

The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special  
Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
**The Uzbek State University of World Languages**

# **C O U R S E P A P E R**

**Category of Definiteness in English**

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group 203

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Tashkent 2005

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### Category of Definiteness

This paper deals with several phenomena usually subsumed under the category of definiteness. There are nearly as many proposals on how to describe this category semantically as there are semantic frameworks. In traditional truth-conditional semantics from Russell to Montague, it is assumed that indefinites express an existential statement, while definiteness carry additionally some uniqueness requirement. More recent approaches like Discourse Representation Theory or File Change Semantics prefer to assume that definiteness and indefinites perform different actions on some discourse model. As a common integrator, most influential semantic frameworks consider definiteness to be a central issue of semantic theory.

One might wonder whether this dichotomy is really that important after all. There are a considerable number of languages that do well without any marking of definiteness, and even in languages such as English and German, where the contrast is expressed morphologically, it is highly redundant. (I was once told a very illuminating story about a Japanese woman living in Germany who knew German superficially very well. She never used any articles. Her German colleagues not only failed to miss them, they even failed to notice it at all.)

Of course the communicative redundancy of definiteness does not suffice to prove its theoretical marginality. There are quite many widespread phenomena in different languages that are *prima facie* related to definiteness. They are usually covered with the notion of "Definiteness Effect". We do not intend to investigate these systematically here, but it is questionable whether this term is really appropriate. As an example, the most prominent instance, English *there*-constructions, is obviously not related to definiteness at all.

(1) a. There is only John in the garden.

b. There was the biggest car I've ever seen in front of his house. (Chris Wilder, p.c.)

I am not aware of any definition of indefiniteness that covers *only John* or *the biggest car I've ever seen*.

Whatever the category is the coda of *there*-sentences is sensitive for, it is not definiteness.

We are only interested in the second kind of scrambling which is restricted to DPs and some PPs, involves only deaccentuation of the scrambled item and does not give rise to scope inversion.

Instance of the Definiteness Effect. Several authors (Lenerz[1977], Reis[1987], and, more recently, Buring[1994]) have proposed that in German, the surface position of arguments inside or outside VP is largely determined by definiteness. Provided that no focus- or animacy-effects intervene, definite subjects and objects have to occur in a VP-external position, while indefinites remain *in situ*. Most data support this view.

(2) a. Peter hat gestern ein Buch gekauft. Peter has yesterday a book bought.  
b. Peter hat ein Buch gestern gekauft Peter has a book yesterday bought.  
'Yesterday, Peter bought a book'

(3) a. Peter hat gestern das Buch gekauft. Peter has yesterday the book bought.  
b. Peter hat das Buch gestern gekauft. Peter has the book yesterday bought.  
'Peter bought the book yesterday'

If we assume that the adverb *gestern* 'yesterday' marks the VP boundary, the indefinite object is preferred in the VP-internal position and the definite one in the VP-external position.

Nevertheless, there are counterexamples. Name-like definites like *die Bibel* 'the Bible' are allowed in both positions equally well, and specific indefinites occur in scrambled positions.

(4) a. Peter hat gestern die Bibel gekauft. Peter has yesterday the Bible bought.  
b. Peter hat die Bibel gestern gekauft. Peter has the Bible yesterday bought.  
'Yesterday, Peter bought the Bible'

3. Hans has a certain student still never seen

Hans has still never a certain student seen

'There is a certain student that Hans never saw'

As it turns out, there are other factors scrambling is sensitive to that usually coincide with definiteness, but sometimes the distinctions are orthogonal to each other. There is a lot of recent crosslinguistic work that shows that this property of scrambling is not a pure idiosyncrasy of German. Comparable observations can be made for Dutch (de Hoop[1993]) and – more unexpectedly – Cashmerese (Rajesh Bhatt, p.c.). Meinunger[1995] shows convincingly that for instance case alternation phenomena in Finnish and Russian and clitic doubling in Romance and Bantu-languages should be treated on a par with scrambling. This enables us to assume that there is another dichotomy besides definiteness that is responsible for the mentioned contrasts. We decided to call those items that are marked by scrambling /structural case/ clitic doubling Topic, but the nomenclature is of minor importance. Probably, there is a kind of feature specification default that requires definites to be Topics and indefinites to be non-Topics, but there are exceptions in both directions. It is very likely that the category Topic is

universally present, while there is no need to assume that languages that do not express definiteness morphologically have that category at all.

The aim of this qualification paper is to give an explicit formal specification of the semantic impact of the category of definiteness. In order to do so, we review three representative semantic frameworks in chapter two. We start with a brief overview on basic ideas of Montague Semantics, pointing out in particular its shortcomings in connection with anaphora phenomena.

We seek to extend the coverage of DETT to definite descriptions. It is argued that this is impossible without taking the category Topic into account. To describe the semantics of Topics, a formalism more powerful than DETT is needed. In particular, the twofold distinction between novel and familiar discourse referents proves to be not finegrained enough. Intuitively, we have to distinguish (at least) two layers of discourse referents. Similar ideas - figuring under the headers "Centering" or "Focus" - are already quite common in computational linguistics. Nevertheless, this research work is to my knowledge the first attempt to elaborate on these insights in a compositional model of natural language semantics. As starting point, Dynamic Modal Predicate Logic is used. Its main features are incorporated into the overall architecture of DETT. The resulting system is called Dynamic Intensional Type Theory (DITT). DITT provides an adequate formal tool to define a template that shifts the meanings of determiners heading non-Topic DPs to the meanings of the corresponding Topics. This allows us to give a unique semantics of the definite determiner that covers a wide variety of apparently unrelated readings of this item.

It is shown that it offers a basis for a unified account of widely discussed phenomena like the partitive readings of weak quantifiers and the proportion problem in connection with donkey conditionals.

Now let's look through phenomena that make the category of definiteness and indefiniteness.

## Articles

The paper presents the reader with one of the most difficult and intricate problems of language structure. Although, a great number of philologists have treated the article both in English and in other languages, it will be only fair to say that even the most essential points concerning the theory of the articles still remain doubtful.

In embarking now on a study of the Modern English article, we should first of all eliminate those problems which are of no real scientific interest, though they have been occasionally discussed. Thus, we will not dwell in the problem whether the article is a separate part of speech, since neither an affirmative nor a negative answer would in any way affect the really relevant questions concerning the article. The problem is irrelevant.

Another problem, which, though not irrelevant, appears to have been frequently misstated, is this: is the article a word or a morpheme? It has been solved in different ways by different authors. There would always be some argument in favour of the article being a separate word, and some argument to show that it was a morpheme.<sup>1</sup> This kind of approach, however, does not seem to be the right one. It would mean that we start examining the article, a very peculiar phenomenon, with ready-made notions of what a word and what a morpheme is. Instead we should first study the article as it actually exists and functions in the language, and only then see whether it will fit into any *rado-mada* category. It may well happen that it will not; then we shall have to face the situation and take it for what it is worth.

With respect to the article we must state, in the first place, that there are languages which have no article. Besides Uzbek and most other Turkik languages, the Russian language, the Latin language belongs here. Ancient Greek had only one article - the definite one. Many languages (Italian, Spanish, German, Swedish, etc.) have two articles - the definite and the indefinite. As far as its form is concerned, the article is usually a separate unit which may be divided from its noun by other words, chiefly adjectives. However, in certain languages the article may also be a morpheme attached to the noun as a kind of suffix.

This is the case, for instance, in Bulgarian, where we find such formations as *селото* 'the village', *линіята* 'the line', etc. The same may be said of Rumanian, e. g: *universul* 'the universe', *curentul* 'the courier', etc., where *-l* is the definite article corresponding etymologically to French *le*, Latin *ille*. A suffix article is also found in Swedish; compare, e. g., *dag* 'day', *dagen* 'the day'; rum 'room', *rummet* 'the room': Alongside of this suffix article Swedish also has an article separate from the noun, as in *den* 'the'. The fact that a suffix article. Exists

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This applies to Modern English. In speaking of the German language, it would be impossible to assert that the article was a morpheme, since it is declined and, therefore, every form of it consists of two morphemes, e.g. genitive singular neuter *d-es*, as distinguished from the nominative and accusative *d-as*.

in several languages must of course be taken into consideration in a general theory of the article.

It has been a long debated question how many articles there are in English. Obviously there are only two material articles, the definite article *the* and the indefinite article *a (an)*. The distinction thus is between, for instance, *the language* and *a language*. However, the noun *language*, and indeed many other nouns, are also used without any article, as in the sentence *Language is a means of communication*. It is obvious that the absence of the article in this sentence is in itself a means of showing that "language in general", and not any specific language (such as English, or French, etc.), is meant. Hence we may say that there are three variants:

(1) *the language*, (2) *a language*, (3) *language*.

Now the question arises, how this third variant is to be treated. The older grammatical tradition described it as "omission of the article", which is obviously inadequate, since there is not the slightest reason to believe that the article in such cases was ever "omitted". Another view is that we should describe this as "absence of the article", and sometimes this notion is made more precise and the phenomenon is called "meaningful absence of article".<sup>2</sup> A third view, which has been gaining ground lately, is that the very absence of the article is a special kind of article, which is then termed "zero article". According to this view, then, there would be three articles in English: definite, indefinite, and zero.

This idea of a zero article takes its origin in the notion of "zero morpheme", which has been applied to certain forms in inflected languages, - namely to forms having no ending and differing by this very absence from other forms of the same word, which have each their individual ending. A case in point in Russian is the genitive plural of some nouns (chiefly of the feminine gender), e. g. *пук*, which is characterized as a special form by the absence of any ending, as distinct from nominative singular *пука*, genitive singular *пуку*, dative plural *пукам*, etc. The notion of "zero morpheme" may also be applied in English, for instance, to the singular form of nouns (*room*) as distinct from the plural form with its *-s*-inflection. If, therefore, we were to interpret the article as a morpheme, the idea of a zero article would make no difficulty. If, on the other hand, we take the article to be a word, the idea of a "zero word" would entail some difficulty. It has been pointed out that the notion of a "zero copula" has been applied to such Russian sentences as *он здоров* or in Uzbek *У соғ-саломат*, where there is no verb. In this sentence the present tense is implied as distinct from *он был здоров* - *У соғ-саломат эди* and *он будет здоров* - *У соғ-саломат бўлади*, where the past or future tense is expressed by a form of the verb *быть*, Uzbek *бўлмок*. However, in this case it is not a "zero copula", but a "zero form" of the copula *быть*. It might thus formulate the following tense

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Т. Н. Сергеев, *О значащем отсутствии артикля перед именами существительными в современном английском языке*. Иностранные языки в школе, 1953, #1.

system of this copula: present tense - "zero", past tense был - эди, future tense будет – бўлади. So even in this particular case the notion of a "zero word" seems very doubtful. Still more doubtful is the notion "zero" with reference to the English article, if the article is a word. We will therefore proceed on the assumption that the notion "zero article" is only possible if the article is not a word.

The two main views of the article are, then, these: (1) The article is a word (possibly a separate part of speech) and the collocation "article + noun" is a phrase (if of a peculiar kind). (2) The article is a form element in the system of the noun; it is thus a kind of morpheme, or if a word, an auxiliary word of the same kind as the auxiliary verbs. In that case the phrase "article + noun" is a morphological formation similar to the formation "auxiliary verb + infinitive or participle", which is an analytical form of the verb.<sup>3</sup>

Now, the very fact that two such widely divergent views of the article are possible shows that there are some quite peculiar difficulties here. Besides those already mentioned, there is the problem of the meaning of each article: we must find out whether it has one or several meanings, each of them appearing in a different context.

We can illustrate this problem by comparing, for example, the two sentences: (1) *The dog has come home* and (2) *The dog is a domestic animal*. Of course it is at once obvious that *the dog* in the former sentence means one individual dog, whereas *the dog* in the latter sentence means the dog in general, as a zoological species. The question, then, is whether the article itself has two distinct meanings (if so, the second of these is termed "the generic article") or whether the meaning of the article is the same in both sentences, and the difference in meaning between them depends on some other factor.

If we endorse the first view, we shall say that the definite article has at least two distinct meanings, viz. (1) it means that an object is singled out from all objects of the same class, (2) it means that the whole class of objects, as distinct from other classes, is referred to.

If we endorse the second view, we shall say that the definite article has one meaning only, viz. that of something singled out from other entities. Now, whether the essence thus singled out is a separate object or a whole class depends not on the article at all but on the other elements in the sentence, usually on the predicate.

Reverting to the two sentences, (1) *The dog has come home* and (2) *The dog is a domestic animal*, we shall see that each of the predicates has several peculiarities which influence the meaning of the sentence one way or another. Let us analyse each of these.

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<sup>3</sup> This view of the article has of late been emphatically stated once more. See Т. В. Строева и Л. Р. Зиндер, *Грамматическая категория соотнесенности имени существительного в немецком языке*. Проблемы языкознания. Ученые записки ЛГУ им. А. А. Жданова, Серия филол. наук, вып. 60. 1961, стр. 218--232.

First, the grammatical peculiarities. In (1) the predicate is a verb in the present perfect tense, in (2) it is a group "link verb + predicative", and the link verb is in the present tense. That of course would not in itself be sufficient to show the different meanings of the sentences, but it does give a certain indication this way: the verb in the present perfect tense is more likely than not to express a concrete action (i. e. one that has taken place once), while the group "link verb in the present tense + predicative" is very likely to express some general characteristic.

Now, these grammatical points are supplemented by some lexical points, which make the difference quite clear. In (1) the verb *come* and the adverb *home* denote a concrete physical action and the place to which it is directed, while in (2) the predicative *a domestic animal* denotes a zoological idea and thus proves that by *the dog* is meant not an individual dog but the whole species: According to this view, then, the meaning of the definite article itself is the same in both sentences, and the difference proceeds from the peculiarities of the predicates and the words expressing them.

Which of the two views is the more convincing one? Both views seem to be defensible, and the decision will have to be made on the ground of some guiding principle.

Such a principle may be that of the invariable, i. e. of a stable element in the meaning of a word preserved throughout all the changes and combinations in which the word may be found. The principle of the invariable has been recently very forcefully defended by A. Isachenko in his paper on grammatical meaning. The principle may be briefly formulated in this way: "State an invariable wherever possible," or negatively in this way: "Do not state differences wherever this is not strictly necessary." In short, the principle amounts to this. Whenever a word or a word-form, appears to have different meanings in different contexts, look for that element of its meaning which is always there and does not depend on any context: that is the invariable. If we adhere to this view (as it appears we should) we will say that there is no difference in the meaning of the definite article between the sentences *The dog has come home* and *The dog is a domestic animal*; the difference proceeds from other sources, as we have explained above. It is obvious, however, that not everybody will accept the principle of the invariable, and for those who will Not do so, the question of the meaning of the definite article will appear in a different light.

The same may be said about the indefinite article. If we compare the two sentences, (1) *There is a hill behind our house*, and (2) *A hill is the opposite of a valley*,<sup>4</sup> the question will arise, whether the indefinite article with the noun *hill* has different meanings in the two sentences. If we think it has, we shall say that in (1) it serves to denote an individual object, without reference to its individual peculiarities, and in (2) any object of a given class. If, on the other hand, we endorse the principle of the invariable, the article will be said to have the same meaning of indefiniteness in both sentences, and the difference in meaning will

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<sup>4</sup> Example given B. H. Sweet (*A New English Grammar*, Part N., § 2044).

have to be sought elsewhere. We shall first of all note the different types of predicate in the two sentences; In (1) we have the predicate *there is*,<sup>5</sup> in (2) the group "link verb + predicative", and the predicative is a noun. There is, besides, an adverbial modifier in (1) and an object in (2).

From the lexical point of view, it is important to note that in (1) we find three words with a meaning pointing to a concrete situation, viz. *behind*, denoting a relation in space, *house*, and especially *our*. In (2), on the other hand, there is the group *the opposite of a valley*, which expresses some general notion, not restricted to any concrete position in space or time. The indefinite article before *valley* - is of course quite parallel to that before *hill*, and they are bound to be used in quite the same way. All these peculiarities in (2) point to the sentence having a general meaning, i. e. Expressing a definition. Such, then, are the factors on which the general meaning of each sentence and the use of the indefinite article depend. Taking this line, then, we should say that the invariable in the indefinite article is its meaning of taking an object without its individual peculiarities. Whether the noun used with this article is used to denote "a certain hill" or "any hill", is outside the meaning of the article itself and depends on series of different factors, 'which we have tried to point out. It must be emphasized, of course, that if the principle of the invariable is not accepted the result of the analysis will be different.

In coming now to the difference in meaning between the definite and the indefinite article, we should start by comparing two sentences which are exactly alike in everything except that one has the definite article where the other has the indefinite. We ought to find several pairs of this kind, and then try to get at the essence of the difference between them. So let us take these two, in the first place: *Give me a newspaper, please!* and *Give me the newspaper, please!* Here the difference is obvious: the one sentence means, 'Give me some newspaper, no matter which', and the other means, 'Give me that particular newspaper that you are reading at the moment, or the one that is lying on the table, or the one that you had in your hand as you came in, etc., depending on the situation. Of course many similar pairs of sentences might be found. Here, then, the difference is that between "individual object with its own characteristics", and "some object belonging to that particular class of objects". This may indeed be called the difference between definite and indefinite in the usual sense of the words.

However, this distinction will not apply to all cases and we must proceed to look at the sentences where the line of distinction is of another kind. Let us now take these two sentences, *The door opened, and the young man came in*, and *The door opened, and a young man came in*. We need not deny that at the bottom of this distinction there is one between "definite" and "indefinite"; however, another element has come in here, which may be briefly described like this. We can only say *The door opened, and the young man came in*, if we knew in advance that the person standing, say, in the corridor was a young man; if there was a knock at the door, and we did not know who had knocked, and we said,

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<sup>5</sup> We need not discuss here the various problems connected with the expression *there is*.

"Come in," we can only say, *The door opened, and a young man came in*, which might be made more explicit in the following way, ...*and the person who came in proved to be a young man* (implying, not an old man, not a young girl, etc.); Thus the fact that it was a young man would be new, it would be the central point of the sentence. Coming back now to the sentence with the definite article, we can say that its meaning is approximately this, 'The door opened, and the young man (did not stay out but) came in'. Here, then, the central point would be that he came in. Now, this element of the sentence which is the central point may be said to correspond to the semantic predicate, or the rheme. Then the indefinite article, as opposed to the definite article in sentences of this kind, would be a means of expressing the semantic predicate of the sentence. How should we then define its meaning? To use the simplest words possible, we might say that the indefinite article expresses what is new, and the definite article expresses what is known already, or at least what is not presented as new. This opposition would then be superimposed on that between definite and indefinite.

To make the point quite clear, let us consider two more sentences. Let us assume that we are speaking about what happened in a classroom during a lesson: *The door opened and a teacher came in.* - *The door opened and the headmaster came in.* In both cases we did not know in advance who was coming, we only learnt it when the door opened. We would then say, ...*a teacher came in*, but not ..., *a headmaster came in*. How are we to account for the difference? Obviously the reason is this. There are many teachers in a school, but only one headmaster. Therefore the sentence *The door opened, and a headmaster came in* would have no reasonable sense. Apparently, the idea of definiteness (there being only one headmaster in every school) takes the upper hand and the idea of newness is not expressed at all. Thus, the sentence *The headmaster came in*, which in this case corresponds to the Russian вошел директор, might, in another context, correspond to the Russian директор вошел: in that case *came in*, and not *the headmaster*, would be the semantic predicate.

Let us now see in what relation the absence of the article stands to the meanings of the definite and the indefinite article.

When we consider the absence of the article, we have to distinguish between the singular and the plural number. Broadly speaking, the absence of the article with a noun in the plural corresponds to the indefinite article with that noun in the singular, whereas the absence of the article with a noun in the singular stands apart and does not correspond to anything in the plural.

We will first consider the absence of the article with a noun in the singular and start with nouns which can equally be used with the definite and the indefinite article and without any article. One of these is the noun *language*. We take three sentences: *Language is a means of communication. English is the foreign language I know best. Everyone must study a foreign language.* The difference here is obvious enough. *Language* without article does not refer to any one language (Uzbek, Russian, English, German, etc.) but to the general

idea of that means of communication. Compare also the following three sentences: *He has eaten the egg. He has eaten an egg. He has egg on his sleeve.* In the latter sentence, what is meant is not a "unit", an oval-shaped hen's egg, but some "material", which happens to have stuck to his sleeve. Similar observations might be made on a number of other nouns.

From this we may also draw some conclusions about nouns which can't be used with the indefinite article. Compare: *Water boils at 1000 centigrade* and *The water is boiling*; *Snow is white* and *The snow has melted*. In each of these pairs, the first sentence 'expresses a general truth, without reference to any particular occasion, while the second expresses a concrete occurrence at a certain moment (this is seen from the form of the verb used in each case).

The noun *water* without any article is the name of the substance in general, whereas with the article it denotes a certain quantity of that substance found at a certain concrete place. The same of course applies to the noun *snow*. The indefinite article is not possible with these nouns.

The absence of the article with a noun in the plural, as we have said, corresponds to a certain extent to the indefinite article with the noun in the singular. However, this is far from being always the case. This may be shown by some very simple examples. If we take, for instance, the sentence *I have read a novel by Thackeray* and if we want to change it in such a way as to show that more than one novel is meant we will of course say *I have read some novels by Thackeray*, i. e. we shall have to use the word *some*, and not merely drop the article. Though the word *some* is not an article, it does come close in meaning to the indefinite article in one of its uses.

The absence of the article with a noun in the plural is the only possibility in sentences expressing general statements, such as, *Dogs are domestic animals*, or *Goose quills were in common use formerly*. The article is also absent in such sentences as, *Pencils, pens, and sheets of paper were strewn all over the table*, where in definitely large quantities are meant.

Such would seem to be the main factors determining the use of the definite or indefinite article and the absence of the article. They do not cover all possible cases, and a considerable number of examples will be found to lie outside the sphere of the grammatical system and to be due to occasional causes which sometimes remain obscure. To give only a few examples, if a noun is modified by the adjective *wrong* meaning 'not the one needed', the definite article is always used with it, as in *I took the wrong bus*, or *He walked in the wrong direction*. The underlying idea seems to be that there were two alternatives, the one right, and the other wrong, and the wrong one happened to be chosen. This, however, is not quite convincing, since, for example, in the case of buses, there often would be more than one bus line which might prove "wrong". Such peculiar cases do not easily fit into any system.

Another peculiar case is that of the absence of the article with nouns used in pairs. Atypical example is the sentence *In the quiet, quaintly-named streets, in town-mead and market place, in the lord's mill beside the stream, in the bell that swung out its summons to the crowded borough-mote, in merchant-gild and*

*church-gild and craft-gild, lay the life of Englishmen who mere doing more than knight and baron to make England what she is . . .* (J. R. GREEN) No article is found here either with the noun *knight* or with the noun *baron*. If only one of these nouns had been used, the article could not possibly be absent. This also applies to the other nouns in this sentence, and this usage may be found elsewhere. It appears to be strictly literary.

There are many other special cases defying grammatical analysis, such as the use of the definite article with certain geographical names, etc.

Having considered the main meanings of the articles and the main factors determining their use, we will now look into the question of the essence of the article and its place in the English language.

The question arises whether the group "article + noun" can be a form of the noun in the same way as, for example, the group *will speak* is a form of the verb *speak*. If we were to take that view, some nouns would have three forms, two of them analytical, e. g. *room, the room, a room*; while other nouns would have two forms, one of them analytical, e. g. *water, the water*, etc. It must be said that the problem is hard to solve, as unmistakable objective criteria are missing. There seems to be nothing to prevent us from thinking that *a room* is an analytical form of the noun *room*, and there seems to be nothing to compel us to think so. If we endorse the view that the group "article + noun" is an analytical form of the noun we shall have to set up a grammatical category in the noun which is expressed by one or the other article or by its absence. That category might be called determination. In that case we could also find a "zero article". If, on the other hand, we stick to the view that the group "article +/- noun" is not an analytical form of the noun and the group is a peculiar type of phrase, no "zero article" is possible, and the meanings of each of the two articles (definite and indefinite) are to be taken as individual meanings of words. The choice between the two alternatives remains a matter of opinion, rather than admitting of a binding conclusion. On the whole the second view (denying the analytical forms of nouns) seems preferable, but we cannot, or the time being at least, prove that it is the only correct view of the English article.

## Definite Determiners (Demonstrative Pronouns)

Demonstrative pronouns are very often the sticking point for students. If you take some extra time with this paragraph and make sure that you understand the concepts behind demonstrative pronouns, and if you make sure that you memorize and can recognize the paradigms, you will be well on your way to being able to translate Old English sentences fluently.

Demonstrative Pronouns are "pointing words": they indicate proximity relationships.

Usually only the pronouns *this* (*these*), *that*(*those*), *such* and *the same* are regarded as demonstrative. But even this small group is not homogeneous. The pronouns *this-that* (*these-those*) are correlative. The sphere of *these* or *this* is the space or time close to the speaker and the moment of speech, where as the sphere of *that* and *those* is the time or space farther away from the speaker and the moment of speech.

The pronouns *such* and *the same* have no correlative pronouns. They indicate objects or qualities by comparison with those pointed at by the speaker. Now similar relations can be found in other pronouns. The words *here* and *there* meaning «in this (that) place», *now* and *then* meaning «at this time», *hence* and *thence* meaning «from this(that ) time(place) » are similar to *this* and *that* in their relations to the speaker and the moment of speech. Since they do not name any place or time, but indicate it, and this indication is particular, variable and relative with regard to the speaker and the situation of speech, they are pronouns. The words *so* and *thus* in the meaning «in this way» are pronouns like *such* and *the same*. They have no correlative words and indicate the manner of actions by comparison with those pointed at by the speaker. Demonstrative pronouns can be:

Pro-nouns: *This* is pretty slick, eh?

Pro-adjectives: *These* continental rooms are always overpoweringly stuffy.

Pro-adverbs: *Thus* nobly endowed, he was popular with audiences.

*This-these, that-those* are number opposemes. The grammatical meanings of «singular» and «plural» number are also preserved when these pronouns are used as pro-adjectives, thus involving grammatical combinability; *this book, these books*. As elsewhere the singular members of the opposemes occur in speech much more often than the plural opposites, the ratio being approximately 9:1.

## The Use of Definiteness and Indefiniteness in English

The paragraph describes four things a linguist needs to know in the course of learning definitives in English. The first thing every translator needs to know is exactly what it is that he/she is dealing with. For instance, the translator needs a general grammar of the English article system. These are the general points about articles that most native English speakers take for granted. Most contexts make it clear whether a group of objects is being referred to in a general way or whether reference is being made to a particular example of the group. For example, in this sentence "*The Kiwi is a New Zealand bird*" (Киви – Янги Зеландияда учрайдиган куш) saying "The Kiwi" makes general reference and saying "a New Zealand bird" makes particular reference. The second point is when reference is particular i.e. a distinction is made between any member of a group and a special member of group. For example, if you tell someone to "*Choose a chocolate,*" (Шоколаддан хохлаганингни танла) it means any chocolate but if you say "*Take the smallest chocolate*" (Энг кичкина шоколадни ол) then the choice is restricted. The third point has to do with the classes of nouns, as in countable and uncountable. The fourth point has to do with singular and plural nouns. These last two points can be used in many combinations, which confuse learners of English quite a bit.

There is a useful chart showing the four points described above. It is very helpful for a visual of the English article system. However, one of the major areas of confusion in the English article system is the overlap of articles. An example of how general reference can be made by five different forms is in the following sentences:

*A tiger is a member of the cat family.*

*Шер – мушуклар оиласига кирувчи ?айвон.*

*The tiger is a member of the cat family.*

*Мана бу (кўриб турганинг) шер мушуклар оиласига кирувчи хайвон.*

*Tigers are members of the cat family.*

*Шерлар – мушуклар оиласига кирувчи хайвонлардир.*

*The Tigers are members of the cat family.*

*Мана бу (кўриб турганинг) шерлар мушуклар оиласига кирувчи хайвонлардир.*

*Fur is a thick hair covering certain animals.*

*Мўйна – маълум ?айвонларда ўсадиган ?алин соч.*

Each sentence uses a different form for the "subject" or first noun phrase of the sentence. These five sentences show just the tip of the problem that students of English must learn to deal with.

In general, it suggests starting with countable nouns because they cover more functions and because they are more frequent in general English and give a wider coverage. It suggests teaching plurals next, then moving to the concept of mass—like the noun "*color*," and finally the concept of "any" in relation to choosing, for example, "*choose any two pens*."

- "*a*" is used for introducing an item, followed by "*the*" for second mention of the item. Example: *His car struck a tree* Унинг машинаси (кандайдир) дарахтга урилди; *You can still see the mark on the tree* – Хозир ҳам (ўша) дарахтда(ўша) белгини кўришинг мумкин.
- "*the*" usually indicates uniqueness. Example: *The sun and the planets remain a mystery* – Куёш ва сайёралар синоатлигича колмокда.
- "*a*" usually indicates typicality. Example: *A man and a boy are on a bus* - (Бир) киши билан бола автобусда ўтиришибди.
- "*the*" is used with nouns preceded by ordinals and superlatives. Example: *Which country of the world has the most famous art collection?* – Дунёнинг ?айси давлатида энг маш?ур санъат музейи мавжуд?

"*the*" can be used with a first mention of an item if the item is familiar or identifiable to both speaker and listener. Example: *Where did you park the car?* *In the driveway.*

The correct use of the articles (*a / an* and *the*) is one of the most difficult points in English grammar. Fortunately, most article mistakes do not matter too much. Even if we leave all the articles out of a sentence, it is usually possible to understand it.

*Please can you lend me pound of butter till of week?*

Most Western European languages have article systems very like English. Among them: French, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Romanian.

To understand the rules for the articles, we need to know about countable and uncountable nouns.

Countable nouns are the names of separate objects, people", ideas etc., which we can count.

We can use numbers and *a/an* with countable nouns; they have plurals.

*a cat - three cats*

*a newspaper - two newspapers*

Uncountable nouns are the names of materials, liquids and the other things which we do not see as separate objects. We cannot use *a / an* or numbers with uncountable nouns; they have no plurals. *water* (NOT *a water*; *two waters*)

*wool* (NOT *a wool*; *two wools*)

*weather* (NOT *a weather*; *two weathers*)

We cannot usually put *a / an* with an uncountable noun even when there is an adjective.

*My father enjoys very good health.* (NOT...*a very good health*)

*Мой отец себя хорошо чувствует.*

*We're having terrible weather.* (NOT... *a terrible weather.*)

*У нас очень плохая погода.*

*He speaks good English.* (NOT...*a good English.*)

A noun like *house*, *engineer*, *girl*, *name* refers to a whole class of people or things.

We use *a / an* with a noun to talk about just one member of that class:

(*A / an* means 'one'.)

*She lives in a nice big house.*

*Она живет в одном большом доме.*

*My father is an engineer.* (NOT *My father is engineer.*)

*Мой отец инженер.*

*A girl phoned this morning.*

*Эрталаб бир ?из ?ўКакая-то девушка позвонила утром..*

*Tanaka is a Japanese name.*

*Танака это японская имя.*

We use *a / an* when we define or describe people or things (when we say what class or kind they belong to).

*He's a doctor. She's a beautiful woman.*

*'What's that?' - 'it's a calculator.'*

We do not use *a / an* with a plural or uncountable noun, because *a / an* means 'one'.

*My parents are doctors.* (NOT ...*a doctors.*)

*Would you like some salt?* (NOT ... *a salt.*)

We do not use *a / an* with an adjective alone (without a noun).

Compare:

*She's a very good engineer.*

*She's very good.* (NOT *She's a very good.*)

We do not use *a / an* together with another determiner (for example *my*, *your*).

*He's a friend of mine. (NOT He's a my friend.)*

Note that we write *another* in one word.

*Would you like another drink? (NOT ...an other drink?)*

*a / an* (the indefinite article).

The form *a* is used before a word beginning with a consonant, or a vowel with a consonant sound:

*a man a hat a university a European a one-way street*

The form *an* is used before words beginning with a vowel (a, e, i, o, n) or words beginning with a mute h:

*an apple an island an uncle*

*an egg an onion an hour*

or individual letters spoken with a vowel sound:

*an L-plate an MP an SOS an 'x'*

*a / an* is the same for all genders:

*a man a woman an actor an actress a table*

In certain expressions of quantity:

*a lot of a couple a great deal of*

*a great many a dozen* (but *one dozen* is also possible)

With certain numbers:

*a hundred a thousand*

Before half when half follows a whole number:

*1,5 kilos = one and a half kilos or a kilo and a half*

But *1/2 kg = half a kilo* (no **a** before *half*), though *a + half + noun* sometimes possible:

*a half-holiday a half-portion a halr-share*

With *1/3, 1/4, 1/5* etc. **A** is usual: *a third, a quarter* etc., but **one** is also possible.

In expressions of price, speed, ratio etc.:

*5p a kilo 1 a metre sixty kilometres an hour*

*10p dozen four times a day* (Here *a/an* = *per.*)

In exclamations before singular, countable nouns:

*Such a long queue! What a pretty girl!*

*Such long queues! What pretty girls!*

(Plural nouns, so no article.)

*a* can be placed before *Mr/Mrs/Miss + surname*:

*a Mr Smith a Mrs Smith a Miss Smith*

*a Mr Smith* means 'a man called Smith' and implies that he is a stranger to the speaker. *Mr Smith*, without *a*, implies that the speaker knows Mr Smith or knows of his existence.

a/an is omitted:

Before plural nouns.

a/an has no plural form. So the plural of *a dog* is *dogs*, and of *an egg* IS *eggs*.

- Before uncountable nouns

- Before names of meals, except when these are preceded by an adjective:

*We have breakfast at eight.*

*He gave us a good breakfast.*

The article is also used when it is a special meal given to celebrate something or in someone's honour:

*I was invited to dinner* (at their house, in the ordinary way)

but *I was invited to a dinner given to welcome the new ambassador.*

a little/little and little/few.

A) a little/little (adjectives) are used before uncountable nouns:

*a little salt/little salt*

a few/few (adjectives) are used before plural nouns:

*a few people/few people*

All four forms can also be used as pronouns, either alone or with *of*:

*Sugar? - A little, please.*

*Only a few of these are any good.*

B) a little, a few (adjectives and pronouns)

*a little* as a small amount, or what the speaker considers a small amount. *a few* is a small number, or what the speaker considers a small number.

only placed before a little/a few emphasises that the number or amount really is small in the speaker's opinion:

*Only a few of our customers have accounts.*

But quite placed before a few increases the number considerably:

*I have quite a few books on art.* (quite a lot of books)

C) little and few (adjectives and pronouns)

little and few denote scarcity or lack and have almost the force of a negative:

*There was little time for consultation.*

*Little is known about the side-effects of this drug.*

*Few towns have such splendid trees.*

This use of little and few is mainly confined to written English (probably because in conversation *little* and *few* might easily be mistaken for a little/a few). In conversation, therefore, little and few are normally replaced by hardly any. A negative verb + much/many is also possible:



*This is my uncle. (NOT ...the my uncle.)*

*I like this beer. (NOT ...the this beer.)*

The formal markers of indirect anaphora are connected with the category of definiteness. The reason is that the speaker marks the object as definite if he or she considers the listener to be able to identify its referent by explicit or implicit reference. There are two ways to express the definiteness in English: the definite articles and the demonstrative pronouns. Let us consider more examples; impossible variants are marked with “not”:

*I bought a house. The(not This) kitchen (roof, walls) was extremely large.*

*I bought a house. The(not These) dimensions were 20 × 20.*

*I bought a house. The(not These) previous owner was happy.*

*I was buying a house. I counted the(not These) money carefully.*

*I sold a house. What can I do with the/this money?*

*I bought a house. I liked the/this price.*

*John was eating. The(not These) table was dirty.*

*John was eating. It was dark in the(not These) forest.*

*John was eating. The/This food was delicious.*

*John was eating. The/These apples were delicious.*

*John was singing. The/This noise disturbed Peter.*

*John was singing. Peter disliked the/this noise.*

*John was reading. He liked the/this author.*

*John died. The(not These) widow was mad with grief.*

We do not usually use *the* with proper names.

*Mary lives in Switzerland. (NOT The Mary lives in the Switzerland. )*

We do not usually use *the* to talk about things in general – *the* does not mean 'all'.

*Books are expensive. (NOT The books are expensive.)*

3. The definite article is used:

a) When the object or group of objects is unique or considered to be unique:

*the earth the sea the sky the equator the stars*

b) Before a *noun* which has become definite as a result of being mentioned a second time:

*His car struck a tree; you can still see the mark on the tree.*

c) Before a *noun* made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause:

*the girl in blue*

*the boy that I met*

*the man with the banner the place where I met him*

d) Before a *noun* which by reason of locality can represent only one particular thing:

*Ann is in the garden. (the garden of this house)*

*Please pass the wine. (the wine on the table)*

Similarly: *the postman* (the one who comes to us), *the car* (our car), *the newspaper* (the one we read).

e) Before superlatives and *first, second* etc. used as adjectives or pronouns, and *only*:

*the first (week) the best day the only way*

4. the + singular *noun* can represent a class of animals or things:

*The whale is in danger of becoming extinct.*

*The deep-freeze has made life easier for housewives.*

But *man*, used to represent the human race, has no article:

*If oil supplies run out, man may have to fall back on the horse.*

*the* can be used before a member of a certain *group* of people:

*The small shopkeeper is finding life increasingly difficult.*

the + singular *noun* as used above takes a singular verb. The pronoun is he, she or it:

*The first-class traveller pays more so he expects some comfort.*

5. the + adjective represents a class of persons:

*the old* = old people in general

The difference between *a/an* and *the* is explained very simply:

*a/an* just means 'one of a class'

*the* means 'you know exactly which one'

*A doctor must like people. (any doctor, any one of that profession)*

*My brother's a doctor. (one of that profession)*

*I'm going to see the doctor. (you know which one: my doctor)*

*I live in a small flat at the top of an old house near the town hall. (a small*

*flat*: there are might be two or three at the top of the house - it could be any one of these.

*an old house*: there are lots near the town hall - it could be any one.

*the top*: we know which top: it's the top of the house where the person lives - a house only has one top.

*the town hall*: we know exactly which town hall is meant: there' s only one in the town.

Form the is the same for the singular and plural and for all genders:

*the girl - the girls, the boy - the boys, the day the days*

We do not use *the* with uncountable or plural nouns to talk about things in general - to talk about all books, all people or all live, for example. *The* never means 'all'. Let's compare:

*Did you remember to buy the books? (particular\_books which I asked to buy)*

*Books are expensive.*

(NOT *The books are expensive.* We are talking about books in general all books.).

*I'm studying the life of Beethoven.*

*(one particular life)*

*Life is hard.* (NOT *The life*.....This means 'all life'.)

*'Where's the cheese? - 'I ate it'*

*Cheese is made from milk.*

*Could you put the light on?*

*Light travels at 300,000 km a second*

Sometimes we talk about things in general by using a singular noun as an example. We use *a/an* with the noun (meaning 'any').

*A baby deer can stand as soon as it is born.*

*A child needs plenty of love.*

We can also use *the* with a singular countable noun in generalizations (but not with plural or uncountable nouns). This is common with the names of scientific instruments and inventions, and musical instruments.

*Life would be quieter without the telephone.*

*The violin is more difficult than the piano.*

These common expressions have a general meaning: the town, *the country*, *the sea*, *the seaside*, *the mountains*, *the rain*, *the wind*, *the sun* (*shine*).

*I prefer the mountains to the sea.*

*I hate the rain.*

*Would you rather live in the town or the country?*

*We usually go to the seaside for our holidays.*

*I like lying in the sun(shine). I like the noise of the wind.*

Common expressions without articles.

Articles are not used in these expressions:

*to school at school from school to/at/from university/ college  
to/at/in/into/from church to/in/into/out of bed/prison/hospital to/at/from work  
to/at sea to/in/from town at/from home*

*for/at/to breakfast/lunch!dinner/supper at night by  
car/bus/bicycle/plane/train/tube/boat on foot go to sleep watch  
television(TV) on TV.*

all and both.

We sometimes leave out *the* after *both*, and after *all* when there is a number.

*Both (the) children are good at maths.*

*All (the) eight students passed the exam.*

We can say *all day, all night, all week, all summer/winter, all year*, without *the*.

*I've been waiting for you all day.*

Place-names.

We usually use *the* with these kinds of place-names:

seas (*the Atlantic*)

mountain groups (*the Himalayas*)

island groups (*the West Indies*)

rivers (*the Rhine*)

deserts (*the Sahara*)

hotels (*the Grand Hotel!*)

cinemas and theatres (*the Odeon, the Playhouse*) museums and art galleries  
(*the British Museum, the Tate*)

We usually use no article with:

continents, countries, states, counties, departments etc (*Africa, Brazil, Texas, Berkshire, Westphalia*)

towns (*Oxford*)

streets (*New Street*)

lakes (*Lake Michigan*)

Exceptions: countries whose names contain a common noun like *republic, state(s), union* (*the People's Republic of China, the USA*). Note also *the Netherlands*, and its seat of government *the Hague*.

We do not usually use *the* with names of the principal buildings of a town.

*Oxford University* (NOT *the Oxford University*)

*Oxford Station* (NOT *the Oxford Station*)

*Salisbury Cathedral*

*Birmingham Airport*

*Bristol Zoo*

Names of single mountains vary - some have articles, some do not.

#### 4. Newspapers.

The names of newspapers usually have *the*.

*The Times*

*The Washington Post*

Most names of magazines do not have *the*.

*Punch*

*New Scientist*

Special styles.

We leave out articles in some special ways of writing.

newspaper headlines *MAN KILLED ON MOUNTAIN*

notices, posters etc

*SUPER CINEMA, RITZ HOTEL*

telegrams

*WIFE ILL MUST CANCEL TODAY*

instructions

*Open packet at other end*

dictionary entries *palm inner surface of band between wrist and fingers*

lists *take car to garage; buy buttons, pay phone bill*

notes *J. thinks company needs new office*

The definite article is not used:

a/ Before names of places except as shown above, or before names of people.

b/ Before abstract nouns except when they are used in a particular sense:

*Men fear death* but

*The death of the Prime Minister left his party without a leader.*

c/ After a noun in the possessive case, or a possessive adjective:

*the boy's uncle = the uncle of the boy*

*It is my (blue) book = The (blue) book is mine.*

d/ Before names of meals:

*The Scots have porridge for breakfast* but

*The wedding breakfast was held in her father's house.*

e/ Before names of games: *He plays golf.*

f/ Before parts of the body and articles of clothing, as these normally prefer a possessive adjective:

*Raise your right hand. He took off his coat.*

But notice that sentences of the type:

*She seized the child's collar.*

*I patted his shoulder.*

*The brick hit John's face.*

Similarly in the passive:

*He was hit on the head.*

*Уни бошца уришди.*

*He was cut in the hand.*

*Уни ?ўли кесилди.*

2. Note that in some European languages the definite article is used before indefinite plural nouns but that in English the is never used in this way:

*Women are expected to like babies.* (i.e. women in general)

*Big hotels all over the world are very much the same.*

If we put *the* before *women* in the first example, it would mean that we were referring to a particular group of women.

3. *nature*, where it means the spirit creating and motivating the world of plants and animals etc., is used without *the*:

*If you interfere with nature you will suffer for it.*

When *home* is preceded or followed by a descriptive word or phrase it is treated like any other noun:

*They went to their new home.*

*We arrived at the bride's home.*

*For some years this was the home of your queen.*

bed, church, court, hospital, prison, school/college/university

*the* is not used before the nouns listed above when these places are visited or used for their primary purpose. We go:

*to bed* to sleep or as invalids

*to hospital* as patients

*to church* to pray

*to prison* as prisoners

*to school/college/university* to study

*to court* as litigants etc.

Similarly we can be:

*in bed*, sleeping or resting

*at church* as worshipper

*in hospital* as patients

*at school* etc. as students

*in court* as witnesses etc.

We can be/get back (or be/get home) from *school/college/university*. We can *leave school*, *leave hospital*, be released *from prison*.

When these places are visited or used for other reasons *the* is necessary:

*He goes to the prison sometimes to give lectures.*

### 3. sea

We go *to sea* as sailors. To be *at sea* = to be on a voyage (as passengers or crew). But to go *to* or be *at the sea* = to go *to* or be *at the seaside*. We can also live *by/near the sea*.

### 4. work and office

*work* (= place of work) is used without the:

*He's on his way to work.*                      *He is at work.*

*He isn't back from work yet.*

Note that *at work* can also mean "working"; *hard at work* = working hard:

*He 's hard at work on a new picture.*

*office* (= place of work) needs the: *He is at/in the office.*

To be *in office* (without the) means to hold an official (usually political) position. To be *out of office* = to be no longer in power.

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