

## EXPRESSING INDEFINITENESS IN ENGLISH WITH REFERENCE TO BODY PARTS

LENKA VAŇKOVÁ

### 1. Introduction

The present study focuses on expressing indefiniteness in English, particularly nongeneric indefinite reference with a unique referent. The aim of the study is to give a comprehensive and detailed description of the use of the indefinite article *a/an* with reference to body parts, based on their semantic differentiation and function in functional sentence perspective.

### 2. Reference to body parts

#### 2.1 Nongeneric definite reference

Body parts are generally associated with nongeneric definite reference. This applies especially to body parts with only one possible referent, in which case nongeneric definite reference expresses uniqueness. Since nongeneric definite reference and the indication of uniqueness are the domain of the definite article, body parts are most often referred to by the definite article or a possessive. Furthermore, “with reference to parts of the body and following a preposition, *the* is often used instead of possessive pronouns *my, your, her, their, etc.*” (Quirk et al., 1985: 270, *CGEL* henceforth). Compare the following examples, taken over from *CGEL* (270):

- (1) Mary banged herself on *the forehead*.
- (2) They pulled her by *the hair*.
- (3) Everyone gave us a pat on *the back*.
- (4) Don't keep digging me in *the ribs*.

In these examples, the personal pronoun or noun referring to the possessor of the body part is the object, and the body part constitutes a prepositional complement. These clauses can be paraphrased by clauses in which the body part is preceded by a possessive determiner, and functions as object:

- (5) I shook him by *the hand*. / I shook *his hand*.

In place of *the*, it is often possible to use a possessive pronoun; however, these constructions are rather unidiomatic (CGEL, 271). The reason for the preference of the definite article in such cases is to avoid pleonasm, i.e. there is no need to express a possessor twice:

- (6) I shook him by *his hand*.
- (7) He kissed her on *her cheek*.
- (8) She patted him on *his shoulder*.

In other cases the noun phrase indicating the possessor of the body part is the subject of the clause (9–10), or alternatively, the possessor may be implied rather than stated (11–12) (CGEL, 271):

- (9) My mother complains of a pain in *the/her hip*.
- (10) The wanted man has a scar on *the/his left cheek*.
- (11) The doctor diagnosed a fracture of *the collarbone*.
- (12) Many patients in the hospital suffered from a disease of *the liver*.

However, such constructions are not exceptions to the general rule that *the* refers to what is uniquely identified by shared knowledge. The possessor of the body part is either irrelevant or already adequately clear (CGEL, 271). In constructions with prepositional complement, the definite article is the usual choice as compared to such cases as (13), where the possessive pronoun, rather than *the*, has to be used:

- (13) Have you broken your arm? Cf: \*Have you broken the arm?

A further restriction is that the possessive pronoun is used if the body part does not refer to what is denoted by the direct object.

- (14) She throws the ball with her left hand.

## **2.2 Indefinite reference**

Even though body parts are generally associated with the use of the definite article or possessive pronouns, they are also sometimes used with the indefinite article. The indefinite article can be used where the body part in question has more than one possible referent, there being two or more actual referents for the body part as such (e.g. *finger, arm, leg, ankle*, etc.):

- (15) Sally has hurt *a finger*.
- (16) He's broken *a leg*.

Nevertheless, even when the body part is not unique, the possessive pronoun is the usual choice (CGEL, 273):

- (17) Sally has sprained *her ankle*.
- (18) He's broken *his leg*.
- (19) I've cut *my finger*.

As mentioned above, *a/an* cannot be used unless the body has more than one of the body parts mentioned. Chesterman (1991: 22–23) explains it by Hawkins's opposition of 'inclusiveness' vs. 'exclusiveness' (Hawkins, 1978: 167): the use of the definite article refers to "the totality of the objects or mass within this set which satisfy the referring expression" while the use of *a/an* suggests "a proper subset, i.e. not-all, of the potential referents of the referring expression" (Hawkins, 1978: 187). Hence, examples (15) and (16) are grammatically correct because it is possible to refer to "not-all' the fingers or legs of a person: there exists at least one leg or finger which the speaker excludes from the reference" (Chesterman, 22–23). In comparison with these grammatically well-formed examples, example (20) (*CGEL*, 273) is absurd in implying that Roger has more than one nose, or (21) (Chesterman, 1991: 22–23) in implying that Fred has more than one head. In these cases, the use of the indefinite article is not possible:

- (20) \*Roger has hurt a nose.
- (21) \*Fred lost a head during the war.

Furthermore, in cases where a body has more than one of the body parts mentioned, yet this body part is further specified by a premodifier, the indefinite article cannot be used because the body part in question gains uniqueness, and the status of this premodified body part becomes the same as that of *head*, *nose*, etc. Thus the premodified body part requires the definite article or a possessive pronoun (Chesterman, 1991: 23):

- (22) \*Fred lost a right leg during the war.

In this case, the premodification of Fred's leg makes the colligation of the whole noun phrase with an indefinite article impossible, for there is no possibility of Fred's having more than one right leg.

### **2.3 Indefinite reference – special cases**

There are several cases which do not conform to the exclusiveness condition of indefinite reference. The reasons for these exceptions are connected with the choice of the verb in the clause and with the information structure. Information structure is here conceived according to the theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP), developed by Firbas (1992). The two basic FSP functions, the theme and rheme, are defined, respectively, as the elements carrying the lowest and the highest degree of communicative dynamism (information load). The FSP structure of the sentence is determined by an interplay of four FSP factors, context, semantic structure, linearity and intonation which indicates the rheme by the position of the intonation centre.

Compare the following examples (Chesterman, 1991: 23):

- (23) I have a head.
- (24) There is a head on my body.
- (25) There is no doubt that he has a shrewd head on his shoulders.

In cases where the clause contains a so-called “set-existential” verb (defining existence within a set), such as *be* or *have*, the exclusiveness condition of indefinite article does not hold (Hawkins, 1978: 221). Even though examples (23) and (24) are considered grammatically correct, they sound odd because of the trivial nature of the information being conveyed (Dušková, 1997: 36). From the point of view of the FSP structure, the sentence lacks a novel element in the rheme since the relationship between the theme (*I, on my body*) and the rheme (*a head* in the basic, non-figurative meaning) expressed by the verb is clear and pragmatically given. The fact that every person has a head is natural and obvious to everyone and thus need not be conveyed in this way. Unlike examples (23) and (24), example (25), although presenting the same structure, contains *head* with premodification which conveys new information. Hence, the information structure contains a novel, irretrievable element in the rheme, and conforms to the usual configuration of a given theme and a new element in the rheme. Moreover, example (25) does not strictly refer to the head as a unique part of the body, since *head* is used in a figurative sense (cf. 4.3.2).

Furthermore, in cases where a unique body part in question ceases to be a universal feature, the appropriateness of indefinite determination increases:

- (26) He is growing a beard.

Since beards are worn only by some men, the information structure of this example conveys irretrievable information in the rheme even without modification of the object noun phrase, and hence avoids the deficiency of the previous examples. Again, the verb *grow* can be classified as a “set-existential” verb in that it brings into existence the entity referred to by its complement. However, classing a verb with “set-existential” verbs still fails to explain why these verbs behave differently from others, specifically why (27) is grammatical, while (28) is not (Dušková, 1997: 37):

- (27) He grew/had a beard.
- (28) \*He shaved off a beard.
- (29) He shaved off his beard.

The verb *have* expresses the possessive relationship between the possessor and the thing possessed, and hence makes other means indicating this relationship redundant. In consequence, the determiner of the thing possessed can be selected according to the type of reference and function in the information structure, as in (27). However, in (28) there is no indication of the fact that *a beard* is a thing possessed by the subject. In the absence of a verb indicating the possessive relationship, the use of the possessive becomes obligatory, cf. (29). A determiner other than the possessive suggests a possessor different from the subject (Dušková, 1997: 37).

As shown by the foregoing account, the degree of grammaticality of the indefinite article with unique body parts depends not only on the semantics of the indefinite article (i.e. one of a set of more than one), but also on its function in functional sentence perspective, as well as on the semantic structure and functional sentence perspective of the sentence as a whole (Dušková, 1997: 37).

### 3. Material and Method

For the analysis, one hundred sentences containing the indefinite article with three body parts were excerpted from the *British National Corpus*, namely twenty sentences with *arm*, and two sets of forty sentences containing *head/nose* respectively. A list of these is attached at the end of this paper (see Appendix). The excerption was performed by a simple text search, using a key phrase consisting of the body part in question, i.e. *head/nose/arm*. Since the premodification of the body parts in question had to be taken into account, the indefinite article was added to “collocates” section and set to be found within two words to the left. This search provided results containing *a/an* + the body part as well as *a/an* + an adjective + the body part. Twenty concordance lines for *arm* and forty concordance lines for *head/nose* each were selected at random. For the excerption, 72 texts were needed (see Sources).

### 4. Analysis

This part of the study is based on the results of the concordance search in the *British National Corpus*. It is divided into two parts according to the body part analyzed, i.e. *arm* (4.2), and *head/nose* (4.3). Section (4.3) is further divided according to the meaning of the body part, i.e. as a part of a fixed idiomatic expression (4.3.1), with modified yet related meaning (4.3.2) and the body part proper (referring to a part of the body) (4.3.3). The latter section is further subdivided according to the type of reference expressed by the body part with the indefinite article, its syntactic function, and its relation to the subject, namely *head/nose* referring to the body part proper with nongeneric indefinite specific reference and a subject as the possessor of the body part (4.3.3.1); *head/nose* referring to the body part proper with nongeneric indefinite specific reference and the subject as non-possessor of the body part (4.3.3.2); *head/nose* referring to the body part proper with nongeneric indefinite specific reference in the syntactic function of subject (4.3.3.3); and *head* referring to the body part proper with generic/nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference (4.3.3.4). As will be shown, the degree of grammaticality and appropriateness of the use of the indefinite article with unique body parts depends mainly on the semantics and FSP. Moreover, since the material for the study is drawn from fiction, a specific factor, due to this functional style, has been found to play a role, viz. defamiliarization manifested in the use of *calque* and *pars pro toto* constructions and in figurative uses, reflecting the idiolect of the author (4.3.2, 4.3.3.1, 4.3.3.2).

#### 4.1 Indefinite reference

The indefinite article with body parts is far less common than the use of a body part with the definite article or a possessive pronoun (see Table 1):

**Table 1.** Overall frequency of *the/a(n)/possessive determiner + body part* in BNC

	<i>a(n)</i> + <b>body part:</b>	<i>the</i> + <b>body part:</b>	<b>possessive pronoun</b> + <b>body part:</b>
<i>HEAD</i>	181	1,050	11,891
<i>NOSE</i>	53	149	1,080
<i>ARM</i>	279	368	2,326

In the case of *head*, the use with an indefinite article represents 1.4% out of 13,122 occurrences of this noun used with an article or a possessive pronoun, the noun phrase *an arm* accounts for approximately 9% of all instances of *arm* with an article or a possessive pronoun and *nose* appears with the indefinite article in 4% of all instances with an article or a possessive pronoun. The use of the indefinite article with the body part in question occurs with different meanings of the respective body part as well as with a different function in functional sentence perspective. These distinctions are further described and analyzed in the following sections.

#### 4.2 Indefinite reference with arm

The use of the indefinite article with the body part *arm* may be considered the least problematic case of all three body parts examined. This is basically due to the fact that *a/an arm* is the only example of the three body parts in question which has more than one possible referent, i.e. a left and a right arm. In other words, the use of *a/an* suggests “a proper subset, i.e. not-all, of the potential referents of the referring expression” (Hawkins, 1978: 187). Thus, the body part *arm* plus the indefinite article is of minor interest from the point of view of the aim of this study insofar as it conforms to the usual pattern for expressing nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference. This is the case of 17 out of 20 instances of the uses of the indefinite article with *arm*, for instance:

- (30) “Don’t cry, dear,” she said, putting an arm round my shoulders, “it is not your fault.” [BW:9]
- (31) Mungo wanted to put an arm round her shoulder, but knew he would embarrass her. [KC:13]
- (32) Maggie lunged out an arm and hauled the girl towards her. The girl started clawing at Maggie. [BE:19]
- (33) I tried waving an arm to attract attention but only a weak flap of a hand was achieved. [FM:17]

In all these instances, the noun phrase *an arm* expresses nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference. The speaker does not further specify whether the person in question used his or her right or left arm as an instrument for the intended action. However, it is clear that each *arm* in these examples is a thing possessed by the subject. From the point of view of functional sentence perspective, these constructions conform to the usual configuration of a given theme (*she, Mungo, Maggie, I*) and a new element in the rheme, i.e. *an arm*. However, what is more important, the rhemes in these cases are all partly context-dependent in that they are pragmatically derivable from the given context. In other words, it is clear from the context that *an arm* is a thing possessed by the subject (cf. example 34). Furthermore, the indefinite article also conveys that it is actually not important for the story itself whether the subject uses his or her right or left arm. *An arm* serves to express an instrument whose further specification is not necessary for the story, attention being concentrated on the action of the subject. This can be supported by the Czech equivalents of such constructions as *to put an arm round (someone) / obejmout (někoho)*, which show that it is not the instrument but the action that is important. Moreover, all these instances can be paraphrased with the use of a possessive pronoun instead of the indefinite article without a consequent change in meaning.

The remaining three instances of the use of *arm* with the indefinite article display a different pattern:

- (34) He must escape. He must ... Close to panic, Mungo felt an arm slipped through his. "Here, let me show you," Vic said. [KC:14]

Even though the use of the indefinite article expresses nongeneric indefinite nonspecific reference as in the previous examples, this case differs in that the arm in question is not a thing possessed by the subject. From the viewpoint of functional sentence perspective, *an arm* is the rheme of the clause, expressing a new element in the clause, as in the previous examples. However, this case is different in that the rheme in this case is not context-dependent, i.e. the possessive relationship between the subject and the body part is not pragmatically derivable from the context because in this case *an arm* is not a thing possessed by the subject but introduces another participant. Thus, the use of the indefinite article is connected not only with the non-specificity of the arm in question (in this case, it is indeed irrelevant whether it was a right or left arm), but rather, the use of indefinite article suggests that the possessive relationship between the subject and the body part in question does not hold and introduces a possessor other than the subject proper. As such, the clause cannot be paraphrased with the use of a possessive pronoun; the only possible paraphrase is: "Close to panic, Mungo felt somebody's arm slipped through his."

Another function of the indefinite article combined with *arm* can be seen in following examples:

- (35) Some of his male colleagues boasted about how they'd felt with various women, raising an arm to show what they'd been like. [PF:7]  
 (36) The chants were now accompanied by signs as one member after another thrust a right arm in the air to stab a pointing finger at the man on the platform. [KM:2]

In example (35), the use of the indefinite article is connected to the fact that there are not only more possible referents of the body part in question, but also, and more importantly, that there are more subjects possessing this body part. In other words, the use of the indefinite article suggests that each member of the group of subjects (i.e. some of his male colleagues) was raising his own arm and further specification of the arms is not needed. What is conveyed is only that each member was raising only one of his arms. However, example (36) is special in that it involves the combination of the indefinite article plus the body part, yet this body part is further premodified. While *an arm* is a non-unique body part, with premodification, a *right arm*, it denotes a unique body part. Such a combination of a unique body part with the indefinite article is impossible in its usual use; nevertheless in this case, this construction is considered grammatical due to the fact that there are (as in the previous case) more subjects and a class of objects, i.e. a number of right arms, involved. The use of the indefinite article suggests that each member of the subjects referred to thrust his or her own arm, particularly his or her right arm as an instrument for the intended action. In these cases, a paraphrase with the use of the possessive pronoun *their* would be possible without changing the meaning.

### 4.3 Indefinite article with head/nose

In the case of the unique body parts *head/nose*, the use of the indefinite article is more problematic as compared to *an arm*, since the possible referents of these nouns concern only one object (as opposed to *an arm*). Accordingly, while the indefinite article with *arm* is associated with nongeneric indefinite reference (due to more possible referents), in the case of *head* and *nose* the article is usually connected with nongeneric definite reference. Thus, according to general rules, these nouns should be determined by the definite article or a possessive pronoun. However, there are several reasons for the use of the indefinite article plus *head* or *nose*, all of which are analyzed in the following subsections.

The first step in the analysis of the use of the indefinite article with the two body parts in question is connected with their polysemous meaning. Since both nouns have more than one meaning, it is necessary to make a distinction between examples in which the body part retains its original sense, i.e. a part of the body, examples in which the body part is used with modified yet related meaning, and examples in which the noun phrase is used in a fixed, idiomatic expression (see Table 2):

**Table 2.** Different meanings of the body parts *head* and *nose*

	<i>HEAD</i>	<i>NOSE</i>
the body part proper	26	31
<i>head/nose</i> with modified (yet related) meaning	12	7
fixed, idiomatic expression	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>



### 4.3.1 Fixed, idiomatic expressions

The indefinite article with *head* or *nose* is commonly (especially in the case of *head*) found in fixed, idiomatic expressions. All of these instances have in common that the meaning of the body part is modified, i.e. it does not refer to the part of the body, but expresses a different notion:

- (37) It didn't seem possible that things could have come to a head so soon. Evelyn was frightened by the strength of her reactions. [SP:32]
- (38) Well, that was when it had all come to a head. But it had been simmering for a couple of years before that. [MA:45]
- (39) Don't tell me you were just passing by? Come to have a nose, by any chance? Gloria tell you? [PK:68]
- (40) Nutty had gone up to have a nose, sat behind the oil-drum stack early and seen him leave. [PK:69]

Examples (37–40) are typical examples of idiomatic expressions. If a situation *comes to a head* (37–38), it reaches a point where something must be done about it, because it has suddenly become very bad (*OALD*). *To have a nose*, in examples (39–40), carries the meaning “to look around a place” (*OALD*). In these cases, the meaning of the whole phrase is different from the meanings of each word understood on its own.

### 4.3.2 Head/nose with modified meaning (related to the basic meaning)

The indefinite article with *head* or *nose* is quite common in expressions where the meaning of the respective body part is modified. In the case of *nose*, such constructions account for 17.5% of all instances and this percentage is even higher in the case of *head*: 30% of all instances. All of these instances have in common that the meaning of the body part is modified, i.e. it does not refer to the body part as such, but expresses a different notion, yet related to the original meaning:

- (41) Thomas had been a bluff hearty man but unfortunately he did not have a head for business. [GI:30]
- (42) It suited him less well than it had Zacharias. His was not a head made for haunting. [BC:44]
- (43) Spencer help you, my dear, my youngest son always did have a good head for figures. [GI:31]
- (44) You're nine years old, coming on ten quick, an' you've got a head on your shoulders, so, I'm goin' to talk to you straight. [CC:28]
- (45) Somehow Beador had got a sniff of it. He must have a nose for money better than any hound for any fox. [MM:93]
- (46) I think if I were a fledgling esoteric, with a nose for history, it wouldn't be difficult. [BC:76]

- (47) I've tried, believe me. I've got as good a nose as any other man on the paper, even if I do specialize in science. [RC:63]
- (48) "Hello, Joe," the desk-sergeant greeted him. "You must have a nose like a bloodhound; sniff out a murder before it's happened!" [HR:64]
- (49) I've had enough of this bloody place. The noise has given me a head. [JD:39]

The phrase *to have a (good) head/nose for something* does not refer to a body part proper. Its meaning is slightly modified in that the phrase *to have a (good) head for something* can be paraphrased as *to be good at something* (OALD) while the phrase *have a nose for something* means *to have the ability to sense or find something* (OALD). Further, if someone has *a head on his/her shoulders* (44), it means that the person is sensible (OALD). Similarly, in example (49), the phrase *the noise has given me a head* simply means that the noise has given the speaker a headache. Accordingly, *a head/nose* does not refer the part of the body proper, but rather implies a feature, characteristic or ability of the possessor. Nevertheless, the meaning of these constructions is derivable from the phrase as such, for the meaning of the body part in question is related to its original sense (as opposed to idiomatic expressions in the previous section). For instance, the speaker in example (48) by saying "You must have a nose like a bloodhound" by no means compares the hearer's nose to the dog's nose on the basis of his physical appearance, but rather wants to express and appreciate the hearer's ability and intuition.

In addition, *a head* is frequently found in the following construction:

- (50) He peered at the menu displayed with accompanying admiring press comment outside the Trattoria San Giorgio, and decided you'd be lucky to get out of there under £20 a head. La Bretagne looked even pricier. [NJ:22]
- (51) Matty and Chris examined their bank accounts. Club Maquis was £750 a head for fourteen nights, B & B. The Seychelles were £1500 a head for fourteen nights, half-board. [JC:34]

In these two examples, *a head* is used with nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference, close to generic reference, referring to *any* "head" in the sense of person. Thus, the phrase "£20 a head" / "£750 a head" can be considered a kind of fixed, meronymic expression, referring to a person as such rather than the body part proper. However, such constructions are considered rather informal.

### 4.3.3 Head/nose referring to the body part proper

In cases where the body part in question retains its basic meaning, i.e. reference to a body part proper, a further subdivision is made according to the syntactic function of the body part and its relation to the subject. In addition, the examples expressing a type of reference other than nongeneric indefinite specific are taken into account (see Table 3):

**Table 3.** The subdivision of the body parts *head* and *nose* according to their reference, syntactic functions and relation to the subject

		<i>A HEAD</i>	<i>A NOSE</i>
Nongeneric indefinite specific reference	S = the possessor of the body part	9	23
	S ≠ the possessor of the body part	4	6
	S = the body part itself	9	2
Generic/nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference		4	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>

#### 4.3.3.1 *Head/nose referring to the body part proper with nongeneric indefinite specific reference and a subject as the possessor of the body part*

The constructions in which these body parts determined by the indefinite article are used with nongeneric indefinite specific reference and a subject as the possessor of the body part represent the most common type. In the case of *head*, this type accounts for almost 35% of all instances and *nose* appears almost exclusively in this construction, accounting almost for 75% of the instances. Compare the following examples:

- (52) She had a head of flowing auburn hair and carried herself in a self-possessed manner. [GA:42]
- (53) Most conspicuous was a short, dark girl dressed in scarlet who had a big head, big eyes (her best feature), a big nose and a very big voice, which could be heard above all the other bleating, twanging, cackling, warbling, conspiratorial voices. [BJ:56]
- (54) George Crowninshield was a good-looking man with a strong-boned face and a head of thick black hair. [CB:41]
- (55) Aching head you may have, but at least you have a head to have aches in. She put aside her darning basket, and picked up ... [AR:24]
- (56) Why, Jo wondered, did she have to have a nose like a cross between a doughnut and a ski-jump? [BL:65]
- (57) “A girl in Class Two of course,” said Maisie, “with a nose like a pig!” [WN:67]
- (58) Long, unkempt hair, several missing teeth, and a nose that looked as if it had met more than one fist in its owner’s lifetime. [BY:92]

None of these instances conforms to the exclusiveness condition of indefinite reference. There are two reasons for this; first these examples contain a “set-existential” verb, defining existence within a set; the second reason is functional sentence perspective. Another important factor (connected with the use of a set-existential verb) is the possessive relationship between the subject and the body part, expressed either by the verb *have* (exx. 52–53, 55–56) or in postmodification by a prepositional phrase with the preposition *with*: *a man with ... a head of thick black hair / a girl ... with a nose like a pig*, which makes other means of indicating this relationship redundant. In addition, from the point of view of functional sentence perspective, the use of the indefinite article is connected with the rhematic function of the body part in these examples, i.e. they express new information.

Most importantly, in all cases the rheme is premodified and/or postmodified. The modification represents new, irretrievable information, viz. the rheme proper, and the whole structure conforms to the usual configuration of a given theme at the beginning and a new element in the rheme at the end or in the postverbal part. All this conduces to the use of the indefinite article.

The last set of examples shows another reason for the use of the indefinite article with a unique body part, in this case *nose*. This construction (and analogous instances) has its origin in French and entered English as a loan translation, a calque. Thus, in this case, the use of the indefinite article has its origin in its French counterpart:

- (59) Nigel had the same beak of a nose, but, without the dark eyes, its effect was comic rather than forceful. [BS:95]
- (60) He had a broad, high-cheekboned face, a straight beak of a nose, and dark eyes that stared at us without expression. [IH:97]

Furthermore, a large number of constructions are presumably based on this French calque, for instance *to have a hook/button/blob of a nose*, and in a number of these constructions, the head of the noun phrase, i.e. *beak/hook* etc., is further premodified, by adjectives such as *straight/great/thin/pink*. Interestingly, such constructions also appear in the syntactic roles of subject (cf. [BS:96]), or object without the possessive relationship between the subject and the body part (cf. [ME:91], [IH:98]).

#### 4.3.3.2 *Head/nose referring to the body part proper with nongeneric indefinite specific reference and a subject as non-possessor of the body part*

The examples in which the body parts in question are used with nongeneric indefinite specific reference but without the possessive relationship between them and the subject are also quite common. The non-possessive relationship between the body part and the subject is connected with the use of a verb other than *have*. Compare the following examples:

- (61) The shadows were thick and all she could make out was the outline of a head. Suddenly the head gave a brisk nod. [NG:23]
- (62) I looked along a line of patients and recognized a back still straight and a head still proudly held. Aunt Louise's eyes were over-bright and she tried ... [BW:25]
- (63) I remember now that I saw neat features, a nose a little hooked, and a very good figure. [HP:79]
- (64) At the end of the alley I paused, waiting, but all I saw was the end of a nose which quietly withdrew as I stood there. [HJ:87]

All these instances are similar to the instances in the previous section in that the body part in question – from the point of view of functional sentence perspective – constitutes a component of the rheme, i.e. a new element in the information structure. However, there is one crucial difference. In the previous sections, all occurrences of the body parts in question though rhemes are partly context-dependent in being pragmatically derivable from the context, by means of the possessive relationship between the subject and the body part. In contrast, in this case there is no possessive relationship between the

subject and the body part, hence the body parts here constitute entirely context-independent rhemes, i.e. entities even pragmatically not derivable from the context because *a head/a nose* is, in this case, not a thing possessed by the subject but introduces another participant into discourse. Thus, the use of the indefinite article suggests that the possessive relationship between the subject and the body part in question does not hold and introduces a possessor other than the subject. As such, these clauses cannot be paraphrased with the use of a possessive pronoun. For instance, example (61) illustrates the connection of definiteness/indefiniteness with the operation of functional sentence perspective in text: in the first sentence, *a head* is introduced in the rheme. The use of the indefinite article indicates a new element in the structure, mentioned for the first time. In the second sentence, the definite article with *head* in the theme indicates that this element has already been introduced and is thus henceforward defined, integrated in the story as a known element.

#### 4.3.3.3 *Head/nose referring to the body part proper with nongeneric indefinite specific reference in the syntactic function of subject*

In the case of *head*, this combination is also quite common, constituting almost one third of the collected instances. On the other hand, *a nose* with nongeneric indefinite specific reference in the syntactic role of subject was found in only one instance:

- (65) She was sitting in a daze on the edge of the bed when a head came round the partition ... [CC:29]
- (66) They set off briskly, boots echoing hollowly from the paving-stones. A head looked out of the offside window and spoke to the driver. [BR:36]
- (67) A bang on the door. Almost at once a head came round: a woman's. [HP:48]
- (68) Then as I hauled inexorably, a nose appeared, then a head, then all of the big animal hanging limply by his collar. [HJ:86]

The use of the indefinite article in these instances is, again, connected with functional sentence perspective. *A head/a nose*, respectively, constitutes the rheme of each sentence, this time in the syntactic function of subject. As in the previous section, the rheme is entirely context-independent; however, these sentences differ from the previous type in having the rheme construed as the subject, and hence constitute presentation sentences (cf. Firbas, 1992: 59–61), i.e. they introduce a phenomenon on the scene, which is here a member of a subset constituting a body. In example (68), *a nose* is further followed by other parts of the body: “a nose appeared, then a head, then all of the big animal ...” The reason for the only example of *a nose* in a presentation sentence is presumably that the nose, unlike the head, is not a typical part of the body to indicate the appearance of a person on the scene.

Furthermore, there are two cases in which the use of the indefinite article is connected with more possessors of the body part:

- (69) I found a good place on the bus, on the top deck, right at the front, where you can feel the warmth coming up through a grating (here and there a head nodded understandingly) and see the view. [BW:26]

- (70) Poor kids. They'd fallen asleep, a head on each shoulder and she was determined to leave them like that for as long as she could. [EE:43]

As opposed to the previous examples with one-to-one relationship of the body part and a possessor, these two instances are different in that there are more possessors of the body part in question. The indefinite article is appropriate in such constructions not only from the point of view of functional sentence perspective, but also because it is used in a distributive sense: there is a number of *heads* involved and each member of the group of possessors has only one. Furthermore, example (69) can be considered an example of meronymy. As such, the noun phrase *a head* stands for the “whole” human being and the clause could be paraphrased as “here and there a person nodded understandingly”. This was also the case of examples (65)–(68).

#### 4.3.3.4 *Head referring to the body part proper with generic/nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference*

In the case of *head*, there are four instances in the excerpt in which this noun is used with either generic reference or nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference. These are also to be taken into account in order to have a complete description of the use of the indefinite article with the body parts in question:

- (71) Nails was becoming quite human, and looked positively Olympic with the goggles pushed up on his forehead, shouting instructions to Hoomey. The trouble was, a head under water heard nothing. [PK:35]
- (72) Women's bodies bring out all his finer feelings. The fact that a woman's body has a head on top of it isn't much more than a detail. [AM:51]
- (73) What's the point of a head when it can't pass exams? What's the point of a heart when it's lost its dreams? [LA:37]
- (74) This wasn't a fair challenge, Harry being more than a head taller than Sam and built like an ox. [GC:46]

In examples (71) and (72) the body part in question expresses generic reference. In both cases *a head* is used generically, not referring to any particular head or any particular possessor of it, cf., “heads under water do not hear anything” (71) / “women's bodies have a head/heads” (72). As such, both examples can be put in the plural without any consequent change in meaning. Example (73) shows another function of the indefinite article determining *head*. In this case, the indefinite article expresses non-generic indefinite non-specific reference similar to the generic reference of the previous two examples, even though the noun phrase cannot be put in the plural: *a head* again does not refer to any particular person, yet in this case, the body part is used as a kind of concept. Example (74) presents yet another function of the indefinite article. In the phrase “being more than a head taller”, the body part is used as an expression of measure and the indefinite article has a numeric function in this case, viz. “one head taller”. The numeric function of the indefinite article determining *head*, although attested by only one instance, completes the variety of functions this determiner performs with body parts.

## 5. Conclusion

Even though body parts, especially those which are unique, are usually associated with nongeneric definite reference and thus with the use of the definite article or possessives, there are several cases in which a body part appears with the indefinite article. Since *arm* is not a unique body part, having more possible referents, the determination of this body part with the indefinite article is the least involved. Most often, the use of the indefinite article with *arm* is connected with functional sentence perspective in that these constructions conform to the usual configuration of a given theme (usually a subject) and a new element in the rheme (*an arm*). In addition, the use of the indefinite article may suggest that the possessive relationship between a subject and the body part does not hold and introduces a possessor other than the subject. Finally, the indefinite article is also used in situations where there are more subjects and a class of objects, viz. a number of arms, is involved. *Head* and *nose*, on the other hand, are unique body parts and since they are polysemous, the use of the indefinite article with these two body parts is largely connected with the respective meaning. The first distinction to be made depends on whether *a head/a nose* retains its basic meaning or is used with a modified (yet related) meaning, or whether the body part is used as a part of a fixed, idiomatic expression. When the body part retains its basic meaning, viz. a part of the body, a further division is made according to the syntactic function of the body part and its relation to the subject. Moreover, examples expressing other types of reference (i.e. generic or nongeneric indefinite non-specific) need to be taken into account. As in the case of *an arm*, the indefinite article plus *head/nose* is connected with functional sentence perspective, introducing a new element, a rheme, into the information structure. Both *head* and *nose* refer to the body part proper in a majority of the examples; however, their use with a modified (yet related) meaning is also quite common. In cases where *head/nose* refers to the body part, the indefinite article almost exclusively expresses nongeneric indefinite specific reference and there is usually possessive relationship between the subject and the body part in question (in these cases the body part appears in the syntactic function of object). In addition, *a head* is also frequently found in the syntactic function of subject and there are four examples in which the indefinite article expresses either generic reference or nongeneric indefinite non-specific reference. Thus, the use of the indefinite article with unique body parts is shown to depend not only on functional sentence perspective, but also, and even more importantly, on the meaning of the body part in question, and on the semantics of the indefinite article and of the sentence as a whole. In the style of fiction, an additional factor has been found in style-specific uses.

---

## REFERENCES

- Chesterman, A. (1991) *On Definiteness. A study with special reference to English and Finnish*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Dušková, L. (1997) Expressing indefiniteness in English. *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Philologica* 5, *Prague Studies in English* XXII: 33–50.
- Dušková, L. et al. (1988) *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny*. Praha, Academia (3rd ed. 2003).

- Firbas, J. (1992) *Functional Sentence Perspective in Written and Spoken Communication*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Hawkins, J. (1978) *Definiteness and Indefiniteness*. London, Croom Helm.
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, S. (1985) *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London, Longman.

### Dictionaries

- Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2nd Edition*, CD-ROM (2006).
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 8th Edition*, CD-ROM (2010).

### Sources

*The British National Corpus* <<http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>>

- [AM] Amis, M. J., *Time's Arrow*. London, Cape, 1991.
- [AR] Anderson, R., *Paper Faces*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- [BC] Barker, C., *Imajica*. Glasgow, Harper Collins, 1992.
- [BE] Blair, E., *Maggie Jordan*. London, Bantam (Corgi), 1990.
- [BJ] Bow, J., *Jane's Journey*. Lewes, The Book Guild Ltd, 1991.
- [BL] Brayfield, C., *The Prince*. London, Chatto & Windus Ltd, 1990.
- [BN] Bawden, N., *Carrie's War*. Harmondsworth, Puffin, 1988.
- [BO] Bedford, J., *The Titron Madness*. New York, Dales Large Print, 1984.
- [BP] Bennetts, P., *Topaz*. UK, Magna Print Books, 1988.
- [BR] Butters, R., *Look About and Die*. Lewes, The Book Guild, 1991.
- [BS] Brett, S., *Cast in Order of Disappearance*. London, Vicor Gollancz, 1975.
- [BT] Barnes, T., *Taped*. London, Coronet Books, 1993.
- [BW] Beechey, W., *The Reluctant Samaritan*. Oxford, OUP, 1991.
- [BY] Byrne, J., *My Enemy, My Love*. Richmond, Mills & Boon, 1993.
- [CB] Cornwell, B., *Crackdown*. London, Michael Joseph Ltd, 1990.
- [CC] Cookson, C., *The Rag Nymph*. London, Corgi Books, 1992.
- [CD] Craig, D., *King Cameron*. Manchester, Carcanet Press, 1991.
- [CF] Cooper, F., *Jay Loves Lucy*. London, Serpent's Tail, 1991.
- [CP] Carter, P., *Bury the Dead*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986.
- [CS] Conran, S., *Crimson*. London, Penguin Group, 1992.
- [CT] Constantine, S., *Hermetech*. London, Headline Book Publishing, 1991.
- [DT] Davidson, T., *And Thus Will I Freely Sing*. Edinburgh, Polygon Books, 1989.
- [EE] Elgin, E., *All the Sweet Promises*. London, Grafton Books, 1991.
- [FJ] Fowles, J., *The Collector*. London, Picador, 1989.
- [FM] Forster, M., *Lady's Maid*. London, Chatto & Windus Ltd, 1990.
- [FW] Fox, W., *Willoughby's Phoney War*. Lewes, The Book Guild Ltd, 1991.
- [GA] Granger, A., *A Season for Murder*. London, Headline Book Publishing, 1991.
- [GC] Gidley, C., *Armada*. London, Fontana Paperbacks, 1988.
- [GI] Gower, I., *The Shoemaker's Daughter*. London, Corgi Books, 1992.
- [GN] Gill, A., *City of Dreams*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd, 1993.
- [GP] Gilliat, P., *Nobody's Business*. London, Virago Press Ltd, 1990.
- [GS] Gandolfi, S., *Alistair MacLean's Golden Girl*. London, Chapmans Publishers, 1992.
- [HB] Howell, B., *Dandelion Days*. London, Chapmans Publishers Ltd 1991.
- [HC] Harvey, C., *Legacy of Love*. London, Transworld Publishers Ltd, 1992.
- [HD] Hayden, T., *The Killing Frost*. London, Random Century Group, 1991.
- [HF] Hendry, F., *Quest for a Babe*. Edinburgh, Canongate Publishing, 1990.
- [HJ] Herriot, J., *Vets Might Fly*. London, Pan Books Ltd, 1977.
- [HP] Haines, P., *The Diamond Waterfall*. u.p. 1984.
- [HR] Harrison, R., *Patently Murder*. London, Constable & Company Ltd, 1991.
- [HT] Healy, T., *It Might Have Been Jerusalem*. Edinburgh, Polygon Books, 1991.
- [IH] Innes, H., *Isvik*. London, Chapmans Publishers Ltd, 1991.



- [JC] Jennings, C., *Now We Are Thirty-Something*. London, John Murray, 1991.
- [JD] James, P. D., *Devices and Desires*. London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 1989.
- [JR] James, R., *Payback*. London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1993.
- [KC] Kelly, C., *The Forest of the Night*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- [KH] Kureishi, H., *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 1990.
- [KL] Keane, M., *Loving and Giving*. UK, Andre Deutsch Ltd, 1988.
- [KM] Kilby, M., *Man at the Sharp End*. Lewes, The Book Guild Ltd, 1991.
- [LA] Leonard, A., *Gate-crashing the Dream Party*. London, Walker Books, 1990.
- [LD] Lodge, D., *The Picturegoers*. London, Penguin Group, 1993.
- [LP] Ling, P., *Flood Water*. London, Headline Book Publishing, 1993.
- [MA] MacNeill, A., *Time of the Assassins*. London, Fontana Press, 1992.
- [MD] McIntee, D., *White Darkness*. London, Virgin, 1993.
- [ME] Mildmay, E., *Lucker and Tiffany Peel Out*. London, Serpent's Tail, 1993.
- [MJ] McGahern, J., *Amongst Women*. London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 1990.
- [MM] Macdonald, M., *The Rich Are With You Always*. London, Coronet Books, 1978.
- [NG] Neel Cross, G., *On the Edge*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- [NJ] Neel, J., *Death of a Partner*. London, Constable & Company Ltd, 1991.
- [NM] Nabb, M., *Death in Springtime*. UK, Collins, 1989.
- [PF] Pitt-Kethley, F., *Misfortunes of Nigel*. Peter Owen, 1991.
- [PK] Peyton, K. M., *Who, Sir? Me, Sir?* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988.
- [PR] Pickernell, R., *Yanto's Summer*. Wotton, Morgans Technical Books, 1988.
- [PT] Percival, J., *There in My Blood: Biography of John Cranko*. London, The Herbert Press Ltd, 1983.
- [RC] Rayner, C., *The Meddlers*. London, Michael Joseph Ltd, 1991.
- [RR] Rendell, R., *The Best Man to Die*. London, John Long, 1969.
- [SJ] Staples, M. J., *Sergeant Joe*. London, Corgi Books, 1992.
- [SM] Scott, M., *Nudists May Be Encountered*. London, Serpent's Tail, 1991.
- [SP] Scobie, P., *A Twist of Fate*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.
- [SU] Sunley, M., *Fields in the Sun*. London, Century Hutchinson, 1991.
- [WD] Wright, D., *Never Such Innocence*. London, Michael Joseph Ltd, 1991.
- [WI] Watson, I., *Space Marine*. London, Bantam, 1993.
- [WN] Williams, N., *The Wimbledon Poisoner*. London, Faber & Faber Ltd, 1990.

---

## VYJADŘOVÁNÍ NEURČITOSTI PŘI ODKAZOVÁNÍ NA ČÁSTI LIDSKÉHO TĚLA V ANGLIČTINĚ

### Resumé

Předmětem článku je popis anglických vět obsahujících část těla determinovanou neurčitým členem. Části těla obecně mají negenerickou referenci určitou vyjadřující jedinečnost, tudíž se v angličtině nejčastěji vyskytují s členem určitým nebo s přivlastňovacími zájmeny. Neurčitý člen se v kombinaci s částmi těla vyskytuje zejména v případech, kdy má daná část těla více referentů (např. *prst*, *paže*, atd.), kde neurčitý člen vyjadřuje referenci negenerickou neurčitou. V případech, kdy existuje pouze jeden referent, se použití neurčitého členu nejčastěji vysvětluje volbou slovesa ve větě a aktuálním členěním větným.

Dokladový materiál byl vybrán z Britského národního korpusu a zahrnuje tři části těla: *paže*, *hlavu* a *nos*. Výzkum je zaměřen na případy užití těchto částí těla s neurčitým členem.

*Paže* (jakožto zástupce částí těla s více než jedním možným referentem) ve spojení s neurčitým členem nejčastěji odpovídá aktuálnímu členění větnému a je zmíněna pouze okrajově. Příklady *hlavy* a *nosu* se nejdříve klasifikují podle toho, zda odkazují k části těla jako takové a podle vztahu mezi podmětem a danou částí těla, nebo zda je význam těchto částí těla přenesený, a do jaké míry. Ve většině zkoumaných případů opět hraje roli aktuální členění větné, nicméně na základě rozboru příkladů daných částí těla se ukazuje, že neméně důležitým prvkem je v těchto konstrukcích sémantika nejen dané části těla, ale i sémantika neurčitého členu a věty jako celku.

## APPENDIX

### AN ARM

- [CF] (1) She turned half-asleep in her big warm bed to curl an arm and herself round Lucy's hot soft body.
- [KM] (2) The chants were now accompanied by signs as one member after another thrust a right arm in the air to stab a pointing finger at the man on the platform.
- (3) "What's the matter? Trouble at t'mill?" Mark slipped an arm around her slim waist as they walked from the hall into the kitchen.
- (4) She linked an arm through his. "Now let's take a walk over the fields with Honey and Harriet."
- [CD] (5) "But remember" – he had lifted an arm now and was prodding with his forefinger as though pointing to the furthest corners of the country.
- [NJ] (6) He was very nearly as tall as her, but she put an arm under his shoulders and supported him to the untidy room which served as the stable office, calling to one of the stable girls to take over the class.
- [PF] (7) Some of his male colleagues boasted about how they'd felt with various women, raising an arm to show what they'd been like.
- [NG] (8) "I'll take you." He put an arm round Tug's shoulders and the bare skin of his wrist lay warm and dry against Tug's upper arm, the crisp hairs tickling slightly.
- [BW] (9) "Don't cry, dear," she said, putting an arm round my shoulders, "it is not your fault."
- [FW] (10) The sergeant has been looking after us very beautifully though. Clarissa waved an arm round the Saloon and smiled at the Adjutant.
- [NM] (11) He waved an arm at an empty green field with mist rising from the cropped grass.
- [CC] (12) A silence fell on the room, and its increasing heaviness made her heave herself up from the couch and take the three steps to throw herself on to the seat beside him; and to put an arm around his shoulder and say, "Come on, lad, come on ...".
- [KC] (13) Mungo wanted to put an arm round her shoulder, but knew he would embarrass her.
- (14) He must escape. He must ... Close to panic, Mungo felt an arm slipped through his. "Here, let me show you," Vic said.
- [CT] (15) "What else can I do?" Roirbak put an arm around Tammuz's shoulder. "There may be a way," he said.
- [FM] (16) Mackie put an arm round her and kissed her cheek.
- (17) I tried waving an arm to attract attention but only a weak flap of a hand was achieved.
- [GS] (18) Putting an arm round her shoulder, he crouched down and used a stick to draw the meadow in the dirt.
- [BE] (19) Maggie lunged out an arm and hauled the girl towards her. The girl started clawing at Maggie.
- (20) Mrs Lennox threw an arm around Maggie and drew her into the kitchen.

## A HEAD

- [RR] (21) He summed her up as a sharp little piece with a head on her shoulders.
- [NJ] (22) He peered at the menu displayed with accompanying admiring press comment outside the Trattoria San Giorgio, and decided you'd be lucky to get out of there under £20 a head. La Bretagne looked even pricier.
- [NG] (23) The shadows were thick and all she could make out was the outline of a head. Suddenly the head gave a brisk nod.
- [AR] (24) Aching head you may have, but at least you have a head to have aches in.
- [BW] (25) I looked along a line of patients and recognized a back still straight and a head still proudly held.
- (26) I found a good place on the bus, on the top deck, right at the front, where you can feel the warmth coming up through a grating (here and there a head nodded understandingly) and see the view.
- [CC] (27) But to have an upper bulk like mine and a head like a bull, well, I can't see all the good ...
- (28) You're nine years old, coming on ten quick, an' you've got a head on your shoulders, so, I'm goin' to talk to you straight.
- (29) She was sitting in a daze on the edge of the bed when a head came round the partition, saying, "You had better put a move on else you'll get scalped."
- [GI] (30) Thomas had been a bluff hearty man but unfortunately he did not have a head for business.
- (31) Spencer help you, my dear, my youngest son always did have a good head for figures.
- [SP] (32) It didn't seem possible that things could have come to a head so soon. Evelyn was frightened by the strength of her reactions.
- [HF] (33) Marion screamed after them. "Stop! Stop!" Not a head turned. A lad lifted a stone to throw.
- [JC] (34) Matty and Chris examined their bank accounts. Club Maquis was £750 a head for fourteen nights, B & B. The Seychelles were £1500 a head for fourteen nights, half-board.
- [PK] (35) Nails was becoming quite human, and looked positively Olympic with the goggles pushed up on his forehead, shouting instructions to Hoomey. The trouble was, a head under water heard nothing.
- [BR] (36) They set off briskly, boots echoing hollowly from the paving-stones. A head looked out of the offside window and spoke to the driver.
- [LA] (37) What's the point of a head when it can't pass exams? What's the point of a heart when it's lost its dreams?
- [DT] (38) A head with dose-cropped hair appeared at the top of the stairs and seeing Martin, smiled.
- [JD] (39) I've had enough of this bloody place. The noise has given me a head.
- [SU] (40) Walking with almost a swagger, George noted the way the sun glinted on a head of coppery curls.
- [CB] (41) George Crowninshield was a good-looking man with a strong-boned face and a head of thick black hair.

- [GA] (42) She had a head of flowing auburn hair and carried herself in a self-possessed manner.
- [EE] (43) Poor kids. They'd fallen asleep, a head on each shoulder and she was determined to leave them like that for as long as she could.
- [BC] (44) It suited him less well than it had Zacharias. His was not a head made for haunting.
- [MA] (45) Well, that was when it had all come to a head. But it had been simmering for a couple of years before that.
- [GC] (46) This wasn't a fair challenge, Harry being more than a head taller than Sam and built like an ox.
- [CS] (47) "We have the mayor bugging out on this, Scott." A head poked around the door. "Call to Europe in your office, Scott."
- [HP] (48) A bang on the door. Almost at once a head came round: a woman's.
- [LP] (49) Emily had never had a head for figures, and her brother-in-law, Marcus Judge, had kept an eye on her finances from the beginning, gradually acquiring a controlling interest in the business.
- [MD] (50) They were speedily, if only temporarily, relieved of their worries when a head appeared amidst the gently rolling waves a short distance from the beach.
- [AM] (51) Women's bodies bring out all his finer feelings. The fact that a woman's body has a head on top of it isn't much more than a detail.
- [MJ] (52) McQuaid gloated. "You had a great head on you the way you thought the plan through from beginning to end."
- (53) News of it spread throughout the whole country. "You had a great head on you, Michael."
- [CP] (54) "Smart grey suit, business man; brown overalls – a thick head. All right! I'm joking. And I'm off."
- (55) Step by step they climbed, and as they ascended, black against the dazzling blue sky and glazed under a shroud of ice, a vast figure began to loom: a helmeted head, a flowing cape, a sword in one hand and a child in the other ...
- [BJ] (56) Most conspicuous was a short, dark girl dressed in scarlet who had a big head, big eyes (her best feature), a big nose and a very big voice, which could be heard above all the other bleating, twanging, cackling, warbling, conspiratorial voices.
- (57) She was short and square, with a small head poked forward, long swinging arms and a bent-kneed running walk.
- [PF] (58) He had a good head for numbers, and recited it all the way down St Martin's Lane and into Monmouth Street.
- [SJ] (59) He had a good head of dark brown hair, and it looked as if he knew a decent barber.
- [HB] (60) If we can't do anything about his legs we'll give him a new head when he gets back.

## A NOSE

- [CD] (61) He was tall, sun-reddened, with a big lower jaw and a nose like a wedge.
- [SM] (62) Tall, fair men gazed into her eyes and were transformed. She adjusted a nose here, a thigh there, she shifted the alignment of a particularly alluring set of eyebrows ...
- [RC] (63) I've tried, believe me. I've got as good a nose as any other man on the paper, even if I do specialize in science.
- [HR] (64) "Hello, Joe," the desk-sergeant greeted him. "You must have a nose like a bloodhound; sniff out a murder before it's happened!"
- [BL] (65) Why, Jo wondered, did she have to have a nose like a cross between a doughnut and a ski-jump?
- [WN] (66) A few thin strands of black to grey hair and a nose that looked like badly applied putty. An out-of-date Englishman.
- (67) "A girl in Class Two of course," said Maisie, "with a nose like a pig!"
- [PK] (68) "Don't tell me you were just passing by? Come to have a nose, by any chance? Gloria tell you?"
- (69) Nutty had gone up to have a nose, sat behind the oil-drum stack early and seen him leave.
- [PR] (70) Bert was in his sixties, balding head with a thin weazel face and a nose that never stopped running. Winter or Summer.
- [HT] (71) Rab swallowed Winnie's wine. He would not want a nose like that.
- [BO] (72) But his features were carved from stronger stuff, the mouth wider beneath a nose that was broken though still straight.
- [KH] (73) It's a misfortune, not a fault. Like being born with a nose like a turnip.
- [PT] (74) So, just before his seventeenth birthday, a thin gangly boy, but (as Lionel Luyt remarked) completely unselfconscious, with a nose still red from his operation, John Cranko began to work full-time at ballet.
- [BC] (75) From this small dukedom he managed to prosper, employed as he was in a business which required a few choice contacts, a nose for the changing taste of his market, and an ability to conceal his pleasure at his achievements.
- (76) I think if I were a fledgling esoteric, with a nose for history, it wouldn't be difficult.
- [BN] (77) He had a bit of a beak for a nose and in profile, especially when he was frowning and thoughtful, looked like a young, dreaming hawk.
- [BP] (78) Aunt Liti had a nut-brown face, hard black eyes and a hook of a nose.
- [HP] (79) I remember now that I saw neat features, a nose a little hooked, and a very good figure.
- [GP] (80) You've got a nose for the washed-up, I'll say that for you.
- (81) He flapped his jacket. He had a nose like a snout, long and inquiring.
- [WD] (82) Julia set off towards the Dorsoduro, beginning to feel really ill with a headache pounding behind her left eyebrow, smarting eyes, a rasped throat and a nose that felt as though it were stuffed with hot, wet flannel with a few pins in it, but even so she decided to give her lesson.

- [HC] (83) He had thick brows and a nose which was so curved it was almost hooked, and she felt apprehension rise in her like sickness.
- [FJ] (84) He is going bald and he has a nose like a Jew's, though he isn't (not that I'd mind if he was).
- [BT] (85) A man with black curly hair and a nose like a doorknob bustled up from his desk when Dexter walked in to the inner sanctum of the editor's office.
- [HJ] (86) Then as I hauled inexorably a nose appeared, then a head, then all of the big animal hanging limply by his collar.
- (87) At the end of the alley I paused, waiting, but all I saw was the end of a nose which quietly withdrew as I stood there.
- [LD] (88) Clare had a nose for worry and unhappiness, and she scented it now.
- [KL] (89) An hour later, Lalage came tip-toeing into her room where she heard a dog whining gently. It was Nettie, with a nose under the door.
- [GN] (90) Here, too, the features were large, and clumsily applied: a nose like a ridge of clay, lips that recalled a Nubian's, though set in a bitter line.
- [ME] (91) Aged about ten months, he sports a poorly, red button of a nose, barnacled with encrusted snot.
- [BY] (92) Long, unkempt hair, several missing teeth, and a nose that looked as if it had met more than one fist in its owner's lifetime.
- [MM] (93) Somehow Beador had got a sniff of it. He must have a nose for money better than any hound for any fox.
- [JR] (94) Then from behind the bar a hunk the size of Ludo and with a nose like a squashed pear tells them to cool it: we aren't police, he says.
- [BS] (95) Nigel had the same beak of a nose, but, without the dark eyes, its effect was comic rather than forceful.
- (96) Shylock greeted Charles as he entered the front door. The beak of a nose seemed strangely reminiscent of Marius Steen.
- [IH] (97) He had a broad, high-cheekboned face, a straight beak of a nose, and dark eyes that stared at us without expression.
- (98) I was staring at him, at the set, aquiline face, the great beak of a nose and the hard line of the jaw, his features in silhouette.
- [WI] (99) A Sergeant with a crudely reconstructed pink blob of a nose – obviously bitten off at some stage in his professional or previous career – sat at a damascened bronze data-desk stained green with cupreous patina.
- [HD] (100) Mr Corcoran had stared stonily at him through the pince-nez fastened on to his thin beak of a nose. He had a bony wizened face and an unhealthy pallor.