

***ENGLISH LANGUAGE***

**A GRAMMATICAL  
DESCRIPTION**

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## MINOR PARTS OF SPEECH

What is termed minor parts of speech is also regarded as closed classes or closed class items. Closed as opposed to open classes are fixed and can not admit more new members of the same class. Examples of the closed classes are *Pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, determiners* and *interjections*.

Further investigation will reveal that practically it is rare to invent a new pronoun or articles or even conjunctions. One need not be deceived by the name minor parts of speech because a lot of grammatical blunders are committed by their incorrect usage in sentence construction and as such, there is every need to pay serious attention to their correct usage

**1 PRONOUNS:** Pronouns are words used to replace a noun so as to minimise the frequent and monotonous use of the same noun in succeeding sentences. They are classified into *personal, possessive, demonstrative, reflexive, interrogative indefinite, relative*

**1.1. PERSONAL PRONOUNS:** have distinctions of person. There are three distinctions of person namely (first person) i.e. the speaker in a speech act or the person who gives a message to a receiver in communication act. Such pronouns as *I, we* are used especially to begin a sentence. This is said to be in subjective case. The second person is the persons spoken to or the addressees. So, the pronouns *you, (thou, ye, thee)* are used for the person receiving directly the message. The third person indicates the person or things that are being spoken about. Such pronouns as *he, she, it, they*. These pronouns can be shown in a table form.

**Table 1 Personal Pronouns Subjective positive**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>First person</b>	I	We
<b>Second person</b>	You (thou)	You, (ye)
<b>Third person</b>	He, she, it	they

Examples of sentence with personal pronouns

- (i) *I* love my country Nigeria
- (ii) *You* must be here tomorrow
- (iii) *He* failed the test
- (iv) *They* are armed robbers

In the same vein, personal pronouns can serve in object position and are said to be in objective case. Such pronouns as *me, us*, are used for the first person while *thee, you, (ye)* are used for the second person. *Him, her, it, them* are used for the third person. See table 11 below

**Table 11 Personal Pronouns Objective Position**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>First person</b>	me	us
<b>Second person</b>	You, *thee	You, (ye*)
<b>Third person</b>	him, her, it	them

\*Archaic, not in use in modern times they can be seen in poetry and the Holy Bible.

Examples:

- (i) The flight ticket was given to *me*
- (ii) Mad men live among *us*
- (iii) I want *you* to come with *me*.
- (iv) Bring *it* here
- (v) Nigeria, we hail *Thee*
- (vi) Can't you arrest *him*
- (vii) The police opened fired on *them*

Other uses of personal pronouns

1.1.1 she (her) is sometimes used for such inanimates as aircraft, ships, motor-cars locomotives etc to express affection or familiarity e.g.

- (i) Nigeria has set aside two days to honour *her* fallen heroes
- (ii) Cameroon has launched a new worship in to *her* frontiers, *she* is called 'Hipponia'

- (iii) Pump attendant at a fuel station: Sir, how many litres of petrol do I put in the car? Owner of the car: Fill *her* up, please

**1.1.2** *It* is used as a formal subject with verbs concerning weather condition

- (i) *It* is raining cats and dogs

*It* is used with expression of time and measurement

- (i) *It* is twelve midnight  
(ii) *It* is four hundred miles to Lagos

*It* is used as a formal subject or object in other constructions, the real subject or object usually following as an infinitive or subordinate clause.

- (i) *It* is not easy to convince those villagers  
(ii) I find *it* difficult to believe your story

*It* is used idiomatically in other sentences or phrases (usually colloquial or slang) where it seems to have very little specific meaning e.g

- (i) If the lecturer finds you cheating in the examination hall, you'll be in for *it*  
(ii) When I meet John, I'll have *it* out with him.

*It* can stand for a whole sentence

(i) he is trying to set up business of his own; he won't find *it* easy.

**1.1.3** The use of *I* and *me*. In case of subjective or objective positions, both '*I*' and *me* can be used eg. Who is on the line. The reply can be. It is *me*. This is if the sentence stops with the person giving the reply without any additional phrase. According to prescriptive grammar, such a question will elicit the reply 'it is I' but 'It is me' is more in use in the convention of informal style. But if the sentence continues with an adjoining relative pronoun, 'I' is used and not me eg.

(i) It was *I* who called a while ago

Prepositions like 'on', 'with', 'after', 'between', 'at', 'over' e.tc usually take the objective form of the personal pronoun.

(i) He rained abuses on *them*

(ii) Keep this information between *me* and *you*

**1.2 Possessive pronouns:** Like the personal pronouns, these show ownership of something by persons or things. The possessive pronouns stand alone. There are possessive adjectives which must not be confused with possessive pronouns. The former correspond with the later

- (i) That is my certificate. That certificate is *mine*.
- (ii) I saw Bisi in a car. Is that car *hers*?
- (iii) I have shared the yams and those are *yours*
- (iv) While I was sipping my drink Peter gulped *his*.
- (v) We lock our gate by 8pm while our neighbours lock *theirs* by 10pm.

The possessive pronoun *its* is very rarely used but it could be used in such a sentence as

- (vi) The mango tree gives its shade to the house and the orange tree gives its shade to the house and the orange tree gives *its*.
- (vii) History has its lessons and fiction has *its*.
- (viii) **Speaker A** : How is your family ?

**Speaker B**: Fine, thank you and *yours*?

### 1.2.1. Double Possessive.

This is a situation where 'of' is put before the possessive pronoun. e.g

- (i) Dayo is a friend of *his* (not a friend of him)
- (ii) The tailor sewed some dresses of *theirs* before the Christmas celebrations



**3. Relative Pronouns:** These shows relationship with an antecedent noun.

These pronouns morphologically resemble the interrogatives. They include *who, whose, whom, which, that, what*. There are two types of relative pronouns- the wh- pronoun and 'that' or zero. Relative pronouns are used in restrictive sense or defining clause e.g

- i. That is the governor *who* was abducted
- ii. John is the man *whose* car was snatched along this expressway
- (iii) The lecturer to *whom* sabbatical leave was granted is back.

The personal objective *whom* is often replaced by *who* in informal situations:

- (iv) Do you like the man whom you met (formal)

Do you like the man who you talked with (informal)

When preceded by a preposition, *whom* cannot replace *who*  
example?

- i. *For whom* are these goodies meant?

*Which* is used with non- personal things e.g.

- ii. Is this the car *which* you paid for?

My neighbour lives in a house *which* has never been painted.

*Which* is used for collective nouns denoting persons if the noun regarded as singular e.g.

- (i) The Green Eagles Team *which* played so well last season has done badly this season.

*Which* is used when the antecedent is a whole sentence e.g.

- (ii) This little boy has become insulting, *which* is a bad habit.

*That* could refer to persons or things ie. personal and non-personal reference e.g

- (i) She is the woman *that* got married yesterday
- (ii) I like the mango tree that produces juicy fruit

**1.4. Interrogative Pronouns:** These share the same morphological features with the relative pronouns. They are used in the nominative or subjective accusative and genitive cases

#### **Nominative**

- (i) *Who* is at the door?
- (ii) *Which* is your room?
- (iii) *What* would you say?

### **Accusative**

- (i) *Whom* did you meet?
- (ii) To *whom* did you submit your assignment

### **Genitive**

- (i) *Whose* fiance is that?

*What* is used when we make a selection from a more or less unlimited number e.g.

- (i) *What* books do you enjoy reading?

*Which* is used to present a choice from a limited number.

*Which* of the days are you free?

**1.5. Demonstrative Pronouns:** These have number contrast and do state 'near and distant reference. In other words, for an object within reach and in singular use, '*This*' is used but if the objects are many and near enough to the speaker, '*These*' is used e.g.

- (i) *This* is my car (near enough and one object)
- (ii) *These* are my students (nearby and many)

On the other hand, an object farther away from the speaker and singular in number, takes the demonstrative pronoun *that* e.g.

- (i) *That* is the British flag at the Embassy (a distance away from the speaker)

If the objects are far and are plural in form, *those* is used e.g.

*Those* is used e.g.

*Those* cows were presented at the man's funeral ceremony.

**1.6. Reflexive Pronouns:** They are so-called because they reflect the noun or subjects which introduce the sentences where they occur. They are also called the '-self' type of pronouns for singular subjects and - 'selves' for plural nouns e.g.

- i) He admires *himself* always in the mirror
- ii) She gave *herself* a treat at the hotel
- iii) I blamed *myself* for the irrational behaviour
- iv) They laughed at *themselves* for acting stupidly.

That is why it is incorrect to say:

\*They love themselves so they would soon get married. (meaning showing selfishness).

Emphatic use can be made of the reflexive pronouns e.g.

- (i) I *myself* will not apologise
- (ii) He locked the door *himself*

**1.7. Indefinite Pronouns:** Under this group, many of them function as pronouns but they can also function adjectivally and would be called determiners. It is necessary to note how they function as pronouns.

**1.7.1.** The 'Some' group i.e. *something, somebody, someone, somewhere*.

Some is used in the affirmative sentences e.g.

- (i) The complainant has *something* to say ( I can see him eager to talk)
- (ii) *Somebody* knocked at the door (I heard a noise at the door).
- (iii) *Someone* is crying outside ( I heard a cry outside)
- (iv) I went *somewhere* at my break time.

**1.7.2.** The 'any' group i.e. *anything, anybody, anywhere, and anyone*.

- (i) We can use *anywhere* as our venue for the occasion.
- (ii) Please give me *anything* to eat

- (iii) Did you find *anybody* in the class?
- (iv) *Anyone* can stand in for her.
- (v) There isn't *anyone* in the office (negative)

**1.7.3.** The 'no' and its group i.e. *nothing, nobody, no one, none, nowhere*

- (i) You'll find *nothing* in her bag if you search it.
- (ii) *Nobody* is perfect in this world
- (iii) Is *no one* ready to own up?
- (iv) You are going *nowhere* until you get the work done.
- (v) I looked for my detractors at the court premises but I saw *none*.

*None* is a pronoun which is equivalent to (nothing, no one)

**Note:** *Nothing, no one, nobody* are used with singular verbs.

*None* is used for an answer to a question beginning with: *how many or How much* e.g.

*How many people failed the course? None*

*How much kerosene is there in the lantern? None*

**1.7.4.** The 'every' group is *everybody, everything, everyone, everywhere*.

'Every' appears to have similar meaning with *All*, but while *every* uses singular verb, *all* uses both singular and plural verbs.

- (i) *Everybody* enjoys drinking coke.
- (ii) The chairman sent *everybody* out from the hall.
- (iii) *Everything* is ready
- (iv) *Everyone* wrote his or her name in the register

**Note:** Currently, there is the use of plural for everybody or everyone e.g.

- (v) *Everybody* is expected to take their seats at the hall by 10 O'clock.

**Note** *everyone* attracts of – construction e.g.

- (i) *Everyone* of the dancers borrowed *their* costumes

*Every* – can be used with plural expression

- (ii) E.g. He reviews his rent *every* two years.

**1.7.5. All:** *All* as a pronoun can take a singular or a plural verb. When it takes on the meaning everything, it takes the singular verb e.g.

- (i) An observer who saw the ship capsize cried out, "All *is* lost".

- (ii) The invitees were waiting at the gate and at 4pm, all *were* asked to go into the arena.
- (iii) The officer inspected the four cars and all of them *were* found road-worthy.

**1.7.6. Each:** Each focuses attention on items individually as well as expresses totality. Each can be used for two or more people or items e.g.

- (i) Three of the girls won scholarships and *each* was given ten thousand dollars

**Note :** *each, every, everyone, everybody, everything* take a SINGULAR Verb.

There is emphatic use of each in sentences:

- (ii) *Each* and *every* one of you must report here tomorrow.

**1.7.7. Both:** Both is used for only two people and it indicates totality. Both is used with plural verbs and it is put before plural nouns.

- (i) I know the lecturers; *both* graduated from this university.
- (ii) I don't know which party to attend; I shall attend *both*
- (iii) Which of the two girls are you in love with? Ans – *Both*



(iv) Dr. Adejumo has two daughters; *both* are doctors.

**1.7.8. Other:** It is a kind of pronoun but it can be used as an adjective. As a noun, it has the plural form *others* Singular Pronoun is *another*

(i) My handbag is lost; I will buy *another*

(ii) Mr Okoh's sons are abroad; one in U.S *the other* in Germany.

(iii) Many invitees have arrived; *the others* are still being expected.

**1.7.9. Either:** This is restricted to things, persons or groups. It simply means, one or the other. It makes a choice between two options e.g.

Sir, would you like plantain chips or potato chips for your dinner?

**Reply:** *Either* is okay (meaning any of the two will do)

(ii) *Either* of the two students will emerge the overall best student in the faculty.

**1.7.10. Neither:** This is comparable to *Either* in the sense that it is used for two people; items, or groups of people. It shows negative e.g.

(i) *Neither* of your proposals will be accepted. It is equivalent to that, *none* of the proposals will be accepted.

(ii) Which of the pictures appeal to you? Ans: *Neither* of them. This means none of them.

(iii) Eventually *neither* of the ring leaders was expelled.

**1.7.11. One:** *one* is used to stand for 'people', or 'I' or 'any' person in my position'. It takes the possessive form *one's* and reflective *oneself* eg

(i) *One* is often confused in a situation like this.

(ii) *One* can't kill oneself to satisfy these people.

### Activity

Correct these sentences where necessary.

(i) All what I have learnt, I have forgotten.

(ii) The two young people are in love with themselves so please ignore their excesses.

(iii) Mary, please don't eat up all those apples, I would like to have any.

(iv) Each other day, my breakfast is egg omelet

(v) We don't need to blame ourselves for what happened.

(vi) Ifeoma met a friend of her at the airport last week.

(vii) My three sisters are grown ups and both are married.

- (viii) These houses across the river are my father's property.
- (ix) Before you present your plays someone must review it.
- (x) Speaker A: Would you take tea or coffee? Speaker B: Oh! I am sorry I will take either.

## PREPOSITIONS

2. Prepositions are words used with nouns or noun equivalent to show relationship between these nouns and the other words in the sentence eg.

- (i) The lecturer is *in* the lecture hall.

Here the preposition *in* expresses the relationship between *Lecturer* and *Lecture hall*. The preposition and noun together make a 'case phrase' ie it consists of an objective case in that sentence eg

- (ii) I whispered *to* him.

- (iii) She danced *with* them.

The prepositions *to* and *with* express relationship between *I* and *him* in sentence (ii) and *she* and *them* in sentence (iii)

Prepositions convey very many meanings.

Let's look at place or direction prepositions

- (iv) The soldiers marched *to* the field
- (v) John could not look at Mary's face
- (vi) Find your car *behind* the garage

Other prepositions in this category include *down, across, towards, round, past, inside, into, onto, through, near, off, up etc*

### **2.1. Complex Prepositions:**

Many prepositions are single words like those mentioned above and they are called simple prepositions. Others consisting of more than one word are called complex. These can manifest in the form of:

**2.1.1 Prepo + Prepo:** eg' along with, as for, close to, away from, out of, up to, far from e.t.c. eg

- (i) Are you *out of* your mind?
- (ii) This is *close to* what I am looking for
- (iii) My destination is *far from* here.

**2.1.2. Prepo + noun + Prepo:** eg by means of, in comparison with, in atonement for, at loggerhead with, by virtue of, at par with e.t.c. They are numerous in this category and the stress falls on the noun preceding the last preposition. Some complex prepositions require the indefinite/definite articles eg in the light, of as a result of.

**2.1.3. Verb/adjective/Conjunction + prepo:** e.g because of, owing to, irrespective of,

2.2. The time relation prepositions.

These express time eg

The football match will start *at* far O'clock examine these sentence s

- (i) The referee arrived *in* time
- (ii) Dayo arrived *on* time
- (iii) The doctor arrived *by* 10 O'clock.
- (iv) The celebrant arrived *after* 12 O'clock
- (v) Sule arrived *before* 11 O'clock.

Sentence (i) means that the referee arrived early (ii) means that Dayo came on the dot of time (iii) it simply states his time of arrival (iv) states that the celebrant came late ie after the occasion had started by 12 o'clock

(v) It means that Sule come early.

Other prepositions that express time include *throughout, about, during, in the middle of, till, since, at the beginning of, between*

When writing about years and months the preposition *in* is preferred but for definite days *on* is used eg

(vi) Everybody came home *in* December for the installation ceremony of the 'Igwe' but

(vii) *On* the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, James and Rita got married.

### 2.2.1 The use of At

The use of *at* poses a problem for the second language user of English *At* is used with something seen as a point in space e.g

(i) He was *at* the party

(ii) He live *at* Lagos

(iii) I met him *at* the bus-stop

(iv) He is *at* school (ie studying there)

*At* is used at a point in time. eg

*At* 12 noon, *at* Christmas, *at* Easter, *at* the time I was living in Abuja

*At* is used with words, actions, or ideas that are the cause of feeling or behaviour eg

(v) I was surprised *at* him

(vi) They laughed *at* the woman

(vii) He is good *at* connecting people.

*At* is generally used for small towns

*In* is used for large cities, region and countries e.g.

(viii) He lived *in* London.

(ix) Peter trades *in* Kaduna

(x) He wedded *in* Kenya (not *at* Kenya)

Prepositions should not be confused with adverbs in their use. No part of speech should have a water-tight classification especially in isolation because a word can function under a class in one sentence and also function under another class in another sentence. Consider the following:

- (xi) The party started *before* 8 o'clock. (preposition)
- (xii) We have used this venue *before* (adverb)
- (xiii) Henry drove *past* us in his blue car (preposition)
- (xiv) I saw the lady walk *past* (adverb)

### 2.3. Idiomatic use of Prepositions

- (i) put up with – (tolerate)
- (ii) above water – (to remain solvent)

Because salaries have not been paid for over four months, workers find it difficult to keep their heads *above water*.

- (iii) ran across (meet unexpectedly)

During my visit to London, I *ran across* my early childhood friend.

- (iv) behind the times (out of date) His dressing is *behind the times*.

- (v) somebody marrying beneath him/herself – (marrying somebody of inferior social position)



because she felt she was getting old, she ended up marrying *beneath herself*.

(vi) beside himself (almost mad) He missed a new business partner so he was *beside himself* with rage

(vii) fell out with (quarreled with )

I don't know why Joe *fell out with* Judith after many years of smooth friendship.

### ACTIVITY

Fill in the blank spaces with the most appropriate preposition in the expression below.

- (i) Her friends alluded ---- her ugly behaviour at the party.
- (ii) My father while greeting Mr. Okoli, asked ----- his wife.
- (iii) At this lenten season, we should endeavour to fast to atone --- our sins.
- (iv) The lecturer was congratulated --- her brilliant performance at the occasion
- (v) The judge dispensed --- the case for want of evidence

- (vi) If you want to live long, try to close your eyes ---- the excesses of the youths
- (vii) The politician is imbued ---- courage to ever utter these remarks
- (viii) The police take delight --- intimidating innocent citizens
- (ix) Our government is insensitive --- the demands of the masses
- (x) Undaunted ----- his threats, the lady jilted him.

### 3 CONJUNCTIONS

Connectives join or link words, phrase and sentences. Not all connectives are however conjunctions. Conjunctions join together words, phrases or sentences of equal strength and similar values. Those in this category are divided into four group namely

**3.1** The *And* group. This shows inclusiveness and addition. Where many items are involved, the use of commas is made to avoid monotonous use of *and*

Only the last item will have *and* before it eg

- (i) The rich *and* poor are equal before God,
- (ii) Leading strikers in the soccer are Olu, Benson, John *and* Kachie

- (iii) Parents wish their daughters to be out *and* their sons to marry early.

*And* should attract before it as naturally expected addition eg

- (iv) The weather was bright *and* sunny rather than

\* The weather was dull *and* happy

The addition happy is not natural to dull.

Other connectives, that do the same function are *as well as, moreover, also besides, furthermore, both.*

**3.2** The *but* group. *But* introduces an alternative and suggests contrast.

By its introduction, the addition introduced usually brings into the sentence something unexpected eg

- (i) Henry loves Ada *but* he would not marry her (one would have expected Henry to marry Ada since there is love between them)

- (ii) The sick boy was hungry *but* he refused to eat.

Other connectives that can do the same function include: *yet, however, in spite of, nevertheless, despite.*

**3.3** The *OR* group: The use of *or* provides a choice or an alternative from existing offers e.g.

(i) I will present a flask *or* a dish to the couple at their marriage.

(one of the two will be given to them)

(ii) The new baby will be given the name Nelly *or* Sonto.

*Or* is used to show approximation

(iii) The doctor will be here again on Tuesday *or* Friday next week.

Other connectives that belong to this group are: *either or, neither nor, not only but also*

(iv) Either Nigeria *or* Algeria will win the match

(v) Neither Tunisia *or* Mali produces oil for export.

(vi) He *not only* robbed the Chief *but also* maimed him.

It is important to note that the use of the correlative conjunction must obey the concord rules

(vii) Neither you nor he *is* to attend the conference

(viii) Either Mary is guilty or I *am*

**3.4** The 'So' group

So is used to connect two related sentences, the first part giving rise to the second part

- (i) My visitor was late to the airport *so*, she missed her flight.
- (ii) Dad is strict on me *so* I rely on my peers for certain information

Other conjunctions in this group include *therefore, accordingly, hence, consequently.*

*So--- that*, is a phrase denoting purpose eg

- (iii) The little boy was punished *so that* he will desist from that habit.

Other adverbs that serve as conjunction are: *then, only, again*

- (iv) Jimmy rested for a while; *then* we continued our walk
- (v) Anita is pretty; *only* she is very flippant
- (vi) My fiancé is humorous; *again* he can be horrid

**3.5** There are conjunctions that introduce certain clauses and are called subordinating conjunctions. Mainly such clauses introduced are noun clauses and adverbial clauses. They may not always appear at the middle of such sentences joined. In other words, they can be found at the beginning of the sentence e.g.

- (i) *If* you fail this examination, you'll be sent away from school.
- (ii) He came to me *because* he has no other place to go to.
- (iv) The applicant came to borrow money from me *when* my finances were in a bad shape.

Some other sub-ordinating conjunctions are: *that, where, while, after, since, unless* e.t.c

### ACIVITY

Complete the following sentences with suitable conjunction from the list supplied below

- 1 Gin -----lime is always drunk at parties.
- 2 The teacher was irritated --- the students displayed a recalcitrant behaviour.
- 3 Both boys -----, passed the examination -----were given scholarship abroad.
- 4 The police gave him three days ultimatum ----- he refused to comply.

- 5 ----- the robbers were in serious operation the inmates of the neighbouring house were trying to get across to the police.
- 6 ---- he decided to terminate my job, I will take a civil action against him.
- 7 It is ----- you marry her ---- you pay her compensation for damages.
- 8 Try to put off the light ---- you carry out any repairs on the metre.
- 9 The students were sur-charged ---- they would not engage in wanton destruction of school property again.
- 10 ----- you submit yourself to God, you will not have a better tomorrow.

(yet, unless, while, so that, either or, because, before, since, and, not only— but also)

#### **4 DETERMINERS**

A determiner according to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, is a word that limits the meaning of a noun and comes before adjectives that describe the same noun. Determiners can occur in the form of the article.

They are *a* or *an* which are also called the indefinite articles; *the* which is called the definite article

**4.1** *A* is used before a countable noun that begins with a consonant sound eg *a table, a fowl, a dog, a house* etc

*An* is also used before a countable noun beginning with a vowel sound. The emphasis on sound is important because some words begin with consonant but are pronounced like vowels eg *an orange, an apple, an hour, an honourable minister, an heir*

**4.1.1** Indefinite articles, are used before singular nouns denoting profession, trade religion, class eg.

- i. My daughter is *an* engineer
- ii. She married *a* Christian, not *a* Moslem.
- iii. George is *an* officer in the army.

**4.1.2** Indefinite articles are not used before a noun denoting a title or office that can only be held by one person at a time eg.

- i. They appointed him chancellor for the university (not *a* chancellor)
- ii. I am applying for the post of clerk in your office (not *a* clerk)



- iii. Mr. Okolo is professor of English at Leeds University.
- iv. My nephew rose to the rank of colonel in the British Army

**4.1.3** A (n) can be used to refer to a person known only as a name eg.

- (i) *A* Mr. Taju called on the phone this afternoon.

(The *a* means the reporter has no idea who Mr. Taju is, but the caller said his name was Mr. Taju.)

**4.1.4** Other use of the indefinite article. This is not used with uncountable nouns but there are exception like: it's *a* pity; try to be in *a* hurry; to take *an* interest in; to have *a* headache /*a* cold/ *a* cough (but to have tooth ache); to have *an* opportunity to. There are other construction like: *many a*, *quite a(n)*, *rather a* eg

- i. *Many a man* has asked her hand in marriage
- ii. There were *quite a* lot of passes in the course
- iii. He was *rather a* disgrace to his family
- iv. Our economy is in *a* bad shape

## 4.2 The Definite Article: THE

*The* can be used both before a countable and uncountable noun, and before a singular or plural noun.

4.2.1 *The* is used to show a noun that has become a common knowledge between the speakers e.g.

i     *The* photographer has brought *the* pictures.

(where the two discussants had known that a particular photographer took some shots)

4.2.2 *The* is used before a noun that is one of its kind – *the* world, *the* moon, *the* University of Nigeria.

4.2.3 *The* is used before a noun that is to be particularized by a defining relative clause e.g.

i     This is *the* boy who won the prize

4.2.4 *The* is used before the name of a country that is a union of smaller entities eg *the* United States, *the* United kingdom, *the* Netherlands

**4.2.5** *The* is used before groups of Islands, range of hills or chains of mountains and names of rivers and oceans eg *the* West Indies, *the* Bahamas (for Islands)

*the* Himalayan mts, *the* Udi Hills for mts and hills, *the* Niger, *the* Thames

**4.2.6** *The* is used before adjectives used as nouns denoting class: *the* rich = (rich people) *the* blind (blind people), *the* aged (old people)

**4.3** Other determiners are grouped according to their co-occurrence with singular count, plural count and non-count nouns

**4.3.1** Possessives eg *My*, *our*, *his*, *her*, *their* etc

- i. *My* children have all come home
- ii. *Their* dresses are being mended
- iii. *Our* holiday begins tomorrow

**4.3.2** *Whose*, *which(ever)*, *some* (stressed) *any* (stressed), *no*

- i. *Whose* child are you?
- ii. *Which* school do you attend?
- iii. Did you bring *any* food?
- iv. *No* teacher was posted to the rural school.

These determiners can also be used with plurals and count nouns. The determiner *some* can be used with singular count nouns when it is stressed

- v. There was *some* film launched by a famous star last year (stressed *some* means extraordinary) *Some* is used before a plural noun but unstressed eg
- vi. *Some* mangoes are overripe (unstressed).  
*Any* is used with plural noun eg
- vii. *Any* students caught cheating will be dealt with.
- viii. *Enough* money will be needed by the students for the trip.

*Zero* article is used where determiners are not used especially for non-count nouns

- ix. The boys need furniture for their apartment.  
*This* is used for singular count noun within reach.
- x. *This* pen is flowing.  
*That* is used for singular count noun farther from the speaker eg
- xi. *That* house belongs to the Minister of Works.

*These:* *These* is the plural of *this*. It is used with plural nouns close to the speaker eg

- xii. *These* girls are my colleagues.

*Those:* *Those* is the plural of *that*. It is used with plural nouns farther away from the speaker eg

- xiii. *Those* cars are for sale

**4.3.3** Indefinite determiners eg *each, every, either, neither* (used before singular count nouns)

- i. *every* politician is a potential liar
- ii. *each* member should pay fifty naira
- iii. *either* book is interesting
- iv. *neither* of the girls will go for national service.

Determiners with of-constructions

*All* eg

- i. *All* of your mates have graduated
- ii. *All* your mates have left school.

*Both eg*

- iii. *Both* lecturers have been promoted.
- iv. *Both* of his brothers have gone overseas.

*One eg*

- v. *One* of the men was selected.

*A few of eg*

- vi. *A few of* my friends were at the party (A few is used with countable nouns as well as *few*. A few has positive implications)

*Half of eg*

- vii. *Half of* the bread was eaten by rats

*Little and a little:* These are used with uncountable nouns but while *a little* has positive implication, *little* means not much just as *few* means not many

- viii. Do you drink at all? Yes *a little*
- ix. The *little* money he hopes to survive with has been stolen.
- x. *Many:* many years have passed since I saw him last.
- xi. *Plenty:* plenty of drinks were consumed at the party.

4.3.5 Cardinal numerals (apart from *one* which co-occurs with singular noun) co-occur only with plural count nouns

- i He has *one* shirt and *four* trousers
- ii Share the *four* oranges between Tina and Joe

4.3.6 Ordinal numerals and other ordinals. Ordinals have one-for-one relation with the cardinals e.g. *sixth* –six; *tenth* – ten; *seventeenth* –seventeen.

- i Her name was *fourth* in the list.
- ii Christ rose from the dead on the *third* day.

4.3.7 The other ordinals include *next*, *last*, *(an)other*, *additional*. All ordinals co-occur only with count nouns and usually precede the cardinal numbers.

- i The criminal's *last* five days in the prison were horrible.
- ii Give her *additional* three hours to make up her mind.

## ACTIVITY

Insert indefinite or definite articles where necessary.

- 1 The lecturer was unable to come to work because she has cold
- 2 My application for the post of clerk was received
- 3 Buy one pen for writing the minutes
- 4 He is manager of the company
- 5 There is solid mineral hidden in Cameroon mountains .
- 6 He was made professor of English last December.
- 7 Fabian rose to the rank of Brigadier in his promotion.
- 8 Pope is the supreme head of the Catholic Church.
- 9 The woman gave birth to bouncing baby by.
- 10 He is Moslem and not Christian.

## 5.0. INTERJECTIONS

5.1. **Interjection** is a word or sound which is used to express emotions of excitement, sorrow, disappointment, anger, humour,



surprise etc. The oldest forms are *Oh!* expressing pain, or surprise. *Aha!* (as reminder) *Hey!* (to call or attract attention, etc. One exclaims as the emotion pushes him eg *Terrific! Wonderful! Good! Perfect !* Some are attributed to feminine characteristics eg *Dear Lord, Goodness me! Oh! Dear.* Some harsh ones include: *damn it ! bull shit; blast! e.t.c.*

**5.2. Exclamatory** sentences can begin with

- (i) *What* a shame that he can't speak out
  - (ii) *How* old she is looking!
- For kind honoured expressions there is
- (iii) Here comes my mentor!
  - (iv) Off the newly married drove!
  - (v) There you are!

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