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THE EXPRESSION OF INDEFINITENESS IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC:
A CONTRASTIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem

Indefiniteness is a linguistic term used in grammar, semantics, and pragmatics. It refers to an entity or class of entities which is not capable of specific and unique identification. It indicates that the referent of an expression is not presumed to be uniquely identifiable

by the addressee because of a lack of shared knowledge or situation or because there is no previous mention of the referent.

English and Arabic grammarians agree that indefiniteness is the unmarked term in the system of language because it is considered the basis and the origin of all things. Definiteness, on the other hand, is considered secondary to indefiniteness.

In English, indefiniteness is expressed grammatically by the use of the indefinite article *a/an* with the singular count nouns, and *zero article* or the unstressed *some* with the plural and non-count nouns. In Arabic, it is expressed by the absence of the definite article أ ل التعريف 'the' and the indefinite marker *nunation* التنوين , which is used with count, non-count, and proper nouns, with certain exceptions, to perform different functions.

Languages are different in their rules and structures; so they are different in how they organize their thematic structure. There is a

tendency in most languages, including English and Arabic, to place the given information, which is definite, at the beginning of the sentence, and the new information, which is indefinite, at the end. Certain devices are used in both languages to keep the sentence grammatical and acceptable such as: *existential there*, *transformation*, *extrapolation*, etc.

The indefinite and definite terms have generic and specific uses and the selection of the proper term depends on syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic considerations. English and Arabic grammarians try to find syntactic rules for the use of the indefinite term irrespective of the semantic and pragmatic factors. In the present study, indefiniteness will be treated at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels.

Indefiniteness is not a specific notion, and the distinction between indefiniteness and definiteness is not easy to understand. The many linguistic and extralinguistic contextual variables, which operate, should be taken into consideration. The distinction can be captured in pragmatic terms.

There is no one -to –one relation between English and Arabic; so areas where the two languages differ are expected to constitute problems to the non- native speaker concerning indefiniteness.

1.2 The Aims of the Study

The study aims to:

1. Point out how the concept of indefiniteness is expressed grammatically in English and Arabic, and show the role of articles in expressing the concept.
2. Show the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic uses of the indefinite expression in English and Arabic.
3. Identify the similarity and difference between the two languages at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels which may help to get a common core that contributes to the belief in the existence of language universals.

1.3 The Hypotheses

In order to give a comprehensive view about indefiniteness in English and Arabic, it will be treated at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Accordingly, the following hypotheses will be considered:

1. The indefinite feature exists in the noun itself not in the article so the article in English is considered a grammatical device not a semantic one.
2. Indefiniteness in Arabic is more active and powerful syntactically and pragmatically than it is in English.

1.4 The Procedures

1. Giving an idea about the concept of indefiniteness and how it is expressed in different languages.

2. Showing indefiniteness in English at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels.
3. Showing indefiniteness in Arabic at the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels.
4. Carrying out a contrastive analysis to show the similarity and difference between the two languages concerning indefiniteness.
5. Drawing conclusions from the results of the study.

1.5 The Value of the Study

The contrastive analysis that will be done in this study may be useful for the belief of some linguists in the existence of language universals. This study may be useful also for pedagogical purposes. The findings and results of the study may help us predict difficulties that non- native speakers encounter concerning indefiniteness.

1.6 The Limits of the Study

The study will be limited to Standard English and Standard Arabic.

CHAPTER TWO
THE CONCEPT OF INDEFINITENESS

This chapter presents an introduction about how indefiniteness is expressed in different languages. It contains also the definitions of the concept, indefiniteness v. definiteness, the need for articles, indefiniteness as the unmarked feature and sentence structure as far as indefiniteness is concerned.

2.1 Introduction

Concepts such as negation, question, indefiniteness and definiteness etc. are expressed linguistically by grammatical devices, that is to say these concepts are transferred from theory to practice through grammatical devices.

The concern of the present study is the concept of indefiniteness. To see how this concept is expressed in different languages, which may help us to comprehend the concept, a brief survey of thirty languages from different families is made.[1] It is found that some languages have article system and others do not, and those that do are different from each other in their article system.

[1] The web site WIKIPEDIA provides a wide range of information about languages, including grammar and semantics, (http:/en.wikipedia.org/wiki). Webster's Third Dictionary (1976) also provides the grammar of seven languages which are: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, and Japanese.

Some languages have indefinite and definite articles. Others have only a definite article, and the absence of this article indicates indefiniteness. The difference is also in the position of the article and whether it is a separate word or an affix.

Languages which have no article system employ other devices to express indefiniteness and definiteness such as word order, intonation, demonstratives, numeral *one,* the form of words and the context.

It is to be mentioned here that the survey includes in addition to natural languages two different languages: an artificial language called The Master Language, and American Sign Language (ASL).

According to the survey, the examined languages are classified as follows:

I. Languages which have an article system:

(a) Languages which have both indefinite and definite articles are:
English, French, German, Swedish, Danish, Romanian, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and The Master Language.

(b) Languages which have one article (the definite article) are:
Arabic, Greek, Galician, Bulgarian, Soddo, Welsh, and Mekheal .

II. Languages which have no article system are:

Latin, Japanese, Chinese, Turkish, Czech, Finnish, Russian, Hindi, Slovene, Rotuman, Tamil, Acatec, Garifuna, and American Sign Language (ASL).

These Languages are different in expressing the concept of indefiniteness and definiteness (see the Appendix).

Out of the survey, the following points come out, which need special attention:

1. The choice of the proper noun phrase, whether indefinite or definite, depends on linguistic, situational, and cultural context in addition to the man's knowledge of the world, i.e.the environment in which the noun phrase occurs determines the choice of the noun phrase.
2. The indefinite and definite articles in most languages, which have an article system, have the function of the numeral *one* and the demonstrative *that* respectively. In some languages which have no article system the numeral *one* and the demonstrative *that* function as indefinite and definite articles respectively. This point emphasizes the historical origin of the indefinite and definite articles in English. The former is derived from the numeral *one,*and the latter from the demonstrative *that* (Strang1970: 272 ; Halliday & Hassan 1976/1987 :70).
3. None of the examined languages has only an indefinite article. This point may emphasize the fact that nouns are inherently indefinite, and that indefiniteness is the unmarked feature in the system of language.

4. The gender of the noun affects the form of the article in some languages i.e. the article agrees with the gender of the noun in some languages that have grammatical gender.
5. In some languages, the indefinite and definite determiners can be used together in the same noun phrase. In others, two definite determiners can be used in the same noun phrase.
6. The physical linguistic manifestation that exists in the surface structure of a language cannot be considered a ground to make comparison between languages because there is no one –to –one relation between them. So, the further one abstracts from the physical aspect of language towards its conceptual content, the nearer one gets to a common core of linguistic universal (Leech 1974/1978 : 232).

2.2 Definitions of Indefiniteness

Indefiniteness as a general term is always associated with *vagueness* and considered as a synonym to it (2OED s.v. *indefiniteness* ; Webster's III s.v. *indefiniteness*). In fact, the indefinite noun may be considered as non-specific rather than vague because there is a distinction between vagueness and lack of specificity (Alston 1964:84-85).

In grammar books and linguistics, there is no precise and comprehensive definition for indefiniteness. The concentration is on the article rather than the concept itself. However, Crystal (1997 s.v.

Indefinite(ness)) defines it as "a term used in Grammar and Semantics to refer to an entity (or class of entities) which is not capable of specific identification."*Definiteness*, on the other hand, is used "to refer to a specific identifiable entity (or class of entities)"(ibid. s.v. *definite (ness)*). It seems that these definitions are inadequate, partly because they do not give a semantic explanation for the concept, and partly because they ignore the pragmatic factors which are highly involved in expressing the concept.

Arabic grammarians define the indefinite اسم in different ways. Here are some of them. ابن السراج (ت 316 هـ [1965:1/175]) defines it as follows : كل اسم عم اثنين فما زاد فهو نكرة ،وإنما سمّي نكرة من اجل انك لا تعرف به واحداً بعينه اذا ذكر i.e 'The اسم is said to be نكرة 'indefinite', if it applies to more than one entity. It is called نكرة 'indefinite', because when the indefinite اسم is mentioned the addressee cannot identify with it a specific entity.'

ابن يعيش (ت 643 هـ : 5/85) defines النكرة 'the indefinite اسم' from a semantic and pragmatic point of view ; he says :

> ا لنكرة بمعنى المنكور - والمراد بالمعرفة ما خص واحداً من الجنس لا يتناول غيره وذلك متعلق بمعرفة المخاطَب دون المتكلم .اذ قد يذكر المتكلم ما هومعروف له ولا يعرفه المخاطَب فيكون منكوراً كقول القائل لمن يخاطبه في داري **رجل** ولي **بستان** وهو يعرف الرجل و البستان وقد لا يعرفه المتكلم ايضاً نحوقولك انا في طلب **غلام** اشتريه او **دار** اكتريها ولا يكون قصده الى شيء بعينه.

Paraphrase in English (without the examples):

> The indefinite اسم means that the referent is unknown to the addressee, but it can be known or unknown to the speaker. The definite اسم , on the other hand, is related to one specific entity which is known to the addressee and the speaker/writer
> .

الأنصاري (ت 761هـ [1977:1/292]) defines it as follows : النكرة ما وضع شائعاً نحو رجل والمعرفة ما وضع خاصاً i.e.‘ The indefinite اسم applies to common things and the definite applies to specific things.’

الجرجاني (ت 816 هـ [1405: 316, 185]) says النكرة ما وضع لشيء لا بعينه كرجل i.e. التعريف عبارة عن ذكر شيء تستلزم معرفته معرفة شيء آخر ‘The indefinite اسم refers to a non-specific thing as *a man*…definiteness is mentioning a thing the knowledge of which requires prior knowledge of something else.’

From the above definitions, one concludes that the indefinite noun / اسم refers to a common entity which is not understood by the addressee to be the only thing, group, or quantity of the kind in existence in general, or in the relevant situation in particular. The definite, on the other hand, means that the referent is uniquely identified by the addressee.

The identifiability criterion is not controlled by certain rules. The referent is said to be identifiable if it is visible in the situation, mentioned previously, recoverable from the context, or based on general knowledge of the speaker/writer and the addressee. In brief, it exists uniquely in the shared knowledge.

2.3 Indefiniteness v. Definiteness

The contrast between indefiniteness and definiteness is not a binary taxonomy; the relation between them is rather one of hyponomy (Leech 1974/1978:167-168).[2] Thus, the formula ‘a man’ (- definite) and ‘the man’ (+ definite), which is used by some grammarians, is incompatible. This can be seen from the relation of entailment in the following example:

2.1 I saw *the queen* today.

entails

2.2 I saw *a queen* today

(ibid.)

So, *the queen* is *a queen*, and, according to the componential analysis, *the queen* includes the features of *a queen* plus the definite feature. The phrase *a queen*, in another respect, includes *the queen* in the sense that the general term includes the meaning of the specific one (ibid. 101).

According to meaning inclusion, it can be said that the definite term has the features of the general term which in turn has the features of the more general one and so on. Thus, the indefiniteness of a noun is a matter of degree, the larger the set is, the more indefinite its member will be. For example, *the queen* is *a queen* and she is *a woman*, *a human being*, *a creature*, and *a living being*. It can be seen that *a creature*, for example, is more indefinite than *a queen*.

2 Leech (ibid.102) defines the term *hyponymy* as “the inclusion of one meaning in another” and *incompatibility* as “the exclusion of one meaning from another.”

From this ground it can be said that the feature of indefiniteness and definiteness belongs to the theory of reference (ibid.). The indefinite noun refers to a common and non-unique entity and the definite noun refers to a unique entity in the relevant situation.

Since nouns in general refer to common objects in the world, they are inherently indefinite. Then, when an object becomes uniquely identified in the mind of the speaker/writer and the addressee, or when it is given a name, it becomes definite.

Compare the following entries of the words *god*, *man*, and *sun* in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000):

> *god* 1 (God) [sing.]… the being or spirit that is worshipped and is believed to have created the universe… *2* [c]…a being or spirit who is believed to have power over a particular part of nature …
>
> *man* [c] an adult human being …
> *sun* (the sun, the Sun) [sing.] the star that shines in the sky during the day and gives the earth heat and light
>
> .

It can be seen that *god* (1) and *sun* are introduced by the definite noun phrases *the being* and *the star* respectively .The former indicates the uniqueness of *God* , and the latter refers to the unique entity that shines on this earth . The words *god* (2) and *man* are introduced by the indefinite noun phrases *a being* and *an adult*

respectively because they are common nouns. They can be classified into indefinite and definite according to the context.

The اسم /noun can be classified into indefinite and definite in the sentence not in isolation (الآمدي 631هـ ت [1914:1/35]) because the feature of indefiniteness and definiteness belongs to the theory of reference, and the distinction between them is essentially related to the knowledge of the speaker/writer and the addressee. Thus, the proper nouns and personal pronouns are considered definite because they refer to definite persons or things which are supposed to be known to the speaker/writer and the addressee and they are unique in the relevant situation.

Accordingly, the noun can be classified into indefinite and definite syntactically and semantically. These levels are related to each other and they cannot operate independently of context and general knowledge .The speaker/writer generates a linguistic utterance by matching the conceptual meaning with the right syntactic structure of his language. The addressee, on the other hand, understands the utterance by matching the syntactic structure with the conceptual meaning (Leech 1974/1978:13). The article has no conceptual meaning; so it has no semantic function, it does not add meaning , but it is an indicator after the noun has already been made indefinite or definite by the speaker/writer through the context. Yet, some grammarians consider, for example, *a lion* and *the lion* indefinite and definite respectively because the former is preceded

by the indefinite article and the latter by the definite article. They pass their judgement independently of context and give the impression that the article carries the feature of indefiniteness or definiteness not the noun.

Consider the following examples:

2.3 I saw *a lion* and an elephant in the zoo yesterday and *the lion* tried to attack me.

2.4 *The lion is* a dangerous animal.

The indefinite noun phrase *a lion* in (3) is grammatically indefinite but it refers to a specific lion in the mind of the speaker but it is unknown to the addressee. When the object becomes contextually definite to the addressee, and when it becomes the only thing in the relevant situation that is talked about, the definite noun is used .The definite noun phrase *the lion* in (4)is grammatically definite but it does not refer to a specific lion in the mind of the speaker/writer and the addressee . The indefinite noun phrase can be indefinite in form and reference as in:

2.5 *A lion* is a dangerous animal.

The indefinite noun *a lion* refers to any arbitrary lion for the speaker/writer and the addressee. It seems that the terms indefinite and definite are not always proper ones for classifying these nouns.

2.4 The Need for Articles

Consider the following example:

2.6 *I meet *man* and *woman* yesterday and *man* tried to help me.

This sentence can be understood without articles depending on the lexical meaning of the words and the pragmatic factors. Sentences analogous to this sentence can be normal and grammatical in some languages that have no article system.

Since English has an article system to mark the indefiniteness and definiteness of nouns and form part of the structural meaning of the sentence (Fries 1977:56), the articles are used as follows :

2.7 I met *a man* and *a woman* yesterday and *the man* tried to help me .

It is obvious that *a man* and *the man* refer to the same entity and *the man* is *a man.* Now, when it becomes definite, *a man* requires an extra article which is the definite article *the.* As a result, a conflict

will ensue between the two articles, the indefinite and the definite, as it is explained below:

2.8 I met *a man* and a woman yesterday and *the (a) man* tried to help me .

In such a case, the original article used with the noun is dropped i.e. the indefinite article (ابـن جنـي ت 392هـ [1956:3/62] ; Jespersen 1949/1954:VII:468):

2.7 I met *a man* and *a woman* yesterday and *the man* tried to help me .

Quirk et al. (1985/1987:55) say that the articles have no lexical meaning nor function independently of the noun they precede. They are used solely to give grammatical status to the following noun which needs this status. Yet, the articles are considered separate words. Hall (1960:98-99) thinks that they are considered separate words because English grammars use writing not language as their point of departure. He suggests that the articles should be counted as bound forms like prefixes and suffixes . For example, the indefinite

article *a/an* and the suffix –*s* in the following nouns have the same grammatical role :

a book , book*s*

The indefinite article *a* is used with the singular count noun to individualize the object *book* , so it indicates singularity , whereas the suffix –*s* is used to indicate plurality . The historical origin of the indefinite article in English may support this view (Strang 1970/1974 :272). Thus, the indefinite article is used with the singular count noun to perform an obligatory syntactic function. It is used to pick out one of a potentially infinite number of the object in question. Compare:

2.9 *I bought *book*.

2.10 I bought *a book* .

2.11 I bought *the book* .

The noun *book* in (9) has only a lexical meaning. It does not refer to anything, whereas *a book* in (10) refers to the object as an individual, and it is indefinite because it is the first mention of the referent. When the object becomes definite to the addressee the definite *the book* is used as in (11).

This grammatical classification into indefinite and definite is categoric. It does not apply only to nouns that accept determiners, but it includes the whole class of nouns . The types of noun that do

not always take a determiner can also be classified into indefinite and definite. *John* for example is definite, whereas *kindness* is indefinite (Blomfield 1933/1963:204). It is obvious that the indefiniteness of *kindness* and the definiteness of *John* are not expressed formally, i.e. they are expressed without articles. So, they are similar in terms of article use. Some grammarians try to distinguish between these nouns by giving different labels concerning the article. Quirk et al. (1985/1987:246) and Palmer & Blandford (1969:56-62n)[3]almost share the same view in this respect. They distinguish between *zero article* and *no article.* Quirk et al. introduce the following:

2.12 I like *music* .

2.13 I think *the music* is too loud in here .

2.14 I like *Sid.*

The noun *music* in the first example has *zero article* because it means *music* in general, whereas *Sid* in the last example has *no article* because it is a proper noun.

Dik (1978/1979:61-62) has another view which is more general because it includes languages which have an article system and languages which do not. He says that terms can be indefinitised

[3]Palmer & Blandford say that there are two articles in English, indefinite and definite .When the indefinite article is used with plural and non-count nouns , it is alogistic, i.e. not represented by any word . It is equivalent to zero article .

or definitised by means of the indefinite or definite operator respectively .The operator exists in the underlying structure of the term , and it is expressed in different ways depending on the type of the noun and the structure of the language in question. Thus, indefiniteness and definiteness can be expressed with or without articles. In English, for example, the operator in some nouns is expressed by a marker, whereas in others, such as proper nouns ,the operator is present in the underlying structure of the noun. In languages which have no article system, the operator is expressed by other ways. In Latin and Finnish, for example, the operator is expressed by the constituent order differences. Consider the following example from Finnish (Ihalainen1980: 59):

2.15 a Kirja on pöydälä.

b *The book* is on the table.

2.16 a Pöydälä on kirja.

b There is *a book* on the table .

It can be noticed that articles are not a prerequisite of expressing indefiniteness. It can be expressed in one way or another It is a matter of fact that the speaker of any language which has no article system never misses the article because its use has not become conventional with him (Pyles 1964/1971: 10).

Bloomfield (1933/1963:203) believes that the use of determiners with nouns is a habit; he says :

> This habit of using certain noun expressions always with a determiner is peculiar to some languages, such as the modern Germanic and Romance. Many languages have not this habit; in Latin, for instance, *domus* 'house' requires no attribute and is used indifferently where we say *the house* or *a house.*

As a conclusion it can be said that articles are only needed for structural and grammatical purposes not semantic ones .The noun itself carries the feature of indefiniteness or definiteness in the deep structure, and the article is introduced in the intermediate syntactic structure (Postal 1966; cited in Master 1987: 167).

2.5 Indefiniteness as the Unmarked Feature

The originality of indefiniteness may be considered as a reason for being the unmarked term in the system of language . The other reason is that it is more general and common than definiteness.

السيوطي(911هـ ت [ب):71])says that indefiniteness is the origin of things because it is the first to arise in the mind. Harris (1751/1968:251; cited in Brown & Yule 1983/1987 : 170) refers to the primary perception of the indefinite article and the secondary perception of the definite one. It is better to use the indefinite noun instead of the indefinite article in this statement because the feature of indefiniteness exists in the noun not in the article.

Quirk et al. (1972:128) say that the indefinite term is considered the unmarked term in the system because “it is natural to consider indefiniteness as being basic to definiteness.”

Leech (1974/1978:168,190) explains the unmarkedness of the indefinite term according to the normal rules of componential analysis. He suggests that the definite feature is marked by a single symbol and the absence of this symbol marks indefiniteness. In English, for example, the definite feature is marked grammatically by the definite article *the* in a noun phrase and it is also present in the meaning of the proper nouns and the personal pronouns. The absence of the definite feature marks indefiniteness, which is marked grammatically by *a/an* or *zero article* in the noun phrase .The noun phrases *a butcher* and *the woman*, for example, according to Leech’s theory have the following features:

	[+Human]
a butcher	[+Adult]
	[+Male]

	[+Definite]
the woman	[+Human]
	[+Adult]
	[-Male]

2.6 Sentence Structure

It is important to show the structure of the sentence as far as indefiniteness is concerned. The structure of the sentence can be divided semantically and grammatically. Semantically, it is divided into *theme* and *rheme*,or what is called in other schools of linguistics *topic* and *comment* .The theme represents what is talked about, and the rheme what is said about the theme .

The distinction *given/new* is used sometimes for *topic/comment* and *theme/rheme* distinction. The theme contains given or shared information and it can be identified with the subject in the unmarked pattern .The rheme , on the other hand, gives extra meaning and new information which adds most to the advancing communication process(Crystal 1997/1998, s.v. *theme* and *rheme*). The difference between *theme / rheme* and *given/new* is that the former is defined linguistically, whereas the latter is established contextually (Quirk et al. (1985/1987: 1362]).In terms of indefinite and definite , the theme should be definite and the rheme indefinite .

In logic, propositions, which are normally explained in terms of predication, may be true or false (ابن يعيش643هـ ت :1/ 87) and (Palmer1981:198).Each proposition is analysed in terms of predicate and arguments. Leech (1974/1978: 167]) believes that the feature of indefiniteness and definiteness belongs to the theory of reference rather than to the theory of truth and falsehood. He considers the

terms *predicate* and *argument* logico-semantic units and the predicate in this sense has nothing to do with the predicate of traditional grammar.

Indefiniteness on the semantic level belongs to arguments not to predicates or predications as a whole. When the noun phrase expresses a whole predication, the use of the definite article becomes vacuous because there is no concept of definiteness to be expressed. So, the following examples are in free variation (ibid. :128,190):

2.17 *Robbery of old people* is a heinous crime.

2.18 *The robbery of old people* is a heinous crime .

The structure of the sentence is divided grammatically into subject and predicate .The subject should be definite and known to the addressee. The predicate, on the other hand, should be indefinite and unknown to the addressee, and should contain new information.

CHAPTER THREE
INDEFINITENESS IN ENGLISH

This chapter deals with indefiniteness in English at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels.

3.1 Indefiniteness at the Syntactic Level

The parts of speech in English are classified traditionally into noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, preposition, conjunction, adverb, and interjection (Palmer 1984/1985: 55).

Indefiniteness is a characteristic of nouns. All nouns in the context are either indefinite or definite in meaning, but they are different in expressing the concept grammatically. Proper nouns, for example, are self- determining, i.e.they do not need a separate word to express their definiteness. Common nouns, on the other hand, need a separate word with a determinative function to express the concept; i.e. they need a determiner (Quirk et al. 1985/1987: 64).

There are three kinds of determiners in English: predeterminers, central determiners, and postdeterminers. The concern of this study is with central determiners. They include the articles (*a/an, the),* demonstratives (*this, that,* etc.), quantifiers (*some, any, every, each*, etc.) and wh-determiners (*what (ever*)), *who (ever)* , etc.)

Indefiniteness is expressed by the indefinite article *(a/an*) with the singular count noun, and the *zero article* or the unstressed *some* with the plural and non-count-nouns. Indefiniteness with added meaning of amount can be expressed by indefinite determiners like *some, most, any*, etc. (Leech & Svartvic 1994/1996: 45-51).

Definiteness is mainly expressed by the definite article *the*. It can be expressed by other determiners like the demonstratives *(that, this*, etc.) and the possessives *(my, his*, etc.).

3.1.1 The Classification of Nouns

Nouns are divided for syntactic and semantic reasons into proper and common nouns. A proper noun refers to a unique entity which cannot be further specified. Yet, it behaves as a common noun when there is more than one entity referred to by the same proper noun as in :

3.1 *The Dr. Brown* I know comes from Australia.

3.2 The flower arrangement was done by *a Miss Phillips* in Park Road .

(Quirk et al. 1985/1987: 290)

A common noun, on the other hand, refers to a general object. It is of two types, count and non-count nouns. Count nouns have singular and plural forms, whereas non-count nouns have one form

and refer to continuous entities which have no natural bounds. They are either concrete such as *milk*, *sand*, and *water*, or abstract such as *kindness*, *strength* and *information*. The term *mass noun* is used sometimes for non-count noun in general and sometimes for concrete noun only.

In fact, common nouns are not inherently count and non-count, but they are used countably and non-countably (Jacobs 1995:107). It can be seen that some count nouns can be used uncountably and non-count nouns can be used countably in one way or another.

3.3 You have got *some egg* on *your shirt* .

3.4 She needs *a piece of paper* .

3.5 Two more *coffee*, please (=cups of coffee)

Furthermore, there is a number of nouns that can be both count and non-count nouns as in the following examples :

3.6 We went for a walk in *the woods*.

3.7 There are a lot of houses made of *wood.*

Determiners are used with count and non-count nouns differently. The indefinite article *a/an* is used with the singular count noun, as in :

3.8 *She has a* book.

3.9 *A child* needs plenty of love.

It is used with plural count nouns in certain exceptions (Quirk et al.1985/1987 :758n. (b)) as in :

a happy three months and *a good many friends.*

Jespersen (1949/1954: 431) considers the use of *a many* "an archaism or provincialism", as in :

3.10 They have not shed *a many tears* . (Tennyson)

The structure *many a* is used with singular count noun to indicate plurality (Quirk et al 1985/1987: 263), as in:

Many a good student

which means :

Many good students

The indefinite article can be used with the non-count nouns when the noun is premodified or postmodified (ibid.:287). Consider the following examples:

3.11 She played the oboe with *(a) charming sensitivity.*

3.12 She played the oboe with *a sensitivity that delighted the*

critics.

The acceptability of the indefinite article depends on the amount of modification (ibid.). The modified noun sometimes refers to a quality of a person or a thing, and the modification is either expressed or implied (ibid. 252 n.), as in :

3.13 She has *a good education.*

3.14 She has *an education* (a good education).

The stressed *some* is used with the singular count noun to denote an unspecified or unkown person or thing, as in:

3.15 *Some old philosopher* once said that you should know something of everything and everything of something.

(Jespersen 1933/1976:180)

It can be strengthened with *or other* to emphasize the indefinite or unknown feature of the referent.

3.16 Some *one (or other)* must have touched my paper since I went out .

(ibid.)

Strongly stressed *some* occurs with certain singular noun, especially temporal nouns (Quirk et al. 1985/1987:257 n.(a), 384), as:

3.17 *Some day*, I'll tell you a great secret .[one day]

Christophersen (1939; cited in Jespersen 1949/1954:VII:609) distinguishes between *a* and *some;* he says :

> S*ome* competes with *a* in certain of its uses. It is neither individualizing nor generic; we cannot say, "once upon a time there was some king who had some daughter," or "some cat has nine lives." *some* emphasizes the total indefiniteness of the notion.

Compare the following examples:

3.18 I have read it in *a book* .
3.19 I have read it in *some book* .

In (18) the speaker may still remember which book he has read, whereas in (19) the speaker probably cannot remember the title of the book (ibid.).

The unstressed *some* and *zero article* are used with plural count nouns and non-count nouns to express indefiniteness, as in:

3.20 I want *some rolls / bread* , please .

3.21 I've always preferred *coffee* to *tea.*

The unstressed *some* and *zero article* are exchangeable in certain contexts and not in others (Quirk et al.1985/1987 : 274-275). Consider the following examples:

3.22 Would you like (*some*) *coffee* or (*some*) *tea* ?

3.23 I've been writing (*some*) *letters* this morning.

3.24 We have just received *(some)news* from Moscow.

3.25 They have become *vegetarians.*

3.26 * They have become *some vegetarians.*

It can be noticed that *zero article* has a categorical meaning, so it is used in the generic sense, whereas *some* has a quantitative meaning, so it is used in the specific sense. The choice between them is a matter of focus (ibid.).

Swan (1995/2003:61) has almost the same view. He says that *some* is used when the speaker/writer is thinking about limited but indefinite numbers or quantities, whereas *no article,* which he uses instead of *zero article*, is used when the speaker/writer is thinking about unlimited numbers or quantities, or not thinking about them at all.

It is to be mentioned that although that the unstressed *some* is

sometimes considered a plural article, it keeps its quantifying function. It refers to a specifiable but indefinite number or quantity (Quirk et al. 1985/1987: 275). It is proper to consider it an indefinite article instead of a plural article since it is used with count and non-count nouns.

The definite article *the* is used with count and non-count nouns. It occurs with both of them in the specific use, as in:

3.27 Where do you want me to put *the chair/ the chairs* / *the furniture?*

and only with the singular noun in the generic one as in:

3.28 Mary plays *the harp* very well.

The definite article can be used with nationality nouns as in: *the English*, and with an adjective referring to a group of people as in: *the blind.* It cannot be used with the plural and non-count nouns for generic reference (ibid.:283 ; Swan1995/2003:62-63).
Consider the following examples:

3.29 * *The wolves* are carnivorous.

3.30 *Wolves* are carnivorous .

3.31 **The hydrogen* is lighter than the oxygen.

3.32 *Hydrogen* is lighter than the oxygen.

(Quirk et al :283)

Swan thinks that the definite article *the* does not mean *all,* so it cannot be used to talk about things in general. Hawkins (1978) disagrees with this view. He considers such sentences as(29) and (30) grammatical and he distinguishes between them (see 3.2.4).

The last point to be mentioned is that count nouns can occur without a determiner in two cases (Quirk et al. 1985/1987: 255n.(a)):
1. In parallel structure, as in:

3.33 *Man* or *boy*, I don't like him .

2. In the vocatives, as in :

3,34 Look here, *man*!

It is to be mentioned that *man* is used generically without the article when it means ‘the human race’ rather than ‘a male human being’, and in this sense, its synonym is *mankind* (ibid.282n.)

3.35 This book is an attempt to trace the history of *man.*

3.1.2 Articles

English grammarians from Harris (1751/1968) to Crystal

(1997/1998) concentrate on the indefinite and definite articles as prototypes of indefiniteness and definiteness respectively. It is said previously that these articles, unlike other determiners, have no function independently of the noun that follows them. They have no lexical meaning by themselves but they acquire their meaning from the following noun and the context in which the noun occurs.

Yet, grammarians give different labels to the articles. Fries (1952/1977:182) describes the indefinite article as general, and the definite as specific. Palmer & Blandford (1969:58) say that the indefinite article is either a specific and introductory article used to single out the idea expressed by the noun and make the addressee expect further information about it, or absolute article with the purely indefinite sense of *any*. Halliday & Hasan (1976/1987: 70) say that the indefinite article is a non-specific determiner, whereas the definite is a specific one. The proper name for *a/an* is the individualizing article because it is mainly used to individualize the object in question, whether it is specific or non-specific

Hartmann & Stork (1973 s.v. *article**)*** define the word *article* as ‘an adjunct to a noun to modify or limit its meaning’. So, it is considered by traditional grammarians as an adjective because it adds meaning to the following noun and limits its application. It is treated today as a determiner (Palmer1984/1985: 59). The indefinite article *a/an* or its equivalents in other languages is considered an individualizing adjective and it is said to be indefinite because it is

applied to nouns “taken in their more general and confused signification”(2OED s.v. *indefinite*).

Structuralists, owing to their concentration on form rather than meaning, consider the articles as noun-determiners and they are grouped under function words (Fries 1952/1977: 88). They believe that the structural meaning of a sentence is understood by the use of formal devices like articles. For example, Fries’s sentence *ship sails today* is ambiguous because it lacks a noun determiner to decide whether *ship* and *sails* are nouns or verbs (ibid.:146). It is to be noted that the ambiguity of this sentence does not only arise because of the absence of the articles, but also because it is cited in isolation independently of context and prosodic features like intonation.

Transformational grammarians distinguish between the grammatical and conceptual structures. Chomsky (1965) distinguishes between the surface structure, what is actually uttered, and the deep structure, what is present in the mind. He puts the determiner (article) in the deep structure and gives it the indefinite and definite features. Postal (1966; cited in Master 1987:167) is not satisfied with this vague transference of features from the noun to the article. He infers that the noun itself carries the feature in the deep structure and the article is introduced as a segment in the intermediate syntactic structure.

The interest of English grammar books is to show the grammatical indefiniteness, by using the articles, separately from the

meaning of words and the context. This separation leads to the incompatibility of the rules of grammar with the meaning and use of words and leads consequently to ungrammatical structures (Hawkins 1978: 237-38). Compare the following structures:

a pretty girl * *a prettiest girl*

the pretty girl *the prettiest girl*

These noun phrases have the same syntactic structure (Det + Adj+ N).Yet, for a semantic reason, *a prettiest girl* is ungrammatical. This ungrammaticality arises because of the semantic incompatibility between indefiniteness and the superlative. Thus, the choice of the article depends on the other elements in the noun phrase in addition to the whole context.

Indefiniteness in English is associated with the indefinite article *a/an* which is used with the singular count noun. Some grammarians try to show the grammatical indefiniteness of plural and non-count nouns. Palmer & Blandford (1969: 57) believe that when the indefinite article is used with plural and non-count nouns, it is alogistic, i.e. not represented by any word, which is equivalent to the *zero article*. Quirk et al.(1985/1987:65.n) say that "the apparent absence of an article signals the presence of the zero article." Crystal(1997/1998 s.v. *zero*) says that *zero article* refers to the absence of an indefinite or definite article before a noun .

3.1.3 The Syntactic Position of the Indefinite Noun Phrase

The structure of the sentence is divided grammatically into subject and predicate. The subject is supposed to be known and definite to the addressee, and the predicate unknown and indefinite because it gives new information about the subject. This statement emphasizes the fact that the verb is an indefinite element (see 4.1.4).

Stageberg (1971: 169-90) gives nine basic patterns for the English sentence. The following ones are chosen to explain the syntactic positions of the indefinite and definite nouns:

1. N^1 be N^1

3.36 *My brother* is *a teacher*.

2. N^1 LV N^1

3.37 *My brother* became *a teacher*.

3. N be UW

3.38 *The doctor* is here.

4. N^1 TrV N^2

3.39 *The girl* bought *a dress*.

5. N^1 TrV N^2 N^3

3.40 *The woman* bought *her daughter a dress*.

The noun phrase that occupies the subject position in these patterns is either specific or generic. The specific subject is almost always definite, but when the reference is indefinite in certain situations, the indefinite noun is used:

3.41 While we were sitting in the class, *a boy* opened the door.

However, when the subject is indefinite, there are certain grammatical devices used to make the sentence more acceptable. One of these devices is *existential there* which is used to avoid starting the sentence with new information and prevent any kind of awkwardness sensed in the sentence (Quirk et al. 1985/1987:1402) Consider the following examples:

3.42 *A car* is blocking my way.

3.43 There is *a car* blocking my way.

The other device is to combine the subject with discontinuous postmodification of the noun phrase (ibid.):

3.44 *A bird* is in that tree.

3.45 *A bird* is in that tree which I have never seen around here before.

The indefinite and definite generic noun may occupy the subject position but the indefinite generic is more flexible in taking other syntactic positions as well (Master 1987:184):

3.46 The best way to learn *a language* is to live among its Speakers,

(Quirk et al. 1985/1987: 281)

Gramley & Pätzold (1992:162) say that the singular indefinite generic noun may occur only in subject position. In fact, the indefinite and definite generic noun may occupy other syntactic positions depending on the verb selected and the context (see 3.2.1).

In the first and second patterns, when the complement of the copular and linking verbs has a classifying function, the second noun should be indefinite (Zandvoort 1962/1963:125; Quirk et al. 1985/1987: 273; Jacobs 1995: 109).

The object of the transitive verb should be indefinite when it is not uniquely identified in the situation and in its first mention.

3.2 Indefiniteness at the Semantic Level

To show the semantic contrast between indefiniteness and definiteness, it is better to shed light on the uses of the indefinite and definite nouns, the indefinite article and numeral *one*, and indefiniteness and ambiguity.

3.2.1 The Uses of the Indefinite Noun

Jespersen (1949/1954), Zandvoort (1962/1963), Frank (1972), Hawkins (1978), Quirk et al.(1985/1987), Jacobs(1995), and Leech & Svartvick (1994/1996) distinguish two main uses of the indefinite noun: specific and generic:

1. The specific use:

It includes count and non-count nouns. The singular indefinite noun may refer to a definite member of a class which is unknown to the addressee. It is used to introduce entities into the discourse; so Jespersen refers to this use as *introductory.* It is the first mention of the noun phrase as in:

3.47 I bought *a book* yesterday.

The indefinite noun *a book* refers to a certain book from many others existing in the situation, which are infinite in number; so it is not uniquely identified by the addressee. It is considered in this sense a

referring expression because it refers to a particular book in the speaker's mind, which is definitely one book. So, the singular indefinite noun indicates singularity and specificity at the same time. Sometimes, the context or the intention of the speaker concentrates on one of these meanings more than the other. So, when the concentration is on the singularity, the indefinite article can be replaced by *one* as in:

3.48 I bought *a* (*one*) book and two magazines.

It is to be mentioned that Quirk et al. (1985/1987:265) give the following example as a specific use of the indefinite noun:

3.49 *A lion* and two tigers are sleeping in the cage.

It seems that this example indicates singularity more than specificity because it is followed by *two tigers*, and the concentration of the speaker/writer is on the number of the animals.

The indefinite noun in a sentence can be understood either specific or generic depending on the context as in:

3.50 I bought *a newspaper* yesterday (a specific one).

3.51 I bought *a newspaper* yesterday (not a magazine).

The plural indefinite noun refers to a specific number of

something which is unknown to the addressee and the non-count indefinite to a specific a mount of something, as in :

3.52 She bought (*some*) *books.*

3.53 She bought (*some*) *milk.*

2. The generic use:

The indefinite noun in this use cannot be considered *a referring expression* because there is no particular thing in the mind of the speaker and the addressee. The indefinite noun is used to mean any member or any thing of the class. This use can be sub-divided into three uses applied in three cases:

(a) The general use of the indefinite noun:

It includes the count and non-count nouns. The singular indefinite noun may refer to any arbitrary member of a class as a representative of the whole class. So, it has an inclusive meaning in a superficially exclusive use. The plural and non-count indefinite nouns refer to things in general. Some examples are shown below:

3.54 *A tiger* has no mane.

5.55 *Tigers* have no mane.

3.56 *Milk* is nutritious.

3.57 *Education* is important for everyone.

Jespersen (1949/1954:VII:424) proposes the term *all-representative* use for this use and he keeps the term *generic* for the definite noun, whereas Jacobs (1995:110) ignores the generic use of the definite noun and employs the indefinite generic to refer to a class of entities.

This use is proper in the context of definition which includes classification, properties, comparisons and other means used to define an object. So, it almost always occurs in the subject position, and when it occurs in other position , the properties of the object can be understood from the context, as :

3.58 *A lion* is very strong.

(Frank 1972 :1:154)

3.59 He had the strong teeth of *a rodent*.

(Jespersen1949/1954:VII:424)

This use is also proper in the context of generalization. It occurs in this sense in different positions in the sentence:

3.60 She likes reading *books.*

3.61 *Tea* is my favourite drink.

The indefinite noun used in transferred or metaphorical sense can be included in this use. Consider the following examples:

3.62 Old Mr.smith is *a fox*.

3.63 He married *a lemon*.

(Bloomfield 1933/1963:149)

The indefinite nouns *a fox* and *a lemon* are not used to mean *a real fox* or *real lemon* .The indefinite noun used in these examples indicates the description, behaviour or the qualities of the real object. These sentences can be understood as:

3.64 Old Mr.Smith is sly as *a fox.*

3.65 He married a beautiful girl, like *a lemon*.

Thus, the sentence:

3.62 Old Mr.Smith is *a fox* .

apparently belongs to the following generic use, the classifying use, but virtually belongs to the general use of the indefinite noun.

(b) The classifying use of the indefinite noun:

It provides a classification for the subject or the object, and it is associated with the complement function in a sentence, especially in a copular relation (Quirk et al.1985/1987:273):

3.66 Denver is *an interesting city.*

3.67 He found denver *an interesting city.*

Jespersen adds the appositives to this use, as in:

3.68 Hamlet, *a play* of Shakespeare, is very interesting.

(c) The non-specific use of the indefinite noun :

The indefinite noun can be used to mean *any* member, kind, aspect or quantity of some thing. It is mainly used in negative, interrogative, imperative, and conditional sentences. Some examples are shown below:

3.69 She does not have *a book.*
3.70 Does she like reading *books*?
3.71 Give me *juice*, please.
3.72 If you say *a word*. I'll punish you.

The speaker in all these examples has no specific thing in mind, he means anything that fits the description. Jespersen (1949/1954: VII: 423) refers to this use indirectly by saying that the indefinite noun may refer to a member of a class which indicate the typical qualities of the person or thing in question. He gives the following example:

2.73 She had never yet been inside *a theatre*.

As a conclusion, it can be said that the specific and generic uses of the indefinite noun are different in two main points:

1. The specific indefinite noun is considered a referring expression, whereas the generic one is non-referring expression.
2. The plural of the specific indefinite noun can be preceded by *some*, whereas the plural of the generic one cannot.

It is proper to touch upon the main uses of the definite noun because they will be needed in the present study:

1. The specific use of the definite noun: it includes the count and non-count nouns, and it can be sub-divided into the following uses :

(a) The anaphoric use which is established by the previous mention of the noun, as in :

3.74 She bought a book yesterday. *The book* was lost.

(b) The cataphoric use which is established by a kind of modification such as an of- phrase or a relative clause.

3.75 *The book of my friend* was lost.

3.76 Mary lost *the book she bought yesterday* .

(c) The conventional use in which the definite noun may refer to any thing shared by the community (institutions, devices, etc)

as : *the radio*, *the train*, etc.

(d) The unique use in which the definite noun may refer to what is understood to be unique in the world or in the situation, as : *the sun*, *the Queen*, *the Dean*, etc..

2. The generic use of the definite noun: it includes only count nouns, singular and plural. The generic non-count noun is expressed by *zero article* instead of *the.* The singular definite noun refers to the class as a whole not as individual, whereas the plural refers to all the members of the class, as in:

3.77 *The tiger* has no mane.

3.78 *The tigers* have no mane.

3.79 *Water* is necessary for life.

Restrictions on using the indefinite and definite nouns:

The indefinite and definite nouns can be exchangeable in some contexts, as in:

3.80 *A tiger* is a wild animal.

3.81 *The tiger* is a wild animal.

3.82 *Tigers* are wild animals.

3.83 *The tigers* are wild animals.

These sentences express essentially the same meaning, tigers in

general. Yet, the slight difference between the uses of the indefinite and definite nouns makes them unexchangeable in other contexts. Consider the following examples :

3.84 *The tiger* is in danger of becoming extinct.

3.85 **A tiger* is in danger of becoming extinct.

3.86 *Tigers* are in danger of becoming extinct.

The second example (85) is ungrammatical because the property of extinction is applied to the class itself not to individuals (Hawkins 1978:216 ; Quirk etal:1985/1987 : 281 ; Leech & svartvik: 1994/1996 : 53).

The verb also has a role in restricting the use of the indefinite and definite nouns. Chafe (1968; cited in Master1987:170) believes that certain verbs are inherently generic and the verb determines the genericity of its subject and object. He gives certain restrictions on the selected generic noun. If the verb involves a change in the condition of the object referred to, the generic definite cannot be used .The following examples illustrate the generic object:

3.87 *A gopher digs *the tunnel.*

3.88 A gopher digs *a tunnel*.

3.89 A gopher digs *tunnels* .

If the verb affects all members of the class at the same time and cannot act on any member individually, the generic indefinite cannot be used:

3.90 Roger is studying *the elephant*.

3.91 *Roger is studying *an elephant*.

3.92 *Roger is studying *elephants.*

Concerning the generic subject, consider the following examples:

3.93 **An automobile* has changed our way of life.

3.94 *The automobile* has changed our way of life.

3.95 *Automobiles* have changed our way of life.

3.96 *A student* should work hard.

3.97 *Students* should work hard.

3.98 **The student* should work hard. (ibid.:166)

The ungrammaticality of, for example,(98) arises because the act of working and studying is related to individuals not to the class as a whole. It can be noticed that the verb with the generic noun in subject position should be in the present.

It is to be mentioned that the verb does not only affect the generic noun but also the specific one. Consider the following examples:

3.99 *He scribbled on *a living room wall*.

3.100 He scribbled on *the living room wall*.

The concentration is on the act of scribbling, not on a specific wall; so the indefinite noun should not be used (see 3.2.4).

3.2.2. The Indefinite Article *a/an* and the Numeral *One*

The relation between the indefinite article *a/an* and the numeral *one* emphasizes the fact that the indefinite article derives historically from *one.* Thus, the indefinite article *a/an* means *one* and it is used with count nouns to indicate a single object, and *one* is used only to show a contrast with *two* or more (Praninskas 1975: 8,72). Accordingly, the singular indefinite noun, whether specific or generic, refers to one entity; so it definitely indicates singularity .In the specific use, the indefinite article can be replaced by *one* (Quirk et al.1985/1987 :274), as in the following example:

3.101 The Wrights have two daughters and *a son*.

(cf. 3.2.1.

ex. 49).

In the generic use, the indefinite article cannot be replaced by *one* because the singular generic indefinite noun refers to any arbitrary member of the class as repersentative of the whole class (ibid.), as in:

3.102 *A tiger* is a wild animal.

3.103 **One tiger* is a wild animal.

One as a pronoun has a generic use, and can be replaced by the indefinite *you* in informal use as in:

3.104 *One* never knows what may happen.

3.105 *You* never know what may happen.

The indefinite article cannot occur with *one*, they are mutually exclusive,[4] whereas the definite article may occur. Consider the following structures:

**a one* book I like best.

the one (only) book I like best.

(ibid.:262)

Yet, *a one* may occur when *one* is a noun or in a casual speech or in non-standard usage in the sense of *an amusing person* (ibid. 387). The following examples illustrate these uses respectively:

3.106 I could not remember whether the number

is *a* four or

[4] similarly, the definite article and the demonstratives are mutually exclusive as in :
*the that boy
this point emphasizes the historical origin of the indefinite and definite articles.

a one.

3.107 I had lots of pens and now I haven't got *a one*!

3.108 You are *a one.*

The indefinite article *a/an* used as a numeral or a quantifying element can be seen in its occurrence in such expressions: *a* million, *a* dozen, in *a* word, etc.

The indefinite article *a/an* can be considered an unstressed *one*, equivalent to the stressed *one* (ibid.: 254n.) as in the following structures : *a pound or two* and *one or two pounds*

However, when the indefinite article *a/an* has the function of the numeral *one*, it is not completely article (Jespersen1949/ 1954:408). Though, *one* can be used as an indefinite determiner in some expressions as *one day , one morning*, etc. as in:

3.109 *One day* she will change her mind.

and as an indefinite pronoun as in:

3.110 How does *one* deals with this problem.

It is to be mentioned that the adjective *single* can be used to add an intensifying force to the indefinite noun (Qurik et al.1985/1987: 274) as in :

3.111 They did not stop talking for *a* (*single*) moment.

3.2.3. Indefiniteness and Ambiguity

It is well known that an ambiguity arises when two interpretations are plausible. Consider the following:

3.112 I am looking for *the pencil.*

3.113 I am looking for *a pencil.*

The unambiguity of (112) lies in that the hearer knows the object referred to and it is supposed to be mentioned previously or it may exist in the shared knowledge. So, he has a kind of control on the situation, whereas in (113), the hearer lacks this knowledge. So, he understands the indefinite noun phrase either as specific or non-specific. In the specific reading, *a pencil* means that the speaker has a specific pencil in mind, whereas the in the non-specific reading, it means that anything fitting the description will meet the speaker's need. In both readings, the referent is unknown to the addressee.

It is to be mentioned that this ambiguity arises mainly in opaque contexts in which the meaning of a sentence cannot be understood and determined clearly unless the whole context is known. There are certain verbs used in such contexts as *look for* and

want (Palmer 1981:195 ; Brown & yule 1983/1987:209).

It may be useful to point out that the non-specific reading does not always mean any member of the class and it does not matter which one. It may refer to any member of a certain group in the class. Consider the following example:

3.114 I want *a student* to answer this question.

In the non-specific reading of this sentence, the indefinite noun, *a student*, does not necessarily refer to *any student*, but to *any clever student.* Jespersen (1949/1954:420) mentions the difference between the indefinite article *a/an* and *any* by stating the following questions and answers:

3.115 Can *a boy* do that? No, but *a man* can.

3.116 Can *any* boy do that? No, but *some* boys can.

3.2.4. The Semantic Contrast between Indefiniteness and Definiteness

Russell (1905; cited in Hawkins 1978 ; Abbott 2004) tries to find the semantic difference between the indefinite and definite nouns. His analysis is based on logic and mathematics and applies only to singular count nouns. He thinks that the indefinite noun refers to a non-unique entity in the situation. There is more than one

entity in the situation and the indefinite noun phrase refers to one of them:

3.117 *A student* arrived.

The definite noun phrase, on the other hand, refers to a unique entity in the situation, as in:

3.118 *The student* arrived.

Accordingly, the indefinite noun phrase does not occur with some postdeterminers and adjectives whose meaning is associated with uniqueness such as: *same, only, sole,* and the superlatives. (Hawkins 1978:247-248 ; Quirk et al1985/1987:270):

3.119 Ada and I have *the same* hobby.

3.120 * Ada and I have *a same* hobby.

(ibid.)

Quirk et al.(1985/1987) consider the use of the definite article with these words 'the logical use' of the definite article.

Hawkins (1978) criticizes Russell's theory for being incomplete because it applies only to singular count nouns. So, he introduces his alternative theory 'the Location Theory' which is more comprehensive because it includes plural and mass nouns in addition to the singular count noun.

The crucial concepts in his theory are *exclusiveness* and *inclusiveness.* He argues that the indefinite noun phrase refers *exclusively* to not-all objects, whereas the definite refers *inclusively* to all objects in the situation. This theory applies to the specific and generic uses of the nouns.

Concerning the specific nouns, consider the following examples:

3.121 *A member* of parliament has just died.

3.122 Pass me *a cup* of tea, please.

3.123 Pass me *the bucket*, please.

3.124 Bring *the wickets* in after the game.

3.125 Move *the sand* from my gateway.

The indefinite noun in (121) and (122) refers to one member and excludes the others. The definite noun in (123),(124), and (125) refers to all objects and quantities in the relevant situation.

Concerning the generic nouns, consider the following :

3.126 *A lion* is a noble beast.

3.127 *Lions* are noble beasts.

3.128 *The lion* is a noble beast.

3.129 *The lions* are noble beasts.

The singular indefinite noun *a lion* refers to any member of the class as a representative of the whole class, and the plural indefinite noun *lions* refers to any member of the class whether it exists or not yet in existence. The singular definite noun *the lion,* on the other hand, refers to the class as a whole not as individuals, and the plural definite noun *the lion*s refers to all the members of the class which are actually in existence.

So, according to Hawkins's theory, one can infer that the distinction between *a lion* / *lions* on one hand, and *the lion*/*the lions* on the other, is a distinction between *any* and *every* respectively. The indefinite nouns *a lion* and *lions* refer to any member in the class , A or B or C. The definite nouns *the lion* and *the lions,* on the other hand, refer to every member, A and B and C. It can be noticed that the generic indefinite noun has inclusive and general meaning theoretically not practically. It involves an indefinite reference to any arbitrary member or quantity of something.

This theory can be better explained with the parts of the body as in the following examples cited by Hawkins (1978):

3.130 Fred lost *a leg* in the war.

3.131 Fred lost *some fingers* in the war.

3.132 *Fred lost *a head* in the war.

It can be seen that the indefinite noun cannot be used unless the body has more than one of the body parts mentioned. If there are more than two parts, *some* is used. Yet, the possessive pronoun can be used instead of the indefinite article (Hawkins 1978:180 ; (Quirk et al.1985/1987: 273):

3.133 Fred lost *his leg* in the war.
3.134 Fred lost *his fingers* in the war.
3.135 Fred lost *his head* in the war.

It is to be mentioned that according to this theory, indefinites with *have* and *be* do not presuppose exclusiveness. These verbs define the membership of the relevant objects within a pragmatic set:

3.136 My house has *a roof*.
3.137 There is *a roof* on my house.
3.138 My house has *some windows.*
3.139 There are *some windows* in my house.

It seems that Hawkins's theory does not apply to all situations. Sometimes, even when the referent of the noun phrase is more than one, the definite noun is more suitable. Recall:

3.99 *He scribbled on *a living-room wall*.

3.100 He scribbled on *the living-room wall.*

The referent of the noun in (99) is more than one, so the indefinite noun is supposed to be used. Yet, the definite is used because it does not matter for the hearer which wall was scribbled on. The use of the indefinite noun in this example "gives the impression of being unnaturally precise" (Dubois 1980:233; cited in Abbott 2001:11), whereas the use of the indefinite noun in the following example is normal:

3.140 We have to paint *a living-room wall*.

Abbott (ibid.) thinks that the use of the definite noun instead of the indefinite in (140) is not so good because it gives the impression that there is only one wall in the living room. She fails to point out that the use of the definite noun in such a case is acceptable if the hearer knows previously that one of the walls needs painting; otherwise it is not acceptable:

3.141 We have to paint *the living –room wall*.

Bloomfiled (1933/1963:203) indirectly refers to what Hawkins later on states explicitly. He states that one of the features that sub-divides the determiners into *indefinite* and *definite* is that "a definite

determiner can be preceded by the numerative *all* (as in *all the water*) but an indefinite determiner (as *some* in *some water*) cannot."

What can be said about Hawkins's theory is that:

1. He does not mention proper and abstract nouns in his theory, and he concentrates on count nouns more than non-count ones.
2. He attributes the concept of exclusiveness and inclusiveness to the indefinite and definite articles respectively. Being so, he ignores languages, which have no articles but definitely have the concept of indefiniteness and definiteness.
3. It seems that this theory is not very plausible with the *inclusiveness* of the singular count noun. Compare :

3.142 Pass me *the buckets* , please.

3.143 Pass me *the bucket* , please.

According to Hawkins's theory, the plural definite noun phrase *the buckets* in (142) refers to all the buckets in the situation; the singular definite *the bucket* in (143) also refers to all the buckets, but, as Hawkins justifies implausibly, it just happens that the total number of buckets is only one. This remark also applies to Bloomfield's statement, though he does not give examples for the count nouns, singular and plural.

4. There is no mention of the *zero article* which is used with

plural and non-count nouns.

It seems that Russell's and Hawkins's theories complete each other since the former applies to singular count noun and the latter is more plausible with plural and non-count nouns.

3.2.5 The Indefinite Noun in English Proverbs

It is well known that proverbs are concerned with the general meaning rather than the specific one. They are used for pragmatic purposes in different situations. The proverb can help, for example, to express one's feeling or opinions, justify something, excuse someone, and so on.

The indefinite and definite nouns can be used in English generically; so both of them can be used in proverbs. The singular indefinite is used when the properties of the referent are related to individuals, whereas the singular definite is used when the properties are related to the class as a whole .The plural and non-count nouns are used to convey general meaning. Gramley & Pätzold (1992:76-77) give the following well-known proverbs:

1. *A friend* in need is *a friend* indeed.
2. *People* who live in *glass houses* should not throw *stones.*
3. *Absence* makes *the heart* fonder.
4. *Clothes* do not make *the man.*

Jespersen (1949/1954:VII: 439) says that the generic mass

(non-count) words are frequently used in proverbs because they convey general meaning, as in:

5. *Haste* makes *waste*, and *waste* makes *want* , and *want* makes *strife* between the good man and his wife.
6. *Mirth* and *motion* prolong *life*.

The indefinite article in some proverbs can be replaced by *one* as in the following proverbs:

7. *A bird* in the hand is worth two in the bush.
8. *A stitch* in time saves nine.

(Best 1963/1983: 63)

Zandvoort (1962/1963:126) says that the indefinite article can be used to mean *the same* as in the following proverb:

9. Birds of *a feather* flock together.

Some proverbs contain irregular syntax as in:

10. Like *father*, like *son*.

3.3 Indefiniteness at the Pragmatic Level.

The contrast between indefiniteness and definiteness can be based on pragmatic principles (Dik 1978/1979: 61).

The main environment in which the indefinite noun is required is the first mention of the reference, i.e. when the reference is not mentioned before and supposed to be unfamiliar to the addressee as :

3.144 Bob lost *a gold watch* yesterday.

(Quirk et al. 1985/1987: 272)

When the indefinite noun is repeated in the same context, it refers to another object, i.e. there is no coreference between the two indefinites. When the reference becomes contextually known , the indefinite noun is replaced by a definite one and they refer to the same thing. Compare:

3.145 Bob lost *a gold watch* yesterday, and Bill was wearing *a gold watch* this morning.

3.146 Bob lost *a gold watch* yesterday, and Bill was wearing *the gold watch* this morning.

Quirk et al. use the term direct anaphoric reference for the use of the definite noun in (146). They describe the occurrence of indefinite

and definite nouns in this way as having a complementary role (ibid.:267). It is to be mentioned here that the use of the definite noun in (146) is not obligatory. It can be replaced by *it* or *this gold watch.*

However, the context determines how the indefinite noun is understood. For example, the two indefinite nouns in the following example most probably refer to the same object:

3.147 Bob lost *a gold watch* in *a taxi,* and Bill found *a gold watch* in *the taxi*.

3.3.1 The Pragmatic Contrast between Indefiniteness and Definiteness

The difference between the indefinite and definite nouns in some contexts is mainly pragmatic. Quirk et al. (ibid.:272) give the following examples:

3.148 *The house on the corner* is for sale.

3.149 *A house on the corner* is for sale.

They think that the speaker/writer in (148) presupposes that the referent is identifiable to the addressee because there is only one such a house. In (149), there is no such presupposition. The prepositional phrase *on the corner* in (148) refers to a definite

corner, whereas in (149) it is used to modify the noun *a house*, and it does not refer to any particular corner. Yet, the use of the indefinite noun in such a case is not very satisfactory because the corner permits only one house. The indefiniteness of the referent can be better expressed in this way:

3.150 *A corner-house* is for sale.

The pragmatic contrast between the indefinite and definite nouns can be brought out by the following:

3.151 *The door* of the house was broken.

3.152 *A door* of the house was broken.

The speaker/writer and the adressee in (151) know that the house normally has one door; so the use of the definite noun is normal. In (152), the use of the indefinite noun will be odd unless the house has more than one door. In such a case, the speaker/writer should presuppose that the addressee knows this fact in order to avoid such a question:

3.153 How many doors does the house have?

which is not preferred according to Grice's co- operative principle.

3.3.2 The Co-operative Principle:

The participants in any conversation should co-operate with each other in order to make the conversation proceed properly and successfully. So, the speaker should avoid ambiguity and wh-question which may arise because he may misjudge the knowledge of the hearer.

Grice (1975) sets out the co-operative principle with four maxims, which should be obeyed. Yule (1985/1988:110) states this co-operative principle in the following way:

> Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

The four maxims are quantity, quality, relation and manner.

Grice's co-operative principle can be better explained by the following directive utterances:

3.154 Please hand me *a glass.*

3.155 Please hand me *the glass.*

(Abbott 2001:5)

For (154), any entity fitting the description of *glass* will enable the addressee to carry out the directive, whereas for (155), the speaker cannot be co-operative unless he knows previously that the

addressee can figure out which *glass* the speaker means. Furthermore, the speaker must assume that there is only one glass in the relevant context.

It is to be mention that the ambiguity of the indefinite noun in certain context, whether specific or non-specific, can be treated in pragmatic terms (3.2.3). The referent of the specific indefinite noun is known to the speaker/writer but unknown to the addressee, whereas the referent of the non-specific indefinite is unknown to the speaker/writer and the addressee. The ambiguity of a sentence can be removed by the speaker/writer depending on Grice's co- operative principle. Recall:

3.113 I am looking for *a pencil.*

The speaker/writer can disambiguate (113) if he completes his speech in one of these ways:

3.156 I am looking for *a certain pencil*. (specific)

3.157 I am looking for *a pencil*. Please, who can find it? (specific)

3.158 I am looking for *a pencil*. P leases who can give me one? (non-specific)

3.3.3 The Pragmatic Sets of the Indefinite Noun

Discourse analysts point out that the purpose of the indefinite noun is to introduce entities to the discourse and to indicate that the object(s) referred to does not exist in the speaker-hearer shared knowledge. Consider the following example:

3.159 I bought *a book.*

The indefinite noun *a book* is used to introduce an entity to the discourse and it means to the addressee just one member, any arbitrary member of a potentially infinite number of such objects.

Hawkins (1978: 173) disagrees with this view. He proposes that the referent of an indefinite expression can be located in the speaker-hearer shared knowledge .He proposes pragmatic sets which are defined on the basis of the speaker –hearer shared knowledge and the situation of the utterance. These pragmatic sets are:

1. The larger situation set:

It is common knowledge that people of the same village, country, or nation can speak about objects existing in their area. So, when the speaker speaks about the president of his country, he says *the president* not *a president* because there is only one president in the country. When there is more than one member, the indefinite is used:

3.160 *A member of parliament* has just died.

2. The immediate situation set:

The referent may exist in the immediate situation in which the conversation is taking place. The referent is not necessarily invisible to the speaker and hearer. Consider:

3.161 Pass me *a bucket*.

3.162 Pass me *some buckets.*

3.163 I need *a student* to help me.

3. The association set:

The mention of certain noun expressions sometimes conjures up a set of associations for the hearer, for instance:

3.164 Fred bought *a book* from Heffer's.

3.165 He then went and spoke to *the author* about it.

Although *the author* in (165) is mentioned for the first time, the definite form is used. It is associated with *a book* because every book has an author(s). Consider the following examples:

3.166 Fred bought *a book* from Heffer's.

3.167 He was dismayed to find that *a page* was torn.

3.168 He then went and spoke to *an author* about it.

Hawkins (ibid.:176) says that *a page* is associated with that book, but *an author* cannot be the author of that book .He neglects books which have more than one author.

Prince (1981;cited in brown & Yule 1983/1987: 183) calls this associative use as *inferrable* because the speaker assumes that the hearer can infer from the discourse which has already been mentioned.

Quirk et al.(1985/1987:267) refer to this use and call it *indirect anaphoric reference* of the definite article:

3.169 John bought *a bicycle*, but when he rode it, *one of the wheels* came off.

which is equivalent to

3.170 John bought *a bicycle*, but when he rode it, *a wheel* came off.

It seems that Hawkins concentrates on concrete nouns, and he ignores abstract nouns like *idea*, *help*, *courage*, etc. He needs another set for them, which he may call *imagination* or *mental set.*

CHAPTER FOUR
INDEFINITENESS IN ARABIC

This chapter deals with indefiniteness at the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels.

4.1 Indefiniteness at the Syntactic Level

Arabic grammarians agree that the indefinite form is the original state of things. سيبويه (180هـ ت [1316:1/ 6-7]) expresses this idea by saying النكرة أول ثم يدخل عليها ما تعرف به i.e. 'The indefinite is first and then it becomes definite.' السيوطي (911 هـ ت [(د) : 1/ 55]) expresses a similar view when he says : إذا نظرت إلى حال الوجود كان التنكير قبل التعريف لأن الأجناس هي الأول ثم الأنواع i.e. '*Indefiniteness* precedes *definiteness* because the genera exist first and then the species.' Thus, it can be said that *indefiniteness* is expressed by the original form of the اسم. There is no need to express it grammatically by using an indefinite article .Yet, there is a marker accompanying the indefinite اسم, which is called *nunation* التنوين.Tritton (1943/1970: 24) believes that what is here called *nunation* is in fact an indefinite article /n/ and it occurs at the end of the noun. This marker will be discussed in detail with the definite article in the section on *articles.*

Definiteness, on the other hand, is expressed by many ways.

The first one is by adding التعريف أ ل ‘ the’ as a prefix to النكرة الاسم‘the

indefinite اسم' as in الكتـاب. The other way is by using الإضـافة 'the construct state', which means relating or ascribing the indefinite اسم to a definite اسم or a pronoun as in علم الكتـاب and علمـه. Consider the difference in the following examples:

4.1 (قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ **عِلْمٌ** مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ)
(النمل:من الآية40)

4.2 (وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلاً قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيداً بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ **عِلْمُ ا لْكِتَابِ**) (الرعد:34)

The indefinite اسم may be added to another indefinite اسم as in كلمـة حق. In this case الأنصاري (ت 761 هـ) ([1959:253]) says that the addition gives the first indefinite تخصـيص' '*specialization*' , not تعريـف '*definiteness'* .

The other way to make the indefinite اسم definite is by using المنادى 'the vocative' in the nominative case as in:

4.3 (قُلْنَا **يَا نَارُ** كُونِي بَرْداً وَسَلاماً عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ)
(الأنبياء:69)

This kind of indefinite اسم is called النكرة المقصـودة 'the intended indefinite' because there is a specific individual or thing directly addressed. النكرة غير المقصـودة 'the unintended indefinite' ,on the other hand,is expressed by using the vocative in the accusative case, as in :

4.4 **يا غافلاً** عن ذكر الله

4.5 **يا رجلاً** خذ بيدي

The definites also include, in addition to the three ones mentioned above, الضمائر 'the pronouns', العَلم 'proper noun', أسماء الإشارة 'demonstratives' and الأسماء الموصولة 'the relative pronouns'.

There are certain points that should be taken into consideration concerning the indefinite and definite (ابن الزملكاني ت 651 هـ [1964: 52]; السيوطي ت 911 هـ [د):1/52]; حسن1961:1/146):

1. Certain items classed اسم are considered indefinite by form, but definite by meaning, as the word أول in the following examples:

4.6 كان ذلك عاماً **أولَ**

2. Other items, however, are considered definite by form, but indefinite by meaning, like **أسامة** which means *a lion*. This kind of اسم is called علم الجنس 'generic proper noun'. The generic definite اسم is also put in this group because it is definite by form but it does not refer to a specific thing, as in:

4.7 (إنَّ **الإنسانَ** لَفِي خُسْرٍ)

(العصر:2)

الغلاييني (1966:1/155) gives the following example to show the explicit definiteness and implicit indefiniteness of the generic definite اسم :

4.8 ولقد أمُّر على **اللئيم** يسبُّني

فمضيت،ثمَّت قلتُ : لا يعنيني

He states that اللئيم is definite by form but indefinite by meaning ; so the following sentence يسُّبني , can be considered حال if اللئيم is treated as definite , and صفة if it is treated as indefinite because there is a rule in Arabic that says : الجمل بعد النكرات صفات و بعد المعارف أحوال 'Clauses occurring after the indefinite are adjectival, and after the definite are advervials of manner.'

3. Still others are considered indefinite by some people and definite by others like: واحد أمه and عبد بطنه .

4. And others remain indefinite even when they are used in a construct state like : غير and مثل :

4.9 (وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَإِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْماً **غَيْرَكُمْ** ثُمَّ لا يَكُونُوا **أَمْثَالَكُمْ**)

(محمد: من الآية38)

4.10 (أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ **غَيْرُ** اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ)

(الطور:43)

4.11 (قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَاداً لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا **بِمِثْلِهِ** مَدَداً)

(الكهف:109)

These items are called نكرات متوغلة في الإبهام 'indefinites that are deeply rooted in vagueness' (حسن 1961:1/ 305 n.1).

4.1.1 The Syntactic Definitions of the Indefinite اسم (النكرة)

The indefinite اسم is given a number of syntactic definitions in Arabic grammars. For example, ابن مالك (ت672 هـ [1930:12]) says:

نكرةٌ قابلُ **أل** مؤثرا

أو واقعٌ موقعَ ما قد ذكرا

Explaining this statement, ابن عقيل (ت 769 هـ [1956:1/76]) says النكرة 'The indefinite is ما يقبل (أل) وتؤثّر فيه التعريف أو يقع موقع ما يقبل (أل) what accepts أ ل ' the' and by which it changes into definite . For example, رجل is indefinite and الرجل is definite, whereas عباس and العباس are both definite and أ ل attached to عباس does not affect the اسم. If the اسم does not permit أ ل it may have the meaning of a word which permits it. For example, ذو علم has the meaning of صاحب علم.

علامـة النكـرة ان تقبـل thinks that (1953:131) ت 761 هـ)الأنصـاري (ربَّ) عليهـا دخـول (رُبّ) ‘The indefinite noun is identified by accepting in front of it.’ For example:

4.12 ُربَّ **رجلٍ** عالمٍ

Accordingly, الأنصـاري infers that مـن and مـا may occur as indefinite أسماء in some contexts. He gives the following examples:

4.13 ُربَّ **من** انضجت غيظا قلبه
قد تمنى لي موتاً لم يطع

4.14 ر**بما** تكره النفوس من الأمر
له فرجة كحل العقال

أي and , مـا , مـن says that (1980: 343,345,357]) ت 521 هـ) ا لبطليوسـي may be used as indefinite أسماء on condition that they are modified:

4.15 مررت **بمن** محسن إليك
4.16 مررت **بما** معجب لك
4.17 مررت **بأي** معجب لك

4.1.2 The Classification of Nouns

The parts of speech in Arabic are classified traditionally into الاسم, الفعل, and الحرف. الاسم is not easy to determine ; so سيبويه

(سيبويه ت 180هـ [1316:1/2]) determines الفعل and الحرف , and leaves الاسم to include all words which are neither فعل nor حرف.

Nevertheless, it can be said that الاسم includes اسم الجنس [5] 'generic or common noun', العلم 'proper noun', الصفة 'adjective' , اسم الفاعل و اسم المفعول 'participles' , الضمير 'pronoun', اسم الإشارة 'demonstrative', الاسم الموصول 'relative pronoun', and الظرف 'adverb', in addition to other certain اسماء like : غير, مثل, كيف, أين, ما, من, and ذو which cannot be placed with the previous groups.

'the generic noun' is either اسم عين 'concrete noun' as اسم الجنس 'man' ,or اسم معنى 'abstract noun' as علم 'knowledge'. The same may apply to adjectives and participles, for example, راكب , riding, is اسم عين, a concrete noun , and مفهوم, understood , اسم معنى, an abstract noun (الآمدي ت 631 هـ [1914:1/73] ; Wright 1896/1955:1:107) .

'proper noun' العلم , is definite but it is either transferred from indefinite noun like أسد, , or from adjective like رحيم ; or it may be derived from indefinite noun like عمر, or it is a borrowed noun (non-native Arabic) like إبراهيم (ابن السراج ت 316 هـ [1973: 1/176-177]).

الاسم is also either count or non-count . Count اسم can be مفرد 'singular' as معلم , مثنى 'dual' as معلمان , or جمع 'plural'. The plural of اسم include جمع المذكر السالم 'the regular masculine plural' as معلمون, جمع المؤنث السالم 'the regular feminine plural' as معلمات , and جمع التكسير 'the irregular (broken) plural' as رجال .

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[5] Concerning اسم الجنس ' the generic noun', الزمخشري (538 هـ ت [5 : (ب)]) says : [ينقسم اسم الجنس] ينقسم الى اسم عين و اسم معنى وكلاهما الى اسم غير صفة واسم هو صفة فالاسم غير الصفة نحو رجل وفرس وعلم وجهل والصفة نحو راكب وجالس ومفهوم ومضمر . Some grammarians do not distinguish between اسم الجنس and النكرة (حسن 1961: 1:142 n).

الاسم is classified according to التصريف 'declension' into معرب 'declinable' and مبني 'indeclinable' (Wright 1896/1955: 1:234; حسن 1961:1/18-22). The declinable اسم is either معرب منصرف 'fully declinable' (with nunation) as رجل and محمد , or معرب غير منصرف 'partly declinable' (without nunation and without the regular ending of the genitive case) like صحراء ,which is called الممنوع من الصرف 'diptotes' . The indeclinable, on the other hand, has either a rigidly fixed termination like كيف and ما ,or a non- rigidly fixed termination i.e. a termination that can be changed but only under certain conditions like سيبويهِ when it is not applied to the known person, but to any person carries the same name and unknown to the addressee .

The indefiniteness of the singular, the regular feminine plural, the irregular (broken) plural, and the non-count common declinable اسم is expressed by the origin of such اسم i.e. the absence of the definite article, and it is emphasized by *nunation*, like رجلٌ ,مسلماتٌ, رجالٌ and ماءٌ. The indefiniteness of the regular masculine plural and the dual is expressed by the absence of the definite article, like مسلمون and مسلمان . Similarly, The indefiniteness of the common diptotes is expressed by the absence of the definite article without *nunation* like صحراءُ . The indefiniteness of proper nouns will be discussed separately. The indefiniteness of the indeclinable اسم is expressed by *nunation* like سيبويهٍ / سيبويهَ and صهٍ / صهْ .

4.1.2.1 The Indefiniteness of الاسم العلم 'Proper Noun'

الاسم العلم, The proper noun, is one of the definites . It is a name of a person, a city, a river, etc. which is applicable to only one individual of a kind. السيوطي (ت 911 هـ) ([1/73: (د)]) says that وقد ينكر العلم تحقيقاً او تقديراً ' The proper noun can be indefinite either practically or as an assumption', and he gives the following examples respectively:

4.18 رأيت **زيداً** من الزيدين

4.19 لا **قريشَ** بعد اليوم

Then, it is deprived of its definiteness and behaves as an indefinite اسم. It can be dual as زيدان , and plural as زيدون . It accepts the definite article أل التعريف, as in:

4.20 **هذا الزيد** اشرف من ذلك **الزيد**

and the proper noun can be used in a construct phrase, as in :

4.21 علا **زيد نا** يوم النقا راس **زيدكم**
بأبيض ماضي الشرفتين يمان

Also it may occur after رُبَّ and لا النافية للجنس which are used only with indefinite اسم, as in:

رُبَّ **زيدٍ** احسن من زيدٍ 4.22

قضية ولا **أبا حسن** لها 4.23

The proper noun أبا حسن is used in (23) as a generic noun . It is used instead of the indefinite noun رجل . Its use gives the situation more effectiveness and shows how the problem is difficult. This impression comes from the fact that the use of الاسم العلم 'the proper noun', that refers to a man well- known for his wide knowledge in this respect, is better than using a man in general. The use of the proper noun in such a case does not mean that the person in question, أبا حسن, is indefinite or not considerable; on the other contrary, it shows his greatness. So, some grammarians interpret this sentence as:

قضية ولا**قاضي ولافاصل** مثل ابي حسن لها 4.24

قضية ولا **مثل أبي حسن** لها 4.25

لا **امثال علي** لهذه القضية 4.26

(ابن عقيل ;2/104: ت 643 هـ ابن يعيش ; [1/354 : 1316 هـ] ت 180 هـ سيبويه 1985:3/82]). [(ب)] ت 911 هـ السيوطي ; [1956:1/335] ت 769 هـ

It is to be mentioned that the proper noun is either declinable as محمد and احمد or indeclinable as سيبويهِ . The declinable is either fully declinable as محمد or diptote as احمد.

All these types of proper noun can be indefinite and accept nunation in one way or another. The indefiniteness of the fully declinable proper noun can be understood through the context (السيوطي هـ 911 ت [د) :1/73] ; السامرائي 2000 : 1/ 81) :

4.27 ما من **زيد** كزيد بن ثابت

The indefiniteness of the diptote is expressed by *nunation*, as:

4.28 قابلت **احمداً**

The indefiniteness of the indeclinable proper noun is similarly expressed by *nunation*, as in:

4.29 قرأت لسيبويهِ و**سيبويه** آخر

The indefiniteness of the proper noun can be accounted for by the following:

1. The proper noun, especially the name of a person, can be repeated many times; so this repetition gives it a sense of indefiniteness.
2. Proper nouns refer to persons, cities, etc. which are originally common nouns; for example, محمد is a man , بغداد is a city , دجلة is a river and so on . Thus, the proper noun implies indefiniteness

and the name is just a distinctive marker to make الاسم definite, like أل التعريف 'the definite article'. The difference between them is that the origin of الاسم is observable with the definite article and not observable with the proper noun.

ابـن جنـي (هـ 392 ت [1956: 3/ 240] accounts for the indefiniteness of the proper noun by saying that the proper noun is, by form , like the indefinite اسم . Its definiteness is implicit, whereas the definiteness of the definite اسم that is defined by the article or the construct state is explicit.

3. Proper nouns are either transferred from common indefinite اسم like, أسد or from ,صفة adjective, like ,نبيل or it is derived from indefinite اسم, likeعُمر . The proper noun has no meaning related to the referent and it does not describe the person or thing which carries the name. It happens that someone's name is صـادق but in fact he is a liar . Thus, the name has nothing to do with the fact and personality of the referent. Yet, it happens that the meaning of the name fits the description of the person or thing it denotes. In such cases, the definite article can be attached to the proper noun to draw attention to the meaning of the noun, as in: الحـارث ,and الحسن (السـامرائي 2000:1/ 84). Compare, for example, الفرات with دجلـة. The definite article is attached to the former but not to the latter because the former has a sense of description, which is الماء العذب (السيوطي هـ 911 ت [(جـ):2/157]) :

4.30 (وَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمْ مَاءً **فُرَاتاً**)

(المرسلات: من الآية27)

This phenomenon is called in Arabic لمح الأصل 'hinting at the original meaning'. It is to be mentioned that changing the name of someone does not make a change in language, whereas changing the genus or class of someone makes a change in language (السيوطي هـ 911 ت [(ب) :3/ 81]).

4. There is a kind of proper nouns called علم الجنس 'the generic proper noun', like أسامة , ثُعالة and ذُؤالة .These nouns are definite by form but indefinite by meaning. Each one of these nouns is applicable to every individual of a whole kind (الأنصاري هـ 761 ت [1959:97]) . It is to be mentioned that these nouns do not accept the definite article and the construct state.

4.1.3 Articles

The indefinite marker in Arabic, as considered by some Arabic grammarians, is التنوين 'nunation' ,and the definite article is أل التعريف 'the' .

4.1.3.1 التنوين 'Nunation'

Nunation is traditionally defined as نون زائدة ساكنة تلحق الآخر لفظاً لا خطا،لغير توكيد 'A superfluous /n/ that is attached to the end of the اسم pronounced , not written , and for no emphasis .'

The origin of التنوين ' *nunation'* , is التمييم ' *meemation' ,*which exists in other semitic languages like Akkadian ; for example the origin of بيتٌ is بيتم (برجستراسر 1982: 27).

It is found that in the ancient Akkadian التمييم has also a sense of definiteness (ibid.: 118). The occurrence of التميـيم with the indefinite and definite items is found in Hamurabi's texts ; so السامرائي(1968:192-194) concludes that *nunation* and the definite article do not occur together because they indicate the same thing , and also for phonological reasons .

In Aramaic languages, when the definite article becomes weak and old, another article is invented. The old one becomes part of the word and it is considered as an indefinite article. It is not omitted when the new article is added; for example, the noun *'u hmōrō* has two articles. برجستراسر (1982 : 119) infers that *nunation* perhaps is a definite article then it becomes an indefinite one.

Accordingly, the indefinite and definite articles are changeable and exchangeable. There is no strict formal marker that distinguishes between indefinite and definite forms in these semitic languages.

Arab grammarians, traditional and modern, have **two views** about nunation:

The first one says that nunation is a marker of fully declinable اسم whether indefinite or definite.سيبويه (ت 180 هـ) [1316:1/7]) says that التنـوين علامـة للامكـن عنـدهم والأخـف علـيهم وتركـه علامـة لمـا يسـتثقلون i.e.'*Nunation* is a marker of the fully declinable اسم and the easier in

articulation; avoidance of *nunation* indicates that they find it difficult in articulation.' الجرجاني (ت 471 هـ)(ب)1982:1/73 - 76]) and السيوطي (ت 911هـ)(ب) : 3/239]) distinguish a number of types of *nunation* amounting to ten types, but the following are the concern of this study :

1. تنوين التمكين: this kind of *nunation* shows that الأسم is fully declinable like رجلٌ and محمدٌ . It includes indefinite and definite اسماء, and when *nunation* is mentioned without specifying it , this *nunation*, تنوين التمكين , is meant.

2. تنوين التنكير 'nunation of indefiniteness': this kind of *nunation* is used to distinguish between indefinite and definite indeclinable اسماء, as in :

4.31 قرأت لسيبويهِ و **سيبويهٍ** آخر

The first سيبويهِ refers to the well-known Arabic grammarian and the second one refers to another one called سيبويه, but he is unknown to the addressee. اسماء الأفعال' the nominal verbs' , like صَهْ , مَهْ, and إيهِ are also included in this type ; for example , the word إيهِ means هات الحديث, speak on this subject , whereas إيهٍ means هات حديثاً, speak on any subject (الجرجاني ت 471 هـ [(ب) 1982:1/ 73 -74] ; ابن منظور 711هـ ت:17 / 366 s.v.إيهِ). It is to be mentioned that البصريون consider these words اسماء أفعال, because they are neither أفعال nor أسماء. They accept *nunation* which is a marker of اسم and they also indicate action and time which are the characteristics of فعل . الكوفيون, on the

other hand , consider these words أفعال because they indicate action and time and they have nothing to do with indefiniteness and definiteness (المخزومي 1964 : 202).

3. تنوين المقابلة ' nunation of correspondence' : this nunation is found in the feminine regular plural which corresponds to the النون /n/ in the masculine regular plural. This *nunation* does not seem reasonable. Consider the following words :

مسلماتٌ	مسلمونَ	مسلمٌ	مسلمةٌ
المسلماتُ	المسلمونَ	المسلمُ	المسلمةُ
يامسلماتُ	يامسلمونَ	يامسلمُ	يامسلمةُ

It is obvious that the *nunation* in مسلماتٌ corresponds to the *nunation* in مسلمٌ and مسلمةٌ rather than to النون in مسلمون. The indefiniteness of the dual and the masculine regular plural is expressed grammatically by the absence of the definite article not by النون . This نون exists in the indefinite and definite اسم and also in the vocative; so it cannot be considered the marker corresponding to nunation, as considered by some grammarians. نور الدين (2003:234), for example , says that the indefinite marker النون and the definite marker أل can be used together as in دخل المعلمان . It is to be mentioned that there are some Arabic tribes that use nunation with the dual as in: جاء رجلانٌ. This dialect is called العجرفية (ibid. :139).

الجرجـاني (ت 471 هـ [1982 (ب) :1/183]) tries to find an explanation for the use of the النون with the indefinite and definite dual and masculine regular plural . He believes that النون in these forms has two cases : in the first one it corresponds to الحركـة و التنـوين in the indefinite singular, as in :

رجلان رجلٌ
مسلمون مسلمٌ

In the second case, النون corresponds to الحركة, as in :

يا رجلان يا رجلُ
يا مسلمون يا مسلمُ
الرجلان الرجلُ
المسلمون المسلمُ

That is why الجرجـاني does not mention the *nunation* of correspondence. It is better to include the nunation of the feminine regular plural within the first type of nunation with the indefinite singular, the irregular plural and the non-count اسماء.

4.تنـوين الممنـوع من الصـرف 'nunation of diptote': It is used to distinguish between indefinite and definite diptote , as in:

4.32 قابلتُ **احمدَ**

4.33 قابلتُ **احمداً**

The first احمدَ refers to a definite person who is known to the speaker and addressee, whereas the second, احمداً , refers to someone called احمد , who is unknown to the addressee .

5. تنوين المنادى ‘nunation of the vocative’ :it is used to distinguish between the indefinite and definite اسم in the vocative case , as in :

4.34 (قُلْنَا يَا **نَارُ** كُونِي بَرْداً وَسَلاماً عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ)

(الانبياء:69)

4.35 يا **غافلاً** عن ذكر الله

The second view is that nunation is a marker of indefiniteness. ابن جني (392 هـ ت [1954 : 69]) states that التنوين يدل على التنكير واللام تدل على التعريف ‘*Nunation* indicates *indefiniteness* and the definite article لام /l/ indicates *definiteness*.’ Tritton (1943/1970:24) and مصطفى (1959 :165) agree with this view. It seems that this statement is not very precise. It says that the definite article indicates definiteness which means that the absence of this article indicates indefiniteness, as in الرجل and رجل . Accordingly, *nunation* does not indicate indefiniteness, but it occurs in this case to emphasize indefiniteness. Furthermore, nunation occurs with other nouns as a device to perform different functions (see 4.1.2). Thus, *nunation* and

the definite article do not occur together because the indefinite noun becomes definite by the definite article; so there is no need to emphasize the indefinite noun.

ابن جني(ت 392هـ [1956:3/240) accounts for the nunation in proper nouns by considering them indefinite اسماء ; so when the proper noun refers to a specific person who is directly addressed as in the vocative , then nunation is not used , like : يا محمدُ .

This statement is in contrast with two cases:

1. The proper noun محمدٌ (ص) in :

4.36 **محمدٌ** رسولُ الله

refers to a specific person and no one can be confused about him. Yet, nunation is found in this noun.

2. The proper noun زيدَ in:

4.37 لا **زيدَ** كزيد بن ثابت

is used indefinitely and generically. Yet, *nunation* is not found in this noun.

Concerning the first case, *nunation* in محمدٌ refers to the indefinite origin of the اسم. *Nunation* here does not reduce the importance and the greatness of the prophet Muhammad, but it

shows the origin of the proper noun. This can be supported by the following Quranic ayya (verse):

4.38 (وَمَا **مُحَمَّدٌ** إِلَّا **رَسُولٌ** قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُم) (آل عمران: من الآية144)

Concerning the second case, لا زيدَ , nunation is not used because لا زيدَ is considered as one phonological unit .Similarly, the اسم in the vocative is used also without nunation except in certain cases in which nunation is used for necessity (see examples(34)and(35) above) (السامرائي 1968 : 188 - 189). In general, *nunation* is omitted to make the articulation easy and effortless.

Joodi (1978: 181) and Johani (1984 :233) consider *nunation* an indefinite article and they suggest a *zero article* to account for the absence of *nunation* in diptotes.

الأستراباذي (2/129 : ت 686 هـ) stands between these **two views**; he says that التنوين في كل اسم متمكن غير علم يفيد التمكين والتنكير معاً . i.e.'Nunation in declinable اسماء except the proper nouns shows that a noun is fully declinable and also indicates indefiniteness.'

As a conclusion, it can be said that nunation is an indefinite marker, but it has different functions: in the common declinable اسمit emphasizes indefiniteness because the اسم is originally indefinite. In the proper noun which is declinable, nunation is used to hint at the origin of the اسم. In the indeclinable اسماء, diptotes and the اسمused

in the vocative , nunation has a semantic function , because it indicates indefiniteness and distinguishes between indefinite and definite اسماء .

4.1.3.2 The Definite Article أل 'the'

The definite article in Arabic is أل التعريف 'the'. Some grammarians say that it is لام التعريف(ل). ابن يعيش (634 ت هـ :1/24) calls it حرف التعريف'a particle' for two reasons :

1. to include the view of سيبويه , who considers the letter or the sound (ل) alone as the definite article ,and of الخليل , who considers أل as حرف واحد 'a particle' combined of two letters like هل and بل .
2. to include the practice in ancient Arabic of replacing لام التعريف by الميم as in the saying of prophet Muhammad:

4.39 ليس من امبر امصيام في امسفر

(الأنصاري ، ت 761هـ [114:1959])

and in :

4.40 عليك ام رأي وعلينا ام فعال

(ابن أبي الحديد ، ت 656 هـ[3:1965/ 96])

The definite article أل التعريف in Arabic has three main uses (الانصاري ت 761 هـ [1959:112- 113) :

1. العهد, as in :

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ **الْمِصْبَاحُ** فِي زُجَاجَةٍ **الزُّجَاجَةُ** كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلا غَرْبِيَّةٍ) 4.41

(النور: من الآية35)

2. الجنس, the generic use , as in :

(وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ **الْمَاءِ** كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ) 4.42

(الانبياء: من الآية30)

3. الأستغراق , as in :

(يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ **الإنسان** ضَعِيفاً) 4.43

(النساء: 28)

الآمدي (ت 631 هـ [1914:1/301]) says that when the definite article is used generically , it does not show the genus of the object because it is already known without it . It is used to convey a sense of *generalization* .

4.1.4 The Syntactic Position of the Indefinite اسم

The structure of the sentence in Arabic is divided grammatically into a subject and a predicate. The subject is called المسند اليه or المحكوم عليه and the predicate is المسند or الحكم.There are two types of sentences in Arabic : الجملة الفعلية 'the verbal sentence' and الجملة الاسمية'the nominal sentence'.

The verbal sentence is composed of الفعل 'the verb' and الفاعل 'the subject' (the doer of the action). The nominal sentence, on the other hand, is composed of المبتدأ 'the subject' and الخبر 'the predicate'.

In Arabic, indefiniteness is associated with the predicate. In the verbal sentence, the verb is considered the predicate and it precedes the subject. So, Arabic grammarians agree that the verb is نكرة 'indefinite', and it is impossible to be definite (ابن يعيش ت: 643 هـ 1985:1:199] (ب)]; السيوطي ت 911 هـ 1974:1/323 ; حسن 1/24]). Though, there are some examples in Arabic in which أ ل is attached to the verb. In such cases, this prefix has the form of the definite article ال التعريف, 'the' , but the different meaning of a relative pronoun, as الذي 'who, that, which' (الأنصاري ت 761 هـ [1977:1/312]; الجرجاني ت 471 هـ [(ب)1982 :1/72]). This use of ا ل is irregular and abnormal (ibid.) . الجرجاني gives the following :

يقول الخنا وابغض العُجمِ ناطقاً 4.44
إلى ربنا صوت الحمار **اليُجدّعُ**

ويستخرجُ اليربوعَ من نافقائه 4.45
ومن جُحره بالشيخة **اليتقصّعُ**

الأنصاري says that (أ ل) in this sense is used out of necessity:

ما أنت بالحكم **التُرضّى** حكومته 4.46

and it is also used with اسم الفاعل and اسم المفعول 'the participles' as in الضارب: and المضروب . It can be said that these two forms of أ ل, التعريف and أ ل الموصولة, can be considered hymonymous .

The subject of the verbal sentence may be indefinite or definite since the verb begins the sentence and the action is determined in the mind of the speaker first (ابن عقيل ت 769 هـ [1965 :1/ 92]), as in :

(وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ **فَتَيَانِ**) 4.47

(يوسف: من الآية36)

(فسجد **الملائكة** كلهم أجمعون * إلا إبليس) 4.48

(الحجر:30-31)

The object of the verb may be definite or indefinite as in :

(إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ **رَسُولاً** شَاهِداً عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ **رَسُولاً*** فَعَصَى فِرْعَوْنُ **الرَّسُولَ** فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذاً وَبِيلاً) 4.49

(المزمل15- 16)

There are certain positions in Arabic that are occupied by اسماء in the accusative case, and these اسماء should be indefinite. The important ones will be mentioned hereunder with examples:

1. الحال 'adverbs of manner' as in :

(وَلا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ **مَرَحاً**) 4.50

(الاسراء: من الآية37)

2. التمييز ‘Specificative’, as in:

(قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ **شَيْباً**) 4.51

(مريم: من الآية4)

(إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ **نَعْجَةً**) 4.52

(صّ: من الآية 23)

3. المفعول المطلق‘the absolute object’ ,as in :

(إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ **تَطْهِيراً**) 4.53

(الأحزاب: من الآية 33)

(إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ **فَتْحاً** مُبِيناً) 4.54

(الفتح: 1)

4.المفعول لأجله, as in:

(إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ **جِهَاداً** فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي) 4.55

(الممتحنة: من الآية 1)

The indefinite also occurs after لا النافية للجنس , as in:

(وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ لا **رَيْبَ** فِيهَا) 4.56

(الحج: من الآية7)

It also occurs after كل ‘every, each’, أي ‘any’, and كم ‘how many’, as in :

(كُلُّ **نَفْسٍ** ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ) 4.57

(الانبياء: من الآية35)

(فِي أَيِّ **صُورَةٍ** مَا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ) 4.58

(الانفطار: 8)

كم **كتابٍ** قرأت 4.59

In the nominal sentence, the subject precedes the predicate and should be definite and known to the addressee. The predicate, on the other hand, should be indefinite and unknown to the addressee (سيبويه 180هـ ت [هـ 1316:1/22]). Thus starting a message with an indefinite اسم is not allowed in Arabic. However, there are certain justifications for which the subject may be indefinite.[6] These justifications as stated by Arabic grammarians come to forty ones. الانصاري(761 ت هـ [1957:182-183]) and السيوطي (ب)] 911 ت هـ) 1985:3/95]) state the main and common justifications as follows :

1. When the indefinite is modified explicitly or implicitly, as in the following:

(وَ**لَعَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ** خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ) 4.60

[6] There are different views about starting the nominal sentence in Arabic with an indefinite اسم / نكرة. السيوطي 911 هـ ت ([(ب) : 1985 :3/107]) mentions some of these views.

(البقرة: من الآية221)

السمن **منوان** بدرهم 4.61

رُجيل جاءني 4.62

Sentence (61) means : السمن **منوان منه** بدرهم, and (62) means **رجلٌ صغيرٌ** جاءني .

2. When the indefinite is active, i.e. it is derived from a verb as:

قائمٌ الزيدان 4.63

امرٌ بمعروف صدقة 4.64.

3. In the case of العطف‘co-ordination’, provided that either المعطوف عليه orالمعطوف satisfies the grammatical conditions of the permissible indefinite subject as in :

(**قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ** خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذىً 4.65
وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ)

(البقرة:263)

(**طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ** فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْراً لَهُمْ) 4.66

(محمد:21)

4. When the predicate is a preposition or an adverbial phrase as follows :

(وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ **لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ**) 4.67

(الرعد: من الآية 38)

(لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا **وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ**) 4.68

(قّ: 35)

5. If the indefinite اسم is used non- specifically either by itself like أسماء الشرط ‘conditional أسماء’, or it is preceded by negation or interrogation as follows :

(**فَمَنْ** كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضاً أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ) 4.69

(البقرة: من الآية 184)

(أَلا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لا **خَوْفٌ** عَلَيْهِمْ وَلا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ) 4.70

(يونس: 62)

ِ(**أَإِلَهٌ** مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلاً مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ) 4.71

(النمل: من الآية 62)

6. If it is used generically and as a matter of fact, as in :

تمرةٌ خيرٌ من جرادة 4.72

حديدٌ خيرٌ من نحاس 4.73

7. When it has a meaning of a verb , which denotes , for example , invocations , as in the following example :

(**سَلامٌ** عَلَى إِلْ يَاسِينَ) 4.74

(الصافات:130)

8. When the information conveyed in the message is unusual and strange, as follows :

4.75 **شجرةٌ** سجدت

Some grammarians consider this sentence nominal since it begins with اسم; others consider it verbal since it contains فعل 'verb' regardless of its position .

9. When the indefinite اسم occurs after إذا الفجائية , as :

4.76 خرجت فاذا **رجلٌ** بالباب

10. When it occurs in the initial position of الجملة الحالية , a manner clause , as :

4.77 سرينا **ونجمٌ** قد أضاء فمذ بدا
محياك أخفى ضوءه كل شارق

Arabic grammarians divide the structure of the nominal sentence according to indefiniteness and definiteness into three patterns (الجرجاني هـ 471 ت [(ب) 1982:305-309]) :

1. The subject is definite and the predicate is indefinite. This pattern is the unmarked one because it follows the requirements of the meaningful sentence , as in :

4.78 زيدٌ منطلقٌ

2. Both of them, the subject and the predicate, are definite. In this pattern, there is no information to convey. However, it is used in certain cases. Consider the following examples:

الله ربنا و محمد نبينا	4.79
علي أخي	4.80

Concerning (79), every Muslim knows this fact , but it is said as a kind of worship . It may also be said to the non- Muslim who does not know this fact, or to the child to teach him . Concerning (80), it is said if the hearer knows that I have a brother, and he knows someone called علي , so I inform him that علي is my brother . In this case the whole sentence is considered new information.

A kind of confusion may arise concerning whether the subject and the predicate in this pattern form a complete sentence or just a nominal structure. So, to remove any possibility of the predicate being considered as an adjective or apposition, a pronoun called ضمير الفصل 'a pronoun of separation' is normally inserted between the subject and the predicate (بشر 1975 : 205 n.173) . This pronoun is used either to indicate the beginning of the predicate or to emphasize the subject (Ziadeh & Winder 1957:48) . Consider the following examples:

عليٌ هو أخي	4.81

(وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِك هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ) 4.82

(غافر: 9)

The intonation also helps to know whether the subject and the predicate in this pattern form a complete sentence or a part of a sentence.

3. Both the subject and the predicate are indefinite. This pattern will be meaningless unless one of them is modified, as in :

رجلٌ من قبيلة كذا عالمٌ 4.83

طبيبٌ خارج من داري 4.84

ابن السراج (ت 316هـ) [(72 /1: 1973)] adds the following possibility:

4. The subject is indefinite and the predicate is definite. This pattern is used especially for poetic necessity as a poetic licence, as in the following example :

كأن سلافة من بيت رأس 4.85

يكون مزاجها عسلٌ و ماء

To conclude, the indefiniteness and definiteness of the subject and the predicate are determined by the context. Any structure that gives a new piece of information and benefit to the addressee is

possible regardless of the indefiniteness and definiteness of its elements.ابن مالك summarizes this matter by saying :

ولا يجوز الابتدا بالنكرة
ما لم تُفد،كعِند زيدٍ نَمِرة

4.2 Indefiniteness at the Semantic Level

It is said previously that Arabic grammarians define النكرة , the indefinite اسم, semantically (see 2.2). Some of these definitions refer indirectly to the uses of the indefinite اسم which will be mentioned in detail in this section.

4.2.1 The Uses of the Indefinite اسم

There are two main uses for the indefinite اسم depending on the knowledge of the speaker/writer and the addressee: specific and generic:

1.The specific use:

The referent of the specific indefinite اسم is known to the speaker and unknown to the addressee. Some grammarians concentrate on the singular indefinite اسم in this use. In fact, this use include countable and non- countable أسماء. The indefinite singular اسم refers to one definite member of a class, as in:

(قَالُوا إِنْ يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ **أَخٌ** لَهُ مِنْ قَبْل) 4.86

(يوسف: من الآية 77)

(وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ **بِكِتَابٍ** فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ هُدىً وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ) 4.87

(لأعراف:52)

The indefinite dual refers to two members of a class or a group, as in

(قَالَ **رَجُلانِ** مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيهِمَا) 4.88

(المائدة: 23)

The indefinite plural refers to some members of a class or a group, and not all of them (الآمدي ت 631 هـ [1914 : 1/ 302]) :

(لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ **آيَاتٌ** لِلسَّائِلِينَ) 4.89

(يوسف: 7)

(وَقَالَ **نِسْوَةٌ** فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ) 4.90

(يوسف:30)

(وَعَلَى الأعْرَافِ **رِجَالٌ** يَعْرِفُونَ كُلّاً بِسِيمَاهُمْ) 4.91

(الأعراف: من الآية46)

This indefinite اسم can be followed by certain words like معدودة or معلومات , as in :

(وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ **دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ**) 4.92

(يوسف: من الآية20)

4.93 (الْحَجُّ **أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَاتٌ**)

(البقرة: من الآية197)

The indefinite non - countable اسم refers to a certain quantity, a part , or a kind of something, as in :

4.94 (وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيَانِ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَعْصِرُ **خَمْرا** وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي **خُبْزاً** تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ)

(يوسف:من الآية36)

The indefinite abstract اسم refers to a certain aspect or kind of something, as in:

4.95 (خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ **غِشَاوَةٌ**)

(البقرة: من الآية7)

4.96 (قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ **عِلْمٌ** مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ)

(النمل: من الآية40)

In general, the indefinite اسم refers to some or part of the class in question (الاستراباذي هـ 686 ت :2/129).

2.The generic use:

The referent of the generic indefinite اسم is unknown to the speaker and the addressee. This use applies in three cases:

(a) The generic use:it shows the very identity and nature of a certain class or genus as in:

4.97 **رجلٌ** خيرٌمن **امرأة**

and recall :

4.73 **حديدٌ** خيرٌمن **نحاس**

This use can be called identity-generic use to distinguish it from the other generic ones.

(b) The classifying use: it classifies the subject or the object. So, it occurs in the predicate, as in :

4.98 (قَالَ يَا بُشْرَى هَذَا **غُلامٌ**)

(يوسف: من الآية19)

4.99 (يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ **خَلِيفَةً** فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَق)

(صّ: من الآية 26)

4.100 (قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا **بَشَرٌ** مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَى إِلَيَّ)

(فصلت: من الآية 6)

(c) The non-specific use: it refers to any member of a class or a quantity or a kind of some thing that carries the qualities of the thing in question, as in :

4.101 (إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا **بَقَرَةً**)

(البقرة: من الآية67)

4.102 (وَإِنْ يَرَوْا **آيَةً** يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرٌّ)

(القمر: 2)

الجرجاني (471 ت هـ [103:(أ)]) distinguishes between the specific and generic use of the indefinite اسم by the structure of the interrogative sentence. Compare:

4.103 أ جاءك **رجلٌ**

4.104 أ **رجلٌ** جاءك

In (103), the question is about the coming of a specific person, whereas in (104), the question is about the genus of the comer, (cf. ابن الزملكاني 651ت هـ [1964: 51]) .

4.2.2 Indefiniteness and Singularity

The indefinite singular اسم used in the specific and generic uses definitely refers to one thing, but this sense does not always have the priority. The context determines the indication of the اسم.

الزركشي(794 ت هـ [1391:4/42]) and السامرائي (2000:1/39) give the following examples respectively referring to the sense of singularity of the indefinite اسم :

4.105 (وَجَاءَ **رَجُلٌ** مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا مُوسَى إِنَّ الْمَلَأَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوكَ فَاخْرُجْ إِنِّي لَكَ مِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ)

(القصص: 20)

4.106 (وَجَاءَ مِنْ أقصى الْمَدِينَةِ **رَجُلٌ** يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِين) (يّس:20)

It seems that these examples are not appropriate to convey the sense of singularity. In (105) and (106), the indefinite اسم , رجلٌ ‘a man’ means one man , but it is not important whether the man who came is alone or not . The most important thing in the first situation is that the news of the conspiracy reaches Moses by someone, whereas in the second, the most important thing is that the message of the prophet Muhammad reached the remotest part of the city .The position of the indefinite اسم in these examples supports this point. However, the following examples can be used to express singularity:

4.107 (قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا **يَوْماً** أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ)

(الكهف: من الآية19)

4.108 (أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ* وَ**لِسَاناً** وَشَفَتَيْنِ)

(البلد:8-9)

In (107) and (108) , the indefinite اسم implies the numeral واحدة / واحد ‘one’ which can be expressed explicitly in a certain context to emphasize the singularity of the indefinite اسم, as in :

4.109 (وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى **بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ**)

(الرعد: من الآية4)

4.110 (إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً وَلِيَ **نَعْجَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ**)

(صّ: من الآية23)

It is to be mentioned that واحدة/ واحد ‘one’ and the indefinite marker التنوين ‘nunation’ are not mutually exclusive.[7]

4.2.3 Indefiniteness and العموم ‘Generalization’

When the indefinite اسم is used in the contexts of negation, conditional, and imperative it conveys a sense of generalization, as :

4.111 (إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا **بَقَرَةً**)

((البقرة: من الآية 67)

4.112 (إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ **شَيْئاً** وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ)

(يونس:44)

4.1 13 (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ **فَاسِقٌ** بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْماً بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ)

(الحجرات: 6)

It can be noticed that the indefinite اسماء in these examples do not imply inclusive generalization, but they refer to any one , or any part of the object(s)in question . Sometimes, the indefinite اسم used in the sense of generalization has an inclusive meaning, as in:

4.114 (وَمَا تَدْرِي **نَفْسٌ** مَاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَداً وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ)

[7] Similarly, the definite article أل التعريف and the demonstratives (هذا, etc.) are not mutually exclusive.

(لقمان: من الآية 34)

4.115 (وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ* عَلِمَتْ **نَفْسٌ** مَا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ)

(الانفطار:4-5)

4.116 (ِ(وَ**مَنْ** يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجاً)

(الطلاق: من الآية 2)

The indefinite اسم after لا النافية للجنس and مِنْ also expresses inclusive generalization , as in :

4.117 (قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لا **عِلْمَ** لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَاإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ)

(البقرة:32)

4.118 (وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ **آيَةٍ** مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ)

(الأنعام:4)

4.2.4 Indefiniteness and Ambiguity

The indefinite اسم in Arabic can be understood as specific or generic (non-specific) depending on the intention of the speaker and the context.

Consider the following example:

4.119 اريدُ انْ اتعلمَ **لغةً** اجنبيةً

This sentence either means that the speaker has a specific language in mind, or he has no specific language.

It is to be mentioned that this ambiguity arises with certain افعال‘verbs’, like اريد , ابحث and احتاج .

4.2.5 The Semantic Contrast between Indefiniteness and Definiteness

Consider the following Quranic aayas (verses):

4.120 (ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا ثُقِفُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ **حَقٍّ** ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ)

(آل عمران:112)

4.121 وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ **الْحَقِّ** ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ)

(البقرة: من الآية61)

The indefinite اسم **حق** ‘ right’ in (120) indicates that there is no right at all to kill and hurt the prophets. The definite اسم **الحق**, ‘the right’ in (121) refers to one definite حق ‘right’ which is the right to kill the prophets. So, the indefinite is general and unknown, whereas the definite is specific and known (السامرائي 1988: 170).

It can also be understood that the indefinite and definite اسماء, حق and الحق are used generically . Arabic grammarians distinguish between the generic indefinite and generic definite.

الغلاييني (1966 : 1/ 155) and السامرائي (2000: 1/ 116 - 118) think that the difference between them is a different between المطلق ‘the absolute’ and المقيد ‘the restricted’ . The generic indefinite refers to the absolute fact without restriction, whereas the generic definite refers to the identity of the thing as it exists in the mind. The difference between them is also that the generic indefinite is indefinite by form and meaning, whereas the generic definite is definite by form but indefinite by meaning.

At any rate, whether the definite اسم **الحق** in (121) is specific or generic it is restricted and it is in harmony with the whole aaya, for example , with the word النبيين. The indefinite اسم **حق** in (120) is general and it fits in with the whole ayya and with the word الأنبياء . The choice of these words in these ayyas is intended to show that the mischief and hideousness of the non-believers are more in (120).

The indefinite and definite أسماءare used in the Glorious Qur’an to convey different provisions. For example, the words وصية and الوصية occur in the Glorious Qur’an in different situations . Consider the following Quranic aayas (verses) :

4.122 (يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ فَإِنْ كُنَّ
نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا

النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِد مِنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ **وَصِيَّةٍ** يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعاً فَرِيضَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً)

(النساء:11)

4.123 (كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْراً **الْوَصِيَّةُ** لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقّاً عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ)

(البقرة:180)

In (122), the indefinite اسم **وصية**, refers to something optional. The definite اسم **الوصية** in (123) refers to an obligatory state which is required of Muslims at a certain time. The interference of the pragmatic element with the semantic one is obvious.

4.2.6 The Indefinite اسم in Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings

The indefinite and definite items can be used in Arabic generically; so both of them are used in proverbs and proverbial sayings. The indefinite item can begin the sentence if , for example, it has a modifier of some sort , or specialization , as in :

1. **حشرٌ مع الناس** عيدٌ.
2. **كلمةُ حقٍ** عند سلطان جائر

The indefinite item can be used in non-subject position, as in:

3. لا يسكت المرء على **إهانة**

4. اظلم من **أفعى**

and it may imply the numeral واحد ‘one’, as in ,

5. ألف صديق ولا **عدو**

6. الدهر يومان **يوم** لك و**يوم** عليك فاذا كان
لك فلا تبطر وإذا كان عليك فاصبر

The indefinite item is used in the context of negation to convey a sense of generalization, as in:

7. لا **طاعة** لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

8. لا ينتصف ثلاثة من ثلاثة **: بر** من **فاجر** و**عاقل** من **جاهل** و**كريم** من **لئيم**

and it may be used after ربَّ , as in :

9. فربَّ **كلمة** سلبت نعمة

4.3 Indefiniteness at the Pragmatic Level

The indefinite اسم is used when the referent is mentioned for the first time; otherwise, for example, when the referent is mentioned previously or unique or well-known to the speaker and the hearer or it has a general sense, then the definite اسم is used, as in the following example :

4.124 (وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإنسان مِنْ سُلالَةٍ مِنْ **طِينٍ** * ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ **نُطْفَةً** فِي **قَرَارٍ** مَكِينٍ*ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ **عَلَقَةً** فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ **مُضْغَةً** فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ **عِظَاماً** فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْماً ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقاً آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ)

(المؤمنون: 12 -14)

Arabic grammarians recognize four cases for the repetition of the اسم in the context according to its indefiniteness and definiteness (أ)] ت 911 هـ السيوطي ; [4/93 : 1391 هـ] ت 794 هـ الزركشي): 1/563]):

1. When the first and second اسماء are indefinite , they have different referents , as in :

4.125 (اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ **ضَعْفٍ** ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ **ضَعْفٍ** قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ **ضَعْفاً** وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ) (الروم: 54)

2. When the first and second أسماء are definite , they have one referent , as in :

4.126 (اهْدِنَا **الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلا الضَّالِّينَ)**

(الفاتحة: 6-7)

These two cases can be seen in the following example :

(فَإِنَّ مَعَ ا **لْعُسْرِ يُسْراً*** إِنَّ مَعَ **الْعُسْرِ يُسْراً**) 4.127

(الشرح: 5 -6)

The indefinite, يسرا , has two referents, whereas the definite, العسر , has one referent. This view is supported by the saying of the prophet Muhammad "لن يغلبَ عسرٌيسرين " (الطبرسي ت 548 هـ :10/ 509). In some Quranic commentaries, it is said that the repetition of the whole sentence in such cases is for the sake of emphasis.

3. When the first اسم is indefinite and the second is definite , they have the same referent , as in :

(إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولاً شَاهِداً عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ 4.128
رَسُولاً* فَعَصَى فِرْعَوْنُ **الرَّسُولَ** فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذاً وَبِيلاً)

(المزمل: 15- 16)

4. When the first اسم is definite and the second is indefinite ,they either have one referent as in :

(وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا **الْقُرْآنِ** مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ 4.129
يَتَذَكَّرُونَ* **قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً** غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ)

(الزمر: 27 - 28)

or they have different referents, as in :

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ **السَّاعَةُ** يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا 4.130

غَيْرَ **سَاعَةٍ** كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ)

(الروم: 55)

It seems that these rules sometimes apply to the form of the word not to its meaning. For example, the words الساعة and ساعة in (130) have different meanings, so they definitely have different referents .

The inadequacy of these rules can be supported by the following example:

4.132 (أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ **يَتِيماً** فَآوَى * وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالاً فَهَدَى* وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلاً فَأَغْنَى* فَأَمَّا ا **لْيَتِيمَ** فَلا تَقْهَرْ)

(الضحى: 6 - 9)

This example, according to these rules, belongs to the third case, i.e. the indefinite and definite items يتيما and اليتيم respectively have the same referent. In fact the definite item اليتيم is definite by form ,but it has an indefinite referent because it is used in a generic sense.

It can be concluded that the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic factors should be taken into consideration to form such rules.

4.3.1 The Pragmatic Meanings of the Indefinite اسم

Arabic grammarians state that the indefinite اسم is used to express certain meanings like ‘ التعظيم ‘greatness and elevation’, التحقير‘humility and degradation’, التقليل ‘decreasing and

scarcity', التكثير'increasing and abundance', etc. In fact, the indefinite اسم has its lexical meaning and the above meanings are given to the indefinite اسم by context (بدوي 1950 : 128) . Consider the following aayas (verses):

(وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى **حَيَاةٍ** وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ) 4.133

(البقرة: من الآية96)

(وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ **حَيَاةٌ** يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ) 4.134

(البقرة:179)

In (133) and (134) the indefinite حياة has the same meaning , and it is used instead of the definite الحياة to refer to the absolute life حياة, but the context gives them different meanings. In (133), the context in which حياة occurred gives it a sense of humility ,whereas the context of (134) gives it a sense of greatness (ibid.) .

الجرجاني ([198 - 199 : (أ)] ت 471 هـ) thinks that the indefinite is used in these aayas(verses) because it refers to additional life, not one's already possessed life .[8] ابن الزملكاني (ت 651 هـ [1964:52]) and الزركشي(ت 793ه [1391 : 4 / 91]) reiterate the view of الجرجاني.

It is important to infer that these levels, the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic are integral to each other. The following examples show this integration:

[4] Concerning (133) , الجرجاني says : "و السبب في ذلك [حسن التنكير] ان المعنى على الازدياد من الحياة لا الحياة من وان لم يحسن : concerning (134), he says, اصلها وذلك لا يحرص عليه الا الحي فاما العادم للحياة فلا يصح منه الحرص على الحياة ولا على غيرها "
"ان السبب في حسن التنكير التعريف ان ليس المعنى على الحياة نفسها ولكن على انه لما كان الانسان
اذا علم انه اذا قتل قُتل ارتدع بذلك عن القتل فسلم صاحبه صارت حياة هذا المهموم بقتله في مستانف الوقت مستفادة بالقصاص "

4.134 (وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ **سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ**)

(لأعراف: 200)

4.135 (وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ **السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ**)

(فصلت:36)

At the syntactic level, the two indefinites سميعٌ عليمٌ in (134) form the predicate, which is the normal position of the indefinite اسم . The two definites السميعُ العليمُ in(135), on the other hand, form the predicate but a pronoun of separation, which is هو, is used to remove any possibility of the predicate being an adjective or an apposition .

At the semantic level, the indefinites سميعٌ عليمٌ mean that Allah hears and knows but these qualities are not unique to Him. The definites السميعُ العليمُ, on the other hand , mean that Allah alone has these qualities , and these اسماء are two of His Names.

At the pragmatic level, the choice of the اسم whether indefinite or definite depends on the context. Concerning the first aaya , it can be noticed, by reading the ayyas preceding the one in question , that there is a description of the gods which neither hear nor see nor do anything. So, Allah describes Himself by being سميعٌ عليمٌ. In the second aaya, it can be noticed from the context that the non-Muslims say that the knowledge of Allah is little. So, Allah describes Himself as السميعُ العليمُ to prove that these qualities are

exclusive to Him and all that they know amounts nothing when compared with the knowledge of Allah . The pronoun of separation هو is used to emphasize this meaning (السامرائي 1988:175) .

CHAPTER FIVE
CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

The contrastive analysis intended here will be conducted at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels.

5.1 Indefiniteness at the Syntactic Level

English and Arabic are different in their strutures and their grammatical systems. This difference leads them concequently to be different in their expression of certain concepts .

The parts of speech in English are the noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction and interjection. The parts of speech in Arabic are أسم, فعل, and حرف .The class of اسم in Arabic includes the counterparts of English common and proper nouns, adjectives, participles, and some adverbs.

Indefiniteness in both languages is a characteristic of noun and اسم. It is expressed in English by using the indefinite article *a/an* with the singular count noun and *zero article* or unstressed *some* with plural and non-count noun. In Arabic it is expressed by the absence

of the definite article ال التعريف ‘the’ and the definite suffixal marker التنوين ‘*nunation*’.

In Arabic, the indefinite اسم is given some syntactic definitions (4.1.1), perhaps because there is no indefinite article in Arabic, whereas in English there is no such definitions.

5.1.1 The Classification of Noun and اسم

The classification of noun and اسم in English and Arabic is similar in some aspects and different in others. Nouns in English are of two types: common and proper nouns. The common noun is either count or non- count. The count noun can be either singular or plural. In Arabic, اسم includes the counterparts of English common and proper noun, adjective, participle and some adverbs. These (except proper nouns) are either count or non- count. The count can be singular, dual or plural. The plural is of three types: regular masculine plural, regular feminine plural, and irregular plural. In both languages the noun and اسم is either concrete or abstract.

In Arabic, being an inflected language, اسم is classified according to declension. In English, there is no such classification.

5.1.2 Articles

In English and Arabic, articles have no meaning by themselves. They acquire their meanings from the word they occur with and the context. The choice of the article in both languages depends on syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic factors.

In English, there are two articles. The indefinite article *a/an*, and the definite article *the.* Plural and non-count nouns in the generic use take no article, and in such a case, they are said to take *zero article* (3.1.1). In Arabic, there is one article, which is the definite article أل التعريف**.** The absence of this article indicates indefiniteness with the indefinite marker *nunation* التنـوين, which has different functions (4.1.3.1).

A question may be asked that: is the absence of the definite article in Arabic referred to by *zero article*? The answer is that *zero article* is appropriate with common nouns which have article contrast (quirk et al. 1985/1987:246). In Arabic, when the اسم implies *one*, *some*, or *any* then it can be said that it carries *zero article*, in contrast with the definite article أل التعريف. When the generic اسم refers to the absolute fact of the referent, it does not carry *zero article.*

Nunation is not an indefinite article;[9] otherwise, Arab learners of English would not have produced a sentence like:

5.1 *He is *teacher.*

instead of :

5.2 He is *a teacher.*

It is the interference of Arabic, which lacks the indefinite article, that is behind the production of such a sentence.

Since Arabic is an inflected language, the presence of *nunation* with the indefinite اسم is important. It is found with almost all types of اسم in Arabic. The absence of the definite article and the presence of *nunation* in Arabic may correspond to the indefinite article *a/an*, *zero article* and *some* in English. The differences between the indefinite article *a/an* in English and the indefinite marker *nunation* in Arabic are the following :

[1] see the different views about *nunation* in (4.1.3.1)..

1. The indefinite article in English is used to make the singular count noun grammatically indefinite, whereas in Arabic, اسم is originally indefinite and the definite marker *nunation* is used to perform different functions (4.1.3.1).
2. The indefinite article in English is used to express the indefiniteness of the singular count noun. The indefiniteness of plural and non-count nouns is expressed by *zero article* or the unstressed *some* .The indefinite marker in Arabic is used with all kinds of nouns, with certain exceptions. It is to be mentioned in this respect that the concentration in English grammar books is on the indefinite article and consequently on the singular count noun. The indefiniteness of plural and non-count nouns is almost neglected. In Arabic, though the indefinite marker is used with the count (singular and plural) and non-count اسـماء, the concentration is also on the singular indefinite اسم.
3. The indefinite article in English is not used with the proper noun except when the proper noun behaves as a common noun. In Arabic, the indefinite marker is used with الاسم العلم 'the proper noun' freely.
4. The indefinite article in English is a separate word, whereas the indefinite marker in Arabic is a suffix.
5. The indefinite article in English has the meaning of *one* and they are mutually exclusive, whereas the indefinite marker in Arabic, when it is used with the singular count اسم, does not have

such a meaning and it is not mutually exclusive with واحد and واحدة ‘*one*’.

The definite articles in English and Arabic share almost the same grammatical functions. They are also similar in their position, but in English it is a separate word and in Arabic it is a prefix.

5.1.3 The syntactic Position of the Indefinite Noun and اسم

The sentence is divided structurally into subject and predicate. In English, the subject precedes the predicate and it should be definite because it carries given information. Yet, the subject can be indefinite in certain contexts, although in others it seems awkward. To avoid any kind of awkwardness sensed in the sentence, certain grammatical devices are used. One of these devices is *existential there* and the other is the postmodification of the subject (3.1.3).

In Arabic, the sentence is of two types: verbal and nominal. In the verbal sentence, the predicate precedes the subject, and the subject can be definite or indefinite. In the nominal sentence the subject precedes the predicate and the subject should be definite. It is not allowed in Arabic to begin the nominal sentence with an indefinite element unless there is a justification (4.1.4). If the subject is indefinite and the predicate is a prepositional phrase, the word order of the sentence is changed to avoid starting the sentence with an indefinite اسم . Yet, in modern Arabic texts there is a construction reproducing English *existential there*, viz. هنالك/ هناك (Aziz 1998:

136). This is an aspect of loan grammar in Arabic which has come about as a result of borrowing done by translators from English. The following is an example:

5.3 في الحديقة **رجلٌ**

5.4 **هناك رجلٌ** في الحديقة

The English sentence corresponds to the Arabic nominal sentence. The main difference between them is that in patterns of English sentence where the predicate is an adjective, a noun, or an uninflected word, a *copula* is required between the subject and the predicate which is either verb *to be* or another linking verb. In Arabic, however, there is no verb *copula*. What exists in Arabic in such sentence patterns is another kind of *copula* as in the following examples:

5.4 a. Ahmad is a teacher.

b. احمد معلم

c. احمدُ معلمٌ

5.5 a. Ahmad is the teacher.

b. احمد المعلم

c. احمد المعلم

d. احمدُ هو المعلمُ

In (4a), it seems that the indefiniteness of the predicate معلم functions as a kind of copula in Arabic. In (5d), (هو) ضمير الفصل‘the pronoun of separation’ performs this function (بشر1975:205n.$_{173}$). However, the *copula* is not for emphasis, whereas ضمير الفصل performs rhetorical functions including emphasis (السامرائي 2000:1/47- 56).

The insertion of the pronouns هي/ هو as a *copula* in Arabic seems to have started with the movement of translation from Greek during the Abbasid Era. ملا عبد الله states in the book entitled حاشية ملا عبد الله, or quoting الفارابي (ت 950هـ) that حاشية تعديل الميزان (1129هـ) such use is an arrangement within the Arabic language to fill the gap of the Greek verb *be* **εστι** found necessary in translation from Greek. ملاعبد الله says(p.38):

> وذكر الفارابي إن حكمة الفلسفة لما نقلت من اللغة اليونانية الى العربية وجد القوم ان الرابطة الزمانية في اللغة العربية هي الأفعال الناقصة ولكن لم يجدوا في اللغة رابطة غير زمانية تقوم مقام **است** في الفارسي و **استين** في اليونانية فاستعاروا للرابطة الغير الزمانية لفظة **هو وهي** ونحوهما مع كونهما في الأصل أسماء لا أدوات.

The object in both languages can be indefinite or definite depending on the context.

In Arabic, certain position is occupied by an indefinite noun as التمييز,الحال, المفعول لأجله, etc. which are expressed in English in different ways.

5.2 Indefiniteness at the Semantic Level

5.2.1 The Uses of the Indefinite Noun and اسم

English noun and Arabic اسم share the same uses in the indefinite, the generic and specific use, with some differences. In English, the indefinite singular, plural, and non-count noun are used in generic and specific use. The singular indefinite noun is used generically more than others and it is flexible in taking different syntactic positions in the sentence.

In Arabic, the count and non-count أسماء are used in a generic and specific sense. They are not frequently used in the subject position in an affirmative nominal sentence. In negative, interrogative and conditional sentences the indefinite اسم is used frequently in a generic sense.

The generic definite اسم is used in the subject position in the affirmative nominal sentence instead of the indefinite noun as in:

5.6 وخير جليسٍ في الزمان **كتابٌ**

5.7 **الكتابُ** خيرُ جليسٍ

The difference between the generic indefinite and generic definite is explained in (4.2.6).

5.2.2 The Indefinite Noun /اسم and the Numeral *One*واحد / واحدة

In English and Arabic the singular indefinite noun /اسم, whether specific or generic, implies numeral *one*. The singularity of the indefinite noun /اسم is sometimes emphasized by numeral *one* in English and واحد/ واحدة in Arabic.

In English the indefinite article and *one* are mutually exclusive (3.2.2), whereas in Arabic the indefinite marker, when it is used with the singular indefinite , and واحد / واحدة are not (4.2.2).

5.23 Indefiniteness and Ambiguity

In English and Arabic the indefinite noun/اسم may be understood as specific or non- specific with certain verbs like *want* يريد and *look for* يبحث عن .

5.2.4 The Semantic Contrast between Indefiniteness and Definiteness

The generic use of the indefinite and definite noun in English :

The all- representative singular indefinite noun refers to any member of the class as representative of the whole class. The plural indefinite noun refers to any member of the class as individuals and as a whole class, and it refers to things which exists or are not yet in existence. The non-specific generic refers to any member, no matter which.

The singular definite noun refers to the class itself as a whole. The plural definite noun refers to the class as a whole and as

individuals and it refers only to things which exist. The generic non-count noun is expressed by zero article.

The generic use of the indefinite and definite اسم in Arabic:

The identity generic indefinite اسم refers to the absolute fact of the class or genus . It does not refer to individuals but to the fact of the genus or the class. The counts and non-counts are used in this sense (4.2.1).

The non- specific generic is used mainly in interrogative, conditional, and imperative sentences. It is also used with certain verbs in affirmative sentences as **يريد** and **يبحث عن**, and it has the meaning of any member(s) not specific one(s).

The generic singular definite refers to the fact of the class or genus as represented in the mind by its typical member or specimen. It also refers to the class as individuals. The counts and non- counts are used in this sense.

The specific use of the indefinite and definite noun /اسم in English and Arabic:

The specific indefinite noun / اسم in English and Arabic refers to a particular thing(s) or quantity which is specific and definite in the spearker's mind. The specific definite noun /اسم in English and Arabic refers to a particular thing(s) or quantity which is specific and definite in the speaker's and hearer's minds.

Hawkins's theory of inclusiveness and exclusiveness applies to English and Arabic. The definite refers to all objects in the situation, whereas the indefinite refers to one, some, or any member/quantity of the object.

In spite of the semantic contrast between the indefinite and definite noun/اسم, translators do not convey the same meaning achieved by using the indefinite and the definite in the original text. This point can be proved by the following aayas (verses) of the Glorious Qura'n containing indefinite and definite items examined in a number of translations respectively. The translators depended on here are: Pickthal(1930/1959), Ali(1934/1996), Arberry(1955/1980), and Dawood (1956/1978) :

5.8 (وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ **حَقّ**)

(آل عمران: من الآية112)

5.9 (وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ ا **لْحَقِّ**)

(البقرة: من الآية 61)

‘…and slew the Prophets *wrongfully*…’

‘…and slew the Prophets *wrongfully*…’

(Pickthall:71, 38)

‘…and slew The Prophets in defiance of *right*;’

‘…And slaying His Messengers Without *just cause*.’

(Ali:91,12)

‘…and slew the Prophets without *right*;’

‘…and slain the Prophets *unrightfully;*’

(Arberry 1:88,36)

‘…and slew His Prophets *unjustly*…’

‘…and slew His Prophets *unjustly*…’

(Dawood : 417,338)

It seems that there is no distinction between the indefinite and definite items in these translations and the translators give a general idea about the aayas .The distinction between حق and الحق is worthy of consideration and it is mentioned in (4.2.4).

The use of the indefinite نفس and the definite النفس in the Glorious Qur’an is not arbitrary, and they invoke a number of contextual meanings. It has already been mentioned (4.3.1) that there are a number of pragmatic meanings of the indefinite اسم, such as التعظيم‘greatness and elevation’, التحقير ‘humility and degradation’ التقليـل ‘decreasing and scarcity’, and التكثيـر ‘increasing and

abundance'. These meanings cannot always be found in the pragmatic use of the indefinite *soul* in English. Therefore translators cannot aspire to achieve success in their renderings. However, the inclusion of *every*, *any*, and *each* in some of the translations of a number of aayas reflect their understanding of the general or total reference to all souls addressed or deserving what is said in the aayas. Consider the following translation specimens:

(فَالْيَوْمَ **لا** تُظْلَمُ **نَفْسٌ** شَيْئاً وَلا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ)

(يّس: ٥٤)

'This day *no soul* is wronged in aught; nor are
ye requited aught save what ye used to do'

(Pickthall 317)

'Then ,on that Day,
Not a soul will be
Wronged in the least ,
And ye shall but
Be repaid the meeds
Of your past Deeds.'

(Ali 684-85)

'So today *no soul* shall be wronged anything, and
you shall not be

recompensed, except according to what you
have been doing.'

(Arberry II :147)

' On that day *no soul* shall suffer the least injustice you
shall be rewarded according only to your deeds'

(Dawood 176)

(أَنْ تَقُولَ **نَفْسٌ** يَا حَسْرَتَى عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّاخِرِينَ)

(الزمر:56)

'Lest *any soul* should say : Alas, my grief
that I was unmindful of Allah ,
and I was indeed among the
scoffers !'

(Pickthall 333)

'Lest *the soul* should (then)
Say : Ah!woe is me!' –
In that I neglected
(My Duty) towards Allah ,
And was but among those
Who mocked'

(Ali 726)

‘Lest *any soul* should say , Alas for me,
in that I neglected my duty to God,
and was a scoffer,’

(Arberry II : 171)

‘lest *any man* should say:
‘Alas I have disobeyed Allah
and scoffed at His revelations .’

(Dawood 283)

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ **نَفْسٌ** مَا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ)

(الحشر:18)

‘O ye who believe ! observe your duty to Allah. And let every *soul* look to that which sendeth on before for the morrow. And observe your duty to Allah! Lo! Allah is informed of what ye do.’ (Pickthall 394)

‘O ye who believe !
Fear Allah,
And let *every soul* look
To what (provision) he has

Sent forth for the morrow.
Yea,fear Allah:
For Allah is well-acquainted
With (all)that ye do’ (Ali 887)

‘O believers , fear God. Let *every soul*
consider what it has forwarded for the
morrow. And fear God; God is aware of
the things you do’.

(Arberry II : 269)

‘Believers, have fear of Allah .Let *every soul* look to what it offers for the morrow. Fear Allah , for He is cognizant of all your actions.’

(Dawood 270)

(وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ * عَلِمَتْ **نَفْسٌ** مَا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ)

(الانفطار:4-5)

‘And [when] the sepulchres are overturned,
A soul will know what it hath sent before (it)
and what left behind’

(Pickthal :432)

‘And when the Graves
Are turned upside down_

(Then) shall *each soul* know
What it hath sent forward
And (what it hath) kept back.'

(Ali 985)

'when the tombs are overthrown ,
Then *a soul* shall know its works, the former and the latter.'

(Arberry II :328)

'when the graves are hurled ;*each soul* shall know
what it has done and what it has failed to do.'

(Dawood 16)

(وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا * **ونفسٍ** وَمَا سَوَّاهَا)

(الشمس6 :7)

'And [by] the earth and Him who spread it
And [by] *a soul* and Him who perfected it' (Pickthall 441)
By the Earth
And its (wide) expanse;
By *the Soul*,
And the proportion and order
Given to it;

(Ali 1008)

‘and by the earth and That which extended it !
By *the soul* , and That which shaped it’

(Arberry II : 340)

‘by the earth and Him that spread it ; by
the soul and Him that moulded it’

(Dawood 30)

Concerning the previous aayas, it is important to mention that the all-representative generic in English does not correspond to the identity generic in Arabic. The word نفس ‘soul’ in, for example, the ayya وَمَا سَوَّاهَا **وَنَفْسٍ** refers to something great and indescribable ; so, the generic indefinite is used to refer to this great thing as an absolute concept not as an individual in order to show the greatness of Allah. The context of the Swearing of Allah gives the word نفس more greatness, which is considered by the interpreters the main reason behind using the indefinite word.[10] The word نفس in the ayya عَلِمَتْ **نَفْسٌ** مَا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ refers to the soul as an individual and it has a sense of inclusive generalization (4.2.3).

It can be noticed that the generic indefinite اسم in Arabic assumes a special significance, whereas in English the indefinite noun does not have that significance.

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[10] الزمخشري (ت538 هـ) [(أ)]: 4 / 758) says: تنكير النفس [في سورة الشمس]" فيه وجهان أحدهما أن يريد نفسا خاصة من النفوس وهي نفس آدم كأنه قال وواحدة من النفوس و الثاني أن يريد كل نفس وينكر للتكثير على الطريقة المذكورة في قوله عَلِمَتْ **نَفْسٌ 0 "**

The definite noun /اسم in English and Arabic is almost similar. In both languages, the definite noun/اسم is either generic or specific.

5.3 Indefiniteness at the Pragmatic Level

In English and Arabic, the distinction between indefiniteness and definiteness depends heavily on pragmatic factors. The choice of the word whether indefinite or definite depends on the context, the information shared by the participants, common knowledge, familiarity and unfamiliarity, and the participant's knowledge of the world.

In Arabic, the context determines the choice of theاسم, whether indefinite or definite, and adds meanings to the indefinite اسم (4.3.1). In English, the context determines the choice of the noun, but it does not add meanings to the indefinite noun.

In English and Arabic, the main environment in which the indefinite noun/اسم is required is the first mention of the referent. Then, when the object is determined in the mind of the addressee, the definite noun/اسم is used.

5.3.1 The Pragmatic Sets of the Indefinite Noun /اسم

The main purpose of the specific indefinite noun/اسم is to introduce an entity to the discourse. This entity either exists in the shared knowledge or not.

The pragmatic sets given by Hawkins, which are defined on the basis of shared knowledge and the situation, exist in English and Arabic. In both languages, the indefinite noun /اسم may refer to an object that can exist in one of these sets (3.3.3):

1- the larger situation set

2- the immediate situation set

3- the association set

It is important to say that the choice of the indefinite or definite is relative to the world in which the speaker/writer and addressee live.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

6.1 Conclusions

The study has arrived at the following conclusions:

A. At the syntactic level, the study has revealed the following points:

1. The articles in English are used to perform an obligatory syntactic function, and they have nothing to do with meaning. Accordingly, the first hypothesis, which is that the indefinite feature exists in the noun not in the article, is validated.
2. Arabic grammarians are interested in finding justifications for using the indefinite اسم in the subject position. These justifications are not very satisfactory. The indefinite اسم can be used in subject position if it is accompanied by specifying features that render it definite.
3. The use of the indefinite اسم in Arabic is obligatory in certain positions in the sentence, and it is used to perform different functions, such as الحال , التمييز and المفعول لأجلـه , which

do not exist in English in forms corresponding to their forms in Arabic. This point partially validates the second hypothesis,

which is that the indefinite expression in Arabic is more active and powerful from the syntactic point of view than it is in English .

4. The indefinite article *a/an* and *zero article* in English, and the indefinite marker, *nunation*, in Arabic share some grammatical functions.

B. At the semantic level , the study has revealed the following points which apply to English and Arabic:

1. The notion of reference overlaps with the conceptual meaning of the indefinite noun / اسم. The indefinite noun / اسم has a conceptual meaning which exists in all objects referred to by the noun /اسم. The context determines whether the referent is specific or generic.

2. The function of the indefiniteness is internal to the language system in English and Arabic.

3. This study will hopefully contribute to the belief in the existence of language universals.

C. At the pragmatic level, the study has revealed the following points:

1. The context determines the choice of the noun/ اسم, indefinite or definite, in English and Arabic.

2. In Arabic, the context gives additional meanings to the indefinite اسم which also contributes to the validation of the second hypothesis.

6.2 Recommendations

Depending on the findings arrived at in this study, the following recommendations are considered useful for pedagogical purposes and also for researchers:

1. Indefiniteness is a concept that can be expressed with or without articles. Teachers should not concentrate on the syntactic aspect of indefiniteness, which is expressed by the articles. They have to consider the semantic and pragmatic aspects of the concept as well.
2. The difference in using the articles in English and Arabic should be taken into consideration in the pedagogical process. So, this study is considered helpful to the learners so that they overcome some of their problems in using the articles.
3. Since indefiniteness is the unmarked term in the system of language, the indefinite article in English, for its obligatory occurrence with the singular count noun, can be considered a bound form not a free form. This is suggested by Hall (1960: 98-99).

6.3 Suggestions for Further Study

1. The feature of definiteness is not treated in detail in this study, but it has been touched upon when needed. A similar contrastive study can be conducted about expressing definiteness.
2. A similar contrastive study can be done with other languages to investigate the concept of indefiniteness in these languages.

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المستخلص

التنكير مفهوم لغوي في الانكليزية والعربية وهو يعني إن الشيء المذكور شائع في جنسه ولا يتميز بأوصاف زائدة تميزه عن بقية جنسه . إن التنكير والتعريف متعلق في الحقيقة بمعرفة المخاطَب دون المتكلم إذ ان الشيء المذكور لا يعرفه المخاطَب ولكن قد يعرفه المتكلم أو لا يعرفه .

التنكير هو خاصية (ظاهرة) دلالية يتم التعبير عنها بوسائل نحوية بالاعتماد على عوامل تداولية تخص السياق و المتكلم و المخاطَب ولهذا فان هذه الدراسة تتناول التنكير من الناحية النحوية و الدلالية و التداولية و هذه النواحي (المستويات) مترابطة ومتداخلة فيما بينها ولا يستغني أحدها عن الآخر .

ان كتب النحو الإنكليزي تركّز على أداة التنكيراكثر من التركيز على المفهوم نفسه وهي بذلك َتعُدُّ التنكير ظاهرة نحوية فقط بعيداً عن العوامل الدلالية و التداولية التي لها شأن كبير في التعبير عن التنكير .

أما في اللغة العربية فالتعبير عن التنكير يكون بشكل الاسم الأصل مجرداً من أداة التعريف ، مع التنوين . والتنوين موضع خلاف بين النحويين العرب ولكن هذه الدراسة تعُده علامة تنكير ذات وظائف مختلفة تعتمد على نوع الاسم المنَّون .

وقد اشتملت خطوات العمل في هذا البحث على مقدمة عن مفهوم التنكير وعرض موجز عن التنكير في إحدى وثلاثين لغة مختلفة لبيان كيفية التعبير عنه في هذه اللغات . وعالجت هذه الدراسة موضوع التنكير في اللغتين الأنكليزية و العربية من النواحي النحوية و الدلالية و التداولية وَتبع هذا تحليل مقارن لبيان اوجه التشابه و الاختلاف بين اللغتين في التعبير عن التنكير. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى إن معنى التنكير موجود في اللغة الإنكليزية في ما يسمى**noun** (وهو المقابل القريب للاسم في العربية) أما الأداة في اللغة الإنكليزية فان وظيفتها نحوية فقط ولا تحمل معنى التنكير. وقد توصلت الدراسة أيضا الى ان التنكير في اللغة الإنكليزية والعربية متشابه تقريباً من الناحية الدلالية أما من الناحية النحوية و التداولية فان التنكير في العربية له دور فّعال و مؤّثر اكثر مما هو في الإنكليزية.

جامعة بغداد

التعبير عن التكثير

في

اللغتين الإنكليزية والعربية

دراسة مقارنة

رسالة مقدمة

إلى مجلس كلية الآداب في جامعة بغداد

جزءا من متطلبات نيل شهادة الماجستير

في اللغة الإنكليزية وعلم اللغة

تقدمت بها

إنعام إسماعيل طاهر

بإشراف

الأستاذ الدكتور كاظم حيدر الجوادي

جمادى الآخرة 1426 هـ تموز 2005 م