

**The Study of the English Article System Errors Made
by Secondary School Students in the United Arab
Emirates.**

دراسة الأخطاء في استخدام أدوات المعرفة والنكرة الإنجليزية لدى طلبة

الثانوية بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

By

Student name: Amer Emran Adway

Student ID number : 110014

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Faculty of Education

Dissertation Supervisor

Professor Amanda Howard

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Abstract

The study aims at investigating the errors made by grade 12 students in the use of definite and indefinite articles in one of the secondary schools for boys in Umm Al Quwain (UAQ) Educational Zone . The English articles system can be troublesome for Arab ESL/EFL learners because Arabic language has only a definite article , but it lacks indefinite article. Whereas English language has both definite article and indefinite article. The study attempted to find out the most frequent errors and suggest the teaching and learning strategies need to be applied to address these challenges. However, it is found that most frequent errors made by the sample of the study are intralingual errors which are caused by the wrong and traditional teaching methods of teaching the article system .Therefore, some pedagogical applications were suggested that could help teachers of English to improve students' acquisition of the English article system. It is hoped and recommended that the findings of this study will be utilized in preparing drills to help students improve their ability to use the definite and indefinite articles more appropriately.

Keywords: English article system, error, sources of errors (intralingual errors , and interference errors).

ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الى التعرف على انواع الاخطاء التي يرتكبها طلاب الثاني عشر في استخدام ادوات المعرفة والنكرة الانجليزية في احدى المدارس الثانوية للبنين التابعة لمنطقة ام القيوين التعليمية. ان نظام ادوات المعرفة والنكرة الانجليزية هو يشكل احد المشاكل الشائعة للعرب الدارسين للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية او لغة ثانية. يعود ذلك الى حقيقة ان اللغة العربية تحتوي فقط على اداة تعريف وتفتقر الى اداة نكرة بينما تحتوي اللغة الانجليزية على اداتي معرفة ونكرة. وحاولت هذه الدراسة حصر وايجاد الاخطاء الاكثر تكرارا واقتрحت بعض التطبيقات التربوية لمحاولة التصدي لهذه التحديات والاطفاء. ولقد تم الوصول الى نتيجة مفادها ان اكثر الاخطاء التي ارتكبتها عينة الدراسة هي اخطاء سببها الاساليب غير الصحيحة والتقليدية في تدريس نظام ادوات التعريف الانجليزية. ولهذا تم اقتراح بعض النشاطات التدريسية التي قد تساعد المعلمين لتحسين اكتساب الطلاب لنظام ادوات المعرفة والنكرة. ويؤمل ان تستخدم هذه المقترحات والتطبيقات لتحضير تدريبات تساعد على تحسين امتلاك الطلاب لهذه الادوات واستخدامها بشكل صحيح.

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Dedication:

To the memory of my father,

To my beloved mother Allah keep her safe,

To my mother in law ,

To my wife and children,

To my sincere supervisor ,my Prof Amanda Howard,

To Doctor Mohammed Matar,

To every reader everywhere.

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Chapter One : Introduction

The English articles (*a*, *an* and *the*) are considered to be the most frequent words in English . The article *the* is shown to be the most frequent word in English and *a* to be the fifth most frequent word according to Corpus studies.(Master,2002).And nearly eight and half percent of the English text contains *the* and *a* (Berry,1993). Depending on these statistics, it is obvious that the English articles are a significant part of English language. Furthermore, the English articles have many semantic and syntactic functions. For this reason, they are important functional words. Function words are different from content words in that the later are commonly ignored by learners when processing language mainly for meaning. Moreover, functions words are not usually stressed in speech. Master (2002) explains this fact by stating that articles are usually unstressed which makes them sometimes barely visible in spoken discourse. Consequently, the English articles system is one of the most difficult part of English grammar for the EFL/ESL learners .So, it is not fully acquired by them (Master,1990). Kim and Lakshmanan (2007) say that ESL/EFL learners need more time to acquire the article system than any other grammatical forms. Moreover, Avery and Radisic (2007) claim that L2 learners will never completely master the functional use of the English articles at all. Accordingly, making errors in the use of the English articles is common among EFL/ESL learners of English. For example, a corpus study has been carried out by Han, Chodorow, & Leacock(2006) finds out that thirteen percent of sentences in the essays written by TOEFL students from China, Japan and Russia have article errors. Thomas (1989) points out that other difficulties are resulted from the fact that the article system exists in some languages , but differs greatly from the English article system. He states that the problem becomes worse for the learners whose the languages do not have an equivalent of the English article system. Anderson (1984) agrees with this idea by stating that articles in English create many challenges to the ESL and

EFL learners because of the complication of this system .It is not one- to -one form and meaning relationship. This may cause another kind of difficulties such as L1 interference while L2 is being learned Ellis (1997). Thus, Swan (1994) suggests that learning and teaching the English articles or any other area in English grammar would be better approached depending on the understanding the exact problems of exact learners. After analyzing the errors made by L2 learners of English certain approaches for remedy could be applied such as giving students the opportunities to use the English articles in real life situations (Master ,1990 and 1994, Muranoi, 2002) .

1.1.Statement of the Problem

This study investigates types of errors made by secondary male students in Umm Al-Quwain Educational Zone in the United Arab Emirates in the use of the English definite and indefinite articles. I have noticed as a teacher of English and later as a teacher development specialist(TDS) in the UAE that both students and teachers express concerns over using definite and indefinite article in English. The five teachers whom were interviewed in this study complain that the students make many errors in this regard and sometimes the teacher feels that he/she is unable to find the solutions for this problem. The teachers attribute these errors to the interference of the mother tongue that is Arabic. They have stressed that these errors are resulted from the fact that the system of articles in Arabic differs from the article system in English. According to the teachers, they need to apply certain strategies to overcome this challenge. The interviewed teachers of this study agree that the English articles are considered to be the most frequent words in English. For this reason, the articles are very important functional words. Unfortunately , only one study has been carried out by Crompton (2011) to investigate these errors made by U.A.E Arabic tertiary-level learners of English .So, the lack of research about the errors of using the English articles by the UAE secondary school students in the

U.A.E teaching/learning contexts has encouraged me to explore this problem aiming at finding effective solutions to cope with it.

1.2.Significance of the Study

In general, much research has been done about errors that are made when using definite and indefinite articles by Arab EFL learners when writing or speaking in English such as Abu-Ghararah (1989), Abushihab et al (2011), Alhaysony (2012), Alsulmi (2010), Bataineh (2001), Crompton (2011), El-Sayed (1982), Hamza (2011), Kharma (1981), Kassamany's (2006) and Sarko (2008). However, there has been little research about Arab learners in the U.A.E context. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the second study to be carried out in the U.A.E. The first study has been applied by Crompton(2011) on the students of the American University of Sharjah . As a matter of fact, this study is mainly of great interest to me. Also, it is hoped that it will be a good source for the Ministry of Education teachers in the U.A.E. It could help in identifying the errors more clearly to identify the challenges. It will hopefully help form the basis for another study on the solutions for these challenges in the near future. These difficulties if known would give clues to cope with them by identifying the needed solutions to be generalized in other U.A.E. educational institutions. On the other hand, identifying the sources of errors may help teachers of English to alter priorities, adjust their plans, review and reconsider their teaching strategies. Teachers who recognize these errors and their resources can help students to acquire the English articles easier than those who do not know more about them. Initially, the teacher will be familiar with these errors and the causes behind making them .As a second step he/she will be able to provide proper opportunities for the learners by developing strategies of instruction and assessment for dealing with the English articles to be used accurately in writing and speaking. So, this study aims at investigating the misuse of definite and indefinite articles among Arab speaking learners in the U.A.E and more specifically the secondary schools learners of

English in UMM .AL-Quwain (U.A.Q Educational Zone) and it is meant to be a source for further investigation and research. In addition, involving teachers to express their own views about these challenges and their own views about how to deal with these errors would give more weight to the present study.

1.3.The Research Questions:

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1.What are the most frequent errors "language interference errors and intralingual errors " occur ?
- 2.What teaching and learning strategies need to be applied to address these challenges?

1.4.The Study Hypothesis:

It is hypothesized that the errors made by secondary school students in UAQ in the U.A.E are resulted mainly and with high percentage of frequencies from first language interference which is Arabic. Also, they are resulted from the inadequate learning strategies but with lower percentages.

Chapter two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to the present study such as language acquisition, second language acquisition and the study of errors. This is not intended to be an in-depth review, but this is meant to familiarize the reader with the basic conclusions and findings of the previous studies related to this study.

2.1. Language acquisition theories:

Many theories and approaches have been used to study the process of Language Acquisition (LA). (Piaget (1973), Bloomfield (1914), Chomsky (1976) and Skinner (1957)). It is not possible to cover all these theories in this study because it is mainly about language errors in a very specific grammatical aspect of (LA.) However, mentioning the main theories can be possible to illustrate the most famous and well-known theories. For example, Skinner's (1957) understanding of (LA) process is explained by his behavioural approach which is mainly based on the idea of imitation. He argues that imitation is the process that children use to learn the language. Bloomfield (1914) and Chomsky (1976) find that LA process is mainly related to brain. They argue that the human brain is naturally created for language acquisition and this has been referred to as the innate theory. On the other hand, the cognitive theory of Piaget (1973) agrees with that, but elaborates more by claiming that the language acquisition happens only when there is a cognitive foundation which is developed into stages of cognition. Thus, Piaget relates language acquisition of skills to the cognition stage of the language learner i.e. the age of the learner.

2.2.Second Language Acquisition theories:

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is mostly related to this study. Many theories have emerged in this regard to explain deeply the process of S.L.A. Skinner's(1957) Behaviourism is one of the first theories that tries to explain S.L.A. process. It states that language Acquisition is like a habit formation. According to this theory acquisition a language means acquisition of linguistic habits .This theory ignores totally the mental factor in processing language learning. Accordingly, it has been criticized because it as Johnson (2004)states:

"... undermined the role of mental processes and viewed learning as the ability to inductively discover patterns of rule-governed behavior from the examples provided to the learner by his or her environment" (p.18)

With more emphasis on the role of culture ,Schumann (1978) explains S.L.A as a result of acculturation .He believes that language learning is affected by both the psychological and social factors that are integrated during learning. He insists that when the distance is little between the learner of the second language and the native speaker of this language, learning will be better. This theory could not help a lot in explaining S.L.A , but it tries to give view about one of the solution to make S.L.A efficient and effective. Moving away from the environmental perspectives that are related to S.L.A, Chomsky's (1976) language universal grammar theory depends mostly on his view that language learning is the mirror of mental activities for each individual. His theory does not deal directly with S.L.A, but it affects a great deal many theorists such as Krashen (1978) who is influenced by Chomsky's understanding of language and develops his model which is called "monitor model." In this model, he differentiates between learning and acquisition for the first time. Then, he develops this idea further with his theory that is called "input theory "and more recently "the comprehension hypothesis." In all these hypothesis, Krashen(2004) finds the process of learning is conscious while the acquisition is subconscious and more related to the individual mental processing.

According to Krashen, the grammar rules are acquired in a predictable manner. This theory has been seen as a theory that does not go beyond the grammatical aspect of language. This does not make it able to explain many other aspects concerning S.A.L. Hatch(1978) and Long(1981) are among those who criticized Chomsky's theories of language acquisition by stating that his theories are not sufficient to explain S.L.A. Long and Larsen-Freeman (1991) applied deeper investigation of S.L.A by going beyond the syntactic structure of language to the discourse level. They use free and controlled recorded conversations to explain many ideas related to S.L.A. Swain(1985&1995) criticizes Krashen's and Chomsky's theories and supports the idea of learners' production as a mean of S.A.L acquisition development. She states that when the learner practices language more, (s)he can observe her/his progress and discover what (s)he knows and what (s)he does not know. Another view of language acquisition is the socio-cultural theory that reflects Vygotskian views of language which claims that language learning is seen as a cultural phenomenon that mediates social and psychological interactions. One of the major ideas borrowed from Vygotsky (1978) is the concept of 'scaffolding' or the zone of proximal development(ZPD) that is :

"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers"
(p.86)

This concept emphasizes the importance of assisting the learners by others such as teachers and classmates during the learning process teachers, classmates to help the learners perform a certain learning task. It would not be reasonable to reject or approve all these theories which help a lot in explaining some or all aspects of second language acquisition process. I believe that putting all these theories together would give a border ,deeper and clearer view of S.L.A.

2.3.The History of Contrastive Analysis:

Researchers based most of their studies in the field of Second Language Acquisition(S.L.A) on the Contrastive Analysis theory (CA)during the 60s up to the early 70s. It was first considered as the only approach of investigation of the distinct features between two different languages. This theory was used to explain the difficulties that the learners face when they aim to study the target language. CA was first formulated and adopted as a theory by Lado(1957) who claims that while acquiring the second language ,the learners of the second language tends to compare between the elements or systems in their native language and the target language. He finds that the similar elements are simpler than the different elements. This idea was not exactly novel and new , but Lado (1975) was the first one who developed this suggestion as a design for contrastive studies of languages with procedures, analysis and inclusive scientific treatment .This treatment includes language description, comparison and prediction of the difficulties that the learners may face while acquiring the second language. The main perspective of CA according to Brown (1980) is that: “the principal barrier to second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language system” (p.148)

CA explains the errors made by learners are attributed to the first language negative interference .This interference embeds the appropriate learning process and cause difficulties . Powell(1998) states that the term ‘interference’ is “any influence from the L1 which would have an effect on the acquisition of L2” (p. 2) . Despite the fact that C.A theory is very useful in errors explanation, Hughes (1980) criticizes CA and claims that it looks to the problem of errors from one narrow angle which is L1 interference. He states that many errors that are made by ESL/EFL could not be interpreted in terms of L1 interference.

2.4.The History Error Analysis:

The emergence of error analysis(E.R) at that time during the 60s and 70 gradually impacted the research and studies in the field of SLA. It was first applied by Corder (1967) who stressed that the learners' errors are important to be analyzed to make improvement and reduce errors. Corder (1973) identifies the stages of the process of E.R. The first stage is identifying the errors and investigating the target language itself. The second stage is investigating the teaching processes .The third stage is suggesting the remedy and emphasize the pedagogical implications for improvement.

So, errors analysis as a theory and practice wins the researchers' trust as it paves the way for positive change in language learning. It caused a shift from just compiling errors to remedy them using three stages. Magnan(1983) supports this by stating that:

"...we now view language learning as a series of stages or interlanguages, and errors as positive evidence that learners are experimenting with linguistic rules in order to progress from one interlanguage stage to the next" (p.383).

Thus, ER is not only preventing errors, but it is more learning form errors. Subsequently, attitudes towards error have changed positively during the last 40 years. Therefore, teaching English has changed now by emphasizing the four skills instead of just teaching only grammar which characterized the process of learning English for many years. Essentially, errors could occur when the learners of English focus more on learning English grammar which was seen as a means to an end. Consequently, many errors were made. By time ,the teachers and linguist became very aware of the necessity of the change of focus on grammar when their attitudes changed positively towards making errors .The need becomes urgent to use error analysis which is a systematic process. According to Lu(2010) the process of analyzing errors includes five stages: the first stage is identifying the error by excluding laps from the competence errors. Secondly, analyzing the errors and describing them depending on a grammatical model .The third stage is classifying them into categories and subcategories such as substance errors, text

level errors and discourse level errors. The fourth stage is explaining the sources of errors and why they occur . The fifth stage is evaluating these errors and specifying the most fatal ones then choosing the most effective methods to correct these errors

2.5.What is "an error"?

The term error is mainly used to indicate the violation of a rule that occurs systematically and constantly. According to Klassen,(1991), it refer to a form of structure that the native speaker finds unacceptable and wrongly used in linguistic context. Accordingly, the errors that are made by the learner are different from mistakes. The error is systemic and deep -rooted in the learner's cognition process and practice. Edge (1989) classifies errors separately from "mistakes ,slips and attempts". He stresses that the errors are the key element that negatively affects second and foreign language learning and verbal performance. So, making errors needs attention and remedies as the learners are unable themselves to correct errors as they are unaware of the fact that they are making errors. Thus, errors are a permanent part of the learners' learning process while mistakes are temporary. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) support this fact by pointing out that the error "is a product reflective of his and her current stage of L2 development, or underlying competence"(p.59). Ellis(2008) states that the error represents the learner's lack of knowledge and unawareness of the correct rule or structure. On the other hand, mistakes are just slips in performance and they are easy to be corrected by the learner.

2.6.The Importance of Studying Errors.

A large number of research has been done on error analysis in the field of second language acquisition such as Brown (1980) ,Chacheter and Celce-Murcia (1977) , Corder (1974), Dulay and Burt (1974) , Ellis (1994) , James (1998) and Richards (1971). Reviewing the literature of E.R shows that errors have fascinated researchers and linguists because they are a great challenge to L2 learners and it cannot be ignored . Corder (1967) asserts that errors are a real problem which should be immediately and constantly removed when identified. It is known that the ultimate goal behind learning the language is

mastering it. Making many errors during learning the language could result in negative outcomes ; consequently, this could inhibit learning process in general. Brooks (1960) has a very sharp view as he states that the error is " like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected" (p.58). However, investigating errors in the recent research has become very helpful and beneficial for the learning process . Errors become a tool for remedial teaching and for improving language learning .Corder (1967) emphasizes the importance of errors by stating that :

"They are significant in three different ways. First, to the teacher, in that they show how far towards the goal the learner has progressed. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner is employing in his learning of a language. Thirdly, they are indisputable to the learner himself because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn" (p. 161).

Furthermore, Gass and Selinker (1984) state that errors are very helpful to determine the learner's proficiency level in the studied language. Therefore, diagnostic tests can be better designed to identify the errors made by each individual . Abi Samra (2003) agrees with this view by emphasizing that the errors are a good resource of data that can be used to explore the learning strategies that both the teacher and the learners used when learning the language. Errors that are made by a learner during the learning process of English as a second or foreign language have been studied deeply and intensively. Generally speaking, the errors that are made by learners of the second language could clearly underline the differences that exist between two different languages (the first language and the target language).

2.7.Errors taxonomies:

Categorizing errors into types is the central part of error analysis . Richards'(1971) study of errors paves the way for the actual classifications of errors made by L2 learners of English. According to him errors are classified into three main categories : interference errors cause by the first language of the learners , the interlingual errors caused by the wrong generalisation or incomplete application of L 2 rules and the developmental errors that are resulted from the learner's attempt to build hypotheses depending on inaccurate view of the second language that (s)he learns. But , Selinker (1972) finds Richards' classification a general one. Thus, he elaborates more subcategories to make the classification more detailed .The new thing about his classification are the types of strategies that are used by the learners which lead them to make errors that are communication and learning strategies. James(1998) points out that these strategies occur when the learner attempts to use an estimated form of the essential word needed in the discourse and altering this word into indirect expression. Later on , Richards (1974) makes his classification more concise and classified them into two categories that are : “the interlingual errors” which are caused by the native language interference and the intralingual and developmental errors which are caused during the learning process. Dulay and Burt(1974) also add two more types of errors to Richards'(1974) classification: the unique errors and ambiguous errors. According to them unique errors are those errors that do not reveal L1 structure and also are not established in L1 acquisition system. While the ambiguous errors are those errors that cannot be classified into interference errors or interlingual errors. Brown(1980) suggests another type of errors that is resulted from the context of learning. According to him, this type of error can be caused by the wrong strategies of teaching the teachers apply within the school context. As a final addition, Ellis (1994) claims that another kind of errors can be produced by learners which is called "induced Errors" .He argues that these errors are mainly caused by the

inappropriate application of teaching and more specifically by the unsuitable instructional materials.

2.8.L 2 English article acquisition studies on speakers of foreign languages.

As discussed above, the English article system is a real problem for many learners of English as a foreign language regardless of their proficiency level. Most studies that have been carried out examine the English article system from different perspectives. For example, Venuti's (2011) study is about the aspects of the English articles. It is a partial replication study of Gleason's (2002) which aims at examining nongeneric uses of the English articles that are : the cultural, situational ,structural and textual. The subjects are students from two private schools and one university in Toronto in Canada. The sample of the study is chosen with different proficiency levels : 17 low-intermediate, 20 high intermediate and 34 advanced ESL learners. Then ,the data have been collected by the same testing instrument used in Gleason's (2002) study which is a written test. Instead of being just a quantitative study that supports Gleason's study, Venuti surprisingly finds that the testing instrument of Gleason is inconclusive. This makes him raise a big question about the choice of testing instruments which according to him should be comprehensive to all expected errors may be made when using English article by L2 learners. Unlike Venuti , Khoshgowar's (2010) study is about the errors in contexts. His study is on using English articles in guided conversations by 12 Afghan Dari speakers of intermediate and advanced English learners and who do not have article system in their first language. The data of his study have been collected from recorded conversations that were carried out by them about different topics related to their life, classes and future plans. The recorded conversations have been transcribed and analyzed according to information status, referentiality and various properties of nouns. The results of this study show that the participants are accurate in producing the indefinite articles *a/an* in referential and non-referential contexts that include new information and the definite article *the* in referential context with known information. In terms of the zero article, the

participants show difficulty in producing it accurately , especially in referential contexts. Barret and Chen (2010) choose different contexts. Their study is done on 30 Taiwanese college students to examine their usage of English articles in writing using a corpus based data. The data have been analyzed to examine some features of article system used in students academic writings. It is found that the definite and the indefinite articles are overused while the zero article is mostly ignored. It is concluded that many errors are made due to the lack of understanding of the countable and uncountable nouns relation with the article system. Furthermore, it is recommended that the semantic and pragmatic relationships between specificity and the knowledge of the hearer or the reader should be emphasized when teaching writing to reduce the errors of article usage among L2 learners. Taaj Aldeni (2008) approaches his study differently. He focuses on the psychological aspect of learning the second language. He conducts a study on the role of avoidance strategy and its impact on the use of English articles and the learners' perception of the system . The whole study is built on the hypothesis of the avoidance which hypothesizes that the learners face difficulty in using a different syntactic system while learning L2, they resort to avoidance by escaping from the specific linguistic rules and forms (Ellis , 2003). Taaj Aldeni finds that this strategy explains the great numbers of errors made by the Persian English learners in their course of learning the English articles. He concludes that strategy of avoidance imposes itself on EFL learners. Furthermore, he mentions two main reasons behind these errors that are : 1.The difficulty of the English article system that is full of inconsistency that governs its rules and (2) the deep distinction between L 1 and L2 article system. His study is carried out on 103 male and female Iranian ELT students of B.A .He collected his data by using two tests : The Oxford placement test to determine the linguistic proficiency levels of the participants and the writing test to collect data on using the articles in writing. The results of the first test are homogenized and classified into two levels: an elementary level and a pre-intermediate level. The compositions written by the subjects are analyzed to

identify the errors made by learners when they use the English articles. These errors are classified into: deletion of *the*, inserting of *the*, misusing *the* for *a*, deleting *a* and inserting *a*. The results show that the most frequent error is deleting *the* and the least frequent one is misusing *the* for *a*.

Humphrey (2007) chooses another perspective in studying errors. His study is mainly about the social effect of the learners' culture in learning the language. His study is designed to investigate the ways Japanese learners of English produce English articles. His study has been conducted on high school students and university students. The data have been collected from a test which consists of two sections that contain local contexts. The first section is a passage and the second section consists of short dialogues, multi-sentential and clausal units. In both sections the participants are asked to fill in the missing articles. The findings of the study reveal that the Japanese learners lack the full understanding of the English article usage. He concludes that the Japanese learners use guessing strategies which are not arbitrary. He refers this default of choosing the correct article to their relying on local contextual cues rather than on their understanding of the English article system. Ekiert (2004) applies the same approach of Humphrey (2007) by examining the errors made by learners within the Polish learning contexts. The participants are 25 adult learners divided into 3 groups: 10 Polish ESL learners, 5 Polish EFL learners and 5 native Speakers of English (the control group). All the learners are of different proficiency levels. The data have been collected by giving the participants sets of sentences and then asking the participants to insert articles if necessary. The rationale Ekiert (2004) uses in his study is based on Gleason's (2002) view which states that providing the testers with spaces to fill in with the missing articles will lead the students of low abilities to think that they should fill in with *a* or *the* and this would affect the test's reliability. Unlike the studies that have been mentioned so far, Milton's (2001) study is purely quantitative. It does not investigate any kind of social, psychological and linguistic explanation. He lists the percentages of the types of errors depending

on a corpus-based data examining errors made by the students of Hong Kong University . His corpus-based data reveal that the misuse of the English article system is one of the top ten most frequent errors made by the learners. Errors such as using zero article instead of indefinite article, indefinite article for zero article, definite article for zero article and definite article for indefinite article are found the most frequent errors. Also, the study of Sarani (2003) and White (2003) are mainly based on the quantitative method to examine types of errors. However, both studies have very contrasted results .For example, Sarani's study is applied on 40 Iranian undergraduates in terms of articles usage based on a filling in test . The results show that most errors are due to the complexity of English article system rather than the negative transfer of L1. Whereas White's (2003) study is conducted on a Turkish speaker ; and he reaches the conclusion that the errors of article omission is more frequent because of the negative effect of L1. He attributes this to the fact that Turkish language uses *bir* which means "one" to express specificity and lacks any article that marks the indefiniteness.

2.10.L 2 English article acquisition studies on Arabic speaking learners.

Much research has been done on errors made by Arab learners in the field of the English article system ,for example, Abu-Ghararah (1989) , Abushihab et all (2011), Alhaysony (2012) , Alsulmi (2010), Bataineh (2001), Crompton (2011), El-Sayed (1982), Hamza (2011), Kharma (1981) Kassamany (2006) and Sarko (2008) . Very recently ,Alhaysony (2012) has conducted a case study on 100 Saudi female undergraduates who study English as a major .His study is on the types of errors made by them when using the English articles . Her study is based on the surface structure taxonomies that are used in classifying the errors. She collects data by asking her students to write life-related descriptive topics .Based on (SST) analysis, the results show that the subjects make many omission errors and few substitutions errors .In terms of omission error type, the omission of *a* is the most frequent error type while the

omission of *an* is the least frequent one. Additionally, her study concludes that the native language interference that is of Arabic plays a great role in the occurrence of these errors in addition to the strategies of instruction when teaching the English errors. So, she stresses that teachers should be aware of the differences between L1 and L2 while teaching the English articles. Crompton's study(2011) agrees with this conclusion but his study has been conducted on Arabs from different Arab countries. He has conducted a study on the students of the American University of Sharjah in the UAE .His data have collected of different nationalities. These essays are regular assignments submitted by students. Then , the data are analyzed to identify type of errors made by the subjects of the study in terms of article usage. It is found that the most frequent error is the misuse of the definite article “for generic reference”. He concludes that most errors are L1 interference errors rather than interlingual errors. Another supportive study to this view is the study of Abushihab et al (2011). He has conducted a study that aims at classifying the grammatical errors made by the Jordanian EFL learners from the English department in Azzytona University in Jordan .This study has been carried out on 62 students who study English literature and translation. The results show that 75 errors are made in the use of the English article out of the total number of errors which is 345. He finds out that the most frequent error is the omission of *the* and the least frequent error is the addition of *the* .Additionally, the study reaches a conclusion that the difference between Arabic language and English language in terms of the articles system causes these errors. Furthermore, the strong impact of L1 interferences contributes negatively in causing these errors. Sarko (2008) reaches the same conclusion , but he includes other EFL learners who speak French to solidify his hypothesis of the Arabic language interference. He investigates the influence of the presence of *al* which is the Arabic definite article on the acquisition of the article system of English. He also includes French speaking learners in his research to make a comparison between the acquisition of English article system by Arabic speakers and

English speakers. He does so because French is similar to English in terms of having a definite article and an indefinite article while Arabic has only a definite article. His study is conducted on EFL learners of English of different proficiency levels. He concludes that the French speaking learners show more progress in learning the article system regardless their proficiency level compared to Syrian learners who speak Arabic. He summarizes the results of his study by stating that:

“It seems that absence of an overt morphological form for the indefinite article with singular nouns in the L1 hinders the acquisition of the corresponding morphological category in the L2 by L1 Syrian Arabic speakers and conversely, presence of indefinite article in the L1 (French), facilitates the process of acquisition”(p. 113)

Kassamany's(2006) study is another study that supports and agrees with the view of the first language's impact on the use of the English system by Arab learners of EFL. However, his method is different because he examines the learners in a written translation and elicitation task. Her study has been done on students of the preparatory program at the University of Beirut. The results show that the Arab learners do not tend strongly to vary the use of *the* and *a* in "non-referential indefinite contexts" . Additionally, the study stresses that idea that most errors made by the Arab learning when using the English articles are due to the interference of Arabic and the difficulty of the English article system. In fact, Kharma(1981) is one of the pioneers who supports this view. His study confirms the idea of the language interference aspect in the learning process of the English article system. He conducts a study on the use of the English articles by the Arab learners of English in Kuwait .The study results indicate that most errors made by them are due to the Arabic language interference. However, he states that other errors could be resulted from the strategies used in learning the second language such as overgeneralization and inadequate instruction.

The other contrastive view that errors are resulted more from the inadequate learning strategies is found in other studies such as Hamza (2011) did a study on Iraqi students in terms of the English article use. His study is conducted on 40 undergraduates students whose specializations are History and Arabic. He collects data using multiple choice and cloze tests. Then the data are analyzed to examine the types of errors using formula of percentages and Chi-A square test. The study findings reveal that the sources of errors is more intralingual than transferable . The study suggests that students should be given more opportunities to use English articles within English contexts . Alsulmi's (2010) study is very similar in terms of conclusion , but it is totally different in the sample chosen and the method used. He conducts a study on 24 undergraduate male students at Al Qasim University in Saudi Arabia .The aim of the study is to find whether the errors made by the L2 learners are mainly resulted from L1 negative interference or from the learning strategies that are used to acquire the English articles. The data are collected by a multiple choice test consisting of 70 short dialogue. Then the participants of his study are asked to comment on their choices by stating the reason behind each choice . The findings reveal that the errors that are made as a result of the wrong teaching and learning strategies are more frequent than those which are resulted from the Arabic language negative interference. More specifically, the results support the theory of Dulay and Burt (1980) that states that when learners are intensively exposed grammar learning of the target language ,the influence of L1 is reduced especially if they make progress in learning the rules of L2 grammar. Thus, It is concluded that learners' errors are developmental and overgeneralization ones compared to L1 interference errors. This view is very similar in view and results to Bataineh(2005) who carried out a study on Jordanian learners who study English at the University of Jordan .Her study is an investigation of the most type of errors that are made by Jordanian EFL learners in using the indefinite article .The results show that most errors are developmental errors such as overgeneralization and simplification .These errors are attributed to the

wrong learning strategies. For example, the deletion of the indefinite article is the only L1 interference error that is identified in the study .

Reviewing holistically the studies that have been conducted on the errors made by the Arab Learners of English would show that they are extremely controversial .For example, Studies such as Kharma (1981) , El-Sayed (1982) , Sarko (2008), Kassamany (2006) , Crompton (2011), Abushihab et all (2011) and Alhaysony (2012) indicate that the language interference is the main cause of the wrong use of the English article system. On the other hand studies of Abu-Ghararah (1989) , Hamza (2011) , Alsulmi , (2010) and Bataineh (2001) show that the source of errors in the English articles system is due to the learning strategies that are used by students .Both the two extremely views do not meet to explain the occurrence of the errors. One way to interpret this contradiction in results is taking into consideration many other variables such as the proficiency level of the students chosen as a sample of the study, the age, the learning strategy used in teaching, the teacher's professional level and the method used by the researcher of the study. In order to obtain some reasonable results that do not lead to contradiction all these variables should be taken into account and measured adequately. Depending solely on one variable or one method of investigation would result in reaching different conclusions. To sum up, it is clear that these studies reflect two conclusions about the source of errors in the English articles learning process , but they are all carried out in different contexts using different tools of investigation. .I believe that this difference in results is natural and healthy. It paves the way for more understanding of the English article system acquisition by Arab learners from all angles. Moreover, it makes the future research more possible and valid. Taking into consideration all the conditions used in these studies when conducting future research will help in having a very comprehensive view about this field of language learning.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The present study applies both qualitative and quantitative method on a sample of Umm AL Quwain (U.A.Q) secondary public school students of two different proficiency level. It is meant to triangulate the methods used to insure obtaining credible results as possible. Denzin (1978) was the first one to use the term " triangulation " to explain how the search methods are brought together in an complementary way .This process of triangulation includes gathering data ,comparing results and interpretation to best answer the research questions. (Morse, 1991). Therefore, the present study follows this method which is found effective and fruitful. So, the aim is to investigate in a triangulating way the source of errors that are made in the use of the English article system by Arab learners from different nationalities including the Emirati students .The next chapter will be mainly on the method used to achieve this aim. To answer the research questions, I used a test and interviews to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The subjects of the present study includes 50 English male students from (U.A.Q) Educational Zone and 5 English teachers. I administered a test for students on the definite and the indefinite articles both multiple choice and cloze test. In addition, I carried out interviews with 5 teachers at one of the secondary schools in U.A.Q. They provided me with useful input on how remedial plans should be approached when dealing with errors in the use of the definite and the indefinite articles.

3.1.The population of the study:

The population of the study is all grade 12 male students at U.A.Q public secondary schools. The following table shows the distribution of grade 12 students in U.A.Q secondary education schools for males.

Table(1): the population of the study

Name of the school	Number of grade 12 male students
Al Amir school-males	134
AlRae'fa	24
Al Falaj	22
Total	180

The participants of this study are 50 male students from one of U.A.Q secondary schools. The students were chosen randomly depending on accessibility .They are from both Art and science sections and they aged between 17-18 years. 5 teachers are chosen who are professional of a long experience in the field of teaching. Besides, they have good knowledge of the UAE context and they all worked as teachers in the UAE for a long time. They are all high school English teachers who worked more than five years in the UAE. They all have a long experience as EFL teachers and have attended many of seminars on methodology. In addition, they are MOE teachers in a school of Madares AL Ghad (MAG) schools that are sponsored by the specialized school department at the U.A.E .Ministry of Education. MAG is an educational reform project started in 2007. So, the interviewed teachers are continuously being trained on weekly basis by Madares Al Ghad staff who work in the same school including two development specialists and instructional leadership coordinator whose roles are to train teachers and carry out professional development session on weekly basis.

The number and the type of participants in the survey are shown in Table 2 below:

Table (2) The sample of the study:

No	Participants	Males
1-	teachers	5
2-	students	50

Table (2) shows that the number of teachers who have participated in the study is 5 male teachers who are all Arabs from various nationalities that are: Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrian and Jordanian. They had long experience in teaching English as a foreign language in the Arab world. Most of them have a long experience in teaching English as a foreign language that ranged between 5 to 30 years.

Table (3): Demographic data of teachers who participated in the study

	Teaching Experience			
Gender	0-5 years	6-10 years	10-20 years	More than 20 years
Males (5)	1	2	2	0

Table (4): Demographic data of students who participated in the study (n=50)

Nationalities					
Section	Emirati	Palestinian	Egyptian	Jordanian	Syrian
Arts (25)	10	3	8	1	3
Science (25)	7	6	7	1	4
Total	17	9	15	2	7

Table (4) shows that the number of students who have participated in the study is 50 from both the grade 12 Arts and Science sections. The students are from various nationalities that included Emirati, Jordanian, Egyptian, Yemeni and Syrian. I have limited the study to male students from one school because, as a male teacher, it is difficult to visit female schools as only female teachers teach in public secondary schools of girls and male teachers teach in public secondary school of boys. On selecting students, I have made sure that it is a sample of convenience. Also, participation in the study was voluntary

3.2.Instrument of Data Collection

This study aims at investigating the errors made by students in government high school English classes in UM AL Quwain (UAQ). To achieve the purpose of this study and the purposes of triangulation, data were collected from the two tests the multiple choice test which consists of 28 questions including a cloze test to be filled in with the correct articles. The answers were analyzed to determine frequencies and percentages for each type of error in the two tests. The percentages were also calculated and the results were presented in quantitative tables and histograms. Then , the results of the two tests were supported by more qualitative data including quotes from the interviews with

the five teachers of English in one secondary education school in U.A.Q educational zone. The participating students constituted about %70 of all high school English grade 12 students in Um Al Quwain secondary school for males. I also conducted interviews with the five English Language teachers teaching in a high school for males. Those teachers have provided me with a clear picture of teaching articles challenges and the way how article teaching is approached in their classes. They agreed to do the interviews and answer the questions about the study topic .

3.2.1.Data Collection:

After getting the permission from the school principal, I collected the data from students and teachers in November 2012, during the English teaching lessons. After each lesson an interview with a single teacher was conducted . All teachers were supportive and cooperative. And notes were taken while teachers were responding to my questions. So, I did not record or video tape any interview to respect their privacy and confidentiality. In terms of the students' tests, they were administered in November , 2012 with the help of the teachers at school. The participants were informed about the purposes of the study , and they were informed that would not cause any risk for them whatsoever. It was made clear for them that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous.

3.3.Design of the Instruments

This study was mainly designed to identify the students' errors in using the English definite article and the indefinite articles and to explore teachers' attitudes over a variety of issues that are related to article teaching and learning strategies. To gather information from the participants, I used two research tools : interviews and a test.

3.3.1.Interviews:

Interviews are normally tools for collecting data that are used to smooth the progress of the interactive discussion between participants of the study and the researchers.(Fasick, 2001) . To insure that the interviews will be properly conducted , I followed certain procedures. First, I asked very clear and direct questions. Moreover, the teachers were given the chance to express opinions freely and openly. Also, I chose the time that suited the teachers to participate in the interview without making this a heavy burden on them. I tried to be as friendly as possible with them by clarifying to them that the responses are for study purpose. In addition, the teachers were informed that they can withdraw or decline the interview whenever they wish. The interviews were conducted in November, 2012 in the computer room of school during the break. Each interview lasted for about 20 minutes.

The interview form was made up of three parts (see Appendix 1). The first part gathers information about teachers in terms of name, nationality, teaching grades, and teaching experience. This kind of information might help in deciding the credibility of their responses. The second part consists of four questions which teachers were asked to respond in details .In the first questions, teachers were asked to tell if teaching the English article system is a challenging task for secondary school teachers or not. The second question is about the teaching techniques they use in teaching the English articles. The third questions deals with the most noticeable errors students make in terms of

the English article system. Finally , the fourth questions is about the teaching and learning strategies that help in reducing the students' misuse of the English article system. In the third section teachers were asked to write any additional comments .

3.3.2. Tests:

Two-question test is designed for students: the first question is a multiple choice test and the second question is a cloze test in which the participants were asked to fill in the missing articles. The test consists of 28 multiple choice questions (see Appendix 2).The first question asks the students to choose the correct answer from four given alternatives that are the definite *the* ,indefinite article *a*, the indefinite article *an* and *no article needed*. The second question is a cloze test which is a local context passage. The students are required to fill in the removed words that are the definite article *the* ,indefinite articles *a*, *an* or just leave the space blank when no article is needed.

3.3.2.1. Validity and Reliability of the Tests:

According to Al Agha (1996) the valid test should measure what it is exactly supposed to measure. Regarding reliability , it is another significant element that examines the quality of the test and its consistency. Gay (1987) defines reliability of the test as the degree of consistency of the test measurement regardless what it measures. To ensure the tests' validity and the reliability , the whole test was sent by email to a jury of 5 educators and specialists in English language and methodology. Some changes were applied according to the jury's feedback and recommendations. This was made to make sure that the tests were designed to cover all expected errors of the subjects of the study.

3.3.2.2.The Statistical Analysis of the Tests

Chi -Square test and formula of percentage have been applied to analyze and discuss the errors made by students in two sections of two proficiency levels: the Science section and the Art section. According to their results in the grade 11 science students achieved higher than those of the Art sections in English. This was the basis of deciding that the science section students are of a higher proficiency level than the Art section students.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

4.1.The identification of errors types made by students:

The analysis contains the percentages of the students wrong answers regarding the two tests applied. The errors that were analyzed are classified into the following errors:

1.Interference errors :the errors that resulted from Arabic interference when *the* is chosen wrongly by students as the answer among other alternatives *a.an* , *no article*.

2.Intralingual or developmental errors : the errors that are resulted from inappropriate learning strategies that are developed during the time of learning the English article systems. These errors are classified into the following categories and subcategories:

A. Substitution errors: These errors were classified into the following :

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1.Substution <i>a</i> with <i>an</i> . | 2.Substution <i>an</i> with <i>a</i> . |
| 3.Subsitution <i>the</i> with <i>a</i> . | 4.Subsitution <i>the</i> with <i>an</i> . |
| 5.Subsitution <i>no article</i> with <i>a</i> . | 6.Subsitution <i>no article</i> with <i>an</i> . |

B. Omission errors that include:

- 1.Deleting *the* when it is needed
- 2.Deleting *a* when it is needed
- 3.Deleting *an* when it is needed.

The students were randomly chosen from sections on the following basis:

Table (5): The distribution of the students chosen for the study according to streams:

Stream	Number of students
Art	25
Science	25

Table (5) illustrates the number of all errors recorded in the two educational stream sections as results of the test that was applied. From each stream 25 students were chosen from different sections. The test has two sections multiple choice part questions and cloze-test part. It consists of 28 items . Thus, the overall number of the answers if they were all answered correctly would be 700 .

Histogram (1) :The frequencies of errors in the two streams:

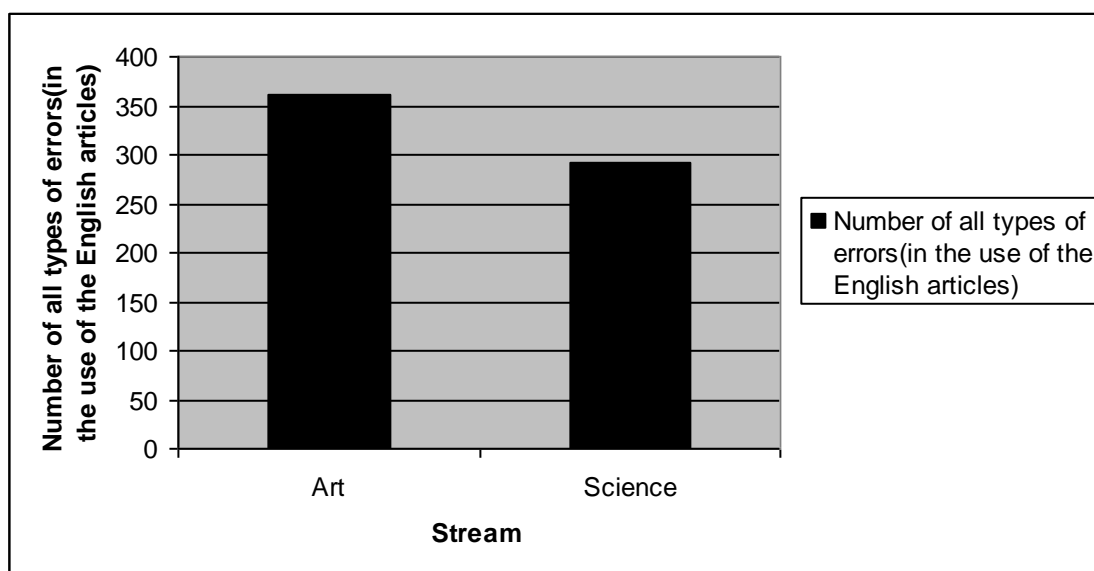


Table (6) : The frequencies and percentages of errors in the two streams:

Stream	Frequencies of errors(in the use of the English articles)	Percentage
Art	362	% 51.7
Science	292	% 41.7

Depending on the results, table (6) shows that the student of the science stream sections have low percentage of making errors than those of the Art stream sections. This indicates that although the percentage is not very high among the students in the science section, they still make errors in the use of the English article. The teachers of English state that the system of the English article is one of the difficult systems in English and this is very clear in the ongoing and the summative exams. They add that this is even more noticeable in writing exams. They elaborate more by saying that the problem becomes worse with the students of the Art sections who practice inappropriate learning strategies in addition to the difficulty of the English article system .Three of the interviewed

teachers think that the impact of Arabic language as a first language is very clear too because Arabic language does not have indefinite article. They think that this is one of the reasons why students in both streams make many errors. In addition, two teachers stress that the curriculum of grade 12 lack the appropriate exercises on the English article system. They think that this issue deserves more attention when designing the syllabus.

Taking each results separately regarding the educational stream as a variable would prove that each group has different statistical results . The number of the expected correct answers was 350 and the number of the expected wrong answers was 350. Applying Chi-Square test reveals the following findings:

Table (7): The results of the Art stream students using by Chi-square:

Stream	Number of correct answers	Number of errors	Chi-square	percentage
Art	338	362	0.82	%51.

As seen in Table (7) Chi-square test was applied on this sample and it records (0 .82) as a computed value and when it is compared to the table value which is (3.8) with(1) as a degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, there are no statistical significance differences between what is observed and what is expected. This implies that the responses of the Art sections students support the idea that both the first language interference and the learning strategies have an impact on the acquisition of the English article system.

Moreover, the percentage of the errors that they made is almost close to the expected percentage which is normally %50. Teachers of English who teach these sections state that some elements such as students' slow progress in English in the previous years and the lack of motivation among Art students could be the main factors that negatively affect the whole learning process.

Table(8): The results of the science stream students using by Chi-square:

Stream	Number of correct answers	Number of errors	Chi-square	percentage
Science	408	292	19.2	% 41.1

As shown in table (8) Chi- square test was applied on the this sample and it records(19.22) as a computed value and when it is compared to the table value which is (3.8) with(1) as a degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a statistical significance difference between what is observed and what is expected. This implies that although language interference and learning strategies play the great role on the acquisition of the English article system, the science students showed lower percentage of errors than what is expected which is normally %50. It is believed that applying appropriate learning strategies would help to reduce the impact of the first language interference. Teachers of English say that science section students normally interact

positively during the learning process and this could help in making the whole learning process successful to a certain degree.

4.1.The identification of errors types that made by students:

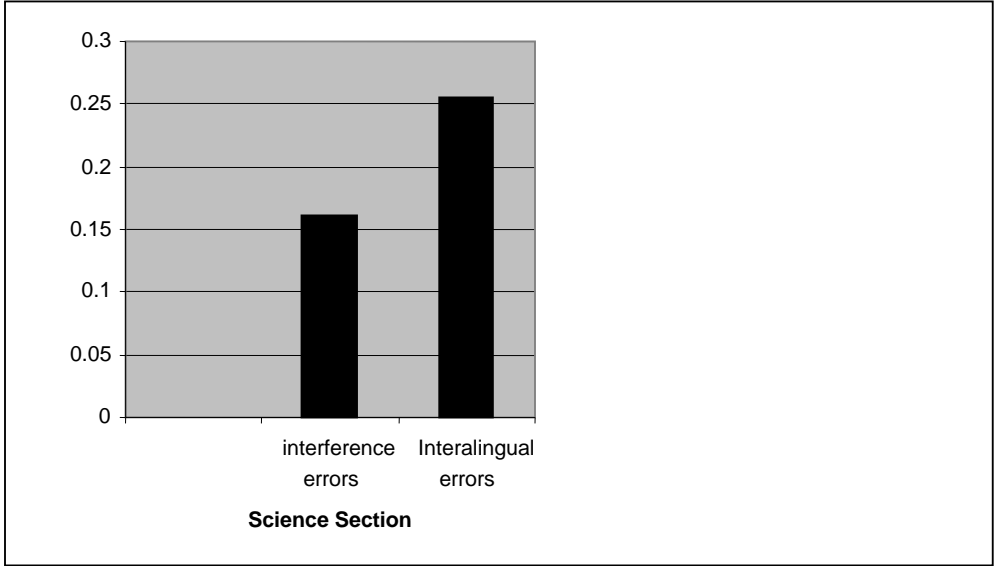
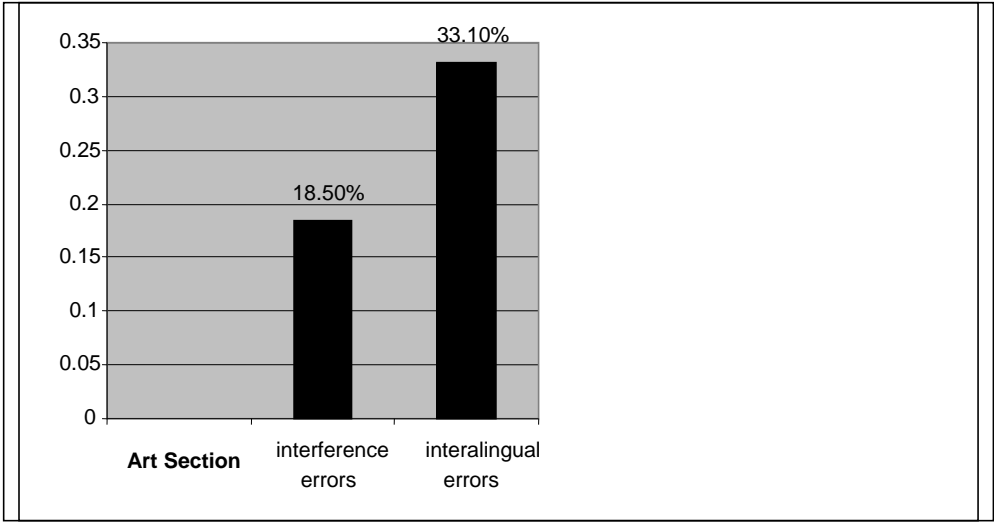
Interference errors that are resulted from the first language interference is mainly the addition of *the* when it is not needed. Arabic language has a definite article equivalent to *the* but does not have indefinite articles. On the other hand, substitution and omission of *the,an,a* are considered as interlingual errors that are resulted from the inappropriate learning process and lack of knowledge or understanding of the English article rules.

Table (9): Types of errors made by Art students and Science students.:

Art Section	Number of errors	Percentage	Science section	Number of errors	Parentage
interference errors	130	%18.5	interference errors	113	%16.1
interlingual errors	232	%33.1	Interlingual errors	179	%25.5
Total	362		total	292	

As it is illustrated in table (9), the types of errors made by students of Art sections are mainly first language interlingual errors. This supports the idea that the negative effect of inappropriate learning strategies used to acquire the English article system is more dominant than the negative effect of language interference. Similarly, students of the Science section score lower percentage of interference errors than interlingual errors. However, the percentages of the errors made by the students of the science sections are lower than those of the Art students in the two types of errors. The reason behind reducing the number of errors of the Science sections was due to the appropriate learning strategies.

Histogram (2): The percentages of errors in the two streams:

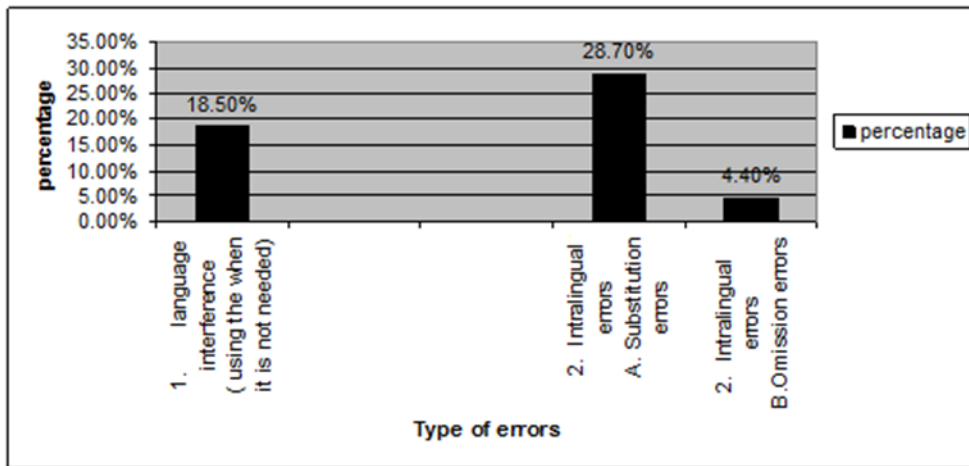


Table(10) : Types of errors made by Art students

Type of errors	Number of errors	percentage
language interference (using <i>the</i> when it is not needed)	130	% 18.5
2. Interlingual errors		
A. Substitution errors	201	% 28.7
B. Omission errors	31	% 4.4

It is clear that substitution errors are more frequent than the omission errors. According to these findings , it is concluded that students choose to answer the questions having in mind that any noun phrase should be preceded by an article regardless the contextual situation that determine whether the article should be used or not. This could be resulted from the fact that the lack of knowledge of the English article rules and the lack of the understanding of the context are some reasons behind making errors. Teachers of English agree that one of the main challenges of acquisition the English article system is its difficulty . They think that would lead to the students' wrong choices.

Histogram (3) :Percentages of types of errors made by Art students



Table(11):Substitution errors made by Art students

Type of error	Frequencies of error	Percentage
A. Substation <i>an</i> with <i>a</i>	24	%3.4
B .Substitution <i>a</i> with <i>an</i>	32	%4.5
C .Substitution <i>the</i> with <i>a</i>	63	% 9
D. Substitution <i>the</i> with <i>an</i>	35	%5
E .Substitution <i>no article</i> with <i>a</i>	31	% 4.4
F. substitution <i>no article</i> with <i>an</i>	16	% 2.2

It is apparent that substituting *an* with *a* is the least frequent error whilst substituting *the* with *a* is the most frequent error. This indicates that students

have a problem deciding the indefiniteness in English language since Arabic language is totally different from English in terms of the indefiniteness marking system. Indefiniteness in Arabic is not marked by an article. Instead ,it is conveyed by using *tanween* (nunation) with the noun phrase . This causes a lot of confusion among Arab EFL learners. According to the interviewed teachers, the lack of understanding the rules of the head noun pre-modifiers adds more to this problem.

Histogram (4): Percentages of substitution errors made by Art students

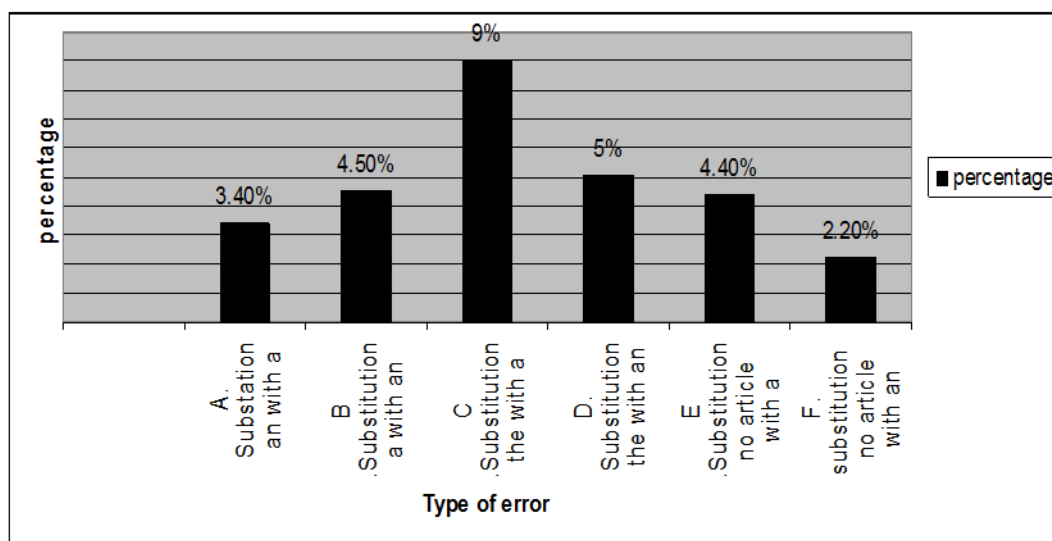


Table (12): Omission errors made by Art students.

Type of omission error	Frequency of errors	percentage
1.Deleting <i>the</i> when it is needed	15	% 2.1
2.Deleting <i>a</i> when it is needed	10	% 1.4
3.Deleting <i>an</i> when it is needed.	6	%0.8

It is obvious that the deletion of *the* when it is needed is the most frequent error and the deletion of *an* is the least frequent error. This supports the fact that misusing *the* as a determiner or pre-modifier of the noun phrase is one of the

most common errors among EFL learners .The appropriate choice depends ultimately on the knowledge of the English article rules such as adding *the* when the head noun is followed by relative pronoun , adding *the* when the noun is referred to in the context...etc.

Histogram (5) :Percentages of omission errors made by Art students.

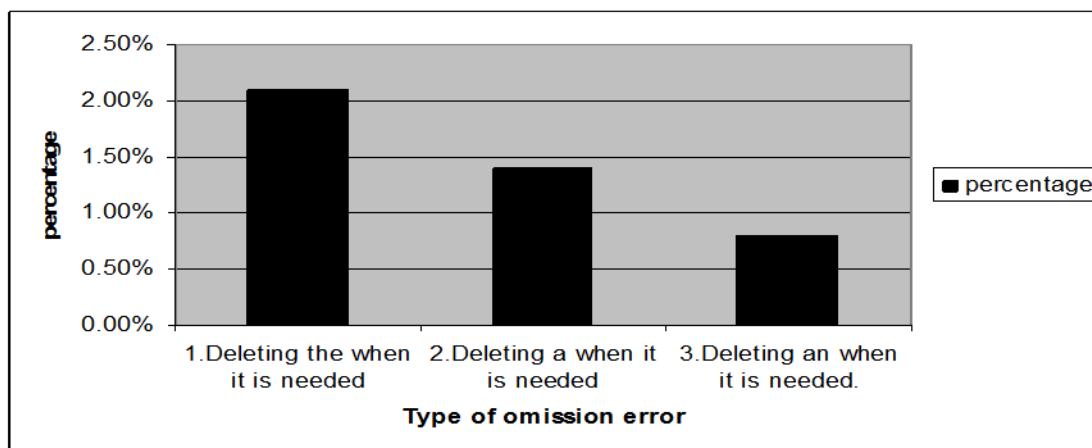


Table (13) :Types of errors made by Science students

Type of errors	Number of errors	percentage
1.language interference (using the when it is not needed)	113	%16.1
2.Intralingual errors	150	%21.4
a. Substitution errors		
b. Omission	29	% 4.1

It is clear that substitution errors are more frequent than the omission errors. According to these findings , it is concluded that students of science sections

have the same tendency of answering the questions rather than leaving them unanswered. This supports the idea of the difficulty of the English article system which affects students' choices. It is concluded that Arab EFL students, regardless their proficiency level, make errors due to the difficulty of the English article system and first language interference. However, this degree of difficulty could be reduced when appropriate learning strategies are applied. Yet, applying adequate learning strategies does not eliminate totally making errors.

Histogram (6) : Percentages types of errors made by Science students

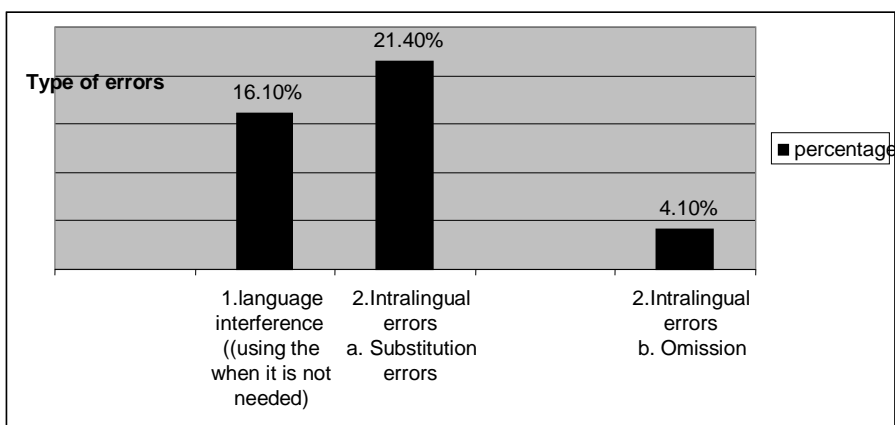


Table (14) :substitution errors made by Science students.

Type of error	Frequencies of error	Percentage
Substitution <i>an</i> with <i>a</i>	11	%1.5
b. Substitution <i>a</i> with <i>an</i>	30	% 4.2
c. Substitution <i>the</i> with <i>a</i>	39	5.5%
d. Substitution <i>the</i> with <i>an</i>	29	%4.1
e. Substitution <i>no article</i> with <i>a</i>	26	3.7%
f. substitution <i>no article</i> with <i>an</i>	15	2.1%

Depending on the results shown in table (14) , it is clear that the most frequent substitution error made by science students is substitution *the* with *an*. This is exactly the most frequent substitution error made by Art students. This supports the idea that students have a problem with definiteness and indefiniteness which is not the same case in Arabic. To add, the inadequate learning processes of the learners causes more confusion. So, overgeneralization or incomplete acquisition of the L2 rules are real challenges which hinder the acquisition of the English article system.

Histogram (7) : percentages of substitution errors made by Science students.

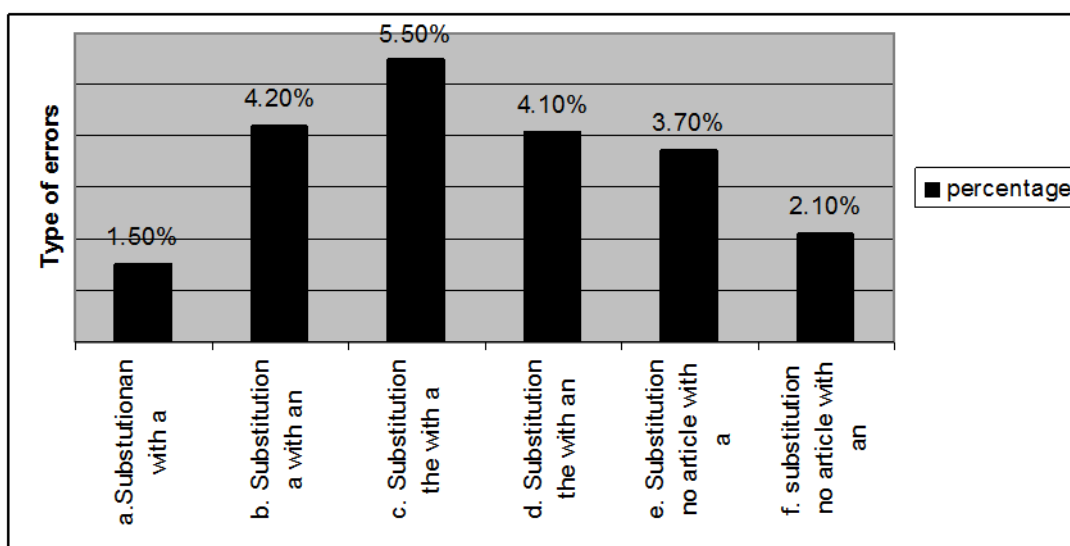
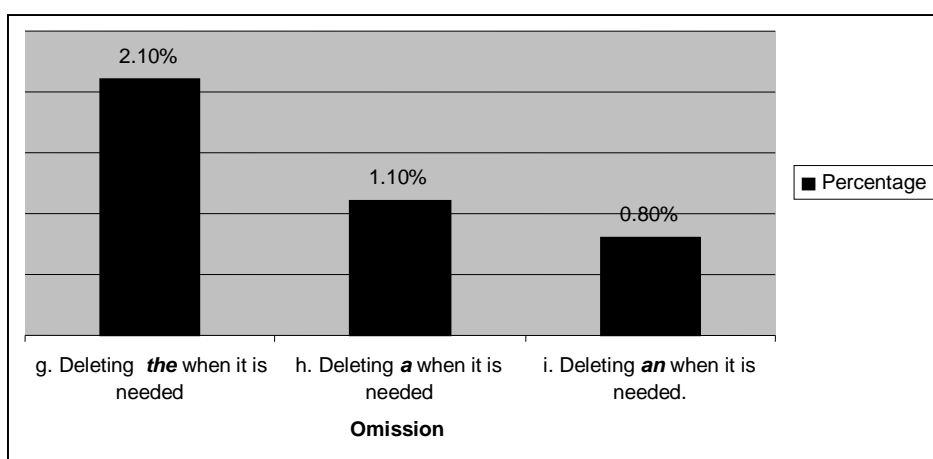


Table (15) omission errors made by science students.

3.Omission		
g. Deleting <i>the</i> when it is needed	15	%2.1
h. Deleting <i>a</i> when it is needed	8	%1.1
i. Deleting <i>an</i> when it is needed.	6	%0.8

It is clear from table (15) that shows that deleting *the* when it is needed was the most frequent error made by Science students . This provides another solid evidence that misusing *the* as a determiner or pre-modifier of the noun phrase is one of the most common errors among EFL learners. No being able to apply the English article rules in learning contexts is a reflection of the students' lack of knowledge and practice. Teachers of English say that less practice of the rule in real situation is one of the challenges that hinder the total mastery of the use of the English articles by Arab EFL learners including high achievers .

Histogram (8) : Percentages of omission errors made by Science students.



Chapter Five : Discussion and Conclusion.

This chapter discusses the study's results that could answer the following questions:

- 1.What are the most frequent errors "language interference errors and interlingual errors " occur ?
- 2.What teaching and learning strategies need to be applied to address these challenges?

Before going deep in the results of the study that could have answered the first question, it could be essential to briefly discuss the two contrastive article systems of English and Arabic which will lead to the exploration of the positive and negative impact of Arabic when learning the English definite and indefinite articles.

5.1.A.English Article System VS Arabic Article system.

Generally speaking ,SLA research on the acquisition of the English article system divides languages into two types : the languages that have article system [+article] and the languages that lack the article system [-article].Arabic is one of the languages that has a definite article system , but it does not have indefinite article as a marker of indefiniteness (Schulz, 2004). Whereas, the English articles are two categories: definite *the* and the indefinite *a* or *an* . The definite article system is used as determiners prior to the noun and they function as adjectives. When *the* is used before the noun, the speaker or the writer indicates that the noun's identity is known by the reader or the listener. Using *a* or *an* indicates the identity of the noun is unknown or it is general. Studies on the English language articles system acquisition such as Enc (1990), Ionin (2004) and Lyons (1999) discuss deeply the relation between the NP and the definite and indefinite articles in terms of the specificity and definiteness. The first thing noticed when the children of L1 and the L2 learn the English articles

is that there association of articles to the specificity and definiteness. The use of *the* to refer to specific and unspecific things. This is the marking system they depend on when expressing the state of the noun phrase. Therefore, most errors made when acquiring article system refer to the overuse or the omission of the definite article *the* in different contexts where learners mix between specificity and definiteness. So, Specificity is one of the semantic features that is related to the speaker's or the writer's knowledge without paying a great attention to the hearer's or the reader's knowledge of this entity. Ko et al (2008) stresses that "Specificity is a semantic feature that makes reference to the knowledge state of the speaker concerning a uniquely salient discourse referent" . (p.118). When the noun phrase is specific , we say that “there is a particular object which the speaker is thinking of as motivating the choice of description” (Lyons , 1999, p.166) . Ionin supports this by stating that:

“ If a determiner phrase of the form [D NP] is +specific, then the speaker intends to refer to a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP, and considers this individual to possess some noteworthy property” (2004, p.326) .

Although this idea of specificity is straight forward and clear there is an ongoing debate about the relationship between specificity and definiteness. Some linguists see that specificity is related to definiteness such as Enc (1990) who asserts that all "definites" should be specific and it is impossible that the noun phrases to be unspecific if they are definite. However, Ionon (2003) looks at this case in a different way. He believes that the overt morphology is more responsible than semantic features in deciding whether the noun phrase is definite or not through encoding definiteness.

The following example shows the difference between specificity and definiteness:

I am searching for a business man, but I can't find him (indefinite but specific)

I am searching for a business man but I can't find one (indefinite and non-specific)

The noun phrase **business man** is marked as indefinite but it is specific in the first example and non specific in the second .

I found the food which I like. (definite but non-specific)

I found the food that you told me about. (definite and specific)

In term of definiteness, Ko et al (2008) defines definiteness as “ a semantic feature which makes reference to the knowledge state of both the speaker and the hearer concerning a unique discourse referent” (p.118). Lyons (1999) emphasizes the role of definiteness as he believes that definiteness is crucial in helping the hearer to organize his information in any discourse. Consequently, it makes all the components of the discourse such as concepts and distinction connect and interact to form a structure of communication .

To conclude, definiteness is more related to the use of *a* or *the* , but specificity is a feature that is more determined by the actual discourse that occurs between the speaker and the hearer rather than the existence or the absence of the definiteness marker *the*. Simply, there are two categories of the English system: definite *the* and the indefinite *a* or *an* which are used as determiners prior to the noun and they function as adjectives. When *the* is used before the noun, the speaker or the writer indicates that the noun’s identity is known by the reader or the listener. Using *a* or *an* indicates the identity of the noun is unknown or it is general. There are cases when there is no need for using definite or indefinite articles before the noun. *The* is a definite article that is used before both singular and plural countable and uncountable nouns whereas *a* and *an* are

indefinite articles. *a* is an indefinite article that is used before a singular countable noun that starts with a consonant sound or a vowel sound like a consonant and *an* is used before a singular noun which starts with a vowel or a mute (h). The countable nouns refer to things that can be counted. These things can be either singular or plural whereas the things that cannot be counted are called uncountable nouns and they are always singular.

Unlike the English language, Arabic has only definite article *al* which is the equivalent definiteness marker of the English *the*. Thus, most focus in the Arabic article system is on the differences between definiteness and indefiniteness rather than definiteness and specify which is the case in the English article system.. Smith (2001) states that two definite articles in Arabic and English are similar in the they refer to nouns which were indefinite and mentioned previously in the discourse and for unique nouns. However, he adds that the negative transfer causes problems that are resulted from the fact that Arabic is unlike English in the fact that it does not have indefinite article. This absence is compensated by using nunation (traditionally, called tanween.). But, this is seen by Fassi-Fehri (1993) as the main source of the negative interference which causes error making. Depending on the results of the present study, it is concluded that the existence of the definite article in Arabic is a source of negative transfer because it leads the Arab learner of English as a second language to use it in contexts whether it is needed or not. At the same time, the absence of the definite article in another language transfer problem that causes making errors when Arab learners use the English article system in different contexts. To add, the absence of *al* before the noun phrase which is zero article expresses indefiniteness in English or *nakerah* in Arabic. Definiteness and indefiniteness states are found in all languages, but they are marked differently. In other words, the forms of each language to express definiteness and indefiniteness are different. At the syntactic level, it is agreed by the Arabic grammarian that the original state of all nouns is indefiniteness (the equivalence in English is the zero article) and adding *al* which is the

definiteness marker before the noun phrase is another state that comes later. This indicates that indefiniteness as a syntactic state is the rule. When we say *ketabun*, *ketabin*, *ketaban* (book) in Arabic, this is the indefinite state. The suffixes ***un, in, an*** are what we call in the Standard Arabic ***tanween***. These variations indicate the different grammatical positions of the word in sentences. The following examples illustrate these grammatical rules of the word ***ketab*** in different grammatical positions:

I bought a book about animals:

اشتريت كتابًا عن الحيوانات

“ Ishtaryto ketaban a’n al haywanat”

In this sentence the noun *ketab* is a direct Object. ***.an*** is added to the end of the noun *ketab* to become *ketaban*.

I learned a lot from a book I bought .

استفدت من كتابٍ اشتريته

“ istafadato men ketabin qara’atoh”

In this sentence the noun *ketab* is propositional complement preceded by ***from*** (which is in Arabic “***men***”: a preposition that has the same meaning of the preposition ***from***). Therefore, ***in*** is added to indicate the prepositional case. It becomes *ketabin*.

A book you read is sometimes better than a friend.

كتابٌ تقرأه أحياناً أفضل من صديق

“ ketabun taqra’uho ahyanan afdal men sadeeq”

In this sentence the noun ***ketab*** is a predicate that comes at the beginning of the sentence. Therefore, ***un*** is added to indicate that it is a predicate. It becomes *ketabun*.

Adding ***al*** makes it ***al ketab*** (the book) and this is the definite state of the word *ketab*. Definiteness in Arabic is expressed by the article ***al*** (the equivalence is ***the*** in English).

I bought the book you told me about

اشتريت الكتاب الذي اخبرتني عنه

“ *Ishtaryto al ketab alathi akhbartani anho*”

In this sentence the noun *ketab* is in the definite case that is called *ma'refa* (definiteness) which is the opposite of *nakerah* (indefiniteness). So, *al* is added to the end of the word *ketab* to become *al ketab*.

Simply, the differences between the two systems could be the main factor of the difficulty in learning and teaching the English article system; and it could be the reason behind the negative transfer which mainly causes errors in use of the article system. I suppose that this is clear and could be the common attitude in all studies carried out to discuss the sources of errors in the use of the English article system among EFL Arab learners. To sum up, previous studies extremely vary in terms of the findings of the most frequent errors made by Arab EFL learners in the use of the article systems. So, taking into consideration the differences and similarities between the two article systems in Arabic and English could be the crucial issue that the teachers of English should be aware of teaching the English definite and indefinite articles for the Arab learners.

Depending on the previous studies, it was found that the deletion of *a/an* is the most frequent error in using the indefinite article by Arabic speaking learners. (Al Kaimi et al (1979), Beck, (1979), El Sayed (1983), Kharmah (1981) and Willcott (1974). This error could be resulted from the negative transfer of L1 since Arabic does not have an indefinite article. But, the present study reaches a different conclusion in terms of the most frequent error. It shows that the most noticeable error is the substitution of *the* with *a*. In other words, the students tend to use *a* instead of *the*. This could be attributed to some students' tendency of hypercorrection that reflects the difficulty in this type of structures for students to cope with. More specifically, using *a* with uncountable and proper nouns are the most noticeable errors in using the indefinite article. The

redundancy of the definite articles could be attributed to the improper learning strategies. In terms of the interlingual errors the literature reported that the most frequent error is the use of *the* instead of zero article, for example Abu Gharah (1989), Al Kasimi et al. (1979) and Kharmah (1981). According to the present study's results the redundancy of the definite article is a noticeable error in the use of the English article among the students of both Science and Art sections, but it is not the most frequent one. More specifically, this error is in the use of *the* with all type of nouns : proper, countable and uncountable nouns. This could be attributed to the negative transfer of the first language i.e Arabic. However, the results reveal the idea that the interlingual errors are more frequent than the interlingual errors although the former is noticeable too. Also, the results show that the negative transfer is not the main cause behind making errors in the use of English definite and indefinite articles among the sample of this study, but the percentages of the interlingual errors are high and close to the percentages of interlingual errors. (see tables 10 and 1).

5.1.B. Pedagogical implications: suggestions for teaching the definite and indefinite articles

This section illustrates the teaching and learning strategies need to be applied to address the challenges of error making in the use of English article system among EFL Arab and Emirati students .This would answer the second study question which is the one of the objectives of the present study .This study is meant to provide some suggestions that would help in reducing errors made by students while using the definite and indefinite articles both in writing and speaking. One of the problems about learning the English article system by Arab learners is that it is not dependent on meaning. For example, if the Arab learner of English hears or reads the sentence; **please , give apple*. He or she will immediately understand the meaning. For him or her ,using *the* or *an* is not important since the meaning the sentence is conveyed and fully understood. This would cause the Arab EFL learner unintentionally make language

interference errors. This is one of the challenges of learning the English articles. To cope with this problem, teachers could apply some pedagogical techniques that enable students to learn more effectively. The hope is that students are not fossilized to a certain type of learning strategies that hinder adequate learning and result in more errors. Also, teachers play the key role in reducing all challenges when they are aware of the proper way of teaching the definite and indefinite articles..

5.1.B.1.Teaching the articles contextually :

One of the recommended methods for teaching the English article is to teach them contextually. This would improve the learning and make it more effective than just presenting the rules deductively. For example, Rinvolucri's (1997) "Defining birds and brothers " activity is one of well-known activities where students are asked to form sentences describing the features of brothers or birds. Each sentence should start with the phrase "*the bird*" and students should complete it starting from the beginning. This activity has been used as an example of contextual use of the articles. Thus, focusing only and totally on the form is not recommended in teaching the English articles .Nevertheless, introducing students partially to some structural forms of the English article is possible. (Dekyser 1998). To sum up, students should be engaged in using the articles in different social and cultural contexts .Consequently, students would be more aware of the situational and the cultural functions of the article usage .

5.1.B.2. Authentic materials:

One of the strategies that helps learning English is teaching it through employing authentic materials i.e. the texts that are produced in reality by native speakers of English for native speakers of English such as magazines, newspapers..etc . They are totally different from the artificial teaching material i.e. the materials that are designed specifically for language learners of

English such as exercise of the course book or supplementary materials .Many experts in the field of education and teaching stress the importance of authentic materials such as Little, Devitt, and Singleton (1989).They state that authentic texts would help not only in making the learner more familiar to the culture of the target language , but also make learning an enjoyable experience. As a result, motivation would also help in making learning easier and productive.

To make this method more applicable and as a first step, students would be asked to locate the sentences in the authentic texts that contain the articles. The next step would be asking students to form similar sentences using their own words. The third step would be asking students to share sentences with each other through writing a dialogue to be presented orally in pairs as a final learning product. Other instructional tasks would be asking them to listen to a dialogue between two native speakers regardless the topic of the conversation and ask them to complete some written exercises by filling in the spaces with the correct article if needed. So, students' exposure to English authentic material would result in a better performance .So, the chances of learning would be greater and mastering English articles . This would give students the real chances to practice using the definite and indefinite articles in more adequately and efficiently. The more they practice the more they will be familiar with the appropriate use of the articles. But giving the rules explicitly will not help since the students will always compare and contrast the new given knowledge with what they have in their mother tongue. I think it is impossible to master the system of articles without experiencing it in reality . According to Pica (1983) the process of acquisition of the English article system is only achieved through the exposure to English language and daily life experiences and expressions and not to the classroom communication or language. Moreover, using this method of teaching would reduce the first language interference impact which is one the main resources of errors . Being acquainted with it in the same way the native speakers of English use it would increase their understanding and eliminate or at least reduce the chances of comparisons the

EFL learners would make between the two systems of articles in the first and the foreign languages. In addition, the spoken and written discourse that include the articles would solidify the practice with greater exposure to the target language. It is believed that this strategy would make the control on the use of articles higher compared to other strategies of teaching and thus would improve learning process.

5.1.B.3.Using pictures and real life situations:

Teachers of English should be aware that when teaching English as a foreign language they are teaching something goes beyond learners imagination, experiences and daily interaction. Thus, using pictures would help to provide the learners with immediate visual presentation of the linguistic item such as articles. Illustrating this with real life situation would improve learning too much . Articles are abstract items and putting them in a context supported with pictures is more effective than just explaining the rules of using articles in isolation from real world. One of the techniques of employing pictures in teaching article usage is giving students pictures that contain "after" and "before actions". The objective is to teach students the referential side of the English articles within a context .Consequently, students learn the difference between using articles with "the new information" and "the old information" .For example , in groups, students are given two different pictures and they are asked to show the differences. Firstly, they are given a picture about an untidy classroom and then another about tidy classroom (the same classroom after cleaning it). The teacher should prepare the second picture by putting in mind that some things or objects that were in picture one will disappear in picture two. Then , the teacher introduces his/her discussion about *a* and *the* simply by stating that *a* is used when we talk about something/somebody for the first time (new to us). *The* is used when we talk about something or somebody we talked about before.

One of the model answers would be:

Picture 1: *there is a garbage near the door.*

Picture 2: *the garbage which was near the door is taken away.*

Many grammatical issues may arise, but the teacher should focus only on the article usage .It is suggested that students should be told the intended objective that the teacher needs to achieve before starting the activity .

Another suggestion of using pictures in teaching English would be preparing picture stories that cover cases of the article system and with the sequence needed. Students comment on the pictures with their suggested descriptions. Also, the teacher can prepare pictures and ask students to put them in chronological order or match the picture with its description and then arrange them chronologically. The following are some sentences that the teacher can form and they are just examples of what the teacher could prepare before hand:

a story of a man who made an accident.

A man was driving his car.

The man then saw an animal crossing the street.

The animal was a camel.

5.1.B.4.Writing practice:

The purpose of teaching English is to cultivate the students' competency in using English communicatively in writing as well as in speaking. Without doubt, writing is considered a significant language learning skill that requires more practice. Therefore, writing activities should tackle all difficulties noticed in the use of the article system. Observing and analysing these errors should be followed by varied exercises that address the challenges. For example, one of

the interviewed teachers of this study emphasises that writing is not given the needed attention. According to him , students should be exposed to more daily practice .Some writing exercises would be helpful such as gap filling where the students are asked to supply the appropriate articles depending on the context. Also, applying matching exercises for low level students that focus on indefinite articles *a* and *an* by asking students to match two columns A and B. Column A includes indefinite articles (*a,an*) and column B contains abstract words such as *university, hour, honour* etc. The objective behind this is to practise using indefinite articles in words not in contexts since it is applied to very low achievers who are unable to comprehend texts or contexts . Moreover, concentrating on one article per lesson which is supported by more writing practice exercises would consolidate the mastery of the article being taught. To make all these implications effective and useful the syllabus designers should include different kinds of writing activities that help students to cope with all challenges of learning the English article system.

Finally, it is likely that the problem may be better resolved if all the pedagogical implications that are suggested here are integrated in remedial teaching lessons for the students in article usage in English.

5.2.Limitation of the study.

The study is limited in the following ways:

In terms of the study sample, the study was carried out only on grade 12 male students in one of secondary public schools. It was very difficult to involve female students for some cultural considerations in UAQ Educational Zone. The lack of local resources and studies in this area in the UAE made going further is not reasonable. As a result, I have not gone deeply in the analysis to include the syntactic or the semantic features of the English article system and their impact on students' making errors.

5.3.Conclusion and Recommendations.

It is interesting to find what I hypothesized is not true. It is found that the language interference errors are not the main cause of making errors in using the definite and indefinite articles of English by the Arab speaking learners. But, negative interference according to the study helps in causing the interlingual errors. Both types of errors are related in cause and effect. Simply, the inappropriate learning/teaching strategies make the problem worse. If the learners are provided with proper teaching strategies the effect of the negative language transfer could be reduced .Therefore, teachers should be fully aware of ways the English article system is taught .This could not be fully applied if the teachers do not know about the common errors that are made by students. It is concluded that solving the issue of the errors in the use of the article system needs awareness of the common errors and the challenges that cause these errors. So ,the purpose of this study was to spot, examine and classify errors in the use of the definite and indefinite article made by the Arab EFL learners in the secondary public schools .The students were chosen randomly from different Arab nationalities studying English as a foreign language in one of the UAE public schools. It is concluded that teaching the English articles for Arabic speaking learners as non- native speakers of English requires investigating the two article systems in the two languages : Arabic and English . When the Arab learners learn English article , they put high emphasis in studying the rules. These rules that determine the use of the English articles in writing or speaking become a challenge for Arabic speaking learners. It requires accuracy when deciding the choices of the articles by both assessing the noun properties (e.g. countable or uncountable and plural or singular) and by paying attention to the intended meaning to convey the message properly. The process of choosing the accurate article thus requires both knowledge of the syntactic features of the noun that follows the article and the semantic aspect of the whole message to be conveyed as intended. This process is mainly cognitive

and adds to the difficulties of article choice. Another difficulty is the fact that the article systems in both languages are totally different. Arabic which is the language of the sample of this study has a system that differs from the English article system in many ways. Thus, Language interference has the dominant impact in L2 acquisition. Investigating the errors made by the L2 learners should give a great consideration to this general phenomenon. The present study is a close examination of all these factors that determine these errors when using the English articles by the Arab learners. The investigation of error sources was considered as an essential part in the study of learners' errors.

Being constantly affected by the L1 special semantic features and trying to abide by the syntactic rules of L2, L2 learners of English sometimes feel uncertain about the correct English article choice. The results showed that most errors made by students were intralingual and developmental errors. The percentages of these types of errors in the use of the English article system were higher than language interference errors. It was hypothesized that the interference errors are higher than the developmental errors, but the results proved the opposite. However, these findings lead to the conclusion that the English article system should be dealt as a special problematic case and both type of errors should not be taken separately. In other words, the first language interference impact on the use of different articles hinders the acquisition process of the articles and thus make the problem worse. The difficulty of the English article system, the inappropriate learning processes in teaching this system and the impact of the first language are factors impede proper learning regardless the percentage of the negative impact of each factor. It is a circle of effects that are relatively related but the final outcome is the same which is the misuse of the English article system. The evidence for such conclusion is that the studies that are carried out on the errors made by Arab EFL learners in the use of the English article system have come out with different results in terms of percentages of the types of errors and resources of errors of the English

article system. This is also applicable on the present study. This contradiction of results in many studies on the Arab EFL learners implies the need for approaching different methods in the future research on the definite and indefinite article system and its usage. The focus should be more on the best and proper teaching and learning techniques that would solve this problematic issue rather than just analysing and classifying errors. To add, trying to find which errors are more frequent than others would not add a lot in the process of reducing the errors. If this research is intended to be done again it will be about the most efficient strategies of teaching the English article system since errors now are proved to be known, but in different frequencies and types which is according to the researcher's view has no significance influence on the process of remedy.

Depending on the conclusion of this study and the previous studies, it is recommended that the English articles should be taught within real life contexts using authentic materials with more exposure to the real life English. It is not enough that students learn the definite and indefinite articles rules as separated rules isolated from contexts. It would be ineffective and unproductive to keep telling students that English article system is only related to nouns or nouns phrases. This way of teaching the English article system does not take into considerations the differences between the Arabic article system and the English one since both are very distinct in many ways. The students follow some wrong strategies because of this difference and give the way for language interference to do its impact. Moreover, they are more concerned with knowing the rule not with applying it in real life which makes the problem worse. Consequently, students make errors and the teachers find themselves unable to cope with these fatal errors although they keep repeating the rules from time to time. It is also recommended that the researchers make more focus in their research when tackling this issue on the strategies of teaching definite and indefinite articles to the Arabic speaking learners instead of just recording

and classifying the errors. The common errors are now spotted and clear and known. No need to predict or identify them .So, the process of analysis should now go beyond just identifying and be more on finding how to apply the pedagogical implications that most previous studies included in as final conclusions and recommendations. The step forward is now to collect or analyze all these suggested implications and classified and put as plans for action. It is also recommended that future empirical research be more in the U.A.E about the definite and indefinite article system and how to teach it to school students from cycle one till cycle three. No doubt that good delivery of instruction and teaching will result in good learning. It is the time for researchers, syllabus designers ,educators and teachers to work together to bring this important issue into the surface like other issue related to shift the research from just identifying errors to ways of applying the most practical applications to reduce error making.

The present study could be a start to raise awareness to confirms the need for paradigm shifts in the ways the English articles are taught and the way they are addressed and approached in the empirical research. Also, it could be more helpful if similar studies are carried out on varied samples of students of all proficiency levels and grades who study English as a second and a foreign language in the U.A.E to obtain more accurate and comprehensive results. Moreover, it would be very beneficial too if a study carried out to draw a between articles in English and articles in Arabic .This study would illustrate the differences and similarities between the two languages in terms of the article system. Thus, it may pave the way for finding better strategies for teaching and learning of the article system. Also, a study on the methods of teaching English articles in the United Arab Emirates to explore the best ways of teaching the article system for the Arab learners is recommended. Finally, a similar study to the present one would be more fruitful if it is carried out on a border sample of different educational institutions of all levels.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1:

Teacher Interviews Interview No.()

Part 1: Personal information

Name(optional)

Nationality:

Grades you teach:

Years of teaching experience:

Part 2: Questions

1.Do you think teaching the English article system is a challenging learning and teaching task for you? Why, why not?

2.What are the teaching techniques you use in teaching the English articles?

3.What are the most noticeable errors students make in terms of the English article system?

4.What are the teaching and learning strategies and methods you think that are more effective in

reducing the students' misuse of the English article system?

Do you have anything to add such as Comments, suggestions and recommendations:(please you can write them yourself if you wish.)

Appendix 2:

A test : built by Dr. Mohammed Al- Ta'ani

Name: _____

Section: ____Art/science_____

Date: _____

A)-Circle the correct answer from a, b, c or d

1-Is there ----- university in your town?

- a)- a b)- an c)- the d)- no article

2- I have been waiting here for ----- hour.

- a)- the b)- a c)- an d)- no article

3- We go to ----- school by bus.

- a)- no article b)- a c)- the d)- an

4- Where is ----- cat? I think it is in the kitchen.

- a)- a b)- the c)- an d)- no article

5-He is -----UNESCO worker.

- a)- a b)- an c)- the d)- no article

6- Al-Ain is ----- beautiful city.

- a)- no article b)- a c)- the d)- an

7- English has become----- international language.

- a)- no article b)- a c)- the d)- an

8- I need -----information about hotels in Abu Dhabi.

- a)- a b)- an c)- the d)- no article

9- ----- Sun is a star.

- a)- A b)- An c)- The d)- No article

10-What is on----- television tonight?

- a)- no article b)- a c)- the d)- an

11- Where is -----milk? It is in the fridge.

- a)- the b)- a c)- an d)- no article

12- -----Red Sea is between Saudi Arabia and Africa.

- a)- A b)- An c)- The d)- No article

13- Salim is studying engineering at-----Manchester University.

- a)- the b)- a c)- an d)- no article

14-What did you have for-----breakfast?

- a)- the b)- a c)- an d)- no article

15- ----- homeless need more help from the government.

- a)- The b)- A c)- An d)- No article

B)- Read the following passage .Write the correct article in the blank spaces.

If no article is needed, leave the space blank. The first one is done for you.

Rashid lives in an apartment with his dad ,mum and sister Moza. _____ apartment has three bedrooms , _____ kitchen, _____ bathroom and _____ sitting room. Rashid's dad works in _____ office and his mum stays at _____ home looks after _____ apartment. She spent most of her time in _____ kitchen preparing meals. Rashid and Moza help their mum with _____ housework. Rashid likes using _____ vacuum cleaner and Moza likes to sweep _____ floor. Dad gives Rashid and Moza money when they help their mum. They usually spend _____ money on _____ computer games!

Model Answers:-

A)-

- 1- A
- 2- An
- 3- No article
- 4- The
- 5- A
- 6- A
- 7- An
- 8- No article
- 9- The
- 10- No article
- 11- The
- 12- The
- 13- No article
- 14- No article
- 15- The

B)- an/ the/ a/ a/ a/ an/ no article/ the/ the/ the/ the/ the/ the/ no article.