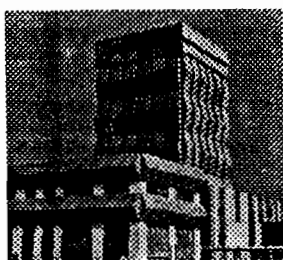


UNIVERSITE GASTON BERGER DE SAINT-LOUIS

U.F.R de Lettres et Sciences Humaines

Section d'Anglais



Mémoire de Maîtrise

**A Descriptive Study of the English Articles and Some
Aspects in French and Seereer : A Contrastive
Approach**

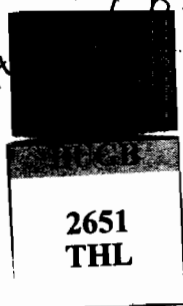
By

Mr Malick NDOUR

**A Thesis Submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Art/Grammar and Linguistics**

Superviseur : *Dr Amadou Moustapha DIOP*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father and my mother who both made a lot of sacrifices for the success of my studies.

To all my brothers and sisters and my brothers' wives.

I am also thinking of all my brothers' sons and daughters and my sisters' sons and daughters.

I also dedicate this thesis to my Spiritual Son Malick NGOM, to Sagar BA and her family.

In memory of my late little Sister,
Ndeye Dom Ndour,
my late cousin,
Adama Faye.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is incidental to all human activities. Social groups of individuals are known to be kinship when there is some intelligibility in the means they use to communicate. This means of communication can be a dialect, a sociolect, or a language.

Dialect and Sociolect are different ways of speaking a language. A dialect mainly refers to geographical informations about the speakers. It can also be called geolect. A Sociolect is also a variety of a language, it refers to a specific vocabulary and grammar, like the dialect, of a group of people in term of social activities and interactions.

Language can be defined as being a means of communication that includes all the sectors of all the societies. « It is a means of understanding ourselves and our society, and of resolving some of the problems and tensions that arise from human interaction. »¹

When we talk of communication, that is to say, the multiplicity of people's views, literature and ways of life, we absolutely refer to a coherent use of a particular language. The language being clearly structured, Unique and autonomous has its own grammar ; both oral and written. Grammar can be registered among the most striking fields of research of a language. Grammar is not considered as merely a list of rules, but as a coherent system based on the relation between the utterances, that is to say, sequences of words which are endorsed by an utterer in a particular situation of utterance.²

¹ CRYSTAL, David.- The Cambridge Encyclopédia of LANGUAGE. 1987. Cambridge University Presse - p. 1.

² This is developed in Antoine Culioli's theoretical framework.

Grammar can help us to know the language, that is to say, to be able to speak and read the language. This aspect of the language (knowing the language) is different from knowing about the language, that is to say, to be able to study the language structurally.

So far, the decision we have taken to deal with grammar in this thesis is not a hasard. It can be traced back to our first steps at the University, when we encountered some new approaches in grammar, particularly different from the grammar translation method. The grammar translation method was the set of grammatical rules that were to be used in ready made exercises. Our interest is first raised when we realized that this approach of grammar is meant to foster autonomy to the learners, but not to make them stick to the rules.

To show the importance of this grammatical approach, that can be called LINGUISTIC, EXPLANATORY or MODERN Grammar, we can refer to the use of 'FOR' (a grammatical notion) as it is taught in high schools. It is said that 'FOR' indicates the DURATION, but in :

THIS PEN IS FOR YOU,

'FOR' indicates a POSSESSION and not a duration. One could just state that 'FOR' can indicate a duration, knowing that its functions are not reserved to one thing.

Therefor, the same issue can be found in the study of the English DETERMINERS which are mainly divided into three groups. Determiners constitute the specification of nouns.

There are :

ARTICLES : Ø, a/an, THE.

POSSESSIVES : my, your, his/her,...

DEMONSTRATIVES : This, That, These, Those.

There are also the QUANTITY DETERMINERS :

all, some, any, every, one, two, first, second, many, few,... and the W-H-determiners : what, which, whose,...

We have then chosen to concentrate our research on the study of articles. For, articles are very important in the field of grammar, since they can guarantee the relation between words and may be able to change the meaning of utterances : Example, the fact of moving from « a » to « the » will bring a difference in these following sentences :

A/ A BOY ENTERS THE ROOM.

B/ THE BOY ENTERS THE ROOM.

In sentence A, the speaker may be asked which boy he is referring to, while in sentence B the boy is already mentioned, he is then known.

However, a good study of grammatical items in a given language needs at a time, a look at other languages. That's why, we intend to have a look at some French and Seereer systems of articles in contrast with English ones. Our aim is to see how do they contrast as far as their functioning is concerned ; and what is the importance of this in language teaching and learning. According to Henry Adamzcewski, the utterances are made of structuring activities of the utterers, that is to say, the internal structure can

appear in the utterances we produce. This is valid for all the languages in the world.

As for Greenberg, he studied Language Universals and realized that the properties found to recur consistency across past and present languages have a profound bearing on our understanding of the human mind. He was also concerned with the advancement of the language users understanding of the structure of human linguistic utterances and their spatial-temporal distribution in the world.

As far as didactic aims and objectives of our study are concerned, we also aim to determine if this contrastive approach will lead us to neighbouring or parallel systems in other languages.

So far, all the books we came across in our readings have succeeded to a certain extent in describing the articles and classifying them. But the main problem we met is that the WHY and the HOW are not always dealt with.

As for English Grammar, with the introduction of the work of Professor Henri Adamczewski of his book called :

GRAMMAIRE LINGUISTIQUE de L'ANGLAIS, there is a depart from its descriptive aspects.

Then, we would like to make our study both descriptive and analytical. For that reason, we will try to see why an article is said to be definite or indefinite, why it is referring to a notion, and the extent to which this study can be applied in French and in Seereer.

Before tackling the different structures of the thesis, we would like to understand the use of some technical notions.

The term 'aspect' comes from the Latin word 'Spex' which means 'observer'. The category which we call aspect designates the way in which the utterer visualizes an event (action or state).

The term 'notion' was elaborated by Antoine Culioli in the Concept of National Domain [1991] : He put that a notion can be defined as complex bundle of structured physico-cultural properties and should not be equated with lexical labels or actual item (...). An 'article', as it is put by WEBSTER'S II, bilingual dictionary, is a word such as 'A' or 'The' that is used to signal nouns and specifies their application. It is a grammatical structure, and its use depends on the utterer.

The term 'ENOUNCER' is somehow abstract, it is the conceptualization of a structuring subject in language. It is a linguistic notion.

As for 'count' and 'uncount nouns', they respectively refer to nouns that are countable and nouns that are uncountable.

Thus, the plan of the work will fall into three main parts :

We will first deal with the description of the English Articles. In this part, we intend to expose each article in different situation and try to explain how it functions.

Then, we will look at some aspects of the French system in the second part. In the third part, we will introduce some aspects of the Seereer system of articles. For that, we will adopt a contrastive approach with the English system.

PART I

ENGLISH ARTICLES' DESCRIPTION

Chapter 1 - ZERO ARTICLE : Ø - ΔNΔ

Some words are used without any grammatical item. For instance, when we say : PERSON, we may refer to any person. PERSON is used to indicate any « human being ».

Here, we will just try to show why Ø³ designates some known thing in a given context and may change if the context changes.

In : MILK IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH ; the enouncer doesn't expect the hearer to have a problem of choice. The milk can be of any kind : *full milk Semi-Skimmed or powder milk*. The hearer is not compelled to look for any particular milk.

But, in :

THE MILK IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH ;

the enouncer is pointing out some known milk. The kind of milk is already thought in the speaker's mind. The hearer may even know the milk that matters.

So, ZERO ARTICLE mainly refers to the NOTION. A Notion is an idea or a concept. It reflects a reality that can be abstract or concrete :

FRIENDSHIP IS AN ABSTRACT CONCEPT.

It is important to show that Ø can determine two other aspects of the notion : it can have an open meaning. The concept CAT is concrete and has an open meaning. It means that, we don't know the kind ; it is not identified. It can also have a restrictive meaning.

CATS IN AFRICA ARE WILD ANIMALS.

³ Ø = absence of article

Here, we know that it is not any cats, but cats in Africa. The means used to create limitation is nothing but the word AFRICA.

When a language is coherently structured, it is not only the practical and technical interaction that matters, but also, the mind of the user and the relationships between what is said and the reality it designates.

In the strip cartoons, or some novels, one can find words such as : EARTH, MOON ; these words are used without articles.

In the Grammar book called *Grammaire et usage de l'Anglais*,⁴ it is explained that there is no article in MARS, JUPITER and VENIS. But the explanation can be somewhere else. In those literary works, there are many techniques used to create credibility for the novel and make the readers believe that what is being said is true.

In some books, EARTH and MOON can be used as per, sons, and this technique is called PERSONIFICATION. They change their nature and become Proper Names at the same level as Ibou, Fatou, Abdou...

ASTRONAUTS IN ORBIT MUST REMAIN IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH EARTH.⁵

First of all, ASTRONAUTS is a plural count noun used with no article. But we know that it is used in a restrictive context, and this context is determined by IN ORBIT. The context is a localisation.

In this example, the use of Ø is a thematic one ; meaning that the enouncer has already fixed the concept of ASTRONAUT in his mind.

⁴ Written by ATTAL, Jean Pierre - 1987 - *grammaire et usage de l'anglais* - Paris Gembleux. DUCULOT., p. 80.

⁵ Ibid., 1987 - p. 80.

There is also a presupposition, that is to say, the enouncer knows very well which Astronauts he is talking about. We need, then, to explain the use of EARTH instead of THE EARTH.

EARTH is unique and is personified, it is not contextualized but the earth indicates one possibility of meaning already known by the hearer who shares the knowledge with the speaker.

The *earth* is more than unique, and the use of « *the* » tends to make it emphatic.

To make Ø and its restrictive meaning more clear, in other words contextualized Ø, we can take these following examples and try to contrast them.

THE SNOW WAS FALLING.

THE RAIN WAS POURING DOWN.

But we will have :

RAIN AND SNOW FELL ALL NIGHT.

Yet, when we say *Rain* and *Snow*, we know that they are not *Stones* and *Sticks*, and only with the use of the enumeration of *Rain* and *Snow*, there is a clear cut between them. So, there is no need to use the definite article. The *Rain* and *The Snow* would be an extra use of the article. The « ING » form is at the same grammatical level of usage as the definite article *THE*. So, there is a parallelism between *THE* and « ING » form. This form indicates the position of the enouncer as an interpretator.

In MAN and WOMAN and in examples as : *How does Woman differ to man ?* The notion is at the level of the distinction between *man* and *woman*.

The concept *man* refers to all kind : *white man, young man...*

The concept *woman* refers to all kind : *black woman, old woman...*

Each notion is both a generality and a specific thing : generality in its possible composition⁶ ; it is also a specific noun when it is compared to the other nouns.

All the recent inventions are used with the definite article, but the word *television* can be used without article⁷ *Television* is then at a different level as *the radio, the cinema, the telephone*. We consider that it is an open use of TELEVISION without any attempt at specification. It is not *the television*, for it would be a working machine, and *television* would be the invention or the product.

The use of Ø can also be found in the use of count and uncount nouns.

Count : *We do not Sell Sun-glasses.*⁸

People don't like to be ignored.

Grouse are rather rare on these moors

Uncount : *Silver is not as precious as gold*

Beer is a bitter drink.

Intelligence is not always a companion to beauty

We said in our definition that an article is a means of limitation and specification ; and Ø is said to be the indicator of the notion of things. But in these examples, although there is no limitation, we can talk about the fact that every word, whether it is a count or an uncount noun, is put in a specific context which guarantees its particularity. That context makes the notion different from any other notion at the level of its quality.

⁶ All the elements that form the noun or the thing that matters.

⁷ ATTAL, Jean Pierre. 1987 - grammaire et usage de l'anglais - Paris Gembleux. DUCULOT. p. 82.

⁸ Reggero, J. Grammaire Anglaise - p. 125.

Then, the noun *Sun-glasses* is a nominal-class included in the class of glasses. Here, the context is that among the *glasses* that can be found in the « shop », *Sun-glasses* are not taken into consideration. It means that there are no *Sun-glasses* in that shop.

Silver and gold are different notions in their quality, but they both belong to the notion of *metal*.

We know also that it is not possible to calculate intelligence, it is just *intelligence*. It is generic.

When we say :

DINNER IS READY,

it is not worth using an article, because dinner is always supposed to be served at a known time in the day. When pershaps people are not aware of the time or if they are strangers, we can say :

THE DINNER IS READY.

In using « the », people (the strangers) will know that they are invited « The Dinner » may not be a cultural use. It can be a break with what is known in this or that society, but it may be appropriate in the context of the strangers.

Chapter 2 - INDEFINITE ARTICLE - a / an

2.1. Phonetics and phonology

Before tackling the very point of a/an pronunciation, we would like to say some words about oral and written forms. In general, what we can hear is not always what is written. It is important to show that the use of a/an can depend on the pronunciation of the following word, whether it is a vowel or a consonant.

So, the use of a/an does not depend on the spelling. This leads us to the distinction between oral and written grammar which deserve deep research. When we consider the abbreviations, it is the sound of the following word that will matter.

an L. Plate ; an M.P → a Member of Parliament.

Then, to come to the pronunciation of a/an, we can say that *a* is found before all consonant sounds, and *an* is found before all vowel sounds.

But *a* can be pronounced [ə] or [ei] ; And *an* can be pronounced [ən] or [den].

Generally, the pronunciation of *a* is [ə] and the pronunciation of *an* is [ən]. But when we want to put the stress on *a* or on *an* their pronunciation will change. Then we will have [ei] instead of [ə] and [den] instead of [ən].

[ə] is the weak form of [ei] which is strong and [ən] is the weak form of [den] which is strong too.

Those pronunciations with the stress are totally grammatical. They will influence the meaning of the word that is determined.

To make this more clear, we can have a look at this example :

A teacher is not A TEACHER.

[ə tɪtʃə ɪz not eɪ tɪtʃə]

[eɪ tɪtʃ ə] = [ə tɪtʃ ə] + Some other qualities.

An other example :

*I did not say the Queen, I Said A [eɪ] queen.*⁹

Here, it is rather complex, because of the definite article.

the Queen is supposed to be *Step 2*, and a queen is *Step 1*, but a [eɪ] queen is neither *the Queen*, nor a queen.

With [eɪ] queen, there is a presupposition like in *the Queen*.

There are some nouns that begin with /h/ which are pronounced without an h-sound ; and use /an/:

an heir, an hour, an honour ; with their related words like = *an hourly train service*.

But when /h/ is pronounced, we use *a* /ə/ :

a house a hated man. / ənəʊtəl, ən ɪstɒrɪkəl nəvəl

There are some *h - words* with unstressed first syllables which sometimes take *an*.

a/an hotel, a/an historical novel

In this case, there is a link between the article and the word. It is *anotel, anistorical novel*.

⁹ Reggero, J. Grammaire Anglaise - p. 124.

The pronunciation of *a* as /ə/ can be affected to British English ; but it is more frequent in American English. This can be explained by the fact that American English tends to be simple.

Also, before the semi-consonants, *a* is pronounced /ə/, as in A university, a use, a European.

[ə ju:nivə'siti, ə ju:s, ə ju:rə'piən]

2.2. Use

In this section, we will try to see before which noun we can have *a/an* and why. First of all, there is a division between *count* and *uncount* nouns ; which can affect the use of *a/an*.

The count nouns have a singular for one form and a plural for more than one form. The regular plural is made by adding -s to the noun.

So, *a/an* is the determiner that always comes before the noun, if it is in Singular.

a man, a horse, an apple.

/ə mæn, ə hɜ:s ən əpl/

The other category of nouns is something we cannot separate, or divide ; it is usually considered as a whole. Those nouns are called *mass-nouns*, meaning, non-countable nouns, also called *mass-count*.

milk, tea, rice.

There is a complex list of uncount nouns that need to be explained :

money, equipment, furniture, homework, scenery.

All these units are composed of elements which are count nouns. But when for instance, we say scenery, we do not use an article, because *scenery* is taken as a unit, meaning a whole. It is a generic notion.

To come back to the indefinite article *a*, it is not variable in gender before a vowel or an unpronounced *h*.

an hour, an orange, a horse, a boy.

If *a/an* has its origin in the numeral *one* it does not have a plural form.

a girl → girls ; an orange → oranges.

Then, we would like to do an exercise.

Task n° 1 : Put *a* or *an* in front of the following words or expressions¹⁰

accident	hour	experiment
entertainment film	horoscope	electric current
example	heavy machine	hot meal
union	new book	funny cartoon.

See the Annex for the correction.

A can also be a means of transforming an uncount noun into a count noun. Here, we will refer to the components of the uncount noun. For instance, when we say :

A tea, it refers to *a cup of tea*.

Two teas, refer to *two cups of tea*.

To put the word *wine* as a notion in a restrictive situation, we can use the same technique that consists of limiting the notion. In, *a very bitter wine*, the meaning of wine has changed. It is no longer *wine*, but wine which taste is affected.

¹⁰ Edward, Woolds, Nicol, Mcleod : Using Basic English. grammar.

When limiting the meaning of a noun or word, we can refer to one aspect of its own. For example :

A Knowledge of computers, a love of money.

In computer science, there are many things to know, but here, a knowledge of computers is nothing but *to know something about computers*. The use of *a* makes *knowledge* very vague. That's why *a* is called *indefinite*.

If we say : *The knowledge of computers* or *the love of money*, the use of the article becomes a generic definite one.

The Study of *a* can concern the use of nouns that are formed from a verb : for example :

To have a go, have a wash, take a look.

A go, a wash, a look are all samples of respectively *to go, to wash, to look*. *A* plays the role of restriction. We have just one action of the verb.

The indefinite article *a* can be used with proper names, when we use them as ordinary count nouns.

THERE'S A MRS YOUNG TO SEE YOU.

In this example, the use of *a* is just to show that the speaker doesn't know the man who is looking for his fellow (you). But he (the speaker) ; know that it is *a certain person*.

As far as the meaning of *a* is concerned, one can give two possible explanations.

First : *A train has just arrived at Platform 5.*

Here, it is an actual train. It is a specific train, but indefinite and the listener cannot know which train the enouncer is talking about. It will only be definite when we talk of it again. In that case, it will be the one mentioned before.

But if we say :

A TRAIN RUNS ON RAILS,

We are not talking about an actual train. We know that it is not a bus, or a plane. It can be any train. It is a sample.

When we say : *I am a student*. The identity of being a Student is a common noun *I as a student* is taken as a sample.

Chapter 3. - DEFINITE ARTICLE - THE

3.1. Phonetics and Phonology

THE finds its origin in a demonstrative (*ðe*, *ðæt*)¹¹. Its pronunciation may depend upon many factors ; and the meaning of the word it goes with is a result of the particular pronunciation.

THE is pronounced [ðɪ] before all vowel sounds.

THE EYES, THE EARS, THE AIR, THE R.A.F.

[ðɪ aɪz, ðɪ ɪəz, ðɪ ɛə, ðɪ a: 'r eɪ əf]

THE is pronounced [ðə] before all consonant sounds.

THE SKY, THE MAN, THE DOG, THE HAIR, THE HOSPITAL.

[ðə skɑɪ, ðə mæn, ðə dɒg , ðə hɛə, ðə hɒspɪtəl].

It is also pronounced [ðə] before a semi-vowel.

THE YEAR, THE EWE.

[ðə jɪə, ðə ju:].

There may have been a confusion with words that begin with H. The pronunciation of the article is as important as the pronunciation of H.

With a mispronunciation of H in initial position, one may misunderstand what is being said by the speaker. For example, AIR and HAIR are minimal pairs, and the only difference is the H in HAIR. If H is not well or clearly articulated, HAIR can be considered as AIR.

THE AIR [ðɪ ɛə] means WHAT A PERSON BREATHES ; and

THE HAIR [ðə hɛə] means THE HAIR OF HEAD.

¹¹ ATTAL, Jean Pierre - 1987 - grammaire et usage de l'anglais - Paris Gembleux. DUCULOT., p. 79.

This can be found in words such as :

THE HEEL, THE FEEL

/θ hi:l : , θ i:l/

We can also have [θ i] before a consonant sound. The enuncer does this on purpose in order to lay emphasis on the thing he is referring to.

I DON'T WANT THAT TABLE, I WANT THE
TABLE I GAVE YOU.

With the pronunciation of [θ i teɪb (ə)l], we can see that the second table is totally different from the first mentioned one.

When the enuncer says « I don't want that table », we can see that he does not like the table he was to be given.

So, inference is to be mentioned in the use of the negative form DON'T WANT and the use of THAT.

This inference is also in I WANT and THE [θ i], where there is affection.

THE [θ i] is a metalinguistic use of THE [θ ə]. This means that it brings additional informations.

3.2. Use

THE is said to be a definite article, but we must see on what extent it is definite. We always have to refer to the context in which THE is used. It is generally used to indicate something known by the enuncer, or something which the enuncer has already referred to. THE is used to show that the noun is determined.

I HAD PUT a NEWSPAPER ON MY CHAIR

TO KEEP MY PLACE, AND LOUISE SAT HERSELF
ON the OPPOSITE CHAIR BECAUSE SHE HADN'T
SEEN THE NEWSPAPER¹²

The first time NEWSPAPER is mentioned, the hearer was not able to know which one it was about. There was no clear indication for the newspaper, but the second time NEWSPAPER is used, the hearer knows that it is the one which was put on the chair. The enouncer refers to a known newspaper.

The problem of DEFINITE and INDEFINITE is rather confusing. Even in the first part of the sentence, I HAD PUT A NEWSPAPER ON MY CHAIR..., the NEWSPAPER is known in spite of the use of the indefinite article *a*. If the article *a* is said to be indefinite, the NEWSPAPER can be said to be known, because, it is the one that is put on the chair, not any other.

To be more explicit, we can say that the article is the companion of the noun. It shows the position of the noun, that is to say, whether, the noun is first mentioned, repeated or if it is not a strange element in the context in which it is used.

Definite or indefinite, the article may refer to the context, the meaning of the noun and to the will of the enouncer. When we explicitly say : PASS ME THE SALT, PLEASE ; there is an interrelation between the enouncer and the hearer. The speaker (enouncer) refers directly to known things. The relation is concrete and there is no misunderstanding.

¹² Les Clés de la Grammaire Anglaise. Henri Adamczewski, Jean-Pierre Gabilan. ARMAND COLIN.

Since the article determines the noun and indicates its characteristics, the speaker will try to manipulate it in order to give the meaning he desires.

In : WHERE IS THE DOG ?

there is a close relationship between the speaker, the dog and other people in the house. The dog is the only existing one in the house, and it is known by everybody. This is called SHARED KNOWLEDGE. In saying WHERE IS A DOG ? there is no possible relation between the speaker and the hearer. Here, DOG is not localized, the speaker is just asking for something called DOG.

THE is always used to show that the thing which the enouncer is refering to is known. But it can be direct as in PASS ME THE SALT, or indirect as in THE roof, THE WINDOW, when a room is already mentioned.

THE can also refer to a unique element. This is to show that the noun is the only one in the particular context.

THE SUN and THE WORLD are unique entities.

One can also mention the difference between :

Ø + plural and THE + plural.

Ø WORKERS	≠	THE WORKERS
. Notional class	≠	Social class
. Wide } Open } meaning	≠	restrictive meaning.
. any workers	≠	a known group of workers
. Unknown context	≠	known context.

Let us see why THE is used with some names of rivers, seas, oceans and some countries.

Its use with proper names is not too frequent except if we want to make it emphatic.

When we say, THE BLACK SEA, THE PACIFIC OCEAN, THE UNITED STATES, there is no possible confusion, because they refer to their singleness in the world.

THE PACIFIC OCEAN is not THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

THE UNITED STATES is not THE NETHERLANDS. Considering the United States, there is a particularity even in the way it is organized. If it were one country, there would not be any focus on it, but it is a combination of many countries, each being a known State as when we refer to FRANCE, SENEGAL etc. In the same way, Africa would be called « THE UNITED STATES OF AFRICA ».

The same emphatic use of the article can be found in people's names :

THE BROWNS refers to Mr and Mrs Brown ; it means the Brown family. When somebody is too famous, his name can be used with the definite article.

THE Elizabeth Taylor.

And in THE Paris I love, there is a stress the enunciator is laying on Paris. It can be a title of a novel, which is always a means of attracting the readers' attention.

Having a look at the plural count and uncount, we realize that there is a double usage of determination.

THE being a definite article, determines the noun it accompanies, the context also is definite.

THE BOOKS I bought this morning ARE FOR YOU.

THE COFFEE they gave us WAS EXCELLENT.

The definite article can be a rejection of something that the enouncer hates. For that, THE is considered as a demonstrative. Here, the context plays an important role.

WE WERE GETTING FED UP WITH THE WAR.

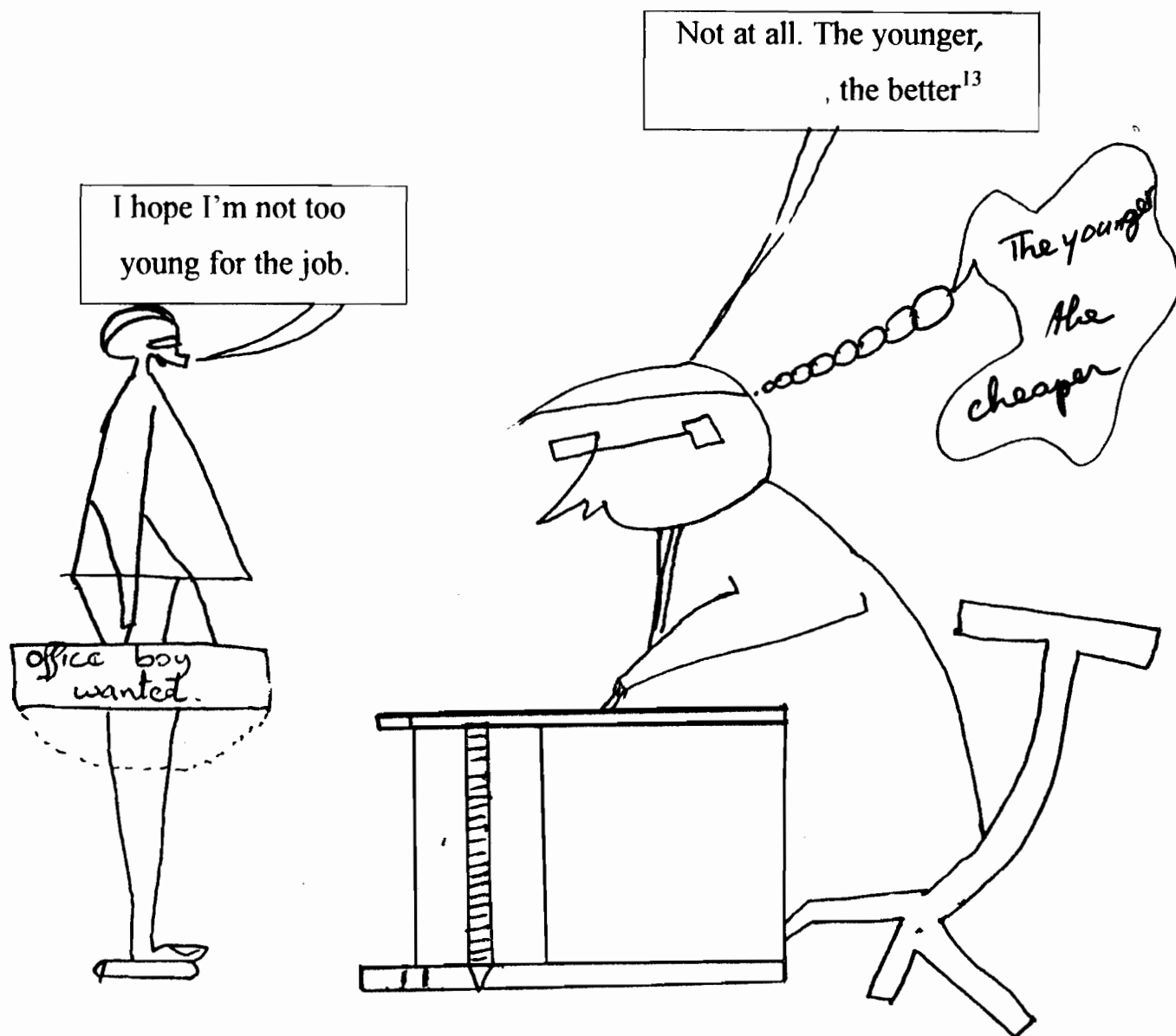
In this sentence, there is a need to point out the war. It may be a war that is lasting, a horrible and a dreadful war. The relation between the enouncer and the war is a negative feeling. So, there is some coherence in the use of GETTING FED UP and the use of THE WAR. That is why we cannot have:

* WE WERE GETTING FED UP WITH A WAR.

We do not know the meaning of A WAR, we cannot appreciate it.

We found a very interesting example in the use of THE + COMPARATIVE in AN A-Z of English Grammar and Usage, by Geoffrey Leech - 1989 - Mayfield Road.

It is said in the book that THE is like a CONJUNCTION but not an ARTICLE.



- I hope I'm not too young for THE Job.

- Not At all. THE younger, THE better.

The younger, the better means, THE YOUNGER THE CHEAPER.

¹³ Leech, Geoffrey - 1989 - An A-Z of English grammar and usage - Mayfield - Melson., p. 468.

The boy uses the definite article, because the term JOB is already mentioned in the block he carries. Then, the job is known by the employer. That is why the employer says : Not at all.

The younger, the better. It is just a matter of comparason. « 'The' in THE BETTER » is a repetition of too young. Therefore, something has been said before (too young), we can say that « Too young is better » means « The younger, the better. » The answer of the employer implies something else. It is a kind of mirror or image.

Too young = The better = « the cheeper ».

THE can also be used in measuring. It will be a means of distribution.

HE SOLD CLOTH BY THE YARD.

'Yard' is the unit of measure, it is supposed to be a shared knowledge between the seller and the one who is buying.

Task n° 2 : Insert the article *the* if necessary¹⁴

1. youngest boy has just started going to school ; eldest boy is at college.

2. She lives on top floor of an old house. When wind blows, all windows rattle.

3. darkness doesn't worry cats, cats can see in dark.

4. modern boys usually say that they want to be spacemen, but most of them will probably end up in less dramatic jobs.

5. Do you know time ?

Yes, clock in hall has just struck nine.

Then it isn't time to go yet.

¹⁴ THOMSON, A.J. - MARTINET, A.V - 1986 - A Pratical English Grammar. Exercises 2 - New edition - Oxford - Oxford Universit Press, p. 32.

PART II

SOME ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH SYSTEM

Chapter 1 : PRESENTATION AND DESCRIPTION

1.1. Presentation

Ø : Δ Chemin Δ

Indefinite : Une femme d'une province française

Definite : Le hangar de la maison.

In French, the article can have many different forms : There are *contracted*, *elided* and *normal* forms.

The contracted forms are taken from the contraction of the prepositions *de* and *à*, and of the definite article *Le* or *Les*.

Elided forms are used before singular words beginning with a vowel sound or a weak / voiceless h/dumb h.

ARTICLES	Singular		Plural	
	masculine	feminine	masculine	feminine
Ø	Δ chemin Δ	Δ terre Δ	chemins	terres
Indefinite	un monde	une terre	des mondes	des terres
Definite	N. Le monde	La terre	Les astres	les planetes
	E. L'univers	L'aurore	aux hommes	à les
	C. au/à le monde	à la ville	à les	des femmes
	du/de le	de la ville	des cieux	de les
			de les	

Remark

When two or many nouns are coordinated, the article is repeated before every noun.

On apercevait les toits et les cheminées des premières maisons

Except in some full utterances :

Les eaux et forêts. Les arts et manufactures.

Except also when the two nouns are coordinated by *ou* explicative.

Les Mussipontains ou habitants de Pont-à-Mousson

1.2. Description

- Ø ARTICLE : Justice, liberté, l'esclavage est aboli

- THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

The definite article determines clearly the noun.

Répétez la phrase que vous venez de lire.

Repeat the sentence you have just read.

La brings clarity : it is the sentence you have just read.

The definite article can also have the sense :

- of a *demonstrative adjective*

Venez Le mardi 13 Mars, meaning : ce mardi 13 mars.

- of a *possessive adjective*.

J'ai mal à la tête, meaning à ma tête.

- of an *indefinite adjective* :

Cérises à tant *le* kilogramme, meaning *chaque* kilogramme. The definite article is not used before the proper names of towns and persons, but it is used before the name of people and countries :

Δ Durand, Δ Lyon, but les Parisiens, *le* Maroc.

The definite article is used before names designating :

- families ⇒ Les Valois, Les Bourbons.

- Work of an artist ⇒ Les Rembraudt (les oeuvres du peintre Rembraudt).
- Names of persons accompanied with adjective ⇒ L'odieux Tartuffe.
- Hated persons ⇒ *La* Du Barry . *La* Brinvilliers
- admired persons ⇒ *Les* Corneille et les Racine.
- Artists ⇒ *La* champmesle. *La* Clairon.

Remarks. The feminine nouns of countries are not accompanied with the article when they are preceded by preposition, *à*, *de*, *en*. Habiter *à* Madagascar, Revenir *de* Tunisie. Aller *en* Chine.

The definite article is omitted when it is about :

- a noun which is in *apposition* : Paris, Capital de la France.
- noun attribute (facultative) : Il était aide-comptable.
- Verbal locution : Il prit soin de lui.
- full locution (locution toute faite) : Il est nu-pieds. A vol d'oiseau.
- Proverbs : A bon chat, bon rat.
- Enumeration : Femmes, moine, vieillards, tout était descendu.
- addresses : Il habite rue de Sèvres.
- Titles of books : Histoire de France. Grammaire Française.

The Indefinite Article

The indefinite article introduces a noun and presents it as being different from other nouns of the same space, without bringing more precision. In plural, it can indicate an undetermined number.

UN HOMME EST LA QUI VOUS ATTEND.
IL Y A DES CERISES CETTE ANNEE.

The indefinite article can also have the sense of :

- The indefinite adjective *quelque* : on le crut pendant un temps;
- of Scorn : *Un* avare comme lui !

or- admiration : Il a parlé avec *une* éloquence de maître.

The indefinite article is omitted before :

- a plural noun preceded by an adjective :
De petits oiseaux.
- an attribute noun : Il destine son fils à être avocat.
- Some utterances or proverbs : Il est parti en voiture.

The partitive article.

The partitive article is used before the nouns of things to indicate an undetermined quantity.

Il boit du vin. Il veut de la soie.

Il mange *des* confitures

It can designate, particularly an undetermined quantity of a whole.

Prenez *des* croissants.

The preposition *de* can be used alone, instead of the partitive article :

- after an adverb of quantity (*trop, peu, beaucoup*, etc).

Except in bien des gens.

Eg : J'ai peu *de* temps devant moi.

Exc : Bien des gens disent..

- after a verb of a negative form.

Eg : Il ne boit pas *de* lait.

- Before a plural noun accompanied with an adjective

Eg : Il nous a servi de beaux fraits.

The partitive article is not expressed after the prepositions *avec*, *ou*, *sans*.

Eg : Travailler *avec* peine. Arriver *sans* difficulté.

Task n° 3 : Distinguish the definite article.¹⁵

Une maison tranquille.

Tout à l'entrée, la maison des Martin-Lévesque, seule au bord de la route. C'est une petite demeure de pêcheur, aux murs d'argile, au toit de chaume empanaché d'iris bleus. Un jardin large comme un mouchoir, où poussent des oignons, quelques choux, du persil, du cerfeuil, se carra devant la porte. Une haie le clôt le long du chemin...

Un chat dort sur la fenêtre ; et des giroflées épanouies font, au pied du mur, un beau bourrelet de fleurs blanches, sur qui bourdonne un peuple de mouches.

Maupassant (Le Retour, Albin Michel, édit.).

¹⁵ Dubois, J. - Jouam, G. - Grammaire et Exercices de Français.

Chapter 2 : CONTRASTIVE ASPECTS

In our introduction, we mentioned that no language can develop without the others. There is no priority of a language upon any other, but the importance is that languages are universal. For, we can refer to the universals of language (words, vocabulary, sentences) to show how languages are linked together.

It is this way that one can distinguish three degrees of articles in French as found in English.

Ø Article : Tout ce qui brille n'est pas or¹⁷

Je bois mon café sans sucre.

Mon père est architecte.

Indefinite Un, une, des

J'ai consulté *un* architecte.

J'ai acheté *des* peches, regarde.

Pour nous *un* client, c'est sacré.

Definite Le, la, les

L'or est de nouveau en hausse.

Passe-moi le sucre.

Le lion est le prince de la jungle.

Tiens ! Voilà l'architecte.

ZERO ARTICLE : Ø ; ΔNΔ

In *Je bois mon café sans sucre*, there is no article. To make the utterance more understandable, we can devide it into three parts :

Je bois : the relation between je and bois is valid because of *S*

¹⁷ Les clés de la Grammaire Anglaise. H. Adamczewski. J.P. Gobilor.

mon café : here, *mon* is a possessive determiner which indicates the gender (*masculine*) and the number (*singular*) of *café*.

Sans sucre : *Sans* is an adverb of quantity which makes negative the noun *Sucre*. With the use of *sans*, *sucre* does not exist in the *café*, it means that there is no sugar in it.

Since there is no *sucre* (sugar) in the coffee, there is no need to (determine that) *sucre*. The article brings the degree of quantity and the one of quality, so before qualifying or quantifying something, this thing has first to exist.

If it were *je bois mon café sans le sucre*, we would say that this sugar is known. It could be the sugar that had been put somewhere or the sugar the doctor ordered. With *le sucre* (the sugar) we would have an exclusive use of the word.

There wouldn't be any choice.

It would be an anaphoric use as in *Passe moi le sucre*.

Here, we overpass the notion of *sucre*, the hearer is aware of what *sucre* to give.

It would also be a generic use as in *le lion est le prince de la jungle*.

There are three possible degrees in determining the name : It has first to be quoted, named and then identified.

In the use of Zero Article, we are at the level of quotation : for, let's consider the following example :

MON PERE EST ARCHITECTE.

The way Ø is working is different from the way it works in some cases or contexts.

If *architecte* is used with Ø in the sentence : *Mon père est architecte*, it will be used with the *indefinite* article. So, it will be My father is an architect. In Seereer, we have : Faapes arsitek oo.

For this particular situation, French and Seereer are working in the same way a both use Ø.

There is no information about the use of *architecte*. *Architecte* is at the level of the notion, even though it is a restrictive notion ; that is to say, the father is not a carpenter, he is not a mason, he is not the best architect.

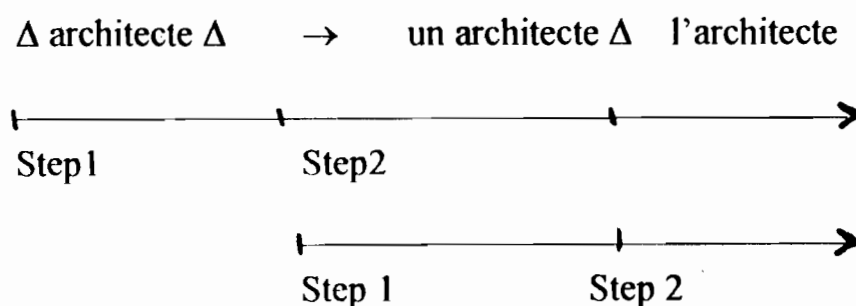
We do not know anything about him or his being architect. The noun architect is just affected to *mon père*, but one doesn't know what kind of architect is *mon père*.

The meaning of architect here, is open ; there is no limitation in its meaning.

It is different from *mon père est l'architecte* which would be a known architect. Here, there would be a close relationship between the speaker or the enouncer and the hearer.

L'architecte is the very architect, the known one, the determined one, which is different from any other one.

In *mon père est un architecte* ; we tend to define *mon père* and to define architect. There is a step forward from the notion to *un architecte*. It can be shown in :



INDEFINITE ARTICLE : *un, une, des*

The first remark to do here, is that *une* is feminine and *un* is masculine; but *des* can be either feminine or masculine. *Des* is the plural of *un* and *une*.

When we say : *J'ai consulté un docteur*, there is an attempt to limitation. The hearer is eager to know about that doctor.

J'ai consulté un docteur is at the same grammatical level as when it is translated in English and in Seereer : *I went to see a doctor ; ret'aam deetik docktoor*. First of all it is known that the man didn't go to an architect nor did he go to a mason. It is clear that he is concerned with a doctor. The problem with the phrase is that it is too vague. Nobody knows about the doctor. We are in *Step 2* *un docteur* is not *le docteur* which is more informative.

So, from *mon père est architecte* to *j'ai consulté un docteur*, the degree of comprehension of the hearer is always different.

To be more clear, we use *mon père est architecte* and *j'ai consulté un architecte*.

Step 1 : *mon père est architecte*.

Step 2 : *j'ai consulté un architecte*.

If we consider the meaning, *un architecte* is included into *architecte* ; meaning *Step 2* is included in *Step 1*, *Step 2* is a representative of the group *architecte*.

In *un homme est là qui vous attend*, there is a probleme of definition. *Un* is an indefinite article, but in this context, there is a hint of clarity. We all know that it is the man who is waiting, not the one who is eating. That is why *un* should be called article of *indefinition*. For, it is not *un* that is not definite, but it is *homme* that is not definite.

There is a man waiting for you.

As in French *a* could be called article of indefinition. The speaker tends to define the man although he used an indefinite article.

We can assert that the enouncer is not aware of the identity of the man, that is why he cannot define it. And since everything is formed in the enouncer's brain, (psychology), he is bound to look for a context that will be known by the hearer. An utterance is nothing but an articulator realization of psychological images. Hence, there is always some coherence, parallelism between *what is said and what was in the speaker's brain or mind*.

Then, we can jump to the plural indefinite *des*. So, let us consider this example :

IL YA DES CERISES CETTE ANNEE.

With the use of *des*, we are dealing with a count noun. For that, the indefinition is at the level of the number ; even though we do not know here the quality of the *cérises* (cherries). What we can do is just to speculate. There can be an abundance of cherries or the contrary. It is important to show that the amount of *cérises* is defined with *des*. These *cérises* are part of all the possible *cérises* in general. That is why it is difficult to say : **il y a les cérises cette année*.

The expression *il y a* brings some ambiguity ; and the nominal group *cette année* is definite. So, the statement is not clear to allow a hearer to know very well about the *cherries*.

If we want to use *les*, we will say *les cérises sont nombreuses cette année*. This is more direct and it is easily understood.

There are some interesting examples in a dictation presented by one of our colleagues who is teaching in Primary School. It was during *les cours de vacances*.¹⁹

The title of the dictation was : *La guerre* (the war), written by *Jean Ikellé Matiba*.

What is really interesting in that dictation is the use and the choice of the articles. We will analyse the text through the use of articles in order to see how important articles are in a text.

Articles are determiners : they determine any author's ideas through the choice of words. There is then a close relationship in any Linguistic structure which can be analysed using the particular choice of articles.

La guerre.²⁰

Ø Chemin faisant, nous voyions des maisons brûler, des enfants pleurer, des infirmes et des vieillards se lamenter/. La guerre et ses misères avaient commencé. La ville d'Edéa fut attaquée et c'est là que je connus la guerre. Le bruit du canon se poursuivait jusqu'à l'aube. Toute la nuit, les soldats se battaient/. On marchait sur des cadavres, ou dormait à côté des morts et des mourants, on ne trouvait plus rien à manger. Partout les gens mouraient, des jeunes et des vieux, des enfants et des femmes. Les Allemands n'épargnaient personne. Ils tiraient sur tout le monde.

Jean Ikellé Matiba.

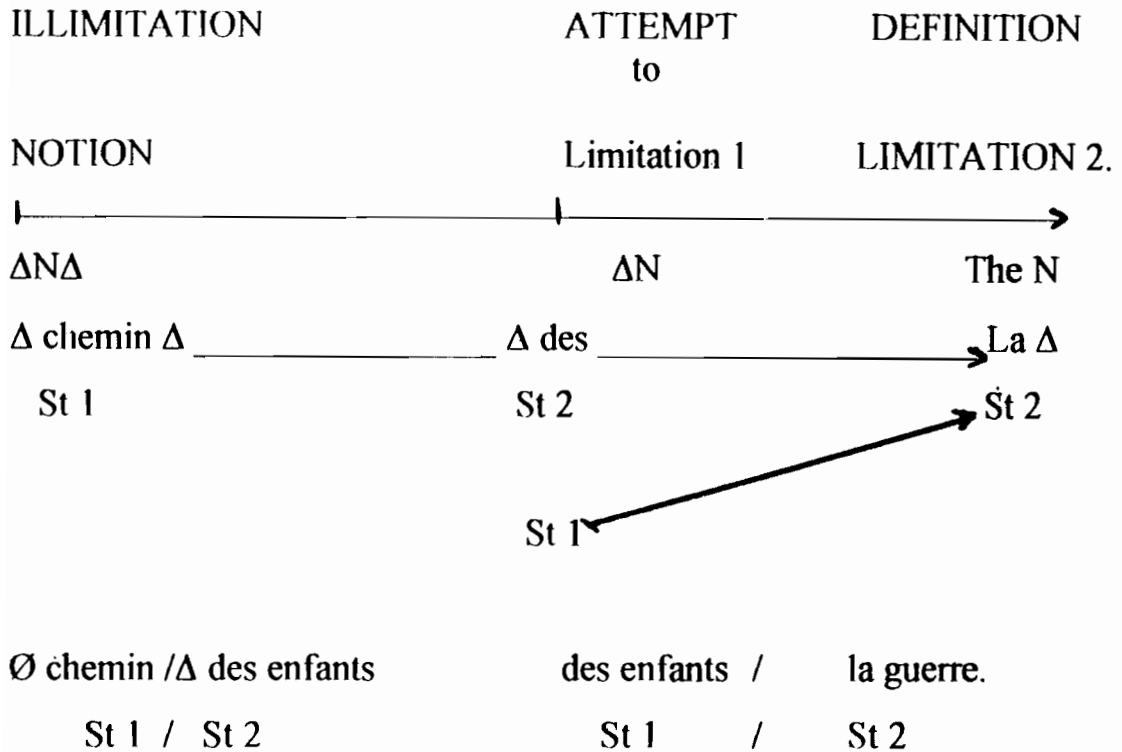
In this text, there are *twenty three* articles among which we can find :

One Zero article in Ø chemin Δ faisant ; *eleven* uses of *des* ; six uses of *la* ; *two* uses of *le* ; and *three* uses of *les*.

¹⁹ Holiday courses. (During the Summer holidays in Senegal).

²⁰ Monsieur Papa Gorgui Ndiaye's class in CM² (Holiday course, Gandiaeye). Sept 1995.

If we put aside the title which is definitely informative, we can even see a coherent evolution of the degree of usage of the articles from Ø the (in la guerre of the second sentence).



So, in this text, one can ask the following question : why does the author use an enumeration of *des* ? *Des* is said to be an indefinite article which normally means that it is not known. But if we consider the context, we will see that in St 1, there is an attempt to limitation. And this can be seen by the use of *enfants* which comes to determine or to limit it ; and *pleurer* also is to qualify *enfants*.

The use of *des* shows that the author is describing the war at the level of concrete events. But he did not tell about the identity of *enfants*, *infirmes*, *vieillards* and *maisons*.

After that, he began to use definite articles, showing that he knows very well what he is talking about.

DEFINITE ARTICLE - *Le, La, Les*

The text (*la guerre*) is a particular description of a known event, simply with the use of *La* in the title, we can say that the author is witnessing what he is saying. In *La guerre* (the title) ; *la* is anaphoric for the writer, because he really knows what he wants to describe. But the article is cataphoric for listeners or readers because there is no link between them and the sense of its use. This cataphorical and anaphorical use can be found in English.

There are two different uses of *la guerre* which are totally contrasted. In the title, *la guerre* is a whole idea of what is the text in general. It is the image of the text. But in *c'est là que je connus la guerre*, it means *c'est là que je connus ce qu'est une guerre*. It means, « that's how I knew what war is ». the title is what is being described by the writer. This can be considered as the embodiment of any war.

It is clear that, the definite article clarifies the noun and sometimes puts it in a context.

In *Répétez la phrase que vous venez de lire. F* (F= French)

Repeat the sentence you have just read. E (E = English)

To teach or explain this kind of syntax in French, people refer to what they call :

Proposition Principale = main proposition (utterance)

Proposition subordonnée : subordinated utterance.

Conjonction de subordination : conjunction of subordination.

We will have :

Répétez la phrase : main utterance

Que vous venez de lire : subordinated utterance

Que : conjunction of subordination.

However, the study of *La* (in *la phrase que*) shows that *que vous venez de lire* is nothing but a repetition of *repetez la phrase*. Because, when somebody says *repetez la phrase*, he is supposed to be understood by his hearer. *La phrase* here, is both anaphoric and *thématique*. It is like in shared knowledge. For example :

Où est le chien ? Qui a pris le vélo ?

Ouvre La porte opposed to *ouvre une porte*, which means any door if there are two or more doors in the room.

We will finish this section with the sentence :

LE BON SENS EST LA CHOSE DU MONDE LA MIEUX
PARTAGÉE.²¹

The utterance can be considered as a general truth. All the definite articles designate the same aspect : *Le bon sens = La chose du monde. La mieux partagée.*

For any individual, *le bon sens* is always *le bon sens*, it is accepted by everybody.

If we use *un*, we will have *un bon sens est une chose du monde mieux partagée*. Here, there is an abstraction of the third definite article. There will be a kind of multiplicity of *bon sens*. It will refer to the aspect of diversity instead of uniqueness in *le bon sens*.

Commutatively we have : *La chose du monde la mieux partagée est le bon sens*. Here, the stress is put on *la chose du monde la mieux partagée*.

With, the definite articles, the context is loading the definition of the idea or of the message. Example : *Le pagne de Melle Faye est sur la clôture. Melle Faye* and *sur la clôture* are loading *le pagne* which is understandable by itself.

²¹ DESCARTES, Discours de la méthode. 1ère partie., p. 91.

PART III

SOME ASPECTS OF THE SEEREER SYSTEM

Chapter 1 : PRESENTATION AND DESCRIPTION

1.1. Presentation

Ø Article : Ø pis, Ø faam, a naf, Ø nof.

Examples : Indefinite Ø pis, a cek, Ø hiid

Definite pis ne, a cek ale, Ø hiid ole

All the three categories of articles can be found in Seereer, but there is a confusion between Ø and the indefinite article.

The reference to the context is compulsory in recognizing the articles.

In Seereer, articles are called. « Yoon we », meaning the companions.

Table 1

ARTICLES	Singular		Plural	
	masculine	feminine	masculine	feminine
Ø	Δ PIS Δ	a cek	Δ PIS Δ	a cek
Indefinite	Δ PIS Δ	a cek	PIS	a cek
Definite	PIS ne	a cek ale	PIS ke	a cek ake

Table 2

ARTICLES	Singular		Plural	
	masculine	feminine	masculine	feminine
Ø	X	a naf	X	a naf
Indefinite	naak	X	naak	X
Definite	naak le	a naf ale	naak ke	a naf ake

1.2. Description

In this section we will mainly refer to the Study of the nominal classes as it is developped in : *Morphologie du Nom Seereer (Système nominal et alternance consonantique)* in *Les Langues Nationales du Sénégal*. N.S. 10 ; written by Dr Souleymane Faye, Master Assistant in Research - CLAD (Centre de Linguistique Appliquée de Dakar).

Before tackling this section, we would like to quote Dr Souleymane Faye when he dealt with the « class morpheme ».

He said : « In Seereer the class morpheme is a prefix which is used, as an indefinite, article to name an object without any necessity to add some informations in its spacial or temporal situation (near or far) ».

There are then three groups of nominal classes which are : *O, a, Ø*.

The *O* group is divided into two classes : *O1* and *O2*.

The *a* group is divided into two classes *a1* and *a 2*

The *Ø* groupe is divided into five classes : *Ø1, Ø2, Ø3, Ø4, Ø5*.

O Group

The Class O1

This class is mainly composed of human names.

Singular	Plural
O kuud « a robber » .....	.....guud « robbers »
O taan « a grand father » .....	..... daan « grand fathers »
O tew « a lady » .....	..... rew « ladies »
O pog « a relative » .....	..... fog « parents » relatives
O kiin « a person » .....	..... wiin « persons »
O qon « a dead man » .....	..... xon « dead men »

In this class the class marker is O in singular, and this mark disappears in plural, but the initial consonant changes. It changes from voiceless to voiced.

O > Ø

Vlss > V

Since the nasals are changing, the nasal initial nouns just lose their class marker.

- O muum « a dumb »

muum « the dumb »
- O naq « a witch »

naq « witches »
- O ñaaw « a widow »

ñaaw « widows »

The O2 Class

Here the class marker O in singular becomes Xa in plural, with a consonantic change of the initial consonant in the other way : = voiced → voiceless.

O > Xa

V > Vless.

Singular	Plural
O dal « a corpse » .....	..... Xa tal « corpses »
O jan « a horn » .....	..... Xa can « horns »
O ɓay « a hand » .....	..... Xa ɓay « hands »
O fes « a young man » .....	..... Xa pes « young men »
O hiiɓ « a bone » .....	..... Xa kiiɓ « bones »
O run « a fig » .....	..... Xa tun « fig »
O hoor « a star » .....	..... Xa koor « stars »
O hoon « adry apple » .....	..... Xa koon « dry apples »

In this class, when an initial sound is voiceless, in singular, it remains voiceless in plural.

O qol « a farm » → Xa qol « farms »

O cok « a neck » → Xa cok « necks »

A GROUP

a1 class

In this class, all the nouns have their initial sound prenasalized. In plural, the *a* marker disappears and the prenasalization becomes a plosive voiceless.

[Prenasal = p.n ; pLosive = P.L.]

a > Ø

p.n. > PL. Sd

Singular	Plural
a ndok « a room » .....	..... tok « rooms »
a ngas « a well » .....	..... kas « wells »
a mboy « a tomb » .....	..... poy « graves or tombs »
a mbeel « a pool » .....	..... peel « pools »

This class is rather limited.

a2 class

In this class, the class marker doesn't change and there is no consonantic change. There is no transformation either in singular or in plural. Then the number is always determined by the syntagmatic relations : the verb, the adjective the consonantic change at the level of the definite article :

a cek « a hen »

a cek « hens »

a tooq « crow »

a tooq « crows »

a caf « foot »

a caf « feet »

When the noun is put in a context, we can know the number as in :

singular a tooq a gara « a crow has come »

plural a tooq a ngara « crews have come »

Most of the nouns in *a group* belong to this class.

Ø GROUP

Ø1 Class

The nouns of this class have no marker, in plural the marker is *a* and they are submitted to a consonantic change voiced → vless

Ø > a

Voiced > Vless

ɖak « a stone » → a ɸak « stones »

gac « a pebble » → a kac « pebbles »

xoox « a head » → a qoox « heads »

ɓil « a rock » → a ɸil « rocks »

Ø2 Class

In this class, the nouns do not take a marker either in singular or in plural. They always have Zero marker. The only change is a consonantic one in initial position. The initial consonant is always a nasal or a prenasalized consonant.

So, the prenasal changes into a voiceless plosive and the nasal, doesn't change.

We also find nouns with initial implosive or voiceless plosive ; which do not change as well.

Singular	Plural
mbaal « a sheep » .....	..... paal « sheep »
ndap « a granary » .....	..... tap « granaries »
njong « a bed » .....	..... cong « beds »
ngol « a finger » .....	..... qol « fingers »
ngang « a chest » .....	..... kang « chests »
ñaal « a day » .....	..... ñaal « days »
naak « a cow » .....	..... naak « cows »
ñek « a vaccination » .....	..... ñek « vaccinations »
pay « a loin dath » .....	..... pay « loinclothes »
fool « a skin » .....	..... fool « skins »
nof « an ear » .....	..... nof « ears »

Ø3 Class

In this class, all the nouns are in plural, they have no singular form.

No singular.

Plural :

lang = sands

ndaw = cinders

mbidel = meal or flour

ñaamel = food

calel = works/jobs

Ø4 Class

These nouns have n plural form, they are just in singular. They constitute a combination of a verb and a prefixed particul which is « fa- ».

Singular :

falay	=	speech	from « lay » = to speak
fangon	=	death	from « xon » = to die
fandim	=	delivrance	from « rim » = to deliver
fayar	=	bringing up	from « yar » = to bring up
fangen	=	living	from « gen » = to live.

We can also have « fa- » used with a nominal radical instead of a verbal radical.

Examples :

fasaap	=	a Sorrel (plant)	passap	=	sorrels (plant)
fanoox	=	a cayman	panoox	=	caymans

Ø5 Class

These nouns are formed with a derivative prefix « fo- » which means « that comes from », and a verbal or nominal radical which specifies this resultance. They are mainly used in singular : their plural form is rare.

Singular :

fosoow	=	curdled milk
fosis	=	fresh milk
foneew	=	cream
fotiir	=	oil
fodeen	=	the mother's milk
forand	=	water that already washed rice or millet
foraf	=	water that already washed the clothes.

There are nine fondamental nominal classes. But if we add the diminutive and the augmentatives, called the secondary classes, we will have two other subclasses.

Chapter 2 : CONTRASTIVE ASPECTS

Here, we are not doing an exclusive study of the Seereer articles, we are just trying to see to what extent the study of the English articles can be applied in Seereer.

For, a Study of the nominal classes has been done in Seereer. For this study, we can refer to the book of Dr Souleymane Faye : *Morphologie du nom Seereer*.

We need to see how the Seereer articles work when Separated from the nominal classes.

The problem of the NOTION as it is expressed in English does' exist in Seereer, but the absence of the article (Ø) is not regular. Mr Faye refers to the basic form of the noun which is the indefinite form. This form is just used to name without determining.

For some names, the marker of that form is (obvious) absolute (*a cek, O Kiin*) ; for others, the marker is not present (*famb, mbaal*).

In NDAXAR, there is no article, NDAXAR is a concrete notion that has an open meaning.

NDAXAR means TREE.

Otherwise, *MBAFID* is a restrictive notion ; it is a short tree, and the noun *pa'* comes to be more restrictive.

The irregularity of the absence of the article for the notion can be seen in : A CEK. Here, the word A CEK is in its indefinite form. One cannot know about the chicken (A CEK). CEK alone doesn't mean anything.

There is no clear cut between the notion and the indefinite article.

IN : NJOM NE MOON FA RUUL,²²

THE WRESTLING OF HYENA AND HOG.

NJOM NE is Known, but MOON and RUUL are not identified. MOON AND RUUL are taken in a general understanding. They are not specific.

That's why the sentence is not :

NJOM NE NO MOON OLE FO RUUL LE.

In this sentence, the speaker would know which MOON and which RUUL are they about.

In Seereer, as in English, zero article can go with a concrete noun or an abstract noun.

Some abstract nouns are obviously known and have no ambiguity. The word YIIF is abstract, but everybody knows that it is a man's possession. It can be the MIND.

In some words, it is difficult to recognize zero article and the indefinite form. For instance, YIIF is at the level of the notion, it is used with Ø. YIIF LE is used with a definition. In YIIF, there is no contextualization.

Let's consider :

1- YIIF LE MOODU, YIIF NO MAAK OO.

2- MOODU NDI, YIIFUM YIIF NO MAAK OO.

We have a definite article in Sentence 1, and a definite usage of the same name, in Sentence 2 because the suffix of possession refers to MOODU.

In S1 ; YIIF NO MAAK is in apposition, meaning that the repetition plays the role of definition and emphasis.

So, the complexity of the problem of definite or indefinite is also a device in Seereer. For, it is not the determiner which is definite, but the word in its context.

²² S.A.L.N. (Séminaire - Atelier en Langues Nationales) - U.S.L/M.E.N. 1994.

Some concrete nouns can be used in a restrictive way. The word MBIND refers to any house, it is a concrete notion. It is not qualified. But in : PIND GANJAAY FOP MBOGEE O JALOOT, we tend to limitate the notion. Here we are just talking about the houses in Ganjaay.

The term indefinite is not satisfactory enough to determine a noun in its full usage.

Let us look at this dialogue.

- A PIGAX NEEK A NANDAA
- NAM EE ?
- XECA NE NGOOR A FI'TAN.

A in A PIGAX is an indefinite article. The definite article would be A PIGAX ALE.

If we analyse thoroughly the dialogue, we will see that the enouncer knows very well what he is talking about. The phrase : NEEK A NANDAA shows the presupposition from the speaker.

The enouncer has already a knowledge of what A PIGAX is. Thus, it is definite at the level of the enouncer.

Then, we can see the addressee's reply : NAM EE ? (HOW). This means that the addressee is at the level of the usage of the indefinite article in A PIGAX. He is not aware of the meaning of the context. A PIGAX is anaphorical for the speaker, but the hearer is not able to know.

Then, the answer : xeca ne Ngoor a fi'tan allows the hearer to know about what A PIGAX means.

The morpheme OLE can play a distributional role when we want to define a noun. In OLE, /L/ is the basic consonant ; /O/ is the repetition of the class marker, and /E/ indicates the distance.

Here, we will use a noun and an adjective.

L1²³

l'élève

O → elew	O → rew	Ole
----------	---------	-----

L2

l'élève

O elew Ole	O rew Ole
------------	-----------

definite

L3

un(e) élève

O elew Ø	O rew Ø
----------	---------

Indefinite

L4

élève

Ø elew Ø	Ø rew Ø > Ø tew Ø
----------	-------------------

notion Ø

L1 and L2 are definite : the article is a definite one : O... Ole, composed of *O*, the class marker and *Ole* the definition marker.

L3 is indefinite : the article is an indefinite one : O. L4 is at the level of the notion ; used with Ø.

The adjective is not always indicating a definite noun. It may depend on the context it is used. In : *O elew O rew ole*, it is sure that we have a definite noun, but in : *O elew O rew*, although *elew* is qualified by *rew*, one cannot say that it is definite.

Many researchers have talked of the articles, but they mainly refer to the nominal classes.

The Study of the nominal classes is of great help for the Study of the articles.

²³ L = Level.

In Seereer, the definite article can play the role of demonstrative determiner. When we say : *A CEK ALE*, it seems that we are in front of the *hen*. If *A CEK ALE* is not concretely present, it is present in the enouncer's mind. Even the fact of having two phonemes for the definite article is nothing but an emphasis. The phoneme *ALE* is used to clarify *A CEK*, that is why *A* alone is said to be indefinite.

Let's consider this dialogue Siidi and his son Jibi.

S - JIBI, KAA PIS NE ?

J - PIS NUM EE BAAB ?

S - Xeña Kaa o dof, pis pod num jegó ?

Waaskiro kuu layee'oona o baatten Lakas

S - *Where is the horse, Jibi ?*

J - *Which horse Dadd ?*

S - *Stop making the fool. How many horses do you have ?*

Pis ne with the definite article - *NE* is supposed to be a shared knowledge. But since Jibi is too lazy to go and check, he refuses to know that *PIS NE* is a known and single horse in the house.

The utterance : *Pis num ee Baab ?* doesn't fit the context. We can say that - *NE* is an anaphorical article, because everybody is supposed to know the horse (*Pis ne*).

The fact of using a definite article does not mean that there is no need to redetermine the noun.

In : *Maaga, O toog oxe ne'eena Faatu Nduur, o maak oxe no roog we a xooy a den ee : an nu cungtaa o maax ole koy ?*

Here, we can see that :

O toog oxe is definite, but the phrase *ne'eena Faatu Nduur* redefines it.

O maak oxe is in apposition, it means : « the elder ».

O maax ole is a shared knowledge.

So one cannot leave aside the context to explain the use of the articles.

The discussion between *definite* and *indefinite* is really actual *in all the languages*. We always need to refer to situation whatever the article is.

POSTAGE

The scholarly use of language has been concentrating for many years a great deal of discussion around which language teaching and language learning have always been dealt with.

The pedagogical preoccupations being always different from the linguistic ones used to oppose or to bring some contradictions between the teacher of a language and the linguist himself. The language teacher was always referring to the pedagogical items which were nothing but a set of rules that one should know by heart.

In the 20th century linguistics as a field of research began to develop and would later change the attitudes of the teacher.

A teacher may know some grammatical rules, but he must be able to internalize the global system of the language, that is to say, he must be able to speak correctly the language. This means that the teacher must be able to teach the language with no reference to any grammatical rule, but just able to teach the language structurally and in a global way. A language is global, it is internal, but not one element a part.

All the teachers are not linguists, but they must know about linguistics. This will help to be free in their methods.

There is no perfect teaching method, a language teacher must be aware of many methods in order to be flexible, in concordance to the context, the situation or the learners.

We know that language policy does concern the government, but this government should give the responsibility to a commission composed of teachers, linguists and other scholars.

Our study is not only descriptive, we have also tried to go through analysis. It is not sufficient to show the learners that THE is a definite article. If you

do so, you have just given a name to something. You have to show how it is definite, its degree and what it defines.

We went also through contradiction by talking about French and Seereer, as you may know contradiction is always positive. To put together the three languages is to make accessible their teaching and their learning. The teacher of a language should be a real language teacher. He must know the functioning of any language once the language is spoken in his environment.

We will not forget that language teaching or learning always depends on the learners will or on their purpose.

The purpose can be just communicative, it can also be linguistics. That's why the teacher must prepare himself for any purpose. In this sense specialization brings limits.

We do not pretend to bring absolute solutions in all the issues we raised here, because we may have our own limits. We just wanted to bring our bricks to the flat.

This study leads us to the use of national languages which deserve deep studies. A country cannot develop in the language of the foreign. There are some cultural realities that we cannot express in French or in English. This problem is complex and vital.

CONCLUSION

Being contrastive with the introduction of two other languages (French and Seereer), our work has been a global study of the English Articles. This study has been based on a description of those articles, which was nothing but a pretext to further analysis.

We have tried to show that in a global system, articles cannot be studied alone.

Thus, any grammatical item is to be studied within its context. In this conclusion we will state again that zero article always goes with the notion that can be abstract or concrete, open or restrictive. Zero article means that there is an absence of article and that's why, the terms open meaning or restrictive meaning will always depend on the context in which words are used.

The indefinite article is stuck to the word it accompanies. As for the definite article, it can be totally grammatical, for it depends on the enouncer.

The article is said to be definite when the meaning of the word can be fixed in the speaker's mind, but not always in the hearer's mind. If it is so, it is called shared knowledge.

This particular use of the definite article is found in both French and Seereer languages.

English : Where is *the* dog ?

French : Où est *le* chien ?

Seereer : Kaa o box *ole* yee ?

So, in the second and third part, we have tried to apply the study of the English Articles in French and in Seereer. This happens to be easy when there are some similarities and difficulties when there are some differences.

Let’s consider the contrast in these examples :

- English : Lions only attack man when they are hungry
- French : Les lions n’attaquent l’homme que lorsqu’ils ont faim.
- Seereer : Mbanuu cogoy a ndeefna o kiin rek kaa da ngeexel.

To see the difference between the articles in the three languages, we will draw a contrastive table.

Languages	Ø	Definite	Indefinite
ENGLISH	Lions man	-	-
FRENCH	-	Les lions l’homme	-
SEEREER	O Kiin cogoy	-	O Kiin

The main aim of our thesis was to show that all the languages are equal at the level of linguistics. We also wanted to show that any grammatical study in a given language can interest or even be applied in any other language. That’s why the use of some French and Seereer aspects is of great importance for us in the intended next researches. This study has helped us to see how English, French and Seereer articles are working.

We know that the study is not exhaustive and it cannot be perfect, for it is not always easy to answer all the issues in the use of the articles in the three languages which are entities that totally different. We just intended to contribute to the grammatical and linguistic research in English by contrasting it with French and Seereer.

We consider this work as a step forward for the study of the National languages, which is our daily design.

ANNEX

- A Comparative Table :

□ ENGL.

Legend : Δ FRENC.

○ SEER.

Articles	SINGULAR						PLURAL						Legend
	masculine			feminine			masculine			feminine			
ΔNΔ - Ø	man	horse	tree	woman	hyena	leg	men	horses	trees	women	hyenas	legs	□
	homme	cheval	arbre	femme	hyène	jambe	hommes	chevaux	arbres	femmes	hyenes	jambes	Δ
	X	pis	ndaxar	o tew	o moon	a caf	goor	pis	taxar	X	xa moon	a caf	○
ΔN - INDE- FINITE	a man	a horse	a tree	a woman	an hyena	a leg	men	horses	trees	men	hyenas	legs	□
	un homme	un cheval	un arbre	une femme	une hyène	une jambe	des hommes	des chevaux	des arbres	des femmes	des hyènes	des jambes	Δ
	X	pis	ndaxar	o tew	o moon	a caf		pis	taxar	X	xa moon	a caf	○
THEN- DEFI- NITE	the man	the horse	the tree	the woman	the hyena	the leg	the men	the horses	the trees	the women	the hyenas	the legs	□
	l'homme	le cheval	l'arbre	la femme	l'hyène	la jambe	les hommes	les chevaux	les arbres	les femmes	les hyènes	les jambes	Δ
			ndaxar	o tew	o moon						xa moon	a caf	○

CORRECTION

Task n° 1 : P. 20

an accident	an hour
an entertainment	a horoscope
an example	a heavy machine
a union	a new book

an experiment
 an electric current
 a hot meal
 a funny cartoon

Task n° 2 : P. 30

1. The, __, the, __ 2. The ; the. 3. __, __, __, the
 4. __, __, __,
 5. The ; the, the ; __

Task n° 3 : P. 36

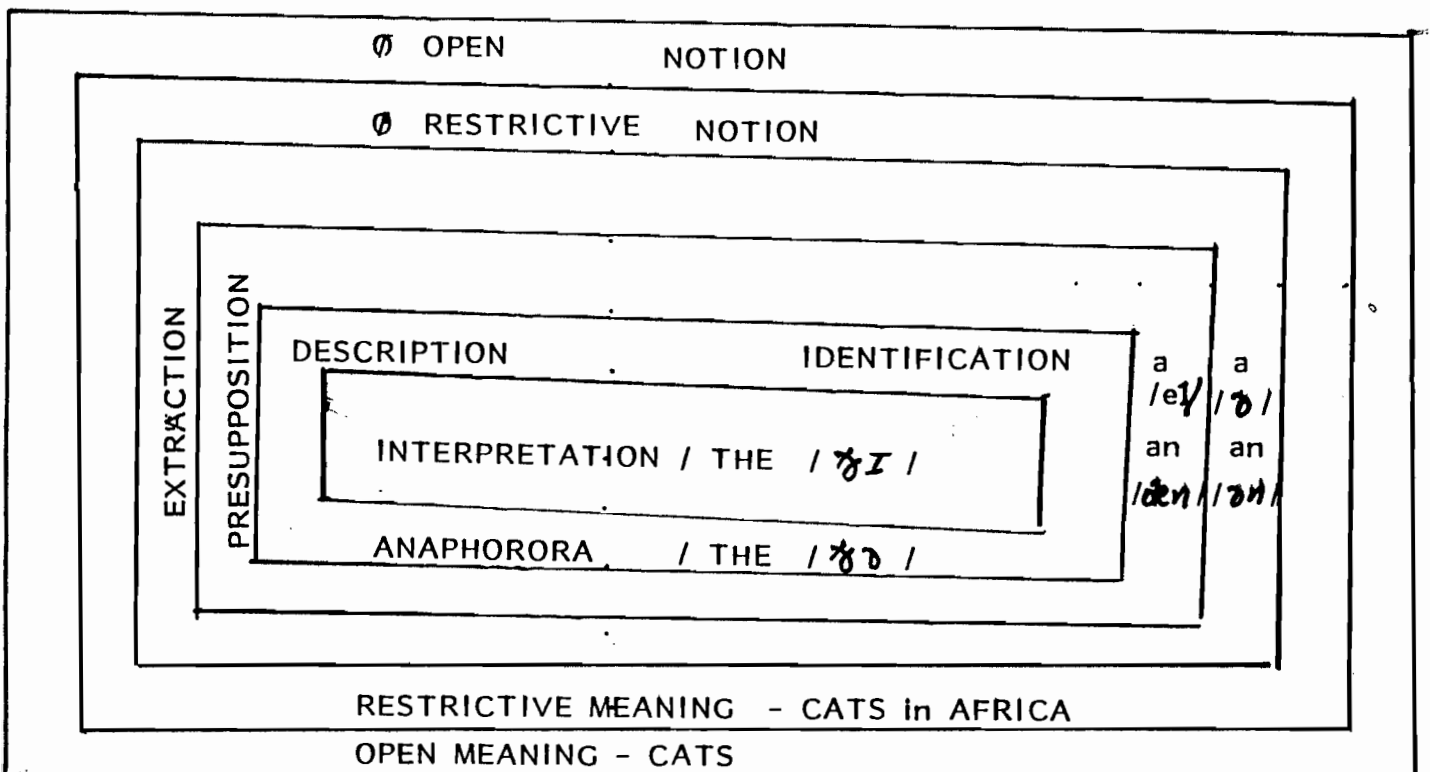
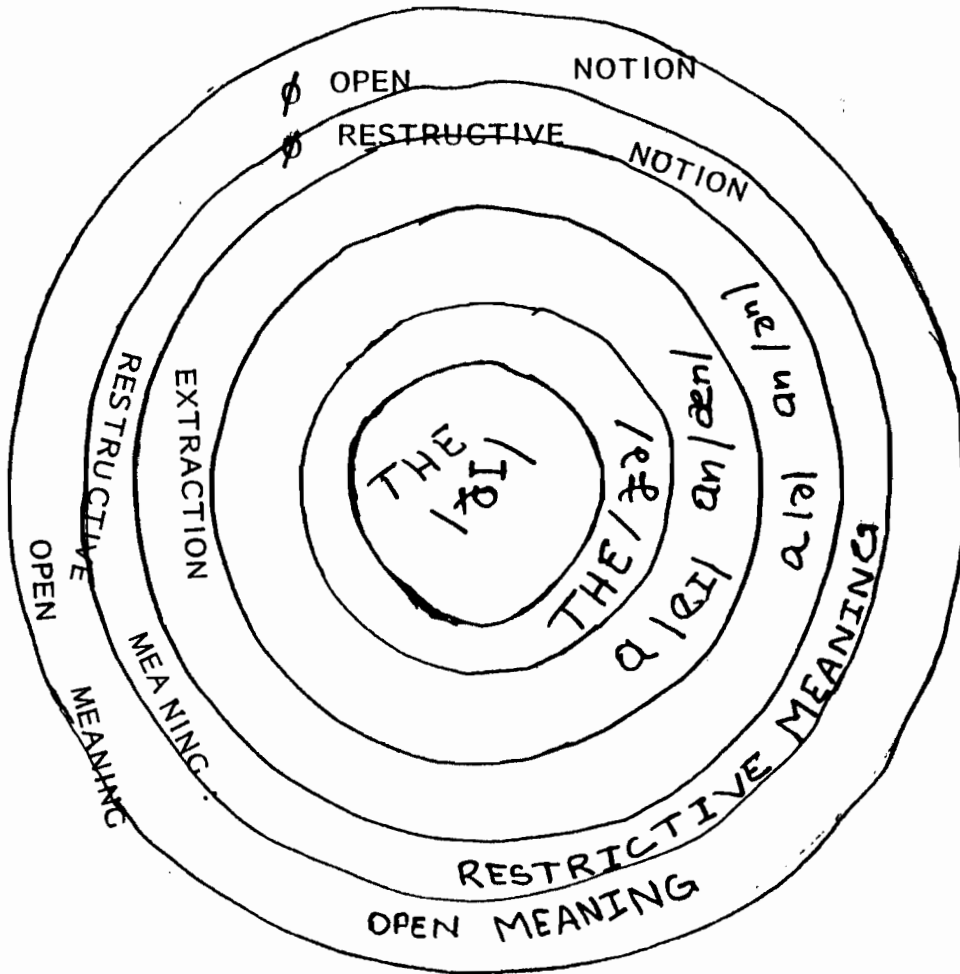
Definite : 1. L', la, 2, la ; 3. __ 4. __ 5. __ 6, la 7 le, 8 la, 9, les, 10 __

Indefinite : 1 (des), 2 (une), 3 (de, d', de) 4 (d', un,)

5 (un, des) 6 (une), 7. __ 8 (un, des) 9 (un, de) 10 (un, de)

RECAPITULATION.

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**Université Gaston BERGER
de Saint-Louis**

U.F.R de Lettres et Sciences Humaines

Section d'Anglais

MEMOIRE DE MAITRISE

A Descriptive Study of the English Articles and Some Aspects
in French and Seereer : A Contrastive Approach.

ERRATA

Pages	Paragraph	Line	"	Instead of	"
20	3	1	a means of		a means of means of
20	footnotes		p. 198		
25	footnotes		p. 112		
26	1	10	referring	"	refering
27	1	8	way	"	wa
7	5	1	Therefore	"	Therefor
30	1	4	comparison	"	comparason
38	2	3	let's	"	lat's
39	1	5	. They	"	a
40	3	1	problem	"	probleme
41	1	3	he	"	be
43	1	2	from ø to the	"	from ø the
51	3	5	do not	"	doesn't
52	3	1	no	"	n
56	1	3	limit	"	limitate
61	1	11	must	"	mun
64	6	3	difficult	"	difficulties
36	2	1	and indefinite	"	definite <u>v</u> article
36	footnotes		1956- Paris- Larousse	"	
37	footnotes p. 110		Gabilan	"	Gobilor
70	bibliography n° 8		GREENBERG	"	GREEMBERG
73	bibliography n° 6		MÄKELÄ	"	MÄDELÄ

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