

حَوَالِيَات مَكْتَبَةِ الْآدَابِ

تصدر عن كلية الآداب - جامعة الكويت

الرسالة السابعة
في اللغة

تحليل أخطاء الطلبة العرب في استعمال
أدوات التعريف والتشكيك الانجليزية

د. نايف نمر حرمنا

قسم اللغة الانجليزية - جامعة الكويت

المجلد الثاني ، ١٩٨١ - ١٤٠٠ هـ

طبعة ثانية منقحة

١٩٨٧



حَلْوُ اللَّيَالِي مَكْتَبَةُ الْآذَانِ



تَصْنَدُ رَعْنُ كَلْيَةِ الْآذَانِ - جَامِعَةُ الْكُوَيْتِ

رَئِيسُ التَّحْرِيرِ: د. جَلْدُونُ جَبْرِ النَّقِيبِ
مَدِيرُ التَّحْرِيرِ: عَبْدُ لَعِزِّزِ السَّيِّدِ أَحْمَدُ
سَكْرَتِيْرُ التَّحْرِيرِ: مُحَمَّدُ بَرْكَاتُ

هَيْئَةُ التَّحْرِيرِ

د. رَشَاحُودُ الصَّبَّاحِ د. عَبْدُ الرَّسُولِ الْمَوْسَى
أ. د. سَعْدُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ د. عَبْدُ اللَّهِ أَحْمَدُ الْمَهْمَنُ
أ. د. شَاكِرُ مَصْطَفَى د. عَبْدُ الْمَالِكِ الْمَبْعِي
د. شَفِيقَةُ بَسْتَكِي د. فَهْدُ ثَابِقُ الثَّاقِبِ

نَمُنُ الرِّسَالَةَ

الْكُوَيْتِ ٤٠٠ فلس - الْبَحْرَيْنِ نَصْفُ دِينَارٍ - قَطَرْ ٥ رِيَالٍ - الْإِمَارَاتِ ٥ دِرَاهِمٍ - السُّعُودِيَّةِ ٥ رِيَالٍ
عَمَانُ نَصْفُ رِيَالٍ - الْيَمَنُ الْجَنُوبِي ٢٠٠ فلس - الْيَمَنُ الشَّمَالِي ٣ رِيَالٍ - الْمَرْقَا ٤٠٠ فلس
ج. م. ع. ٢٥٠ قرشاً - لُبْنَانُ ٥ لِيرَاتٍ - الْأُرْدُنُ ٢٥٠ فلساً - سُوْرِيَا ٥ لِيرَاتٍ - السُّودَانُ ٢٥٠ مَلِيْمَا
لِيْبِيَا ٤٠ قرشاً - الْجَزَائِرُ ٥ دِينَارٍ - تُونِسُ ٤٠٠ مَلِيْمٍ - الْمَغْرِبُ ٥ دِرَاهِمٍ .

نَمُنُ الْهَوْلِيَّةِ السَّنَوِيَّةِ

لِلْأَفْرَادِ دِينَارَانِ كُوَيْتِيَانِ فِي الْكُوَيْتِ - دِينَارَانِ وَخَمْسَمِائَةِ فِلَسٍ فِي الْوَطَنِ الْمَرْبِيِّ - عَشْرُونَ دُولَارَا
أَمْرِيكَا فِي الْخَارِجِ بِالْبَرِيدِ الْجَوِيِّ .
لِلشَّرَكَاتِ وَالْمُؤَسَّسَاتِ وَالْحَوَائِثِ الرَّسْمِيَّةِ عَشْرُ دِينَارٍ كُوَيْتِيَّةٍ - فِي الْخَارِجِ أَرْبَعُونَ دُولَارَا أَمْرِيكَا .

لِأَعْضَاءِ هَيْئَةِ التَّدْرِيسِ وَالطَّلَابِ خَصْمٌ ٥٠٪

جَمِيعُ الْمُرَاسَلَاتِ الْخَاصَّةِ بِشُرُوطِ النِّشْرِ أَوْ آيَةِ اسْتِغْفَارَاتٍ أُخْرَى بِشَانِ الْهَوْلِيَّاتِ تُوجَّهُ إِلَى :

رَئِيسُ تَحْرِيرِ الْهَوْلِيَّاتِ م. ب. : ٣٦٥٨٥ الصَّفَاةُ - الْكُوَيْتِ

حوليات كلية الآداب

تصدر عن كلية الآداب - جامعة الكويت
المحلية الثانية ، ١٩٨١ - ١٤٠٠ هـ

الرسالة السابعة
في اللغة

تحليل أخطاء الطلبة العرب في استعمال
أدوات التعريف والتشكيك بالإنجليزية

د. نايف نمر حرمنا

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية - جامعة الكويت

صدر من هذه الحولية الحولية الاولى

الرسالة الاولى (في الفلسفة)

الجذور الفلسفية للبنائية

د . فؤاد زكريا
قسم الفلسفة

الرسالة الثانية (في التاريخ)

صفحات مجهولة من تاريخ ليبيا

د . محمد صالحية

الرسالة الثالثة (في الأدب)

ابن قلاؤس (حياته وشعره)

د . سهام الفريح

الرسالة الرابعة (في التاريخ)

الامر تتركز الحسامي

د . حياة الحجري

الرسالة الخامسة (في الاجتماع)

دراسات اولية في النظام الطبقي في المجتمعات العربية

د . خلدون النقيب

الحولية الثانية

الرسالة السادسة (في الأدب)

علي أحمد باكثير شاعرا غنائيا

د . عبده بدوي
قسم اللغة العربية

- Unpublished **Ph. D. Dissertation, Given by the University of Texas at Austin.** University of Texas at Austin, 1972.
- Willcott, Paul. «Problems of Definiteness in the Written English of Arabic Speakers» in **English Language Teaching Journal**, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, Oct. 1978, PP. 67-73.
- Wright, W. **A Grammar of the Arabic Language.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951 and later editions.

REFERENCES

- Abdo, Daud . **Studies in Arabic Linguistics (Arabic)**. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1973.
- Allen & McNeal. **Progressive Living English for the Arab World**, books 1 - 4. England: Longman, several impressions.
- Allen W.S. **Living English Secondary Course, books 1 - 4**. England: Longman, Several Impressions.
- Arabski, J. «Contrastive Studies and Inter-Language» in **Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics**, (Poland, Poznan) Vol. 10, 1979, PP. 135-143.
- Bakalla, M.H. **Bibliography of Arabic Linguistics**. U.K.: Mansell, 1975
- Bloor, M. et al. **Objective Tests in English as a Foreign Language**. U.K.: Macmillan, 1975.
- Drozdk, L. «Generic Definiteness in Arabic», in **ZFFUK** 2(1970), PP. 177-190.
- Drozdk, L. «Hypothesis of a Transition Value of Definiteness in Arabic», in **AAS** 5 (1969), PP. 39 - 48.
- Drozdk, L. «Definiteness Patterning in Arabic» in **AAS** 6(1970), PP. 9 - 49.
- Hassan, Abbas. **Al-Nahw Al Wafi** (in Arabic). Cario: Dar al-Maarif, 1970.
- James, Carl. **Contrastive Analysis**. England: Longman, 1980.
- Nehls, D. (ed). **Studies in Contrastive Linguistics and Error Analysis**. Vol. 1, Heidelberg; Julius Gross Verlag, 1978.
- Nehls, D. (ed.). **Studies in Language Acquisition**. Heidelberg: Julius Gross Verlag, 1980.
- Qafisheh, Hamdi Ahmed. **English Pre-nominal modifiers and corresponding Modern Standard Structures: A Contrastive Study**.
Unpublished **Ph.D. Dissertation**, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1968.
- Quirk, et al. **A Grammar of Contemporary English**. England: Longman 1972.
- Richards, J. (ed): **Error Analysis**, England: Longman, 1974
- Willcott, Paul. **An Analysis of the Written English of Native Speakers of Arabic as Found in American History Final Examinations**.

APPENDIX — VIII
ERROR ANALYSIS (DENSITY SCALE)

University Students (English Dept.)
No. of Students: 128

Class: 4th
No. of Test Item: 40

Boys/Girls: B. 41 + G. 87
Average Grade 71.2%

Sr. No. No.	Item No. No.	Correct Answers Answers	Remarks	Kind of Mistake and No. of Students Making it					
				a	an	the	No. articl?	Total errors	%
TOP TEN									
1	2	No art.	a = 5 No art = 4.	110	0	7	—	117	91.4
2	39	No art.		104	0	9	—	113	88.3
3	38	a		—	0	43	50	93	72.7
4	27	a	the = 1.	—	0	46	42	88	68.8
5	11	No art.		1	7	73	—	81	63.3
6	40	a		—	0	73	7	80	62.5
7	15	a		—	0	74	3	77	60.2
8	13	the		53	—	—	0	53	41.4
9	35	No article		25	1	26	—	52	40.6
10	5	a		—	0	18	31	49	38.3
BOTTOM TEN									
1	3	the	the = 6. a = 3.	0	0	—	1	1	0.8
2	23	the		0	0	—	2	2	1.6
3	21	No art.		3	0	1	—	4	3.1
4	14	the		2	0	—	2	4	3.1
5	9	the	No art = 1.	0	3	—	4	7	5.5
6	19	the		8	0	—	1	9	7.0
7	33	the		1	0	—	8	9	7.0
8	7	a		—	1	2	8	11	8.6
9	8	a		—	1	6	4	11	8.6
10	36	a		—	0	5	8	13	10.2

APPENDIX — VII

ERROR ANALYSIS

School: University / English Dept.
No. of Sts. 128

Class: 3rd and 4th
No. of Test items: 40

Boys / Girls: 41 + 87
Aver. Grade: 71.2%

Item No.	Correct Answer	Kind of mistake and No. of students making it					
		a	an	the	—	total wrong	%
1	—	13	0	21	—	34	26.6
2	—	110	0	7	—	117	91.4
3	the	0	0	—	1	1	0.8
4	—	14	2	25	—	41	32.0
5	a	—	0	18	31	49	38.3
6	—	30	0	9	—	39	30.5
7	a	—	1	2	8	11	8.6
8	a	—	1	6	4	11	8.6
9	the	0	3	—	4	7	5.5
10	—	1	0	30	—	31	24.2
11	—	1	7	73	—	81	63.3
12	—	0	16	18	—	34	26.6
13	the	53	0	—	0	53	41.4
14	the	2	0	—	2	4	3.1
15	a	—	0	74	3	77	60.2
16	—	2	0	18	—	20	15.6
17	—	1	0	23	—	24	18.8
18	—	0	0	48	—	48	37.5
19	the	8	0	—	1	9	7.0
20	a	—	0	18	13	31	24.2
21	—	3	0	1	—	4	3.1
22	the	1	0	—	15	16	12.5
23	the	0	0	—	2	2	1.6
24	the	1	26	—	3	30	23.4
25	—	2	0	19	—	21	16.4
26	a	—	0	46	42	88	68.8
27	—	1	31	1	—	33	25.8
28	a	—	1	12	18	31	24.2
29	—	4	19	14	—	37	28.9
30	—	1	8	12	—	21	16.4
31	—	2	0	25	—	27	21.1
32	—	0	0	25	—	25	19.5
33	the	1	0	—	8	9	7.0
34	the	3	0	—	44	47	36.7
35	—	25	1	26	—	52	40.6
36	a	—	0	5	8	13	10.2
37	the	0	24	—	2	26	20.3
38	a	—	0	43	50	93	72.7
39	a	104	0	9	—	113	88.3
40	a	—	0	73	7	80	62.5

APPENDIX VI

TERTIARY LEVEL TEST

On your answer sheet write the missing (a, an, or the) next to the number of the space in the passage. If no word is needed put a dash (—).

Example:

When he was (1) boy, he wanted to become (2) doctor, but he didn't have (3) necessary intelligence.

Answers: 1. a 2. a 3. the

I. Michael Faraday was one of those remarkable men who begin (1) — life in (2) — very modest circumstances and yet reach (3) — top of their profession through (4) — determination and (5) — certain amount of (6) — good luck. Although he began his career as (7) — poorly educated bookbinder, he became internationally known as (8) — scientist before he reached (9) — age of thirty. He devoted (10) — part life to (11) — experiments with (12) — electricity. He was (13) — man who invented (14) — first dynamo as well as (15) — type of

transformer.

II. Before (16) — money was thought of (17) — men exchanged (18) — goods. This was not (19) — best system as (20) — person might not easily find (21) — somebody who wanted what he had and could offer something acceptable in exchange. It is thought that (22) — first money consisted of cowrie shells, which are found in many parts of (23) — world. It was in China that (24) — idea of using (25) — coin first arose. In Ancient Greece (26) — coin was worth for (27) — example, (28) — certain number of (29) — oxen or (30) — olives and could not be used to buy anything else. In time, (31) — gold and, (32) — silver were used since these are among (33) — most rare metals, but (34) — money which we use nowadays is mostly (35) — paper notes. For (36) — long time now (37) — actual value of (38) — coin has borne (39) — little relation to what one can get for it, and (40) — paper note is practically worthless in itself.

APPENDIX — V (cont'd.)
Error Analysis (Density Scale)

School: Secondary
 No. of Sts. 1370

Class 4th
 No. of Test Items: 50

Boys/Girls: B/780 + G/590
 Aver. Grade: 60.8 %

Sr. No.	Items No.	Correct Answers	Remarks	Kind of mistake and No. of students making it					
				a	an	the	No. Art.	Total	%
26	7	the		211	47	—	268	526	38.4
27	9	a		—	30	395	100	525	38.3
28	2	No. Art.		232	41	246	—	519	37.9
29	15	a		—	88	72	291	451	32.9
30	25	No. Art.		233	32	380	—	445	32.5
31	27	the		281	11	—	52	443	32.3
32	43	a		—	37	191	180	408	29.8
33	41			—	30	102	251	383	28.0
34	39	the		246	8	—	90	344	25.1
35	6	a		—	48	160	120	328	23.9
36	40	No Art.		105	105	12	208	—	325
23.7									
37	8	the		210	10	—	90	310	22.6
38	11	the		162	9	—	137	308	22.5
39	20	the		98	—	—	204	302	22.0
40	42	a		—	40	113	132	285	20.8
41	48	the	Bottom Ten	103	38	—	130	271	19.8
42	13	an	0: no	23	—	76	168	267	19.5
43	14	the	article	190	—	—	71	261	19.1
44	21	the	3: a/an	210	—	—	43	253	18.5
45	4	the	7: the	182	10	—	60	252	18.4
46	19	a		—	20	101	104	225	16.4
47	31	the		101	—	—	100	201	14.7
48	37	the		133	37	—	26	195	14.2
49	12	a		—	20	11	102	133	9.7
50	1	the		31	—	—	59	90	6.6

APPENDIX — V
Error Analysis (Density Scale)

School: Secondary
No. of Sts. 1370

Class: 4th
No. of Test Items: 50

Boys/Girls: B/780 + G/590
Average Grade :60.8%

Ser. No.	Item No.	Correct Answer	Remarks	Kind of mistake and No. of students making it					
				a	an	the	No Art.	Total Errors	%
1	32	the	Top Ten 7: no article 2: a/an 1: the	22	413	—	490	925	67.5
2	47	a		—	120	527	371	918	67.0
3	18	an		163	—	329	401	893	65.2
4	26	No Art.		210	21	658	—	889	64.8
5	46	No Art.		99	23	748	—	870	63.5
6	34	No. Art.		160	35	671	—	866	63.2
7	45	No. Art.		181	22	643	—	846	61.8
8	17	No. Art.		319	70	453	—	842	61.5
9	16	No. Art.		192	59	584	—	835	60.9
10	23	No. Art.		403	56	282	—	741	54.1
11	36	The		228	25	—	475	728	53.1
12	30	a		—	91	302	334	727	53.1
13	35	No Art.		312	253	150	—	715	52.2
14	33	the		68	288	—	352	708	51.1
15	5	the		300	61	—	342	703	51.1
16	28	the		260	40	—	358	658	48.0
17	22	a		—	81	132	438	651	47.5
18	10	an		61	—	182	375	618	45.0
19	3	a		—	28	488	85	601	43.9
20	24	a		—	40	313	217	570	41.6
21	50	No Art.		246	51	264	—	561	40.9
22	49	the		90	63	—	402	555	40.5
23	29	a		—	41	105	406	552	40.3
24	38	the		390	55	—	106	551	40.2
25	44	the		90	108	—	352	550	40.1

APPENDIX — IV ERROR ANALYSIS

SCHOOL: SECONDARY
NO. OF STUDENTS: 1370

CLASS: 4TH
NO. OF TEST ITEMS: 50

BOYS/GIRLS: B/780 + G/590
AVER. GRADE % : 60.8 %

Item No.	Correct Answer	Kind of mistake and No. of students making it					
		a	an	the	No Art.	Total errors	%
1	the	31	00	—	59	90	6.6
2	No article	232	41	246	—	519	37.9
3	a	—	28	488	85	601	43.9
4	the	182	10	—	60	252	18.4
5	the	300	61	—	342	703	51.3
6	a	—	48	160	120	328	23.9
7	the	211	47	—	268	526	38.4
8	the	210	10	—	90	310	22.6
9	a	—	30	395	100	525	38.3
10	an	61	—	182	375	618	45.0
11	the	162	9	—	137	308	22.5
12	a	—	20	11	102	133	9.7
13	an	23	—	76	168	267	19.5
14	the	190	00	—	168	267	19.5
15	a	—	88	72	291	451	32.9
16	No article	192	59	584	—	835	60.9
17	No article	319	70	453	—	842	61.5
18	an	163	—	329	401	893	65.2
19	a	—	20	101	104	225	16.4
20	the	98	00	—	204	302	22.0
21	the	210	00	—	43	253	18.5
22	a	—	81	132	438	651	47.5
23	No article	403	56	282	—	741	54.1
24	a	—	40	313	217	570	41.6
25	No article	233	32	380	—	445	32.5
26	No article	210	21	658	—	889	64.8
27	the	281	11	—	52	443	32.3
28	the	260	40	—	358	658	48.0
29	a	—	41	105	406	552	40.3
30	a	—	91	302	334	727	53.1
31	the	101	00	—	100	201	14.7
32	the	22	413	—	490	925	67.5
33	the	68	288	—	352	708	51.1
34	No article	160	35	671	—	866	63.2
35	No article	312	253	150	—	715	52.2
36	the	228	25	—	475	728	53.1
37	the	133	37	—	25	195	14.2
38	the	390	55	—	106	551	40.2
39	the	246	8	—	90	344	25.1
40	No article	105	12	208	—	325	23.7
41	a	—	30	102	251	383	28.0
42	a	—	40	113	132	285	20.8
43	a	—	37	191	180	408	29.8
44	the	90	108	—	352	550	40.1
45	No article	181	22	643	—	846	61.8
46	No article	99	23	748	—	870	63.5
47	a	—	120	527	371	918	67.0
48	the	103	38	—	130	271	19.8
49	the	90	63	—	402	555	40.5
50	No article	246	51	264	—	561	40.9

APPENDIX III

SECONDARY LEVEL - Test

On your answer sheet write the missing word (a), (an), or (the) next to the number of the space in the passage. If no word is needed, put a dash (—).

Example:

Unfortunately (1) apples we bought (2) yesterday are rotten already. I never thought (3) trader we bought them from was (4) dishonest man.

Answer:

1. the 2. — 3. the 4. a.

When the family and I moved to (1)... south of (2)... Wales I wanted to rent (3)... house near (4)... River Neath in (5)... Black Mountains, and went to look at one I knew which had (6)... big garden. I knocked on (7)... front door of (8)... house and (9)... man came out followed by (10)... unfriendly-looking dog. The man offered to show me over (11)... house. It had (12)... lot of rooms, and it took over (13)... hour to see them all. Then we went into (14)... garden. There was (15)... tennis court marked out for (16)... tennis and (17)... badminton, and (18)... orchard with (19)... few old apple trees.

At (20)... back of (21)... house was (22)... spring of (23)... fresh water and (24)... pool full of (25)... frogs.

By (26)... midday, I had seen everything and I asked (27)... man what (28)... rent was. He said it was twenty pounds (29)... month, and that as (30)... certain Mrs James had looked at (31)... house (32) the evening before and said she was interested in it, I had better decide quickly. I thanked him for (33)... advice and left.

I went to (34)... bed that night still undecided and lay awake (35)... half (36) ... night. Finally I decided to go early in (37)... morning and take (38)... house, and I immediately fell asleep.

The next day, which was (39)... second of (40)... May, I took the house and we moved in after (41)... week. In (42)... few months, I'm proud to say I had learned (43)... little of (44)... Welsh language. I found (45)... most people in (46)... South Wales very friendly and my stay was (47)... most interesting one. By (48)... time we left, (49)... two youngest of my children could speak (50)... Welsh almost as well as their own language.

APPENDIX — II
CLASSIFICATION OF FIRST LEVEL TEST
SUMMARY

SCHOOLS: INTERMEDIATE.

CLASS: 4TH INTERMEDIATE.

BOYS / GIRLS: b/560
g/400

No. OF STS: 960.

NO. OF TEST ITEMS: 40.

AVER. GRADE %: 84%

Item No.	Correct Answer	Kind of mistake and No. of students making it					
		a	an	the	—	Total wrong	%
1	a	—	—	90	20	110	11.5
2	a	—	20	359	31	410	42.7
3	the	221	11	—	60	292	30.4
4	the	180	51	—	40	271	28.1
5	a	—	41	110	218	369	38.5
6	—	111	52	321	—	484	50.4
7	the	271	52	—	32	355	37.0
8	the	9	281	—	120	410	42.7
9	the	341	20	—	52	413	43.0
10	—	599	90	32	—	721	75.0
11	a	—	50	251	311	612	63.7
12	the	390	81	—	79	550	57.3
13	an	61	—	142	81	284	29.6
14	—	132	59	629	—	720	75.0
15	an	168	—	85	175	428	45.6
16	a	—	86	224	68	378	39.4
17	the	72	11	—	26	109	11.4
18	the	199	71	—	104	374	39.0
19	the	269	60	168	—	497	51.8
20	—	410	69	210	—	689	71.8
21	—	341	58	392	—	791	82.4
22	—	301	38	459	—	798	83.1
23	the	298	81	—	70	449	46.8
24	an	101	—	222	67	390	40.6
25	—	161	201	249	—	611	63.6
26	a	—	34	330	66	430	44.8
27	a	—	—	398	103	501	52.2
28	—	312	68	340	—	720	75.0
29	the	201	70	—	251	522	54.4
30	an	101	—	170	89	360	37.5
31	—	431	60	356	—	847	88.2
32	—	182	102	231	—	515	53.6
33	the	302	17	—	51	370	38.5
34	the	281	62	—	120	563	58.6
35	a	—	9	239	50	298	31.0
36	the	312	46	—	92	450	46.9
37	an	40	—	262	179	481	50.0
38	a	—	31	272	160	463	48.2
39	—	391	90	298	—	779	81.1
40	the	56	495	—	30	581	60.5

PASSAGE TWO

When Ali was still (26).... school-boy, he wanted to become (27)... teacher. He was very interested in (28)... history and wanted to study (29)... history of his own country and then teach it. His father, who was not (30)... educated man, wanted him to study (31)... medicine and earn (32)... more money than (33) ... teacher. Even

(34)... headmaster of his school did not encourage him. It was (35)... man in Ali's village who persuaded him not to give up (36)... plan. This old man spent nearly all his time reading history books, and Ali spent (37)... evening (38)... week at his house during school holidays writing (39)... long stories about what (40)... old man told him of fifty years before.

APPENDIX I
PRIMARY LEVEL - TEST

On your answer sheet write one of the three words, «a, an/or/the» next to the number of each space in the passage. If no word is needed, put a dash (-).

Example:

I told him (1) only letter I received (2) day before was from (3) old friend of mine. It had been posted (4) two days before.

Answer:

1. the 2. the 3. an 4. —

PASSAGE ONE

When I was (1)... little boy, I lived in (2)... village in (3)... country. (4)... village was not (5)... large one, but (6)...many interesting people live there. (7)... man I liked best was Mr Obi He was (8)... only teacher in (9)... village. His school

was (10)... small and had two classrooms and (11).... bathroom. The classrooms had been there when Mr. Obi first arrived, but he had built (12)... bathroom himself. He was (13)... energetic man who was very interested in (14)... cleanliness. Although he had (15)... ugly face, he wore (16)... beautiful red hat, and in (17)... morning he used to stand outside (18)... school building holding a piece of (19)... chalk and calling us. Inside the room were (20)... lots of pieces of (21)... red soap. Mr. Obi liked (22)... bright colours.

«Pick up (23) ... soap», he shouted. «Scrub yourselves. Clean boys are healthy boys and healthy boys work hard».

We all thought that this was (24) ... excellent piece of (25) ... advice.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING:

Those should be deduced from what has been said above and can be summarized in the following:

1. Definiteness / indefiniteness should be paid more attention in the formal teaching of Arabic grammar.
2. The same should be presented systematically when teaching English. The use of «no article» should be taught better and at the same footing as «the» and «a»; in fact it should be taught with more emphasis, at least to Arabic-speaking students, lest it should be equated with the use of «no article» in Arabic.

In this respect, the three articles should be presented not only in iso-

lated sentences, as it is often the case, but also, and indeed more importantly, in longer stretches of discourse.

3. When Arabic interference is seen to be the main cause of errors, it can be explained briefly to the students as they grow older and more proficient in English and Arabic, and as they become aware of the grammar of either language whether this is taught formally or functionally.
4. Regular mistakes committed must be collected by the teacher, their cause explained and a lot of situational and meaningful drilling conducted until the students overcome the difficulty involved.

nected writing which students carry out naturally without being aware of a particular grammatical point which they have to observe. Quite often in this kind of writing the content predominates the form and certain mistakes are committed which need not be made on a special test. Often also, the principle of AVOIDANCE plays an important role, whereby students avoid using what they are not certain about. Therefore, in examining connected writing, one should not depend too much - as Willcott did - on the FREQUENCY of errors committed, because it might be deceptive in giving the wrong impression that a particular mistake, because of its high frequency, is actually the most difficult. Thus the use of «the», which both Willcott and myself found to be the **most frequent** in the university students' connected writing, need not be the **most difficult** at all.

3. As has already been shown and mentioned in the conclusions given at the end of the two previous parts, many errors are due to Arabic interference, in fact a great number of them in the area under consideration. But it is not clear whether, even in those cases which are quite obvious, no other factors also play an important role.

4. The same remark made at the end of the previous part seems to apply to the whole study, although it is not as clear on the tertiary level test as on the two others. This is, in a nut-shell, the

fact that up-till now, EFL is generally being taught in our schools:

i) with emphasis on grammatical accuracy rather than on coherence in connected discourse,

ii) with great emphasis on the sentence (rather than the discourse) as the unit by means of which full meaning is expressed, and

iii) with very little opportunity to use the language in real-life situations in or out of school. (This is being changed now.)

5. Another possible reason why the use of the definite/indefinite tools in English is not usually mastered by Arab students right up to the top of their university career is that little attention is paid to this area in the teaching of Arabic grammar; it is usually hastily and formally introduced in primary school, and that takes care of the whole subject. This naturally reflects on the Arab teachers' as well as the students' attitude to the subject, especially as neither of them find any difficulty in indicating definiteness / indefiniteness in their spoken Arabic.

6. Finally, owing to the complexity of the subject and the rather conflicting results found by different people on different occasions, the writer believes that more research should be carried out in an area which has always proved to be of special difficulty to Arabicspeaking students.

Arabic discourse (see «Statement of the Problem» in part I above)

2. In the first part of this paper that deals with the primary level of ELT, the findings have demonstrated that the easiest article for our students to learn is «a/an». This is followed up the scale of difficulty by «the» (though rates are very near), and finally by **«no article» which apparently constitutes the greatest problem.**

In the second part dealing with the secondary stage, the pattern changes. The use of «no article» remains topmost on the scale of difficulty, but this is followed down the scale by «a/an», and finally by «the» (though again the last two seem comparatively equal in difficulty).

The tertiary level findings bring forth still another pattern with some radical change. «The» is now definitely the easiest to use; but the use of «no article» is no more the most difficult. Rather it is «a/an», followed by «no article» - rather a surprising finding not supported by findings from students' connected writings examined by the writer of

this paper, or those arrived at by Willcott (Willcott, 1972 and 1978) who comes up with a more surprising result, namely that «the» is the most difficult to use by university students, and moreover that the most common wrong substitute for it is «no article» (see Table X below for FREQUENCIES).

Thus we notice that we do not seem to have a regular systematic pattern for the frequency of difficulty in the use of the English articles by Arab students. This is, in the writer's opinion, due to various factors. Firstly, the learning stage which is being dealt with. Difficulties need not be the same in all stages. In our case we notice one important finding common to both the primary and the secondary stages, namely, that the major difficulty is the use of «no article», whereas the other two are not far apart on the scale of difficulty. This is a significant finding which can be strongly supported by the writer through his observation during his long career in E.L.T.

Secondly, we should distinguish between a diagnostic test, of whatever sort it may be, and the con-

TABLE — X

	a/an	No art.	the
Primary Level	41.1%	70.9%	42.4%
Secondary Level	36.6%	51.4%	31.7%
Tertiary Level	37.6%	32.9%	14.5%
Connected Writing	13%	37%	50%
Willcott	16%	22%	41%

when the plural noun is modified by one or more adjectives, as in item No.2 «in very modest circumstances» which is rendered in Arabic without any article: **fii duruuf mutawaaDi'ah jiddan**.

In the case of the English special use of «no article» in certain idiomatic phrases, the Arabic equivalent of the phrase might be a completely different structure, or it may be with or without any article; but the probability of interference in such cases is rather low. It is more a question of pedagogy than anything else.

(d) Detailed Analysis and Interpretation:

(i) With the first meaning of «no article», all the errors, except one, were committed by the use of «the», as anticipated through comparison with Arabic. In the only case in which «a» was used more frequently than «the» (i.e. item No.6: good luck) the cause is most probably due to the use of the expression in «football» without «the». Moreover, the Arabic equivalent of «luck» is very commonly used without the definite article.

(ii) with the second meaning, «the» has been, as expected, the mistake committed in all cases except the small numbers on items 29 and 35, and the very high number on No.2. As already explained above, in No.2, when the plural is modified by an adjective or more, as it is the case here, no article is

used in Arabic which means the use of «a/an» rather than «the». This is what happened here.

(iii) As for idiomatic uses, it is interesting to notice that the percentages of errors are quite low, except for No. 39. This No. 39 is a special case, where «a» or «no article» is related to «little» rather than to the noun «relation». This special use, with difference in meaning, is strictly English, and is, in fact, rarely mastered by our students if at all. The same applies even more to «few» and «a few» which are followed by plural nouns. In the case of perplexity, our students seem to have used the form nearest to Arabic where the equivalent of «little» does not take the definite article.

Conclusions of the whole study:

1. It has been proven without any doubt at all that the use of the English definite/indefinite articles is a serious source of difficulty to Arabic-speaking students. After 12 years of English language teaching and learning, the last 3-4 years spent in intensive study of English language and literature, our students score only as high as 71.2 % on a test which does not in fact incorporate some of the most difficult uses of those articles.

This is supported by a detailed study of the students' connected writing whether in the form of free composition or as translation of

TABLE — IX

No. of students: 128

(a) Correct Answer: No article

ERRORS						
Item No.	Meaning / Use	a/an	the	Total %	Most common error	% Remarks
1	(1) With non-count nouns	13	21	26.6	the	also: a/an = 12.5% also: a/an = 12.5%
4		16	25	32.0	the	
6		30	9	30.5	a/an	
12		16	18	26.5	the	
16		2	18	15.6	the	
31		2	25	21.1	the	
32		0	25	19.5	the	
2	(2) With plural nouns used generically or in a general sense	110	7	91.4	a/an	insignificant
11		8	73	63.3	the	
17		1	23	18.8	the	
18		0	48	37.5	the	
25		2	19	16.4	the	
29		23	14	28.9	a/an	
30		9	12	16.4	the	
35		26	26	40.6	both	
10	(3) In certain idiomatic Phrases	1	30	24.2	the	insignificant
21		3	1	3.1	a/an	
27		32	1	25.8	a/an	
39		104	9	88.3	a/an	
Overall mean:				32.9		27.3

III. The Use of «No Article» (See Table IX)

(a) General Remarks:

There is a very wide range of error-percentages on this group: from a minimum of 3.1 % to a maximum of 91.4 %, with an overall mean of 32.9 %. The majority, however, cluster around 15 - 40 % (15 out of 19 items). Only three items soar up to 36.3 %, 88.3 % and 91.4 %.

It is interesting, but rather surprising, to notice that the overall average of mistakes on the «no article» has, for the first time, fallen short of the average on the use of «a/an». In both the primary and the secondary levels the use of «no article» proved to be much more difficult than the other two. Not on this tertiary level, however. The use of «the» still remains the least difficult of all. A study of Appendix VIII supports our findings: Out of the top ten errors, five go to «a/an», and four only go to «no article», whereas out of the bottom ten, six go to «the», three to «a/an» and only one to «no article». The latter shows that the use of «no article» is still the least easy, but the former does not show that it is the most difficult, though it does show that it is still among the most difficult. The

two highest percentages (91.4 % and 88.3 %) are still the monopoly of «no article». At first sight, it may be attributed to the fact mentioned in the two earlier parts, namely that no article in Arabic comprises the two uses of «no article» + «a/an». We will discuss this last point in some detail below.

(b) The meanings/uses of no article as used in the Test:

The meanings of «no article» employed on this test are exactly the same as those used on the secondary level test (see table IX.). The only change here is the much greater number of instances in which «no article» occurs (47.5 % vs. 24 %). This was deliberate since the previous tests showed clearly that students found much more difficulty in using «no article» than in the use of the two other articles.

(c) Comparison with Arabic:

It has already been shown (see previous parts) that Arabic normally employs the definite article with the first two meanings, i.e. with non-count nouns, and with plurals used generically or in a general sense. This rule, however, has certain exceptions as, for instance,

nor the relative clause can modify it.

(d) Detailed Analysis and Interpretation:

(i) Contrary to Willcott's students' performance (Willcott, 1972 and 1978), our students have done so well on most items of this part of the test, that there is no point in conducting a detailed study of the very small number of errors made on those items.

(ii) In item 24, as expected from comparison with Arabic, a few errors (23.4 %) have been made, mostly by the use of «a/an».

No. 37, where very few errors should have been committed, comes as a surprise with some 20.3% of wrong usages. The only explanation which seems plausible is that the students have treated this example as an «of-construction», just like the other three, in which case no definite article is required.

(iii) As said earlier, the two other items, where the second new use is employed, should have caused no difficulty to the students. The equivalence of English and Arabic in the use of the definite article does not justify the high number of errors committed (41.4% and 36.7%). However, looking more closely at the two instances, gives us better

insight into the source of difficulty.

First, we notice that on item 13, most errors result from the use of «a/an», whereas most errors on item 34 result from the use of «no article». In the former case the noun «man», whereas in the latter the noun «value», is used. It seems clear that the factor causing the difficulty is not Arabic influence, but a very English one: the fact that «man» is a count-noun with which «a/an» is usually used, whereas «value» is a non-count noun which does not usually need any article.

Moreover, it seems also that this is a case of bad teaching techniques whereby students are taught the language, especially the grammatical part of it in **isolated sentences**, rather than as part of a **discourse**. In other words, the students see, or are taught to see, a unit on its own rather than as part of a larger stretch of language. In this way, they remain unaware of the meaning relations underlying cross-sentential use. Had the case been otherwise, the students should have noticed that in the former instance, the word «man» refers to a person that has often been mentioned before in the same paragraph, whereas in the second instance, the word «value» has also been preceded by similar words like «worth» and «rare metals».

previous (and current: see below) comparison with Arabic. The overall mean of errors did not exceed 14.5 %, and only on two items (Nos. 13 and 34: a new use) did it go beyond the 25 % point.

In three of the four cases where the percentage of errors exceeds 20 %, the mistake was the use of «a/an» instead of «the»; only in No. 34 was the most frequent mistake the use of «no article».

(b) Meanings/Uses of «the» employed in the Test:

Only three of the meanings used in the secondary level test were also employed in this test (see Table V, Nos. 1, 4 & 5 in the previous part, and compare them with Table VIII, Nos. 1, 4 and 5 in this part). Two additional and more advanced uses were introduced into the present test, namely Nos. 2 and 3 in Table VIII. These are:

- i) to particularize a noun followed by a defining prepositional phrase, as in Nos. 3, 9, 24 and 37; and
- ii) to particularize a noun followed by a defining relative clause as in Nos. 13 and 34.

(c) Comparison with Arabic:

Since this has already been done for the three meanings common to this and the previous test, which the students seem to have mastered at the tertiary level, we shall concern ourselves here only with the two other meanings mentioned in (b) above.

- (i) As for the first additional

meaning, we notice that the prepositional phrase used in the four cases (3, 9, 24 and 37) is the «of» phrase which is the equivalent of the genitive or «idaafa» in Arabic. Now in Arabic the first element of this genitive is almost always indefinite, i.e. with no article, often equated with English «a/an» but never with «the». The rationale behind this is that this element is going to be defined or particularized by the following element, which is usually definite; therefore, there is no need for an extra «the» or definite article. The last item, however, i.e. No. 37, is different. Because the first element (a noun) is modified by an adjective, the following construction changes from an «of phrase» into another kind of prepositional phrase, and in this case the way to define the noun is to use a definite article before both the noun and the modifier. Thus the phrase: «the actual value of a coin» is usually translated into Arabic by «alqiimah (i.e. the value) al haqiqiya / li-qit'at alnuquud...» But this does not preclude an Arabic equivalent with no definite article, just like the other three items, i.e. «qiimat (with no definite article) al-qit'ah al naqdiya alhaqiqiya....».

- (ii) The other new use should have caused no problem whatsoever, since a noun followed by a defining relative clause must be definite, otherwise neither the relative pronoun,

TABLE — VIII

No. of Students: 128

(b) Correct Answer: The

Item No.	Meaning / Use	ERRORS					Remarks
		a/an	No art.	Total %	Most Common Error	%	
23	(1) The only one: one of a kind	—	2	1.6	No article	1.6	insignificant
3	(2) Before a noun followed by a defining prepositional phrase = "a specific example".	—	1	0.8	No article	0.8	insignificant insignificant
9		3	4	5.5	No article	3.1	
24		26	3	23.4	a/an	20.3	
37		24	2	20.3	a/an	18.8	
13	(3) Before a noun that is particularized by a defining relative clause	53	—	41.4	a/an	41.4	
34		3	44	36.7	No article	34.4	
14	(4) Before ordinal Numbers	2	2	3.1	both	1.6	insignificant
22		1	15	12.5	No article	11.7	insignificant
19	(5) With superlative adjectives used attributively	8	1	7.0	a/an	6.2	insignificant
33		1	8	7.0	No article	6.2	insignificant
Overall mean				14.5	13.3		

found with the new use added to this test (i.e. the generic use), whereas the lowest number goes to the fourth meaning (i.e. indicating a profession, etc.). The most common error is divided equally between «the» and «no article»; but, against our expectations too, in all the highest rates of errors except one (No. 38), «the» is the most common error, not «no article».

(b) Meanings/Uses of «a/an».

Two of the uses of «a/an» were added to those utilized before: namely, «the generic use», and «the use before singular predicative nouns to denote a profession, a class, a religion, etc. (see parts 3 & 4 in Table VII).

(c) Comparison with Arabic:

As already stated in the two previous parts, the error anticipated through Arabic interference is the use of «no article» for «a/an». But we should immediately add here that the generic use in Arabic (see meaning 3 in Table VII) usually requires the definite article even when non-count words are used. Thus «iron» is «al-hadid», «sugar» is «al-sukkar» and so on. So, this is a factor which in this context works against the general Arab conviction regarding the use of «a/an».

(d) Detailed analysis and interpretation:

The first thing we notice in this part of the test is that the new meaning/use (no.4 on Table VII) seems to create no difficulty at all, the rate of errors in both instances

not exceeding 7.8 %.

Moreover, meanings/uses 1 and 5 are also more or less mastered since the rate of errors ranges between 10.2 % and 38.3 %, the latter being related to one of the idiomatic phrases.

The generic use (No. 3 on Table VII) is the new one introduced into this test which seems to have created some difficulty, the rate of errors on the three items being 68.8 %, 72.7 % and 62.5% respectively. On one of the items (No. 40) most errors are made by the use of «the», the one expected through Arabic interference (see above), whereas on the two other items, the students are divided between a general conviction that English «a/an» = no article in Arabic, and this new situation. Consequently, the errors are almost evenly spread out over «the» and «no article».

No. 15 requires special interpretation. Normally, this would be «no article» in Arabic but in this particular context: «the first dynamo as well as a type of transformer», co-ordination has played a more important role than previous conviction, and «the» is used in 73 of the 80 error cases.

II. The Use of «the»

(a) General Remarks: (See table VIII)

Performance on this part of the test is very much higher than on the two other parts. This is in line with previous findings (see previous parts) and with anticipations from

TABLE — VII

ERRORS						
Item No.	Meaning / Use	The	No Art.	Total %	Most common error	%
20	(1) any one of a kind	18	13	24.2	The	14.1
15	(2) One	74	3	60.2	The	57.8
26 38 40	(3) Used generically	46 43 73	42 50 7	68.8 72.7 62.5	The No art. The	35.9 39.1 57.0
7	(4) Used before singular predicative nouns, denoting a profession a class, a religion etc.	2	8	7.8	No art.	6.3
8		6	4	7.8	The	4.7
5 28 36	(5) In certain idiomatic phrases	18 12 5	31 18 8	38.3 23.4 10.2	No art. No art. No art.	24.2 14.1 6.3
Overall mean:				37.6%		26.1%

also: No article = 32.8%
also: the = 33.6%

insignificant
insignificant

insignificant
insignificant
insignificant

- (b) that the relative weighting of the various articles in this test has been changed considerably in order to raise its level of difficulty. Thus, since the use of «no article» has proved to be the most frequent problem with Arab students in the two previous stages, its frequency of occurrence on this test has been increased from 24 % on the secondary level test to 47.5 % on this test, whereas the frequencies of occurrence of «a/an» and «the» were brought down from 34 % and 42 % to 25% and 27.5 % consecutively.

Summary and conclusion drawn from the three papers are also given at the end of this article.

Third (Tertiary) Level Test:

- (a) The test (see Appendix VI) consists of 40 items, each item with a slot to be filled in (on a special Answer - Sheet).
- (b) The test was administered to a random sample of 128 students (41 boys and 87 girls, the latter accounting for over 65 % of the students in the Department of English).
- (c) A summary of the results is shown in Appendix VII in which the errors are classified according to their various types, and the total number and percentages are given too.
- (d) The errors were re-classified on the basis of each article and its meanings/uses. This is shown in Tables VII, VIII and IX, on which we will base our analysis.

Analysis of Errors

I. The Use of «a/an»

a) General Remarks: (see Appendix VII and Table VII)

The average grade attained on the whole test is 71.2 %. If we bear in mind the greater difficulty of the test (see «Study Design» above), we realize that there is a considerable improvement from the grade 60.8 % attained on the previous test. On the other hand, the fact that the students who took the test were either third year students, or were about to graduate from the English Department and obtain a B.A. in English, and probably get appointed as teachers of English, does not make us feel very happy with such improvement. If our graduates have only about 70 % command of this comparatively small grammatical item, how do they stand with respect to the more difficult and more subtle aspects of language use?

The total number of errors in the 10 cases where «a/an» is to be used ranges between a minimum of 7.8 % on items 7 and 8, and a maximum of 72.7 % on item 38. The overall average is 37.6 %. This is much higher than the percentage of errors made on the whole test (28.8 %). In fact, contrary to expectations, this is even higher than the average percentage of errors committed with each of the two other articles (i.e. «the» (14.5 %) and «no article» (32.9 %). This has to be explained later. But it is worth noticing here that the highest number of errors is

III. THE TERTIARY LEVEL

In the two previous parts we gave a description and the findings of two similar studies carried out on students learning English at the PRIMARY and SECONDARY levels, i.e. throughout the preuniversity course of study. This part concludes the study with a description of the problem at the Tertiary, i.e. University, level and a discussion of the findings related to the study of English by Arab students at this and the two other levels.

Background to the Study:

A description of the background, as far as the school system is concerned, was made in the first part of this study. We have only to give here a very short account of the set-up at the university.

Here we are not dealing with those university students who major in various disciplines and take up English as a subsidiary subject. Those constitute a great variety and are difficult to work with. In some faculties they have to take very few English courses, whereas in others, such as Engineering and Medicine, they go through special intensive courses. Consequently,

we chose the **English Department** in the Faculty of Arts for several reasons. Firstly, students in this department specialize in English Language and Literature, which means that they devote more time and effort than any other students in order to try to master English. Therefore, if any errors are still committed by these students, they must be of the very persistent and resistant types and are, for this reason, worthy of serious study. Moreover, the students are more or less uniform in that they are exposed to the same amount of English during their university career. They were, furthermore, easier to observe and study simply because the writer of this article teaches in this Department.

Study Design:

This is similar to the two other levels.

Comparing the present test (Appendix VI) with the two previous ones, we notice the following:

- (a) that the meanings/uses of the def./indef. articles in this test are more advanced than before (see tables);

has attracted a 54.6 % of the «the» errors. This can be directly attributed to Arabic interference: Arabic: «Wales al-Jannubiyah», where the definite article would be used with the adjective preceding the noun.

(iii) The idiomatic expressions occurring in the passage: «by midday», «to bed» and «half the night» are English Language - Specific and apt to cause confusion, which they have. This accounts for the very high rates of errors on the three items 26, 34 and 35 which reached 64.8 %, 63.2 % and 52.2 % respectively.

Conclusion

1. Though new meanings/uses of the article have been introduced during the four years of the secondary course, teaching has been able to overcome some of the difficulties encountered by the students, and the mean achievement has risen by more than 10 %.

2. The least number of errors was made in the use of «the» (31.7 %), followed by the use of «a/an» (36.6 %). See also Appendix V, where 7 out of the 10 lowest intensity errors go to the use of «the», the rest

belong to «a/an». But the main problem still remains, namely: the use of «no article» in English.

3. Errors are partly due to Arabic interference, either specifically, or generally as in the case of the equation of English «a/an» with Arabic «no article» because of the difference in the system employed by either language.

4. But many other errors are also due either to the nature of the English Language itself as it is the case with idiomatic expressions, or to bad teaching and/or learning strategies and techniques.

5. Quite a number of errors may be attributed to the kind of English which students are usually exposed to at School. Often this English is «simplified» or «idealized» one way or another, and aims at exemplifying language usage (i.e. the structures), rather than use (i.e. meanings, uses, values). Such English often tends to focus on the language items selected rather than on language as it is used naturally. Had the case been otherwise, that is, had natural English been taught, the students would have been more capable of observing the relations between language items when used more coherently.

TABLE — VI

(c) Correct Answer: No article

No. of students: 1370

ERRORS						
Item No.	Meaning / Use	a/an	the	Total %	Most Com-mon error	%
16 17 23	(1) With nouns of substance, abstract nouns etc. i.e. Non-count Nouns	251 389 459	584 453 282	60.9 61.5 54.1	the the a/an	42.6 33.1 33.5
25 45	(2) With plural nouns used generically or in a general sense	265 203	380 643	32.5 61.8	the the	27.7 46.9
2 40 46 50	(3) With most proper Nouns	273 117 122 297	246 208 748 264	37.9 23.7 63.5 40.9	a/an the the a/an	19.9 15.2 54.6 21.7
26 34 35	(4) In certain idiomatic expressions	231 195 565	658 671 150	64.8 63.2 52.2	the the a/an	48.0 49.0 41.2
Overall mean				51.4	36.1	

Therefore, the total number of errors, 48 %, is surprisingly high, and its dispersion over the two possible kinds of mistake only points to inadequate teaching and learning.

III. The Use of «no article» (See Table VI and Appendix V)

(a) General Remarks:

The errors made on this part of the test range between a minimum of 23.7 % and a maximum of 64.8 % with an overall mean of 51.4 %. This is much higher than those of the other two sections, indicating, as expected and as proven by the primary level test, a much higher level of difficulty with the use of «no article» than with the two other articles. This is also supported by the dispersion of the errors over «a/an» and «the».

We also notice from Appendix V that the intensity of errors is greatest with the use of «no article», since out of the TEN highest percentage errors, SEVEN belong to the use of «no article», whereas we do not see a single «no article» item among the bottom TEN.

But teaching must have improved the situation, since the mean of errors on the similar part of the First Level Test was as high as 70.9 %.

(b) The meanings of «no article» as used in the Test:

The first two meanings are the same two used in the Primary Level Test, namely:

- (i) with non-count nouns in the singular; abstract nouns,

names of substances, etc., and

- (ii) with plural nouns used in a general sense.

To these the following uses are added:

- (iii) with most proper nouns, and
- (iv) in certain idiomatic expressions.

(c) Comparison with Arabic:

As stated before, (see previous part), contrary to English, Arabic normally employs the definite article with nouns under (i) and (ii) above.

Arabic also does not normally use the definite article with Proper Nouns, but it does not have words like «Welsh, English, French» to refer to languages; instead it employs the phrase «the English language, etc.»; (Arabic: al-lughah al-ingileeziiyah). Idiomatic expressions naturally vary from one language to another. English and Arabic may agree in some of them as far as the use of «no article» is concerned, but may disagree on others.

(d) Analysis and Interpretation:

- (i) The error committed in the use of «no article» with the first two meanings was, as expected from comparison with Arabic, the use of «the», although in most cases, «a/an» figures highly too among the errors.

- (ii) With proper nouns, the difficulty seems less except with No. 46: (South Wales) which

ond meaning of «the» are instances of bad teaching strategy. As was said in our study of the Primary Level, almost all linguistic exercises found in English Language Courses, including the one used in the secondary schools of Kuwait, are made up of isolated sentences rather than connected discourse. Therefore, when the student is confronted with such discourse, he deals with it as if it were made up of isolated sentences, and the previous introduction of a noun does not mean very much to him. Had the case been otherwise, we should have had far less errors in this area.

The rates or errors are, however, rather low on most of the items, except for such special cases as No. 33 where we have the abstract noun «advice», usually used without any article of any sort, and No. 38, where the students must have misunderstood the sentence and thought «the house» the man took could be ANY HOUSE.

(iii) The errors made in the third meaning are expected, and can be interpreted through the influence of Arabic. All the five constructions here are genitive, or rather «of-constructions» and these do not take the definite article in Arabic. We were, in fact, expecting more errors here.

(iv) The students should not, under the influence of Arabic,

have found any difficulty with the idiomatic expressions used in the test: No. 32: (the evening before); No. 36: (half the night) and No. 37: (in the morning). The result of the test, however, has been rather surprising: exceptionally low scores on the first two items, but a very high score (c. 86 %) on the third. Moreover, the almost equal dispersion of the errors over «a/an» and «no article» can only indicate a case of great **confusion**. What the cause of this confusion can be, since it cannot be Arabic interference in this case, is not very clear. One of the explanations - which may not be the best - is that the students are much more used to the expression «in the evening», which occurs very frequently in English; so they felt rather lost when they were confronted with the less common construction «the evening before», which they might have wrongly taken to mean: «before the evening» or something of the sort. In the case of No. 36, «half the night», it is almost certain that this was taken to mean «mid-night» and therefore not given the definite article.

(v) Not much should be said about the use with «ordinal numbers», No. 39 on the test, since the number of errors is far less than the average on the whole test; cause: lack of mastery.

(vi) With the word «rent» there should have been no problem.

and the definite article precedes it; thus we have: «Al-Jibal al-Sawdaa?» and «Al-Lughah al-Welshiyyah». But the first example is usually rendered in Arabic by a genitive construction where the first element cannot have the definite article, whereas the second, not only can have it, but makes the first element definite if it is definite itself whether by being a Proper Noun (with or without the definite article) or a definite common noun. Thus here the equivalent Arabic structure is: «Nahr Neath»; but we can also have: «Nahr al-Neel» = The River Nile, etc.

(ii) **Second Meaning:** Here, as in English, the Arabic noun should take the definite article.

(iii) **Third Meaning:** If the noun is the first element of an «of-construction», that is Arabic «Idaafa», it need not have the definite article in Arabic. The second element is the one that usually takes it, if it is not a Proper Noun that does not need it. Thus item 1, «the South of Wales» is rendered as «Januub Wales» in Arabic, and «the back of the house» as «dhahr al-bayt», etc.

(iv) **Fourth Use:** In the three idiomatic expressions occurring in the passage (Nos. 32, 36 and 37) Arabic employs the definite article, the same as English.

(v) **Fifth Use:** is the same as in Arabic.

(vi) **Sixth Use:** is the same as in Arabic too, unless the noun «rent» (Arabic: *ujrah*) occurs as the first element of a genitive construction (Arabic: *idaafah*).

(d) Analysis and Interpretation:

(i) Although we expect that the students would, under the influence of Arabic, use no article with the first of the three instances (Nos. 4, 5 and 44) and make a minimum of mistakes on the other two, we actually find the opposite. The number of errors on the first item is 18.4 % whereas on the other two it is 51.3 % and 40.1 %, two of the highest on the various items of the test.

It is difficult to explain the first item; the other two items can be explained as instances of over-generalization of the fact that most Proper Nouns, since they are already definite, do not need to take the definite article. But if this is what is happening, why the very low rate of errors on the first item?

The most plausible interpretation seems to be that the students have almost always heard and learnt the **names of rivers** in particular preceded by «the», such as: The Nile, The Tigris, The Euphrates (from their own countries), as well as others such as: The Danube, The Ganges, The Thames, The Amazon, etc. This applies not only to English, but also to Arabic where most of these names are preceded by the definite article «al-».

(ii) The errors made in the sec-

(b) Correct Answer: the

TABLE — V

No. of students: 1370

ERRORS						
Item No.	Meaning / Use	a/an	No art.	Total %	Most Common error	%
4	(1) to identify a noun which is one of a kind	192	60	18.4	a/an	14.0
5		361	342	51.3	a/an	26.3
44		198	352	40.1	No art	25.7
8	(2) Precedes a noun which has been introduced (usually with the article «a/an») to make it more specific	220	90	22.6	a/an	16.1
11		171	137	22.5	a/an	12.5
14		190	71	19.1	a/an	13.9
21		210	43	18.5	a/an	15.3
27		292	52	32.3	a/an	21.3
31		101	100	14.7	a/an	7.4
33		356	352	51.1	a/an	26.0
38		445	106	40.2	a/an	32.5
1	(3) To specify or point out a noun as particular, (often followed by an «of-construction»)	31	59	6.6	No art	4.3
7		258	268	38.4	No art	19.6
20		98	204	22.0	No art	14.9
48		141	130	19.8	a/an	10.3
49		153	402	40.5	No art	29.3
32	(4) Idiomatic use - with «evening, morning, etc.»	435	400	67.5	a/an	31.8
36		453	475	53.1	No art	34.7
37		170	25	14.2	a/an	12.4
39	(5) With ordinal numbers	254	90	25.1	a/an	18.5
28	(6) With the word «rent»	300	358	48.0	No art	26.1
Overall mean				31.7		19.7

also not very strange.

The second use/meaning (i.e. = one) raises no special problems. The rate of errors is low in the two items and in both the anticipated «no article» is the error made.

The same applies to the third use/meaning (i.e. = every) except that the rate of error is higher here. This use, in fact, poses a special problem to the Arab student because it is quite strange to him. Not only is nothing similar to it employed in Arabic, but even in English the use of «every», and the suffix «ly» (e.g. daily, monthly, etc.) are quite common and seem straightforward and more acceptable.

In the fourth use, comprising mostly idiomatic expressions, the rate of error is generally quite low except for No. 30 (a certain Mrs. Jones), an English Language-specific use, which may sound strange (i.e. the use of «a» with a definite Proper Noun) not only to an Arab, but probably to speakers of other languages as well.

It is also worth mentioning here that the confusion between «a» and «an» has become minimal. This area of difficulty seems to have been overcome by teaching and use.

II. The Use of «the»

(a) General Remarks: (See Table V)

The number of errors committed on this section of the test range between a minimum of 6.6 % on item No. 1 and a maximum of 67.5% on item No.32, with an overall mean of 31.7 %. This is lower than the mean

of the previous part of the test and much lower than that of the whole test. But this is expected, since there are many points of similarity between the two definite articles in English and Arabic, each of which is expressed by a special morpheme, and since the meanings uses of this article are more clear-cut than the others.

Most of the errors are made by using «a/an» (14 items out of 21), but in 9 items the use of the other inaccurate article is comparable too.

(b) Meanings/Uses of «the» as employed in the test:

Those meanings/uses are the following:

- (i) Identification of a noun which is one of a kind;
- (ii) Making a noun, that has been already introduced, more specific, and
- (iii) Specifying a noun as particular;
«The» is also used:
 - (iv) in certain idiomatic expressions referring to time, etc.
 - (v) with ordinal numbers.
 - (vi) with the word «rent».

(c) Comparison with Arabic

- (i) **First meaning:** The three examples of this use are Compound Proper Nouns: (The River Neath, The Black Mountains, and the Welsh Language). In the latter two instances, where the construction is Adjective + Noun, the Arabic structure is similar

TABLE — IV

(a) Correct Answer: a/an

No. of students: 1370.

ERRORS							
Item No.	Meaning / Use	the	No article	Total %	Most common error	%	Remarks
3	(1) used with countable nouns in the singular to indicate «one example of, any one of a kind etc.»	488	85	43.9	the	35.6	also: No article = 8.8% also: the = 24.0% also: No article = 15.8%
6		160	120	23.9	the	11.7	
9		395	100	38.3	the	28.8	
10		182	375	45.0	No art.	27.4	
15		72	291	32.9	No art.	21.2	
18		329	401	65.2	No art.	29.3	
22		132	438	47.5	No art.	32.0	
24		313	217	41.6	the	22.8	
47		527	371	67.0	the	38.5	
13	(2) = One	76	168	19.5	No art.	12.3	
41		102	251	28.0	No art.	18.3	
29	(3) = Every	105	406	40.3	No art.	29.6	
12	(4) idiomatic uses: (a few, a little etc.)	11	102	9.7	No art.	7.4	also: the = 7.4 % also: the = 24.4% also: the = 8.2% also: No article = 13.1%
19		101	104	16.4	No art.	7.6	
30		302	334	53.1	No art.	24.4	
42		113	132	20.8	No art.	9.6	
43		191	180	29.8	the	13.9	
		Overall mean				36.6%	

In the 17 cases where «a/an» is to be used, the total number of errors range between a minimum of 9.7 % on item No.12 and a maximum of 67% on item No.47, with an overall mean of 36.6%. This is lower than the 39.2% point, which is the overall mean of errors made on the whole test, but is still comparatively high. It is also highest on the items with the first meaning (= indefiniteness), and lowest on the items with the second meaning (= one).

In 11 out of 17 items, the error made is the use of «no article» instead of «a/an», but in 4 of these «the» is also employed at a comparable rate. This also applies to the 6 cases where «the» is used; in 3 of them «no article» is used at comparable rates. This is more in agreement with the findings of other researchers (Willcott, 1978) than with the first test's results.

(b) Meanings/Uses of «a/an»

The meanings/uses of «a/an» employed in the present test are very similar to those of the Primary Level Test, namely: «indefiniteness, one, and every»; to these only a few idiomatic uses are added (see part 4 of Table IV).

(c) Comparison with Arabic:

As stated before (see previous part), the error anticipated through the influence of Arabic is the substitution of «no article» for «a/an», since this is the Arabic form which the students equate with the English «a/an».

(d) Analysis and Interpretation:

In line with our anticipation

based on Arabic interference, and contrary to the results of the first level test, we find that in most cases the errors made here employ «no article» where «a/an» should be used. The students' learning strategy based on equating the English «a/an» with the «absence of any article» in Arabic seems to have set in at this stage, most probably because of their better acquaintance with Arabic, and under the influence of more internal mental translation. But there is still some observable confusion in the use of the first meaning where in 5 of the 9 items the article «the» is used. A few of these errors, however, can be interpreted individually on the basis of false analogy, or the particular context. For instance, the English superlative adjective is usually taught, and in fact most frequently used, with the article «the», e.g. **This is the highest mountain, I have met the eldest son in the family,** etc. Therefore, its use with the indefinite article «a» in item No.47 (a most interesting one) is not very common, sounds unusual and is easily mistaken by the students. Moreover, the adjective «full» is normally used predicatively, the subject being a definite noun, e.g. **The Glass is full of water, the room is full of children,** etc. Consequently, the use of «the» instead of «a» in item 24 (**a pool full of frogs**) is not unexpected. In item 3, too, the noun «house» is modified by the prepositional phrase «near the River Neath», which is apt to make it, in a sense, at least partially definite; therefore, the use of «the» with it is

II. THE SECONDARY LEVEL

In the previous part, the results of the study conducted on students learning English at the PRIMARY LEVEL, i.e. the first four years of English, were given. In this part we shall deal with the results of the test given to students at their SECONDARY LEVEL of English Language learning, i.e. in their eighth year of E.L.L., just before they leave school for careers or for the university. (Please refer to the previous part for information about «background to the study»).

Study Design:

This is similar to the previous part.

As will be seen in the Tables, the meanings/uses of the articles in this test exceed those found in the Primary Level Test. The new meanings were chosen on the basis of an examination of the four parts of the English Language Course used by the students in their four secondary years (Allen).

Second Level Test

(a) The test (see Appendix III) has 50 slots to be filled in. A separate answer-sheet was used for the answers, so that some of the test

forms could be used again.

(b) It was administered to a random sample of 1370 4th year students, 780 boys and 590 girls from 25 secondary schools.

(c) The Answer sheets were scored and the errors classified in accordance with their various types. A summary of this classification can be seen in Appendix IV.

(d) Reclassification of the errors on the basis of each article, and of the various meanings/uses of each article was made. This forms the basis of Tables IV, V and VI below on which we will depend for our analysis.

Analysis of Errors

I. Use of «a/an»

(a) **General Remarks:** (See Appendix IV and Table IV)

The average score obtained on the whole test is 60.8%. This is an improvement by more than 10% on the score achieved on the Primary Level Test. But, in point of fact, it is more than that, since the number of meanings/uses of each article has increased too. This is, of course, due to teaching and learning efforts, and to the very nature of the syllabus.

«no article» has been presented at a very early stage of the course with little emphasis, as a companion for the plural or for names of substances; and that this was the area where most errors were made. With the well-known standard of non-native English Language teachers both in proficiency and teaching techniques, we cannot expect them to try to compensate for the shortcomings of the textbook, which, to most of them, is the Holy Bible.

Some of the errors could be interpreted through Arabic interference,

about one third of the total; a few others through wrong learning strategies such as false analogy or overgeneralization, or the wrong equation of two systems. But it is mostly inadequate teaching that is responsible for most of the errors, and for the low scores on the whole test. Quite often the errors are very difficult to explain on a general or regular basis; they are better considered to be **due to the confusion caused by a number of the factors mentioned above.** A study of the students' motivation to learn English may also reveal a very important factor not mentioned in this paper.

right article in all these items, including the idiomatic usages 3 & 17. In fact on the last two items in particular the correct scores are exceptionally high. On the other items the correct scores are very near to the average grade obtained by the students on the whole test, namely 48.8 % - which tells us that this must be the limit which the calibre of our teachers has been able to reach.

In two cases, namely Nos. 29 & 34, the noun is the first element of a genitive construction and does not require the definite article in Arabic. It is worth mentioning here that about 13% and 26% of the examinees have used «no article» instead of «the», on the two items respectively and that these are the only two cases where such numbers exceed 12 %.

But it is quite clear that the rest of the errors are due to bad textbook presentation and drill and inadequate teaching of the articles. In most elementary English courses, like the one used in Kuwait, grammatical items are presented and drilled in ISOLATED SENTENCES, not in longer stretches of discourse. Thus the students grow up with little awareness of the importance of CONTEXT. Had the case been otherwise, the examinees should have noticed that, in the first meaning, «the» is to be used with ALL the nouns with which it should be

used, (that is all those in part 1 of Table III above except Nos. 8 & 34) simply because each noun has been mentioned, in an indefinite form, earlier in the passage. Thus No. 2 precedes No. 4; «people» precedes No. 7 «man»; Nos. 2 & 4 precede No. 9; No. 11 precedes No. 12; «his school» precedes No. 18; No. 21 precedes No. 23; No. 28 precedes No. 29; «plan» is implied several times before it occurs in No. 36; and No. 35 precedes No. 40. Thus the cause of this kind of error is obviously faulty pedagogy, rather than Arabic interference.

CONCLUSIONS:

In the first instance, the average grade obtained on the whole test, (less than 50%) indicates clearly that there must be something wrong in an E.L.T. system that is unable to teach the first elementary meanings of an E.L.T. definiteness and indefiniteness as expressed in English. This became quite obvious as we went through the detailed analysis of the test- items. We were able to obtain evidence that the definite and indefinite articles are hastily introduced, with one meaning each, very early in the English course, and never highlighted again throughout the four books constituting the four years' course. It was also found that the use of

TABLE — III

First Level Test
Correct Article: the

No. of examinees: 960

No. of Item	Meaning of article	Articles wrongly used		Total Errors		Total of most frequent error		Remarks
		a/an	No art.	No.	%	art.	%	
4	(1) meaning: the one in question, or the one referred to just now, or the one the speaker intends to single out from a group.	231	40	271	28.2	a/an	24.1	also: no article = 26.1%
7		323	32	355	37.0	a/an	33.6	
8		290	120	410	42.7	a/an	30.2	
9		361	52	413	43.0	a/an	37.6	
12		471	79	550	57.3	a/an	49.1	
18		270	104	374	39.0	a/an	28.1	
23		379	70	449	46.8	a/an	38.5	
29		271	251	522	54.4	a/an	28.2	
34		343	120	563	58.6	a/an	35.7	
36		358	92	450	46.9	a/an	37.3	
40		551	30	581	60.5	a/an	57.4	
3	(2) idiomatic usage	232	60	292	30.4	a/an	24.2	
17		83	26	109	11.4	a/an	8.6	
33	(3) generic meaning	319	51	370	38.5	a/an	33.2	
Overall mean					42.4%		33.0%	

the use of «no article» or make a great deal of errors in this use, we can easily understand why our students **refrain** from using «no article» with the noun. This is also strengthened by the students' learning strategy made under the influence of Arabic, as will be explained in the next paragraph.

As we know, Arabic has a two-way system for expressing definiteness and indefiniteness, namely, either the use of the definite article, or its absence. In English, it is a three-way system, in which the more common, and earlier taught manner of indicating «indefiniteness» is the use of «a/an». It seems highly plausible for the Arab student, especially in the first stages of learning English, to try to equate the English with the Arabic system, and the logical way to do that is to equate the Arabic «al-» with the English «the», and: the Arabic «no article» with the English «a-/an», thus leaving no room for the use of «no article» in English. It is almost certain that this is what happens, and that this is how the Arab student tries to learn the English system. This is strongly supported by the avoidance of the «no article» on the test, and can explain why the «a/an» is being over-emphasized and used even with the plural. This process is what Arabski calls choosing a **primary counterpart** (Arabski, 1979)

IV- Errors committed in the use of «the»: (See Table III)

(a) General Remarks:

The first thing that one notices here is that the numbers of errors committed are comparable to those made in the first section, i.e. in the use of «a/an», but much fewer than those made in the use of «no article», (the means being 41.1 %, 70.9 % & 42.4 % in the three sections respectively). Secondly, the use of the wrong form «no article» is here generally below 10 %; this is a point which supports the assumption made above. Most of the errors in this section are in the area of «a/an».

(b) Meanings of «the» as used in the Test:

Except for three items namely
- No. 33, where the generic meaning is expressed, and
- Nos 3 & 17, which are idiomatic usages, in all the rest, «the» is used with the meaning: the one in question, the one referred to just now, etc.

(c) Comparison with Arabic:

In the three meanings & uses mentioned above Arabic usually employs the definite article with the noun.

(d) Interpretation

The student should normally face no difficulty in choosing the

We believe that both the English Teaching Strategy employed during the first four years of the English course, as well as the students' learning strategy influenced by Arabic, is responsible for this.

Let us start with the «teaching strategy». The use of «no article» in English seems to be presented by the textbook twice in the very early stages of the English Course. First, the article-less plural is introduced in Book I, But the emphasis is, all the time, on the «plural», especially the pronunciation of the final «s», rather than on the meaning of the absence of both the definite & the indefinite articles. The authors do not write one single word asking the teacher to try to emphasize this new phenomenon. Moreover, they soon (in fact, in the same lesson) add the determiners «my, your, his, etc.» before the plural noun, thus almost completely obliterating the significance of the phenomenon. Later on in the book, when «any» and «some» are presented before plural nouns, the use of «no article» must have evaporated from the students' minds altogether, that is, if they have had any idea about it at all.

The same thing applies to article-less names of substances, such as «chalk» and «ink». These are first presented quite early in the course with the author's warning to the

teacher: «Don't try to explain..... the lack of a/an before the uncountable nouns CHALK and INK». The only two sentences in which the words are used without articles are:

«Look! This is ink (chalk)

What's this - It's ink (chalk)».

But immediately after this, and throughout the whole lesson, the two words are used with «the», eg. The ink is in the inkpot., The chalk is in the box., Where is the ink? etc.

Later on (in lesson 16) «any» and «some» are added before «ink» and «chalk», as well as before general plurals, as mentioned above.

The last point which is relevant to the «teaching strategy» is the fact that the use and meaning of «no article» is never explicitly and emphatically presented and drilled, nor is it ever recycled in the four books of the course.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from such a situation is that this grammatical point, which is very important to the Arab student, is not properly dealt with or sufficiently emphasized. The expected outcome is that the students will naturally avoid using something that they are not sure of. If we add to this that a number of the teachers, probably the majority, have been brought up in the same tradition, and either avoid

48% & 31%. But we also notice a very strange and baffling phenomenon, namely that almost as many mistakes, often more, are made by using «a/an» with the PLURAL!! The percentages in this area are about 17 %, 50 %, 35 % & 50 %: very high indeed, so high that none of them can be attributed to carelessness or chance. We can leave this phenomenon unexplained for the time-being and wait until we have finished with the two other uses to find out if there is anything common to all of them.

ii- In the second use, it is anticipated that the students would employ «the» instead of «no article». Again our expectations are not left unfulfilled, and we have about 66 %, 18 %, 41 %, 26 %, 35 %, 37 %, and 24 % of the errors committed in this area. But, again in all cases except the very first (i.e. item 14), the use of «a/an» is much more frequent, amounting to about 20%, 34%, 42%, 40%, 38%, 51%, & 40 % on the seven items successively. This is, however, less baffling than the phenomenon observed in the previous section. If we look more closely into the various items, we can explain this type of error without great difficulty. In item 14, the abstract noun «cleanliness» used in a general sense, as it is the case here, always takes the definite article in Arabic. This explains the great number of answers (65.5%) where «the» is

used instead of «no article». In items 19 & 21, the nouns are «chalk» and «soap», both used to indicate the substance out of which units, i.e. a chalk (or a piece of chalk), a soap (or a bar of soap) are made. It seems that the students have been confused about how to consider these nouns: generic or unit nouns. Those who opted for the former used «the», whereas those who chose the latter used «a/an». Both choices are made under the influence of Arabic, where the noun used generically (i.e. *ism al-jins*) takes the definite article, whereas that used as the name of a unit (i.e. *ism al-wihdah*) does not need any article when it is definite, i.e. is similar to the «a/an» + noun in English.

The other items, however, cannot be accounted for in the same way, but will be considered again below.

iii- Only item 10 is an adjective used predicatively and does not need an article before it, the same as in Arabic. It is significant to find that about 75% of the students chose the error «a/an» rather than «the» (only 3.3%). This finding, we believe, helps us to account for the errors on all the other items above which could not be interpreted through direct Arabic interference. Even the use of «a/an» with the PLURAL can have its interpretation via this finding.

70.9 %. This is so high, especially when we notice how the errors are distributed, that it is a clear index of difficulty and deserves some serious thinking.

The errors in this section are distributed between «a/an» and «the», sometimes more in the use of one than the other, even when the noun is plural.

b) The meanings of «no article» as used in the Test:

In twelve items of this test no article is required in the following contexts:

i- before plural nouns used in a general sense, (items 6,20,22 & 39);

ii- before singular uncountable nouns; abstract, substance, collective, etc., (items 14,19,21,28,31 & 32); &

iii- before an adjective used predicatively (not followed by a singular countable noun), item 10).

c) Comparison with Arabic:

In the first use, Arabic differs from English in that the **definite article** is used when the plural noun is used in a generic or general sense even if it is followed (i.e. preceded in English) by an adjective as in item 22 «bright colours», & 39 «long stories», or by a quantifier as in item 20 «lots of pieces», or a quantifier & an adjective, as in item 6 «many interesting people». But

item 39 can also employ «no article» in Arabic and so does item 20: in fact in the latter case, because «pieces» is the first element of a genitive construction, it cannot, in this specific context, take the definite article; thus we say «k a t h e e r u n m i n q i t à al-saboon....».

In the second use, Arabic again employs the **definite article** whether the noun is abstract, or is the name of a substance, or a collective noun, or the name of a science, etc.

In the third use, Arabic is similar to English in that «**no article**» is used, if the adjective is the predicate (i.e. khabar); because if it is preceded by the definite article it cannot function as the predicate, but only as an adjective modifying the subject. Thus: al-madrasah kabirah = the school is big; but, al-madrasah al-kabirah = the big school.

d) Interpretation

In the light of the comparison with Arabic (see also Qafisheh) one would anticipate the following types of errors due to Arabic interference:

i- **In the first use, most errors are expected to occur in the use of «the» instead of no article.** On examining the errors actually made, we find that our expectations are fulfilled on all four items; the numbers of the errors in this area are about 33%, 22%,

TABLE — II

First Level Test
Correct Article: No Article No. of examinees: 960

No. of Item	Meaning/use of article	Articles wrongly used		Total Errors		Total of most frequent error.		Remarks
		a/an	the	No.	%	article	%	
6	(1) before plural nouns used in a general sense.	163	321	484	50.4	the	33.3	also: a/an = 17%
20		479	210	689	71.8	a/an	49.9	also: the = 21.9%
22		339	459	798	83.1	the	47.8	also: a/an = 35.3%
39		481	298	779	81.1	a/an	50.1	also: the = 31%
14	(2) before singular uncountable nouns (abstract, substance, collective, etc.)	191	629	720	75.0	the	65.5	also: a/an = 19.9%
19		329	168	497	51.8	a/an	34.3	also: the = 17.5%
21		399	392	791	82.4	a/an	41.6	also: the = 40.8%
25		362	249	611	63.6	a/an	37.7	also: the = 25.9%
28		380	340	720	75.0	a/an	39.6	also: the = 35.4%
31		491	356	847	88.2	a/an	51.1	also: the = 37.1%
32		384	231	515	53.6	a/an	40.0	also: the = 24.1%
10	(3) before an adj. used predicatively (not followed by a singular countable noun).	689	32	721	75.0	a/an	71.8	
	Overall mean				70.9%		46.9%	

But besides these few cases, it seems that the most probable cause of the other errors is either the textbook, or inadequate teaching or both. On examining the textbooks used by the students during their first four years of English (Allen and McLean), we notice that the two articles are introduced very early in the course: «a/an» in lesson 4, and «the» in lesson 5 of Book I, that is in the very first week or two of the English programme. The former is presented with the meaning «one example of a thing called....», and the latter with the meaning «a particular thing....». This is all that one finds in the four books that has anything to do specifically with the definite and indefinite articles. This is not to say, of course, that the two other uses included in the Test do not occur. It simply means that the whole topic is severely de-emphasized.

Naturally if this is the situation obtaining in the textbooks themselves, which our teachers depend on to a great extent and often follow literally, we do not expect many teachers to do better. The net result seems, as expected, to be a partial command of the use of the articles. This is clearly indicated by the students' achievement on the whole test, the mean grade being less than 50 %. Con-

sequently, those errors which cannot be interpreted on purely linguistic grounds, can in our view, be ascribed to the pedagogical reasons stated above.

ii-The errors committed in using «the» instead of «a/an» with the meaning «one» can easily be interpreted through Arabic interference. We cannot explain why «the» in particular has to be used. It can only be said that the facts of the comparative study stated above can, and do, cause confusion. In point of fact, in both cases (items 11 & 24), the errors are spread over «the» and «no article».

iii-Arabic interference can also partially help us explain the use of «the» or «no article», the former to a greater extent than the latter, in item 38 where «a» means «every», since in at least one form of the equivalent Arabic phrase the definite article/prefix «al-» is used.

III) Errors committed in the use of «no article»: (See Table II)

a) **General Remarks:** Here, the total number of errors made on the twelve items in the Test where «no article» is to be used, is much higher than in the previous section, i.e. in the use of «a/an». They range between a minimum of 50.4 % on item No.6 and 88.2 % on item No. 31, with an overall mean of:

the most common of the three meanings. The second meaning is also expressed in Arabic by the indefinite (i.e. article-less) noun, but is usually modified by the equivalent of the English «one» for clarification or emphasis. The third meaning, however, requires a phrase made up of the Special adjective «kul» meaning «every» preceding the noun: «Kul yawm» (Everyday), or of the preposition «fii» meaning «in» preceding the definite noun: «fii al-yawm» = every day (literally = in the day), or of the preposition «fii» + «kul» + the indefinite noun: fii kul yawm (= in every day), or it may be expressed only by the adverbial «yawmiyyan» etc. formed from the noun, meaning «daily».

d) Interpretation

i-In the light of the quick comparative study made above, (see also Qafisheh, 111-112) there seems to be no reason why the students should, under the influence of Arabic, make the mistake of using «the» in the first meaning of «a/an» mentioned above. In fact the use of «no article» is the kind of error that one anticipates through Arabic interference. But unexpectedly, one finds only two cases, namely Nos: 5 & 15, in which the expected error predominates; and even in these cases the percentages do not look very high (22.8 % & 18.2

%) when compared with the overall mean of errors (41.1 %) or with those errors where «the» is used.

One of the errors, namely No. 2 («the village» for «a village») may be explained as an example of false analogy. We notice that item 3 «the country» has been answered correctly by a large majority of the students, namely about 70 %. The meanings and uses of these two words are very similar in Arabic as they are used in the test. It is suggested that the students have overgeneralised the use of «the» with «country» to make it cover «village» too - hence the high percentage (37.4 %) of the use of «the» with «village».

Two other items may be interpreted in terms of Arabic interference, namely No. 13 «an energetic young man **who** was very interested.....», and No. 35 «It was a man in Ali's village **who** persuaded him...»; the rates of errors made on these two items were 14.8 % and 24.9 % respectively. In both these cases there is an indefinite noun followed by a relative pronoun introducing a relative clause. Now, unless the so-called antecedent is definite - and frequently having the definite article «al-», we cannot have such a construction in Arabic. This is most probably the reason why in these cases «the» has been used instead of «a/an», i.e. to make the antecedent definite.

given in the exercises **with the article immediately preceding the noun**, and, secondly, that, when an adjective or more precedes the noun, the use of the proper article is not given sufficient attention, and probably also, that errors committed in this context are hastily corrected or not corrected at all.

- c) Only one case resists analysis and interpretation, namely, item No. 16 (a beautiful red hat) where 86 errors (about 9 %) were committed, the students using «an» instead of «a» for no apparent reason, except, probably, the false analogy of «an hour», «an honour» and even «an hotel», though it must be admitted that this is a far-fetched explanation.

II) Errors committed in the use of «a/an»: (See Test and Table I)

- a) **General Remarks:** In the two passages, that constitute the Test, there are 14 items where «a / an» should be used. (They are Nos. 1, 2, 5, 11, 13, 15, 16, 24, 26, 27, 30, 35, 37 & 38). The total number of errors on the various items range between 11.5% and 63.7% with a mean of 41.1%. These are high enough to ask for interpretation.

On analysis of the errors, it has become quite obvious that, in the majority of cases, the definite article «the» has been used instead of «a/an». In three cases

only either most errors went to the use of «no article» (as in items Nos: 5 & 15), or were almost equally spread over «the» and «no article» (as in No. 11).

b) Meanings of «a an» used in Level I

Test: Only three meanings of the English indefinite article were employed in this first level test, namely:

i - «a/an» is used with countable singular nouns (which may be preceded by one or more adjectives) with the general sense meaning: «any one of a species», (as in items 1, 2, 5, 13, 15, 16, 26, 27, 30, 35, & 37: the upper section of Table I).

ii- It is also used with countable singular nouns meaning «one» or «one piece or kind of...» (as in items 11 & 24: middle section of Table I)

III- Finally, it is used with the meaning «every» (as in item 38: the lower section of Table I).

- c) **Comparison with Arabic:** There is no special indefinite article in Arabic. Indefiniteness is expressed by the **absence of the definite article** (or rather the morpheme/prefix «al-»). Thus «a boy» is «walad» (which is the root form), but «the boy» is «al-walad».

As far as the three meanings mentioned above are concerned, the first certainly applies to indefinite, article-less nouns in Arabic, and is, in fact,

TABLE — I

First Level Test
Correct Article: a/an

No. of examinees: 960

No. of Item	Meaning/use of article	Articles wrongly used			Total of errors		Total of most frequent error		Remarks
		-a- for -an- / -an- for -a-	the	No art.	No.	%	art.	%	
1	(1) Used with countable singular Noun (often preceded by adjective/s) with a general sense, meaning: any one of a species.	—	90	20	110	11.5	the	9.4	
2		20	359	31	410	42.7	the	37.4	
5		41	110	218	369	38.5	No art.	22.8	
13		61	142	81	284	29.6	the	14.8	
15		168	85	175	428	45.6	No art.	18.2	
16		86	224	68	378	39.4	the	23.3	
26		34	330	66	430	44.8	the	34.3	
27		—	398	103	501	52.2	the	41.5	
30		101	170	89	360	37.5	the	17.7	
35		9	239	50	298	31.0	the	24.9	
37		40	262	179	481	50.0	the	27.3	
11	(2) used with uncountable Nouns, meaning: one, or one piece (kind) of...	50	251	311	612	63.7	No art.	32.4	also «the» = 26.1%
24		101	222	67	390	40.6	the	23.1	
38	(3) Meaning: every	31	272	160	463	48.2	the	28.3	
Overall mean						41.1		25.4%	

I. THE PRIMARY LEVEL

Let us now proceed with our study beginning with the Primary Level of English, i.e. at the end of the first four years of English Language Teaching and Learning at Kuwaiti schools.

Uses of the Articles: See Tables I, II & III below.

Primary Level Test:

- a- The test (which can be seen in Appendix No.I) has 40 slots to be filled in. In fact, a separate answer sheet was used.
- b- It was administered to a random sample of 960 students (550 boys and 410 girls) from the population of the 4th Intermediate classes in 22 schools.
- c- The Answer-sheets were scored and the errors classified according to their types. A Summary of this classification for all papers can be seen in Appendix II.
- d- Reclassification of the errors in accordance with **the different meanings of each article** can be seen in the following Tables, I, II & III on which our analysis will be mainly based.

Error Analysis:

- I) **A or An:** (See Test in Appendix I and third column, Table I)

Errors due to the confusion of these two forms are of two kinds:

- a) In cases where the article immediately precedes the noun (items 2, 11, 26, 27, 35, 37 & 38) errors either do not occur at all, or are very few indeed. The greatest number of errors on any one item did not exceed 50, or 5.2 % (Item 11). Consequently they can be considered incidental errors and disregarded.
- b) On the other hand, there are those cases where the article does not directly precede the noun because the latter is already preceded by one or more adjectives (as in items: 13, 15, 24 & 30). Here errors are much greater, ranging between 6.2 % & 17.7 %. These errors are most probably due to bad teaching strategy: the students are taught and trained to use «a» before a NOUN (not an adjective) beginning with a consonant sound and «an» before one beginning with a vowel sound. At this level very little explanation of rules is given to the students in our schools, but we suspect: firstly, that most examples of «a» and «an» are

ing passages.

- (b) After identifying those uses, a test was chosen (Bloor et al) and modified in order to cover those uses which are relevant for each stage.
- (c) After administering the test to the appropriate sample (see below), the results were classified, an attempt made at accounting for each type, and some teaching recommendations made.

The Tests:

The tests are of the objective, and practically of the multiple-choice type, since students were asked to

fill the slots by one of four choices. But for important reasons that will be mentioned later, we chose one continuous passage (or more) rather than individual sentences, for each test. The question of the larger context and of natural language is of great importance here.

Although we had some information from previous research (Willcott, 1972) about the rate of occurrence of each type of error, we preferred to start with a neutral attitude, and consequently spread the slots over the three tools of definiteness/indefiniteness employed in English (considering «a/an» as one item). After all, this does not in fact bias the statistical calculations made later on.

writer of this paper.

Both of them, however, differ from this study in ~~more~~ more than one way. Qafisheh devotes only a small part of his dissertation to the question of definiteness (as part of the various types of pre-nominal modifiers which are the focus of his research). Moreover, he adopts the method of theoretical contrastive study of the English and Arabic systems of definiteness and (in the tradition of Fries and Lado) predicts some of the errors which are liable to be made by Arab students learning English - some of which predictions will be made use of in this paper. He does not, however, try to test his predictions by means of a test, or verify them by collecting errors from essays, etc. and analysing them.

Willcott's research paper, on the other hand, does not contrast English with Arabic (the man does not seem to know Arabic at all). He does a very useful work, however, by **classifying** the types (and those into sub-types and sub-sub types) of errors Arabs make with English definiteness (24 categories in all) and counting the rate of occurrence of each. This research has also been helpful to the present study.

Beyond those two dissertations we find very little similar work. A very recent British Council **Specialized Bibliography** (British Council, 1980) lists 6 books and 29 articles on contrastive analysis and 10 articles on error analysis related to Arab students, but mentions only **one single article** on the English and

Arabic articles (Willcott, 1978), one which we have also drawn upon in this paper.

Our study, however, is also different from those mentioned above in that it starts with the identification of the errors committed by a school population in three stages: primary, secondary and tertiary, and elicited by means of special tests. Then it goes on and tries to account for these errors, making use of the general principles of Contrastive Analysis (James, 1980), of contrastive studies of English and Arabic already made, of the writer's contrastive study conducted on each **type** of errors, and of the more modern suggestions for explaining systematic errors (Richards, 1974, Nehls, 1979, Nehls, 1980). Moreover, this study covers the whole range of English language study, from the earliest to the advanced stages. The writer is also interested in the educational implications of the study, and consequently gives some suggestions for better teaching at each stage.

Study Design:

The design of the study is quite simple.

- (a) First the writer went through the English main textbooks prescribed for and actually used by all the students of each stage (Allen and McNeal; Allen) and looked for the various uses (meanings) of each of the definite and indefinite articles/tools either formally presented or actually occurring in the read-

reasons, the first being simply the fact that the writer of this article has been working in it for over 30 years; but the second and more important reason is the fact that the student population in the schools of Kuwait is a great mixture of Arab elements; about 50 % are Kuwaitis, the rest come from countries east of the Mediterranean: Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqi, etc. in addition to a substantial number of Egyptians. This is very fortunate as far as E.L. learning is concerned, because the errors made by such a population can be said to be representative of all those Arabs.

Statement of the Problem:

There is no doubt that the use of the English articles (or their absence) constitutes one major problem which confronts Arab students in learning English. This has been observed by the writer of this paper during his very long career in teaching English to Arab students at all levels: primary, intermediate and advanced. It is also supported by some objective evidence. Out of 2950 syntactic errors of various kinds collected by the writer from essays written by students at the **English Department of Kuwait University** over the last few years, about 300 belong to the category of errors dealt with in this paper. This constitutes more than 10 % of the total, a substantially high per-

centage in comparison with the other types of errors, and only surpassed by mistakes of the verb-tense system. In his research for the Ph.D., Willcott counted 574 occurrences of errors related to English definiteness in his comparatively small corpus of sixteen three-hour American history final examinations written by Arabic speakers at the university of Texas at Austin (Willcott, 1972). Finally, not only do Nouns constitute one of the two main parts of speech (or form classes) in English, but every noun has to be classified with regard to definiteness as soon as it is used in a sentence, and very few English sentences can do without a noun or more.

Related Literature:

We are not here concerned with the literature which deals with the English Articles by themselves, of which there is plenty, or that which deals with the Arabic Articles alone, of which there is very little (see references). What concerns us here is the literature of contrastive studies of English and Arabic and of error analysis of Arab students' consistent mistakes, especially those related to our topic. A recent **Bibliography of Arabic Linguistics** (Bakalla, 1975) lists 2018 items, several of which deal with contrastive and error analyses related to Arab students learning English, but **only two** related to the syntactic aspect under consideration in this paper, namely Qafisheh (1969) and Willcott (1972), both of which have been for some time available to the

ANALYSIS OF ARAB STUDENTS' ERRORS IN USING THE ENGLISH ARTICLES

Introductory Note:

This is part of a large scale investigation of the types of errors committed by Arab students learning English in Kuwait, and an attempt to explain the causes of some of these errors. This specific part of the study dealt with definiteness/indefiniteness in English, and was conducted at three levels:

- a- The **FIRST LEVEL**, i.e. the Primary Level of English Language learning, covered a large sample of the student population of the fourth intermediate classes, that is, the fourth year of the English Language learning course in the country.
- b- The **SECOND LEVEL**, i.e. the Secondary Level of English Language learning, covered even a larger sample of the student population of the fourth secondary classes, that is, the eighth year of the E.L. learning course in the country. (For some details of the educational system, see «Background...» below.)
- c- The **THIRD LEVEL**, i.e. the

Tertiary Level, covered a substantial sample of the students in their Senior Year at the **ENGLISH DEPARTMENT** of Kuwait University, where the writer of this article currently teaches.

Background to the Study:

- a- The school system of Kuwait comprises twelve years, the first four called the Primary, the second four the Intermediate, and the last four the Secondary stage.
- b- Children commence their English course at the end of the primary and the beginning of the intermediate stages, i.e. practically in the 5th form. Consequently, the intermediate stage constitutes the primary level of English language learning, whereas the school secondary stage constitutes the second or secondary level of E.L.L. The university constitutes the third or tertiary level.
- c- The State of Kuwait was chosen for this kind of study for two

ABSTRACT

The article reports results of the analysis of errors made by Arab students in Kuwait in the use of the English Definite/Indefinite Articles. The study is conducted at three levels; Primary (i.e. in Intermediate Schools), Secondary (i.e. in Secondary Schools), and Tertiary level (i.e. at Kuwait University English Department). Use is made of theoretical contrastive analysis of English and Arabic, of the two other studies made on the same subject, of specific tests administered to random samples of the students in each stage, and of the English essays and Arabic/English translation papers collected by the writer over the past few years. Results of the study uncover some causes of the errors committed. Among these are: interference from Arabic, overgeneralization and false analogy, the complicated nature of the English Definite/Indefinite system, the nature of the English language course taught in schools and the method of teaching it, and inadequate teaching of the English system of Articles. Comparing the findings of this study with those of other researchers, the writer finds major differences in the error patterns of frequency, and consequently calls for more research in an area which has always been of special difficulty to Arab students. However, he offers a few suggestions that might improve the teaching of the English Articles.

**ANNALS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS — 1981
SEVENTH MONOGRAPH (IN LINGUISTICS)**

C O N T E N T S

	Page
ABSTRACT	6
ANALYSIS OF ARAB STUDENTS' ERRORS IN USING THE ENGLISH ARTICLES	7
I. THE PRIMARY LEVEL	11
II. THE SECONDARY LEVEL	24
III. THE TERTIARY LEVEL	34
APPENDICES	47
REFERENCES	57
ARABIC SUMMARY	59

**ANNALS OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS
KUWAIT UNIVERSITY
RULES OF PUBLICATION**

1. The Annals of the Faculty of Arts at Kuwait University publishes original researches and studies made by present or previous staff of the Faculty of Arts at Kuwait University, in all the fields of the humanities and social sciences. The Editor may accept for publication papers submitted by other contributors.
2. Researches or Studies should be written in either Arabic or English. Each should not be less than 40 pages (18000 words) other than the footnotes and the bibliography.
3. The contributors will please observe the following :
 - A. The arrangement of the text, footnotes, references, documentation and bibliography should follow accepted scientific rules.
 - B. Researches or Studies submitted to the Annals should not have been published elsewhere before.
 - C. Each paper should have a preface of about 200 words.
 - D. Three copies of the paper should be sent to the Annals. These copies must be accompanied with a one-page abstract in both Arabic and English.
 - E. The cover page should have the following information : title of paper, name of author and the name of the academic institution he is affiliated with. On a separate sheet the author should give more information about himself, his career, his major works, his department or institution, and especially his full address.
4. Researches or Studies should be addressed to :

The Editor
The Annals of the Faculty of Arts
Faculty of Arts – Kuwait University
P. O. Box : 26585 Safat – KUWAIT.
5. Researches or Studies received shall be confidentially sent to one or two specialised readers chosen by the editor, preferably from those outside Kuwait. If the readers' evaluations differ, the research shall be sent to a third reader, if the editor deems this necessary.
6. Authors submitting papers for publication in the Annals will be sent acknowledgement to this effect from the editor within a week after he receives their papers. The final decision as to whether their papers will or will not be published will be conveyed to the authors within six months.
7. The editor will inform the authors of the final evaluation of their papers according to the following procedures :
 - A. Authors of publishable papers will be informed by the editor that their papers shall be published. Authors will also be notified of the date of publication.
 - B. Papers evaluated as publishable only after certain modifications and additions are complied with, will be returned to their authors who will make the required modifications and additions and finalize them for publication.
 - C. Papers deemed unacceptable for publication will be returned to their authors who should not expect reasons for the refusal of their papers.
 - D. Fifty copies of the published paper will be given to the author.
8. Papers published in the Annals may be reprinted, and in such cases reference should be made to the Annals as the original publisher.

ANNALS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS

Issued by the College of Arts, Kuwait University

Volume No. 2, 1981

SEVENTH MONOGRAPH

IN LINGUISTICS

Analysis of Arab Students' Errors in Using

The English Articles

Dr. Nayef Nimir Kharma

Department of English, Kuwait University

ANNALS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS

Issued by the College of Arts, Kuwait University

ORIGINAL MONOGRAPHS IN THE SOCIAL
SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES.

Chief Editor : Khaldoun Al-Naqeeb.

Managing Editor : Abdul Aziz Al-Sayed.

Editorial Assistant : Mahmoud Barakat

Editorial Board

Sa'ad Abdel Rahman

Shafika Bastaki

Abdel Rasoul Al-Musa

Abdallah Ahmad Al-Muhanna

Shaker Mustafa

Rasha Al-Sabah

Abdel Malek K. Al-Tamimi

Fahd Thaqib Al-Thaqib

Price of a single monograph : 500 Fils or U. S. \$2, in Kuwait.

Price of the annual volume :

For individuals : K.D. 2/000 in Kuwait, U. S. \$ 20,00 in all other
Countries (by air).

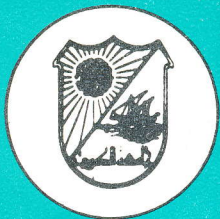
For institutions : K.D. 10 per year in Kuwait.

U. S. \$ 40.00 in all other Countries (by air)

50% Special discount for Faculty & Students.

Mail all communications, including publishing conditions and
Subscriptions to :

The Editor,
ANNALS OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS
P. O. Box : 26585 - KUWAIT.



ANNALS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS

Issued by the College of Arts, Kuwait University

SEVENTH MONOGRAPH
IN LINGUISTICS

Analysis of Arab Students' Errors in Using The English Articles

By

Dr. Nayef Nimir Kharma

Department of English Kuwait University

Volume No. 2, 1981

SECOND EDITION
1987