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English Article System Errors among Saudi Arab EFL Learners: A Case of the Preparatory Year English Program Learners of King Saud University

[PP: 69-77]

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to identify and categorize the errors made by Arabic speaking EFL learners in their use of the English Article System. In addition, it sought to attribute these article errors to their possible sources in an attempt to postulate whether L1 Arabic or L2 English played a key role in learners' article misuse. To this end, 50 Saudi male EFL learners were subject to an MCQ test, and 5 teachers were interviewed. Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST) of errors was used to classify errors in three major categories, namely omission, addition, and substitution. These major categories were further classified, according to error sources, into two error types, namely interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The study revealed that while Saudi learners made errors in all categories, addition errors were the most frequent. Further, substitution was the second frequent while omission errors showed to be the least frequent type of errors. Analysis of test results and interviewed teachers' responses showed that most of article errors could be attributed to L1 interference. In many areas, the Arabic Article System was negatively transferred into English where learners seemed to resort to their mother tongue to decide on the appropriateness of using the article in question. However, L2 English, in other cases, was the source of errors. Ignorance or incomplete application of the rule brought learners to commit intralingual errors as well. The results were discussed, and the implications were made.

Keywords: *Error Analysis, Contrastive Analysis, Interlingual, Intralingual, Surface Structure Taxonomy of Errors*

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1. Introduction

A plethora of research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the period between the 60s and the 70s was based on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). According to CAH, the learning process should focus on areas of linguistic differences between L1 and L2. Such linguistic contrasts, if not properly dealt with through instruction, will cause difficulties for L2 learners, which may result in discourse errors presumably due to L1 interference (interlingual errors). According to Fries (1945) and Lado (1957), learning should cater for acquiring those L2 items which are different from L1. Brown perceives L1 interference as a major stumbling block. He states that "The principal barrier to Second Language Acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language system" (1980, p.148).

However, sometimes the target language itself is the source of errors. Corder (1967) claimed that not all learners' errors could be attributed to L1. He considers analyzing L2 learners' errors as the genuine device for studying how learning takes place. This, if systematically done, could inform teachers' decisions about learning and teaching. Hughes (1980) argued for this approach stating that many errors made by learners could not be interpreted in terms of L1 interference. Based on this assumption, a large number of Error Analysis (EA) studies have taken place following the process stages suggested by Corder (1973). First, researchers identify learners' errors and investigate the target language itself. Second, the teaching process is to be investigated. Finally, recommendations and pedagogical implications for future improvement are to be suggested.



In problematic areas where L1 system seems to mainly differ from L2 system, CAH and EA studies have provided a wide arena for researchers to investigate such discrepancies in order to find instructional solutions and inform pedagogical decisions. Arabic belongs to the family of Semitic languages. Hence, it has a grammatical system that is markedly different from that of the family of the Indo-European languages such as English. These fundamental differences bring Arabic speakers to surprisingly encounter a big deal of problems and unwillingly commit a wide range of errors in their written or spoken discourse of English. One of these problems is the acquisition of the English Article System. Arabic speakers often experience difficulty using English articles. The fact that “there is no indefinite article in Arabic, and the definite article has a range of use different from English” (Swan and Smith, 2001, P. 205) causes confusion to Arabic speaking learners of English. Furthermore, Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) pointed out that Arabic predominantly varies from English as it has only one definite article /al/ in the surface structure of the Arabic Article System (AAS). In addition, this Arabic definite article is a bound morpheme, which means it cannot stand by itself. On the contrary, the definite article /the/ in the English Article System is a free morpheme, which stands by itself as the determiner of a noun phrase (NP) structure (the + noun). Moreover, Arabic does not have indefinite article/s in the surface structure of the Article System. Indefiniteness is simply encoded through the absence of articles in Arabic structures.

The above-mentioned elements of differentiation pose problems to Arabic speaking learners of English upon using the English Article System. Since it is the case for Arabic speaking learners of English, the current study stands as a significant contribution to reveal the errors made by this category of learners in one of the most complicated L2 structures, the English Article System. Therefore, the present study investigates English article errors among Arabic speaking learners of English in the Preparatory Year English Program of King Saud University. Based on the Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST) of errors, the researcher will classify the misuse of English articles into three major categories, namely omission, addition, and substitution. Then, the source of these errors is to be identified in order to make

recommendations for instructional decisions and to inform pedagogical implications.

2. Literature Review:

Literature contains numerous studies of Arabic speaking EFL/ESL learners' errors in the use of the English Article System, for example, Alhaysony (2012), Bataineh (2001), Crompton (2011), El-Sayed (1982), Kassamany (2006), Kharma (1981), Sarko (2008), Sawalmeh (2013), and Scott and Tucker (1974). The findings of Scott and Tucker (1974) which rank article errors among the top four error types among high school graduate L1 Arabic speaking learners of L2 English should prioritize the importance of the present investigation. Studies conducted on Arabic speaking EFL/ESL learners mainly differ in the attribution of L2 learners' article errors. On the one side, some studies primarily attribute errors to L1 interference. Other studies, on the other side, attribute them to the target language itself.

For example, the misuse of English articles is one of the top common error types committed by Jordanian male learners according to a study by Sawalmeh (2013). He carried out his study on 32 Arabic speaking Saudi EFL male learners in a preparatory year program. Data were collected from 32 written essays where all subjects' errors of written discourse were identified and classified into different categories. Sawalmeh concludes that most of Arabic learners' errors can be attributed to L1 transfer as there are overt influences of Arabic on the learners' writing of English. He also advises language teachers to take careful stock of the transfer and interference of learners' mother tongue in their spoken or written discourse.

In his research on Article Errors in the English Writing of Advanced L1 Arabic Learners: The Role of Transfer (2011), Crompton investigated the scale and nature of article system errors made by tertiary-level L1 Arabic learners in a corpus of written text. He conducted his research on EFL students of the University of Sharjah in the UAE. Then, data were analyzed to identify error types in the use of the English Article System. Crompton states that errors in the use of articles are mainly attributed to L1 transfer rather than interlanguage developmental order. His findings represent the misuse of the definite article /the/ for generic reference as the commonest among learners' errors. He finally notes that even for learners of English with mother tongues

that already have article systems [+ Article], transfer may still be a problem and as such could be well addressed in language instruction.

Another study which seems to be helpful in this context is Analysis of Article Errors among Saudi Female EFL Students: A Case Study (Alhaysony, 2012). The researcher conducted her study on 100 essays written by 100 female students during their second semester of the first year at the English Department of Ha'il University in the northern region of Saudi Arabia. The findings from this study are worthy to highlight the article errors which are very specific to the Saudi context. Article errors, in this study, are categorized, according to the Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST), into three categories namely omission, addition, and substitution. Alhaysony reveals that while omission errors are the most frequent, addition errors rank second, and substitution errors are rarely made by learners. She also concludes that although L1 Arabic interference is mostly the source of errors, L2 English is a source of many errors as well.

Another study that proves the impact of L1 Arabic interference on the acquisition of English articles is Kassamany (2006). She conducted her research on EFL learners of the preparatory year program at Beirut University. Kassamany employed a totally different data collection tool for her research, translation and elicitation task. She records no great variation in the use of /the/ and /a/ in non-referential indefinite contexts. Moreover, she traces Arab EFL learners' article errors to L1 negative transfer.

On the contrary, some other studies mainly attribute Arabic speaking EFL/ESL learners' article errors to L2 itself under an umbrella called intralingual type of errors. For example, Hamza (2011) conducted a study on 40 Iraqi EFL undergraduates. Both multiple choice question and cloze tests were used as data collection tools. The researcher used percentage formula and a Chi-Square test for data statistical analysis. His findings reveal that Arab EFL learners' article errors are intralingual (L2) rather than interlingual (L1). A very similar study is Alsulmi (2010). Although he employed a very different research approach, his findings were close to those of Hamza (2011). He carried out his research in Al-Qasim University in Saudi Arabia on 24 undergraduate male EFL learners. The researcher used a multiple choice question

test within 70 situational dialogues where study subjects wrote the rationale behind each article selection for every test item. The findings attribute learners' errors in article choices to bad teaching and learning strategies. So, learners' errors are developmental rather than transferable.

Now, it is crystal clear that studies, which attempted classifying native Arabic EFL/ESL learners' article errors according to their possible sources into either interlingual or intralingual, are observably controversial. Numerous variables may contribute to these contradictions among the findings of these studies, which is healthy anyway in a research context. Study population and sample, subjects' genders, ages, and proficiency levels, and employed data collection and analysis instruments are all factors which may affect any study findings in any research setting. The researcher believes it would be advisable, even though it may not seem achievable, to consider all these standing variables for future research endeavors so as to reach more reliable results.

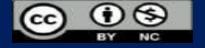
3. The Present Study: Aims & Objectives

The present study aims to investigate the English article errors among Saudi Arabic speaking male learners of English. In an attempt to categorize article errors and to attribute them to their possible sources, the researcher aims to answer the following two research questions: First, what are the types of the English Article System errors made by Arabic speaking male learners of English in the Preparatory Year English Program of King Saud University? Second, what are the sources of these English Article System errors?

4. Methodology:

4.1 The Study Population and Sample

"A population means all the elements that contain the sample criteria used in a study" (Burns and Grove, 1993, P. 779). The present study population represents all male learners in the Preparatory Year EFL Program of King Saud University. This program annually receives around 6000 students in the male campus after they finish their secondary education. They all sit for an entry placement test to identify their English language proficiency level, and then they are categorized into level A, B, or C English classes. "A sample means the elements selected for the purpose of investigating something about the population which is represented by this sample" (Mouton, 1996, p. 132). The sample for this study consists of 50 Saudi Arabic speaking male learners



of English and 5 EFL teachers in the Preparatory Year EFL Program of King Saud University.

4.2 Data Collection Instrument

The researcher applies both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods for the sake of finding answers to his research question. This is meant to triangulate the methods used for the sake of obtaining credible results. Denzin (1978) first used this term of “triangulation” which means the application of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance the confidence in the research findings. Thus, the researcher uses an MCQ test and semi-structured interviews for the sake of the present study.

4.3 Data Collection Procedure

The study participants sat for a 30-minute written test administered by their instructors. The test consisted of 15 multiple choice questions on the use of English articles, /a/, /an/, and /the/. Then, the researcher himself conducted semi-structured interviews with 5 EFL instructors to investigate their teaching methods of the English Article system. Also, the researcher aimed to measure teachers’ perception of the source of errors the way they are made by their learners. Perhaps this will inform instructional decisions and reveal pedagogical implications.

5. Data Analysis

For the sake of the present study, the researcher used the Surface Structure Taxonomy of errors (SST) to classify article errors in three different categories, omission, addition, and substitution. Frequency counts for each error type were recorded along with the percentage. In addition, the researcher, for an answer to his research second question, classified errors, according to their possible source, into two categories, interlingual and intralingual errors. On the one side, by means of contrastive analysis, interlingual errors are attributed to L1 interference as they have nothing to do with the target language, L2 English. On the other side, by means of error analysis, intralingual errors are caused by the target language, L2 English as they have nothing to do with the mother tongue, L1 Arabic.

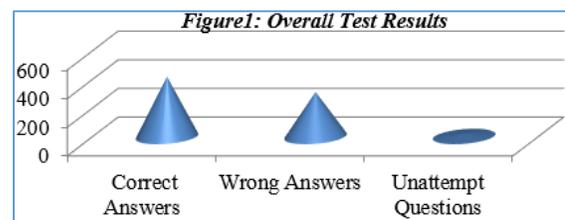
6. Results and Discussion:

In this section, the researcher presents and discusses the findings of the present study in line with its objectives. Following the same model described by Ellis (1997), the researcher collected errors,

identified errors, classified errors, analyzed errors, and explained errors. For collecting and identifying errors, both Table 1 and Figure 1 below show that out of 750 responses to the MCQ test, 311 responses standing for 41.5% made up the overall frequency counts of article errors among Saudi male learners, which is very close in results to studies conducted before by Kambel (1980), Khuwaileh and Shoumalia (2000), and Smith (2001).

Table 1: Overall Test Results

Correct Answers	Wrong Answers	Unattempt Questions
417	311	22

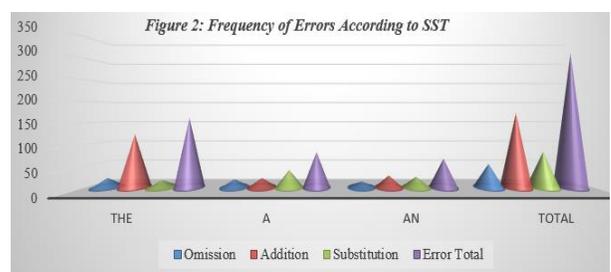


6.1 Type of Article Errors

In an answer to the research first question, the researcher presents error types in the use of the English Article System within the Surface Structure Taxonomy of errors as shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 below.

Table 2: Frequency of Errors According to SST

Error Type	the	a	an	Total	the %	a %	an %
Omission	22	19	14	55	40%	34.54%	25.45%
Addition	123	22	28	173	71%	12.70%	16.18%
Substitution	17	41	25	83	20.48%	49.40%	30.12%
Error Total	162	82	67	311	52.00%	26.36%	21.54%



According to the SST shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 above, there are three error types made by Saudi learners in the use of the English Article System, namely omission, addition, and substitution. The table represents addition errors to record the highest frequency counts with 173 hits standing for 55.6%. Addition means the use of an article in an ill-formed structure where a zero article should be used instead. Students’ responses recorded different types of addition errors. The addition of the definite article /the/ comes first with 123 hits standing for 71% among this error type and 39.5% among all error types. Not surprisingly, the researcher expected this high frequency of errors in the addition of

the definite article **/the/**. Such a result is strengthened by the fact that Arabic speaking learners overuse the definite article **/al/** in their Arabic discourse, which excessively affects their English production. These findings agree with Brown (1994) and Alhaysony (2012). Furthermore, the addition of the indefinite article **/an/** comes second with 28 counts standing for 16.10% while the addition of the indefinite article **/a/** hits 22 counts with 12.70% of the addition error type. This means that Arab learners less frequently add the indefinite articles in ill-formed structures, which agrees with the findings of Snape (2005) and Alhaysony (2012). This kind of error has nothing to do with L1 interference simply because indefinite articles are in the hidden structure of Arabic language; consequently, Arabic speaking learners tend to omit indefinite articles, not to add them, in the production of English. So, such a result is not surprising as well.

Substitution errors, according to the SST, records 83 counts representing 26.9% of all error types made by the study subjects. This error type falls in the second rank, which disagrees with the findings of Bataineh (2005) and Alhaysony (2012) who both recorded substitution errors to be the least frequent among Arabic speaking learners of English. Substitution means replacing a correct article with a wrong article to produce an ill-formed structure (a zero article is excluded). The researchers recorded different categories of substitution errors. Four categories attribute the misuse of articles to L2 (intralingual). These categories are substitution **/a/** for **/the/**, substitution **/an/** for **/the/**, substitution **/a/** for **/an/**, and substitution **/an/** for **/a/**. The other two categories attribute the misuse of articles to L1 itself (interlingual). These categories are substitution **/the/** for **/a/** and substitution **/the/** for **/an/**. The table below shows the frequency counts and the percentage of each substitution error category.

Table 3: Frequency counts and percentage of substitution error categories:

Substitution Error (the)	Count	Percentage
Substitution /the/ for /a/	6	7.20%
Substitution /the/ for /an/	11	13.25%
Substitution Error (a)	Count	Percentage
Substitution /a/ for /the/	26	31.32%
Substitution /a/ for /an/	15	18.10%
Substitution Error (an)	Count	Percentage
Substitution /an/ for /the/	3	3.61%
Substitution /an/ for /a/	22	26.50%

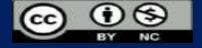
As shown in Table 3, substitution **/a/** comes first recording 41 hits and

representing 49.42% of all substitution errors. Moreover, substitution **/an/** comes second recording 25 counts and representing 30.11% of this error type. Meanwhile, the definite article **/the/** shows to be the least frequent substitution error type among learners. The study subjects only committed 17 errors substituting the definite article **/the/** for the indefinite article **/a/** or **/an/** recording 20.45% among all substitution errors. To the researcher's surprise, these findings disagree with several studies by Dulay and Burt (1974), Kim (1987), AbiSamara (2003), Bataineh (2005), and Alhaysony (2012) who all recorded substitution **/the/** to be the most frequent among Arabic speaking learners. The researcher expected the same as Arabic speaking learners tend to overuse the definite article **/the/** due to L1 interference, but it seems the English Article System is too complicated for researchers to reach expected findings.

Of all the error types, omission type of errors seizes the third rank recording 55 counts and representing 17.68%. These findings disagree with Alhaysony (2012) who revealed omission errors to be the most frequent among Saudi female learners. Omission means dropping an article in an ill-formed structure by using a zero article instead. According to the SST shown in Table 2 above, omission **/the/** comes first with 22 counts representing 40% of such error type. Meanwhile, the omission of the indefinite articles **/a/** and **/an/** comes second and third recording 34.5% and 25.5% respectively. Again, this is contrary to the researcher's expectations and several studies as well. El-Sayed (1982), Smith (2001), Mourtaga (2004), Bataineh (2005), and Alhaysony (2012) all recorded the omission of the indefinite article **/a/** to be the most frequent among all omission type of errors and the definite article **/the/** to be the least. Once more, this accounts for the complexity of the English Article System when it is used by Arabic speaking learners.

6.2 Source of Article Errors

Now, in an answer to the research second question, the researcher classifies the article errors made by the study subjects, according to their source, into two categories, namely interlingual and intralingual. As explained before, interlingual errors are attributed to mother tongue interference while intralingual errors are caused by L2 itself as they have nothing to do with L1. Table 4 below presents a full account of article error types according to their source.

**Table 4: Error Source Types:**

INTERLINGUAL ERRORS	INTRALINGUAL ERRORS
Addition of /the/	Omission of /the/
Omission of /a/	Addition of /a/
Omission of /an/	Addition of /an/
Substitution /the/ for /a/	Substitution /a/ for /an/
Substitution /the/ for /an/	Substitution /an/ for /a/
	Substitution /a/for /the/
	Substitution /an/ for /the/

The present study interestingly shows that Saudi learners' article errors fall in all the areas displayed in Table 4 above. In an attempt to answer the research second question, the researcher recorded counts of different error types in relation to their possible source. Table 5 and Figure 5 below present the frequency of article errors according to the source.

Table 5: Frequency of Errors according to Error Source:

Error Source	Omission	Addition	Substitution	Total	%
Interlingual	33	123	17	173	56%
Intralingual	22	50	66	138	44%

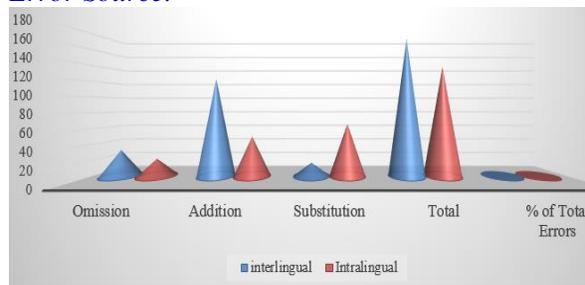
Figure 5: Frequency of Errors according to Error Source:

Table and Figure 5 above show that most of the study subjects' errors are attributed to L1 interference rather than L2 itself. Data records interlingual errors to represent 56% of learners' total errors while intralingual errors represent only 44%. These findings agree with Mizuno (1999), AbiSamara (2003), and Alhaysony (2012). In addition, interviews with EFL teachers show their perception to Arabic interference to be the main source of article errors among their learners. 60% of the interviewed teachers attribute learners' errors to L1 interference while 40% attribute errors to L2 itself, which correlates with the quantitatively analyzed data.

Addition errors, attributed to L1 interference (interlingual), rank first recording 123 counts and representing 71% of this error source and interestingly 71% of all addition error type. Such an error source only represents the addition of the definite article /the/. These findings are supported by contrastive analysis studies which stress

that Arabic speakers overuse the definite article /al/ in their utterances. Consequently, they tend to overuse the definite article /the/ in their English discourse as well. This agrees with the findings of Mourtaga (2004) and Alhaysony (2012).

In other cases, addition has nothing to do with L1. Addition errors of the indefinite articles /a/ and /an/ are all attributed to the target language itself (intralingual). Such errors represent 36.2% of this error source and 29% of all addition error type. This could be simply explained by the fact that indefinite articles are in the hidden structure of the Arabic Article System, yet they are in the surface structure of the English Article System. So, Arabic speaking learners mainly, due to negative transfer, tend to drop the indefinite articles when they produce English. Due to ignorance or incomplete application of the rule, learners add an indefinite article in ill-formed utterances. This is clearly attributed to intralingual developmental stage and close to findings reached by Kim (1987) and Alhaysony (2012).

Omission ranks second among interlingual errors. It records 33 counts representing 19% of this error source and 60% of all omission error type, which is close to results by Scott and Tucker (1977) and Alhaysony (2012). This interlingual error type represents the omission of the indefinite articles /a/ and /an/. As explained before, the absence of indefinite articles in the surface structure of the Arabic Article System compels learners to drop /a/ or /an/ in their English utterances.

In some instances, omission errors are attributed to the target language (intralingual). Omission /the/ records 22 counts to represent 16% of this error source and 40% of all omission error type. These findings are confirmed by Dulay and Burt (1974) and close to results by AbiSamara (2003) and Alhaysony (2012).

In contrast with the findings of Bataineh (2005) and Alhaysony (2012), the subjects of the present study showed to commit noticeable errors in the area of substitution. Of the six substitution error types (shown in Table 3 above), 2 categories are attributed to L1 interference (interlingual). Substitution /the/ for /a/ and /an/ records 17 counts representing 9.8% of this error source and 20.4% of all substitution error type, which could be attributed to the fact of overusing the definite article in Arabic.

On the contrary, the researcher recorded four substitution error types to be attributed to L2 itself. Intralingual substitution errors record 66 counts representing 47.8% of this error source and 79.5% of all substitution error type. Substitution /a/ for /an/ and /a/ for /the/ both record 41 counts while substitution /an/ for /a/ and /an/ for /the/ both record 25 counts. Surprisingly, substitution /a/ is the most frequent substitution error type. This disagrees with several studies by Dulay and Burt (1974), Kim (1987), AbiSamara (2003), Bataineh (2005), and Alhaysony (2012) who all recorded substitution /the/ instead to be the most frequent among Arabic speaking learners of English, but it seems the English Article System is too complicated for researchers to reach expected findings and for learners to perform in a streamline.

7. Conclusion:

The present study aimed to investigate article errors made by Saudi male learners of English in the Preparatory Year English Program of King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. The study findings revealed addition errors to be the commonest among Arabic speaking male learners of English. Further, substitution was the second frequent type of errors while omission errors were the least frequent. Some of these findings were expected and confirmed by previous studies as well. Addition /the/, as expected, was the most frequent error type, which is attributed to the highly frequent use of the definite article /al/ in Arabic. So, by means of negative transfer, learners tend to add /the/ in their English discourse. On the contrary, some findings were not either expected or in line with previous studies. Substitution /a/ was the second most frequent error, which was neither expected nor confirmed by previous research. Moreover, the study sought to present full account of error sources in an attempt to inform pedagogical decisions and provide learners with tools that would help them overcome such problems in their use of articles. The analyzed data and the interviewed teachers' responses attributed most of article errors to L1 interference. In many areas, the Arabic Article System was negatively transferred into English where learners seemed to resort to their mother tongue to judge the appropriateness of the article in question. However, the target language, in other cases, was the source of errors. Ignorance or incomplete application of the rule brought learners to commit intralingual errors as well.

These findings, as mentioned before, assume that English Article System is so complicated that teachers should place more focus on this area of acquisition. Both teachers and learners should be aware, by means of contrastive analysis and error analysis, of the problematic areas they may encounter within their teaching and learning context. This would help them to preempt these pitfalls through reinforcement and practice. Getting learners exposed to authentic materials to enhance noticing as a learning assumption would be a good teaching technique to overcome these error types.

Appendix 1: Test Sample for Students

Dear Student,

I would like you to kindly answer the following grammar test questions investigating English Article Errors among Native Speakers of Arabic. Kindly give your answers sincerely, and only give answers that reflect your knowledge about the grammar point in question as only this will guarantee the success of the study. It is estimated that it will take *twenty to twenty five minutes* to finish this grammar test.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS FORM ARE *ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENTIAL*. ANONYMITY WILL BE RESPECTED AND INFORMATION IDENTIFYING RESPONDENTS *WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED* UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. ONLY THE RESEARCHER HAS ACCESS TO THIS DATA.

Persona Information

Name: -----

Age: -----

Section: -----

Date: -----

Please, turn the page over for test question!

Circle the correct answer from a, b, c or d:

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

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

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

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

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

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

4- Where is ----- pen? I think it is in the drawer.

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

5-He is -----UN worker.

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

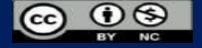
6- Riyadh is ----- beautiful city.

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

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

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

8- I need -----information about parks in Riyadh.



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

9- ----- Sun rises in the east.

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

10-What is on----- television this evening?

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

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

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

12- Alexandria overlooks ----- Mediterranean Sea.

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

13- Rakan is studying engineering at-----Sunderland University.

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you very much for your patience and cooperation

Appendix: 2 Teachers' Interview Questions

Dear Colleague,

I would like to welcome and thank you for attending this interview investigating English Article Errors among Native Speakers of Arabic. Kindly give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the study. The interview estimated time is around ten minutes. The information collected from this interview session is absolutely confidential. Anonymity will be respected and data identifying respondents will not be disclosed under any circumstances. Only the researcher has access to this data.

Part A: (Personal Information)

Gender: M F Nationality: Teaching Level: A B C
Teaching experience: Less than 5 years – 5 to 10 years – 11 years or more
Qualifications: BA in Education BA in Arts BA in Languages & Translation
 BA MA in PhD in
 Other (Please specify).....
Professional Training: TOT TEFL TESOL CELTA DELTA Other

Part B: (Interview Questions)

1. Do you think the English Article System is a challenging learning and teaching task for you? Why, why not?
2. What methods and techniques do you use in teaching the English Article System?
3. What do you observe as the most noticeable errors students commit in the use of the English Article System?
4. How could you attribute the misuse of the English Article System among your Saudi learners?
5. What do you think are the most effective teaching and learning strategies could be adopted to reduce students' misuse of the English Article System?

Part C: (Conclusion)

If you have any further comments, suggestions, or recommendations, please write them down yourself in the space provided below.

Should you be interested in finding out more about the study, please provide your contact details below:

Name: Email:
.....Phone no.:

Thank you for your time, patience, and cooperation

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