. We shall adopt the model with some modifications.

In describing the articles, we shall use the following framework as used in Jespersen (1939) Close (1962) and Christophersen and Sandved (1969).

i. the definite article 'the' - (Def. Art)
ii. the indefinite article a/an - (Ind. Art)
iii. Zero article - (0 Art)

2.3.1 The Definite Article 'the'

The chief use of 'the' is to indicate a person or thing that at the moment is uppermost in the mind of the speaker and hearer too. Traditional grammarians are of the opinion that when we use the definite article, we presume that both we and our hearer know what is being talked about. Generally, 'the' has also been used extensively in English to convey different meanings.

2.3.1.1 Associative anaphoric 'the'

The meaning of some nouns allows a subsequent definite reference of an associative kind. This referred to as associative reference or associative anaphoric reference. In the following examples, the use of the NP 'the window' is triggered by the previously mentioned NP 'the house'.

(111) This house is beautiful but the windows are not strong.
Ref./ obj Ana Def. Art.

while 'the bicycle' acts as a trigger for the noun 'wheels' in

(112) There is a bicycle you can use, although the wheels.
Ind. Art Ref./obj. Ass. Def. Art

are not very good

In (112) definite reference to 'the wheels' is made possible because the wheels are though to be part of the bicycle. Other examples include:

a house------ the door

a book ------ the pages ---- the cover

Christophersen (1939) pointed out that introducing an item by means of an 'a' - form is not the only way of making it familiar.

Example:

(113) 'The king' or 'the sun'

These class nouns are unique and therefore need no introduction because these cases are situationally determined while in the former, i.e. 'the bicycle' in (98), it was the context that determined the justification for the use of 'the'.

2.3.1.2 The Article 'the; with nouns

Traditional grammarians recognized the noun phrase and articles as an important part of the noun. The rule of traditional grammar as regards the noun states that, the definite article can be used with singular noun and plural nouns as in the following examples:

(114) The pen I bought is red
(Def./Art) (Sg./N)

(115) Give me the books on the table
(Def./Art) (Pl./N)

Proper nouns and abstract nouns do not take articles. This suggestion has been taken up and modified by modern grammarians like Close (1962) and Quirk et al (1973). With these modifications we can use 'the' with proper noun, abstract noun, and mass noun. The following substantiates this fact.

(116) He is not the Peter I want to see .
(Def.Art)(Pr.N)

The same is true of proper nouns with plural application or to denote members of a family, as in

(117) The Samsons will soon be here

(Def/. Art) (Pl·/ N)

(118) The handicapped need to be pitied.

(Def/. Art) (Pl·/ N)

In the above, the Def. art emphasizes the idea of collectivity, with plural application. Abstract nouns can occur without the definite article as in (119).

(119) Beauty is skin deep

(Abs/.N)

where 'beauty' is used as a general term. This can be compared with its meaning when it is preceded by the definite article...

(120) Switzerland is famous for the beauty of its

(Def. / Art) (Abs / N)

mountain scenery.

specific/.

Mass nouns which do not normally take the definite article may occur with it in some of its uses:

(121) Can I have the ink on that table?

(Def/. Art) (Ms·/ N)

There are several situations as those in (122-125) below) where 'the' performs different functions. In the example sentences:

(122) He plays the violin

(Def/. Art) (Gen·/ Ref.)

(123) Mr. John is the man for the job.

(Def/. Art) (N/)

'the man' in (123) denotes specimen per excellence

(124) The bigger of the two dogs have been sold

(Def/. Art) (Comp/·)

(125) He died in June, the June of 1970

(Def/.Art) (Partt/)

The use of 'the' with 'of' - phrases is possible too, as in

(126) The wine of France is accepted internationally

Def of phr.

However, there are cases where the use of 'the' is due to ellipsis of a common name in which 'the' is formally always added. as in

The Sahara (desert)

The Congo (river)

2.3.2.0 The Indefinite articles 'a and an'

The principal function of the indefinite article is to denote a single specimen of the class of persons, animals, or things, indicated by the noun often with the implication that any other specimen of the same class would have done just as well. The indefinite article 'a/an' does not stand for any particular individual known to both speaker and hearer.

In addition to the traditional accounts, we shall use some of the explanations in the works of Zandvoort (1962), Christophersen and Sandved (1969); Quirk et al (1972) and Hawkins (1978) which are not strictly speaking traditional but eclectic in their approaches. What is traditionally termed 'the indefinite article' occurs in two forms: 'a' before consonants and 'an' before vowels.

(127) She is an heir

(Ind. Art) (Vo.S)

(128) A name is a label

(Ind. Art) (Con.S)

There are instances when the indefinite article does not have an introductory function as:

(129) He spent a week in a small village. Let us go to a restaurant and have a good dinner.

But the following structure

(130) I can drive a car

Ind. Art/) (UNSP.N/)

denotes a single specimen of the class and suggests that any other specimen would have done just as well. In example (131) reference is not specific:

(131) A boy who tells a lie should be punished

(Ind. Art)+ Gen.

The indefinite article portrays the individual as a representative of the whole class as compared with the function of indefinite article in the following:

(132) On my way to work this morning i met an old friend

(Ind/. Adj/) (N/)

The use of 'an' in (132) denotes an unspecified member of a class of friends.

The indefinite article can be used to suggest ' a certain' as in (133).

(133). A. Mr John is waiting to see you

(Ind./. a certain/)

'a Mr. John' will then be interpreted as 'a person who gave his name as Mr. John'. Its use in (134) denotes an abstract state.

(134) He left her in a pitiful state of mind

(Ind/. Abs./N)

Other uses are with analogues such as:

(135) We considered him a fool.

Ind./ Anal./.

With classifiers to denote a mass noun we have as follows:

(136) There is a heap of rubbish at the back of the class

Ind MS N.

2.3.3.0 Zero-form article

Zero form in English expresses a more general notion. Christophersen and Sandved (1969) affirm the extensive use of zero form in English.

2.3.3.1 Zero-form with nouns

Quirk et al (1972: 153-159) illustrate the conditions for the use of zero form in relation to nouns in English. They explain that:

i. Mass noun and plural count nouns when they have generic reference, take zero article. Concrete and abstract mass nouns and usually plural count nouns are used with zero article such as examples (137-139)

(137) He likes 0 chess very much.
(zero/) (Ms.N/)

(138) They like to play 0 chess
(zero/) (Pl.N/)

(139) John does not go on 0 long walks
(zero/) (Abs.N/)

ii. Plural nouns also take zero article when they are unambiguously generic as in:

(140) 0 appearance can be deceptive)
(zero/) (P.N/)

iii. Syntactic groups and set phases:

The article is often omitted before nouns in enumerations and when contrast is expressed as in (141)

(141) It is probable that the radio of 0 judge to 0
(zero/) (zero/)
population is lower in our country.

iv. Genitive and possessives also take zero form as in the following:

0 St. Micheal's Island', 0 'Shakespeare's 'theatre',
(zero/) (zero/)

and 0 John's book.

(zero/)

v. Other articleless words in English include branch of sciences, astrology, economics, linguistics, and mathematics.

With certain idiomatic expressions, verbs like BE and GO and prepositions like 'at' and 'by' take zero article, for example:

(142) I go by 0 car to school

(zero/)

(143) He stays at 0 home during the day

(zero/)

vi. Other cases include colours, uncountables + adjectives, two or more nouns referring to a human couple, object of a game as the name of the game, generic sense, etc. Sentences (144-150) explains these uses.

(144) 0 Black is a sign of morning.

(zero/)

(145) 0 Human life is precious

(zero/) un. + adj.

(146) 0 father and son are both soldiers.

(zero/.N/ N/)

(147) John plays 0 football everyday

(zero/) obj./)

(148) 0 Man is a social animal

(zero/) (Gen/)

In this chapter, we presented a review of related literature on the articles in English. We went on to examine some grammatical

approaches with a view to selecting a model for the study. The model was also described in the third section of the chapter.

In the next chapter we shall discuss the methodology for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 Location

This study which deals with the use of the articles in English among some secondary schools students in Zaria was designed with a view of collecting data in accordance with the objectives stated earlier. This study was carried out in four different post-primary schools within Zaria.

The rationale for the choice of these schools is that they give a fair representation of all the types of schools within the town in the sense that they consist of boys school only, girls school only, boarding school, day school and co-educational school. The schools under study are;

1. Demonstration Secondary School, A.B.U., Zaria
2. Government Girls Day Secondary School, Samaru Zaria.
3. Government Commercial College, Zaria.
4. Barewa College, Zaria.

These institutions are owned by Kaduna State Ministry of Education except Demonstration Secondary School which is owned by Ahmadu Bello University. Government Commercial College which used to be a private school now serves as a Unity School for both Kaduna and Katsina states Ministry of Education. Each Local Government of the two states has relatively equal representation of candidates in the school.

3.1.2 The Subject

Two hundred subjects were randomly chosen from the four selected schools. Subjects in these four institutions have something in common; they use the same syllabus designed by the West African Examination Council. They also learn English as a compulsory second language.

Each of the schools has about eight periods of English lessons in a week. Subjects chosen to write the test administered by the researcher are Senior Secondary School (SSSII) students who have spent about five years in the school. The reason for the selection of these students is that they are supposed to be going to their final year class. At this level of education, it is assumed that they should have had adequate knowledge of the grammatical items i.e. 'the articles' which the test sets out to test.

Fifty students were chosen from each school. The researcher felt that this number would provide adequate data for the present study.

The test instrument was administered to all the selected subjects. Most of the test materials were taken from exercises based on the use of the articles from secondary school texts books presumed to be commensurate with the level of the subjects' education because these books are designed for the use of students of English in the second language situations.

3.1.3 Test Materials

The test materials consisted of sixty objective questions and two essay topics. The test was divided into two sections. Section 1

was made up of sixty objective items divided into three parts, A,B and C. Part A consisted of items 1-20 which aimed at testing the subjects' ability to use the definite article in about twenty different situations as the test demanded of the subjects, such as the anaphoric use, generic use, and situational use with nouns. etc. Part B which was made up of items 21-40 set out to test if the subjects could use 'a' or 'an' appropriately. The definite article was also introduced in this section to test if the subjects' could discriminate the use of the definite article from that of the indefinite article.

Part C consisted of items 41-60. This part examined the use of the zero-article in English. The term 'zero form' here refers to the non-use of any of the articles (the definite article and the indefinite article). The subjects were given twenty sentences which they were required to correct by deleting the articles where they felt this was necessary.

It should be noted that the items used were carefully chosen to reflect as many of the usage types of the articles as possible.

The second part of the test material consisted of two essay topics. The task before the subjects in this part was to write an essay on one of the two topics given. The two topics were assumed to be topics that would be of interest to the subjects. The first topic was on how they spent their last holidays while the second was on the present economic situation in the country. These topics were selected on the assumption that the subjects would be able to write on one of them without much difficulty. They were expected to write not more than 250-300 words on the topic of their choice.

3.1.4 Sampling Procedure

There were five arms of the SSI classes in each school in May 1992 during the time the research was conducted. In each arm, there were about fifty students.

The subjects at that time according to the information given by their subject teachers were not streamed according to performance by the school authorities. The subjects all offer English as a compulsory school subject and are taught relatively under the same learning situation, so, it was assumed there would not be much difference between the students in all the arms. In the light of this, one arm of SSII students was randomly picked in each school.

The period for English language was used for administering the test in all the schools. The subject teachers in each school assisted in conducting the test. The test lasted about one and half hours in each school.

3.1.5 Ethical Issues

The researcher duly sought the permission of the school authority before administering the tests to the subjects involved. this was done to be sure of their cooperation and understanding. The nature and purpose of the test were stated. The English teachers and students were equally informed and they (including the principal) gave their consent to the test administration.

3.2 Framework of Analysis

The objective tests were marked using the marking scheme that was worked out (see appendix B) according to the different

ways in which articles were categorized with respect to their formal use. The marking of the essays was impressionistic. The reason was borne out of the fact that the students' use of the articles would not be on the same frequency. Since the rationale for the essay was to identify errors of the articles, such errors were picked out. These errors differ from individual to individual because there were cases where a few articles were used, nevertheless, the researcher based on the final judgement in awarding marks on the subjects' ability in the use of English as reflected in their essays.

The objective items which consist of sixty questions were marked out of sixty marks while the essay questions carry forty marks thus making a total of 100 percentage.

Some of the data collected from subjects' essays, however, have been used as example sentences in the analysis of our data. The scores for the objective tests were worked out using raw scores in the first instance and subsequently percentages.

Table 1 - Gives the overall analysis of results item by item. The performance of the respondents in terms of their response to the test items in all the schools used is presented.

Table 2 - presents the analysis of the three types of articles discussed in parts A,B and C which comprise the definite article 'the', the indefinite article 'a'/an' and the zero article which refers to articleless words.

Table 3 - is the analysis of the results of students from the Demonstration Secondary school, giving the overall percentage of the types of articles used.

Table 4 - gives the overall percentage of the three types of articles as used by students from Government Girls Day Secondary school.

Table 5 - presents analysis of the overall percentage of the three types of articles as used by students from Barewa College.

Table 6 - gives the performance of students from Government Commercial College.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter presents the analysis of the data for this study and discusses some of the possible causes of misuse and none use of the articles among students in selected secondary schools in Zaria. The study also attempts to suggest possible implications of the study for students, teachers and for educational purposes in general. Though this study is limited to selected secondary schools in Zaria area, however, some of our findings and generalizations might have applications for other schools within Zaria area particularly and all secondary schools in Nigeria. Further research would however, be needed to support such an assumption.

4.1 Result Profiles

The following categories explain how the results have been discussed.

1. Category A (items 1-20) the definite article 'the'
2. Category B (items 21-40) the indefinite article 'a' 'an'
3. Category C (items 41-60) the zero article or the articleless words.

4.1.1. Responses in Percentage of Overall Analysis of Results: Item by item

Item No. Category	Demonstration Secondary School, ABU, Zaria	Govt Girls Day Secondary School, Samaru	Barewa College, Zaria	Government Commercial College, Zaria
1	96	90	68	74
2	90	68	80	76
3	80	74	68	52
4	80	78	72	64
5	60	64	58	44
6	46	40	44	38
7	88	80	78	54
8	86	70	78	74
9	94	78	64	66
10	92	70	64	74
11	58	52	40	30
12	54	42	48	40
13	90	74	50	48
14	96	76	74	62
15	62	58	62	50
16	48	40	46	30
17	46	40	32	38
18	52	48	38	42
19	94	88	66	60
20	86	78	58	66
Average	75.4	65.4	59.4	54.1

CATEGORY B

No.	Demonstration	Government Day	Barewa	Commercial
21	92	80	76	70
22	62	50	46	52
23	44	42	30	38
24	66	50	52	60
25	70	60	62	52
26	46	38	40	34
27	66	60	56	50
28	72	70	60	58
29	52	46	36	20
30	96	84	64	52
31	82	68	50	54
32	44	38	30	28
33	42	36	28	30
34	78	64	60	58
35	80	78	60	66
36	64	42	34	30
37	88	76	58	52
38	76	64	60	58
39	84	82	68	64
40	66	36	26	30
Average	68.5	57.7	49.8	48

CATEGORY C

No.	Demonstration	Government Day	Barewa	Commercial
41	70	56	62	58
42	76	64	54	50
43	66	32	42	30
44	42	20	40	44
45	74	68	76	36
46	44	36	18	28
47	56	64	52	58
48	46	38	40	38
49	40	26	38	42
50	64	56	62	68
51	48	34	30	20
52	62	52	58	32
53	74	64	56	18
54	52	22	18	10
55	38	42	36	16
56	74	68	62	54
57	68	84	66	70
58	70	76	48	38
59	72	42	50	66
60	54	50	38	50
Average	59.5	49.7	47.3	41.3

4.1.2 Category A: The Definite Article 'the'

The researcher presumed that many students in the secondary schools misuse and omit the definite article where it is required. Table 1 presents the general performances of all the respondents. Items 1 - 20 gives the correct responses (in percentages) of 200 respondents.

The grading system used in secondary schools is used in this test. The pass mark for students in the secondary school is 50% therefore, respondents who scored less than 50% are regarded as having failed the test.

The results of each school will be discussed one after the other as they appear on the table for each article. As earlier stated, category A, (item 1-20) tested the use of the definite article 'the' in *English*. *Some respondents in Demonstration Secondary School* scored less than 50% only in items 6, 16 and 17. In sentence 6, 54% of the respondents substituted the definite article with the indefinite article. In sentence 16, the definite article was omitted by 52% of the respondents while in 17, 54% of them substituted 'the' with 'an'.

6. Peter likes playing a violin
   Ind / Gen/ref.
16. He died in June, June of 1970
   Partt/.
17. It is hot around an equator
   Ind / S.D./.

The high percentage of the incorrect responses in items 6, 16, and 17 could be due to the fact that respondents were not aware of the task which demanded of them the use made of 'the' with generic reference e.g. 'the violin'. They were probably also ignorant of the fact that in order to bring out the partitive meaning in item 16, they were supposed to have used 'the' i.e. 'the June' 54% of the total respondents failed item 17 probably because of the respondents' ignorance of the rules of the articles. The grammar rule states that 'a' is used with consonants and 'an' with vowels. The choice of 'an'

instead of 'the' for the noun 'equator' might be due to respondents' inadequate knowledge that although 'equator' begins with a vowel sound, nevertheless, since it is situationally determined, the definite article 'the' should be used viz 'the equator'.

The following are similar examples of the wrong use of 'the' from the respondents' essays:

i. I want to get education than the money
def./ Abs/. N

ii. During the holidays, we had a party in my friend's home
My friends father is the accountant.
def./ Unsp.N/.

The overall response of subjects from Government Girls Day Secondary School, shows that 60% of the respondents substituted 'the' for 'a' in item 6. While 60% of the respondents failed item 12, items 17 and 18 were failed by 50% of the respondents. Some examples of these items are:

12. A bigger of the two dogs has been sold.
Ind./ Comp/.

18. He is a man for the job
Ind/ per/ excellence

The inability to use the definite article was also reflected in their essays. The following are some examples of wrong use.

i. I am an girl in our house
Ind/ sp/ N

ii. I don't have a time for relaxing. I am a person of action.
Ind/ sp/.

iii. We always play with a computer during the holidays.
Ind/ +instrument

iv. My uncle is a chief of our town.
Ind/ of/ Phr.

Most of the respondents from Barewa College, Zaria, like their counterparts from the other schools substituted the definite article with the indefinite article in their responses. They scored less than 50^% in the following items:

6. Peter likes playing a violin
Ind· pref./.

11. A poor has no hope for tomorrow
Ind/. sg+/pl.app

12. A bigger of the two dogs has been sold
Ind/ comp/.

16. He died in June, a June of 1970
Ind/. Part/.

17. It is hot around an equator
Ind·/ S.D/.

18. He is a man for the job
Ind/ /per excellence

The following wrong use of a(n) also occurred in their essays.

i. I spent my Holidays in Katsina which is a capital of Katsina
ind/. 2nd/mention
State.

ii. On our way to Abuja, we passed through a stadium in Kaduna
ind./ S.D/.
where people use to watch match.

iii. We saw where the river Niger flows into an Atlantic sea
Ind./ Pref/.

We also observed the wrong use of the definite article by some respondents from commercial college in the following items, 5,6,11,12,13,16,17 and 18.

Items 5 and 13 will suffice as examples of their wrong sentences:

5. I will be travelling to a West Indies.
Ind/ pref/.

13. We buy them by a hundred
Ind/ dist/.

The following sentences from their essays also show the way the definite article has been wrongly used.

i. A solution to the economic problem is not easy
Ind/ Abs/.

ii. We got a news about my father's death during my last
Ind/ Ms/. N
holiday in Kano.

iii. My uncle who invited me for holidays in Benin is in
an arm force.
Ind/ /institutionalized.

From the analysis of the data the subjects inability to use the definite article correctly is obvious.

In the contexts which require the definite article, many respondents use the indefinite article. 56% of respondents from Government Commercial College used the indefinite article for item 12. They were probably not aware that comparatives usually occur with the definite article in English. Thus instead of 'the bigger'. Some of their essays also contain similar errors, a reflection of their poor knowledge of the rules of article use in English. The definite article normally occurs with nouns that are situationally determined such as 'stadium' and Atlantic.

It also appears that in some cases respondents merely guessed the answers which inevitably resulted in wrong answers. While there appears to be no evidence to back up this claim, the indiscriminate use of the indefinite article for the definite seems to suggest this.

It could be seen that many respondents did not know when to use the definite article and when not to. An example of such as:

I prefer education than the money

from one of the essays shows the influence of the common occurrence of 'money' with the definite article, a use which connotes previous knowledge of the money being referred to which is not the case with the above example where a general reference is being made.

The use of the indefinite article 'a' in the sentence.

He is a man for the job.

appears to derive from the assumption that nouns such as 'men', 'boy', usually occur with the indefinite article. The use of the indefinite article in this context however does not bring out the intended meaning of 'the man' i.e. 'the man per excellence'.

4.1.3 Category B: The Indefinite Article 'a' (n)'

Table 1 (items 21-40) presents the overall performance of respondents in all the four schools with respect to the indefinite article.

In Demonstration Secondary School, some respondents scores were low in items 6, 16, and 17. The percentages of their responses are 46%, 48% and 46% respectively use of the indefinite article from their responses are:

23. The Mr. Jones wants to see you
    Def./ a /certain
    The students arrived on the Thursday
    Def/ R./P.
32. John can never be the Napoleon
    def/. /quality of a person named
33. Have you ever seen the bellows mender in your life?
    def./ sg./ unsp

Their essays also revealed indiscriminate use of the articles as in the following.

i. Educational facilities are in the state of mess
   def/ abs/.
ii. I recognized him as my friend at the glance
   Def./ W/N.S

iii. The present economic situation has made rice, beans, gari to become an essential items.

Ind/. C/N.

Majority of the respondents from Government Girls Day Secondary also scored below 50% in items 23, 24, 26, 29, 32, 40.

The following are some of the wrong responses:

26. The students arrived on the Thursday.

Def/ R/P

29. His father is an European

Ind/ con/s

33. Have you ever seen the bellows mender in your life?

Def./ sg. unsp.

40. He drank half the bottle of wine

Def./ /substance

Similar wrong uses of the articles found in their essays are:

i. The journey came to the end around 12a.m. at night

def./ /unsp

ii. We had a enjoyable time with my uncle's children

/Ind. /Vo.s.

iii. We entered Lagos full of a happiness

Ind/. abs./.

iv. My father is a administrator in Niger State.

Ind/. /Vo.s.

Some of the responses of students from Barewa College also showed that they could not use the indefinite article where

necessary they scored less than 50% in the following items, 22,23,26,29,32,36,40.

22. He left him in the pitiful state of mind.
Def/· Abs/.+Adj.

23 The Mr. Jones wants to see you
Def./ A /certain

26. The students arrived on the Thursday.
Def/ R/P

29. His father is an European
Ind/ con/s

33. Have you ever seen the bellows mender in your life?
Def./ sg. unsp.

36. We considered him the fool
Def./ .ana/.

38. You have to be learned to become the doctor
Def./. /Gen.

40. He drank half the bottle of wine
Def./ /substance

Their essays also showed lack of knowledge of the use of the indefinite article. The following are examples of their responses.

1. I am a obedient boy in the school
/Ind /Vo.s.

2. He used a axe to cut the head of the thief when they were
   Ind Vo.s.
   fighting.
3. My uncle's wife who is as wicked as the witch
   Def. Comp.
   did not allow me to enjoy my holidays.
4. During the holidays I go to the football field three times
   the week to play.
   Def./ /Dist.
5. My friend gave me a love that I can never forget in my life.
   Ind./abs.

The school on the table which is Government Commercial College also has difficulty in using the indefinite article as reflected in the following items: 23, 26,29, 32, 33, 36, and 40, in which they scored less than 50%.

The sentences below from their essays give credence to the above claim, that is, their inability to use the indefinite article appropriately.

i. My experience during the holidays is bad because my small brother played with a fire and it burnt our room.
   Ind abs

ii. We entered a aeroplane to Abuja.
   Ind Vo.s.

iii. My mother was not happy because my brother has
   a measles during the holiday
   Ind. name of diseases.

iv. I don't use to have a luck in anything I do.
/Ind. /abs

v. The economy has made some people to become an rogue
/Ind /con.s.

The discussions on the indefinite article so far have revealed that quite a number of respondents in the four schools could not use the indefinite article in many of its functional forms.

We also observed that respondents found similar items difficult in their responses. If we look at items 23, 32, 33, 36, 38 and 40, we will see that they reoccur as problem items for some of these respondents in all the four schools. For instance, item 23 required the use of 'a-form' so as to bring out the meaning ' a certain Jones,' but respondents used 'the' probably because they were used to such forms such as 'the principal,' 'the prefect' and by analogy used 'the' with 'certain Jones'.

Article usage and functions are generally difficult for learners of English to grasp because they are not found to be common occurrences in the mother tongues. On the other hand, English language attaches a lot of importance to articles because they amplify the meaning of the nouns they determine. In example (ii) on page 87, some respondents used 'a' instead of 'an' for aeroplane when it is obvious that the 'a - form' usually occurs with consonants and 'an' with vowels. One point that emerges from these sentences is that most respondents do not really know when to use 'a' or 'an'.

The result of this shortcoming is that students expression in English (spoken and written) often sound stilted, ambiguous and

naive. The need for the appropriate uses of the articles can therefore not be underestimated.

The fact that no school scored 100% in any of the items also shows that many respondents had problems with the use of the articles in English.

4.1.4 Category C. Zero Article

Along with the misuse of the definite and the indefinite articles, it was assumed also that some respondents did not know when to use the (zero articles). The notion of 'zero' form in this study refers to the non-use of both definite and indefinite articles. Items 41-60 tested the use of zero form referred to as articleless words in English. some respondents from Demonstration Secondary School used the definite and indefinite articles instead of the zero form in items 44, 46, 48, 49, 51 and 55 thereby scoring below the pass marks.

44. His child is suffering from an epilepsy
Ind./ a/disease

46. He turned against the people that have been the kindest
def/. pred/sup.

48. Mr. Jack is an Irishman first, a Critic next.
/Contr. /Ind. /Contr.

49. The principal turned a politician surprisingly
/Ind.

51. (Father) and the son are both soldiers.
N/ /Def. /N

55. He became the teacher and the protector of his students
/N /Def. same/person

The use of the articles where they were not necessary also featured in their essays. A few examples will suffice:

i. Text books are what the students need most in this country,
Def/ Cl./ss

but economic situation has rendered students helpless.

ii. We went to the Kongo side and came back in the night.
/ /
Def. Place name

iii This country is full of the people with a dubious minds.
/
Ind. /Pl.cl.N /Ind. /Pl

iv. Nigeria can never have a progress because of the bad economic
/Ind. abs/.

situation

v. I made friends with some many people in Enugu. Ifeoma and Ngozi were a wonderful friends.
/ /
Ind. Pl.

Some subjects from Government Girl Day Secondary School also had problems in the use and non-use of the articles. They scored below the pass mark by scoring (less than 50%) in items 43, 44, 46, 48, 51, 54, 55, and 59. We cite a few examples of these:

43. They were at the table ready to each when we came in.
/Def.

54. Mr. Gladstone was the Prime Minister from 1892-1894.
/ /
Def. N.sg.V.

59. I saw him after the school hour

/Def. /institutionalized event

Their essays also showed that they were not aware of the contexts which did not require the use of the articles, for example:

i. **The** food is generally expensive in the market because of SAP.
/Def. cl./N

ii. People cannot afford a three square meals in a day.
/Ind. /pl.

iii. The inflation is killing many families in Nigeria because
/Def. /Abs.
of expensive things like food, school fees etc.

iv. The marriage I went home to attend was good.
The husband and the wife were very happy.
/Def. /para.s. /Def.

With respect to Barewa College, we also observed that some respondents have problems in the use of the zero form. This is shown in items 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55 and 58. Majority of these items seem to be common problems. Items 52 and 58 are used to illustrate the problems:

52. He studied the french at school

/Def. /name of subject

Below are the wrong uses observed in their essays:

i. We all know that travelling is part of the education.
/ /
Def. abs.

ii. The money has no value in this country.
/Def. /unc.

iii. I like playing a football but my father likes me to do lessons
/Ind. /name of a game
during the holidays.

iv. Nigeria which is the largest country in the Africa is now
/Def. /country
suffering because of bad management of its economy.

Some respondents from Government Commercial College,scored less than 50% in fourteen items out of the total of twenty items showing a very poor performance in the use of the zero form.

Item 53 is an example of this problem:

53. A human-life is precious
/Ind. /Unc. adj.

These wrong uses also occurred in their essays.

i. When the holidays finished I came back to Zaria by
the bus.
Def./ /transport

ii. During the holidays I do the business with my auntie so
Def/ abs/.
that I can have money.

iii. The type of the work I like to do when I am on holidays
/Def./unc.N.
is taking care of our baby.

iv. I attend science lessons during the holidays because I want to study the engineering course in the University.

Def./ subj/.

v. We visited the Zuma's rock on Abuja road when we

/Def. /genetive

travelled to Niger State.

From the analysis presented in category C, it was observed that the use of the zero-form seemed to be the most difficult area for some respondents from the four schools.

The percentages of responses from the objective items and the samples taken from their essays to support this claim. This is to say that in some cases, articles were used where none was required. consider the following examples:

(43) They were at the table ready to eat when we came in.

Def/.

(55) He became the teacher and the protector of his students

/N /Def. /same person

In item 43, the noun 'table' does not require any article because 'table' is used with reference to a meal which was taken at that material time and not to the table as an object.

In item 55, the two words 'teacher' and 'protector' designate one and the same person, therefore, the article is not supposed to be repeated but some respondents did repeat the article. They probably assumed that because the first noun occurs with 'the' the second noun should also occur with it.

4.1.5 Overall Analysis of Result-Category by Category

Percentage of correct responses

ARTICLE VARIABLE	Demonstration Secondary School, Zaria	Government Girls Day Secondary School, Zaria	Barewa College	Government Commercial College, Zaria
Category A The Definite Article	75.4	65.4	59.4	54.1
Category B The Indefinite Article	68.5	57.7	49.8	48
Category C Zero Article	59.5	49.7	47.3	41.3

The column in category A which tested the use of the definite article shows that respondents from Demonstration Secondary School scored 75.4%. Those from Government Girls Day Secondary School scored 65.4% while respondents from Barewa and Government Commercial Colleges scored 59.4% and 54.1% respectively. A close observation of these scores revealed that students generally used the definite article wrongly at percentages ranging from 45.9 to 24.6.

Some respondents scored less than 50% in items 12, 16, 17 and 18. The reasons generally could be attributed to their shallow knowledge of the rules of the articles and their various functions in English. Examples of some items which they found difficult are:

6. Peter likes playing a violin
   Ind·/ pref./.

11. A poor has no hope for tomorrow
   Ind/. sg+/pl.app

12. A bigger of the two dogs has been sold
   Ind comp.

16. He died in June, a June of 1970
Ind/. Part/.

17. It is hot around an equator
Ind/ S.D/.

18. He is a man for the job
Ind/ /per excellence

The performance might also be due to the fact that respondents probably did not know that names of instruments as in (6) usually take the definite article. It is possible too that most of the respondents were not aware that a comparative adjective as in (12) always occurs with the definite article, i.e. (the bigger of the boys).

The use of 'a' in (16) does not bring out the partitive meaning which expressed in the sentence. The error in (17) could have resulted from the fact that respondents were not aware that the equator being situationally determined requires the definite article. In (18) the use of the definite article by respondents does not bring out the notion of a specimen 'per excellence' which the item portrays.

In category B, respondents from Demonstration Secondary School scored 68.5% while those from Government Girls Day Secondary School scored 57.7%, Barewa College students scored 49.8% while respondents from Government Commercial College scored 46.5%. Generally, the respondents' wrong use of the definite article in percentages ranges from 31.5% to 53.5%.

Item 23, 26, 32 and 33 were the most difficult items respondent from all the schools where they scored below 50%. In addition to these items, Government Commercial College, Barewa

College and Government Day Girls Secondary Schools scored below 50% in items 29, 36 and 40.

23. The Mr. Jones wants to see you
Def./ a /certain

26 The students arrived on the Thursday
Def/ R./P.

29. His father is an European
/Ind. /Con.s.

32. John can never be the Napoleon
def/. /quality of a person named

33. Have you ever seen the bellows mender in your life?
def./ sg./ unsp

36. We consider him the fool
/Def. Analogue

40. He drank half the bottle of wine between meals.
Def./ /btw subs.

In item (23) respondents omitted 'a' which was supposed to precede 'Mr Jones' bringing out the meaning of 'a certain'. Respondents did not use 'a' in (26) which would refer to 'Thursday' as a remote period. Respondents scored less than 50% in (29), (32) and (33). In (29) the choice of 'an' rather than 'a' is due to spelling pronunciation. When an initial vowel has / u/sound, the indefinite article 'a' is put before it. i.e. 'uniform', 'unicorn' etc. But it appears that many respondents were unaware of this fact and so used 'an' instead of 'a'. The use of 'the; instead of 'a' to denote quality of a person named accounts for the unacceptability of (32) it could also be because

respondents were unaware that some nominals in plural form have a singular meaning. They used 'the' instead of 'a' in (33). In item (36) respondents should have used 'a' for analogue while 'a' should also have been used in (40) between 'half' and 'substance.'

Category C examined the use of zero article in English. According to the results, Demonstration Secondary School scored 59.5%, Government Girls Day Secondary School scored 49.7%, Barewa College scored 47.3% while Government Commercial College scored 42.5%.

All the schools scored less than 50% in the following items:

44. His child is suffering from an epilepsy
Ind. a disease

46. He turned against the people that have been the kindest to him
def/. pred/sup.

48. Mr. Thompson is an Irish first, a critic next.
/Contr. Ind. /Contr.

49. The principal turned a politician surprisingly
Ind.

51. The Father and the son are both soldiers.
N/ Def. /N

55. He became the teacher and the protector of his students
/N /Def. same/person

From the respondents scores, it is clear that zero article posed the most serious problems. On the whole, many of them did not show awareness of the rules governing the non-use of articles in English.

In item (46) the definite article should not come before a predicative superlative. The rule states zero form in this case.

In (48), contrast is expressed between different capacities of an individual therefore, it should be 'critic next.'

The rule requires the use of zero. In(49), the expression 'to turn' does not take an article. The zero form is the rule when two or more nouns refer to a human couple as in (51). In (55) the article should not have been repeated since the nouns 'teacher' and (protector) designate one and the same person.

From the three categories of articles discussed, what has emerged is that students generally do not possess adequate knowledge of the use of the articles in English. These problems could be due to a number of factors such as inadequate learning and mother tongue interference.

We shall look at the performance of each school based on the different categories of articles in tables 3,4,5 and 6.

4.1.6 Demonstration Secondary School, A.B.U. Zaria.

Average Score Category by Category

Article Variable

Category A	**Category B**	**Category C**
The Definite Article	The Indefinite Article	Zero Article
75.4	68.5	59.5

Category A:

Respondents from Demonstration Secondary School performed poorly in items 6, 11, 16, and 17 which have already been discussed

Category B:

Some respondents from Demonstration Secondary School performed poorly in items 23, 26, 32 and 33.

Category C:

Items 44, 46, 48, 49, 51 and 55 seemed to be difficult areas for students from Demonstration Secondary School in terms of the use of zero articles. However, from the three types of articles discussed, the non-attainment of 100% by the students revealed that they have problems using the articles in English.

Although respondents from Demonstration Secondary School had problems in the use of the three articles in some cases, they still performed better than all their counterparts in the other three schools. They scored 75.4% in the test on the definite article, 68.5% on the indefinite article and 59.5% on the zero article. Their good performances could be due to the fact that most of the respondents come from homes where parents are educated. These parents are likely to be senior staff of the University who knowing the value of reading have inculcated the habit into their children. Another reason could be the availability of learning materials such as school text books, learning aids, and libraries. In addition to these, the University academic environment together with the availability of subject teachers might also have contributed to their good performance. The fact that the teachers' salaries are promptly paid

in contrast to the situation in State Government Schools where teachers don't normally receive their salaries on time might suggest that the teachers in Demonstration Secondary School are more efficient than their counterparts in the other schools which is most likely to result in students' high performance. Regular payment of salaries as an incentive to teachers as claimed above however, needs to be substantiated.

4.1.7 Government Girls Day Secondary School, Zaria

Average Score Category by Category

Article Variable

Category A	Category B	Category C
The Definite Article	The Indefinite Article	Zero Article
65.4	57.7	49.7

Category A:

Respondents scored 65.9% in their use of the definite article, which we regard as above average performance. Their scores revealed that they don't have many problems using the definite article.

Category B:

Respondents scored 57.7% in the use of the indefinite article. The cut off marks is 50%. The fact that they barely scored above average score shows that they have problems in almost half of the items tested.

Category C:

Respondents scored 49.7% in their use of zero-article. They performed poorly in more than half of the items on zero-article by scoring less than 50% on them. Their inability to score 50% on the area of zero form showed that they generally found zero form most difficult. This low performance could be attributed to the fact that they were not conversant with the use of the article in English. It could also be due to poor learning strategies.

4.1.8 Barewa College, Zaria

Average Score Category by Category

Article Variable

Category A	Category B	Category C
The Definite Article	The Indefinite Article	Zero Article
59.4	49.8	47.3

Category A:

Respondents from Barewa College scored 59.4% in the use of the definite article. This score revealed that they have some problems using the definite article.

Category B:

Respondents from the above school performed poorly in their use of the indefinite article by scoring 49.8% in this category. Many

of the items must have been items they have never learnt before hence their poor performance. Their inability to perform well might also be due to our earlier assumption that secondary schools students generally have problems using the articles.

Category C:

Respondents from Barewa College scored 47.3% in the test on zero article. They only had seven items right out of twenty. Their poor performances might be because most of the Nigerian languages do not possess the article, hence, the indiscriminate use by the subjects. Another reason could be due to poor learning background of English either in their learning tasks or during social interactions. The consistent low performances by these students which is predominant in their use of the indefinite article and zero forms might also have been due to faulty teaching. Their shallow knowledge of the rules guiding the use of the articles and their functions could also explain their poor performance.

The last table which is table 6 presents the performance of students from Government Commercial College.

4.1.9 Government Commercial College, Zaria

Average Score Category by Category

Article Variable

Category A	Category B	Category C
The Definite Article	The Indefinite Article	Zero Article
54.1	46.5	42.5

Category A

Respondents from Government Commercial College scored 54.1% in their use of the definite article. The fact that they scored just a little above average showed that they had problems in the use of the definite article.

Category B

Respondents scored 46.5% in their use of the indefinite article. The fact that they scored below the pass mark is an indication that they have problems using the indefinite article. The performance could also have been due to similar reasons given earlier, viz. poor learning strategies and mother tongue interference.

Category C

Majority of the respondents from Government Commercial College performed poorly in many items under this category by scoring 42.5% thus falling below the pass mark. Their poor performances could have resulted from inadequate knowledge about

the rules guiding the use of the article in English coupled with poor learning strategies and interference from the mother tongue.

From the over-all performances of the 200 respondents used, we therefore, re-affirm that many students in the secondary schools have problems using the articles in English.

4.2.0 Implications of the Study

The study shows that students do not know the major semantic differences between the definite and the indefinite article. Hence they used the definite article in place of the indefinite article and vice versa.

One of these differences is that the definite article is used with what is known and the indefinite article with what is only being introduced.

The study also shows that students do not know when to use the articles and when not to use them. They used the articles where no articles were required.

Another implication of the analysis is that the students could not make the fine distinctions which is made in English between the indefinite article 'a' and its variant form 'an'.

The inability of the students to use the articles correctly also implies the influence of the mother tongues on their use of English. The fact that many Nigerian languages do not possess articles might be responsible for the omission of the articles where they are required.

These have far reaching implications. They suggest the inadequate teaching of English in the secondary school level. That is,

at the secondary school level not enough effort is being made to help the students to grasp the fundamentals of the English language. This might be because many of the teachers of English do not themselves have adequate knowledge of the subject they teach. If teachers are not well informed in the subject they teach they would not be able to impact the knowledge of the subject to their students. The poor performance of students is therefore a reflection of their poor learning background.

It is also the case that require a number of teachers of English are not trained to each English as such they are not able to teach the subject well. As long as novices are being recruited to teach the English language the result will continue to be devastating.

4.2.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of these study the following recommendations would be made;

1. It is being suggested here that first and foremost, only competent and qualified teachers of English should be assigned to teach English both at the primary (since this is where the foundation is built) and the secondary school levels. This would ensure that those who teach the subject are in full grasp of the subject matter.

We would also suggest that curriculum designers should take into considerations the fact that many Nigerian languages lack the article in their grammatical systems and therefore should design grammar courses which will make up for this gap to ensure that transference of this feature does not take place. Teachers should also compliment the effort of the curriculum designers in the area

mentioned above by making effort to thoroughly teach these grammatical features not only at the senior secondary school level but also at the junior secondary school level.

2. Refresher courses, seminars, conferences and workshops should be organised for teachers of English time to time. Educational planners should recommend up to date books that deal with grammatical items of the English language. These texts should also be reviewed from time to time.

3. Library periods should be organized for students so that they will be able to study on their own. They will also be able to gain access to educational materials outside their school text. If students are encouraged to read widely, i.e. good and educative materials, these will enhance not only good learning habits but improve their progress in learning the English language.

4. Exposure also to books referred to as the classics written by renowned writers like Austen, Dickens will greatly improve the students ability in mastering not only the grammatical items of the English language but other fundamental facts about the language.

The errors involving the use of the articles in English as earlier mentioned do not, in most cases, hinder effective communication. Rather, they generate a feeling of incompetent use of the language which, often leads to semantic misinterpretations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This study set out to investigate the use of the articles among some senior secondary school students in Zaria. In addition, we have attempted to identify the possible causes of the general inability of students in the senior secondary school to use the articles in English. This study which was carried out in four different secondary schools in Zaria area has been informed by the belief that students in the senior secondary school do not know many functions of the articles in English and therefore mis-use and omit the articles in situations where they are normally used. In order to achieve the aims sets, we started by explaining the roles of the articles in English.

Three categories of articles were identified and used for investigation.

In chapter two, a review of related literature was done. Different approaches to the study of the articles in English were discussed after which a model for our study was chosen. In order to give a comprehensive account of the use of the articles in English we opted for the choice of the traditional approach. Despite the weakness often associated with this approach, this study has adopted the traditional model though with slight modification. This decision was due to the wide treatment which traditional grammar has given the articles in English in such works of authors like Hawkins (1978), Christophersen and Sandved (1969) and Close (1962).

In chapter three, we discussed the method used for our data collection and the subjects used. Two hundred subjects were drawn

from four school with fifty students from each school in Zaria area of Kaduna state.

The test instrument consisted of sixty items of objective questions and two essay questions. The researcher with the help of the subject teachers in all the schools used administered the test. There was no time limit for the test, but majority of the subjects finished the test under one and half hours. The tests were marked and scores were given according to the samples of article usage for the three types of usage - the definite article, the indefinite article and the zero-form.

Chapter four discussed the results which were presented in different tables - item by item and category by category. This was done to bring out the performance of subjects from each school. What emerged from the analysis is that the use of the zero-form posed the greatest problem for the students. about 50.5% of students in the secondary school have no knowledge about zero article in English. About 43.9% of students in the senior secondary school do not know how to use the indefinite article in English. 36.4% of students used the definite article wrongly. This showed that more than half of a significant number of the respondents encountered difficulties using the definite article.

Taking a general look at the scores, there is certainly the need for improvement in the use of the articles in English by students and teachers in all the levels of education in Nigeria.

5.2 Conclusion

The very high percentage of the wrong use of zero-form (50.5%) shows that more than half of the students investigated could not use the zero article correctly. In view of this relatively high percentage, it can be conclusively stated that the zero article constituted the number one problem area for the respondents generally. We therefore concluded that some students in the secondary school do have limited knowledge in the area of the use of articles in English and are ignorant of the rules of article usage. It was assumed that since a very high percentage of the respondents were not informed, the inadequate exposure to language in use and poor teaching might have been some of the contributing factors. Since no oral test was conducted, we assumed that the wrong use and omission of the articles could be attributed to the fact that most of Nigerian languages do not make use of the articles in their grammatical systems.

The researcher found that most of the categories of article errors made by the respondents in this study were similar to those they hear from the natural speech situations of some English teachers themselves. So we assume that faulty teaching and inadequate knowledge of the uses and the rules of the articles by the teachers are passed on to the students in the cause of teaching them. Although, native-like competence is not easily possible with either the learners of English or the teachers of English, efforts should be made to strife for the Standard English since it enjoys a pride of place not only in our politico-social economic situation but also in our educational system.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

We acknowledge the fact that there are certain limitations in the application of the traditional grammar approach because of the claim that it is prescriptive in outlook. However, from our analysis, it is obvious that the adoption of the traditional approach and its application in this study has helped us to identify problems relating to the use of the articles among some secondary II school students in Nigeria.

Secondly, the approach adopted in this study is a linguistic one. This does not mean that it is the only approach for studying the articles. The articles could also be possibly studied from a psycholinguistic approach which might reveal certain psychological factors responsible for students inability to use the articles correctly. From the sociolinguistic approach it might be seen that certain sociological factors could affect the use or non-use of certain grammatical categories. It could further help to establish if the mother tongue actually interferes with second language learning.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study covers only senior secondary students. Similar studies can be carried out at the level of tertiary institutions - Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities. Results from such students might reveal interesting facts about second language learning.

A similar study could be done using different teachers for example, lecturers in the University, Graduate and NCE teachers in

secondary schools with the aim of carrying out a broader and more intensive form of linguistic analysis on the articles in English. This type of study might show that unless teachers themselves are able to use the articles correctly, they might not be able to teach them well to their students.

It was not possible within the scope of this study to explore in details the notion of definiteness and indefiniteness in English. This area could also be another interesting topic for further research.

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APPENDIX A

General Instructions: This test is divided into two sections. Section I is made up of sixty items. You are required to answer **all** the questions. In Section II, there are two essay topics, you are required to write on **one** of the two topics.

Section I

Part A;

Fill in 'a'. 'an' or 'the' in the following black spaces.

1. John bought --- expensive book
2. --- book is very interesting
3. --- Samsons will soon be here
4. --- wine of France is accepted internationally.
5. I will be travelling to --- West Indies
6. Peter likes playing --- violin
7. --- housewife has a harder life than the office work.
8. This is not--- Paul I want
9. ---English like to be with their families at Christmas.
10. Please, pass me -- bread on the table.
11. --- poor have no hope for tomorrow
12. --- bigger of the two dogs has been sold
13. We buy them by --- hundred
14. We will send for -- family doctor
15. History is his best subject especially -- history of the civil war.
16. He died in June, --- June of 1970
17. It is hot around --- equator
18 He is --- man for the job
19. --- fewer the better for them

20. I have never seen -- Nile in my life

Part B:

Underline the article in brackets that best completes each of the following sentences.

21. He became (an, the, a) business man.
22. Mrs Ahmed left her children in (an, the, a) pitiful state of mind
23 (the, a, an) Mr Johns want to see you.
24. He emptied his glass as (the, an, a) drought.
25 I am coming from (the, an, a) friend's house.
26. The students arrived on (the, an a) Thursday.
27. I see him once (the, an, a) day.
28. We had a coffee of (a, the, an) kind.
29. His father is (a, an, the) European.
30. ((an, the, a)) the boy who tells a lie should be punished
31. He is as brave as (the, a, an) Napoleon.
32. John can never become (the, a , an) Napoleon.
33. Have you seen (the, an, a) bellows mender in your life.
34. What (an, a, the) terrible day!
35 There is (the, an, a) heap of rubbish at the back of the class.
36. We consider him (the, a, an) fool.
37. Give me a raincoat and (a, the, an) umbrella please.
38. You have to be learned to become (the, a, an) educationist.
39. There is (the, a, an) fire on that house.
40. He drank half (the,a, an) bottle of wine between meals.

Part C:

Correct the following sentences by deleting the articles where they are not necessary.

41. We visited the St. Helen's island last year
42. The highest mountain is a mountain Everest
43. They were at the table eating when we arrived.
44. `His child is suffering from the epilepsy
45. After removing of the disturber the events went smoothly
46. He turned against the people that have been the kindest to him.
47. Our civilization owes a heavy debt to that of the Ancient Greek
48. Mr. Bright is an Irishman first, a critic next.
49. The principal turned a politician surprisingly.
50. The black is a sign of mourning.
51. The father and the son are both soldiers.
52. He studied the French at School.
53. The human life is very precious
54. Mr gladstone was the Prime Minister from 1892-1894
55 He became the teacher and the protector of his students.
56. A man is a social animal
57. The information is not easy to obtain
58. He takes a pride in all his children
59. I saw him after the school hour
60. He plays the football every day.

Section II: Essay writing

Instruction: Write an essay in not more than 300 words on one of the following:

1. How I spent my last holidays.
2. The present economic situation of the country.

APPENDIX B

Marking Scheme

Part A

1. an expensive book.
2. the book
3. the Samsons
4. the wine
5. the West Indies
6. the violin
7. the housewife
8. the Paul
9. the English
10. the bread
11. the poor
12. the bigger
13. the hundred
14. the family doctor
15. the history of the civil war
16 the June of 1970
17 the equator
18. the man for the job
19. the fewer
20. the Nile

Part B:

21. a business man
22. `a pitiful state of mind
23. a Mr. Jones
24. a drought
25. a friend's house
26. a Thursday
27. once a day
28. a kind
29. a European
30. a boy
31. a Judge
32. a Napoleon
33. a bellows-mender
34. a terrible day
35. a heap of rubbish
36. a fool
37. an umbrella
38. an educationist
39. a fire
40 a bottle

Part C:

41. St. Helen's Island
42. mountain ?Everest
43 table
44 epilepsy
45 events
46 kindest
47 Ancient Greek
48 critic
49 politician
50 black
51 father and son
52 French
53 human life
54 president
55 the teacher and protector
56 man
57 information
58 pride
59 school
60 football

(1) How I spent my last holidays.
Dimension Secondary School A.B.U. Zaria (20/40)

I spent my last holidays by traveling to Lagos my uncle's house which is at Bishop Oluwole Street Victoria Island Lagos. When I get to my uncle's place at Lagos he and his family glad to see me and I too was very pleased with the welcome they welcome me. When I arrived for some time he took us around and we went to a beach which I have been hearing about home. When we get there I met with my uncle's Family Friends Mr John, the Johns were happy to see me and they asked about Zaria, and I told them every thing is well with us and I too asked about them in Lagos and it was well too with them.

I also meted a friend who's name is Folabo John, Schooling at the Command Secondary School Bauchi. We eat Somany things like fried fish, Beede beans, Rosted chicken and we drink mineral, Malt, wine and ice cream. On our way back we followed through a bush where I can see some animals like Zebra, elephant, Jeraff like in A Zoo. I also See Some beautiful flowers around the road and decorated trees around too. When we get home my uncle give me

I received which I was very happy when I found so I thank him for a nice present. I Spent the whole holidays with him there and I came back to Zomba when we came about to resume, back to School I really enjoyed my holidays at Lugos and I will love to go back on my next holidays most especially when I remember those family friends and my new friend Kolaleo I never spent that holiday to finished. This is how I spent my holidays.

Government Commercial College Zaria

The present Economic situation of the County

40 lines

The present economic situation of the country is getting worst. The people are tired, the workers cannot use their salary to buy anything. Before the money was valuable but now no value. The economy of the country contribute to materials and also help a market of the country. The economy of Nigeria has not been stable since civil war. It has risen to a point whereby social amenities and even food has to be sweated for - A Standard of population has increased and A Standard of production has decreased.

Educational facilities are in a state that is not certain. This cannot be brought back until A Naira is brought back to Standard

In every community there is A means of exchange. In A US A and Britain their own is better. Food stuff that was cheap has now become A rich man's food.

If we talk about A underground money find A better-than-coal money find which was not requested was brought A Government can rectify the present problem in the sense that it should have A lay down rules.

Nigeria is one of the largest country in Africa. With an oil boom it started wasting its money. The oil is going and the disaster will soon come. If A leaders do better the problem will reduce.

All I know is that we need a honest people who will be leaders to save this country. Nigeria is blessed with the resources which can make it survive. Thats all I have to say.

Essay Part. Bowen College 2017 (18/40)

The Economic situation of the country presently:

The economic situation is getting out of the hands. There is the high prices of goods and services even the unemployment. All thes factors bring the inflation in the country.

Well, If I should go into all problems facing Nigerians, critically, I dont mind to spend more than 10 pages to write it.

Nigeria is only country that produce it. Then how come we are confronted by economic situation are the causes of this? I may ask?

If you go to market now things are very expensive. The Gari, the yam, the provisions is expensive

What we need to remind this situation is call upon government to do something. Also to negotiate with. an experts in field of economics and other financial institutions which will eradicate all problems

Now we are in the school, economic situation is affect our lives We can not eat a good meals We are hungry all times.

Even our parents cannot pay school fees that we are to pay some of us value the education than the money and we want to have the education but economic situation is not allowing us.

We donot suppose to face problems of economy as far as Nigeria is concerned. This is the work of a dubious people that are sabotage effort of Government.

Government Day Secondary School Kaduna
Essay writing - 1st
How I spent my holiday. (20/40)

At the very day we vacated I went to inform my parents about our results that I took first position out of all 10 student offering science subjects. I stayed one week with them to help them with domesticated activities. After that I went to Lagos with my sister. My sister took me to places like Bar Beach, Airport and Victoria Island.

It was there I realizes the adage which says that the travelling is a part of education because I experienced and observed things that increased my knowledge.

I then went to Enugu and there I was received with an open arms. My uncle was happy as he see me. He took me to Orings Palace, Museum and Zoo.

I spent four days with my uncle. On the day I came back and people were happy to see me. As we are able to resume, I washed all things I wore to Enugu and my friends

The day we resumed I went with clean tydy dress which is my uniform. People in the hostel were happy to see me and we were all very happy that day in school.

APPENDIX D

Demonstration	Secondary School's Individual Scores in percentage
001	65
002	56
003	58
004	52
005	60
006	49
007	54
008	66
009	70
010	68
011	75
012	58
013	75
014	48
015	72
016	65
017	58
018	82
019	78
020	66
021	70
022	67
023	59
024	75
025	62
026	50
027	64
028	60
029	48
030	55
031	60
032	58

033	62
034	45
035	58
036	58
037	66
038	41
039	57
040	56
041	68
042	57
043	50
044	62
045	53
046	45
047	58
048	42
049	60
050	59

APPENDIX E

Government DaySecondary School's Individual Scores in percentage

001	50
002	52
003	64
004	59
005	45
006	62
007	46
008	52
009	35
010	44
011	38
012	41
013	60
014	55
015	48
016	35
017	38
018	52
019	45
020	60
021	48
022	56
023	40
024	44
025	38
026	40
027	28
028	32
029	44
030	66
031	48
032	38

033	47
034	52
035	45
036	35
037	54
038	60
039	65
040	33
041	40
042	60
043	58
044	40
045	62
046	20
047	35
048	40
049	55
050	22

APPENDIX F

Barewa College's Individual Scores in percentage

001	25
002	40
003	35
004	54
005	58
006	34
007	51
008	42
009	22
010	58
011	36
012	50
013	25
014	32
015	20
016	55
017	44
018	35
019	55
020	28
021	56
022	42
023	56
024	35
025	38
026	47
027	45
028	50
029	40
030	38
031	56
032	30

033	25
034	60
035	56
036	25
037	38
038	42
039	10
040	46
041	22
042	56
043	38
044	45
045	52
046	56
047	48
048	32
049	50
050	25

APPENDIX G

Government	Commercial College's Individual Scores in percentage
001	45
002	42
003	54
004	48
005	37
006	25
007	55
008	62
009	30
010	47
011	52
012	25
013	44
014	30
015	25
016	55
017	58
018	35
019	20
020	42
021	58
022	60
023	62
024	58
025	28
026	35
027	52
028	48
029	56
030	40
031	35
032	62

033	55
034	30
035	60
036	35
037	30
038	44
039	53
040	41
041	30
042	25
043	58
044	42
045	30
046	50
047	48
048	25
049	35
050	56