

Copy Editing in Medical Journalism

Presented by: Prof. Nasrin Shokrpour



The Use of Articles

- ▶ in English Papers



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅)

▶ ∅ (Zero Article)

▶ We use:

- **Talk about things in general (all things everywhere)**
 - I love watching whales! (All whales everywhere, not just one specific whale.)
 - I love Italy.
- **Countries**
 - He's from Germany.
 - Have you visited Algeria?



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

Languages

- French
- Japanese

• Meals

- Breakfast

• People's names and titles

- Prof., Dr Smith

• With possessives

- My coffee ...
- Her dog ...



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

- **Uncountable nouns (unless referring to a specific example)**
 - I love adding milk (uncountable) to my coffee (uncountable + possessive).
- **Specific mountains, lakes, and islands**
 - Mt. Fuji
- **Most cities, towns, streets, and airports**
 - Kiev
 - New York
 - Main Street



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

- **zero article versus definite article (*the*): main usage**
- The term ‘zero article’ refers to cases where no article is required. Use the zero article if you are talking about something in general and the noun is:
 1. In the plural, e.g. *computers, books*.
 2. Uncountable (e.g. *hardware, information*).
 3. Abstract - either singular countable or uncountable, e.g. *life, success, performance*.
- Note that:
 4. Some words change meaning if they are used with or without *the*.
 5. Titles to papers occasionally omit the article of the first noun. Both forms (i.e. with and without *the*) are common.
 6. Captions to figures often omit the definite article.



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

without the	with the
She didn't want to be in hospital but she was too ill to go home. (in hospital means being there as a patient)	She didn't want to be in the hospital ... (in the hospital means being in the building)
When I was at school, we didn't have computers. (at school means being there as a student)	When I was at the school ... (at the school means being in the building)



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

- ▶ We don't use *the* with *bed* when we go there to sleep:
 - ▶ *I always go to bed at eleven o'clock.*
Not: ~~I always go to the bed~~ ...
- ▶ We don't use *the* before *work* when we talk about the place where we do our job:
 - ▶ *They go to work at 8 am every morning.*
Not: ~~They go to the work~~ ...



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

In, on at with time

▶ *I arrived on time.*

▶ **Possessive expressions**

We don't use *the* to refer to an individual's behaviour or to parts of an individual's body:

He spends most of his free time playing computer games.

Not: ~~He spends most of the free time ...~~

▶ *I must wash my hands.*

Not: ~~I must wash the hands.~~

▶ **This, that and articles**

▶ *I need this book*



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

- We don't use *the* with plural nouns when we are referring to things in general:
 - ▶ *We have to protect wild animals. (referring to wild animals in general)*
 - ▶ *Not: ~~the wild animals.~~*
- We don't use *the* when we refer in general to something abstract or uncountable:
 - ▶ *I love Japanese food. (all Japanese food/Japanese food in general)*
 - ▶ *Not: ~~I love the Japanese food.~~*



1.3. The Use of Zero Article (∅) (cont)

- We don't use *the* when the noun is not known to the listener or reader:
 - ▶ *Last Sunday, we saw **a** film called 'Nightmare'. (The speaker doesn't think that the listener knows of this film.)*
 - ▶ *Not: ... ~~we saw the film called 'Nightmare'.~~*
- We don't use *the* instead of a possessive pronoun:
 - ▶ *The police asked us to put **our** hands up.*
 - ▶ *Not: ~~The police asked us to put the hands up.~~*

