

The Use of Articles with Proper Nouns in English

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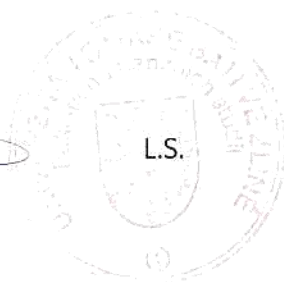
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ABSTRAKT

Táto bakalárska práca popisuje používanie členov v anglickom jazyku s podstatnými menami, so zameraním na vlastné podstatne mená. Teoretická časť je zameraná na klasifikáciu podstatných mien, štruktúru nominálnych fráz a distribúciu determinantov. Pomocou Britského národného korpusu a Korpusu súčasnej americkej angličtiny, praktická časť na základe výsledkov konštatuje a porovnáva distribúciu členov s vlastnými podstatnými menami.

Kľúčové slová: Podstatné mená, determinanty, členy, štruktúra NP, vlastné mená, BNC, COCA

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis describes the use of articles with nouns in English, focusing on proper nouns. Theoretical part deals with classification of nouns, structure of noun phrases and distribution of determiners. Using of British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English, it describes and compare distribution of articles with proper nouns.

Keywords: Nouns, determiners, articles, structure of NP, proper nouns, BNC, COCA

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INTRODUCTION

The basic function of articles in English is to express definiteness of the accompanied noun. They belong to larger group called determiners. Distribution of determiners depends on various types of nouns. From semantic point of view, main function of the determiners is to identify the noun phrase as definite or indefinite. This category of nouns is described as definiteness.

This bachelor thesis is divided into theoretical and practical part.

In terms of theory, first chapter is devoted to nouns as a part of speech, their typical features, functions, classification and it also describes noun phrases and their structure. Concerning the structure of noun phrases, the focus is on determiners as one of the obligatory constituents of noun phrases. It explains how determiners are divided into three categories and how they can be combined together.

The second chapter deals with central determiners and their use with common nouns. The last chapter of the theoretical part deals with the use of articles with proper nouns. This chapter describes groups of proper nouns which occur mostly with the definite article and their exceptions and also groups of proper nouns which are mostly used with the zero article.

The practical part is based on the analysis of British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English. It has two main parts. Firstly it compares groups of proper nouns which occur with the zero article and their exceptions with corpus findings. Furthermore, the aim of this part is to find explanations for the exceptional occurrence of the definite article among these groups of proper nouns.

In the second part, the focus was on the group of proper nouns which are used with the definite article based on the table 5.

The aim is to compare the results to assertions of many linguists about the usage of articles with proper nouns.

I. THEORY

1 NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES

1.1 Nouns

Parts of speech can be described as a group of words sharing specific properties. Veselovská and Emonds (2011,3) state that word categories are divided into major or open class and minor or closed class. Nouns belong to a major class, due to the fact that they are able to form new items.

There are certain criteria for establishing a part of speech. From the **morphological** point of view, derivational morphology is relevant tool for identification of a particular word category. Concerning nouns, there are typical suffixes for this category: *-er, -ment, -ity, ...* etc. (*writer, accomplishment, generosity*). In comparison with another member of the major class - *verbs*, whose suffix *-ize (realize)* is one of the most widely used suffixes in this category. In addition to this, inflectional morphology is connected with internal structural change of a word. In English, it is closely related to grammatical categories of nouns. There are five grammatical categories in English:

Number (plural, singular)

Countability (countable, uncountable)

Definiteness (definite, indefinite)

Gender (masculine, feminine, neuter)

Case (common case, genitive)

From the **syntactic** point of view, nouns as heads of noun phrases are regarded as superordinate elements in the presence of subordinates such as: *adjectives, articles,...*

Nouns have several syntactic functions which depend on their distribution in the sentence.

The most common syntactic functions of nouns are:

Subject: (1) *Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland.*

Object: direct: (2) a) *He kicked **the ball**.*

indirect: b) *John threw **Mary** the ball.*

Complement: (3) *She is **our teacher**.*

Apposition: (4) *C. Ronaldo, **the football player**, scored two goals.*

From **semantic** point of view, nouns are linguistic items which refer to physical objects (*people – John; animals – cat; places – Edinburgh; things - chair*) and substances (*ice, water*). Moreover, to this category belongs also abstract entities such as: *happiness, hatred*. (Veselovská and Emonds, 2011, 3-14)

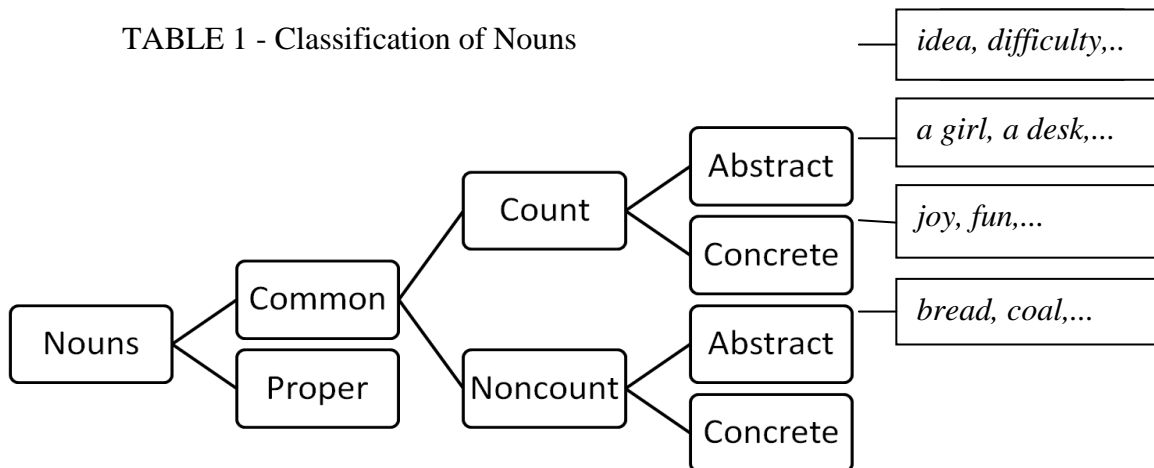
1.1.1 Classification of nouns

As many grammar books state there is a division of nouns into two major subclasses: proper nouns and common nouns. According to Biber (2007,245), proper nouns denote for personal names (*Ben, John, Catelyn*), geographical names (*China, The High Tatras,...*), names of objects and institutions (*Pinta, the European Council*). Generally, proper nouns have no determiners, they identify one concrete entity and the initial letter is capitalized (5). However, there are some cases when the determiner precedes proper noun (6). These exceptions will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 3.

(5) *Martin is from Slovakia.*

(6) *Martin is from the Netherlands.*

TABLE 1 - Classification of Nouns



On the other hand, common nouns do not name any specific entity and they can be accompanied by determiners and they may vary in number. Alexander (2003,49) points out that for accurate use of determiners and variation of singular or plural form, common nouns need to be divided into countable (mass) and non-countable nouns.

1.1.1.1 Countable and non-countable nouns

Countable nouns can have a singular and a plural form. In most cases, plural form of a common noun indicates countability of the entity. Oftentimes after the question about quantity (*How many?*) or just when entities need to be counted numerals (*one, two,..*) can precede. Moreover, all forms of articles (*a, an, the, zero*) can be used with countable nouns.

(7) *How many beds are there?*

There are two beds in the bedroom.

(8) *There is a book on the table.*

On contrary, non-countable nouns usually appear in a singular form (*water, knowledge, furniture,...*) and they are not preceded by the indefinite article *a/an* or numerals (*one, two,...*) Semantically, non-countable nouns refer to abstract concepts (*research, wisdom, time,...*), substances (*ice, air, fire*), emotional states (*relationship, hatred,...*) and many others. (Biber, 2007, 243)

1.1.1.2 Concrete and abstract nouns

Main difference between concrete and abstract nouns is in reference. Abstract nouns denote for some intangible entity expressing feelings, events, states. On the other hand, Alexander (2003,50) observes that concrete nouns "have individual physical existence". Abstract nouns are mainly uncountable (*depression, love*), however there are some exceptions where abstract nouns are used only as countables (*a proposal, an idea*). Concrete nouns can be countable (*poster, an inch*) or uncountable (*machinery, honey*).

There are some nouns which have both non - count and count use depending on the context. (*advantage, beauty, time,...*)

(9) a) *Penelope Cruz is a beauty.*

b) *Other actresses envy her beauty.*

(10) a) *I take two sugars in my cup of tea.*

b) *There is no sugar.*

Examples (9) and (10) show that uncountable nouns, both concrete or abstract, can have countable uses. The opposite situation is also possible as example below shows.

(11) a) *We have six chickens in the garden.*

b) *I have some chicken for lunch.* (Biber,2007, 243-244)

1.2 Noun phrase

As it was written above, nouns belong to the category of superordinate elements. In addition to this, nouns as superordinate elements along with appropriate subordinates can be characterized as the noun phrase. Noun phrases are complex owing to the indefinite possibility of modification within its structure. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2005,83)

Examples below support this statement:

(12) *Our **house***

(13) *Our new **house***

(14) *Our new **house** in Slovakia*

Concerning the structure of the noun phrase, there are four major components of the noun-headed phrase. Firstly, noun phrase consists of two obligatory parts: *determiner* and *head noun*. On the other hand, noun phrase contains parts which are not obligatory but frequent. These are *premodifiers* and *postmodifiers*.

Determiner	Premodifier	Head	Postmodifier
<i>The</i>	<i>best</i>	<i>song</i>	<i>of the day</i>

1.2.1 The head

The head of the noun phrase is usually a noun and it is obligatory part as it was mentioned. Moreover, other constituents (*adjective phrases, clauses, etc.*) precede or follow the head and they modify the head. These members of the noun phrase are optional and can be omitted.

(15) *a / small wooden / **box** / that he owned*

(16) *a | Ø | **box** / that he owned*

(17) *a | Ø | **box** | Ø*

(18) * *a / small wooden / Ø / that he owned*

In the example (15) there is shown a complex noun phrase which consists of determiner (15), premodification by adjective phrase (small wooden) and postmodification (*that he owned*). In the example (16) and (17), optional parts of the noun phrase are omitted and the noun phrase (*a box*) remains grammatical. However in the last example, we can see that the head of the noun phrase cannot be omitted.

1.2.2 Premodifiers

Premodifiers consist of lexical (*words*) and grammatical items (*case markers, inflections*) which precede the head and they create complex noun phrase. In English, the most typical premodifiers are adjectives /adjective phrases: *official negotiations*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1323). There are many other premodifying items which modify the head and create complex noun phrase:

Ed-participial modifier: (19) *restricted area*

Ing-participial modifier: (20) *a growing problem*

Nouns: (21) *a staff room*

Genitive: (22) *Stacy's mom*

1.2.3 Postmodifiers

Postmodifying elements follow the head. According to Biber (2007,604), there are two main types of postmodifiers: *clauses* (finite and non-finite) and *phrases* (prepositional, adjectival).

Finite postmodifying clause: (23) *The girl who lives in Germany was eating a cake.*

Non - finite postmodifying clause: (24) *A jeep crossing down Beach Road at high speed.*

Prepositional phrase: (25) *The mess in his bedroom*

Adjective phrase: (26) *Rooms available in the hotel.*

1.2.4 Determiners

Second obligatory constituent is a determiner. As it was mentioned, determination is one of the grammatical categories in English. "Determiners are used to specify the reference of a noun." (Biber et al. 2007,258) According to Emonds (2011,19), determiner is required with common nouns that are countable. As many grammar books state, there are three major groups of determiners: *predeterminers*, *central determiners*, *postdeterminers*. Their distribution in the noun phrase and co-occurrence with other constituents will be discussed in next sections.

1.2.4.1 Central Determiners

Most common determiners which occur as an obligatory part of a noun phrase are articles. We know three types of articles: definite (*the*), indefinite (*a, an*) and zero (\emptyset) article. Their use is dependent on different noun classes and will be dealt in next chapters.

There are many other components, which occur as central determiners in the noun phrase: Possessive pronouns (*my, your, his*), relative determiners (*whose, which*), and others (*no, this, these*)

(27) ***Our*** house, ***my*** cards, ***your*** furniture

(28) ***no*** objections, ***no*** grief

(29) ***this*** knowledge, ***these*** pears

(30)* ***the my*** computer, * ***her these*** flowers

As examples above show, definite article is not only central determiner, which occur with plural countable and singular uncountable nouns. However, central determiner is unique and the occurrence of two central components preceding the noun phrase is restricted (30). Taking into consideration common nouns, distribution of articles in the noun phrase is as table shows. It is clear that only definite article *the* can occur with all forms of common

nouns: singular countable, plural countable and singular uncountable nouns. On contrary, both forms of the indefinite article (*a, an*) can occur only with singular count nouns. (Quirk et al. 1985,272)

TABLE 2 - Distribution of Articles

	Countable	Uncountable
Singular	<i>A pen/ an apple</i> <i>The pen</i>	<i>Music</i> <i>The music</i>
Plural	<i>Pens</i> <i>The pens</i>	

1.2.4.2 Predeterminers

Predeterminers precede central determiners. Words such as: *All, both* and *half* are the most common predeterminers. However, not every combination with central determiner is possible (34). Moreover, predeterminers are mutually exclusive, therefore co-occurrence of two elements in a noun phrase is ungrammatical (35). (Quirk et al. 1985, 258),

(31) *All weekend, all this weekend*

(32) *Half a weekend, half my weekend*

(33) *Both weekends, both your weekends*

(34)* *Both every weekends*

(35)* *All both weekends*

There are other groups of predeterminers such as multipliers (*double, twice, three times*) and the fractions (*one - third*).

(36) *once a day, three times every year, twice his weight*

(37) *one-third of my life*

1.2.4.3 Postdeterminers

In comparison with predeterminers, postdeterminers follow central determiners. However, premodifier elements have closer position to the head of the noun phrase as postdeterminers. Most occurred ones are:

cardinal numerals (*one, two, three*)

(38) *one girl*

(39) *one cars **

(40) *a one toy**

(41) *This is the one I need.*

(42) *two girls, five houses*

As examples above show, there are many postdeterminers which modify the head and they have various co-occurrence restrictions and distribution in the noun phrase. As example (39) proves, cardinal numeral *one* cannot be used with plural count nouns and indefinite article (*a/an*) (40). However, *one* can sometimes replace the indefinite article. In addition to this, this element can occur with the definite article (41). Other cardinal numerals are used with plural count nouns (42).

ordinal numerals (fourth, tenth, next, last, another)

(43) *fourth floor, another four years*

closed-class quantifiers (many, a few, much, a little)

(44) *many flowers, a few letters*

(45) *much money, a little advice*

In the example (44) is shown, that closed class quantifiers: *many, few* can occur only with plural countable nouns. On the other hand, there are other groups of closed class quantifiers which occur only with noncount nouns (45).

opened-class quantifiers (*plenty of, a lot of,..*) (Quirk et al. 1985, 261).

(46) *plenty of children, plenty of space, lots of luggage*

2 THE USE OF ARTICLES WITH COMMON NOUNS

As it was mentioned above, distribution of the articles depends on various types of nouns. From semantic point of view, main function of the determiner is to identify the noun phrase as definite or indefinite. This category of nouns is described as definiteness. In addition to this, the use of articles can determine/ narrows down the reference as specific or generic. Specific reference refers to a particular entity of a class. On the other hand, generic reference denote for a whole class. (Huddleston, Pullum, 2005, 91)

(47) *There are **three tomatoes** in the fridge.*

(48) ***Tomatoes** are very delicious.*

2.1 Definite Article - the

Article *the* is the most common determiner used in the noun phrase which co-occur with both countable and noncountable nouns. This central determiner is used to mark the noun phrase as definite. The use of definite article shows that both the speaker and the hearer can identify the referent due to shared knowledge. The category of definiteness can be expressed by many aspects such as: situational context, anaphoric and cataphoric reference, generic reference. (Quirk et al., 1985, 265)

2.1.1 Situational context

Quirk et al. (1985, 265-266) state that the term situational reference is used when the referent is identified by the addressee due to shared knowledge (*contextual or general*) in the extralinguistic situation. Taking into consideration contextual knowledge of participants, *the* can be used with reference to immediate situation.

(49) *Could you please pass me **the book**?*

(50) ***The milk** in the fridge is spoilt.*

As the examples above show, these definite noun phrases refer to entities which are identifiable for the hearer due to physical presence in the situation. As the hearer shares contextual knowledge he probably knows the title of the book, cover, position, etc. Example (50) is used in a context where the addresser assumes the hearer can see that there is only one fridge in a room and he can smell the milk which is spoilt. In addition to this, further specification by *which* question is usually not needed in these cases because the head of the noun phrase is determined as unique (49, 50). However, Biber (2007, 264) adds that the further clarification is needed in some cases when the referent is not identifiable for

the hearer because of "a mismatch between the speaker's and hearer's perception of the situation."

Taking example: (51) *Could you please pass me the book?*

Which one?

The blue one on the table.

In comparison with the contextual knowledge when the referent is known just for the participants in a particular situation, article the can be used to determine entity in a larger situation. In this case general knowledge is shared by both the hearer and the speaker and the referent is not required to be present.

(52) *The president of Slovakia visited France.*

* *Which president?*

(53) *Is the Black Mamba playing tonight?*

* *Which Black Mamba?*

As examples above show, referents are unique and recognizable for general public sharing the same knowledge. Due to the uniqueness of the entity in a larger situation, further specification by which question is irrelevant.

2.1.2 Anaphoric and Cataphoric Reference

When a noun phrase occurs in a discourse for the first time and we want to mention it later, we use the definite article *the* because the noun phrase is already specific. This is called anaphoric reference which can be:

Direct anaphoric reference: (54) *I saw a dog in a park. The dog was chasing a cat.*

Indirect anaphoric reference: (55) *I was sitting in a bus and the seat was uncomfortable.*

In the example (54) we can see a direct anaphoric reference. The second noun phrase is determined due to the previous mention of the noun phrase with identical reference. On the other hand, in the example (55) does not occur repetition of two identical noun phrases with the same reference. However, there is a significant relation between the noun phrases. Second noun phrase *the seat* refers to entity connected to a bus. Example (55) is case of indirect anaphoric reference.

2.1.2.1 *Cataphoric reference*

In comparison with anaphoric reference where the previous knowledge matters, article the can be used in the noun phrase which is determined by the postmodification of the head. This is what we call cataphoric reference. We can see in the example that the noun phrase is marked as definite due to the further specification without any previous mention.

(56) *This is the team which won five games in a row.*

2.1.3 **Generic reference**

The most common way how to express generic reference in English is by the use of zero article with uncountable nouns and countable plural nouns. However, in some cases generic reference can be also expressed by definite or indefinite article mostly with singular countable nouns.

(57) *The bicycle is the most popular means of transportation nowadays.*

(58)* *A bicycle is the most popular means of transportation nowadays.*

Definite noun phrase *the bicycle* refers to the whole class of bicycle. In the example (58) the indefinite article means any bicycle and therefore it is inappropriate here. Expressing generic reference by indefinite and zero articles will be discussed in the next chapter. (Biber, 2007,265-266)

2.2 **Indefinite article a/ an**

Indefinite article indicates that the referent is not unique and it is not identifiable for the hearer or the speaker. It is also used when we mention something for the first time without previous knowledge of the entity in a context.

(59) *Peter has a cat. The cat is very beautiful.*

In the first sentence indefinite article occurs due to the assumption that the hearer does not identify the entity from the situation. In the second sentence, after introducing the entity, we can see anaphoric reference.

2.2.1 **Member of a class**

Indefinite article is also used to refer to a particular member of a group or class. It is used to show the person or thing is one of a group.

(60) *John is a psychiatrist.*

(61) *She is a student in TBU.*

(62) *Peter is an alcoholic.*

2.2.2 Generic reference

When an indefinite singular NP is used in a generic context, we refer to any one member of a class which possess characteristics associated with the kind. Therefore, indefinite article can be understand as a substitution for any or every. (Swan, 2005, 59-60)

(63) *A dog can bark = Every dog can bark.*

2.2.3 A in a numerical function

Historically, indefinite article *a* developed from numeral form one, therefore it can be viewed as an substitute for one in many contexts. However, we cannot use the indefinite article instead of numeral one when we are counting entities (66).

(64) *John has a son and two daughters.*

(65) *It will be delivered in a day.*

(66) *I have a, two, three euros. Is it enough? **

2.3 Zero article

We use the term zero article when the noun phrase is not preceded by a definite or indefinite article. Article *a/an* cannot be placed before plural or noncountable nouns, therefore we use zero article instead. In addition to this, unstressed *some* can be used as an equivalent of *a/an*. However there is a slight difference between the uses of zero article and of *some*. We use *some*, when we talk about particular but not specified quantity of things or people but zero article is used when we talk generally about things or people.

(67) *Some physicians came to teach us.*

(68) *Physicians are people who practice medicine.*

2.3.1 Generic reference

Zero article is the most common determiner which express generic reference because it can occur with noncountable and plural countable nouns.

(69) *Oil is a finite resource.*

(70) *I like punk music.*

(71) *Spiders are ugly.*

2.3.2 Zero article with singular countable nouns

Zero article is not usually used with singular countable nouns. However, the table below shows some exceptional cases where the zero article is used with countable nouns.

TABLE 3 - The zero Article with Countable Nouns (Quirk et al., 1985, 276-281)

Some prepositional phrases of institutions	I studied at university. He has to go <i>to jail</i> for murder.
Means of transport after preposition <i>by</i>	I travelled to Paris <i>by plane</i> .
Times of day and night after prepositions (<i>at, by, after and before</i>)	He woke up <i>at noon</i> . I will return <i>before morning</i> came.
Seasons in general	<i>Winter</i> is coming!
Meals in general	Where are we going <i>for dinner</i> tonight? I should rest after <i>lunch</i> .
Illnesses	diabetes, influenza, etc.
Parallel structures	<i>Face to face</i> communication is very useful.
Some fixed phrases	We will do it step by step. Please <i>take care</i> of yourself.
Block language	Headless body in topless bar.

3 THE USE OF ARTICLES WITH PROPER NOUNS

In comparison with common nouns which name things, people and places in general proper nouns usually refer to one specific entity of a kind (specific person, place, month, day, etc.) Common nouns are capitalized only at the beginning of the sentence, whereas Proper nouns are always capitalized and usually does not require articles. However, there are many proper nouns and proper names which occur with definite article and they will be dealt with in next chapters.

Many grammar books distinguish between proper noun and proper name. While proper noun is a single word (*James, London*), proper names consist of two or more words. Moreover, we cannot change internal structure of proper names by inserting premodifiers or change of inflation. (Quirk et al., 1985, 288)

(72) *Arthur's Seat is situated in the centre of the city of Edinburgh.*

(73) * *Arthur's amazing Seat is situated in the centre of the city of Edinburgh.*

3.1 Use of zero article with Proper nouns

As it was mentioned, zero and definite article can precede proper nouns. However, unlike the common nouns there is no rules how to use articles with proper nouns. There are certain groups of proper nouns which usually occurs with zero articles and other groups where definite article usually precede. Table below shows groups of proper nouns which occur with zero articles. There are many exceptions among these groups.

TABLE 4 - Groups of Proper Nouns Used with the Zero Article (Quirk et al., 1985, 291-294)

Groups of Proper Nouns	Examples	Exceptions
Personal names	Tom Brown, Potter, Michael	The Potters (= members of Potter family)
Festivals	Christmas, President's Day, Easter,..	<u>The</u> Christmas <u>holiday</u>
Months, days, etc.	August, Friday,...	
Names of continents, countries, states, towns, etc.	Africa, France, Prague, ...	The Antarctic, The Netherlands, The Hague, The Bronx,...

Lakes	Lake Winnipeg, Lake Mirama, ...	The Great Lakes
Mountains	Mont Blanc, Mount Everest,...	The Matterhorn
Streets, squares, buildings, parks	Harley street, Time Square, St. Paul's Cathedral,...	The White House
Names of languages	Spanish, French,...	

As it was mentioned, there are no clear rules when to use the definite article with proper nouns and proper names. However, definite article always occur in these structures:

- a) all names with postmodification (by an of-phrase): *the Isle of Man, the House of Commons*
- b) plural proper names: *The Netherlands, The Alps,...*
- c) Proper names consist of (kingdom, republic,.. etc): *the United Kingdom, the Czech republic,...*

3.2 The Use of the definite article with Proper nouns

The definite article occur before certain groups of proper nouns and proper names.

Therefore, names with postmodification and plural proper names can be considered as a general rule for using the definite article. In addition to this, there are many proper names with premodification which are used with definite article (*the National Gallery, the American Civil War,...*). On the other hand there are also many premodified proper names which appear with zero article (*Times Square, Buckingham Palace,...*). Therefore we cannot consider premodification as a rule for using the definite article with proper names. The table below shows groups of Proper nouns that mostly occur with the definite article.

TABLE 5 - Groups of Proper Nouns Used with the Definite Article

(Quirk et al., 1985, 294 - 297)

Names of group of Islands	The Canary Islands, the Shetlands,...
Names of ranges of mountains	The Pyrenees, the Alps, the High Tatras,...
Names of rivers, seas and oceans	The Danube, the Black Sea, the Atlantic Ocean,...
Names of newspapers	The Guardian, the Daily Mail,...

Names of some organizations	The NATO, the European Union,...
Names of deserts	The Sahara, the Great Victoria Desert,...
Names of restaurants, pubs and hotels	the Ritz, the Chateau Marmont, ...
Names of theatres, cinemas, galleries	The Globe, the National Gallery, the Electric Cinema,...
Names of many famous buildings	The Louvre, the White House, the Shard, The Leaning Tower of Pisa,...

3.3 Proper Nouns Behaving Like Common Nouns

Some proper nouns can behave like common nouns in certain utterances. It means that some proper nouns can occur with indefinite article *a/an*, definite article *the* or vary in number. This phenomenon is seen mostly in cases, when there are more than one entity referring to the same name. Moreover, names of days, months and festivals can behave as common nouns in certain utterances. (Quirk et al., 1985, 288 - 290)

See examples below:

(74) *In this town lives many Browns.*

(75) *I do not believe you that you saw the Tom Hanks!*

(76) *A Tom White left you a message.*

(77) *America has seen a few Shakespeares in its literary production, but none of them could match the original.*

(78) *It was the Friday, when she passed the exam.*

(79) *When I decide to leave, It will be in a January.*

In example (74) we can see proper noun in a plural form which refers to people with the same surname Brown. In the second example we use definite article to emphasize the entity we are referring to. In example (76) indefinite article with proper noun indicates that we do not know anything about the person. In example (77), noun phrase *a few Shakespeares* refer to authors who try to write like William Shakespeare. The definite article in (78) is used in order to emphasize the concrete Friday. In contrary, the indefinite article makes the month January unspecified. (79) It does not need to be the upcoming January, but some next in the following years.

II. ANALYSIS

4 THE USE OF ARTICLES WITH PROPER NOUNS

In the practical part of this thesis, I will focus on the use of proper nouns with articles. For research I will use British National Corpus (BNC), in order to observe the occurrence of this phenomena in British English. For the same purpose but focused on American variety of English I will use Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Research is divided into two main parts. Firstly, the focus was on the use of zero article with Proper nouns based on Quirk et al.'s research (291 - 297) such as : *names of festivals, days, states, etc.* Based on the table 4, it compares groups of Proper nouns which occur with the zero article and their exceptions with corpora findings. Chosen examples from each group of proper nouns were firstly input into corpora and then every sentence was analyzed. Furthermore, the aim of this part of research is to find explanations for the exceptional occurrence of the definite article among these groups of proper nouns. In the second part of the research, the focus was on the group of proper nouns which are used with the definite article based on the table 5 such as: *names of deserts, rivers, seas, etc.* I compared the results of research with assertions of many linguists about the usage of articles with proper nouns.

4.1 Groups of Proper Nouns Mostly Used With no Article

4.1.1 Festivals

According to Quirk (1985, 292), this group of Proper nouns occurs with the zero article. The analyzed cases were these three Proper nouns: *Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving*. According to search of BNC, it can be clearly seen that British English uses more often the form *Christmas* than *the Christmas*. (1)

(1) *Christmas is coming up and there are chemistry sets in the shops.* [BNC: 1993: S_brdcast_discussn]

There is a low frequency of cases in BNC where the form *the Christmas* appeared. The number of these cases is 17 compared to 4280 with the zero article. These 17 examples can be considered as rare, mostly seen in spoken language as a matter of context in order to emphasize the concrete festival (2). Therefore this can be viewed as an exception and it is not normally used in British English.

- (2) *Always the same, before **the Christmas** , before New Year. It doesn't matter.*
[BNC: 1993 :H4R : S_ consult]

Quirk's claim about names of festivals was studied in another examples of proper nouns that stand alone without any article in front of it (*Easter, Thanksgiving*). The results from BNC were in favor of Quirk's theory.(1985,292)

- (3) *Up until **Easter**, the box office is open to personal callers Monday-Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm and on Saturday 9.30am-1.30pm* [BNC:1994: W_advert]
(4) *And then I went to Los Angeles, and I spent **Thanksgiving** on Malibu beach, and there was a picture window -- he stared around him.* [BNC: 1993: W_fict_prose]

However, the same pattern of exceptions occurred as it was in the instance of *Christmas*. The frequency was even lower. I found only six sentences with the definite form of proper noun *the Easter* (5). Furthermore, there were no such exceptions in case of *Thanksgiving*.

- (5) *Mid Hants Railway are making an impassioned plea to the public to support the steam attraction over **the Easter** .* [BNC , B03 W_newsp_other_report]

According to COCA, it can be said, that in American English the zero article usually precedes the names of festivals as it is in British English. There are some exceptions, where the definite article precedes proper nouns following the same pattern as it is visible from the previous BNC search (6).

- (6) *So while I don't want to be the Grinch that stole **the Christmas** and I'm a cheerleader for growth.* [COCA:2014:SPOK:NBC]

Finally, It can be said that my conclusions agree with Quirk et. all's assertion that names of festivals belong to group which is used with the zero article. In addition to this, I found out that proper nouns of festivals take the definite article only to emphasize or concretize in a context.

4.1.2 Days

The analyzed BNC cases were proper names of days. Firstly, proper noun *Thursday* was input into corpus. According to research of BNC, example was found mostly without article. (7) Frequency of the form *Thursday* with no article was in more than 1400 sentences.

(7) *St Austell is smack in the middle of the party's natural heartland which Liberal Democrat strategists are increasingly confident will largely revert to its traditional Liberal colours **on Thursday***. [BNC:1992:W_newsp_brdsh_t_nat_misc]

However, in corpus was found 87 examples, where the definite article precedes the form *the Thursday*. In 53 of these cases, preposition *on* appears. (8)

(8) *Oh lovely and er it wasn't bad, the snow wasn't very good to start with but it snowed **on the Thursday** and then we, you know, we skied quite a bit after that, but poor girl she got sciatica **on the Wednesday***. [BNC: 1992: S_conv]

In addition to this, corpus findings proved that proper noun *Thursday* occurred with preposition *on* without article in 1031 sentences. Therefore, these 53 instances are exceptional. Generally, it can be said that names of days do not appear with the definite article. Examples which were found in BNC were mostly in spoken language. Research of COCA was similar to BNC findings. Concerning the concrete example *Thursday*, there were more than eight thousand sentences in which this Proper noun occurred without article. (9)

(9) *Charles Lee was so touched by the waiter's concern in the Monastiraki open-air flea market district that he insisted on taking his family back for dinner **on Thursday**, when Mr. Kolilas gave them a lecture on Greek economics*. [COCA,2015,NEWS: NYTimes]

Results with the definite article were found. It represents 50 cases where the definite article was used in order to concretize one specific *Thursday*. (10)

(10) *At dawn, **on the Thursday before** the start of the Holy Week, the townspeople pulled La Cerda from her cell in the basement of the church*
[COCA:2015: FIC: Bk: All That Followed]

Names of days were found mostly without preceding article as it was proved in BNC and COCA research above. My search of corpora agrees with Huddleston and Pullum's claim

(2002, 516) that names of days belong to group which is mostly used with no article. I observe that names of days sometimes behave like common nouns. In that case, the definite article precedes the proper noun in order to emphasize the concrete day. (Quirk,1985,292)

4.1.3 Names of Continents, Countries, States, Towns

Firstly, continents were input to BNC search engine. All analyzed cases were found with no preceding article. (11)

(11) *In my first article I wrote of the ingenuity and imagination I saw in children's play in Asia* . [BNC:1988: W_ac_polit_law_edu]

Then, the premodifying adjective (*central*) was added in front of names of continents and sentences were searched one by one. The result was the same, which proved that, the definite article did not precede premodified names of continents. (12)

(12) *The question of Germany's frontiers, still unsettled today as a matter of strict international law, will likewise fall into place as part of any new arrangement in Central Europe*. [BNC:1994:W_newsp_brdsht_nat_misc]

The same method was used in COCA corpus and results were identical. This search leads to conclusion that, names of continents are used with zero article in corpus sentences. Therefore Huddleston and Pullum's theory (2002, 517) agree with corpus search.

4.1.3.1 Names of States and Countries

Next group of Proper nouns used with zero article are names of states and countries. However, as the table 4 shows, there are many exceptions among this group which have optional or obligatory use of definite article *the*. Firstly, the research was focused on proper nouns of states and countries which are used with zero article. As the analyzed instances were chosen proper nouns: *France, China, Germany*. In majority of sentences, these examples occurs with no article. (13)

(13) *It merely hints that the world will be a better place if we support it because the unquantified benefits which will flow from it will put us on a level with Germany and France, assuming of course that we wish to be on a level with Germany and France* . [BNC: 1994: S_meeting]

Regarding proper noun *France*, only 8 exceptions were found with the definite article in BNC compared to 6333 sentences with zero article. In 6 of these sentences, *of phrase* appeared. Exceptions are mostly from non academic texts. Interestingly, the definite form of proper noun do not refer to present - day France. It represents one concrete historical period of France. (14)

(14) Only ***the France of the Sun King*** could afford the luxury of overseas development for its own sake, or at least for the sake of a distant and ill-defined future. [BNC: 1984: W_non_ac_humanities_arts].

This phenomena was studied in two other examples: *China*, *Germany*. Results were similar. The definite form of proper noun *China* was found in 4 sentences. (15) In every sentence of - phrase follows the proper noun China.

(15) -- to speak of the *Achsenzeit*, of the axial age, which included ***the China of Confucius*** and *Lao-Tse*, ***the India of Buddha***, ***the Iran of Zoroaster***, ***the Palestine of the Prophets*** and ***the Greece of the philosophers***, the tragedians and the historians. [BNC: 1990: W_ac_humanities_arts]

Concerning example *Germany*, 11 exceptions were found. In 3 out of 11 sentences, of-phrase occurs. Moreover, all 11 instances refer to specific historical period, not to present day Germany. (16) Still, these utterances can be considered as rare examples in comparison to 9000 sentences where the zero article occurs.

(16) Hundreds of clergy and laity, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, lost their live in ***the Germany of theThirdReich***. [BNC:1990:W_religion]

Concerning *COCA*, in 30 sentences the definite article precedes proper noun *France*. Furthermore, exceptional cases were found also with *China* in 23 sentences and with *Germany* in 31 sentences. Therefore, it can be said that proportion of exceptions is higher than in BNC corpus. The data obtained from BNC and COCA suggest that these findings can be considered as rare cases. Majority of sentences proves that names of states and countries are used with the zero article.

4.1.3.2 Names of States Occurring with the Definite Article

Secondly, the focus was on names of states which are claimed to be used with the definite article (*the Netherlands, the Czech republic, the United Kingdom*). In BNC search proper noun *the Netherlands* was found with the zero article in more than 120 sentences. (17)

(17) *A Constellation aircraft of K.L.M. Royal Dutch Airlines left Schiphol Airport in Netherlands , bound for New York via Prestwick*
[BNC:1990:W_misc]

It is considerably high number of cases where the definite article does not precede the proper noun *the Netherlands*. It represents one tenth of analyzed sentences. Interestingly, plural proper nouns are considered as one of three structures where the definite article precedes the proper noun (*see chapter 3.1*). Concerning BNC results I found out that, this statement does not agree with my conclusions. Two other analyzed proper nouns were *the Czech republic* and *the United Kingdom*. Regarding BNC search, proper noun *the Czech republic* was found in all 67 sentences with preceding definite article.(18) This proper noun was not found with the zero article in BNC.

(18) *Foreign relations A delegation from the Czech Republic , led by Prime Minister Petr Pithart, visited Ukraine on Jan. 9-11.* [BNC: 1992: W_non_ac_polit_law_edu]

According to COCA search, results were different. In 242 sentences out of 883, zero article appears. It is considerably higher number of cases than in BNC. (19)

(19) *These are very, very expensive, high- performance belt-fed machine guns made in Czech Republic.* [COCA:2007:SPOK: PBS_Newshour]

As the last analyzed example was proper name *the United Kingdom*. In 79 sentences zero article appears in BNC compared to 3115 sentences where the definite form occurs. In COCA, number of sentences where the zero article precedes the proper noun is considerably higher. It represents one seventh of analyzed sentences. (20)

(20) *Resident of Monaco. Major shareholder in group of betting shops in United Kingdom .* [COCA:1995:NEWS:USAToday]

Based on these results, it can be stated that proper names consist of common noun *kingdom, republic* appear with zero article. I find out that the definite article is not exclusively used with these structures in corpus sentences.

4.1.3.3 *Proper Nouns of State with Fluctuating Use of Article*

Proper nouns of states, countries which have fluctuating use of the preceding definite article were analyzed: *(the)Ukraine*. The purpose of this research was to show, which form of proper noun is more commonly used within corpora. Concerning proper noun *(the)Ukraine*, in BNC the form with no article was more commonly used in corpus sentences. However, the usage of this form was not so dominant. The form *Ukraine* was found in 362 cases. (21) According to corpus search, it can be stated that, the form without article refers to present day Ukraine.

(21) *One is that President Putin and the Russians continue to press in an unimpeded way their goals in Ukraine . [COCA:2015:SPOK:CBS]*

In comparison to this, the form *the Ukraine* appeared in 230 sentences. According to my search of corpora, I observe that the definite form of proper noun *the Ukraine* occurs mostly in sentences referring to the Ukraine which was the part of the Soviet Union. (22)

(22) *One of the prisoners turned out to be my dad's Soviet high school French teacher, from the year my dad lived in the Ukraine .[COCA:2012:FIC: WarLitArts]*

Research of COCA corpus was similar to the BNC findings. It can be said that, both forms of proper name are commonly used in corpora. Therefore example *the Ukraine* is not considered as an exceptional case but rather fluctuating. One of the possible explanations for the form of this proper noun can have historical importance. Research agrees with Quirk et al. assertion (1985,295) that both forms of this proper noun is possible.

4.1.3.4 *Proper Nouns of Towns and Cities*

Firstly, proper nouns *Prague, London, Paris* were input into BNC and COCA. The results were unequivocal. These examples appear only with zero article in all analyzed sentences.

(23) *Mr. Varoufakis has visited **Paris** , where French leaders have been pushing against budget restrictions tied to austerity policies.*

(COCA:2015:NEWS:CSMonitor)

(24) *Others will continue to have legitimate reason to visit **Prague** .* [BNC:1989:W_newsp_brdsht_nat_misc]

According to these findings, it can be said that my conclusions agree with Huddleston and Pullum's assertion. (2002,518) Exceptional case *the Hague* was analyzed. This proper noun was found exclusively with definite article in BNC and COCA. (25)

(25) *So this is the last step in our cooperation in **The Hague**.*

[COCA:2011:SPOK:CBS_Early]

One of the explanation for the definite form of this proper noun can be cross - linguistic. In Dutch, the Hague is called *Den Haag*. The word *Den* represents the definite article. In this case, it is possible that English translated and kept the Dutch article.

4.1.4 Lakes

Names of lakes belong to group which are mostly used with no article (*Loch Ness, Lake Ladoga*). (Quirk et al.,1985,293) There are some exceptions within these proper names (*the Great Salt Lake*). Firstly, names of lakes which are claimed to be used with no article were input into corpora. Based on these results it can be stated that the zero article precedes in every researched sentence. (26,27)

(26) *We can say, too, that if there are large creatures in **Loch Ness** , then they would appear on sonar just as we have recorded them.* [BNC: 1994:

W_non_ac_nat_science]

(27) *Where the River Lovat flows out of Lake Ilmen and north to **Lake Ladoga** , there stood a great city with wooden walls.*

[BNC:1989:W_misc]

Taking into consideration exception in this group, proper name *the Great Salt Lake* was put into corpora. According to search, it can be said that British English uses only the form with the definite article.(28)

(28) *THIS is the place,' said Brigham Young as his wandering, persecuted tribe of Mormons finally set eyes on **the Great Salt Lake and the Wasatch mountains** rising in fairyland fantasy before the rising sun.*

[BNC:1994: W_newsp_brdst_nat_sports]

In contrast to American English where 19 examples with the zero article were found. In 90 sentences, the definite article precedes the analyzed proper name. Research of corpora proves, that names of lakes are used without article. In the exceptional case of proper name *the Great Salt Lake*, research of COCA showed that also the form without article is possible.

(29) *There will also be three tours on Monday -- an all-day northern Utah sunrise tour, an afternoon northern Utah sunset tour, and another evening dinner cruise **on Great Salt Lake** .* [COCA:2005:ACAD: PSAJournal]

4.1.5 Mountains

For the research of proper names of mountains were chosen examples: *Ben Nevis, Mont Blanc, Mount Everest*. These proper names were analyzed in corpora and the result was unequivocal. In all sentences, proper names appears without the definite article.

(30) *The classic lines here were in better condition than those on **Ben Nevis** , and *The Fly* received two ascents despite some thin and scary ice.* [BNC, 1991, W_pop_lore]

(31) *Horizon may be an appropriate word in Texas, but it does no justice to the country beyond Plainpalais, for there the horizon includes **Mont Blanc** , the highest mountain in the Alps, or in Europe, for that matter.* [BNC:1991: W_fict_prose]

(32) *And in what may be the deadliest single incident on **Mount Everest** , an avalanche killed a dozen Sherpa guides.* [COCA:2014:SPOK:PBS]

Then the exceptional cases among this group (*the Matterhorn, the Jungfrau*) were input into corpora. This examples were found in every sentence with preceding article *the*. (33)

(33) *Though I've climbed higher peaks (including **the Matterhorn** , Kilimanjaro and South America's tallest, Aconcagua, at 23,000 feet), little Fuji (12,388feet) holds a special place in my heart.* [COCA:2006:MAG:Forbes]

Generally, names of mountains are used with zero article. According to my search, I find out that names of Swiss Alpine peaks are exclusively used with the definite article.

4.1.6 Names of Parks, Squares, Roads and Streets

Hyde Park, Times Square, Abbey Road, Downing Street were input into COCA and BNC. These locative names were found only without preceding article.

(34) *And the carolers have begun to sing in the street where I live, in Kensington Square, near **Hyde Park**.* [COCA:2013:FIC: Bk:ChristmasAngel]

(35) *Giuliani did some of that when he cleaned up **Times Square**.*
[COCA:2015:SPOK:Fox]

(36) *The thefts happened in Corporation Road, OakleaCourt, **Abbey Road**, Streatlam Road, Langholme Crescent, Hutton Avenue, Geneva Road, Brankin Road and Bramall Lane.* [BNC:1994: W_newsp_other_report]

From the examples above, it is clearly seen that premodification is not "the rule" for occurrence of the definite article with proper names consisting of common noun descriptor. However, there are many exceptions among this group: *the Mall Street, the Falls Road*, I will deal with more general exceptions of locative names which occur with the definite article (*theatres, cinemas and buildings*) in the next chapter.

4.2 Groups of Proper Names Regularly Occurring with the Definite Article

This part of my search is based on the table 5 and Huddleston and Pullum's assertions. According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002,517), the proper nouns/names which bear the definite article to mark their definiteness are classified as *weak proper nouns/names*. On the other hand, proper names/nouns which occur with the zero article are *strong proper nouns*. This category and their exceptions were discussed in the previous chapter. My focus on this part is to find out, if corpus findings correspond with this theory. Moreover, the aim will be to find out if the strong forms of proper nouns occur in corpus sentences. Analyzed cases were chosen based on the table 5.

4.2.1 Names of Group of Islands

Analyzed proper nouns were chosen: *the Canary Islands* and *the Shetlands*. In all analyzed sentences, these proper names were found with the definite article in BNC and COCA.

(37) *They are on holiday in **the Canary Islands**.* [BNC:1994: W_newsp_tabloid]

(38) *There are no trees in **the Shetlands** , little in the way of natural shelter from the blustery winds, and the summer fog can force the airport to close for days on end.* [COCA:2014:USAToday]

In conclusion, my search of BNC and COCA agrees with Huddleston and Pullum's assertion (2002, 517) that this group of proper names has only weak forms. Furthermore, "the rule" that the definite article precedes plural structures of proper names applies on the category of group of islands.

4.2.2 Names of Ranges of Mountains

Proper names: *the High Tatras*, *the Pyrenees* and *the Alps* were input into corpora. Only weak forms of these proper names were found. (39,40)

(39) *On his days off, Viktor goes hiking, exploring the rest of **the High Tatras** visiting other chatas and their keepers.* [BNC :2005: Skiing]

(40) *Spain's Roberto Heras and Jose Rubiera pave the way in **the Pyrenees** and **the Alps**.* [BNC:2003:Bicycling]

My search agrees with Huddleston and Pullum's assertion (2002, 517) that names of ranges of mountains are used with the definite article. The reason for that can be their plural structures as it was in the case of group of islands.

4.2.3 Names of Rivers

Names of rivers (*the Thames*, *the Volga*) were input into corpora. The results were unequivocal. In every analyzed sentence, the definite article preceded names of rivers. (41,42) The explanation for the occurrence of the definite article with names of rivers can be common noun descriptor *river*. Taking concrete example *the Volga*, common noun *river* is preceded by the proper noun (*Volga*) as a premodifier in 32 corpora sentences. According to BNC and COCA, the definite form of proper noun appeared in 900 sentences

where the descriptor *river* is omitted. Form of the proper noun remained weak in these utterances.

(41) *The next major geographical crossing was **the Volga river**.* [BNC:1994:
W_newsp_brdsht_nat_misc]

(42) *There was no fear of revolt in the countryside on **the Volga** , due to sheer exhaustion.* [BNC: 1990: W_ac_polit_law_edu]

In 53 sentences the form *the Thames river* appeared in corpora. In 887 sentences, descriptor *river* was omitted.

(43) *Floating along **the Thames River in London**.* [COCA:2009:Scholscope]

(44) *Usually when I toss someone into **the Thames**, they stay in **the Thames** .*
[COCA:2015: HistoryToday]

In general, premodification is not considered as the rule for using the definite article with proper names. However, my search showed that it can be the case, concerning the geographical names of rivers. Descriptor *river* is not always present in sentences, however I found out that the definite form remains after omission. Therefore, it can be said that descriptor does not have to be present in sentence, but still influences the structure of proper nouns. (Quirk et al., 1985, 1317)

4.2.4 Names of Seas

Proper names of seas: the *Baltic sea*, *the Mediterranean sea*, *the Caspian sea* were analyzed in corpora. The results were unambiguous, as it was in the case of rivers.

(45) *We were gon na go to my country and get married on **the Baltic Sea** .*
[COCA:2015:ABC]

(46) *He wants construct a wall of Iranian dominated Russia friendly anti-U.S. states from Western Afghanistan to Iran through Iraq through Syria and Lebanon to **the Mediterranean Sea** .* [COCA: 2015: SPOK: Fox]

(47) *But Central Asia in the early 21st century enjoys enormous reserves of oil and natural gas, most of it in the area around **the Caspian Sea** .*
[COCA:2002:WashMonth]

An important fact which seems to have an effect on the structure of these proper names is the occurrence of the common noun descriptor as it was in the case of rivers. According to corpora search, the omission of the descriptor is possible.

(48) *The Danes are already actively engaged in underwater excavation of Neolithic sites in the shallow waters of **the Baltic*** [COCA:2006: Archaeology]

In conclusion, my search agrees with Quirk et al.'s assertion (1985, 296) that names of seas take the definite article.

4.2.5 Names of Newspapers

Regarding BNC and COCA, all analyzed newspapers have weak names in majority of corpora sentences. (49,50)

(49) *I mean, **The Guardian and The Daily Mail** are now huge presences in the American market.* [COCA:2013: CBS]

(50) *Congratulations on the addition of a humour section to **the New Scientist**.* [BNC,1994, W_non_ac_nat_science]

However, strong forms of names of newspapers appeared through corpora.

(51) *" Never again became wherever again. " President Paul Kagame of Rwanda (**Daily Mail and Guardian** , May1,2000)*
[COCA:2005:ACAD:African Arts]

(52) *" They talk about it in New Scientist all the time, " she said. #*
*"You read **New Scientist** ?* [COCA: 2012:FIC:Analog]

Therefore, this search agrees with Huddleston and Pullum' theory (2002, 518) that newspapers can have both strong and weak form.

4.2.6 Names of Deserts

The Gobi, the Sahara, the Great Victoria Desert were input into BNC and COCA. There were not found strong forms of proper names. (53, 54)

(53) *Every year he participates in Racing the Planet, a six-day, 150-mile event in the world's most difficult desert terrains, such as **the Gobi and the Sahara**.*
[COCA: 2009: MAG: Fortune]

(54) *About 10,000 Bushmen live in **the Kalahari Desert**.* [BNC:1994:
W_ac_soc_science]

However, omission of the descriptor desert is visible in examples *the Gobi* and *the Sahara*, it left impact on the structure of proper nouns as it was in cases of rivers and seas. Huddleston and Pullum's assertion (2002,518) agrees with my search that names of deserts have only weak forms even after the omission of common noun descriptor.

4.2.7 Names of Theatres, Cinemas, Buildings

Names of theatres (*the Globe, the Criterion*), cinemas (*the Electric Cinema, the Tyneside cinema*) and buildings (*the Louvre, the White House*) were input into BNC and COCA. All examples had only weak forms in analyzed sentences.

(55) *More details from **the Tyneside Cinema**, 10 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne (091-232 8289).* [BNC:1989: W_newsp_brdsht_nat_arts]

(56) *Such has been the success of the piece on a short provincial tour, that it has been snapped up by **The Globe** in the centre of London's theatreland.*
[BNC:1994: W_newsp_other_report]

(57) *'Poppa! Think, we could go to **the Louvre**, and I could practise my French---*
[BNC: 1992: W_fict_prose]

According to my search, I found out that these groups of locative names are used with the definite article in corpora. The reason for weak forms of these groups can be common noun descriptor (not always visible in sentences). Therefore, my search agrees with Quirk et al.'s assertion (1985,296) that these groups take the definite article.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis was to observe the use of articles with proper nouns. I dealt with comparison of data obtained from BNC with results from COCA and I also compared these results with other studies. My aim was to find out whether the corpora findings corresponds with studies of many linguists or there are some differences. Besides that, the focus was to find out the reason for the occurrence or the lack of articles with group of proper nouns. Moreover, my focus was to explain exceptional cases which occurred in groups of proper nouns.

Firstly, on the basis of the obtained results, groups of proper nouns mostly occurred with the zero article (*names of continents, countries, states, towns, festivals, etc...*) and their exceptions were analyzed. Corpora findings mostly agreed with linguists' claims about the use of articles with these groups of proper nouns. The definite article was found in minority of cases with *days and festivals*, mostly to emphasize or concretize in spoken language. Names of continents were found only without the definite article, even after premodifying adjective. States which are claimed to be used only with zero article were found with the definite article in some exceptional cases. These cases referred to a historical period of the state, not to present day. Based on corpora findings, it can be stated that proper names of states consist of common noun *kingdom, republic* appeared also with the zero article. Search found out that the definite article is not exclusively used with these structures in corpora sentences. In specific case of *Ukraine*, it can be said that, both forms of proper name are commonly used in corpora. One of the possible explanations for the definite form of this proper noun can have historical importance. Names of towns were found only with the zero article. Exception in this group is proper noun *the Hague*. One of the explanation for the definite form of this proper noun can be cross - linguistic. Secondly, proper nouns occurring mostly with the definite article were analyzed. Search of corpora agreed with the assertions of many linguists. Strong forms of proper nouns were visible only in group of *newspapers*.

With a few exceptions, the results obtained from BNC and COCA are comparable to linguists' claims about the use of articles with proper nouns.

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