

Leszek Berezowski

The Myth of the Zero Article



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To my wife Beata.

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Introduction

The zero article is the oddball of the English article system. For one thing, it is a newcomer. Articles were first recognized as a separate part of speech more than two millennia ago by Greek stoic thinkers (Krámský 1972: 13) and their use in English has been commented on at least since the publication of William Bullokar's *Bref Grammar for English* in 1586, but the existence of the zero article had not been posited until mid-twentieth century. Secondly and even more curiously, it is hardly ever inquired into.

The literature on the English articles is vast enough to fill a library, but the books, papers and squibs published every year deal almost exclusively with the definite and indefinite article given an overt phonological form, while the zero article inspires hardly any published research at all. The overt articles are hotly debated in a variety of theoretical frameworks that range from pragmatics, e.g. Hawkins (1978), to formal semantics, e.g. Heim (1982), cognitive studies, e.g. Epstein (2002) and to computer linguistics, e.g. Poesio and Vieira (1998), to name only a few, while the zero article is merely taken for granted. It is invoked by the students of the English bare plural, e.g. the numerous papers inspired by Carlson (1977), and relied on by descriptive grammarians to explain away all the cases where the overt articles are not used in English, e.g. Quirk et al. (1985), Downing and Locke (1994) or Biber et al. (1999), but its meaning is hardly ever inquired into. The only works that consistently try to do so are Hewson (1972) and Chesterman (1991).

This book will then explore the origin of this unusual condition of the zero article in English, expose its roots and offer

an alternative account of usages where the overt articles are dispensed with. Specifically, it is shown that the zero article inspires little scholarly interest because it is presumed to be both definite and indefinite at the same time, which makes it an internally contradictory entity that can be hardly theorized about with any success rate or put to any other viable uses. The book argues that the zero article is an artifact of the structural paradigm of language research that has outlived the heyday of the theory that spawned it and remains in use merely as a fig leaf concealing the fact that a number of grammatical issues have failed so far to attract the interest of scholars working in later and more adequate frameworks.

The source of the problem that is glossed over by invoking the zero article is shown to reside in the grammaticalization of the definite and indefinite articles. Since in both cases the process is incomplete in English as argued in Heine (1997) and Hawkins (2004), it is only reasonable to assume that their rise has not yet reached a number of grammatical environments where nominals continue to be used without them. The pockets of English usage where it is the case are largely unrelated, which makes positing a single covert article in all such environments futile and illogical, but the contexts where the overt articles are inadmissible can be shown to fail independently motivated conditions on article use. In other words, it is possible to account for English usage in a much more consistent, reasonable and straightforward manner by drawing on the well-known and researched properties of the overt articles and discard the zero article into the limbo of oblivion.

The explanatory power of this account, referred to in the book as the incomplete grammaticalization model, is illustrated by exploring in depth the article patterns with predicate nominals designating roles and offices held by single individuals. Drawing on standard accounts of the English articles, e.g. Hawkins (1991), and data retrieved from the British National Corpus, it is shown that the use of bare predicate nominals correlates with construals that violate a numerical constraint on

the use of the indefinite article originally identified in Hawkins (1978), which yields a simple and convincing explanation of a well-known but poorly understood irregularity in English grammar. Since the solution is based on what is already known about English articles, it is well integrated with extant theories of their use and the fact that the explanation is sensitive to a single cognitive factor makes it easily available for classroom applications.

Chapter 1

The origin of the concept

The origin of the zero article is unclear enough to warrant a serious investigation. The first significant work where it is used to describe English usage is volume seven of Jespersen's monumental *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles*, where the section on articles opens with the following programmatic statement:

We are here in the first line concerned with the articles, the definite (or better defining) article, and the indefinite article, as well as with the use of words without either of them (zero or the zero article) . . . I treat the three articles together. (Jespersen 1949: 403–404)

However, Jespersen never wrote these words and certainly would not have endorsed the view of the English articles they express. As has been duly noted by Niels Haislund, who completed that volume after Jespersen's death, the term *the zero article* was actually used against the late author's will:

Otto Jespersen did not intend to use the term *zero*, but would have spoken about 'the bare word'. But in accordance with the usage and theory set forth in many modern linguistic works I prefer to retain the zero – term. (Jespersen 1949: 403)

In other words Jespersen is said to have intended to follow the long line of eminent grammarians who believed that truly no article is used wherever *the* or *a / an* are inadmissible. For

example, Sweet discussed the absence and omission of the articles in a number of contexts (Sweet 1898: 63–65), Poutsma described numerous cases where the articles are dropped (Poutsma 1914: 564–587) and Bloomfield identified noun classes which are commonly used without a determiner or do not require its presence (Bloomfield 1933: 205). However, Jespersen's younger associate who set out to complete the unfinished work of his late mentor did not show much respect for that long-standing tradition of descriptive research and preferred to follow a different paradigm of linguistic thinking.

Explaining the reasons for departing from Jespersen's intentions Haislund cites a paper by Jakobson, where it is claimed that in contexts showing a systematic opposition between an overtly expressed element of grammar and its absence, the latter should be recognized as a real member of the contrasting pair and called the zero element due to its failure to be given any outward expression (Jakobson 1940). In fact Jakobson had already broached this idea in an earlier paper (Jakobson 1939) but the examples illustrating his claim were then mostly drawn from Russian declensions and conjugations, while the further going 1940 paper actually shows that the zero grammatical element may also be an article. Specifically, Jakobson claims that the absence of the German indefinite article in the plural, contrasting with its presence in the singular and the use of the definite article in both numbers, is a paradigm case of a zero element he called *der Nullartikel* (Jakobson 1940).

The claim coldly draws on the internal logic of the structural view of language and, within that framework, is virtually irrefutable as there are no theory internal reasons that could bar positing such invisible grammatical entities. If language is taken to be constituted by a system of oppositions between linguistic signs, as structuralists have always done, then there is nothing intrinsically important that hinges on how these oppositions are actually expressed as long as the contrast is explicit enough. It is only natural to expect that both members of a binary pair of signs participating in constituting the system are given some

overt expression as speech is the primary medium of language, but the contrast between two signs is at least equally (if not more) explicit when one of them is equipped with a distinct phonological form and the other one is not. Whenever this is the case, the system contains then a covert element whose existence is undetectable to the naked eye and can be revealed only by a structural analysis of language data.

Analyzing English articles Haislund must have realized that they offer prime examples of the structural opposition Jakobson wrote about (cf. the contrasts in indefinite article use between singular countable and uncountable nominals and between singular and plural countables) and decided to follow the latest theoretical trend of his time in describing that system. Haislund's acceptance of the novel analysis could have also been influenced by a more direct contact with Jakobson, who actually taught at Copenhagen University, i.e. at the school where both Jespersen and Haislund pursued their academic careers, at the time when the seminal paper was read at a meeting of Copenhagen Linguistic Circle in June 1939 and then published in its bulletin as Jakobson (1940).

Another source that Haislund credits with providing the model for analyzing the English articles in the posthumous sections of Jespersen's grammar is the work of Paul Christophersen (Jespersen 1949: 404), a Danish linguist who defended his doctoral dissertation on English articles at Copenhagen University on the eve of World War II (January 23, 1939), i.e. around the time the concept of the zero article was taking shape. The dissertation, dedicated to 'Otto Jespersen in admiration and gratitude' (Christophersen 1939), is quite conservative in design in that it traces the history and development of the articles along with an insightful discussion of their usage in contemporary English, but in describing any contexts where neither the definite and the indefinite article are available Christophersen is consistent in using the term the zero form.

For Christophersen, though, the zero form is not an article yet. He recognizes the existence of only two articles, which is

enshrined in his famous description of the English usage based on the contrast between familiarity denoted by the definite article and its lack denoted by the indefinite article. The zero form is merely the form assumed by the substantive (i.e. a nominal) when neither of the articles is admissible (Christophersen 1939: 23–24). Consequently, throughout his book the zero form is only a label denoting the absence of any article in line with the usage of earlier grammarians (cf. the descriptions in Sweet (1898), Poutsma (1914) or Bloomfield (1933) quoted above) and is virtually synonymous with the bare noun, i.e. the term Jespersen originally intended to use in his grammar (Jespersen 1949: 403). However, the zero form is so similar to the zero article in sound and range of use in Haislund's sections of Jespersen's grammar, and so close in time of its coinage to the turbulent years when the concept of the zero article was in its nascent state, to have at least provided the model for translating Jakobson's Nullartikel into English.

The concept of the zero article seems then to have sprung from the consistent application of structural linguistic methodology to well-known data previously described in terms of the omission of the articles. However, the realization that consistent absence of an article may be conceptualized in the structural paradigm as the use of a silent and invisible zero article took quite a long time to develop. Even Bloomfield (1933), an all time classic of rigid structural thinking, still talks of noun classes that do not require the presence of determiners, i.e. uses vintage structuralist terminology to frame statements typical of traditional prestructural historical linguists he otherwise opposed.

The quantum leap in structural thinking that gave birth to the concept of the zero article did not come until quite late in the classic era of structural linguistics, and seems to have been sparked by the fact that for a brief period of time Copenhagen University served as a meeting ground of two fruitful paradigms of linguistic research. Traditional philology still nurtured in this corner of Europe under the guidance of Otto Jespersen, one

of the longest surviving and most towering figures in this line of research, came into contact with the latest theoretical developments in linguistics brought there by Roman Jakobson, an equally towering figure in the structural paradigm of research, who sowed the seeds of novel ideas at a number of European universities as he fled the political upheavals in his native Russia and the rest of the continent by hopping from country to country. His brief visiting professorship at Copenhagen University on his way to Sweden and, ultimately, the USA came, though, precisely at a time when enough traditional research on the English articles had been done by Danish scholars to inspire one of them to feed the mountains of data amassed by his more conservative-minded colleagues into the latest theoretical apparatus of structural linguistics developed by Jakobson and implement the theoretical concept of the zero article to describing English language data.

As shown above, the step was taken by Niels Haislund some time between 1943, when Otto Jespersen died aged 83, and the end of World War II, when the manuscript of the final volume of his fundamentally philological grammar of English was completed in a structural vein by his personal secretary, as noted in the preface (Jespersen 1949: vii). The fusion of these two paradigms of linguistic research is, though, highly symptomatic of the nature of the zero article. On the one hand the concept is radically structural in positing the existence of a grammatical element which, by definition, is never given any overt phonological representation, but, on the other one, it appears to have a vital historical linguistics substratum. In order to appreciate the philological contribution to the origin and application of the concept of the zero article, it is, however, necessary to briefly step into the shoes of the grammarians active in the time frame and circumstances reconstructed above.

A vital part of their education and teaching was grounded in traditional philology, whose cornerstone was meticulous study of the historical development of a language or languages. And one of the basic findings of historical research was the

observation that articles did not exist in the earliest forms of Indo-European languages, but gradually developed over time (Heine and Kuteva 2006: 99). The definite article was found to have emerged from demonstrative pronouns and the indefinite article to have evolved from the numeral one, which was confirmed by many later inquiries into that question (cf. the classic evolutionary scenarios argued for in Greenberg (1978) for the definite article and in Givón (1981) for the indefinite article). A key ingredient of that process was then believed to be a gradual increase in the frequency of use of the evolving grammatical forms until they became obligatory constituents of all nominals. That view was succinctly summarized in Christophersen (1939), who thoroughly reviewed virtually all previous scholarship on article development in English:

In those Indo-European languages that possess a definite article it originated in a demonstrative pronoun. Like other innovations in language, the article started in a few isolated instances and gradually spread to all the cases where a common name is used in proper name capacity [i.e. wherever a nominal is as definite as a proper name, L.B.]. It is clear, however, that in point of principle we cannot recognize it as an article until the development is completed and the word has become obligatory in all such cases. Till then, we have only an extended use of a demonstrative pronoun. (Christophersen 1939: 83)

The insistence on the obligatory nature of article use was the result of the search for a criterion that would help in pinpointing the time when the definite article separated off from the demonstratives and became a distinct grammatical category. It is a well-known fact that in early forms of English demonstrative pronouns could be used in a large number of non-deictic functions akin to the articles, but they did not form a regular and predictable pattern (for a recent survey of Old English usage cf. Traugott 1992: 171–176), which made dating the origin of the

definite article quite difficult and contentious (for an authoritative critical review of the debate cf. Mitchell 1985: 95–101). It was then only logical to assume that the two categories finally diverged at a time when the non-deictic usage grew to be regular and obligatory.

The same solution was obviously applied to the evolution of the indefinite article, even though in this case the parent category from which the article eventually spun off was the numeral:

So let us here take the consistent view of not talking of an ‘article’ *a* till the word has become the necessary satellite of all unit-words [i.e. countable nominals, L.B.] not otherwise modified. (Christophersen 1939: 98)

Historical linguists were obviously aware of the fact that steady expansion into clearly non-deictic and non-numeral contexts must have engendered substantial changes in the meanings of the evolving grammatical forms, but they viewed that merely as a byproduct of the rise in the frequency and regularity of usage. Consequently, the contention that the use of articles is obligatory came to be recognized as one of their fundamental properties and the hallmark distinguishing the grammatical category of the article from demonstratives and numerals.

From the standpoint of cognitive studies developed decades later this view of the evolution of the articles might now look quite mechanical and the belief in their obligatory use substantially overstated (cf. recent accounts of the development in Himmelmann (1998) or Hawkins (2004)). However, at the time when the concept of the zero article was taking shape, the view that articles are former demonstratives or numerals whose use grew to be compulsory formed part and parcel of the frame of mind of every linguist. No wonder then that once the concept of the zero article materialized and was implemented to describing English usage, it was quickly applied to any context where no overt article could be found, whether that context

matched the original specifications laid down in Jakobson (1940) or not.

The novel idea offered an instant and elegant explanation of the puzzling fact why articles are sometimes left out even though the generally accepted definition of that grammatical category required that they should always be used. With the concept of the zero article in hand any structural linguist could now claim with relief that occasional disuse of the articles is only a illusion caused by the fact that one of them is never given any overt phonological representation, while in reality the pattern is completely uniform and an article truly forms a part of each and every nominal.

The tacit but lingering conviction that the use of the articles is mandatory easily outweighed strictly structural considerations because it provided linguists with a tool that ironed out all irregularities and made the philological definition of the category of the article finally match the data. Linguistic theory and facts could now be easily brought into perfect harmony, which is the ultimate goal of all scholars, and few grammarians could resist the temptation to use the zero article and make that dream come true. Virtually the only major publications whose authors have not succumbed to the seductive power of that solution are Berry (1993) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002), where the terms *no article* and *bare NP* are consistently used in all contexts where overt articles are inadmissible.

Perhaps the most compelling testimony to the allure and persistence of the belief in the omnipresence of the articles is the fact that the concept of the zero article is used in mainstream cognitive linguistics (e.g. Langacker 1991b: 103), i.e. in a paradigm of research that openly questions the viability of structural dogmas that spawned the zero article and avoids positing grammatical entities whose existence is not warranted by human cognition.

Chapter 2

The application of the zero article

As has already been noted above, the concept of the zero article has been applied in practice to a number of quite different contexts. They will now be surveyed and commented on below beginning with those that come the closest to the structural ideal laid down in Jakobson (1940). Throughout the discussion the use of the zero article will be indicated by the slashed o (\emptyset) sign traditionally used in structural linguistics and writings on (in)definiteness.

2.1 Indefinite countable singulars and plurals

The two most prototypical structures where the zero article has been claimed to be used in English are indefinite uncountable nominals (1) and indefinite plurals (3) tied up in a mutually exclusive contrast with singular countable nominals (2):

- (1) Astronomers looked for signs of \emptyset primitive life on Mars.
- (2) Roman Jakobson certainly lived a long and eventful life.
- (3) Seven secret agents risked their \emptyset lives to rescue Bond.

Both oppositions play key roles in defining fundamental paradigmatic classes of English nominals any theoretical framework has to account for and, consequently, they certainly live up to the criteria originally set out by Jakobson for postulating the zero article (cf. his own example discussed in the previous chapter). The only structural objection that could possibly be

raised against that supposition is the observation that not all English nouns are as easily used in all three contrasting forms as has been shown in the examples above, which would weaken the regularity and incidence of the opposition they illustrate. However, students of countability have repeatedly claimed that given an appropriate context any English noun can be put to countable and uncountable uses, e.g. Gleason (1969), (Allan 1980), which puts aside at least a part of any such reservations.

2.2 Proper names

The second most numerous group of nominals traditionally said to invite the use of the zero article are singular proper names:

(4) \emptyset John Paul the Second was born in \emptyset Poland.

Here, though, the grounds for positing the zero article in keeping with its original specifications are much more tenuous. To start with, the usage is not uniform and a large number of English proper names take the overt definite article:

(5) The Thames empties into the North Sea.

Instead of helping to define a major class of English nominals, positing the zero article in cases like (4) would then split it into two subgroups with no independent evidence to justify the division into those proper names that take the definite article and those that do not. It is thus impossible to argue on the assumption that an entire grammatical category or its clearly delineated part enters into a contrast that ultimately provides the rationale for postulating the zero article.

Secondly, it is not at all clear what sort of paradigmatic contrast could possibly be involved. Structurally, English proper names are quite inflexible and only rarely enter into any grammatical oppositions at all. In fact students of English article usage

identified only one environment where it happens with a significant regularity. Yotsokura (1964) and her followers noted that proper names differ from common nominals in their reaction to restrictive modification. In proper names it triggers obligatory use of the definite article, cf. the contrast between (6) and (7), while in common nominals the use of the definite article is only one of the options available to the interlocutors depending on the context. For example, where one unidentified referent is picked from a larger set known to be involved, the indefinite article is used (9), if the referent is presumed to be uniquely identifiable, the use of the definite article is in order (10), etc.

- (6) \emptyset London is the capital of the UK.
- (7) The London I remember from my 1992 visit was much more peaceful.
- (8) I'm looking for a book.
- (9) I'm looking for a book I borrowed from London University library.
- (10) I'm looking for the book I started reading yesterday afternoon.

However, the observation first formulated in Yotsokura (1964) ignores the fact that a large number of English singular proper names always take the definite article and modifying them with a restrictive relative cannot reveal any contrast in their grammatical behavior:

- (11) The Baltic Sea is usually quite cold even in summer.
- (12) The Baltic Sea I remember from my 2002 visit was frigid.

Unless the data represented by (5) and (11)–(12) are disregarded (cf. Sloat (1969) and Chesterman (1991) for accounts that seem to do so), the use of relative clauses offers thus no help in providing a firm foundation for positing the zero article and the structural contrast that could do so remains as elusive as ever.

An even more formidable obstacle to positing the use of the zero article with proper names is, though, the fact that they are inherently definite (Bloomfield 1933: 205). If the zero article is postulated to be used with indefinite plurals and indefinite uncountable nominals, as has been shown to be the case in the preceding section, and with singular proper names, it is then tantamount to claiming that the zero article is both definite and indefinite at the same time, which would make it a most unusual grammatical entity, more akin to fabulous mythological creatures said to be part human and part animal than to the products of cold-blooded structural analyses of language data (cf. though Chesterman (1991) reviewed in Section 3.3 below for an attempt to avoid that conundrum).

2.3 Predicate nominals

Another frequently cited application of the zero article is its use with predicate nominals denoting offices held by single individuals:

- (13) F. D. Roosevelt was \emptyset president of the US for 15 years.
- (14) Americans elected Roosevelt \emptyset president four times.

The argument for positing the zero article in such cases is, however, built on thin ice again. At first blush it may appear to be based on a genuine structural contrast between two classes of English predicate nominals: a small one, comprising nouns that denote functions performed by single individuals (15), and a far more numerous one, subsuming all other nouns, e.g. (16), whose denotations are not that restricted:

- (15) Ronald Reagan was US president for 8 years.
- (16) Ronald Reagan was a little known actor before.

On closer inspection the evidence turns out, though, not to be so crystal clear. For one thing, the contrast illustrated above is

not in fact as simple and objectively given as structural linguists would like to have it based on pairs like (15)–(16). It actually depends much more on the intention of the speaker and the context than on a difference in the denotations of the predicate nominals involved.

Hewson (1972), otherwise a staunch supporter of the zero article (cf. Section 3.2 below), duly notes, for example, that both (17) and (18) are grammatical:

(17) Dr Arnold was \emptyset headmaster of Rugby.

(18) Dr Arnold was a headmaster of Rugby.

but they differ in the perspective they encode. In (17) the view taken by the speaker is purely synchronic in that it zooms on the life of a single individual and asserts that his career included a stint as principal of the famous English public school, while (18) takes a wider diachronic view in that it places Dr Arnold in a long succession of individuals who have held this office in the past. The function is clearly performed by only one person at a time, which explains why an overt article may be dispensed with in (17), but, in the historical perspective presumed in (18), it has obviously been held by a number of individuals, which precludes leaving out the overt article (Hewson 1972: 95).

The contrast invoked in order to justify positing the zero article in predicate nominals is then essentially much more pragmatic than structural, and, consequently, due to its context dependence, may not live up to the standards of constancy and transparency offered by prototypical paradigmatic oppositions relied on by structural linguists. However, this deficiency pales into complete insignificance in comparison with the fact that the argument resting on this contrast is helplessly circular.

The observation that no overt article is used with some predicate nominals is first used as evidence for the claim that nouns denoting functions, ranks and offices held by single individuals

form a distinct subclass in English and then the existence of such a subclass is invoked to justify positing the use of the zero article with its members. In other words the fact that some English predicate nominals do not take any overt article first leads to the inference that this property singles them out as a separate subcategory of nouns and then it is claimed that all nouns forming that subcategory do not take any overt article because they trigger the use of the zero article. The first inference, establishing a subclass of predicate nominals based on the absence of surface articles, is fully legitimate and typical of the structural mode of thinking. The other one, claiming that membership in that subclass explains why no surface articles are used, is, though, merely the reversal of the first one, which is neither good logic nor linguistics, and fails to explain anything.

The vicious circle could be easily broken by providing some independent evidence for the existence of the subclass of English nouns denoting offices held by single individuals, but no attempt at doing so has ever been made. The contrast with the treatment afforded in that respect to proper names could not then have been greater. In the latter case most linguists postulating the use of the zero article took much care to prove first that proper names are structurally different from other nominals (cf. the discussion of restrictive modification in the previous section) and only then proceeded to posit the covert article. As has been shown above, the attempts have been mostly futile, but they were made to provide an independent basis for positing the zero article and avoid charges of circularity.

Since the same linguists have never taken any such steps in postulating the use of the zero article with predicate nominals denoting offices held by single individuals, it is hard to escape the conclusion that independent evidence substantiating that claim simply does not exist. And that means that the zero article had been posited in such cases merely by analogy with other contexts where no surface articles are used in English.

2.4 Vocatives

The zero article is also claimed to precede singular (19) and plural (20) nominals whenever they are used in vocative contexts:

(19) \emptyset Coach, how can we win this game?

(20) \emptyset Boys, we need more long passes.

The ground for positing the zero article in such cases is much more firm than in the structures discussed in the two preceding sections as the use of the vocative is typically accompanied by a number of other direct discourse features (cf. the use of tenses and pronouns for the two most conspicuous examples). The absence of surface articles is thus not the only piece of evidence supporting the recognition of the vocative as a distinct grammatical category in English and the claim that it requires the use of the zero article is certainly free of the charge of circularity. What is more, the contrast in article use with indirect discourse is clear and consistent:

(19') They asked the coach how they could win that game.

(20') The coach told the boys that they needed more long passes.

English vocatives parallel then indefinite plurals and uncountables in offering an ideal structural environment for positing the zero article. In the latter case it is, though, a context calling for the use of an indefinite article, while in the former it is not. The fact that vocative nominals are prototypically used in direct discourse to address hearers or readers, i.e. participants of the same act of speech, makes them inherently definite as identification of the referents of any such nominals is guaranteed by their direct presence (in the case of hearers) or the easy availability of the assumption that texts have readers. Students of English articles have classified these two cases as separate sources of information on the identity of referents, but both of them are unquestionably sufficient to make a nominal definite (Hawkins 1978).

Positing the zero article with English vocatives runs thus into the problems already noted in discussing proper names above (cf. 2.2). The zero article would have to be both definite and indefinite at the same time to accommodate vocatives as well as indefinite plurals and uncountables, which, in turn, would make it a most unlikely grammatical entity (cf. though Chesterman (1991) reviewed in Section 3.3 below for an attempt to solve that paradox).

2.5 Nominals modified by numerals

A similar structure claimed to invite the use of the zero article is a combination of a nominal with a cardinal numeral:

(21) Passengers flying to Honolulu, please proceed to \emptyset gate 4.

The information supplied by the numeral guarantees fool-proof identification of the referent, which makes the nominal unquestionably definite. In contrast to vocatives, independent evidence for the distinct status of such structures and positing the zero article is, however, unavailable. And that means that in cases like (21) the zero article has been posited merely by analogy with other contexts where no surface articles are used in English (cf. the discussion in 2.3 above).

2.6 Prepositional phrases

A still one more type of structure claimed to trigger the use of the zero article is an assortment of English nominals governed by prepositions. The rationale for giving these usages a separate treatment rather than discussing them along with uncountables, whose prepositional uses look exactly the same in taking no overt articles, is the assumption that the nominals in question remain countable even when it is not explicitly marked in any way (Quirk et al. 1985).

For expository purposes they are usually subdivided into a number of smaller groupings based on typical meanings carried by particular combinations and enshrined in traditional labels used also below. Descriptive grammars typically present each subgroup against the backdrop of contrasts in article use that arise when the same nominal is combined with a different preposition, which is also followed below. The most frequently cited instances are subsumed under the three following headings:

(i) 'institutions', e.g.:

(22) Sean went to \emptyset school when he was five.

(23) Seamus drove past a / the school.

(ii) 'means of transportation', e.g.:

(24) Huck traveled much by \emptyset boat.

(25) He slept and cooked in a / the boat.

(iii) 'time of the day and night', e.g.:

(26) The gunmen met at \emptyset high noon.

(27) The gunmen met during the day.

The evidence furnished by any such examples is, however, spurious. To start with, the traditional classification is obviously incomplete as there are many more cases of potentially countable bare nominals following prepositions in English than the descriptive categories quoted above can handle. For example, in the following sentence

(28) In point of \emptyset fact \emptyset World War II ended in 1945 but technically \emptyset Poland remained at \emptyset war with \emptyset Germany until 1991, when a peace treaty was signed after \emptyset communists were finally removed from \emptyset office.

three more cases of the zero article before nominals governed by prepositions could be postulated along the same lines as above, none of them naturally fitting into the rubrics set up by

descriptive linguists (cf. though Stvan (1998) for a fuller listing and an alternative classification scheme).

What is far more important, though, is the fact that the only evidence offered in support of positing the zero article in any such cases is the absence of overt articles. The usages illustrated above do help to explicate the meaning that arises when no surface article is used, e.g. (22)–(23) and (24)–(25) or underscore the difference in the article pattern, e.g. (26)–(27), but they do not testify to the existence of a distinct class of nominals, prepositions or their combinations that could enter into a consistent paradigmatic opposition with other classes of nouns and / or prepositions to provide an independent structural basis for postulating the zero article.

Likewise, there is no independent evidence for presuming that the nominals involved remain countable when governed by prepositions. They might as well be analyzed as uncountables, especially in the light of studies claiming that all English nominals are capable of developing both countable and uncountable senses, e.g. Gleason (1965) or Allan (1980).

The lack of sufficient grounds to postulate the use of the zero article in the structures illustrated above is indirectly admitted even by those descriptive grammarians who always rely on that concept to account for any cases where no surface articles are available. For example, before invoking the zero article to explain the pattern illustrated above, Quirk et al. (1985) note first that it is restricted only to some highly specialized senses of a handful of nouns that form idiomatic expressions with a number of prepositions (Quirk et al. 1985: 156), which basically means that the authors present their explanation with a heavy heart and know full well that the data are irregular enough to defy any structural account, including the one they choose to follow.

The claim that the usage exemplified in (21)–(27) can be accounted for by positing the zero article is then merely based on analogy with other structures where no surface articles are admissible in English and principally motivated by the temptation to offer any explanation at all where there is none at

hand otherwise (cf. though Stvan (1993) and Stvan (1998) for an attempt to avoid that predicament by arguing that any such nouns are neither countable nor uncountable but bare singular noun phrases).

2.7 Bare binominals

A similar structure in terms of the strength and quality of the arguments offered for and against positing the zero article is the bare binominal:

(29) The diplomats finally met \emptyset face to \emptyset face.

(30) They negotiated from \emptyset dawn to \emptyset dusk.

Given their non-compositional meanings, inflexible word order and alliterative rhythm, these structures look even more idiomatic than the prepositional usages reviewed in the previous section, but the only piece of evidence in support of positing the zero article in cases like (29)–(30) is again the absence of any overt articles. As has been shown above (cf. the discussion in Sections 2.3 and 2.5 above), it is, though, a circular argument, much more indicative of succumbing to the tacit belief that articles have to be obligatorily used with any nominal than following sound structural principles.

2.8 Covert countables

Finally, the zero article has been postulated in the same vein to be used with a number of nominals presumed to remain countable at all times whether they are governed by a proposition or not, even though it is explicitly indicated only in a few instances. For expository purposes they are traditionally subdivided into a number of smaller sets on the basis of the meanings they typically carry and this custom is followed below. The

most frequently cited examples are subsumed under the three following headings:

(i) 'seasons', e.g.:

(31) \emptyset Winter will be very harsh this year.

(32) They spent an unforgettable summer on Tahiti.

(ii) 'meals', e.g.:

(33) \emptyset Breakfast is served at seven o'clock.

(34) The spies had a quick lunch before the attack.

(iii) 'illnesses', e.g.:

(35) \emptyset Rubella can now be prevented by vaccination.

(36) The president was rumored to have a cold.

In the now sadly familiar pattern no independent evidence for positing the zero article is, however, provided again. The claim rests only on the fact that no surface articles are usually taken by the nominals in question but that, as has been shown in Sections 2.3, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 above, is helplessly circular. The grounds for postulating the zero article in cases like (31)–(37) are thus not any more firm than in most of the preceding sections and fail to live up to the standards originally set up in Jakobson's writings reviewed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3

Previous accounts

Since the uses of the zero article reviewed in the preceding chapter have been mostly postulated on the basis of scant or no evidence at all, it is understandable that few linguists have tried to integrate them into wider accounts of English articles. The task of unifying in a single theory the definite and indefinite uses of the zero article in both numbers and in a variety of restricted contexts simply proved to be daunting and majority of scholars evaded it by limiting their interests to the overt articles. The zero article was left to the authors of descriptive and pedagogical grammars, who used it profusely to explain away irregularities in English usage but took its meaning for granted and did not explore it in any detail.

The only linguists who took up that challenge are John Hewson and Andrew Chesterman and their theories, published as Hewson (1972) and Chesterman (1991), respectively, will be now reviewed below along with the proposal originally put forward in Jespersen (1949) and a partial account offered in Langacker (1991b). More fragmentary contributions to the understanding of the zero article, e.g. Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski (1993), Stvan (1993), Stvan (1998) or Huddleston and Pullum (2002) will be invoked in discussing the usages they actually apply to in later chapters of the book.

3.1 Jespersen (1949)

The account originally sketched by Jespersen and fleshed out with details by Haislund relies on a scale of familiarity. The

concept of familiarity was first introduced into linguistic theory in Christophersen (1939) as a binary notion intended to capture the meaning carried by the definite and indefinite articles. The use of the definite article was claimed to indicate familiarity with the referent of the nominal, and the choice of the indefinite article its lack.

In order to accommodate a three-article system the binary contrast was expanded into a scale with three degrees of familiarity summarized in the table below (Table 1). The terminology is quoted after the original and explained in square brackets wherever it departs from current usage.

As shown in the rightmost column, the pattern contains no gaps and in line with the traditional definition of the article its use in English nominals is claimed to be mandatory. However, the clarity of the pattern is only an illusion. While the meaning carried by each of the overt articles is captured in a single formula intended to account for a coherent range of uses, the zero article is posited for such an incoherent set of contexts that it is impossible to encapsulate its meaning in a single and consistent statement. It is claimed to be the marker of both complete unfamiliarity and complete familiarity with the referent(s) of

Table 1 Degrees of familiarity in Jespersen (1949)

Degree of familiarity	Type of nominal	Article use
1 Complete unfamiliarity (ignorance)	Mass word [uncountable nominal]	Zero article
	Unit word [countable singular nominal]	Indefinite article
	Unit word plural [plural countable nominal]	Zero article
2 Nearly complete familiarity	All types of nominals	Definite article
3 Familiarity so complete that no article is needed	Direct address (vocatives)	
	Proper names	
	God	
	Father, uncle, baby, nurse and other members of the family circle	Zero article
	Dinner and other regular meals Church, prison, town, etc.	

a nominal, which is a contradiction in terms. If that state of affairs were to reflect the facts of English with any accuracy, it would be hard to see how and why the zero article should be used in that language at all.

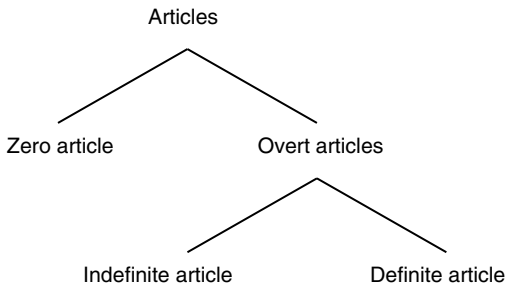
Despite that fundamental flaw this scheme has been copied in numerous descriptive and pedagogical grammars of English since its original publication in Jespersen (1949). Later authors refined the precision of the formulations describing the meaning of the overt articles and varied the range of contexts presumed to trigger the use of the zero article, but the overall design of particular accounts remained in principle the same. It strove to save at all costs the integrity of the view that the use of articles is mandatory, while the fact that it led to ascribing to the zero article a contradictory meaning was passed over in silence and never inquired into.

3.2 Hewson (1972)

The proposal developed in Hewson (1972) is radically different. It breaks with the long tradition of leaving the zero article in the limbo of oblivion and offers a completely new perspective on the role of articles in language. To start with, Hewson notes that in any Indo-European language that has articles they are known to have developed over time and have not been inherited from the proto language (Hewson 1972: 11). This routine observation leads him to the conclusion that the key opposition in any Indo-European article system is the contrast between the zero article, which has been in use ever since, and overt articles, which are a later development.

An article system is therefore essentially binary in nature and in the case of English, where two overt articles have evolved, its structure may be easily diagrammed as shown below (Figure 1).

The model advanced by Hewson assumes thus that articles, whether overt or covert, have to be present in all nominals, which

FIGURE 1 English article system structure according to Hewson (1972)

makes it similar to the account pioneered in Jespersen (1949) and reviewed above. The two approaches differ, though, fundamentally in identifying the causes of the obligatory nature of article use. Hewson (1972) does not rely in that respect on structural analysis of language data or the philological definition of the category of the article, but draws instead on the model of language developed in the first half of the previous century by Gustave Guillaume.

The essence of the model first formulated in 1919 and then revised a number of times (Hewson 1972: 79) was best summarized by Bodelsen in a footnote to his own review of Jespersen (1949):

Guillaume's theory, which in its entirety is valid for French only, may be summed up in the following simile, which I venture to present with apologies to its learned and acute author: the language is like a room. The ceiling represents the world of abstract conceptions, the floor that of concrete reality. Under the ceiling hang a number of balloons; they are the words as they exist in language (as opposed to speech), and a dictionary is in fact a plan of the ceiling with its crowd of balloons. In order to make those balloons which represent substantives available in speech they must be brought down to the floor. This is done by attaching to each of them a weight, and this weight is an article. (Bodelsen 1949: 285–286)

In that framework articles are thus viewed as indispensable mediators between the abstract level of cognitive structures and the practical level of language performance. They signify the operation of a dynamic interface between two spheres of language: the pure potential of *la langue* and its actualization in *la discours* (a term that in Guillaumes's writings replaces de Saussure's well-known *la parole*).

In other words articles simply have to be used if anything is to be said at all, and any context where overt articles are inadmissible automatically turns into first-rate evidence of the existence of the zero article. The most immediate task any researcher working in that framework has to attend to is thus not providing adequate rationale for positing the zero article but identifying the meaning it carries.

According to Hewson the overt articles restrict the meaning of the nominals in a number of ways, while the zero article renders it as broad and general as possible:

The bare unqualified noun (article zero) calls into play all the potential values together; in those cases where such an actual significate is sought for, the noun with article zero will be therefore satisfactory, but in cases where a more restricted sense is required, the articles or other definers will be used [...] In English the noun without article does not represent a mere idea, a total abstraction. It may represent, in fact a concrete reality, but a reality without clarifying exterior form, a mass-word or continue. Add an article and the concept is given form and becomes a thing-word or class-word; the threshold in English lies between the presentation of the notion as a formless, non-numerical entity, and its presentation as a separate singular entity, member of a class and necessarily having form. (Hewson 1972: 76–77)

If the now mostly forgotten terminology is translated into more up-to-date terms, it is evident that the key role of the zero

article in that framework is to impose an unbounded construal of the nominal, i.e. a conceptualization which transcends any limitations that could follow from the outer boundaries, internal structure or finite extent of the mental model of the entity in question.

This view of the zero article is then in a perfect match with the pattern found in uncountable nominals and a variety of prepositional phrases that do not require the use of any overt articles, e.g.:

(37) They all hate chicken.

(38) Deirdre arrived by bus.

where the final segments induce the conceptualizations of *chicken meat* and *bus transportation*, respectively, which means that they go well beyond the standard images of a domesticated bird or a vehicle with multiple seats for passengers.

However, there are a number of contexts where this perspective on the zero article fails to follow actual usage. The most glaring case of such an inconsistency is the article pattern found in English proper names.

At first Hewson claims that the natural choice is the use of the zero article:

When the speaker wishes to use a noun to express in discourse a signficante equal in scope to the potential signficante, it is obvious that no [overt, LB] article will be needed or used. This is in fact the almost universal usage with the proper noun, except in those cases where a restriction in the full sense is intended. (Hewson 1972: 76)

In other words it is claimed that the denotations of proper names always contain only one element (i.e. the entity on which the name has been bestowed), and simply can not be further restricted. The activation of the key function of the overt articles in Hewson's theory is thus blocked and they are never

used unless specifically licensed by the presence of appropriate modifiers, e.g.:

- (39) Shakespeare was a playwright.
 (40) The old Shakespeare was bawdy.

In contrast to (39), which merely ascribes a profession to the subject, the use of the modifier in (40) explicitly restricts the range of its predication to only one stage in the referent's lifespan and, consequently, triggers the use of an overt article.

Later on the facts of English force Hewson to concede, though, that the pattern illustrated above is only the tip of the iceberg and there are scores of proper names that always take the definite article whether restrictive modifiers are used or not (Hewson 1972: 108–111), e.g.:

- (41) the Arctic
 (42) the Amazon
 (43) the Albert Memorial

Hewson is fully aware of the problem and even notes that it recurs whenever proper names refer to entities that lack complete boundaries (e.g. 41–42), but that does not change the fact that the theory he developed does not allow for any such departures from its predictions.

Consequently, even though proper names are claimed to be paradigm cases of the use of the zero article (cf. above), Hewson does not discuss them at length in the chapter devoted to the zero article but does so in the chapter on the definite article and prefers to describe examples where no overt articles are found as instances of the bare noun, but that does little to save his theory. As shown in the quotation cited above, in the system put forward in Hewson (1972) the bare noun is nothing more than a synonym of the zero article.

Likewise, the integrity of Hewson's theory is not saved by the claim that the definite article has the power of lending exterior

form to those proper names whose referents lack well-defined boundaries and, therefore, has to be used in a number of instances, e.g. (41)–(42). For one thing, no such function follows from the structure of Hewson's model (cf. his remarks on the nature of proper names cited above). And secondly, the model would not be saved even if it did in fact support positing that definite article function since many referents of those proper names that always take the definite article are very well bounded on their own and do not need any external sources to provide them with outer boundaries, e.g. (43).

Serious objections may also be raised against positing the use of the zero article in indefinite plurals and predicate nominals as the conceptualizations induced by such structures are not in any way necessarily unbounded, formless and abstract, e.g.:

(44) We saw three kings.

(45) Henry became king.

In (44) the plural nominal clearly refers to three separate human beings, while in (45) the subject is said to have become a new monarch, i.e. a new personal holder of the royal office, clearly distinct from a variety of abstract concepts associated with monarchy, e.g. kingship, the hereditary function of the sovereign, etc.

The range of the data to be accounted for is thus much too broad to be adequately captured by the framework put forward in Hewson (1972). It offers a fair number of genuine insights that will be referred to in later chapters of this book, but it fails as an overall answer to the question why the overt articles may be left out in English so frequently.

3.3 Chesterman (1991)

The theory developed in Chesterman (1991) is an earnest though eclectic effort to overcome the shortcomings noted

above. One way of doing so was to adopt more transparent and consistent terminology. Another and far more original one was postulating the existence of two covert articles. The benefits following from taking the first of these two steps are obvious and need not be inquired into. The consequences of the second one will now be examined in detail below.

The rationale for positing two covert articles is quite simple. Since all previous frameworks failed because they insisted on positing a single zero article to account for a range of data that was too wide to be adequately captured in one formula (cf. the discussion in the two preceding sections), it is only logical to divide that array of usages into two parts and try to account for them separately. The choice of the dividing line was also quite straightforward. As is well known (cf. the overview in Chapter 2) the contexts where the overt articles are inadmissible include instances of both indefinite and definite nominals. Consequently, Chesterman posited two corresponding covert articles. The former, in line with the tradition initiated in Jespersen (1949), was called the zero article, and the latter was labeled the null article.

The proposal is thus built on the assumption that the use of articles is obligatory in all nominals, i.e. it proceeds from the same point of departure as the previous accounts reviewed above. The introduction of two covert articles shadowing the contrast observable in overt articles is intended, though, to ensure a better fit between the theory and the facts of the English language than was the case before.

In order to achieve that goal Chesterman identified three variables that are instrumental in shaping the English article system: locatability, inclusiveness and extensivity. The concept of locatability denotes the ability to identify (i.e. locate) a referent or referents in a set shared by the speaker and hearer. The basis for doing so is the cognitive environment of the interlocutors: their general knowledge, the immediate situation of the utterance, previous discourse or associations triggered by contextual clues. The related parameter of inclusiveness specifies, in turn, whether locatability pertains to all elements of the

shared set or only to some of them, and, as has been shown in Declerck (1987a) and Declerck (1987b), it also depends on contextual considerations. And finally the notion of extensivity (not to be confused with extension!) indicates how abstract the intended referent is, i.e. whether it is a concrete entity, a schematic one or anything in between.

The first two terms were introduced in Hawkins (1978) and later refined by a number of scholars, e.g. Klein (1980), Hawkins (1984), Klégr (1984), Declerck (1986) and Declerck (1987a), Declerck (1987b) and Hawkins (1991) in attempts to capture the meaning of the overt articles. The third one was pioneered by the French linguist Guillaume decades earlier in his writings on the zero article (cf. the discussion in Section 3.2 above). In Chesterman (1991) all the three variables are combined into a matrix describing the key properties of the five English articles that he posits (Table 2).

The meanings of the two covert articles may thus be glossed as follows: the zero article is compatible with any nominal whose referent is a non-locatable set that has at least two members, and the null article is compatible with any nominal whose referent is a locatable one member set (Chesterman 1991: 73). The claim that in both cases the referent is a set itself and not its member or members reflects the unlimited extensivity of the nominals taking the covert articles, i.e. the supposition that their referents are abstract categories. The locatability of individual members of the set depends, however, on their number. If the set contains only one member locating the set will always guarantee that its member is also located, but if

Table 2 Key article properties according to Chesterman (1991: 68)

Article	Locatable	Inclusive	Limited extensivity
zero	–	±	–
some	±	–	+
a	±	–	+
the	+	+	+
null	+	+	–

the number is higher no such default identification is possible. The restriction on set membership reflects thus the difference in locatability between the null and zero articles indicated in Table 2.

In practice the zero article is thus a natural choice for uncountable and plural nominals (with the proviso that in non-referential environments the set in question is a set of properties), while the null article is applicable in more definite contexts. As noted by Chesterman, the paradigm case exemplifying the operation of the null article is its use with singular proper names (Chesterman 1991: 55), e.g.:

(46) Trafalgar Square

(47) Christmas Island

Incidentally, though, this application highlights also the most significant weakness of Chesterman's approach. It is a well-known fact that besides singular proper names that do not take any overt articles unless they are modified, there are also scores of English singular proper names that always require the use of the definite article whether they are modified or not, e.g.:

(48) the English Channel

(49) the Tibet Plateau

In fact the null article may thus be posited with any integrity only in some of the singular proper names. However, the theory does not explain in any way how to tell those proper names that take the null article from those that do not and are preceded by the overt definite article.

Chesterman is clearly aware of the problem, but does not offer any viable solution. At first he merely notes the existence of counterexamples and dismisses their significance in a terse comment:

Finally, we note that proper nouns can take *the* in some contexts: when the noun is plural (*the Himalayas*), or when a

singular noun has a restrictive modifier (*the young Sibelius*). Also the names of rivers, seas, oceans and canals take *the* (*the River Thames, the Indian Ocean, the Kiel Canal*). These uses are 'exceptional' in that singular proper nouns normally take null. (Chesterman 1991: 54)

Later on he quotes at length Guillaume's observation that the overt definite article is usually taken by those proper names whose referents are devoid of complete external boundaries (cf. the watery examples cited above) and openly acknowledges that he has no clue how to integrate it into his own framework:

While such explanations may seem unduly speculative, there does seem to be something in them. It is a reasonable assumption that the various occurrences of null have something in common, although it is difficult to state precisely what this shared semantic feature is. Part of the difficulty lies in the pragmatic basis of all of article usage, with its inherent fuzziness and variation. And part is due to the extreme abstractness of concepts like extensivity which tend to defy exact formulation. But this should not detract from the insight itself underlying the generalization that Guillaume, Hewson and others are getting at. (Chesterman 1991: 86)

The proposal put forward in Chesterman (1991) fails thus to specify the conditions under which the null article is licensed with singular proper names and the same defect recurs in other contexts. For example, Chesterman claims that the null article is used with designations denoting times of day and night or nominals with postmodifying numerals (Chesterman 1991: 55), to name only two cases, e.g.:

- (50) The spy left at dawn.
- (51) Sue worked until midnight.
- (52) Harry stopped on page six.

but his theory does not explain in any way why the null article should be taken just by those times of the day and night or is discarded when the cardinal numeral is replaced by the corresponding ordinal, e.g.:

(53) The spy arrived in the afternoon.

(54) Harry stopped on the sixth page.

Chesterman only notes the fact that overt articles are not admissible in a given context and concludes on this basis that it is a structure inviting the use of a covert article. That, however, is helplessly circular. The observation that a nominal does not take any overt article is first presented as evidence for the claim that it takes a covert one, and then the covert article is presented as the explanation of the fact why the overt article is not used. The second step is merely the reversal of the first one, which is neither good logic nor linguistics, and fails to explain anything.

Consequently, the framework developed in Chesterman (1991) does not stipulate testable conditions under which its claims hold and fails to provide any grounds for predicting the usage of the covert articles it posits. Despite offering a number of interesting insights that will be referred to in later chapters of this book, it is thus unable to account for the cases where English allows no overt articles.

3.4 Langacker (1991b)

The theory pioneered in earlier works of Langacker (e.g. Langacker 1987, Langacker 1991a) elaborated in Langacker (1991b) and further refined in his later publications (e.g. Langacker 1999) is much wider than most of the frameworks examined above in that it puts forward an entire model of language. However, pursuing much farther reaching goals, the cognitive framework developed by Langacker does not shy away from English bare nominals as linguistic theories typically do and the solution it sketches will be reviewed below.

One of the fundamental tenets of cognitive grammar is the statement that a noun profiles an abstract region in a cognitive domain, i.e. merely specifies the type of an entity, while a nominal designates a grounded instance of that type, i.e. an instance that is distinct from other ones and situated with respect to the knowledge of the speaker and the hearer. In any nominal used in discourse the entity profiled by the noun is then both instantiated, i.e. thought of as a separate thing, and grounded, i.e. related to the participants of a speech act and its setting (Langacker 1991b: 33). The prime exponents of grounding (referred to in cognitive grammar as grounding predications) are obviously articles occasionally supplanted by demonstratives and other determiners (Langacker 1991b: 96).

The claim that grounding is obligatory basically means then that any nominals have to be equipped either with an article or some other grounding predication able to perform the same function. Consequently, whenever overt articles are omitted cognitive grammar presumes that grounding has been accomplished by some other devices (Langacker 1991b: 96–107).

In plural and uncountable nominals Langacker opts for the traditional solution and posits the zero article (Langacker 1991b: 103), which is somewhat disappointing given the non-structural tenor of the cognitive paradigm he spearheaded. The function and range of use of the zero article postulated in Langacker (1991b) are then essentially the same as stipulated in Chesterman (1991), even though Langacker merely takes the existence of the zero article for granted and does not discuss its conceptual content. In the case of proper names his account is, however, far more original in that he envisages a covert grounding mechanism which does not require positing an invisible article:

The definite article would also be semantically compatible with proper names but generally cannot occur with them in English (*the Stan Smith). Here the motivation is evidently the avoidance of redundancy, for a proper name conveys the essential content of *the* as part of its own semantic structure.

A name incorporates the idealized cognitive model which specifies that it is borne by, and suffices to identify, just one individual. As a consequence, mention of the name itself is presumed capable of establishing mental contact with the unique instance of the type. (Langacker 1991b: 101–102)

This proposal is not elaborated in any detail and, consequently suffers from the same drawbacks as the theories reviewed above: it does not stipulate any testable conditions specifying when this type of cognitive mechanism economizing on article use is activated, which proper names invite its use, how they differ from those that take the overt definite article anyway, etc. Langacker leaves these questions unanswered and moves to discussing other facets of his model of language, ending his brief coverage of grounding with the standard disclaimer:

An article's range of application in a given language is obviously subject to conventional determination, involving varied rationales and countless subtleties that we cannot explore here. (Langacker 1991b: 102)

As has been shown in Berezowski (2002) and Radden, G. and R. Dirven (2007), the solution sketched in Langacker (1991b) can, however, be successfully developed into a viable account of article use with English proper names that dispenses with the concept of the zero article. The approach outlined in Langacker (1991b) offers thus a glimmer of hope for breaking the vicious circle of theories that keep positing covert articles to explain why the overt ones can be dispensed with but on closer scrutiny fail to account for anything. The applicability of this solution to other cases where the zero article has been traditionally postulated in English remains, though, uninvestigated.

Chapter 4

Article grammaticalization

The solution of the puzzle of the zero article to be presented below is based on the results of recent inquiries into the rise and spread of articles in a number of languages. The point of departure for developing an account that is robust enough to explain why English overt articles are not needed in the contexts surveyed in Chapter 2 above is thus the theory of grammaticalization, i.e. an approach that combines synchronic and diachronic data into a single evolutionary perspective tracing the development of entire grammatical categories.

The students of grammaticalization assume the starting point for the rise of a particular category known from historical research and then review synchronic and diachronic data to verify how far that development has progressed in a sample of languages. The differences in the degree to which that category has been grammaticalized in particular languages, i.e. the variation in the range of its applications, the phonetic form of its markers, etc., may then be used to reconstruct its evolution in language, i.e. its grammaticalization path (cf. the methodology and its numerous applications presented in Heine, Claudi and Hünemeyer (1991), Heine and Traugott (1991), Hopper and Traugott (1993), Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994), Heine (1997), Heine and Kuteva (2002) or Heine and Kuteva (2006), to name a few classics only.

Consequently, this chapter will review the grammaticalization paths reconstructed for the indefinite and definite article and then proceed to develop on this basis an explanation of

English usages dispensing with the overt articles that will be tested in the following chapters against data drawn from the British National Corpus and referred throughout the rest of the book as the incomplete grammaticalization model.

4.1 Grammaticalization of the indefinite article

Following in the footsteps of comparative and historical linguists, the students of grammaticalization assume that the standard source for the development of indefinite articles is the numeral *one*. The reconstruction of the grammaticalization path from a numeral to the grammatical marker of indefiniteness has revealed five characteristic stages of that process that will now be summarized after Heine (1997: 72–74) (Table 3).

As shown by the descriptions in column three, the article gains a new function or functions on each stage of its grammaticalization but, at the same time, it retains the ability to perform the functions typical of the preceding stages of that process. For example, having reached stage three the indefinite article is presumed to be also used in contexts characteristic of stages one and two, but it is obviously unable to perform the grammatical functions yet to be developed on stages four or five. The grammaticalization path outlined above is thus implicational in the sense that locating the stage reached by the article in a given language implies both the range of functions it should be already able to perform and the set of applications presumed to lie outside its reach so far.

The descriptions leave also no doubt that the range of contexts in which the evolving article can be found keeps expanding, which means that the conditions on its use are more and more relaxed on each stage of its grammaticalization path. In other words, the lexical meaning of the numeral *one* is gradually diluted and replaced by the increasingly schematic grammatical meaning carried by the article, i.e. the original meaning is bleached (Heine 1997: 74). The results of that process are best

Table 3 Indefinite article grammaticalization according to Heine (1997)

No.	Stage name	Range of grammatical function	Example
1.	numeral	numeral <i>one</i> only	Czech, Swahili
2.	presentative marker	introduction of a new referent that is known to the speaker and unknown to the hearer but topical (i.e. intended to be taken up in the following discourse), mostly if the new referent is: singular countable, specific	Russian, Tarahumara
3.	specific marker	introduction of a new referent that is known to the speaker and unknown to the hearer whether it is topical (i.e. intended to be taken up in the following discourse) or not, mostly if the new referent is: singular countable, specific	Street Hebrew
4.	non-specific marker	introduction of a new referent unknown to the hearer whether it is known to the speaker or not, topical (i.e. intended to be taken up in the following discourse) or not, specific or non-specific, mostly if the new referent is: singular countable	English, German, Dutch, Punjabi
5.	generalized article	introduction of a new referent unknown to the hearer whether it is known to the speaker or not, topical (i.e. intended to be taken up in the following discourse) or not, specific or non-specific, singular or plural countable or uncountable	Spanish Catalan Portuguese

appreciated by comparing its extreme stages. For instance, by the time the evolving grammatical form eventually comes to be used with plural and uncountable nominals (cf. the description of stage five above), there is hardly anything left of the meaning it had at the outset of the development as shown for Spanish and Portuguese in Martí (2008). In line with typical grammaticalization patterns this change is also accompanied by substantial erosion of the phonetic form of the evolving structure as fully fledged indefinite articles are usually made up of fewer sounds than the sources they arise from (Heine 1997: 76) and are stressed only in exceptional circumstances.

In general, then, the grammaticalization path leads from simple quantification, through highly restricted use of the nascent article with referential nominals that are singular, countable and specific, and in the direction of advanced stages, where the article is found in nominals that are non-referential, generic, plural or uncountable (Givón 1981: 50). The growth in the range of applications of the marker of indefiniteness may also eventually lead to the rise of two indefinite articles to divide that functional load more effectively (Chung and Ladusaw 2003).

The notion of the path does not, however, presuppose a fixed time scale for the full cycle of the development in a given language or make it in any way obligatory (Heine, Claudi and Hünemeyer 1991: 244). Grammaticalization may never start, proceed at different rates in particular languages or come to a halt and remain incomplete (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 95). The path merely shows the direction the process takes once it has been set in motion and the potential for its development broken down into observable stages. At the same time, though, it provides a convenient yardstick to measure how far a given form has evolved and predict what further uses it may be put to.

In the case of English the indefinite article has already spread into a number of non-specific, non-referential and generic uses, which means that it has reached stage four. There is, though, ample room for further development both on that level and on the next one.

4.2 Grammaticalization of the definite article

Historical research has shown that the standard starting point for the grammaticalization of the definite article is a demonstrative pronoun (alternatively, though less frequently, definite articles may also develop from third-person pronouns, cf. Heine and Kuteva 2006: 99). More specifically, detailed analyses of the early stages of the process have revealed that it usually

is the distal demonstrative (Greenberg 1985: 271). For example, Old English distinguished two degrees of proximity in its deictic system and it was the set of distal demonstratives *se, seo, þæt* that gave rise to the modern English definite article (Fischer 1992: 217), while classical Latin encoded three degrees of proximity in its deictics and it was again the distal form *ille* that eventually evolved into the definite articles found now in most Romance languages (Harris 1980). The preference for the distal demonstrative is, however, not a cast iron rule as there are isolated but well-documented instances of definite articles that developed from the medial demonstrative in a deictic system distinguishing three degrees of proximity. For example, the origin of the definite articles used now in Balearic Catalan and Sardinian have been traced back to the Latin medial demonstrative *ipse*, and not to the distal one as is the case in most Romance languages (Vincent 1997: 153–155).

The grammaticalization path modeling the life cycle of the article arising from all types of demonstrative sources will now be summarized after Hawkins (2004) (Table 4).

In line with the fundamental tenets of grammaticalization studies the model outlined above is again implicational, the lexical meaning of the evolving grammatical form is gradually bleached and its phonetic properties eroded. In other words, each time an article reaches a particular stage in its evolution it is presumed that it has also completed all previous stages posited in the model but has not developed any functions typical of more advanced levels yet, while the conditions on its use and phonetic form slowly diverge from the meaning and pronunciation of a standard demonstrative in a given language.

The two latter changes are closely interrelated. The conditions of use keep relaxing, which boosts the range of contexts inviting the application of the article, while its phonetic form keeps shrinking. The gradual emergence of a more schematic, grammatical meaning of the definite article is thus accompanied by the loss of stress, rise of weak forms and general reduction of its phonetic prominence (Lyons 1999: 64). One consequence of

Table 4 Definite article grammaticalization according to Hawkins (2004)

Stage number	Range of grammatical function	Example
1.	The demonstrative stops to be used to differentiate between referents that are close to / far from the speaker / hearer; it comes to indicate that the referent of a nominal is known to the speaker and can be identified by the hearer on the basis of information furnished by: immediate context of the utterance, previous discourse between the interlocutors; on the condition that the nominal is always given a non-generic interpretation.	Gothic
2.	The former demonstrative indicates that the referent of a nominal is known to the speaker and can be identified by the hearer on the basis of information furnished by: immediate context of the utterance, previous discourse between the interlocutors, knowledge of facts unrelated to immediate context of the utterance or previous discourse between the interlocutors, inference triggered by referents mentioned in previous discourse; on the condition that the nominal is always given a non-generic interpretation.	Hausa
3.	The former demonstrative indicates that the referent of a nominal is known to the speaker and can be identified by the hearer on the basis of information furnished by: immediate context of the utterance, previous discourse between the interlocutors, knowledge of facts unrelated to immediate context of the utterance or previous discourse between the interlocutors, inference triggered by referents mentioned in previous discourse between the interlocutors; whether the nominal is given a generic or non-generic interpretation.	English, German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian
4.	The former demonstrative indicates one of the two following possibilities: (i) the referent of a nominal is known to the speaker and can be identified by the hearer on the basis of information furnished by: immediate context of the utterance, previous discourse between the interlocutors, knowledge of facts unrelated to immediate context of the utterance or previous discourse between the interlocutors, inference triggered by referents mentioned in previous discourse between the interlocutors whether the nominal is given a generic or non-generic interpretation; (ii) the referent is known to the speaker but unidentifiable to the hearer, i.e. it is specific.	Samoan, Tongan
5.	The former demonstrative is used in all types of nominals whether their referents are known to the interlocutors or not and comes to serve as a gender / noun class marker.	Swahili

that process may be the merger of the article with exponents of other grammatical categories, e.g. case, gender or number. For a survey of languages where such developments have been noted cf. Krámský (1972: 74–169) and Lyons (1999: 63–67). For a more detailed discussion of the issue in German and French cf. Lyons (1999: 215–219). In a still further going development the article may ultimately lose the status of a free morpheme and become a clitic or an affix. For a review of European languages that have undergone that process cf. Börjars (1994) and Giusti (1994). For a wider but less up-to-date survey spanning the whole world cf. Krámský (1972: 128–169).

If the latter development occurs, articles may easily attach not only to entire nominals but also to their individual constituents (e.g. nouns, adjectives, numerals, etc.), which leads to multiple expression of definiteness in a single nominal variously referred to as determiner spreading (Androutsopoulou 1994: 16), double definiteness (Börjars 1994: 219) double determination (Lyons 1999: 77–82) or double articulation (Plank 2002). What is significant, though, in the analyses put forward in Börjars (1994) and Lyons (1999) multiple encoding of definiteness is claimed to result from the operation of agreement, foreshadowing thus the final stage of article grammaticalization, when it comes to serve as a marker of gender, i.e. an exponent of a grammatical category that frequently features in concord relationships (Corbett 1991: 105–143).

An equally important characteristic of the grammaticalization path outlined in Table 3 is also the fact that spreading to an ever larger set of contexts the article eventually goes beyond marking definiteness. Past stage three its usage is no longer restricted to indicating that the referent of a nominal is uniquely identifiable to the interlocutors on the basis of contextual clues. On top of serving in this prototypical role the article also comes to indicate that the referent of the nominal is a specific entity (stage 4) or that it is denoted by a noun belonging to a particular class / gender (stage 5). For a discussion of languages with articles that have advanced to stage four cf. Ionin

(2006: 214–222). The final development into stage five is argued for in detail in Greenberg (1978).

The growth in the range of functions performed by the marker of definiteness in the latter days of its life cycle may then be offset by the rise of more articles traditionally called semi-definite (Hendrick 2005: 907–908), personal (Lynch 2001) or specific (Lyons 1999: 58–59). A number of such developments has been noted in Austronesian languages, cf. the discussion in Lynch (2001) or the analysis of an extended article system in Tongan in Hendrick (2005).

In comparison with the potential for functional development latent in the definite article English usage has thus much room for further growth. The English definite article has spread to generic uses, which means that it has progressed to stage three on its grammaticalization path along with the definite articles in a host of other Germanic and Romance languages, but there is a number of contexts it has yet to expand into if it is to catch up with its peers, let alone move further down the path. For insightful comments on the differences in the range of definite article use between English on the one hand and Spanish, French and German on the other one cf. Bolinger (1975: 182–185), Lyons (1999: 192–193) and Ebert (1982: 64–75), respectively.

4.3 Consequences of incomplete grammaticalization

The grammaticalization paths summarized and commented on above reconstruct the development of the definite and indefinite article by tracing in some detail the evolution of the conditions under which they are used in language. The reconstruction is based, though, on the assumption that each time the evolving grammatical form enters a new stage of the process it has room to expand, i.e. there are contexts where that form has not been found before but can be used now. If an individual stage of the evolution of a single grammatical form in a particular language

is inspected, new contexts open for further expansion can then be located either:

- a. on the same grammaticalization stage if it has not been completed yet,
- b. on the next one if the potential to expand into new contexts on the previous stage has been exhausted, or
- c. on previous grammaticalization stages if the evolving form failed to expand into some contexts before it leapfrogged on the next grammaticalization stage, i.e. if some developments could have been effected on a given stage but in fact were not.

In general, room for further expansion may thus lie both ahead of where the form now is in its life cycle, i.e. down the grammaticalization path, and behind the current stage of its development, i.e. up the grammaticalization path. The only exception is completing the final step of the last stage of the grammaticalization path, which effectively ends the development and does not offer any space for further evolution. If that is the case the only contexts that may still be open for expansion are environments that were passed over on previous stages of the process but there is no guarantee that they actually will ever be expanded into as grammaticalization may remain incomplete (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 95) and never utilize its full potential.

A much more important point than the exact location of the contexts into which the evolving grammatical form may still expand is the fact that they are known to exist only because that form cannot be used in them yet, i.e. because they are excluded by the conditions that govern the usage of that form at a given point of its life cycle. In other words, the line separating those grammatical environments into which the form has already spread from those that still remain beyond its reach is defined by the conditions of its use as they have developed so far. The precision of their formulation may vary and it is reasonable to expect that in the process of taking another step on a given grammaticalization stage they will be much more fuzzy than

in a period of time when no such changes are taking place, but their existence is unquestionable and completely independent of the study of grammaticalization.

If that model is fed with data on the use of English definite and indefinite articles, it is obvious that given the progress they have made so far on their grammaticalization paths there has to be much room for further expansion. The definite article has advanced to stage three only and the indefinite one to stage four, which guarantees the existence of grammatical environments both forms may yet expand into further down their grammaticalization paths. What is more, comparisons with other languages that have reached the same grammaticalization stages show that there are steps both English articles may still take on the stages they are now on, and, on top of that, there may also be contexts sidestepped on earlier stages of development where the articles are still not used.

The existence of grammatical environments where neither the definite nor the indefinite articles are admissible follows thus directly from the position of the English articles on their grammaticalization paths, i.e. from the fact that their evolution is still in progress. All such environments are simply unable to meet at least one condition on the use of either the definite or indefinite article that is operational nowadays and all such contexts will remain excluded from article use until further progress of grammaticalization.

The central claim of the account argued for in this book therefore is that the gaps in the use of the English definite and indefinite articles reviewed in Chapter 2 above are a direct consequence of incomplete article grammaticalization. An obvious corollary on that claim is that any such gaps are not accidental but each of them reflects the failure of a given grammatical environment to satisfy an independently motivated condition on the use of the definite or indefinite article. The explanatory power of this account will now be validated in the remaining chapters of this book on the example of predicate nominals designating functions performed by single individuals.

Before proceeding to detailed data analysis, it will, however, be helpful to tie up some loose ends that have accumulated so far. Settling these issues will preview the explanatory power of the incomplete grammaticalization model and ensure that unresolved general questions do not distract the discussion in the following chapters.

One obvious point that falls out from the model put forward above is the reason why the theories positing the zero article fail. As has been shown in Chapter 3 above, the principal shortcoming of all such theories was the fact that while they were quite adequate in accounting for some of the English language data, each of them caved in when the same solution was extrapolated to other contexts. For example, they usually worked quite well with indefinite uncountables and plurals but were unable to explain the article pattern with most proper names (cf. the discussion in Chapter 2).

In other words the solution these theories offered was based on the assumption that all contexts where overt articles are inadmissible form a coherent set of grammatical environments and the linguist merely has to discover the key feature or features that they share to spell out the meaning of the zero article. However, the model posited above shows that any such assumption is completely unfounded. If the gaps in overt article use result from skipping some contexts on previous grammaticalization stages and / or reflect spotty progress in expanding to some grammatical environments on the highest stages English has reached so far, the structures in need of an explanation are likely to be unrelated to each other and not susceptible to positing a single overarching solution. Grammaticalization proceeds along a predefined path and is predictable on the macro level of entire language history, but on the micro level of particular grammaticalization steps, like any language change, it is not orderly and consistent enough to make the assumption underlying this type of solution viable.

This assumption makes sense only if the contexts where overt articles are left out belong to a further grammaticalization

stage that has not been reached by a language yet. A case in point is the article pattern with English indefinite uncountables and plurals. Grammaticalization studies have shown that indefinite articles spread into such contexts on stage five of their life cycles, while the English indefinite article has progressed to stage four only (cf. Table 2 above), which means that an entire consistent set of grammatical environments remains outside its reach yet. No wonder then that it is precisely this set of contexts where positing a single covert article fared the best (cf. the discussion in Chapter 2).

However, if the same solution is applied to a wider range of grammatical environments, it is doomed to fail. The writing on the wall had already been seen by Chesterman, who posited two covert articles in the hope that it would improve the fit between theory and the facts of English, but even that was not enough to accommodate the diversity of gaps in overt article use resulting from their incomplete grammaticalization (cf. the discussion in Section 3.3 above).

Secondly, the incomplete grammaticalization model offers a straightforward answer to the vexing question how definiteness and indefiniteness are indicated in the absence of overt articles. In those languages that make do without any articles at all, i.e. in the languages where article grammaticalization has not even started yet, linguists have identified a number of structures providing clues for inferring the definiteness status of particular nominals. For example, relevant cues are offered by word order, sentence stress, case choice or aspect selection, either alone or in specific combinations (e.g. perfective aspect on the verb plus accusative marking on the object discussed in Bacz 1990). For detailed analyses of the ways in which these cues contribute to inferring the definiteness status of nominals and further references cf. Krámský (1976), Szwedek (1986), Chesterman (1991), Cummins (1998), Lyons (1999) or Filip (1999), respectively.

The identification of definite and indefinite nominals in any such language is thus a pragmatic issue requiring some effort on the part of the hearers and readers, but that does not in

any way impair the efficiency or precision of communication. In fact the operation of the pragmatic machinery is so smooth and automatic that it is noticed at all and studied in any detail mostly only in research aimed at or induced by comparison with languages that have articles. Grammars and papers written by linguists who do not have any comparative interests or background in that type of research usually do not even mention the category of definiteness in discussing languages where it is not overtly marked.

In doing so they tacitly assume that in the same fashion there are well-known cases of languages that do not have any overt markers of tense (Comrie 1987: 50–53), case (Blake 1994: 15–18), gender (Hellinger and Bußmann 2001: 16–17) or even number (Corbett 2000: 50–51), there are also languages with no overt markers of definiteness and that presumption is not unfounded. In fact it has been observed that the use of articles actually is an aerial feature of a relatively limited number of languages tightly clustered in some regions of the world (Heine and Kuteva 2006: 99), e.g. Western Europe (Haspelmath 1998: 285), the Pacific (Lynch 2001) or the Mediterranean (Putzu and Ramat 2001). Highly restricted incidence of overt definiteness and indefiniteness markers is also corroborated by statistical calculations showing that at least one article is used only by around one-third of the languages of the world and two articles are found merely in 8% of languages (Dryer 1989: 85–86). Given these facts it is evident that reliance on pragmatic inference in conveying information on the definiteness and indefiniteness of nominals is by far the most popular and unmarked case (Heine and Kuteva 2006: 98–99).

However, once the process of grammaticalization is set in motion pragmatic reasoning is gradually replaced with grammatical markers (cf. Huang (1999) and Juvonen (2000) for detailed accounts of the change in progress in Chinese and Finnish, respectively). Contextual inferences are then steadily built into the conventional meanings of lexical items that undergo grammaticalization, the evolving forms slowly come to

be used in contexts that do not offer any grounds for inferring their nascent grammatical functions and their meanings keep growing more and more schematic.

Grammaticalization is known, though, to proceed quite slowly, which entails that until it is completed the same meaning will be expressed in two different modes: by grammatical markers in those contexts where the process has already come to an end or is well advanced and by inferences drawn from contextual clues in those environments where grammaticalization has not begun yet or remains in its early stages. In other words the incomplete grammaticalization model assumes that pragmatic and non-pragmatic ways of encoding grammatical meanings naturally coexist.

In the case of English articles this assumption translates into the claim that wherever they are inadmissible the definiteness or indefiniteness of nominals is inferred from contextual cues and that condition will continue until these inferences are grammaticalized. The contexts where neither the definite nor the indefinite article can be used preserve thus the original pragmatic status of the information on the definiteness or indefiniteness of a nominal, while elsewhere grammaticalization has already transformed it into overt markers. Consequently, there is no room or rationale to posit the zero article, which explains why in quite a few cases reviewed in the previous sections the evidence relied on by its stalwart supporters was found to be circular (cf. the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 above).

The zero article is expendable because from the standpoint of the incomplete grammaticalization model it is nothing more but an early reification of pragmatic reasoning. Looking for a way to express the intuition that the definiteness or indefiniteness of a nominal may also be expressed covertly, without the use of overt articles, structural linguists had no access to the concepts of pragmatics that emerged decades later and verbalized their insight with the help of the theoretical apparatus available in the 1940s, creating thus the invisible zero article (cf. Chapter 1 for more details).

Since the explanatory power of the covert article they created in this way is, though, negligible (cf. the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 above) and more adequate tools to describe the same data have emerged, the concept of the zero article should be put to rest along with other theoretical fictions that were postulated to explain observable facts but in time proved to be inadequate and were discarded. The examination of British National Corpus data in subsequent chapters will show that the zero article is a linguistic myth that can now be safely retired and need no longer clutter grammatical descriptions.

Chapter 5

Singular role holders

The explanatory power of the incomplete grammaticalization model will now be exemplified by examining English article usage with predicate nominals designating functions performed by single individuals. In line with the claim advanced in the previous chapter it will be shown that any such nominals fail to satisfy an important and independently motivated condition on the use of an overt English article, which effectively prevents its spread into this type of grammatical environment and results in a gapped pattern.

As has been noted in numerous grammars (e.g. Biber et al. 1999: 261), the standard English pattern is to ground predicate nominals with the indefinite article. However, this practice is dispensed with if the predicate nominal instantiates an office held by a single individual:

- (55) Speaking before business, civic and other groups Reagan **was an impressive performer** according to the former newspaperman who organized his early GE tours. (EAY)¹
- (56) Ronald Reagan **was President of the United States**, but the real power lay with advisers like Caspar Weinberger, who wielded enormous behind-the-scenes influence. (CEF)

In (55) it can be safely assumed that there have been countless performers able to charm any audience and Reagan was merely one of them, while in (56) it is clear that the office of the US president is always held by a single person, and the numerical difference is reflected in article usage.

The same contrast is observed when the predicate nominal is used with a verb that also takes an object:

- (57) Harris was born at Henley-upon-Avon, but the family soon moved to Birmingham, where he was later to become associated with the Shakespeare Institute. He took his BA at Birmingham in 1948, and followed this with an MA (on James Shirley) in 1952. Nicoll **appointed him a fellow** of the Shakespeare Institute in 1953. (A47)
- (58) Mr John Deighton, of High Pottergate, Richmond, expects to be away for three years. However, members wanted to recognise his outstanding contribution to the club so **they elected him president**. (K 52)

Any institute or club obviously has a number of members, so the appointment reported in (57) merely added one more person to a group of distinguished individuals who had been awarded that honor before. However, any such institution is typically chaired by a single person (e.g. president, chairman, chairwoman, etc.), which makes overt articles inadmissible in (58) again.

While the nominals predicating membership in a group are unquestionably indefinite (cf. the article use in (55) and (57) above), the definiteness status of predicate nominals designating offices held by single individuals has been subject to some controversy. For example, Chesterman (1991) claims that they trigger the use of the null article, which practically makes them definite (cf. the discussion in Section 3.3), Huddleston and Pullum (2002) offer another argument to the same effect, Hewson (1972) analyzes them in the chapter devoted to the indefinite article, and most descriptive grammars remain uncommitted, stating only that any such predicate nominals trigger the use of the zero article (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985) or noting that the zero article occasionally alternates with the definite one (e.g. Biber et al. 1999).

The issue is then undecided because the definiteness status of nominals designating offices held by single individuals

is not in any way explicitly indicated and arguments in favor of particular solutions can proceed only indirectly via positing and questioning theoretical assumptions or drawing analogies with more clear-cut cases. Settling this issue is, however, crucial for the application of the model developed in the preceding chapter. Since there are two overt English articles whose grammaticalization remains incomplete, it has to be determined first which of them has so far failed to expand into the grammatical environment in question and only then can the model be put into any reliable use. The most convenient point of departure for solving that puzzle seems to be reviewing the rationale behind the use of articles with the less controversial type of predicate nominals.

It is generally presumed that individuals profiled by subject nominals are construed as instances of the type defined by predicate nominals, i.e. as members of sets designated by the latter. Inducing this type of set membership construal is a standard function of predicate nominals attested in a variety of languages (Croft and Cruse 2004: 68) and is indicative of their inherent indefiniteness as this is the default information status of nominal expressions that are type identifiable only (Gundel Hedberg and Zacharski 1993: 284–290). In the case of English this contention is further corroborated by the fact that the standard indicator of set membership in that language is the use of the indefinite article (Hawkins 1991: 416–432).

On a somewhat more detailed level of analysis it has long been known that both in referential and non-referential contexts the use of the indefinite article in English is licensed only if it can be reasonably assumed that a nominal instantiates a set with two or more members: one that is profiled and at least one more that is not (Declerck 1986: 28–29). This numerical requirement reflects the fact that the identity of any entity instantiated by a nominal grounded by the indefinite article is presumed by the speaker not to be known to the hearer. Proceeding on that assumption the speaker can therefore specify only which set the entity in question belongs to in order to provide any information

at all but in doing so has to ensure that the set has enough members of the same kind to make them indistinguishable from one another without access to additional information.

Since the speaker obviously is not in a position to know with any certainty how much information is actually available to the hearer (cf. Clark and Marshall (1981) for an insightful analysis of the consequences that entails), this assumption may occasionally be overridden by an interlocutor who is provided with enough contextual clues to work out which entity is meant anyway (cf. Declack (1987b) and Wilson (1992) for the discussion of relevant examples). However, whether that actually happens or not, it goes without saying that the minimum number of set members required for the assumption to work is two. For instance:

- (59) Looking out of the window, Branson saw flames streaming momentarily from **an engine**; then the plane righted itself and flew on. (FNX)

The laws of physics and common sense leave no doubt that the plane must have had more engines than one for the flight to continue after the fire even though only a single one is profiled by the indefinite nominal. The existence of other ones is merely assumed but the correctness of that assumption is borne out both by the simple fact that the plane did not crash immediately and by a later part of the same text where it is explained that:

- (59') Only when the plane landed was it discovered that there had been a compressor-blade failure in one of the engines. (FNX)

Whether the numerical assumption is explicated in later discourse, as is the case above, or remains implicit, it is then an important constraint on the use of the indefinite article usually referred to as exclusiveness ever since the publication of Hawkins (1978). This traditional name (for the history of the

concept and alternative labels cf. Declerck 1987a) captures the fact that besides the entity actually profiled by the speaker at least one more entity of the same kind is presumed to exist in the same set but is excluded, i.e. remains unprofiled in the background.

Those predicate nominals that designate roles held by multiple individuals meet thus the numerical requirement by definition and are always preceded by the indefinite article, e.g.:

- (60) He **is a hero**, with a hero's faults: **an achiever** and **an adventurer** who is also **a victim** and **an outcast**, **a shameful man** and **a faithful family man**. (A05)

The roles of heroes, achievers, adventurers, victims, outcasts, shameful men and faithful family men are played by numerous individuals and any interlocutor can easily populate each of the sets profiled by the predicate nominals in (60) with at least two or more persons displaying relevant characteristics.

However, if the predicate nominal designates an office held by a single individual, the numerical requirement is much harder to satisfy, e.g.:

- (61) In June 1953, with memorable pageantry, Elizabeth II **was crowned queen**, an event that promoted music rather than literature, among the arts, and design more than either. (CKN)

At first blush populating the set of English queens with at least one other female monarch might not seem to be a problem. Given some basic education and / or exposure to British culture stored in the encyclopedic knowledge of the speakers, it should take no time to think of Elizabeth I or Victoria as obvious members of the same set as Elizabeth II, which, as shown above, would be more than enough to meet the condition necessary for preceding the predicate nominal in (61) with the indefinite article. Evoking such additional set members is, however,

hindered by another piece of encyclopedic knowledge accumulated by the interlocutors.

Besides the names of different queens and zillions of other facts of life, an equally obvious part of the same store of general knowledge is the familiarity with the rule of succession whereby monarchs are crowned only after their predecessors have passed away or abdicated and the royal office is always lawfully held by only one person. The linguistic consequence of familiarity with that simple dynastic principle is focusing the attention of speakers on the period of time occupied by the reign of a single monarch and defocusing any other ones. The ruler profiled by the subject of (61) is thus included in the set of female English monarchs, while other potential members of the same set are not. Consequently, even though the numerical requirement could have been met without any problems as shown above, it is eventually failed because only one individual is salient enough to qualify for set membership, which is insufficient to license the use of the indefinite article.

In other words, the sets instantiated by predicate nominals designating roles played by multiple individuals and offices held by single individuals both have the potential to satisfy the numerical requirement but in the latter case doing so is hampered by the narrow perspective induced by the familiarity with the rule of succession. This default synchronic conceptualization can, however, be overridden if the speaker explicitly takes a historical perspective and profiles the incumbent as one of many individuals who have served in the same capacity over a stretch of time:

- (62) The reverse shows crossed keys above a shield and is inscribed: JULIUS II PONT MAX. Was there **a Pope Julius II**? Indeed, there was a Pope Julius II. He held office from 1503 to 1513 and, among other things, he was responsible for building the beginning of the great Church of St Peter's. He was patron to Michelangelo, some of whose best sculptures were intended for Pope Julius' tomb. These

broad silver coins were first minted under his orders and they became known as *Giulii* for that reason. (G2Y)

The question asked in the early part of the narrative actually serves as an invitation to scan a list of Popes in search of Julius II and finding him on that list is confirmed by the answer provided in the next clause. This Pontiff is thus profiled against the background of all former and later heads of the Roman Catholic Church, which guarantees a plurality satisfying the numerical requirement and licenses grounding the predicate nominal with the indefinite article.

The sets instantiated by predicate nominals designating roles played by multiple individuals and predicate nominals designating offices held by single individuals differ thus only in the temporal status of their members. In the former case particular set members can be both contemporary with the speaker or not, depending on the extent of his or her encyclopedic knowledge, while in the latter case, due to the operation of the rule of succession, set members have to come from different historical periods. For example, the set of actors can be easily filled both with stars active at the time of speaking or with individuals who performed for earlier generations of viewers, depending on which epoch is known better to the interlocutors. The set of queens of England or Popes can, however, be populated only by individuals who have served in these roles in different periods of time since both of these offices are held in strict succession. Consequently, in the latter case set members will differ quite much in their salience, which, as has been shown above, is decisive for article usage.

The cognitive processes underpinning the construal of roles played by multiple individuals and offices held by single individuals are thus essentially similar. They are based on the same conceptual structure and diverge only in the extent they interact with encyclopedic knowledge in according salience to particular set members instantiated by predicate nominals. Given this fundamental cognitive similarity it is thus reasonable to

presume that it also extends to the definiteness status of the nominals involved and predicate nominals designating offices held by single individuals are as indefinite as predicate nominals designating roles played by multiple individuals.

In other words the cognitive analysis developed above follows Hewson (1972) in presuming that predicate nominals designating offices held by single individuals are inherently indefinite and challenges the stipulations formulated in Chesterman (1991) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002), who claim that any such predicate nominals are definite. Both of these rival views will now be examined and disproved in chronological order.

As has been shown in Section 3.3 above, the claim of Chesterman (1991) is based on the assumption that the set instantiated by a predicate nominal designating an office held by a single individual always has only one member, e.g. a single prime minister in (63), which leads to the foolproof identifiability of the person involved and, consequently, profiling by a definite nominal:

- (63) **Winston Churchill was Prime Minister** and rationing was still in force when Jim and Yolanda moved into their three-bedroomed maisonette in Heydean Road with their two young children in 1951. (K4M)

This line of thinking is, however, fallacious because it severely underestimates the cognitive capacity of the interlocutors and, consequently, mistakes the effect of the narrow perspective induced by the familiarity with the rule of succession for an objective fact. It is common knowledge that there have been other prime ministers in the UK besides Churchill, e.g. Blair, Brown, Thatcher, Wilson, etc. and it would be absolutely preposterous to presume that speakers of English could be completely unaware of their existence, names, party allegiance, etc. The general knowledge accumulated by speakers guarantees thus that the set instantiated by the predicate nominal in (63) can be populated by more than one individual, which invalidates

inferring definiteness along the lines envisaged in Chesterman (1991) and, contrary to his claims, creates conditions for the use of the indefinite article.

This potential to use the indefinite article is only rarely actualized because of interference with another piece of general knowledge, referred to above as the rule of succession. The rule was introduced in a dynastic context but in fact it applies across the board to any electable or appointable office held by single individuals in strict rotation and its impact on the conceptualization of the set members instantiated by a predicate nominal is always the same. It is responsible for making only one of them salient enough to qualify for membership in the relevant set, which leads to failing the numerical requirement and prevents the use of the indefinite article.

The fact that only one set member is made cognitively prominent must not, however, be taken to mean that it is the only one there can be, as Chesterman (1991) seems to be doing. The existence of potential set members is warranted by the extent of the encyclopedic knowledge shared by the interlocutors and can be glimpsed in cases like (62), where the choice of a diachronic perspective neutralizes the limitations in construal induced by the rule of succession and predicate nominals designating offices held by single individuals finally can take the overt article that matches their inherently indefinite status.

The view presented in Huddleston and Pullum (2002) is based on the observation that predicate nominals disallowing any overt articles (i.e. bare NPs in the terminology followed by these authors) are definite because they always denote a unique role. The definiteness of such nominals is thus said to be indirectly inferable from the type of entity they instantiate. The viability of this inference depends, however, on what is meant by its key premise, i.e. the role.

The concept of the role was pioneered in Fauconnier (1985), further elaborated in Fauconnier (1997), and successfully implemented to the study of article use both in these two seminal books and in the papers written by a number of other scholars,

e.g. Koga (1992), Epstein (1994), Epstein (1996), Epstein (1998), or Epstein (1999). It is perhaps the most clearly defined in the latter of these publications, where it is noted that:

A nominal designating a role does not refer to any specific individual but, rather, to a fixed property. At the same time, the individual instantiating the role (the role value) can vary from one occasion to another. (Epstein 1999: 56)

A typical English construction profiling such a role is a singular definite nominal, e.g. the Pope in the example below:

- (64) **The Pope** is the head of the Roman Catholic Church, elected for life by a conclave of the College of Cardinals.
(HL1)

In line with the definition cited above, the truth and comprehension of that statement do not in any way depend on who actually happens to fill the role of the Pope at the time of the utterance as any lawful holder of this office is the head of the Roman Catholic Church and is elected for life by a conclave. The identity of particular Pontiffs is not an issue because they merely take turns in instantiating the role designated by the subject nominal, i.e. serve as the values this role may take.

Given this understanding of the concept of the role, it is, however, obvious that it is incompatible with predicate nominals. As has been shown in detail above, they instantiate holders of different roles and not the roles themselves. For example, they profile particular queens or presidents and not the abstract concepts of kingship and presidency. In other words, what predicate nominals instantiate in the terminology of Epstein (1999) and other students of (in)definiteness are individual values that an abstract role can take.

The reason why the definiteness inference proposed in Huddleston and Pullum (2002) is unworkable is therefore quite clear. Since predicate nominals do not instantiate definite

roles then, in the absence of any overt articles, there simply are no grounds for concluding that such nominals are in any way definite.

As has been argued above, predicate nominals are thus inherently indefinite and the difference between those ones that require the use of the indefinite article and those that require its absence boils down to the ability to satisfy the numerical requirement. The former, designating roles played by multiple individuals guarantee that the numerical requirement is always easy to meet, while the latter, designating offices held by single individuals, can do so only if the narrow perspective induced by the rule of succession is obviated, e.g. (55) and (56) repeated here as (65) and (66) for convenience:

- (65) Speaking before business, civic and other groups Reagan **was an impressive performer** according to the former newspaperman who organized his early GE tours. (EAY)
- (66) Ronald Reagan **was President of the United States**, but the real power lay with advisers like Caspar Weinberger, who wielded enormous behind-the-scenes influence. (CEF)

The set of impressive performers has quite a few members at any time and all individuals who do well enough on stage to join that group simply increase the number of its members, i.e. raise the cardinality of the set instantiated by the predicate nominal. Profiling one such member to the exclusion of others is then unproblematic, which licenses the use of the indefinite article.

In the case of the presidency it is, however, not that easy. Under the rule of succession each time a new individual takes office the previous one steps down, is forced to do so or has died before. After each election the cardinality of the set of presidents in office remains thus equal to one again and in a sentence that does not take a diachronic perspective like (62) the numerical requirement simply cannot be met, leaving the predicate nominal without any overt article at all.

In terms of the incomplete grammaticalization model the article pattern with English predicate nominals is then quite straightforward. The indefinite article has already spread to non-referential contexts and is found in all such structures except those cases where meeting the numerical requirement on its use is impossible. In other words, the numerical requirement forms an obstacle that has so far prevented the expansion of the indefinite article to some predicate nominals and is responsible for creating a pocket of grammatical environments where neither of the English articles can be used. The definite one is inappropriate because the predicate nominals in question are inherently indefinite, and the indefinite one can not be used because they fail to meet a key condition licensing its use.

Chapter 6

Corpus data analysis

The validity of the explanation worked out in the previous chapter on the basis of the incomplete grammaticalization model will now be tested against data retrieved from the British National Corpus. For the sake of clarity the presentation of the findings will be divided into eleven domains where the rule of succession is known to operate. The analysis will thus cover predicate nominals designating (i) supernatural beings, (ii) church dignities, (iii) royal and noble titles, (iv) political offices, (v) corporate offices, (vi) legal occupations, (vii) academic appointments, (viii) military posts, (ix) naval ranks, (x) sport titles and (xi) art distinctions.

6.1 Supernatural beings

Due to the fundamental difference between monotheistic and polytheistic religions, predicate nominals profiling deities provide an excellent testing ground for the explanation developed above. The essence of polytheism is the belief in a number of gods, which guarantees that profiling any one of them will always leave other ones in the background, while the cornerstone of monotheism is the belief in the existence of one God only, which makes that kind of construal impossible. Consequently, if the solution is correct, the same predicate nominals should take the indefinite article in polytheistic contexts, where meeting the numerical requirement on its use is unproblematic, but admit no article in monotheistic contexts, since they fail to satisfy that requirement by definition.

As shown below, that indeed is the case:

- (67) Jesus has a uniquely intimate relationship with God, so that we can say Jesus **is God**. (GX1)
- (68) Apollo **is in various ways a god of higher civilization**: he is, for instance, the god of medicine. (H0N)

Apollo is well known to be one of ancient Greek gods, so predicating deity of this mythological creature automatically puts it in a set populated by the rest of the pantheon, which leads to the use of the indefinite article as predicted, while predicating divinity of Jesus puts him in a set whose only member is the Triune God of Christianity, which precludes meeting the numerical requirement and rules out the use of any article.

The same pattern follows even if the difference in the number of supernatural beings is only a matter of personal opinion underscored in writing by the editorial practice of capitalizing the word *god* whenever it reflects monotheistic convictions:

- (69) When it was suggested to Gandhi on one occasion by a Roman Catholic priest that if Hinduism became monotheistic Christianity and Hinduism could serve India in co-operation, Gandhi's reply was that Hindus were not polytheistic. While it is undoubtedly true that Hindus say there are many gods they also declare that there is but one God, *Iśwara*, *Devādhideva*, who **is God of gods**. Gandhi himself professed to be a thorough Hindu yet not a believer in many gods. (C9B)

Gandhi and the priest clearly differed in their perspective on Hinduism, but as soon as Gandhi's idiosyncratic beliefs let him reduce the number of Hindu deities down to one, it was enough to make either article inadmissible in the predicate nominal printed in upper case letters.

Perhaps the most publicized example of the same contrast is the translation of the third clause of the first verse of the

Gospel by St. John. In the Greek original the predicate nominal is bare in line with the grammar of that language (Dana and Mantey 1957: 139–140), but in English two rival traditions have emerged. The mainstream Christian translation practice insists on an article-free pattern:

(70) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. (KJ St. John 1:1)

However, the version championed by Jehovah's Witnesses in the New World Translation of the Holy Scripture inserts the indefinite article in the final predicate nominal with all attendant consequences:

(71) In (the) beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was a god**. (NWT St. John 1:1)

Both the grammar of (71) and the editorial practice followed by The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (cf. the use of lower case letter in the final nominal) leave no doubt that the predicate nominal in question profiles a non-unique member of the designated set, i.e. invites the inference that besides God referred to in earlier clauses there are a number of lesser gods who are thus not fully divine, if at all. Ultimately, the use of the indefinite article serves then the purpose of denying the divinity of Christ, who is understood to be the referent of *the Word*, in line with a major dogmatic point of that outspoken non-Christian denomination (Martin 1985: 51–61).

In contrast, the mainstream Christian version exemplified in (70) obviously upholds the divinity of Christ, which is duly reflected in the choice of the article pattern. The use of a bare predicate nominal guides the reader to construing a set populated by only one entity, which paves the way for a Trinitarian (i.e. monotheistic) exegesis of the passage by equating the Word with God (for an overview of a wide range of extant English

versions and their theological implications cf. Blumczyński 2006: 67–82).

The numerical criterion may then be used to render fine points of theology in the plain language of Bible translation or even read non-biblical doctrines back into the text (cf. 71), but its operation is obviously not limited to religious disputes. Since it is based on simple math, it is intrinsically indifferent to the issue at hand and may just as well help in expressing completely uncontroversial theological statements.

A case in point are the attributes of God. Christian theologians have identified quite a few of them, e.g. love, righteousness, mercy, etc. so that profiling a single one will always leave the remainder in the background and guarantee meeting the numerical requirement. Consequently, the use of the indefinite article is called for even though the predicate nominal frequently includes the noun *god* again:

- (72) All I can say is that the *yes* of God's love is stronger than the *no* of his judgment and that I do believe that despite all the shadows and elements of chaos in the world, in the universe and in life, God's love is stronger and he **is a God of love**. (F85)
- (73) You see God **is a God of order** he's **not a God of disorder**, it's not a case of anybody doing what they like, he works according to his pattern. (J8Y)

Here the use of the indefinite article does not undermine the unique status of God because what is profiled by the predicate nominals is not the single identity of the Godhead but the multiple qualities that characterize Its innermost nature.

All monotheistic beliefs by definition exclude the concept of deification, i.e. raising a human being or a concept to the status of a god to expand the pantheon of deities. Consequently, article-free predicate nominals should not follow the verb *become* and that is indeed the case. There are only two such examples in the BNC, of which one refers in quite

a far fetched manner to Elvis Presley (74) and the other one quickly corrects its own claim despite relying on grossly unorthodox theology (75):

- (74) Elvis's vanity had been given its full and well-quiffed head. He'd had himself painted and sculptured again and again, and he'd been there for all the world to see. Century after century. Elvis the Everliving. He **had become God**. (HTU)
- (75) The son **became God**, beside, or more correctly, in place of, the father. A son-religion displaced the father-religion. (EVY)

In (74) the concept of deification is metaphorically extended to Elvis Presley to capture more succinctly his quaint behavior described in the preceding sentences, while in (75) the intimation that the worship of the Son is an example of deification is promptly modified in the following sentence, where it is claimed to signify only a change of focus. The usages of *become* reported above are then purely rhetorical.

In a polytheistic context the use of the verb *become* in this function is obviously much more at home and literal. However, as has been predicted above, the predicate nominal is then always grounded by the indefinite article since meeting the numerical requirement in this type of religion is guaranteed, especially in the environment of a verb that serves to increase the number of deities anyway:

- (76) In ancient times this magnificent monument must have been much admired and it is hardly surprising that Imhotep was remembered as a great man and eventually **became a god**. (EVR)
- (77) Consequently, for the Greeks, unlike the Persians, time **was not a god**. It only **became a god** in Hellenistic times when it was worshipped under the name 'Aion', but that signified a sacred, eternal time which was very different from ordinary time, *chronos*. (ASF)

The pattern illustrated so far remains unaffected if the noun *god* is replaced with any of its synonyms. In monotheistic contexts, where meeting the numerical requirement is ruled out, predicate nominals continue to disallow article use, and in polytheistic contexts, where the requirement is easy to satisfy, they remain grounded by the indefinite article.

A particularly clear example of that fact is provided by the titles applied to the Triune God of Christianity, e.g.: Lord, Savior, Creator, Redeemer, King of Kings or Judge. The unique status of their referents, i.e. an appropriate Person of the Trinity, and their descriptive content make them all ideally qualified for grounding with the definite article (Berezowski 2002) and that is the standard practice in a variety of grammatical environments, e.g. subject (78) or object (79):

- (78) In fact when God created this world he is described as working (Gen. 2:13), and frequently the world is said to be the work of his hands. **The Creator** is revealed to us as a rational, moral, feeling person, capable of making choices. (CDW)
- (79) Richard Baxter preached with great urgency and seriousness as he pleaded with sinners to ‘embrace **the Redeemer** with a lively faith’. (ALK)

However, if these titles serve as predicate nominals, no articles are admissible as predicted:

- (80) God **as creator** has never willed evil. (CCE)
- (81) From the devil’s power, from planetary fate, Christ **is redeemer**, and his values as expressed in, for example the ‘Beatitudes’ (Matt. 5) are a reversal of those current in society. (ADC)
- (82) The New Testament makes abundantly clear that the key to entry into the Kingdom is the acceptance of Jesus **as Saviour and Lord**. (CCL)
- (83) Future: Jesus who will come again at the end of time **as King of Kings; as Judge** of the living and the dead; and

who will usher his faithful people into the Kingdom of his Father. (CCG)

In a polytheistic environment bare predicate nominals are unavailable as predicted and the use of the indefinite article is the rule no matter which designation of the deity replaces the term *god*:

- (84) Epona was adopted by the Romans **as a goddess of horses and mules**. (CAC)
- (85) Iris was most often depicted **as a NYMPH** with golden, winged sandals and a herald's staff, for she was employed as a messenger for the gods. (CAC)
- (86) It was just like dreaming what I saw. A form stood in the air fronting me . . . It **was a Spirit of a wolf** that appeared to me. Yellow-like in colour it sort of floated in the air. (ALX)

The same pattern is obviously followed by predicate nominals designating supernatural beings recognized in monotheistic religions in numbers that guarantee meeting the numerical requirement without any problems:

- (87) Gabriel, the messenger of the Annunciation, **had been an angel of life and joy**; but the angel of death was a familiar and sombre concept in Christianity, as in Judaism and Islam. (ACA)
- (88) The fallen angel Lucifer, having failed to defeat God in the great battle of heaven, saw his chance to enlist new recruits and continue his rebellion in the material universe. Once so full of envy and pride, the great angel **became a devil of meanness and spite**, and he resolved to spoil the joy of God's new creation. (CCE)

Both the Bible and numerous commentaries refer to many angles and devils (for reviews of a variety of estimates cf. Skowronek 2001: 39–82 and Kościelniak 2002: 24–122), which is enough to license the use of the indefinite article in predicate nominals that profile any of them.

6.2 Church dignities

The same pattern of article use is observable in the related domain of ecclesiastical titles. In those cases where an office is held by only one person at a time and the set of incumbents has always only one member, which precludes satisfying the numerical requirement, article-free predicate nominals are readily found, while the indefinite article is used with predicate nominals designating titles conferred on a number of individuals as multiple holders of the same office, i.e. in cases where the satisfaction of the numerical requirement is guaranteed.

The best-known church dignity held by a single individual is the office of the Pope. Due to the unique status of his office the Pope is typically referred to with nominals grounded by the definite article:

- (89) By 1966, it had become common for Protestant church leaders to visit **the Pope** and to voice ecumenical sentiments. (AD2)
- (90) Starting a trip that was once only the stuff of his dreams and prayers, **the Pontiff** said Lithuanians could now enjoy freedom 'after a long period of sufferings, trials and martyrdom'. (K35)
- (91) On 13th May, 1992 **the Holy Father** formally established a new World Day for the Sick to be observed each year on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on 11th February. (CCF)

However, whenever the designation of the Pope comes to serve as a predicate nominal no article is admissible as predicted even though only one of the three designations quoted above is actually used in that function in BNC text samples:

- (92) Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Cracow, Poland, **was elected Pope** in 1978 and took the name John Paul II. (HL1)
- (93) Yet that clear vision of Pius XI's last years seems to have been lost when his Secretary of State **succeeded him as pope**. (SRK)

Table 5² BNC counts of article usage with *Pope* in predicate nominal function

	<i>Pope</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>Pope</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>Pope</i>	%
as	19	100	0	0	0	0
elected	9	100	0	0	0	0
became	8	100	0	0	0	0
was	4	80	1	20	0	0
relative frequency		97.6		2.4		0

The universality of that pattern is fully supported by the BNC data presented in the table above (Table 5).

The only case where the predicate nominal is grounded with the indefinite article is the example that has already been quoted and discussed as (62). It reports a situation in which the speaker tried to verify whether a name found on a coin really designated one of the Popes and, consequently, construed that Pontiff as a member of a large set of individuals who have served the Church in that capacity over time, which guaranteed meeting the numerical requirement. It is thus not a counterexample but a rare instance of taking a diachronic perspective on an office and its holders.

Other terms denoting high-ranking church dignities follow the same pattern. They are freely used with a variety of determiners in a number of grammatical environments like any other nominals but article usage with predicate nominals depends on the nature of the office in question. If its characteristics lead to construals that fail the numerical requirement, the use of bare predicate nominals follows as shown below for the titles of bishop, archbishop and cardinal.

Every bishop is given a separate see on his consecration and church laws specify in minute detail the time, place and manner in which the office is taken over from the predecessor. Consequently, in every bishopric at any time there is always only one bishop with full jurisdiction over his diocese whether he is helped in running it by other lower-ranking bishops, which is

usually the case, or not (Livingstone 1987: 86). The set of diocesan bishops (also known as ordinary bishops or ordinaries) holding a specific see is thus always populated by only one individual, which precludes meeting the numerical requirement and results in the use of bare predicate nominals. For example:

- (94) On 29 September 1952 Ramsey **was consecrated bishop** by Archbishop Garbett in York minster and enthroned in Durham cathedral on St Luke's Day, 18 October. (A68)
- (95) Irenaeus **was bishop** of a tiny Christian community in Lyons towards the end of the second century. (ABV)

As evidenced by these two examples, the amount of detail provided in the text may vary from the date of consecration and precise location of the bishop's cathedral to a rough identification of the extent of the bishopric, but what really matters is the specification of the see. If it is left unspecified and it is only generally predicated of the referent that he is or was one of the bishops active at a given time in a diocese, country, continent etc., the numerical requirement is obviously met as there may be quite a few bishops in any such location – Vatican statistics for 2005 put the number in the Catholic Church alone at more than 4,600 (Annuario Pontificio 2007) – and the use of the indefinite article in the predicate nominal follows:

- (96) Taken together with his absences for reasons of health, Ewing's work **as a bishop** was not successful. (GT6)

The table below (Table 6) shows that both scenarios reach substantial frequencies even though the former one clearly predominates.

The copulas introducing the predicate nominals fall into two distinct groups. The verbs whose meanings directly relate to ordaining bishops, i.e. *consecrate*, *appoint*, *elect*, *name* and *ordain* basically admit only the bare predicate nominal as specifying the see of the new bishop is part and parcel of the process of

Table 6 BNC counts of article usage with *bishop* in predicate nominal function

	<i>bishop</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>bishop</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>bishop</i>	%
as	88	85	16	15	0	0
was	18	75	5	21	1	4
consecrated	16	94	1	6	0	0
appointed	14	100	0	0	0	0
elected	10	100	0	0	0	0
made	4	66.7	2	33.3	0	0
named	1	100	0	0	0	0
ordained	1	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		85.9		13.6		0.5

his consecration, appointment, election, naming or ordination, as the case in a particular denomination may be. The other three copulas, i.e. *as*, *was* and *made*, have much more general meanings compatible both with detailed statements identifying a bishop's see and more vague ones, limited to revealing only his church dignity.

The choice of the verb is then clearly also a factor in developing the construal that is crucial for meeting or failing the numerical requirement in a given case and ultimately determining article usage.

The same considerations apply also to the title of archbishop. Its holders outrank bishops in seniority and decorum but do not differ much from them in the manner of appointment and succession. Just like any bishops, all archbishops are assigned to a specific see i.e. an archbishopric, and follow one another in office so that at any time the set of archbishops with full jurisdiction over the archdiocese always has only one member (Livingstone 1987: 32) (Table 7).

The similarity of the conditioning factors leads to a fundamentally identical article pattern: predicate nominals are bare again wherever the see assigned to the incumbent is clearly specified, any failure to identify the archbishopric leads to the use of the indefinite article as explained above, and the copulas

Table 7 BNC counts of article usage with *archbishop* in predicate nominal function

	<i>archbishop</i>	%	<i>an</i> <i>archbishop</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>archbishop</i>	%
as	75	92.5	4	5	2	2.5
was	9	75	3	25	0	0
appointed	6	100	0	0	0	0
consecrated	3	100	0	0	0	0
elected	3	100	0	0	0	0
made	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0
enthroned	1	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		90.8		7.3		1.9

Table 8 BNC counts of article usage with *cardinal* in predicate nominal function

	<i>cardinal</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>cardinal</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>cardinal</i>	%
as	4	80	1	20	0	0
created	1	100	0	0	0	0
made	0	0	4	100	0	0
was	0	0	3	100	0	0
became	0	0	2	100	0	0
appointed	0	0	1	100	0	0
relative frequency		31.2		68.8		0

introducing predicate nominals split along the same lines as in Table 6.

What is significant, though, the distribution of the indefinite article is quite different when the dignity predicated of an individual is cardinal. In contrast to the examples discussed so far, in this case article-free predicate nominals are clearly outnumbered by predicate nominals grounded by the indefinite article (Table 8).

In the Roman Catholic Church the title of cardinal is the second highest dignity reserved for the select few who are entrusted with the task of electing popes and stand out by wearing crimson robes. Crucially, though, cardinals form a college

that meets at designated times to deliberate and take decisions collectively, e.g. following a pope's death (Livingstone 1987: 90). In terms of the explanation advanced above it means then that becoming a cardinal may be easily construed as joining a set that has enough members to guarantee that the numerical requirement is always satisfied and, consequently, trigger the use of the indefinite article:

- (97) Newman, John Henry (1801–1890) A foremost leader of the Oxford Movement within Anglicanism, Newman later converted to Roman Catholicism and **was finally made a Cardinal** before his death. (AMT)

On the other hand, though, there is a long-standing Vatican tradition of reserving most appointments to the college of cardinals for a number of historic archbishoprics, which effectively means that each successive archbishop put in charge of such a privileged see sooner or later is made a cardinal. In practice, then, within such an archbishopric, the title of cardinal is passed on from one archbishop to another and at any time it is held by only one individual, very much like the church dignities discussed above. In terms of the explanation based on the numerical requirement the set of cardinals in any such archbishopric has then only one member, which ultimately leads to the use of article-free predicate nominals:

- (98) As was customary, on his appointment **as cardinal** (and within two years), he rebuilt the cardinalate church which adjoined the Arch of Septimius Severus in the Forum. (HPW)

Tradition and purely formal stipulations are then not in perfect match and it is duly reflected in article usage. Two distinct construals of the title result in two overlapping article patterns, which provides strong support for the account argued for in this book.

Other high-ranking church dignities follow the standard pattern: since they are held by single individuals who follow one

another in strict succession, the numerical requirement is never met and the use of article-free predicate nominals is the rule as illustrated below for patriarch, primate, vicar general and vicar episcopal:

- (99) He **was enthroned** in Moscow's Epiphany Cathedral on June 10 **as Patriarch** Aleksei II of Moscow and All Russia. (HKV)
- (100) Antun Vrančić (1504–73, Antonius Verancius) of Šibenik, a truly Renaissance man, travelled widely as a diplomat, had love poems published in Krakow and **became Primate** of Hungary. (FSU)
- (101) Within the archdiocese Renfrew **was Vicar General** as well as **Vicar Episcopal for Religious** from 1974, **Chaplain** to Notre Dame Convent, Dowanhill, for a year, as well as to Bons Secours Convent from 1975 to 1989. (AKH)

Lower-ranking church titles follow the same pattern. Whenever an appointment to a particular church, parish, chaplaincy, etc. is specified, the use of article-free predicate nominals follows as described above:

- (102) A. G. Brown, who refused either to wear a white tie to show his ministerial status or to allow an organ in his chapel, **was pastor** of the East London Tabernacle. (AE6)
- (103) Father Peter Clinton recently retired from his office **as Chaplain** to the Victoria Infirmary and **Assistant Priest** in Holy Cross Parish. (HU9)

However, if the range of ecclesiastical responsibilities is left unspecified and only the type of church office is profiled, the use of the indefinite article is the norm:

- (104) What if he **had been a vicar, a Methodist minister** or a **rabbi**? (HHX)

Table 9 BNC counts of article usage with *pastor* and *vicar* in predicate nominal function

	<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>	
	<i>pastor</i>	%	<i>pastor</i>	%	<i>pastor</i>	%	<i>vicar</i>	%
was	5	100	0	0	0	0	16	62
as	3	37.5	5	62.5	0	0	20	87
became	4	100	0	0	0	0	8	80
relative frequency		70.6		29.4		0		74.6
								5.1
								20.3

The overall pattern is then mixed as shown by the figures tabulated below (Table 9) for predicate nominals comprising the terms *pastor* and *vicar*.

The only new fact revealed by the table is a relatively high proportion of predicate nominals grounded by the definite article. This tendency had already surfaced before (cf. isolated instances in Tables 7, 8 and 9) but in the case of *vicar* the number of such examples is no longer negligible. All of them, however occur in the same grammatical environment: the ecclesiastical title is followed by the preposition *of* and a detailed description of the location of the vicarage and / or the time the referent spent in that office. For example:

- (105) He took a close interest in his adopted village and urged Canon Jarrat, who **was the vicar** of nearby North Cave from 1830 to 1891, to have a school built. (C93)

It is not clear why that should happen since the standard practice with all the titles examined so far has been the use of a bare predicate nominal in such an environment, e.g.:

- (106) He **was vicar** of Duffield, Derbyshire, from 1658 until 1662, when he was ejected under the Act of Uniformity. (GTE)

However, since *vicar* is the most frequent title of parish clergy in the Church of England, the use of the definite article might

Table 10 BNC counts of article usage with *rector* and *curate* in predicate nominal function

	<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>					
	<i>rector</i>	%	<i>rector</i>	%	<i>rector</i>	%	<i>curate</i>	%	<i>curate</i>	%		
was	9	75	1	8	2	17	4	36	4	36	3	28
as	17	85	2	10	1	5	11	39	17	61	0	0
became	10	91	0	0	1	9	7	78	2	22	0	0
relative frequency	83.7		7.0		9.3		45.8		47.9		6.3	

be due to conceptualizing it as a role typical of any town and village, on a par with the mayor, the theater, the church, the graveyard, etc. (cf. the discussion of the concept of the role in Chapter 5 above). If that is the case, such predicate nominals do not profile then an individual holder of the role any more but a well-known role itself.

Other lower-ranking church titles follow the standard pattern that has been noted so far (Table 10):

- (107) Mr Stillings, 59, **had been Rector** of Trefnant for 18 months and **had formerly been curate** at Rhosymedre and Minera, **Vicar** of Bagillt and **Rector** of Llanfynydd. (K97)

If the predicate nominals are not bare, they are usually grounded by the indefinite article as either the parish held by the referent is not identified again (108) or the referent himself is non-specific (109). In either case he is construed as a member of an extensive set of clergymen, which guarantees meeting the numerical requirement without any difficulty. For example:

- (108) Bishop and rector expected him to serve his minimum engagement **as a curate**. (A68)
- (109) Just **as a rector** would put in **a vicar or curate** to care for the souls in his parish, or a landlord would employ a bailiff or steward to manage his estates, so an officer would appoint a deputy to conduct the business of the office,

usually for a small pittance, while he himself enjoyed the bulk of the proceeds. (EEY)

Significantly, article-free predicate nominals are obviously not available with a designation that merely identifies a vocation to religious life but does not specify the range of responsibilities shouldered by the referent. The most frequent general title of that kind is *clergyman* (Table 11).

Since this predicate nominal profiles membership in a set that is big enough to guarantee satisfying the numerical requirement – Vatican statistics for 2005 put the number in the Catholic Church alone at more than 400,000 (Annuario Pontificio 2007) – the use of the indefinite article is the rule as predicted. The same pattern recurs with predicate nominals designating monastic vocations (Table 12).

All that is profiled by both predicate nominals is membership in a religious community, so the use of the indefinite article follows as explained above.

Table 11 BNC counts of article usage with *clergyman* in predicate nominal function

	<i>clergyman</i>		<i>a clergyman</i>		<i>the clergyman</i>	
		%		%		%
was	0	0	13	100	0	0
as	0	0	8	100	0	0
became	0	0	1	100	0	0
relative frequency		0		100		0

Table 12 BNC counts of article usage with *nun* and *monk* in predicate nominal function

	<i>nun</i>		<i>a nun</i>		<i>the nun</i>		<i>monk</i>		<i>a monk</i>		<i>the monk</i>	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
was	0	0	6	100	0	0	0	0	5	100	0	0
as	1	14.3	6	85.7	0	0	0	0	9	100	0	0
became	0	0	6	100	0	0	0	0	7	100	0	0
relative frequency		5.3		94.7		0		0		100		0

However, if predicate nominals profile monks and nuns who fill monastic roles reserved for single individuals no article is obviously needed:

- (110) While still a young man he entered the Benedictine priory of Christ Church in Canterbury. Over the next few years he gained considerable administrative experience, serving first as a member of the household of Archbishop Robert Kilwardby [q.v.] and later **as warden** of the priory's Essex manors and **as treasurer** for two terms. In 1285 he **was elected prior** after the resignation of Thomas de Ringmere, and he remained in charge for the next forty-seven years. (GTC)
- (111) His sister Eleanor became a nun at Amesbury and **was later elected abbess** of the mother house at Fontevrault. (EBP)

6.3 Royal and noble titles

Kings and queens provide paradigm examples of individuals who hold offices reserved for a single person until they pass away or abdicate. The set of monarchs reigning a kingdom is by definition always equal to one and that obvious fact is duly reflected in the usage of article-free predicate nominals (Table 13):

- (112) Diana could never **become Queen** unless **Charles is King**. (CH6)
- (113) Unless the **Queen** stands down, he could be 70 before he **is crowned king**. (CH1)
- (114) When Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, took up the fight against the English and **had himself crowned King** of Scotland, Walter the Steward (Walter Stewart) supported him and fought by his side in 1314 at the Battle of Bannockburn. (BM6)

The indefinite article is admissible with any frequency only where comparison with other monarchs is implied, which invites

Table 13 BNC counts of article usage with *king* and *queen* in predicate nominal function

	<i>king</i>		<i>a king</i>		<i>the king</i>		<i>queen</i>		<i>a queen</i>		<i>the queen</i>	
	king	%	king	%	king	%	queen	%	queen	%	queen	%
as	155	96.3	5	3.1	1	0.8	23	79.3	1	3.4	5	17.3
became	87	100	0	0	0	0	10	91	0	0	1	9
be	46	80.7	6	10.5	5	8.8	30	91	0	100	3	9
crowned	32	100	0	0	0	0	12	100	0	0	0	0
was	18	66.7	3	11.1	6	22.2	6	40	4	26.7	5	33.3
elected	8	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		93.0		3.8		3.2		81.0		5.0		14.0

the construal of a set populated by the referent and at least one more ruler to compare against. The comparison may reflect historical analyses (115) or personal dilemmas (116) but in either case guarantees meeting the numerical requirement.

- (115) Historians are divided over Richard's abilities **as a king**. To some he was wholly bad, to others merely indifferent. Few find him more than adequate and even fewer describe him as good or even satisfactory. He knew no English and took no interest in what he must have regarded as a far flung outpost of his Angevin Empire – except for the revenues it could bring. (ASW)
- (116) If my father had wanted me **to be a king**, why didn't he become king himself? He chose to be an English country gentleman. The boy had never been told that his father was killed in battle in Flavonia, in an earlier attempt to seize the throne for the Vallens dynasty. (EC8)

The use of predicate nominals grounded by the definite article is limited to a handful designations specifying the lands or people ruled by a monarch and introduced by the preposition *of*:

- (117) My father died when I was one week old, so I **was the Queen of Scots** when I was a baby. (FRD)

Table 14 BNC counts of article usage with *fool* and *king* as predicate nominals of *make*

	<i>fool</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>		<i>king</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>	
	<i>fool</i>	%	<i>fool</i>	%	<i>fool</i>	%	<i>king</i>	%	<i>king</i>	%	<i>king</i>	%
made	0	0	48	100	0	0	3	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency			0	100			0	100			0	0

However, it is a minority pattern as the standard way to express that meaning is the use of a bare predicate nominal:

- (118) Now that he **was crowned King of Scots**, he was to pay homage for his kingdom to the English monarch as Lord Paramount. (CD8)

The significance of the numerical criterion is also nicely underscored by the difference in the article pattern with predicate nominals following the verb *make* illustrated above (Table 14).

The set of fools is always populous enough to make sure that the requirement is met and, consequently, grounding the predicate nominal with the indefinite article is indispensable, while in the case of monarchs the requirement is never satisfied and the article-free predicate nominal is king.

Other royal titles follow the same pattern:

- (119) Menelik now achieved his ambition: in 1889, at Entoto just outside Addis Ababa, he **was crowned Emperor**. (H0A)
- (120) The decisive victory won by Ieyasu and lords allied to him at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 established his supremacy over rivals throughout the islands of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. He **had himself declared shogun** in 1603. (EE2)
- (121) When Ivan IV **had himself crowned as Tsar** or Caesar of All the Russias in 1547, he took care to combine the claims of his predecessors as Grand Dukes of Muscovy to be Protectors of Orthodoxy, following the fall of Constantinople, with his own position as heir to the

- territorial gains made by his immediate predecessors Ivan III and Vasily III. (FBA)
- (122) Selim **became sultan** during the disastrous war with Russia and Austria, into which his predecessor, Abdülhamid I (1773–89), had been precipitated by Potemkin’s seizure of the Crimea in 1783. (FSU)
- (123) When he **became pharaoh**, they changed their names in honour of the Old Religion – he to Tutankhamun, she to Ankhsenpaamun. (H84)

Lower-ranking noble titles are not much different. Holding any such title has frequently been associated with owning an estate and inheriting both has been governed by detailed laws ever since. Consequently, the title is held by only one individual at any time, which leads to construals failing the numerical requirement and triggering the use of bare predicate nominals (Table 15):

- (124) The investiture of Prince Charles **as Prince of Wales** could be turned into a perfect television event, and they recommended in addition that he be made available for radio and television interviews. (ADB)
- (125) In 1152, Henry Plantagenet (later Henry II) **became duke** of Aquitaine, then part of the comté of Poitou, and as such recognized his vassalic status towards Louis VII of France. (EBP)

Table 15 BNC counts of article usage with *prince* and *duke* in predicate nominal function

	<i>prince</i>		<i>a prince</i>		<i>the prince</i>		<i>duke</i>		<i>a duke</i>		<i>the duke</i>	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
as	13	72.2	4	22.2	1	5.6	28	100	0	0	0	0
was	3	23.1	7	53.8	3	23.1	2	40	0	0	3	60
became	1	50	0	0	1	50	3	75	0	0	1	25
created	1	100	0	0	0	0	3	50	2	33.3	1	16.7
made	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		53.0		32.4		14.6		84.4		4.5		11.1

The indefinite article is used only where membership in a group of individuals holding the same title is profiled in one way or another, e.g.:

- (126) So, too, was the success of John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough, whom Anne in December 1702 **created a Duke**, an almost unprecedented honour normally reserved for the sovereign's sons, a promotion which he rapidly justified by a series of brilliant victories, from Blenheim in August 1704 to Malplaquet in September 1709. (BNB)

Elsewhere the bare predicate nominal predominates except for a handful of cases in which the specification of the estate associated with the title leads to grounding the predicate nominal with the definite article in the environment of the preposition *of*:

- (127) Johnson was receiving a pension from the King whose brother **was the Duke** of Cumberland, the butcher of the day. (GIY)

As has been the case before, it is, though, a minority pattern since in most instances that preposition is used with article-free predicate nominals:

- (128) He was count of Anjou in Maine after the death of his father; he **was Duke** of Normandy by right of his mother and Duke of Aquitaine by right of his wife, Eleanor, the divorced wife of King Louis VII of France. (ASW)

Predicate nominals profiling other hereditary titles are less frequently found in the corpus but follow essentially the same article usage model as shown below for *duchess* and *earl* (Table 16):

- (129) On 22 September 1924, he regularized a long-time liaison by marrying the recently widowed Duchess of Marchena,

Table 16 BNC counts of article usage with *duchess* and *earl* in predicate nominal function

	<i>duchess</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>		<i>earl</i>		<i>an</i>		<i>the</i>	
	<i>duchess</i>	%	<i>duchess</i>	%	<i>duchess</i>	%	<i>earl</i>	%	<i>earl</i>	%	<i>earl</i>	%
created	2	100	0	33.3	0	16.7	8	100	0	0	0	0
as	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0	6	60	1	10	3	30
made	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	85.7	1	14.3	0	0
became	0	0	0	0	0	25	5	62.5	1	12.5	2	25
was	0	0	2	50	2	50	2	28.5	2	28.5	3	43
relative frequency		44.4		33.3		22.3		67.5		12.5		20.5

created Duchess of Villafranca de los Caballeros in her own right. (GTH)

- (130) The Anglo-Saxon earldoms were allowed to expire; in place of the influence of the Godwines, Roger of Montgomery **was made Earl** of Sussex in 1070. (CB6)

However, article usage is quite different when the title predicated of the referent is peer of the realm:

- (131) Nowadays, one thinks that if one **is a peer**, one is summoned to Parliament. Historically, prior to the fifteenth century, it was the other way round. The receipt of a writ of summons to Parliament meant that one **was a peer**. Since then however, the invariable mode of appointment has been the conferment of a peerage by letters patent. The patent operates in much the same way as a title deed to property, except that the 'property' cannot be alienated. It states the peerage conferred (whether it be a barony, a viscountcy, etc.) and prescribes the mode in which it is to descend to heirs. (C8R)
- (132) He **became a life peer** when he retired from that post and was appointed deputy leader of the Labour Party in the Lords in 1982, an office he relinquished only two years ago. (K5M)

Whether the referent is a hereditary peer or a life peer only, he or she in fact is a duke, a duchess, a marquises, a marchioness, an earl, a countess, a viscount, a viscountess, a baron or a baroness. In other words, the title in question is a cover term signifying membership in a noble class of British society and not a particular rank and / or estate held by the referent. The class is not too numerous, but it contains enough members to invite a construal that meets the numerical requirement and, consequently, leads to the use of the indefinite article in predicate nominals (Table 17).

However, when the predicate nominal designates the holder of a role filled by a single person who serves his or her lord and master by performing designated household duties, no article is obviously admissible again:

- (133) His son-in-law, John Lord Neville, **became Steward of the Household** in 1371, and he too enjoyed the profits of royal patronage, though he was a man of substantial inherited wealth from his estates in Durham and Yorkshire. (E9V)
- (134) His father, the twelfth Earl, spent almost three decades **as Lord Chamberlain** to the mother of the present Queen. (ADB)
- (135) At the end of the month he **was made chief steward, approver and surveyor** of the principality of Wales and the earldom of March, and in mid December **steward of Monmouth**. (EEE)

Table 17 BNC counts of article usage with *peer* and *life peer* in predicate nominal function

	<i>(life) peer</i>		<i>a</i> <i>(life) peer</i>		<i>the</i> <i>(life) peer</i>	
		%		%		%
as	1	12.5	7	87.5	0	0
became	0	0	3	75	1	25
made	0	0	2	100	0	0
created	0	0	2	100	0	0
relative frequency		6.25		87.5		6.25

- (136) Wykeham was arrested, deprived of his temporalities, and accused of corruption when he **was Keeper of the privy Seal and Chancellor** before 1371, while de la Mare was arrested and imprisoned in Nottingham Castle. (E9V)
- (137) Henry III appointed Household officers like his Poitevin favourite Peter des Rivaux: when he **became Chief Justice of the Forest** for life in 1232, des Rivaux **was already Keeper of the Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Treasury** of the royal household, and **became Treasurer of the Exchequer** in the following year. (AE9)
- (138) Edward's treasurer of the chamber, Sir Thomas Vaughan, had been arrested at Stony Stratford in his capacity **as chamberlain** of the prince of Wales and was apparently not replaced. (HWK)
- (139) Bristow **was butler** to the Duke of Richmond whose wife was giving the ball in this large rented house. (CMP)

Since there are a number of servants in any royal or noble household, the name of the office alone is obviously not enough to guarantee a construal which makes him or her the only member of a relevant set and leads to the use of bare predicate nominals. If that is to happen, it is necessary to provide further information identifying the household office and its holder, e.g. the name of the lord whom he or she serves and the time of employment, as has been the case in (134)–(139) above.

Otherwise the referent is construed as a member of a large set of servants holding the same office in hundreds of households, which naturally leads to satisfying the numerical requirement and results in grounding predicate nominals with the indefinite article:

- (140) Furthermore, it must be remembered that my father **was a butler** of an earlier generation who began his career at a time when such attributes were not considered proper, let alone desirable in a butler. (AR3)

6.4 Political offices

Another area abounding in offices held by single individuals is the world of politics. It is much more dynamic than the fields examined so far as elections and appointments usually come more often than coronations and ordinations, but the fundamental principle is the same. Once a politician has been elected or appointed, he or she takes the office over from the predecessor and holds it until replaced by a successor. At any time the set of individuals holding the office has then only one member, which makes it fail the numerical requirement and paves the way for the use of article-free predicate nominals.

The number of electable offices in a democracy is enormous and only a sample can obviously be examined below, beginning with the highest ranking and most prestigious positions of president and vice president (Table 18):

- (141) John Fitzgerald Kennedy was, at 43, the youngest man ever **to be elected President** of the USA. (EWG)
- (142) He accused Mr Bush, who **was vice president** at the time of the affair, of misconduct by failing to make his own notes available to investigators. (CBE)

The bare pattern predominates in every context surveyed in the corpus except for the collocation with the phrase *head of state*

Table 18 BNC counts of article usage with *president* in predicate nominal function

	<i>president</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>president</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>president</i>	%
elected	135	100	0	0	0	0
became	35	97.2	0	0	1	2.8
was	15	93.7	1	6.3	0	0
is	6	37.5	0	0	10	62.5
appointed	3	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		94.1		0.5		5.4

repeated ten times with the use of the definite article, e.g.:

- (143) According to the provisions of this Constitution (with revisions made in 1982 and 1989) the head of state **is the President**, elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term. (HLB)

However, it is not a counterexample as the definite nominal refers here to any person elected president at any time, i.e. to the political role common in democracies and not to a particular holder of that office as bare predicate nominals do.

For the same reason article usage is mixed in predicate nominals containing the term *head of state* (Table 19).

In the present tense the predicate nominals profile either individuals holding that prestigious office:

- (144) Since 1968 the republic has been ruled by a Military Committee for National Liberation with an executive President (currently Gen. Moussa Traoré) who **is head of state and head of government**, as well as **secretary-general** of the sole legal political party, the Mali People's Democratic Union (Union démocratique du peuple malien – UDPM). (HL0)

or the constitutional role itself:

- (145) The Cabinet is appointed by the President who **is the head of state**. (HKU)

Table 19 BNC counts of article usage with *head of state* in predicate nominal function

	<i>head of state</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>	
	<i>head of state</i>	%	<i>head of state</i>	%	<i>head of state</i>	%
is	11	61	0	0	7	39
became	2	100	0	0	0	0
was	2	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		68.2		0		31.8

resulting in the rivalry between the two article patterns reported in row one of the table above. In the past tense only the former possibility is recorded in the corpus, which instantly leads to the exclusive use of bare predicate nominals:

- (146) Under current constitutional arrangements Walesa **became head of state** and **commander in chief of the armed forces**, and held powers to nominate the prime minister, to veto certain parliamentary decisions, to dissolve parliament and to declare a state of emergency. (HL2)

Predicate nominals profiling cabinet level positions follow the same pattern (Table 20). For example:

- (147) The fact was that Churchill and Eden were not of like minds and did not associate closely until Churchill **became Prime Minister** in 1940. (ACH)
- (148) Margaret Thatcher seems **to have been Prime Minister** all my life, and the Falklands War is just a vague and fearful memory of someone else's brother going off to fight. (AA2)

The bare predicate nominal is essentially unrivalled. The articles are used only in a handful of cases where either a set of at

Table 20 BNC counts of article usage with *prime minister* in predicate nominal function

	<i>prime minister</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>prime minister</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>prime minister</i>	%
as	414	98.3	6	1.5	1	0.2
became	109	100	0	0	0	0
was	37	97.3	0	0	1	2.7
appointed	27	100	0	0	0	0
elected	13	100	0	0	0	0
is	8	61.5	1	7.7	4	30.8
named	1	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		97.8		1.1		1.1

least two individuals is profiled (149) or the well-known political role is referred to without identifying its holders (150):

- (149) **As a prime minister** he probably ranked with Ramsay MacDonald in humble origin and modest wealth. (FPN)
- (150) Thus, if you know the speaker **is the prime minister** or the departmental secretary or your family doctor or your mother, and you know that the speaker is speaking to a colleague or his bank manager or a small child, you will have different expectations of the sort of language which will be produced, both with respect to form and to content. (F9V)

In all other cases the article-free predicate nominal is the only choice and the same pattern recurs with *chancellor* (Table 21).

This title refers either to the politician heading German government (151) or the minister responsible for British economy (152), but for article use the difference does not matter as either office is always held by a single individual:

- (151) Kohl **was elected Chancellor** for the fourth time on Jan. 17 by 378 of the 644 votes cast in the Bundestag (lower house of parliament). (HL3)
- (152) Deprived of this option, Mr Lawson decided to soldier on **as Chancellor of the Exchequer**, claiming in his speech on Thursday that there was no alternative to his economic policy. (A5R)

Table 21 BNC counts of article usage with *chancellor* in predicate nominal function

	<i>chancellor</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>chancellor</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>chancellor</i>	%
as	126	97.7	2	1.5	1	0.8
became	9	90	0	0	1	10
was	33	94.2	1	2.9	1	2.9
elected	3	75.0	0	0	1	25
relative frequency		96.1		1.7		2.2

Table 22 BNC counts of article usage with *minister* in predicate nominal function (excluding non-political appointments)

	<i>minister</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>minister</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>minister</i>	%
as	405	91.2	34	7.7	5	1.1
appointed	77	96.3	1	1.2	2	2.5
became	59	84.3	8	11.4	2	4.3
was	30	68.2	11	17.2	3	14.6
is	8	61.5	5	38.5	0	0
named	8	88.9	0	0	1	11.1
relative frequency		89.1		9.0		1.9

Other ministerial positions follow suit (Table 22).

The bare pattern clearly predominates wherever the range of the responsibilities of a minister is set out:

- (153) Bowing to pressure not to appoint a pakeha (one of European extraction) **as Minister** of Maori Affairs, Bolger gave the portfolio to Winston Peters, the National Party's only Maori MP, despite the latter's characterization of the new government's economic policy as 'economic drivel'. (HL0)

A significant admixture of predicate nominals grounded by the indefinite article in Table 22 reflects the fact that ministers form a cabinet, i.e. a set of individuals responsible for particular areas of government, and whenever the range of their duties is left unspecified they are construed as members of a group that is numerous enough to satisfy the numerical requirement without any problems, e.g.:

- (154) Peggy Herbison, a family friend, **was a minister** in Wilson's Cabinet. (K5D)

The only exception from that pattern is the case of cabinet members without portfolio:

- (155) The composer Mikis Theodorakis, a former communist, **was appointed Minister without Portfolio**. (HKT)

- (156) Chamberlain, Baldwin suggested, might consider joining **as a minister without portfolio**. (EFN)

The range of responsibilities shouldered by a minister without portfolio is, though, vague enough to invite two different conceptualizations: a specific one as, after all, it is a cabinet position held by a single individual, and a non-specific one as the wording of the title does not identify what the duties of that person actually are. Any person holding this office may then be construed either as a specific minister or merely as a member of the cabinet, which is duly reflected in mixed article usage.

The predicate nominals profiling ministerial positions follow thus essentially the same pattern as the predicate nominals designating church dignities discussed in a previous section: technically, there are many individuals holding a given rank but each of them has a different range of responsibilities, which makes them distinct. A clear identification of these responsibilities puts thus the incumbent in a set with only one member and any failure to lay out the duties with sufficient clarity automatically qualifies any such person to a set containing all individuals holding the same rank. Ultimately, explicit specification of the responsibilities leads thus to failing the numerical requirement and the use of bare predicate nominals, while leaving the responsibilities unspecified results in meeting the requirement and triggers the use of the indefinite article.

In a fashion reminiscent of the discussion of church dignities predicate nominals designating ministerial positions are also occasionally grounded by the definite article in the environment of the preposition *of*:

- (157) Vlok **was appointed the Minister** of Correctional Services and of Budget; he **was succeeded as Minister** of Law and Order by Hernus Kriel, a conservative. (HL9)

Again, though, it is a minority pattern (cf. the variation within one sentence in the example above) dwarfed by examples

relying on bare predicate nominals:

- (158) Derek Keys, chair of the mining corporation Gencor, **was appointed Minister** of Trade, Industry and Economic Co-ordination in a move seen as an effort to improve the credibility of his government's economic policies. (HLE)

Fundamentally the same pattern is followed by predicate nominals comprising the title *secretary* whether it designates heads of government departments in an American administration (159), lower rank officials in European governments (160) or any other office filled by a single individual (161)–(162) (Table 23):

- (159) New faces emerged in key posts: Robert McNamara, direct from the presidency of the Ford Motor Company, **became Secretary** for Defense; McGeorge Bundy, an academic, **Special Assistant for National Security**; and the President's younger brother, Robert, **Attorney-General**. (EWG)
- (160) ALTHOUGH Mr David Mellor's new role **as Secretary for National Heritage** has been caricatured **as Minister of Fun** or **Minister for Free Tickets**, he was at pains yesterday to emphasise more serious aspects of his task ahead. (AKH)
- (161) Stephen Gardiner, who **was Secretary to King Henry VIII**, and Edward Foxe, the King's Almoner, lodged there in attendance on the King, who had moved out of London. (CFF)

Table 23 BNC counts of article usage with *secretary* in predicate nominal function (excluding non-political appointments)

	<i>secretary</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>secretary</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>secretary</i>	%
as	133	99.3	1	0.7	0	0
became	39	73.6	8	15.1	6	11.3
was	33	84.6	1	2.6	5	12.8
appointed	17	100	0	0	0	2.5
relative frequency		91.4		4.1		4.5

- (162) Frankenberg (1957), in his study of a small Welsh village, **became secretary of the local football team.** (CMF)

Titles denoting other political roles filled by single individuals show the same preference for article-free predicate nominals no matter whether the incumbents pursue careers in local government (163)–(164), an international organization (165), party bureaucracy (166), diplomacy (167)–(170) or the parliament (171)–(172):

- (163) He had served in the Georgia legislature and **been elected governor** of the state in 1970. (EAY)
- (164) When Neville Chamberlain **became Mayor** of Birmingham in 1915, he was the eighth member of the family to hold the office in half a century, and he was never to forget the influence of his local roots. (EW1)
- (165) He twice turned down the chance **to become Secretary General** of NATO, and the ideas on defence and deterrence outlined here compare favourably with much of the output of the Beltway Bandits and their fellow theorists in Paris or Moscow, save only that they are more readably expressed. (A56)
- (166) Mr Yeltsin is a successful career communist who fought his way up through the construction-industry bureaucracy **to become first secretary** of Sverdlovsk, his home town and one of the largest cities in the Soviet Union. (ABF)
- (167) Despite his aspirations to poetry, he became better-known as a prose writer in his minutes and despatches as a statesman, for ‘Owen Meredith’, better known to history as Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, first Earl of Lytton (1831–91), became a distinguished diplomat, the climax of his career coming in 1876–80 when he served **as Viceroy** of India and in that capacity proclaimed Queen Victoria as Empress at Delhi in 1877. (C90)

- (168) They are almost all rich old men, since most are appointed when in their fifties and don't retire until they reach seventy-five: Lord Leverhulme **was appointed Lord Lieutenant** of Cheshire in 1949 and served for forty years. (ADB)
- (169) Gros Espiell, who **was later named ambassador** to France, denied that his decision was connected with the referendum result, but his departure was seen as a further blow to the government. (HLT)
- (170) He **was appointed British Consul** by George III in 1809. (CA7)
- (171) Ellis **became chief whip** in March 1894 when the fifth Earl of Rosebery succeeded Gladstone as prime minister, and found life exceptionally difficult since the Liberals had only the narrowest of majorities. (GT0)
- (172) A parliamentary deputy since 1953, he **was elected Speaker** of the Chamber of Deputies in 1969 and from this post was elected President in 1978 at the age of 81. (HKR)

Article usage in predicate nominals profiling members of national assemblies depends, however, on a factor reminiscent of the pattern noted above in discussing ecclesiastical titles, household servants and ministerial positions. Technically speaking, members of parliament, representatives and senators form large sets of individuals elected for the same term of office, which guarantees satisfying the numerical requirement. Given the British and American constitutional frameworks, each of them, though, is elected in a different precinct and is the only person entitled to represent it in the national legislature.

From the point of view of a voter there is thus always only one MP, congressman or senator who represents him or her in a given term of office even though in the whole country there are scores of people who have been elected. Consequently, if the predicate nominal designating a member of the legislature specifies the precinct he or she represents, it is enough to invite

a construal which puts that person in a one member set, fails the numerical requirement and, consequently, leads to the use of no article:

- (173) In 1979, he **was elected MP** for Putney, south-west London, the seat he held with an increased majority last Thursday despite predictions that he faced defeat. (AKH)
- (174) Heinz, 52, an heir to the H. J. Heinz food fortune, **had been elected senator** for Pennsylvania in 1976, following five years in the House of Representatives. (HL6)

However, if no information on the precinct represented by an MP, senator or congressman is offered, this individual may be easily construed as one of the members of the relevant house of the national legislature, which puts him or her in a set that is populous enough to satisfy the numerical requirement and require the use of the indefinite article in the predicate nominal:

- (175) Unlike some of the other authors, A. P. Herbert **was an MP**, and in a position to make laws as well as jokes. (BNK)
- (176) Harold Macmillan, for example, never forgot his experience **as an MP** in the economically depressed north-east of England in the 1930s. (A6F)

The resulting article pattern is then mixed as shown below for the popular British abbreviation MP (Table 24).

Finally, it is highly instructive to inspect article use with predicate nominals comprising the noun *leader*. Since it designates a person who performs better than others:

- (177) The basic rules of the race are simple. In three weeks' racing the riders are timed individually. Their times are added after each day's stage. The rider with the shortest overall time is the leader on General Classification. He wears the yellow jersey of the leader of the Tour as a whole. (B35)

Table 24 BNC counts of article usage with *MP* in predicate nominal function

	<i>MP</i>	%	<i>an</i> <i>MP</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>MP</i>	%
as	41	53.9	31	40.8	4	5.3
was	23	65.7	10	28.6	2	5.7
elected	19	95	1	5	0	0
became	7	46.7	8	53.3	0	0
relative frequency		61.6		34.2		4.2

Table 25 BNC counts of article usage with *leader* in predicate nominal function (excluding non-political appointments)

	<i>leader</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>leader</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>leader</i>	%
as	218	87.6	9	3.2	23	9.2
became	28	93.2	1	3.4	1	3.4
was	27	67.5	3	7.5	10	25
elected	27	96.4	1	3.6	0	0
relative frequency		86.2		4.0		9.8

or is otherwise in charge:

- (178) Just as a leader cannot exist without followers, so too strategic vision cannot exist without being so recognized by followers. (FAH)

it is ideally suited to invite construals where the referent is the only member of a set and, consequently, trigger the use of bare predicate nominals, and that is indeed the case (Table 25).

In the few instances where the predicate nominal is grounded by the indefinite article the existence of more than one leader is presumed (179) or comparison with other ones is implied (180):

- (179) The meeting blamed the ANC for the violence in Natal, calling on it to abandon the so-called 'armed struggle';

furthermore, it urged the ANC deputy president, Nelson Mandela 'to accept [Buthelezi's] repeated invitation to sit down with him and to talk peace'. The ANC was strongly opposed to such a meeting on the grounds that it would give undeserved legitimacy to Buthelezi by treating him **as a leader** of equivalent standing. (HKW)

- (180) Labour would do better with John Smith **as a leader**. (HLU)

The definite article is again used occasionally in the environment of the preposition *of*:

- (181) It is surprising that his fondness for drink did not do more to impair his career, which was a remarkable career, only marred by his reaction to the appointment of Harold Wilson **as the leader** of the Labour Party. (FPN)

but, as has been noted before, it forms a minority pattern (cf. the percentages in Table 25). In an overwhelming majority of cases the bare predicate nominal rules irrespective of the nature of the office in question. The only factor that matters is that it is held by a single person:

- (182) But when he **became leader** of the Unionist Party, he also became the target for accusations of vacillating leadership. (AD2)
- (183) Two years later **he became Leader** of the House of Commons, and for the last two years of the Labour government presided over the empire of the Department of Health and Social Services. (ARC)
- (184) He **became leader** of the Liverpool city council; she was a member of the city council from 1930 to 1961, for the last six years as an alderman. (GT0)
- (185) Kadreddin Aslonov, chair of the Tajik Supreme Soviet until September 1991, **became leader** of Kurgan-Tyube region. (HLR)

- (186) During the August coup Gamsakhurdia had dismissed the guard's commander, Tengiz Kitovani (who **became leader** of the rebel element), and ordered the guard to disband. (HLB)

6.5 Corporate offices

Another domain with numerous positions reserved for single individuals who are appointed or elected for a fixed term of office is business. For example, in most English-speaking countries day to day management of a company is vested in a single person referred to as managing director (in the UK and its dominions) or the chief operating officer (in the US, where this title is frequently abbreviated to CEO). Any such executive is helped in discharging his or her duties by a number of lower-ranking company officers who are personally responsible for particular divisions or departments and report to the board of directors presided over by a chairperson who, in turn, is elected for a strictly defined term by the shareholders of the company (Hardwicke and Emerson 1987: 293: 306).

Predicate nominals profiling such managerial positions are thus ideally suited for dispensing with any articles as has been explained above and shown below (Table 26):

- (187) Born in 1948, Brendan O'Neill **was appointed managing director** of Guinness Brewing Worldwide in February 1993, and was appointed to the main board in April 1993. (J20)

The bare pattern clearly predominates even though the proportion of predicate nominals grounded by the definite and indefinite article is in this case higher than before, especially when they are introduced by verb forms whose meanings are fairly general (cf. the figures for *is* and *was*). The environments in which the articles are used in the examples surveyed above are, however, familiar.

Table 26 BNC counts of article usage with *managing director* in predicate nominal function

	<i>managing director</i>		<i>a managing director</i>		<i>the managing director</i>	
		%		%		%
as	63	95.5	0	0	3	4.5
is	22	68.9	2	6.1	8	25
appointed	21	87.5	3	12.5	0	0
became	19	79.2	3	12.5	2	8.3
was	14	60.9	1	4.3	8	34.8
named	2	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		82.4		5.3		12.3

As has been the case before, the indefinite article comes into play when the title is held by more than one person:

- (188) E J P Browne (44) **became a managing director** in September 1991. He is chief executive of BP Exploration and is also responsible for research & engineering and investments for the pension fund. R F Chase (49) **was appointed a managing director** on 21 March 1992. He is chairman and chief executive officer of BP America and is also responsible for Western Hemisphere region and health, safety and the environment. (HP5)

and the definite article grounds predicate nominals in a number of cases where the specification of the company managed by the referent involves the preposition *of*:

- (189) Mr Marshall (M) **was the managing director** of Industrial Systems. (CBV)

In a substantial majority of examples, though, it is the bare predicate nominal that is used in the environment of that preposition:

- (190) Dr David H. Leaback **is managing director** of Biolink Technology, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 8ND. (B0M)

Table 27 BNC counts of article usage with *chairman* in predicate nominal function (excluding non-business appointments)

	<i>chair- man</i>	%	<i>a chairman</i>	%	<i>the chairman</i>	%
as	461	98.7	1	0.2	5	1.1
is	71	92.2	0	0	6	7.8
appointed	49	100	0	0	0	0
became	50	98	0	0	1	2
was	85	89.5	2	2.1	8	8.4
named	3	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		96.9		0.4		2.7

An even more explicit pattern emerges from the survey of predicate nominals profiling company chairmen (Table 27).

Article-free nominals predominate almost completely and the same is the case when holding other company titles is predicated of single individuals:

- (191) Kevin Steeds was 29 when he **became finance director** and **company secretary** of a new company called Citigate. (CBU)
- (192) It was also agreed that the Committee would be formed of the Bondholders with Alfred Caldecott **as Secretary** (pro tem) and Mr J. C. Walker, the Manager of the Bank J. & C. Simonds, **as Treasurer**. (AMY).
- (193) Sparc laptop house RDI Computer Corp, San Diego, California has had a change of guard: start-up specialist, Roy Wright, has been brought in **as president** to run day-to-day operations, while co-founder, Rick Schrameck, **remains chairman** and **CEO** responsible for the company's direction, strategic alliances and new product development. (CTA)
- (194) Between 1973 and 1981 he **was general manager** at the Golf View Hotel in Nairn, during which time its turnover increased by 800%. (A7F)
- (195) James joined the company on May 17 from Forte plc where he **was executive director** responsible for a group of restaurant businesses. (K99)

- (196) Taylor **remains executive vice president** of parent company Pencom Systems Inc focused on new business ventures. (CSF)

Characteristically, though, the article pattern changes quite dramatically when the title profiled by the predicate nominal is simply director without any accompanying modifiers. Company law in most English-speaking countries reserves that title for members of the board of directors, i.e. a group of individuals elected by the shareholders of the company to oversee its operations and management. The directors of a company form thus a deliberative body that meets on a regular basis to discuss issues at hand and take decisions collectively (Berezowski 2006: 117–118), which leads to a construal that guarantees meeting the numerical requirement and results in grounding predicate nominals with the indefinite article. For example:

- (197) Because it is not possible for more than four people to share a freehold, the owners of each of the six units formed themselves into a management company in order to buy the building; each **became a director** of the company and was given a 999-year lease of his or her dwelling. (A79)

Since the duties of a director are not too burdensome, it is not unusual to serve on several boards of directors. However, if the same individual heads the board of one company as its chairman but does not hold any such office on the other boards he or she is a member of, the difference is duly reflected in article usage:

- (198) He **is chairman** of Emerson Electric and **is a director** of Anheuser-Busch, Southwestern Bell Corporation, Caterpillar and Baxter International. (HP5)

In the case where the busy referent is personally responsible for the operation of the board, presiding over its meetings, etc.

the predicate nominal is bare (cf. chairman above), and where he is only one of the directors of a board chaired by somebody else the predicate nominal is grounded by the indefinite article.

Some of the directors, on top of their oversight responsibilities described above, may, however, be additionally burdened with purely managerial duties in the same company. Whenever that is the case, they serve then in two roles: as a director supervising the operation of the entire company and as a manager who is personally responsible for a part of its operations and reports to the board of directors. In a way any such person is then both an officer of the company and one of his or her own superiors, which is a peculiarity of the legal systems tracing its origins to the English common law and is completely unheard of on the Continent.

The grammatical consequence of that quirk of company law is, though, the fact that any person sharing these two roles may be construed either as a member of the set of directors or as a holder of a corporate office reserved for a single individual. If the latter is the case, the construal leads to failing the numerical requirement and results in the use of bare predicate nominals usually followed by a string of modifiers specifying the range of duties vested in the incumbent:

- (199) He was subsequently **appointed director**, Reprocessing Engineering Division, and **became technical director** and also **a main board member** in 1984. (HPB)
- (200) Lisa Drake, a former Sun Microsystems Inc senior product manager responsible for defining the company's 1995 desktop products, has joined Solbourne Computer Inc **as director of marketing**, reporting to president Carl Herrmann. (CMW)

Finally, the same title is also occasionally predicated of individuals who hold high-ranking managerial positions in non-English-speaking countries in which the cognates of *director* are

widely used, e.g. Poland:

- (201) Mazowiecki in mid-October 1989 appointed Dariusz Fikus **as director** and **editor** of the government newspaper Rzeczpospolita in place of Janusz Durmala (HKW).

Given this variety of conditioning factors outlined above it is understandable that the overall article pattern with the title director is mixed (Table 28).

The same title is used much more freely outside the world of business, where it is frequently conferred on individuals heading a variety of government agencies (202), research centers (203), non-governmental organizations (204) or public institutions (205). The predicate nominals profiling the holders of any such offices are then obviously article free:

- (202) At a press conference on May 8, Bush announced the unexpected resignation of William Webster, 67, **as director** of the CIA, effective from May 26. (HL7)
- (203) Ann Cartwright, B.Sc., Ph.D., **is Director** of the Institute for Social Studies in Medical Care. (ALP)
- (204) Ian **is Director** of the Fieldfare Trust, which seeks countryside access for all and campaigns for the interests of the disabled at the design stage of new facilities. (EEL)

Table 28 BNC counts of article usage with *director* in predicate nominal function (excluding non-business appointments)

	<i>director</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>director</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>director</i>	%
as	41	29.1	98	69.5	2	1.4
is	0	0	49	94.2	3	5.8
appointed	11	42.3	15	57.7	0	0
became	1	3.8	23	88.5	2	7.7
was	7	13.5	42	80.8	3	5.7
named	0	0	1	100	0	0
relative frequency		20.1		76.5		3.4

Table 29 BNC counts of article usage with *director* in predicate nominal function (excluding business appointments)

	<i>director</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>	
	<i>director</i>	%	<i>director</i>	%	<i>director</i>	%
as	202	93.5	8	3.7	6	2.8
is	43	71.7	3	5	14	23.3
appointed	24	92.3	2	7.7	0	0
became	17	89.4	0	0	2	10.6
was	32	78	6	14.6	3	7.4
named	1	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		87.9		5.2		6.9

(205) Carter Brown, who only last year retired after twenty-two years **as director** of the National Gallery of Art, has again assumed an enormously influential position in the American art world. (CKW)

If corporate offices are excluded article usage with predicate nominals designating directors is then much more uniform and predictable. The article-free pattern predominates and other options are resorted to only infrequently (Table 29).

6.6 Legal occupations

Roles filled by single individuals are also common at law. There are hundreds of judges, attorneys, barristers, prosecutors, solicitors, etc. but only individual lawyers preside over courts, are appointed trustees or named executors of wills. And should any person holding that type of office resign, pass away or be disqualified, he or she is replaced by a successor in the time and manner provided for in relevant regulations.

In other words the set of individuals holding such a legal office at any time has only one member, which naturally leads to a construal that fails the numerical requirement and is reflected in the usage of article-free predicate nominals as shown below

for chief legal officers in the USA (206) and in the UK until the constitutional reform of 2005 (207):

- (206) Nixon hoped that a more conservative Supreme Court might back tougher law enforcement methods, and he **appointed** a mid-western conservative, Warren Burger, **as Chief Justice** on the retirement of the liberal Earl Warren. (EWG)
- (207) Joining the House of Lords as a life peer only in 1963, he **became Lord Chancellor** in the following year when the Labour Administration was formed, remaining in office until 1970. (EEC)

Predicate nominals designating judicial appointments are relatively infrequent in the corpus, but the article usage pattern they follow is quite straightforward as shown below for the head of the judiciary in England and Wales after the constitutional reform of 2005 (Table 30).

If holding other high-ranking legal offices reserved for single individuals is designated, predicate nominals follow the same pattern:

- (208) The latter studied law, **became Master of the Rolls** and was made Lord Cozens-Hardy. (AB4)
- (209) Nigel's father, former Lord Chancellor Lord Havers, **was Attorney General** when former spy Peter Wright was

Table 30 BNC counts of article usage with *lord chief justice* in predicate nominal function

	lord chief justice		a lord chief justice		the lord chief justice	
		%		%		%
as	6	100	0	0	0	0
appointed	3	100	0	0	0	0
was	1	100	0	0	0	0
became	1	50	0	0	1	50
relative frequency		91.7		0		8.3

trying to publish his book *Spycatcher* and Havers senior fought a long battle on behalf of the British Government to ban the book. (G36)

- (210) Two bribe-hungry burgesses of North Berwick explained matters quite plainly in a letter which they wrote to Henry Erskine when the latter **became Lord Advocate** of Scotland in 1806. (CRR)

Whether the referent presides over the Civil Division of the Court of Appeals in the UK (208), provides legal counsel for the monarch and represents her in the cabinet (209) or is the highest ranking legal officer in Scotland (210), each of them performs his or her duties single-handedly, which invites the construal responsible for failing the numerical requirement and dispensing with article use.

The same construal is triggered by appointments related to wills and trusts. Performing any such legal functions is usually accompanied by much less decorum than has been the case in the examples discussed so far but that does not affect article use patterns. What counts is the fact that the function is vested in a single individual: an executor who is named in a will to distribute the property left by a deceased person, an administrator who takes care of the property left by an individual who passed away without leaving a will, or a trustee who is appointed to manage the property left in trust for a designated beneficiary (Borkowski 1997: 331–377):

- (211) Hugh promoted Elias to the Lincoln prebend of Lafford and in November 1212 **appointed him executor** of his will. (GT0)
- (212) The legal dispute over the relics has been between Mr John Claridge, who excavated them in 1931, and his niece, Mrs Georgina Smith, the daughter of his brother, Geoffrey, who died in 1986. Mrs Smith **is administrator** of Geoffrey's estate. (AHX)
- (213) The type of work done by a solicitor is well known. On the property side he investigates title to land, prepares

contracts of sale, conveyances and wills, obtains probate of wills, and frequently acts **as executor** and **trustee**. (FRA)

However, if there are more trustees than one, as is usually the case when property is left for the general public and put under the supervision of a board of trustees, the numerical requirement is obviously satisfied and grounding the predicate nominal with the indefinite article is the rule:

- (214) David Lee, deputy director of the Imperial War Museum at Duxford has **become a member of the board of trustees** at the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington near York. (K4W)
- (215) From 1947 to 1953 he served **as a trustee** of the National Gallery, to which he left a fine collection of photographs of paintings which he had often used to stimulate a love of art in undergraduates. (GT2)

The same pattern follows also when the referent remains unspecified, as is usually the case in statues, legal workbooks and definitions:

- (216) [Where a person, not **appointed as a trustee**,] has received trust property with actual or constructive notice that it is trust property transferred in breach of trust, or because, not being a bona fide purchaser for value without notice, he acquires notice subsequent to such receipt and then deals with the property in a manner inconsistent with the trust, [he is deemed a constructive trustee]. (ECD)

However, if the referent is an insolvency practitioner appointed to deal with a bankruptcy, he or she fills again a legal role reserved for a single individual, which, as has been the case before, is reflected in the use of bare predicate nominals. This time around the duty of the appointee is to satisfy the

Table 31 BNC counts of article usage with *trustee* in predicate nominal function

	<i>trustee</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>trustee</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>trustee</i>	%
as	51	69.9	21	28.8	1	1.3
was	3	23.1	9	69.2	1	7.7
appointed	2	33.3	1	67.7	0	0
became	0	0	1	100	0	0
relative frequency		62.2		35.6		2.2

creditors of the bankrupt company or individual to the extent it is possible:

- (216) The court **appointed** Mr Bob Ramsay of chartered accountants Bird Cameron **as trustee** of the bankrupt estate. (AKR)

Given the variety of the conditioning factors discussed above, the overall article pattern found in predicate nominals profiling the function of trustee is then quite mixed (Table 31).

6.7 Academic appointments

A fair number of positions held by single individuals can also be found in educational institutions. For instance, an appointment to a professorial chair is made either for a limited or an unlimited period of time but is usually intended for an individual scholar. The appointee will most likely hold the same academic degree as scores of other specialists in his or her field of study and may be granted the same academic rank as other professors of the same institution, but the appointment typically identifies a specific area of teaching and / or research which makes the position unique within a given college or university.

- (218) Professor. This is the highest purely academic appointment. Professors are responsible for conducting and

promoting teaching and research in their subjects. A post **as professor** – known for historical reasons as a ‘chair’ – may be established or personal. An established chair is a permanent post in a university: when one occupant leaves it, another will normally be appointed in his or her place. (H8D)

In other words the set of professors holding a specific appointment has at any time only one member, which leads to failing the numerical requirement and triggers the use of article-free predicate nominals:

- (219) He had held sway at the College for 45 years, for 40 of which he had been assisted by his faithful subordinate William Sewell who now, at the age of 58, **was to succeed** his master **as Professor**. (B2W)
- (220) Alison Lurie **is Professor** of Children’s Literature at Cornell University, New York. (A3P)
- (221) Professor Rod Morgan **is Professor** of Criminal Justice in the Faculty of Law. (H45)

However, if the range of professorial duties and / or the institution that made the appointment is left unspecified, the referent is obviously construed as a member of the populous set of professors teaching at a particular institution (222) or the even larger set of individuals holding that title at large (223). The inevitable consequence of failing to specify either of these vital facts is then satisfying the numerical requirement and grounding the predicate nominal with the indefinite article:

- (222) Masaryk, **as a professor** of Charles University, lived here before becoming president. (APT)
- (223) Tolkien in his letters freely admitted, **as a professor** of English, to reading little of anything written since the Middle Ages, to taking no interest in the present state of

English fiction, to dish-king T. S. Eliot intensely, to finding Robert Graves an ass, and to thinking Browning's poems shallow and vulgar. (CKN)

Article usage with predicate nominals designating professors is then bound to be mixed, albeit the bare pattern clearly predominates (Table 32).

The only exception from the pattern identified above is the case of endowed professorial chairs named after the donors who provided the funds to establish them or after eminent scholars. Any such chair is then given a proper name with all attendant pomp and circumstance and the fact that the name is intended to commemorate an individual makes it descriptive, which leads to the use of the definite article for the same reason it is found in the names of monuments, memorials or ships (Berezowski 2002: 172–196). For example:

- (224) Thus it was no surprise that in 1967 he was chosen **to become the Faraday Professor** of Electrochemistry at the University of Southampton on the English south coast. (CER)

However, if no such commemorative factors come into play, the standard grammatical option is to use article-free predicate nominals with a variety of academic appointments

Table 32 BNC counts of article usage with *professor* in predicate nominal function

	<i>professor</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>professor</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>professor</i>	%
is	46	82.1	8	14.3	2	3.6
as	42	79.2	11	20.8	0	0
was	38	74.5	12	23.3	1	2.2
appointed	21	95.4	1	4.6	0	0
became	18	75	6	25	0	3.4
relative frequency		80.1		18.4		1.5

provided that the range of duties and employer are clearly specified:

- (225) In 1953 he **became Assistant Professor** and in 1957 Professor of Library Science at Simmons College in Boston, where he remained until 1965. (A47)
- (226) After the School of Oriental Studies opened in 1917 Alice Werner **was appointed lecturer** and subsequently **reader** in Swahili and other Bantu languages (with her sister Mary **as lecturer** from 1918 to 1930). (GT3)

The same model is followed by predicate nominals profiling key positions in university and college administration. The only difference is that administrative titles typically designate the duties of their holders in much more detail than has been the case above, so the range of responsibilities need not be stated separately in the predicate nominal to qualify it for dispensing with the articles:

- (227) Lord Avon **was Chancellor** of the University from 1945 to 1973. (G31)
- (228) He has published a second volume of autobiography, in which he deals with his years as a student at Oxford before and after the world war, and **is now bursar** of one of the colleges there. (A05)
- (229) Desch was educated at Birkbeck School, Kingsland; and at the age of fifteen entered Finsbury Technical College, where Silvanus Thompson [q.v.] **was principal**. (GTE)
- (230) In 1911 he **was appointed dean** of the faculty of theology at London University. (GTC)
- (231) Hus **was rector** of the University of Prague and in 1403 translated the *Triologus* of the English reformer, John Wycliffe, in which he summarises his theology. (AE8)
- (232) A. C. Benson **was Master** of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and not Magdalen in Oxford. (G2L)

Table 33 BNC counts of article usage with *fellow* in predicate nominal function

	<i>fellow</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>fellow</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>fellow</i>	%
elected	3	4.3	66	95.7	0	0
was	1	3.4	28	96.6	0	0
became	0	0	26	96.3	1	3.7
as	4	18.2	16	72.7	2	9.1
is	1	10	9	90	0	0
relative frequency		5.7		92.4		1.9

Characteristically, though, the pattern is reversed when the meaning of the title bestowed on an academic designates membership in a set of scholars. The numerical requirement is then satisfied automatically and the use of the indefinite article follows:

- (233) From 1966 to 1969 he **was a fellow** of Balliol College, Oxford, and had just been appointed to a readership at the time of his death. (GTD)
- (234) Professor John Gould of Classics **was elected a Fellow** of the British Academy in July. (BNK)

The predominance of that pattern is confirmed by the results of BNC searches for predicate nominals profiling fellows of university colleges and learned societies (Table 33).

6.8 Military posts

The fundamental organizational principle of any armed forces is vesting the command of military units in single individuals. They are appointed, promoted, dismissed and retired in strict coordination to ensure that every military unit has exactly one commander at any time and is never deprived of personal leadership. Irrespective of their rank, holders of all military posts are then naturally construable as the only members of relevant

sets and predicate nominals profiling commanders qualify for dispensing with article usage. For example:

- (235) The constitution tells us that the president of the United States **is commander in chief** of American armed forces and **as commander in chief** he can despatch American armed forces to any part of the world he chooses to. (GSM)
- (236) Edgar Garay **was confirmed as Navy Commander** and Gen. Oscar Botero Restrepo retained his post **as Defence Minister**. (HKV)
- (237) José Cespedes Zarza **was sworn in as Commander of the Air Force** on Nov. 20 in succession to Gen. Dionisio Cabello, who was reported to be under arrest for refusing to hand over his post. (HLD)
- (238) In the 1914–1918 War, he was largely responsible for reactivating the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and **was appointed Commander of the Clyde Division**, rising to Commodore in 1921 before retiring in 1927. (BM9)
- (239) Tom Longland was relieved of his duties **as commander** of 3 Brigade of the Parachute Regiment, – the first time since the deployment of troops in Northern Ireland in 1969 that such action had been taken. (HLK)
- (240) It was **as commander** of the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards that he won the DSO at the Battle of Tumbledown during the Falklands campaign. (K59)

As predicted, the pattern is insensitive to the size of the military unit in question, the range of duties vested in its commander or the branch of the armed forces he or she represents. The prevalence of article-free predicate nominals is further evidenced in the table below (Table 34).

The indefinite article comes into prominence only where the details of the appointment are left out and it is not known which specific unit the referent commanded:

- (241) Mountbatten's career had been a curious one: his reputation as a soldier was founded far less on his record **as**

Table 34 BNC counts of article usage with *commander* in predicate nominal function (excluding non-military distinctions)

	<i>commander</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>	
	<i>commander</i>	%	<i>commander</i>	%	<i>commander</i>	%
as	35	85.4	5	12.2	1	2.4
became	5	100	0	0	0	0
appointed	5	100	0	0	0	0
is	5	100	0	0	0	0
was	4	50	4	50	0	0
made	2	100	0	0	0	0
promoted	2	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		85.3		13.2		1.5

a commander in the field, which on the whole had been a disastrous one, than on his organizational abilities and his acknowledged brilliance as a leader of men. (C90)

or a group of at least two commanders of different units is instantiated:

(242) He, like the emir, **was a commander** answering straight to the King. (BPO)

In either case the numerical requirement is easily satisfied as it is the identification of the unit the commander is put in charge of that differentiates him or her from scores of other officers holding the same type of military post. If that information is missing the referent is then naturally construed as a member of a large set of individuals who are appointed commanders of military units and the use of the indefinite article in the predicate nominal becomes obligatory.

However, as long as the commission of the commander is clearly specified, the use of article-free predicate nominals is the rule even if the duties involved are not specifically military in nature:

(243) The most significant change was in Beijing military region where Gen. Wang Chengbin and Maj.-Gen. Zhang Gong,

- both close associates of Yang Baibing, **were appointed commander and political commissar**, respectively. (HKV)
- (244) **As commander** of the training school for secret police officers at Baneasa, near Bucharest, he was accused of ‘instigation of genocide, aggravated murder and violation of firearms regulations’, in connection with the massacre of demonstrators outside the Intercontinental Hotel in Bucharest on Dec. 21, 1989. (HKV)

Significantly, though, the article pattern is quite different when the same term does not profile a military post but the honor of having been awarded an order or a similar distinction:

- (245) He was awarded the DSO and the military CBE by the British, the Croix de Guerre by the French and **made a Commander** of the Legion of Merit by the Americans. (A2P)
- (246) Mr Stevens said he was ‘very honoured indeed’ **to be made a Commander** of the Royal Victorian Order for his work on the Sovereign Exhibition, which was held at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum. (K5A)

Whether the decoration is awarded for gallantry (245) or in recognition of non-military achievements (246), it is intended for any person who qualifies and is never reserved for one individual only. Consequently, any person who has been honored with a medal, cross, order, etc. is construed as a member of a set that is populous enough to guarantee the satisfaction of the numerical requirement, which is duly reflected in grounding the predicate nominal with the indefinite article.

If a military post held by a single individual is designated, though, no article is needed in the predicate nominal as predicted (247–249), even if it is purely ceremonial (250):

- (247) He was a field marshal and, when acting in his military capacity **as Inspector General of the Imperial Forces**, his wife could accompany him in public. (CLX)

- (248) In 1943, he **became deputy chief of staff** to Lord Mountbatten in South East Asia and in the following year **chief of staff** to Chiang Kai-shek and **commander** of the American forces in China. (AAF)
- (249) In 1813–15 he **was midshipman, quartermaster, and acting master** in the Moselle (16 guns) in the West Indies and off the coast of the United States. (GT6)
- (250) The Prince of Wales, who was in Hong Kong yesterday, **is colonel** of the regiment, and the Queen **is colonel-in-chief**. (K97)

Indicating the rank of the referent alone is, however, not enough to qualify the predicate nominal for dispensing with article use. The reason is that in any country there are scores of soldiers who hold the same military rank but different posts. If only the rank is designated, the key piece of information needed to differentiate between its holders is then not available and the referent is construed as a member of the set of all individuals promoted to the same rank, which leads to satisfying the numerical requirement and triggers the use of the indefinite article in predicate nominals. For example:

- (251) At the orders of Moussa Traoré, who **was a lieutenant** when he took over Mali's government in 1968, soldiers fired on rioting crowds. (ABK)
- (252) He had a meteoric rise winning the Military Cross for leading an attack at Armentieres before **becoming a lieutenant colonel** in 1916 and being awarded the VC at the Somme. (K52)

The same obviously is the case if the unit where the referent serves is identified, but he or she is not the commander or holder of any other unique post:

- (253) Gosse's career was interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1914, in which he **served as a captain** in the Royal Army Medical Corps. (GT7)

- (254) **As a sergeant** with A company, the 2nd Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry, his task was to help guard Japanese prisoners, some of whom had been accused of war crimes. (K52)

Given standard military practice in western armed forces, it is quite unlikely for a captain to command the Royal Army Medical Corps or for a sergeant to be put in charge of a company, but, at the same time, it is highly probable that in either of these units there are a number of captains and sergeants, respectively, which leads to the use of the indefinite article as noted above.

It is otherwise only in the case of predicate nominals introduced by the verb *promote*:

- (255) In 1922 he reverted from temporary major to lieutenant; he **was promoted captain** in 1924 and **major** seven years later. (GT9)
- (256) He **was then promoted colonel** to command the Militia's 14th Infantry Brigade and the Vancouver defences. (AL6)

As has been noted by Hewson (1972: 95), the reason is that while there are thousands of captains, majors, colonels, etc., there is only one rank of captain, one rank of major, etc. In other words the set of individuals holding a particular rank, e.g. captain, has a large number of members but the set of military ranks higher than lieutenant and lower than major has exactly one member, i.e. captain. If a verb profiles serving in a rank, holding a rank, etc., as has been the case with forms of *be* and *become* in (251)–(254), the predicate nominal instantiates then a member of a populous set with all attendant consequences discussed above. However, if a verb profiles movement between particular ranks, as is done by *promote*, the predicate nominal always instantiates the only member of a set, which leads to failing the numerical requirement and dispensing with article use.

The unexpected behavior of predicate nominals following the verb *promote* results thus from the interaction of its meaning with military organizational practice and provides further evidence supporting the explanation argued for in this chapter.

6.9 Naval ranks

Fundamentally similar organizational principles have evolved in the merchant navy and yachting. Merchant ships and sailing boats do not carry guns and are not grouped into squadrons, task forces or other tactical formations to attack or deter other navies as is the case with battleships, but onboard particular vessels the differences largely disappear. All merchant ships and yachts fly national flags and their crews have traditionally been organized into strict hierarchies based on a system of ranks and promotions. Most importantly, though, in any crew there are a number of roles filled by single individuals who are authorized to issue orders to their subordinates and are linked in an unbroken chain of command with the captain, whose power is supreme.

If holding any such role is profiled by a predicate nominal, it should then qualify for abstaining from article use as has been shown in the preceding sections, and that indeed is the case:

- (257) From 1798 he occasionally appeared in the coasting, home, and foreign trades **as master** of various vessels. In 1838 Messrs C., H., and G. Enderby, of London, managing owners for a joint venture, sent the schooner *Eliza Scott* and the cutter *Sabrina* on a commercial voyage of discovery. Balleny **was master** of the *Eliza Scott*, which was not a good sea boat. (GT5)
- (258) I am in wonderful health, but I shall not enjoy a moment until my ship goes to sea. [. . .] PS: Blandly found us an excellent man **to be captain**, and Silver found a man called Arrow **to be first officer**. (FSJ)

The same pattern is followed when lower naval ranks held by single individuals are designated. However, since the BNC offers only one example for each position of that type, they will be listed below without providing any further frequency information:

- (259) In 1968 Commodore Waller **joined** Patonga as **2nd Engineer**. Subsequently serving in Himalaya, Orsova, Spirit of London, Oriana and Island Princess. Since his **appointment as Chief Engineer** in 1978, Commodore Waller has served in Pacific Princess, Island Princess, Royal Princess, Canberra and Sky Princess. Currently seconded ashore, Commodore Chief Engineer Waller returns to sea duties aboard Royal Princess this month. (JIY)
- (260) This grandmother had been herself 'a very efficient sailor and navigator' and **acted** 'for many years' **as chief mate** of her husband's ship. Now blind, she would recount to the boy 'strange stories' of her sea experiences. (AP7)
- (261) He was the owner and shipmaster of the Russell, and when he wasn't off at sea (which was usually) she sometimes saw him striding through the village with Mr Bryant, a gentleman from Plymouth who went on voyages **as navigator** with him. (EWH)

6.10 Sport titles

Sport is competitive as evidenced by tens of races, meetings, cups and championships held every day around the world in practically anything, from alpine skiing to wrestling. The winners are awarded in ornate ceremonies featuring national flags and anthems, victory stands, medals, checks, cups and diplomas, to name only the most frequent prizes. Crucially, though, if the honors lavished on the victors include also an official title, e.g. world champion, Olympic champion, etc. it is held by a single athlete until the next event of the same rank is won by somebody else.

Since at any one time there is always only one reigning champion, a predicate nominal profiling him or her should qualify for dispensing with article use as argued in the preceding sections, and that indeed is the case:

- (262) KHALID SKAH **was crowned Olympic champion** to deafening jeering last night after his controversial off-on victory in the 10,000 meters. (CH7)
- (263) In the five years since, he **has been world champion** three times, but the British Open has eluded him. (AJA)
- (264) But while Mansell was taking a step closer to **becoming world champion** in San Marino, an Oxford speedway rider was mounting his own bid **to become British champion**. (K1M)

The numbers of examples retrieved from the corpus are quite low but, nevertheless, they do confirm the pattern illustrated above (Table 35).

The unexpected use of the indefinite article reported in the final row of the table is due to the fact that all the three predicate nominals listed there designate professional boxing titles awarded by a number of rival organizations, e.g. the World Boxing Council, the World Boxing Association, the World Boxing Organization or the International Boxing Federation. Consequently, in every weight

Table 35 BNC counts of article usage with *world champion* in predicate nominal function

	<i>world champion</i>	%	<i>a</i> <i>world champion</i>	%	<i>the</i> <i>world champion</i>	%
as	11	100	0	0	0	0
was	7	100	0	0	0	0
been	5	100	0	0	0	0
is	1	100	0	0	0	0
crowned	1	100	0	0	0	0
became	1	20	3	60	1	20
relative frequency		78.9		15.8		5.3

division there usually are a number of reigning professional world boxing champions at the same time, which guarantees meeting the numerical requirement and fully justifies grounding predicate nominals with the indefinite article:

- (265) He can start in Scotland on December 13 by going back to his world title roots with a defence against rugged American Doug DeWitt, against whom Nigel first **became a world champion** by winning the WBO middleweight crown back in April 1990. (CH3)

Another sport function that by definition is always vested in single individuals is team captain. Only one player is always named captain and if he or she is replaced by a substitute, the function is taken over by a teammate. Predicate nominals designating captains qualify thus for dispensing with article use as easily as those that designate single champions:

- (266) Jim **became team captain** in succession to Ian in October 1977 and led us up to Division One in 1978–79 as 2nd Division champions, then to the top of the Football League on 29 September 1979, scoring as spectacular a goal in our 4–1 trouncing of Ipswich Town as any football follower could ever hope to witness. (B2H)
- (267) Middlesex have **reappointed** Mike Gatting and John Emburey **as captain** and **vice-captain** despite their involvement in the unofficial winter tour to South Africa. (A80)

The same is also the case when the somewhat less formal designation of the team captain is used:

- (268) He says Lineker's agent Jon Holmes openly canvassed for his man **to be made skipper** of England. (CBG)

The uniformity of that pattern is fully confirmed by the results of the corpus searches reported below (Table 36).

Team captains occasionally perform also a variety of coaching and managerial functions reserved for single individuals and it

Table 36 BNC counts of article usage with *captain* and *team captain* in predicate nominal function (excluding hits unrelated to sports).

			<i>a</i>		<i>the</i>	
	<i>(team) captain</i>	%	<i>(team) captain</i>	%	<i>(team) captain</i>	%
as	98	92.5	8	7.5	0	0
was	25	89.3	1	3.6	2	7.1
became	8	100	0	0	0	0
is	7	70	1	10	2	20
been	4	100	0	0	0	0
named	1	0	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		91.1		6.4		2.5

is then duly reflected in the usage of article-free predicates:

- (269) England has an excellent crop of young players, but my role **as Captain and Selector** precludes me from naming them in these pages. (C9E)
- (270) Beckenbauer, who led Germany to World Cup triumphs **as captain and coach**, is known as Kaiser Franz to his fans. (CH2)
- (271) In charge of that tour **as captain and manager** was Tom Lowry of Wellington. (CU0)

However, when the coach alone is profiled, the name of the team has to be specified if the predicate nominal is to profile the holder of an office reserved for single individuals and qualify for dispensing with article usage:

- (272) Laurie Mains, the former Otago and All Black fullback who nursed Otago to win the national first division championship last winter, **has already been named as coach** of the All Blacks in place of the unavailable Alex Wyllis. (CB2)
- (273) RAY HANDLEY **was fired as coach** of the New York Giants yesterday after failing to lead the two-time NFL Super Bowl champions to the play-offs for two successive seasons. (CBG)

Any failure to identify the team coached by the referent leads to construing him or her as one of the hundreds of individuals who pursue that kind of career, which, leads to satisfying the numerical requirement and grounding the predicate nominal with the indefinite article:

- (274) She is now working **as a coach** in California with her two children and second husband. (HAE)

The resulting pattern is then mixed, depending on the amount of information provided in particular examples retrieved from the corpus (Table 37).

Occasionally other team-related functions held by single individuals are also profiled, and if that is the case, the usage of article-free predicate nominals follows:

- (275) The pressure became too much as sponsors, fly-by-nights and average New Zealanders sent them off to the World Cup with the message that all New Zealand expected them to win. The other part of the losing recipe was supplied by the players and the New Zealand Rugby Football Union. In 1988 the team management was set up with John Sturgeon, an austere West Coaster **as manager**; Alex Wyllie **as coach**; John Mayhew **as doctor** and David Abercrombie **as physiotherapist**. (CHV).

Table 37 BNC counts of article usage with *coach* in predicate nominal function (excluding hits unrelated to sports)

	<i>coach</i>	%	<i>a coach</i>	%	<i>the coach</i>	%
as	52	73.2	17	23.9	2	2.9
was	6	54.5	5	45.5	0	7.1
appointed	2	100	0	0	0	0
became	1	100	0	0	0	0
relative frequency		71.8		25.9		2.3

6.11 Art distinctions

Art can also be quite competitive. For example, in every orchestra only designated musicians are allowed to play solo parts, while the rest of the players have to be content with less prominent roles. And the difference does not simply boil down to performing other parts of the score. It is equally palpable before and after the concert as the soloist comes on stage after all other players, when everybody else has already tuned their instruments, and is the first one to leave, well before the applause has ended. He or she is usually also the only player who shakes hands with the conductor, returns on stage if the ovation continues and is applauded by other orchestra members in recognition of his or her superior mastery.

Given the fact that the distinction is accorded to only one musician who fills the role of the soloist at a given performance, it is only natural to expect that predicate nominals designating such individuals will qualify for dispensing with article use:

- (276) In the RNCM on Friday they are playing Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's Trumpet Concerto, with Hakan Hardenberger **as soloist**. (AAR)
- (277) Brahms took three years to complete his second piano concerto, and he was 48 when it had its first performance (1881) with himself **as soloist**, in Budapest – then the twin capital, with Vienna, of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. (KS8)

Specifying the time and venue of the concert, the piece performed on that occasion and its composer guarantees that the soloist can be easily construed as the only musician accorded that status. However, if the performance is not identified with sufficient detail, the predicate nominal is grounded by the indefinite article as there are hundreds of musicians who fill the role of the soloist on various occasions and profiling only membership in this elite set of players is not enough to fail the

numerical requirement:

- (278) She performs regularly **as a soloist** and in chamber music in many European countries. (AYM)
- (279) **As a soloist** Paul has played in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Wigmore Hall and St John's Smith Square, as well as overseas in Europe and the USA. (H45)

The same considerations apply to musicians who lead particular groups of instruments in an orchestra, the conductor and artistic director:

- (280) Matthew Truskett, who plays in the national youth orchestra, hopes to study music in a big way and become a violinist; Janine Peacock, who **was principal cellist** in the national children's orchestra, recently played solo in a concert at Stockton Parish Church; and many others have won singing prizes. (K4P)
- (281) Alun Francis **was appointed principal conductor** of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra. (A4K)
- (282) The London Mozart Players' Harry Blech founded the London Mozart Players in 1949. Jane Glover succeeded him **as Artistic Director** in 1984, and has successfully broadened the policies of the orchestra by bringing in chamber music of the 19th and 20th centuries, while maintaining a strong commitment to the Haydn/Mozart period. (KS8)

Again, there are thousands of cello players, conductors or directors around the world, but in each orchestra there is only one individual who fills the role of principal cellist, principal conductor or artistic director in a given season, tour, term, etc., which is enough to guarantee failing the numerical requirement and license the use of article-free predicate nominals.

Other performing arts follow the same pattern, e.g. ballet (283)–(284) and the movies (285)–(286):

- (283) Although Sleep **became principal dancer** of the Royal Ballet, he decided to diversify because of his height and

- created his own TV series *The Hot Shoe Show* in the early 1980s. (K4T)
- (284) ‘They both have temperaments’, says Andris Toppe, who has worked with the couple for eight years **as choreographer and rehearsal director**. (HAE)
- (285) *Piccadilly* (1929), for example, had foreigners in all the key positions: the German E. A. Dupont **as director**, Alfred Jünge **as art director**, Werner Brandes **as lighting cameraman**, as well as Olga Tschechova and Jean Bradin as the film’s stars. (A7L)
- (286) His latest film *Peter’s Friends* is due out this week with Branagh serving **as producer, director and star**. (K97)

Finally, the same construal follows whenever artists are awarded distinctions reserved for single individuals who succeeded one another in due time:

- (287) Ilija Crijević from Ragusa (Aelius Lampridius Cervinus) became a member of the Quirinal Academy in Rome in 1484 at the age of twenty-one years, and **was crowned poet laureate** for a treatise on Virgil. (FSU)
- (288) Robert Southey (1774–1843) who was later **to become poet laureate**, discovered the medieval *Chronica del Cid* during his childhood in Spain, and later made a translation which became something of a best-seller in the nineteenth century. (ASW)

There are scores of poets but only one of them is selected to fill the role of poet laureate at a time, which guarantees failing the numerical requirement and one more time calls for the use of bare predicate nominals.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and further research

The results of corpus data examination in the preceding chapter warrant drawing a number of conclusions. First of all, they have provided cogent evidence in support of the incomplete grammaticalization model developed in Chapter 4. The analysis leaves no doubt that the factor conditioning the occurrence of bare predicate nominals is their failure to satisfy an independently motivated condition on English article use, which puts the structure in question beyond the range of grammatical environments the articles have systematically expanded into yet. English usage can thus be successfully explained without resorting to the zero article and its concept can be safely retired from linguistic theories and textbooks as argued at length in Section 4.3.

As shown in the table below (Table 38), in those cases where only one salient construal of the role holder profiled by the predicate nominal is available the relative frequency of the article-free pattern averages more than 90% despite the occurrence of a number of minor interfering factors (e.g. references to multiple or non-specific incumbents, definite article usage in the environment of the preposition *of*, etc.).

What is even more significant, the account presented above proved to be robust enough to offer viable explanations of cases where two salient construals of the role holder designated by the predicate nominal are possible and, consequently two article patterns exist side by side. The integration of the linguistic condition on article use referred to above as the numerical requirement with non-linguistic properties of the roles profiled

Table 38 Relative frequencies of article patterns followed by predicate nominals inviting one salient role holder construal

	<i>no article in the predicate nominal (%)</i>	<i>indefinite article in the predicate nominal (%)</i>	<i>definite article in the predicate nominal (%)</i>
Pope	97.6	2.4	0
king	93.0	3.8	3.2
queen	81.0	5.0	14.0
president	94.1	0.5	5.4
prime minister	97.8	1.1	1.1
chancellor	96.1	1.7	2.2
secretary (in politics)	94.1	4.1	4.5
leader (in politics)	86.2	4.0	9.8
managing director	82.4	5.3	12.3
chairman	96.9	0.4	2.7
director (non-business)	87.9	5.2	6.9
lord chief justice	91.7	0	8.3
(team) captain	91.1	6.4	2.5
geometrical mean	91.2	3.0	5.5

by particular predicate nominals made it possible to predict when two article patterns should be expected and point out the factors motivating the choice of either one – cf. the discussion of predicate nominals designating cardinals, bishops, pastors, cabinet ministers, company directors, trustees, military commanders, university professors, coaches and world champions, to name only a few.

On a more detailed level the data examined in the previous chapter show that while in some instances the fact that a nominal profiles a role held by a single individual is enough to ensure a construal that leads to the use of article-free predicate nominals (e.g. Pope, king, prime minister and some of the remaining items listed in Table 38), in most cases it has to be supplemented by further information, e.g. the range of duties vested in the incumbent, the time he or she has been elected for, the institution he or she serves, etc. In other words, contrary to the statements of some descriptive grammarians (e.g. Berry 1993: 51–52), the disuse of articles does not automatically follow

the occurrence of a restricted group of nouns in predicate nominal function. Their use is only one of the factors contributing to the construal and it need not be decisive.

Likewise the choice of the verb designating the election or appointment of an official holding a function reserved for single individuals (e.g. *to elect, to appoint, to name*, etc.) does not guarantee that the predicate nominal is going to be article free, either. Just like the designation of the noun, the meaning of the verb is only one of the factors contributing to the construal that ultimately determines article use and it need not be decisive. The claims of descriptive grammarians who maintain that article-free predicate nominals automatically follow the use of specific verbs (e.g. Quirk et al. 1972: 159–160) are then also overstated.

The data show also a substantial difference in the propensity of copulas to co-occur with predicate nominals designating roles held by single individuals but grounded by the definite or indefinite article. As indicated in Table 38 and throughout the previous chapter, the frequency of such occurrences is very low, but when they do surface the predicate nominals are typically introduced by copulas whose meanings are fairly schematic, e.g. *as*, or forms of the verb *to be*. Copulas with more fine grained meanings, e.g. *appoint, crown, create, enthrone, make, name, ordain*, etc. usually introduce only article-free predicates. Should the expansion of the English articles into new contexts continue and they come one day to be freely used with predicate nominals designating roles held by single individuals, the development is then most likely to be spearheaded by nominals introduced by the two highly schematic items referred to above.

The incomplete grammaticalization model yields thus a far more adequate, detailed and consistent account of the English usage than the theories based on the concept of the zero article. The model ensures smooth integration of the schematic meaning of the articles with the encyclopedic meaning prompted for by particular nominals, which makes the solution argued for above sensitive to a variety of factors well known to the speakers

but ignored by the traditional accounts, e.g. ecclesiastical traditions, company organization or political systems, as shown in detail in Chapter 6. Consequently, the explanation based on the incomplete grammaticalization model is able to account not only for the standard article-free pattern followed by predicate nominals designating singular role holders but also for the variation on that usage noted in the corpus.

Since the model is built on existing and generally accepted theories of English article use and development (cf. Chapters 4 and 5), the explanation it offers obviously fits in well with accounts of other areas of article usage and expands the range of contexts where it is known to follow from simple cognitive principles. It is particularly helpful in those instances where there is substantial variation in grounding predicate nominals. In any such cases the use of the definite and indefinite article has been shown above to be triggered by the same cognitive considerations as in any other English grammatical environments, while the disuse of the articles has been shown to reflect the failure to meet a numerical requirement that is a vital part of these considerations. The incomplete grammaticalization model effectively extends thus the applicability of tested and generally accepted accounts of article use into contexts that have so far lain beyond their reach and have been treated as irregularities that could only be explained away by invoking the antiquated and fallacious concept of the zero article.

In doing so the solution argued for above preserves, though, not only the consistency of the theories it is based on but also the simplicity of the cognitive paradigm of language research. It does not introduce any complicating factors to the approaches it draws on and relies for its explanatory power on fundamental human cognitive abilities. It can thus be easily used in the classroom to explain English usages that are otherwise inexplicable and have to be memorized as exceptions requiring the use of the zero article.

Finally, it is also hoped that further research will show how the incomplete grammaticalization model can be applied to the

remaining grammatical environments surveyed in Chapter 2. The easiest targets seem to be indefinite plurals and uncountable singulars, since they both clearly fail to meet well-known conditions on the use of the indefinite article. Plurals always instantiate entire sets of entities (for a classic account cf. Schein 1993) while the English indefinite article grounds only nominals designating single items, and uncountables appear to lack units that make any counting feasible at all, which renders them incompatible with an article whose use to a considerable extent depends on the ability to count.

Some work along these lines has already been accomplished, e.g. the accounts of English article-free prepositional phrases (Stvan 1998) and proper names (Berezowski 2002). Given the framework that has been developed and applied to predicate nominals in the preceding chapters, it should, however, now be possible to analyze any areas of English article-free usage without having to fall back on the mythical grammatical concept of the zero article.

Notes

- ¹. The brackets quote the ID of the British National Corpus text the example has been culled from. Bold type fonts are added to facilitate locating the excerpt under discussion.
- ². The results of corpus searches reported in frequency tables are pruned of examples which are spelled in the same way as the item actually searched for but differ from it in reference and / or meaning. For example, the figures in this table exclude instances of the proper name Pope, the frequencies tabulated in the next one do not include references to the chess piece bishop, etc. The numbers provided in frequency tables may then be lower than the raw numbers of hits returned by the BNC search engine.

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