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MASTERING THE ENGLISH ARTICLE

Lucrare metodico – ştiinţifică
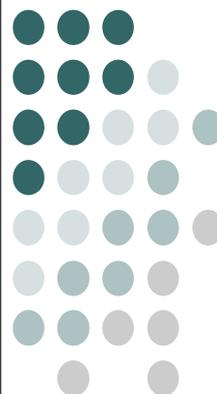
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Introduction

The research presented in this work attempts to find a solution for improving Romanian learners' performance in using English articles. English articles are 'little words' and within current teaching approaches that rely heavily on communication, they receive relatively little attention.

However, English articles occur very frequently and incorrect use may affect communication negatively. Also a second language writer may prefer to be accurate, especially if s/he is to write professionally.

Chapter 1 and 2 explore the difficulties for learners in the English article system and deals with the semantic notions English articles seem to express. The two distinctions that English marks are definiteness versus non-definiteness and count versus non-count. After showing how more traditional definitions and accounts fail to account for all aspects of actual language use, I argue that insights from Langacker's cognitive grammar are most useful in developing a taxonomy of article use that can aid in the analysis of article errors and in providing a coherent account of the English article system in the lessons to be developed.

Chapter 3 will look at the numbers of errors made by Romanian writers of English made. The questions addressed are whether article errors are indeed as frequent as suspected, how they correlate with the total number of errors and the other errors made in the essay, and whether article errors decrease as proficiency improves. We will also examine whether the number of article errors affect writing grades. The greater underlying questions are whether all Romanian learners have the same problems and whether they "automatically" acquire the system as they become more proficient, and whether the problem warrants attention in teaching. Using the taxonomy developed in the previous chapter, Chapter 2 examines the exact environments in which article errors occur. After reviewing the findings from other researchers pertaining to the acquisition of articles and looking at the students' first language article system in depth, I will look at the actual errors Romanian learners make, assuming that there is some influence of the first language on the second language system and some overall systematicity to the errors.

The great number of article errors remaining is somewhat surprising because students have been exposed to textbooks extensively dealing with the correct use of

the articles in their process of acquiring the English language. It is also surprising because the topic has had the attention of several pedagogical and reference grammars.

Chapter 4 examines what pedagogical grammars have said so far about the teaching of the English article system and how these ideas have been translated into current textbooks. The review will show that there are quite a few problems with current methods, mainly because the system is not dealt with coherently as a whole and incorrect "rules of thumb" are provided. The chapter ends with a proposal for a series of lessons based on insights proposed by Master (1990), Langacker (1991), and others.

Chapter 5 presents the results of an intervention study. Two groups are compared, one taught with lessons pertaining to article use from current methods and the other taught with lessons devised on the principles discussed in Chapter 4. The short-term results look very promising, but the long-term results do not.

Chapter I
The Meaning Of Articles

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to explore the meanings of English articles. Because the explanations of meanings of English articles depend heavily on theoretical insights, I shall first give a brief overview of the main insights in different research traditions.

In describing articles, theorists have generally agreed that English articles are prototypical realizations of marking definiteness (Halliday, 1976; Chesterman, 1991; Lyons, 1999). They are used with noun phrases to denote that something (whether in the real world or not) is definite or not. That is, an entity referred to by a noun phrase cannot be known as definite or non-definite without the occurrence of an article. It is therefore crucial to understand the notion of "definiteness".

Below a brief overview is given of the notion of definiteness, starting from more formal, "objectivist" approaches, which do not take the role of a speaker (conceptualizer) into account, via descriptivist and pragmatic views and ending with a "subjectivist" account, which takes into account the role of the conceptualizer and the given context in construing a situation and portraying it for expressive purposes (Langacker, 1991b). In my view a subjective account is the most useful in explaining the article system to second language learners of English in that it seems to explain native intuitions about article use in a simple to understand framework.

1.1. Defining Definiteness

The main notion associated with articles is definiteness. Intuitively, the concept of definiteness is quite simple. A thing in the real world denoted by a noun, which is also called a *referent*, is definite when it is known, familiar, unique, or identified to the speaker and hearer. The referent is indefinite when it is novel, unfamiliar, or assumed not to be identified by the hearer. Theoretically, however, definiteness is a complicated issue. Being a covert category, the notion of definiteness becomes overt only through the cooccurrence of a definite article (i.e. *the)* or an

indefinite article (i.e. *a,* unstressed *some*, and *zero)* with a noun. Three levels of complexity are frequently discussed.

The first level is centered on the meaning of definiteness, i.e. what does it mean to say that something is definite.

The second level is concerned with the intersection between definiteness and

specificity, in which the factor of reference is taken into account. Several possibilities are yielded as a result of the combination between definiteness and specificity.

a. ***specific + definite****: I'm going to clean the house tomorrow.*

b. ***nonspecific + definite****: I'm going to interview the first person*

who wins this contest.

c. ***specific + indefinite****: I met a survivor from the Asian tsunami*

yesterday.

d. ***nonspecific + indefinite****: I dream of buying a luxury house.*

The third level of intricacy is found when definiteness intersects with genericity, in which the notion of a set rather than a specific member of a set is the focus. Hence, we may have definite generic or indefinite generic.

Generic + definite*: The house is the largest purchase you will make*

in your lifetime.

Generic + indefinite*: Houses are expensive. / A house is expensive.*

These three levels of complexity of definiteness will be explored in this section. The first part of the section is concerned with the notions that have been used to define definiteness (e.g. uniqueness, identifiability, etc.) and the relation between definiteness and specificity, for the nature of definiteness, taken from a pragmatic position, cannot be detached from reference, an aspect of specificity. The second part is concerned with genericity of the articles. In these two parts, some research traditions will be presented alongside to provide some insights into the notions introduced.

1.1.1. Notions used to define definiteness

The literature abounds with discussion on how definiteness needs to be defined. Some of the most recurring discussions involve the notions of uniqueness

versus existentiality, familiarity, identifiability versus locatability, and inclusiveness. Each of these will be dealt with separately below.

1.1.2. Uniqueness and existentiality

Many philosophers and logicians have engaged into a survey of the meaning of definiteness. The first attempt goes back to Russell. Russell (1905), by restricting himself to singular count-nouns, discusses the opposition between the definite article and the indefinite article through the following well-known example:

(1) The King of France is bald.

This sentence, according to Russell, is a representation of a conjunction of three propositions.

(2) There is a King of France.
(3) There is not more than one King of France.
(4) This individual is bald.

These three propositions all share one property: they are all asserted. These propositions clearly follow a logical entailment. That is, if one of them is false, the whole conjunction is false. To assert (1) is to assert the other three propositions. (2) is an existential clause and claims the existence of the object referred to by the definite description. (3) is a uniqueness claim about the object: there is only one individual mentioned. And (4) claims that the predication is applicable to this unique, existing individual. According to Russell, the truth and falsity of (1) lies in all these three propositions. If one of them is false, (1) will be false. Thus, (1) would be false if it were uttered at the present time by virtue of the falsity of (2): there is no King of France nowadays. Or if there happened to be more than one King of France, (1) would be false as a result of the falsity of (3). And if this individual were not bald, (1) would not be true because (4) is false. Russell's contribution to the understanding of the nature of definiteness is in the first two propositions – *existentiality and uniqueness*.

An entity denoted by a singular noun used with *the* must exist and must be unique. An entity referred to by a noun marked by *a*, by contrast, is not unique,

though it may exist. Because existentiality can be found in both definite and indefinite descriptions, uniqueness is generally agreed to characterize definiteness. Russell focuses on logical aspects when introducing the notion of uniqueness, but also from a pragmatic perspective, uniqueness can explain the use of *the*-marked nouns in linguistic contexts and non-linguistic contexts as the following examples illustrate.

   (5) I met an old man and a young boy in a park yesterday.

    *Although **the old man** did not recognize me, I realized he was my friend's father.*

   *(6) I took a taxi to the airport, but **the driver** was new to the area.*

    So I missed the flight.

   *(7) Just give **the shelf** a quick wipe, will you, before I put the television on it.*

   *(8) Put these clean towels in **the bathroom** please.*

   *(9) I hear **the prime minister** was poisoned today.*

   *(10) **The moon was** very bright last night.*

Linguistic contexts are found in (5) and (6). In (5) the referent denoted by the *old man* is unique because a mention of *the man* is made in the previous clause. In (6), *the driver* is used as a result of the unique relationship between a taxi and a driver. That is, a taxi has a driver. In nonlinguistic contexts, we also find that we explain the use of the with the notion of uniqueness. **The shelf** in (7) and **the bathroom** in (8) are unique in the immediate situation. And **the prime minister** in (9) and **the moon** in (10) are unique on account of the larger situation (i.e. **a country and the earth**).

Uniqueness can also explain the use of the definite article in logical expressions (e.g. **superlatives, first, same, only, next, last**) or in hypothetical or counterfactual cases (Lyons, 1999)[1].

(11) She is *a / the best performer I have ever known.

(12) He is *an /the only male student in this class.

(13) She is *a / the first/next/last person in the list.

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[1] The contexts that create counterfactual or hypothetical cases in a sentence involve (1) verbs of "propositional attitude" (e.g. wonder, look for, try, hope, intend, etc.), (2) negation,(3) questions, (4) conditionals, (5) modals, (6) future tense (Lyons 1999: 166).

(14) The winner of this competition will get a free ticket to Paris.

In (11-13) the meaning conveyed by the modifying expressions reveals uniqueness; as a result, the indefinite article is incompatible. Similarly, in (14) there is a unique winner who will be able to satisfy the description even 2 The contexts that create counterfactual or hypothetical cases in a sentence involve (1) verbs of "propositional attitude" (e.g. wonder, look for, try, hope, intend, etc.), (2) negation, (3) questions, (4) conditionals, (5) modals, (6) future tense (Lyons 1999: 166). though it is a hypothetical situation in which the competition is not finished yet.

However, some criticisms have been leveled against Russell's accounts. The first is concerned with logical and pragmatic aspects of meaning. Strawson (1971), who revives Frege (1892), criticizes Russell for putting the three propositions (2-4) on an equal basis. He insists that the existential clause in (2) and the uniqueness clause (3) are not asserted by (1). Only the predication of baldness (3) is asserted by (1). To him, (2) and (3) are only presuppositions or preconditions of (1). If (2) is false, (1) still makes sense although it lacks a truth value as a result of the fact that the definite description (i.e. in 1) fails to refer. In addition, Strawson rejects Russell's uniqueness implication by maintaining that uniqueness is not restricted to singular definites.

The referent of singular indefinites can be as unique as of singular definites. The following example will illustrate the case.

(20) Linda sang well and won a prize – the only prize of the variety contest this year.

In this context, the referent *a prize* in (15) can be interpreted as there having been only one vocal prize. Therefore, since existentiality is a trait that both singular definites and indefinites share, Strawson sees *identifiability r*ather than uniqueness as the essence of definiteness. According to him, the elements of contexts and the role of the hearer should be included when describing the nature of definiteness. The second criticism was concerned with what Hawkins (1978) calls 'incompleteness.' To Hawkins (1978), plural and mass nouns can take a definite article under the same conditions as singular unique nouns. The keys in where are the keys should refer to all of the keys in question. Or the sand in Move the sand from the front-yard into the barn is understood as referring to all the sand in question. The totality of the mass or the

number of things referred to can be understood as being unique too. This is what Hawkins labels inclusiveness.

1.1.3. Familiarity

As mentioned earlier, uniqueness can be a constitutive element of definiteness. However, because an analysis in which meaning is divorced from pragmatic elements is felt to be inadequate, attempts have been made to define the meaning of definiteness in terms of reference. Also, because the role of speaker and hearer and the context should be taken into account in explaining the meaning of definiteness (Strawson, 1971), some grammarians consider familiarity to be also a constitutive element of definiteness.

The idea of familiarity can be traced back to Apollonius Dyscolus (2nd century AD), who perceives the role of identity as well as the previous mention of the referent as factors that determine presence and absence of the definite article in Greek (Householder 1981, quoted in Lyons 1999: 254). Christophersen (1939) has developed this view more fully as becomes clear from the following description with respect to the use of the:

…for the use of a the-form it is necessary that the thing meant should occupy so prominent a place in the listener's mind that by the mention of the form the right idea is called up. There must be a basis of understanding and the purpose of the article the is to refer to this basis, to indicate "the thing you know." This function may be described as "familiarization." (69-70)

His description suggests that a noun phrase used with the indicates that the referent is familiar to both the hearer and the speaker. If nothing has been filled in the hearer's mind, a what-question may be anticipated from the hearer as in (16).

*(16) A: "I was down at the bookseller's yesterday, but I couldn't **get the book.** It is out of print."*

B: (surprised) "What book?"

A: "Oh, didn't I tell you?..."

The what-question in (16) can be asked because the hearer is not familiar with **the book** introduced by the speaker. Unfamiliarity arises as a result of the lack of

a basis for understanding- 'the thing you know.' To remedy this situation, *a book* as in *I was down at the bookseller's yesterday, but I couldn't get a book* should have been used instead, suggesting that the speaker may be aware of what is being referred to but the hearer probably not. As Christophersen (1939: 28) asserts, if the speaker "wants to be understood it is important that he should not use words and phrases which the hearer is likely to misinterpret." Hence, familiarity can explain the difference between the definite article and the indefinite article with regards to definiteness.

However, Christophersen's concept of familiarity as an explanation for the definite-indefinite distinction has also been subject to criticism. Hawkins (1978) maintains that the definition of familiarity is not accurate if one considers associative cases such as the author after a book has been mentioned. Christophersen acknowledges this weakness as follows:

> *Now, in all strictness, this term [familiarity] is not always quite correct.*
> *Though the previously acquired knowledge may relate to the very*
> *individual meant, yet it is often only indirectly that one is familiar with*
> *what is denoted by the word. It may be something else that one is familiar*
> *with, but between this 'something' and the thing denoted there must be an*
> *unambiguous relation. Talking of a certain book, it is perfectly correct to*
> *say "The author is unknown" (Christophersen 1939: 72-73).*

To Hawkins, the use of the author is unknown cannot bring up in the hearer's mind the right individual that the speaker is thinking of. Moreover, Hawkins (1978) maintains that 'unfamiliarity' in some cases is compatible with the use of the. Here are some examples.

> *(17) They've just got in from Paris. **The plane** was five hours late.*
> *(18) **The student** Jim went out with last night was nasty to him.*
> *(19) Holland has been buzzing with **the rumor** that the Prime Minister is going to resign.*
> *(20) My supervisor and I share **the same secrets**.*

In (17) getting from Paris does not necessarily involve flying. The association can be real in the example, but we cannot really say that the plane was known to the hearer before the second sentence of this example was uttered. In (18-20), the noun phrases accompanied by *the* are perfectly appropriate as first-mention definite descriptions. ***The student, the rumor and the secrets*** were not mentioned previously. Besides, there are no associative links between the referents of the boldface NPs with those of certain preceding NPs. No prior knowledge is required for the hearer in these cases. Perridon (1989: 111) states that the weakness of the familiarity theory shows in indefinite NPs. He provides the following example.

> *(7) You **have a fine daughter**.*

The hearer in (21) should have good knowledge of the entity mentioned since it is his daughter. However, the speaker still uses *a* and not *the.* This challenges the term ***familiarity***. For it is clear that a noun phrase marked by a can denote an entity which is familiar too. As a result of these inadequacies, the notion of ***identifiability*** has been suggested as a feature of definiteness.

1.1.4. Identifiability and Locatability

Identifiability is considered to be a feature of definiteness when reference as a speech act is taken into account. Linguists who are influenced by Strawson, Searle, and Grice have come up with this concept, which is considered to be a redefinition of the concept of uniqueness and familiarity.

Searle (1969) proposes a principle of identification, which defines the necessary conditions for a successful definite reference as follows:

> *"[The principle of identification] requires that the hearer be able to identify the object from the speaker's utterance of the expression. By "identify" here I mean that there should no longer be any doubt or ambiguity about what exactly is being talked about. At the lowest level, questions like "who?", "what?", or "which one?" are answered.*
> *Of course at another level these questions are still open: after something has been identified one may still ask "what?" in the sense of "tell me more about it", but one cannot ask "what?" in the sense of "I don't know what*

you are talking about". Identifying, as I am using the term, just means answering that question. …Identification… rests squarely on the speaker's ability to supply an expression of one of these kinds, which is satisfied uniquely by the object to which he intends to refer." (pp. 85-86)

Although Searle is concerned with the necessary conditions for the successful performance of a definite reference under speech act circumstances, his definition of identification may contribute to the notion of **identifiability.** To Lyons (1999), identifiability involves the hearer's readiness in identifying the referent of the noun phrase signaled by the. And familiarity is not totally rejected. It is still a component of identifiability. You can identify some real-world entity, which you know to exist because

you can see it or have heard of it. Examples (5), (6), and (7) apply to this case. However, identifiability requires more than that. It suggests that the hearer should exert some effort in working out which is referred to. Lyons provides the following illustration concerning (7), which is repeated here for easy reference.

*(7) Just give **the shelf** a quick wipe, will you, before I put the television on it.*
In (7), the setting is in the sitting room. Now, for example, Ann wants to drive some nails into the wall to put up a picture while she is on a stepladder, and at that time Joe has entered the room. Without turning round, she says to Joe:

*(22) Pass me **the hammer**, will you?*

Joe has no prior idea of the hammer, but he can find it on a chair after looking around. Comparing (7) to (22), we can see that in (7) the hearer has knowledge of the shelf in the room, whereas in (22), he has no knowledge of ***the hammer*** at the time Ann utters the request. The definite article in the hammer tells Joe that he can identify the hammer Ann is talking about (Lyons, 1999). Thus, where familiarity is tenuous, identifiability can take its place.

Identifiability can solve situations that familiarity cannot, especially in associative cases (e.g. the author is associated with a book). In (17), for instance, the association is probable rather than a known one, which has to do with familiarity. The journey from Paris nowadays will most likely involve an aircraft rather than a ship. As

a result, the definite noun phrase the plane will help the hearer associate the referent with a plane taking off from Paris. Nevertheless, Lyons (1999) shows that there are cases in which identifiability is hardly a feature of definiteness. Rather, uniqueness is still a 'powerful' factor for explicating associate, situational, and cataphoric uses of the as in the following examples.

*(23) I've just been to a wedding. **The bride** wore pink.*

*(24)[A student entering a lecture class **at the beginning** of a semester.*
*without referring to the faculty's notice about a guest professor] I wonder who **the guest** professor is this semester.*

*(25) Tom's gone for a spin on **the motorbike** she has just bought.*

In (23) the hearer can infer that there is one bride at a wedding. Yet it would be ludicrous to say that the hearer can identify the bride. In (24) lecture classes involve instructors. On account of this, the phrase the guest professor is quite possible. However, can the speaker, in this case, identify the referent of the definite noun phrase? If the speaker cannot identify the referent, how can the hearer satisfy the expectation – to identify the referent? Although both participants have knowledge of the existence of an individual as a guest professor in this situation, this does not guarantee that identification is achieved. In (25) the relative clause provides a context for the occurrence of the motorbike; however, it does not ensure that the hearer is able to identify which motorbike Trang is using except when he sees Tom riding it.

Also, Hawkins (1978) indirectly challenges the notion of identifiability when he provides an example in which the indefinite article **a** is used instead of the in his criticism of Searle (1969).

(26) So you were **at Eton**, were you? Then you are certain to know ***a chap called   Bill Snoop. (p. 98).***

In (26) the hearer is given sufficient means to identify the referent, but the speaker still uses an indefinite NP. Probably to deal with the inadequacy of identifiability, Hawkins (1978: 167-168) introduces his location theory, according to which the speaker performs the following acts when using the definite article the:

He (a) introduces a referent (or referents) to the hearer; and (b) instructs the hearer to locate the referent in some shared set of objects...; and he (c) refers to the totality of the objects or mass within the set which satisfy the referring expression. (p. 167)

A shared set involves the knowledge that both speaker and hearer share of a given referent, which can be a physical or a mental object occurring in sets of different kinds. There are four conditions for the speech acts to be successful: (1) set existence, (2) set identifiability, (3) set membership, and (4) set composition. Condition (1) concerns the knowledge the speaker and hearer have of the set of objects that the definite referent is located in. Condition (2) refers to the hearer's ability to infer which shared set is actually intended by the speaker. The act of inferring lies in the previous discourse or in the situation of utterance. Condition (3) is involved with the relation between the referent and the shared set. That is, the referent must exist in the shared set inferred. Condition (4), having three sub-parts, is concerned with the correspondence between the number of objects in the shared set satisfying the descriptive predicate and the linguistic referents referred to by the definite description. To illustrate how the four conditions work, I will consider the following examples of communication breakdown (Hawkins, 1978: 168- 170).

(27)   a. *I've just seen **the professor** again.*

        b. *I don't think we've met before, have we?*

(28)   A. *I've just seen **the professor** again.*

        B: Which professor?

        A: Oh, didn't I tell you?

(29)   A: *I've just spoken to the professor.*

        B: What? That one over there?

        A: No, the one I was just talking to you about.

(30)   (i) ***The two students***

        (ii) ***The member of parliament***

        (iii) ***The professors***

Example (27) illustrates the important role of condition (1). The communication broke down in (27) because if the speaker and hearer do not know each other, they do not share a previous discourse set. That is, no previous talk-exchange has occurred between them. As a result, other conditions (i.e. identification and location) are ruled out. Examples (28) and (29) demonstrate the relationship between conditions (2) and (3). They should work in harmony; if one of these conditions is not met, then communication may break down. In (28), condition (2) is met, but condition (3) is not. The cause of the break-down lies in the hearer's knowledge that the referent was not actually a member of this set (condition 3) although he could identify some shared set pragmatically (condition 2). By contrast, (28) shows that condition (3) is met, but condition (2) is not. The breakdown arises because set identifiability failed, though the set membership condition was satisfied. The hearer did not know which shared set the speaker intended: a previous discourse set (i.e. the one I was just talking to you about) or an immediate situation set (i.e. that one over there).

Example set (30) is concerned with condition (4). The two students is possible if the number of students the speaker and hearer are referring to two. Or, similarly, the member of parliament is not possible if it refers to more than one entity in the larger situation set. And the professors can be difficult to locate if in the previous discourse set there was only one entity.

Although Hawkins has also been criticized (see Lyons, 1999 and Chesterman, 1991), Hawkins' location theory can be seen as an attempt to redefine the notions of existentiality, uniqueness, and identifiability mentioned above. Existentiality and uniqueness are put in relation to speech-act participants. Two important issues found in location theory are the notions of a shared set and inclusiveness. Chesterman (1991: 17) describes the notion of a shared set as "a more precise way of defining the associated 'something else' that the hearer is assumed to be familiar with." Inclusiveness is an aspect that has to do with the meaning of the definite article. The example set (30) relating to condition (4) mentioned above is concerned with this notion.

1.2. Inclusiveness

Before discussing how inclusiveness can be a factor in the meaning of definiteness, let us consider the following two examples (Hawkins, 1978)

*(31) Bring us **the wickets** in after the game of cricket.*

*(32) We must ask you to move **the sand** from our gateway.*

In these examples, the definite article is used with the plural noun wickets and the mass noun sand. What are the referents of the noun phrases the wickets in (31) and the sand in (32)? As we know, in cricket, there are six wickets, but how many wickets do we want the hearer to bring us? And in (32), are we satisfied if the hearer moves only part of the sand away?

If we hold the notion that uniqueness is applicable to a set or quantity instead of an individual, then what would happen if the hearer brought a set of four wickets, which according to the hearer can be the unique set? For the set of six wickets may have a number of subsets containing five wickets, four, three, or two wickets. Clearly, these subsets are irrelevant to us. It would disappoint us if he brought us a set of four wickets. In fact, what we are concerned with is the totality of the wickets or the whole set of six wickets. Similarly, we would not be satisfied if the hearer still left some sand in our gateway.

Thus it is argued that the notion of inclusiveness should complement and even incorporate the criterion of uniqueness (Hawkins 1978). The notion of totality in plural nouns or mass nouns when used with the definite article is similar in meaning to the universal quantifier all and the wickets in (31) may be understood as the unique maximal set of wickets by virtue of the context.

However, if the totality of the entities that satisfies a definite description is just one, then inclusiveness is equal to uniqueness. However, Hawkins' notion of inclusiveness has produced some objections. Chesterman (1991: 66-67) criticizes Hawkins for presenting inclusiveness in absolute, logical terms (i.e. all) and "raises major issues about the relation between logic and natural language." He provides some counter-examples in which the universal-quantifier reading is not possible.

*(33) The Americans have reached **the moon**.*

In (33) it is impossible for all Americans to have reached the moon. The Americans in (33) should be understood as representative of a whole set. To Chesterman, the *all* incorporated with the meaning of the is similar to what we might call a pragmatic *all,* which means "all with respect to the relevant intents and purposes", "more or less all" (p. 66).

Similarly, Huddleston (2002) notes that the idea of totality expressed in a noun phrase marked by the is not as emphatic as that found with universal quantification *(i.e. all),* given that all entities in the set are considered to be basically similar. That is, plural noun phrases marked by the do not suggest that every individual entity should have the predication property. Here are examples from Huddleston (2002: 370).

(34)   a ***The bathroom tiles*** *are cracked.*
          b ***All the bathroom tiles*** *are cracked.*

The bathroom tiles in (34a) gives the impression that the totality of the tiles in the bathroom is cracked, but it does not mean that the 'crackedness' is found with every individual entity. By contrast, all the bathroom tiles in (34b) suggest that there is no exception for the 'crackedness' to be applied to every individual tile.

1.2.1. Specificity and Referentiality

Specificity and referentiality are two terms often found in treating definiteness. However, the difference between these two terms is not all that clear. Traditionally, in grammar books, the notion of specificity has to do with distinguishing a specific entity from a general entity (i.e*. a set* or *sets)*. This may explain why Quirk et al. (1985) makes a distinction between specific reference and generic reference when describing the use of the articles. Referentiality has to do with referring or pointing to something. This notion has frequently been used after the introduction of the notions of reference and speech-acts (Strawson, 1971; Searle, 1969). Generally, the two terms seem to be used interchangeably. In defining specificity, Brinton (2000: 292) says that specificity is concerned with whether or not a description conveyed by a NP refers to a specific entity in the real world. In this

definition, the notion of reference is combined with specificity. Hence, a general distinction is often made as a result of combining specificity and definiteness. We have cases in which a specific entity is either definite or indefinite as in (35) and (36), and a non-specific entity is non-definite (37).

(35) *A **lion** and two tigers are sleeping in the cage.*
(36) *I am going to clean **the house.***
(37) *Pass me **a book.***

Researchers are still at variance with each other about whether or not definites and indefinites refer pragmatically or semantically and whether or not definites can be non-referential in the same way that indefinites can be. The first view holds that non-specific noun phrases describe, but do not refer (Donnellan, 1978; Fodor and Sag, 1982). This is the case of a book in (37). Similar to this view is a 'weaker' position (Lyons 1999: 165), which maintains that definite phrases may (but need not) refer, but indefinites do not. A lion in (35) does not refer because it is not identifiable to the hearer. Although the hearer may understand what is conveyed through the indefinite description, he may not be able to identify the lion in question. The main difference between the first view and the weaker one is that the first view does not hold that definite NPs and indefinite NPs refer in a semantic sense (Neale 1990, Ludlow and Neale 1991). Based on Russell's account (1905), they argue that simple definites and indefinites are to be considered quantificational rather than directly referential. However, this does not mean that this view rejects the notion of reference, but reference is limited to proper nouns, demonstratives, and personal pronouns, whose meaning is to pick out an individual entity. Lyons (1999: 166) takes a non-committal position in saying that definites and indefinites are "potentially referring." He does not commit himself to either side in explicating the reference from a pragmatic or semantic point of view, but he does argue that the specific—non-specific distinction applies equally to both definite and indefinite noun phrases. The mechanism that influences such a distinction involves certain grammatical contexts, which may create an ambiguous reading: specific (referential) or non-specific (non-referential) in two types of contexts: opaque and transparent.

Opaque contexts, simply put, are the ones in which, on the non-specific interpretation, a co-referential expression is not 'eligible' to be used to substitute for

the noun phrase in question. For example, in (38) a Norwegian can have a non-specific interpretation and then it is possible to substitute one is possible, but impossible to substitute a Norwegian with him.

>*(38) Helen wants to marry **a Norwegian**, though she hasn't met*
>
>　　*one / ***him** yet.*

The proposition in the continuation can clarify the meaning, but if it is not provided, the sentence is ambiguous because it may have a specific or nonspecific reading. The reason why a co-referential pronoun is not possible lies in the fact that the verb **want** in (38) presents a proposition which is potential or not factual. The Norwegian Helen wants to marry is in Helen's desire, and through the continuation "she has not met a Norwegian yet" it is clear that he is not yet a 'factual' or specific person. **Him** would be possible if a Norwegian is a specific person as in "Helen wants to marry a Norwegian, but she hasn't told him yet." Verbs such as believe, intend, hope, believe (i.e. "propositional attitude" verbs) or intensional verbs (e.g. look for) are like want in that they are hypothetical or counterfactual. A similar characterization obtains in other structures such as negation, questions, conditionals, modals, future tense. In the following examples of opaque contexts from Lyons (1999: 168), we can see that non-specificity is also applicable to noun phrases used with the definite article.

>*(39)　　a. I'm going to buy **a suit** tomorrow – you'll be horrified by the colour.*
>
>　　*b. I'm going to buy **a suit** tomorrow – even if I can't find one I really like.*
>
>*(40)　a. I'm going to have lunch with **the president** tomorrow – I'm dreading it, he's such a boring man.*
>
>　　*b. I'm going to have lunch with **the president** tomorrow – that is, if the election takes place today and we have a president.*

In each set of examples, there are two readings based on the continuations. Without them, ambiguity arises. Thus, the referential reading is found in the (a) examples and the non-referential in the (b) examples. Other near equivalent terms for specific reading are ***extension, de re, or referential*** and for ***non-specific reading, intension, de dicto*** or ***non-referential.*** As (40b) illustrates, the specific—non-specific distinction is not just limited to noun phrases marked by the indefinite article. According to the standard account, the agent that causes the availability of two

readings of noun phrases in opaque contexts is the so-called "scope ambiguity." (For a detailed account, see Lyons 1999: 169-170). Second, the distinction of specificity also exists in transparent contexts (non-opaque contexts). Here are some examples concerning indefinite noun phrases (Lyons 1999: 170).

(41) a. I haven't started the class yet; I'm missing **a student**—
   Mary's always late.
   b. I haven't started the class yet; I'm missing **a student** –there
   should be fifteen, and I only count fourteen.

Two readings are available in the (41) set. In (41a), a student is specific because the speaker has in mind a particular individual, and Mary in the continuation refers to a student. In (41b), non-referentiality is the case since the identity of the student is not the focus although the speaker seems to be 'specific' when she knows that she misses one student. According to Lyons, the distinction between the (a) and (b) reading lies in a pragmatic rather than semantic explanation. That is, "there is no ambiguity in the sense of each such sentence having two semantic representations (different either lexically or in structure). Rather, the expression is vague between readings on which the speaker either has or does not have a particular referent for the indefinite noun phrase in mind".

The specific—non-specific distinction in transparent contexts also obtain in definite noun phrases as seen in (42), where (42a) is referential, and (42b) non-referential.

(42) a. We can't start the seminar, because **the student** who's giving the presentation is absent –typical of Bill, he's so unreliable.
   b. We can't start the seminar, because **the student** who's giving the presentation is absent – I'd go and find whoever it is, but no-one can remember, and half the class is absent. (Lyons, 1999: 172)

A similar distinction is found in Donnellan's well-known example (1966) in (43), although other theorists tend to use different terminology for the distinction in question*: referential versus attributive*.

(43) **Smith's murderer** is insane. (i.e. The murderer of Smith)

In one reading of (43), the referential one, the referent of Smith's murderer (or the murderer of Smith) is specific. A certain individual such as John, Doreen's neighbor, the guy in the black suit, is designated through the use of the description. In the other reading of (43), the attributive one, the description can be applied to anybody who killed *Smith.*

In this case, the referent is non-specific. From Lyons' account, it can be observed that the specific—nonspecific distinction applies equally to both definite and indefinite noun phrases in both opaque and transparent contexts. The issue is more complex in transparent contexts when there is a correspondence between the different readings of definites and those of indefinites as a result of the intersection between the elements of specificity and those of definiteness. According to Ludlow and Neale (1991) and Larson and Segal (1995), as cited in Lyons, a "referential" use must be distinguished from a "specific" use for both definites and indefinites. We have a referential use when a speaker intends to communicate something about a particular individual and expects the hearer to identify which individual is intended. By contrast, we have a specific use, when the speaker, though he has in mind a particular individual, does not intend the hearer to realize any particular individual. Along this line, if the attributive use in (43) is taken into consideration, clearly, as Lyons (p. 172) remarks, "these uses are both distinct from the attributive or non-specific use, which is purely quantificational, involving no individual 'referent' at any level." Although the issue is still under debate, we can infer that what matters is whether or not an entity is definite. Although the distinction between a specific referent and a non-specific referent can be useful for indefinite NPs in co-referential cases, the main criterion in terms of article usage is whether the noun marked by an article is definite or non-definite. That is, if speaker and hearer can uniquely identify the referent, then the article *the* is used, and if not, *a* is used. This is probably the reason why Langacker (1991: 97-98) suggests that it is not necessary for specificity to be known when he introduces the notion *mental contact.*

1.2.2. Definiteness in cognitive grammar

Langacker (1991), who bases his account on Hawkins (1978), provides the following description of definiteness:

"Use of the definite article with type description T in a nominal implies that (i) the designated instance tᵢ of T is unique and maximal in relation to the current discourse space; (2) S has mental contact with tᵢ; and (3) either H has mental contact with t1 or the nominal alone is sufficient to establish it." (p. 98)

I can conclude that definiteness, to Langacker, lies in the speech act participants' awareness of the entity referred to by a nominal (i.e. a noun marked by an article) in the current discourse space. It involves uniqueness and maximality (i.e. inclusiveness).

To attain successful communication, the participants should rely on their ability to of reach one another's mental space within the discourse space. Put differently, two prerequisites for establishing definiteness are discourse space and mental contact. Langacker's discourse space is based on Fauconnier's notion of 'mental space' (1985). A mental space, which is comprised of a set of elements and relations, is a conceived situation that may have various degrees of complexity. Mental spaces are created, evoked, or modified as a result of the addition of new elements and relations throughout the process of discourse. Specifically, one space can be included in another and the relations among the elements of different spaces may be established too. Thus, mental spaces in a person's mind are either his or her conception of reality in the present and past or his or her vision in the future; even those aspects of the present or past s/he has no knowledge of. These mental spaces are distinguished and manipulated easily by a person, although they may have considerable variation in cognitive and logical status. It is worth noting that what one person is capable of, with regard to conceiving reality and manipulating mental spaces, can also be understood by another person since the other's capacity is comparable to his or her own. This suggests that person A's conception of person B's view of reality (or some other mental space available to B) can be regarded as a subspace within A's own reality conception" (Langacker 1991: 97).

A variant of a mental space is what Langacker (1991) calls current discourse space. The current discourse space, which is shared by the speaker (S) and hearer (H), is made up of those elements and relations construed as a basis for communication at a given moment in the flow of discourse. The realm of the current discussion is interpreted as that containing those entities constituting the space. They are immediately available to both S and H, who can figure them out in their conscious

awareness or elicit them easily through association or simple inference. The entities making up the discourse space may include:

(a) *all or portions of other, previously existing spaces available* (e.g. I bought **a flat TV and a DVD recorder**, but I had to return **the DVD recorder.)**

(b) *a new space created by the discourse itself* (e.g. There was **a beautiful lady** who wanted to see you.)

(c) *present reality or the immediate physical context as the discourse space by default* (e.g. Watch out for **the dog** behind you!).

A current discourse space is needed for establishing mental contact. *Mental contact* concerns *an entity being singled out* for individual conscious awareness in the conceptualizer's current psychological state. Speech-act participants can have mental contact easily with an instance (i.e. an entity conveyed by the noun marked by an article) even when the entity involved does not exist or does not refer to something in the real world as long as it exists in some mental space; in addition, nothing *specific* need be known about it. Some examples will illustrate the point.

(44) Once upon a time, there was a beautiful princess who lived with an ugly frog in a castle overlooking a championship golf course….
(45) David wants to catch a fish.

In (44), there is a vague description of the characters and the setting *(a princess, a frog, a castle, and a golf course)*, and they are presumed to be imaginary, but the hearer will not experience any difficulty in being aware of them. In (45), the hearer can be brought into mental contact with a fish even though two readings are available: specific and non-specific.

In a nonspecific reading, *the fish* exists in the space representing David's desire; whereas, the specific reading suggests only that David should have a particular fish in mind. This does not presume that the speaker or the hearer has knowledge of the fish.

What is revealed from this reading is that the speech-act participants have no knowledge other than that there is a fish in David's mind and that it is *the fish* he wants to catch.

Definiteness and non-definiteness therefore can be explained on the basis of the awareness or unawareness that speech-act participants have towards a thing

expressed by a noun marked by an article. If speech-act participants share an awareness of an entity, they should be able to *uniquely* and *maximally identify* (i.e. inclusive) *it.*

1.2.3. Concluding definiteness

Some recapitulation may be useful at this point. So far in this chapter, I have explored the defining elements of definiteness. Four meanings have been advocated from different research traditions: uniqueness, familiarity,identifiability, and inclusiveness. We argued that these four meanings can be amalgamated into two: identifiability and inclusiveness. Identifiability subsumes familiarity, and inclusiveness subsumes uniqueness. I have also explored the interrelation between definiteness and specificity. What can be concluded from Lyons' account is that specificity can be applied to both definite and indefinite noun phrases, and that referential and specific use may need to be distinguished by means of pragmatic factors. To resolve these issues, we introduced Langacker's notion of mental contact, which is the only prerequisite for definiteness. If a speaker and hearer achieve mental contact, then they can uniquely identify an entity, and factors such as referentiality and specificity are redundant. Awareness and nothing else is sufficient. Another aspect of the meaning of the English articles is the relation between definiteness and genericity

1.3. Genericity

Some differences between definiteness and genericity can be noted at the outset. Definiteness versus non-definiteness is marked by the form of the article: the for definiteness and a or zero for non-definiteness.

Genericity does not have one form. It has been agreed that all three forms of the articles (the, a or zero), when used with NPs, may have a generic reading as in (46), even though other factors such as aspect, frequency adverbs, the meaning of the predicate (e.g. a verb) have their impact too. (For details on these contextual factors, see Lawler, 1972, Ihalainen, 1974; Smith, 1975; Lyons, 1999.)

(46) a. ***A cat*** *has four legs.*
b. ***The cat*** *has four legs.*

*c. **Cats** have four legs.*

*d. (**The cats** have four legs).*

In capturing the nature of genericity, most theorists view generic NPs as those whose reference is made to an entire class as a whole – the class in question being that consisting of all the entities satisfying the description inherent in the noun or nominal (Lyons, 1999: 179). Or to Huddleston (2002), generic NPs can be understood as those expressions denoting the situation type called unlimited states, which potentially hold for all time. Hence a relevant factor concerning the nature of genericity is the nature of the class reference.

Lyons remarks that theoretical trends have focused on whether the reference is to the class as (1) an entity, (2) a "second-order" individual, or to the class as (3) the "aggregate" of its members (i.e. the generalization is about the members of the class). As with definiteness, theorists do not share similar views with respect to the possibility and precise nature of a generic reading in relation to the articles. Generally, they disagree with each other about what constitutes a generic NP (Chesterman, 1991).

They are still doubtful whether or not the + Plural N (Burton-Roberts, 1976; Quirk et al. 1985), the zero article (Burton-Roberts, 1981) and a (Jespersen, 1949) have a generic status. Even these native speakers have different readings of genericness. Based on Smith (1975), Chesterman (1991) provides the following examples along with his comments.

*(47) **The idea** is more perfect than the object. (generic for Vendler (1968: 20; 'dubious' for Smith)*

*(48) **A beaver** built dams in prehistoric times. (generic for Smith, unacceptable on a generic reading for Perlmutter (1970))*

*(49) **Time** elapses more quickly in old age than in childhood. (non-generic for Smith, generic for Chesterman)*

*(50) **Ideas** are alien to the undergraduate. (non-generic for Smith, generic for Chesterman)*

*(51) **The true lover** kisses whenever the opportunity presents itself. (starred by Smith, grammatical and generic for Chesterman)*

In line with these differences in opinion, there is evidence that genericity cannot be considered a 'unified' phenomenon (Chesterman, 1991: 34). For generic articles have different distributions and are not in free variation, as seen in the following examples.

> (52) a. **The lion** is becoming extinct.
>
> b. **Lions** are becoming extinct.
>
> c. ***A lion** is becoming extinct.
>
> (53) a. ***The book** fills leisure time for many people.
>
> b. **A book** fills leisure time for many people.

The explanation given for the ungrammaticality of (52c) is that it cannot semantically satisfy the class predicate be extinct. In (53) by contrast, (53a) is ungrammatical because there is no class predicate. Even so, there are examples that show that a generic reading can be achieved for all three forms, even when class predicates are absent (Chesterman, 1991).

> (54) a. **The rabbit** likes carrots. (generic or non-generic)
>
> b. **Rabbits** like carrots. (generic only)
>
> c. **A rabbit** likes carrots. (generic or non-generic)

From these bits of evidence, we may conclude that a generic reading is not the same for each of the articles. It seems that the intrinsic meaning of each particular article has exerted its influence on the interpretation of a NP as generic or non-generic. Let us now turn our attention to the articles and see how linguists account for their generic use. We will see that different views are projected when analyzing the meanings of the so-called generic articles.

1.3.1. Generic "a"

The indefinite article a used with a noun is thought to have a generic reading when it is a representation of a species (i.e. *a typical X* by Chesterman, 1991). At the same time, in instructional materials, it is often presented as the equivalent of 'any'. In this discussion, we will see that the issue is not that simple. There are cases

that 'generic' $a + N$ is not paraphrasable by any and doubts have been raised concerning the status of genericity for **a.**

I will start first with the case in which indefinite singular generics, *a N*, is not acceptable (in relation to other generics), while the lion is acceptable as in *The / *A lion is becoming extinct.* One account, introduced earlier and repeated here in detail, maintains that the predicate determines the appropriateness in interpreting the class as an entity, a second-order individual, or the aggregate of its members as introduced earlier. Class predicates such as be extinct, be numerous, die out, abound require a class (or group) expression[2] as subject. This explains why the lion is acceptable and *a lion is not. For extinction is a property of the class as a whole. The class generic, the N, refers to the class as a whole, while a N, does not. Burton-Roberts (1976) elaborates by explaining that *a tiger is ruled out because "becoming extinct" is an accidental property – not an inherent characteristic. The indefinite singular generic represents a "property generic." It denotes the intension of the noun with no extension.[3] As a result, this generic type, a N, can only take predicates which express inherent or defining characteristics as in A whale is a mammal, where a whale denotes "being a whale" or "whale-hood." But it is hardly possible to say that *A lion is becoming extinct. If the sentence were produced, it would suggest that the inherent property of being a lion is equal to becoming extinct. Thus, it is understandable that an accidental property such as becoming extinct cannot be predicated of the intension of a noun. Another possible reason for the fact that generic **a** is not equivalent to other generics may lie in the meaning associated with paraphrases involving any (Perlmutter, 1970, in Burton-Roberts 1976).

Some linguists, however, do not agree generic a can coincide with any. Burton-Roberts (1976) provides the following counter-examples where oddity results from the substitution of any for generic a.

> (55)   a. A kitchen is a cooking room.
>
>   b. *Any kitchen is a cooking room.
>
> (56)   a. A whale suckles its young.

---

[2] Class expressions are those that refer to the class as a whole or a unit

[3] The term **extension** refers to the set of entities satisfying the description; **intension**, bycontrast, refers to the sense or the description itself (Lyons, 1999: 183).

b. *Any whale suckles its young.

*(57)   a. An eagle, which is the national bird, is generally only
seen by zoo visitors.*

*b. *Any eagle, which is the national bird, is generally seen
only by zoo visitors.*

The unacceptability found in the (55-57) b-examples suggests that any cannot underlie generic a. [4]Actually, the underlying structure of the aexamples, to Burton-Roberts, is to be x. However, there are cases in which "any does appropriately paraphrase the indefinite article in the subject N-- namely those in which the subject is modified by a restrictive relative clause (i.e. a non-generic relative clause), or by a pre-posed modifier derived from one" (pp. 440-441). Here are some examples, also from Burton-Roberts.

*(58) a. **A whale** which is sick yields no blubber.*
*b. **Any whale** which is sick yields no blubber.*
*(59) a. **A hungry lion** is a dangerous animal.*
*b. **Any hungry lion** is a dangerous animal.*

The acceptability of (58b) and (59b) lies in the fact that the sentences, (58a) and (59a), are not generic; rather, they are general statements. He presumes that general statements are non-specific indefinite on the basis of the relationship between (58b) and (59b) and (60) and (61) that follow:

*(60) **If a whale** is sick, it yields no blubber.*
*(61) **If a lion** is hungry, it is a dangerous animal.*

The status of (60) and (61) is similar to that in (62) and (63), where genericity is out of the question.

*(62) If **a duck** is trapped, I go out of my way to help it.*
*(63) If **a girl** has a complaint, she can go to the chaperone.*

---

[4] Readers who are interested in this issue, please read Burton-Roberts (1976).

From this evidence, Burton-Roberts concludes that non-specific indefinite rather than generic is paraphrasable by *any*.

Some other theorists take another view when considering generic *a* as coinciding with non-specific *a* (Christophersen, 1939; Hawkins, 1978). Hawkins explains that a generic indefinite NP is similar to a non-specific indefinite NP in that their reference is to a single object that is random and arbitrary to both speaker and hearer. Both speaker and hearer do not have a particular referent in mind. However, Chesterman disagrees when stating that a generic reading "must sometimes be distinguished from a non-specific one." He provides an example from Burton-Roberts (1981).

(64) ***An Indian*** *smokes a pipe every night.*

An Indian in (64) is ambiguous because it has three readings: specific, nonspecific, and generic. The fact that it can be construed as generic proves that coinciding generic indefinites with non-specific indefinites is not "quite right" (Chesterman, 1991: 35). Although Chesterman may be right, the fact is that the article *a* used with a noun in what is called 'generic' contexts does not refer to an actual entity but a concept, which seems to suggest that it is also non-specific (See Burton-Roberts, 1976).

This can be the reason why Langacker (1991), from a cognitive grammar perspective, agrees with Hawkins that a noun used with *a* in generic statements expresses a non-specific, arbitrary instance.

To Langacker, the notion of arbitrary instance in relation to a mental space can explain the generic use of *a*. An illustration can be seen in the well-known example.

(65) ***A beaver*** *builds dams.*

In this example, *a beaver* is non-specific because both S and H have no preexisting mental contact with the referent (i.e. instance) designated by the amarked noun (also called as a nominal). "The instance is conjured up just for purposes of making the generic statement and as such is thought of as a representative instance of the category rather than a particular instance known on independent grounds".

With reference to the notion mental space introduced earlier, a beaver is considered to be part of a special mental space, R', which represents a fragment of the speaker's conception of "how the world is structured" (p. 106). This special worldknowledge mental space, hosted by the speaker, is distinguished from the present reality mental space (R) of the speaker and hearer.

Therefore, because the speech-act participants have no previous mental contact with a beaver because it is not situated in the present reality mental space, it is nonspecific.

1.3.2. Generic "the "

Generic *the* is found with singular nouns and plural nouns. Used with a singular noun, like the horse, generic the refers to a genus or a species 'horse'. However, with respect to plural nouns, some linguists do not agree by arguing that there can be no more than one 'horse' genus before dealing with cognitive grammar. Let us now examine how linguists treat the+plural N and see whether it treats the+singular N as generic or definite NPs. According to Chesterman (1991), the+plural N can have a generic reading on the condition that reference is made to a set of subspecies. He provides the following examples.

> (66)   Among **the lizards**, iguanas are the most popular as a focal food.
> (67)   Bjorn wants to gather statistics on at least three **whales** that are threatened with extinction. Ideally, the whales should all be most numberous in the same part of the world. (Burton- Roberts, 1981)
> (68)   He likes **the wines** of this shop. (Quirk et al., 1972)

In (67) the lizards should be interpreted as a family of lizard types or all the types of lizards. In (67) the reference of the whales is to kinds of whales. And similarly, the brands or types of wine available in the shop is the only reading found in (68). Hawkins (1978) questions whether the label 'generic' should be applied *to the+Plural* N when actually generic the with plural nouns is similar to non-generic definite plurals if the inclusiveness principle is taken into consideration. Based on Christophersen (1939) and Bolinger (1975), he maintains that the notion of 'singling out' or delimitation is still inherent in the definite article when it is used with plural

nouns. By comparing *the+plural* N with bare plurals (i.e. plural nouns used with the zero article), he explains that all plural definite descriptions are characterized through their possibility of being located within a pragmatic set. Bare plural NPs, by contrast, are not subject to such delimitation. Here are some examples:

(69)   a. *The climate of southern California is ideal for **Samoans.***

        b. *The climate of southern California is ideal for **the Samoans.***

(Christophersen (1939).

(70)   a*. **Italians** are musical.*

        b. ***The Italians** are musical.*

The bare plurals Samoans (69a) refer to all Samoans, who may live in other places outside southern California. The Samoans in (69b) is limited to those who live in southern California. Similarly, the property of being musical is applied to all Italians in (70a). The predication of be musical is pertinent to anyone who either is, has been, or will be an Italian. The definite plural NP in (70b) by contrast, is interpreted as "those individuals of Italian parentage who currently inhabit Italy" (Hawkins, 1978: p. 217).

In terms of quantity, Italians refers to more individuals than the Italians. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the reference of the Italians is made in relation to the world in which the speaker and the hearer live. This relationship hence can lead to ambiguity as in (70b) (Lyons 1999: 193) because it may refer to the Italians mentioned before, known to the speaker and hearer—a point that Hawkins fails to mention.

In cognitive grammar, a plural noun such as pebbles in the pebbles is considered to designate a set consisting of two or more instances. This set is considered to be an instance of the pebbles category. That is*, pebbles* is similar to a mass which cannot be further pluralized. Hence, the whole mass can be regarded as one instance (i.e. of the pebbles category in this case) (Langacker, 1991: 81). When used with the definite ***the,*** the whole mass is likely to be considered to be unique on the basis of the context it occurs. Clearly there is a maximal implication suggested in the structure, which corresponds to Hawkin's inclusiveness (1978) mentioned earlier.

With respect to *'generic' the* used with a singular noun, Langacker (1991) considers the structure as denoting a type (i.e. genus or kind) construed as a unique

instance (i.e. entity or set member) through the notion of a type hierarchy. For example, my cat Tommy belongs to the species cat, but at the same time, it can be considered a mammal, an animal or a thing. The categories can be sequenced in an order referred to as a type hierarchy (e.g. thing > animal > mammal > cat). The nominal 'the cat,' for instance, is construed to be unique if it does not refer to instances (i.e. individual members) of the type or genus cat, but as a type having only one instance (i.e. the only species). Construed in this way, which is also shared in accordance with Givón (1993), the nominal has a definite meaning because the whole species is interpreted as a unique instance. This is the reason why instances (i.e. individual members) can be considered to be the lowest level in the type hierarchy (i.e. genus hierarchy) if they are construed as a unique instance of the type. Consider the following example from Langacker.

(71) The okapi and the wombat are two mammals seldom found in zoos.

In (71) the nominals-- *the okapi and the wombat*— are generically interpreted. In cognitive grammar, they are construed as types rather than particular instances of okapi or wombat. They take the definite article because they are contextually unique.

That is, there is only one instance of each type in question: okapi and wombat. Therefore, the term 'generic' seems to be unnecessary to be applied to the definite article. What is worth distinguishing is whether a noun used with the is construed as an instance or as a type having only one instance.

1.3.3. Generic "zero "

In discussing generic uses, linguists wonder whether or not a generic reading lies in an article-marked noun itself or in other factors in a sentence, such as the predicate (e.g. a verb). This is the reason why doubts have been raised about the 'all' reading found in generic statements in which the zero article occurs with either a mass noun or a plural noun. Also, with respect to the zero article, the term 'generic' again is put to question. Let us consider the former issue first. In (72)

*(72) **Oil** floats on water.*

Oil, a mass noun, can be paraphrased as all oil floats on water. However, a generic reading paraphrased as all is inappropriate in some cases. .

> *(73) **Rabbits** like carrots.*

We cannot be certain that 'all' rabbits like carrots. A relevant quantifier as in general (Biggs, 1978) or a generic verb such as tend (Lawler, 1972) can be used to paraphrase (73). Also either most or at least most can paraphrase the noun marked with the zero article in generic contexts (Lawler, 1972; Chesterman, 1991).

Although a generic reading as at least most applied to nouns marked by the zero form seems to be adequate, there are cases in which it is difficult to decide whether those nouns are generic or non-generic. The problem is found mostly with bare plural NPs and theorists provide conflicting answers with regard to this issue. Burton-Roberts (1976), for example, proposes considering the NPs "determined by the so-called generic zero" to be nongeneric. Here is some evidence from Burton-Roberts (1976: 443).

> *(74) a. In Canada, **the beaver** is hunted by professionals.*
>
> *b. In Canada**, beavers** are hunted by professionals.*
>
> *(75) a. In Canada, professionals hunt **the beaver.***
>
> *b. In Canada, professionals hunt **beavers.***
>
> *(76) a. **Lions** are increasing in number.*
>
> *b. **The number of lions** is increasing in number.*
>
> *(77) a. **The rabbit** is suffering from myxomatosis.*
>
> *b. **Rabbits** are suffering from myxomatosis.*
>
> *c. **A rabbit** is suffering from myxomatosis.*

The definite generic NP (74a) and the bare NP determined by generic zero (74b) are generally considered to be generic. However, in the set of (75), where the sentences are active, the definite NP is generic, and the bare plural NP is not. In (76a), lions is a "putative" generic zero; in (76b), where it is a paraphrase of (76a), it is a non-specific zero. In the (77) set, a rabbit in (77c) is clearly specific. The rabbit in (77a) may be ambiguous between the definite reading and the generic reading. In (77b), by contrast, "there seems to be no plausible distinction between generic and

non-specific". These observations have been grounds for Burton-Roberts to suggest that we "abandon" the notion of plural indefinite generic.

A partly different view from Burton-Roberts', which according to Lyons is widely accepted, is from Carlson (2002), who postulates the idea that bare plurals (i.e. plural nouns with the zero article) are semantically the same, whether they are used generically or non-generically. To Carlson, two interpretations of bare plurals, the generic (kind-referring) and the existential (indefinite or non-generic), can be unified on the basis of kind referring . Carlson maintains that ambiguity (i.e. the generic and indefinite plural interpretations) is not available as a result of contextual factors that are "independently motivated and are needed elsewhere in the grammar to account for interpretations of certain constructions that are wholly distinct syntactically from zero NP" (2002: 53).   When ambiguity arises, it is some predicates that are the cause of the problem. For some predicates may be interpreted either as being characteristic or eventful. Here are some examples from Carlson.

(78) **Frogs** *are clever.*

(79) **Frogs** *are awake.*

(80) **Dinosaurs** *ate kelp.*

Frogs in (78) is understood to be generic, as opposed to the non-generic reading found in (79). No ambiguity occurs in (78) and (79) because the predicates in those sentences have only one interpretation. In (78), a property is predicated of being clever. As a result, it selects the generic reading. In (79), the predicate reports an event; it selects the non-generic reading. In (80), by contrast, ambiguity arises because of the availability of two readings that the simple past *ate* [5]reveals:

eating kelp can be a characteristic of dinosaurs or can be a past event.Lyons (1999: 190) remarks that the predicate is not the only factor that may cause different interpretations: generic and non-generic. Other elements such as locative expression and information structure are also those worth considering. The following are his examples.

---

[5] In English, the simple past may represent both habitual and punctual aspect, which has to do with property and a non-state event.

(81) a. **Lions** *live in Africa – so if you want to see lions, that's where you have to go.*

  b. **Lions** *live in Africa – in fact there are more lions in Africa than any other continent.*

(82) a. **Cats** *mess in loose soil.*

  b. **Cats** *mess in gardens other than their own.*

  c. **Cats** *mess in the open air.*

  d. **Cats** *mess in my garden.*

In (81), a generic reading is found in (81a), and a non-generic in (81b). A difference in intonation is possible, as Lyons notes, as a result of a difference in structuring information. Lions in (81) is the topic of the sentence because the discussion is likely about lions. Conversely, the discussion in (81b) is probably about Africa. This renders the bare plural lions in (81b) to be the comment of the sentence. In (82), a non-generic reading is impossible in (82a-c), but it is available in (82d). Given the fact that the predicate mess is similar in those sentences, the factor that may create different readings are the locative expressions.

  A generic reading is available with those expressions which have a general interpretation. This explains why cats in (82d) is non-generic. With respect to cognitive grammar, Langacker (1991) does not specify conditions for a generic reading with generic masses (i.e. either a plural noun like cats or a mass noun like water). However, insights into how generic masses are cognitively construed, combined with the presentations above, can make the issue clearer.

To Langacker (1991: 551), a bare plural is regarded as a reference mass, RT, which is the maximal extension of a category or a type t^1 in the current discourse space. It is "a hypothetical mass with respect to which a profiled mass is assessed as constituting some proportion." A plural noun like cats resembles a mass noun like water because it comprises all instances of cats, which are non-discrete and overlapping. Any subpart of cats, including the whole set, counts as a valid instance of the cats type. Expressed in a notation, it is $t^1 = RT$, in which an instance of a type is equal to a reference mass. This is how English captures the construal of a generic mass as indefinite. Syntactically, a reference mass is used with a zero article, which places no restriction on its magnitude. *Nations* in 83 is an example.

*(83) **Nations** have natural disasters.*

The presence of the zero article suggests that there is no restriction on the magnitude of the mass and thus the reference mass nations may includes RT as a whole or any subpart or proportion of RT. This explanation is analogous to Chesterman's (1991) paraphrase "ranging from all to at least most" introduced earlier. The plural NP in 83 has a generic reference because "nothing is done to single out any portion of RT (p. 101). Only if a portion of RT is singled out for individual awareness, then the definite article, the crucial aspect of definiteness, should be used. Semantically, a reference mass, with its maximal instance in the relevant discourse space could be construed as definite because it is unique.

Langacker's explanation is in line with Quirk et al's notion of categorical meaning if a plural noun is construed as referring to a type (i.e. category), and the magnitude conveyed by the zero article ranges from a relative size to a maximal size, depending on the context in which the nominal occurs. To them, the generic meaning of the zero article is "no more than a special variant of [the] categorical meaning" (Quirk et al. 1985: 275).

1.3.4. Concluding genericity

It is obvious that genericity is also a notion that is difficult to capture. However, if we compare the use of the three articles—*the, a*, and the zero article in expressing genericity, we can conclude that each article also retains some of its prototypical sense. *A* singles out one instance to stand for all others, as in "A beaver builds dams", but because it is only one single instance it cannot be used in a full generic sense as in "A beaver is becoming extinct". In its generic use, *the* singles out a whole class as a whole , as in "The beaver builds dams", and because it includes all members, it may be used fully generically as in "The beaver is becoming extinct." But the full generic sense of *the* also explains the ungrammaticality of (52) "The book fills leisure time of many people" because a human cannot possibly read the whole class of books in his leisure time. Finally, in its generic use, the zero article is rather vague and 'assists' nouns in reaching full generic reference on the basis of its predication (i.e. no restriction on magnitude)and can therefore be used in either a vague sense as "Beavers may be dangerous" or in a full generic senses as in "Beavers are becoming extinct".

1.3.5. Conclusion: definiteness and genericity

Now that we have looked at how "definiteness" and "genericity" may be explained from different research traditions, we believe that the cognitive grammar framework is most useful in language teaching because it is most elegant in that it only needs a few principles to explain the many uses of the articles coherently. However, insights from other research traditions may also be used in explanations, either in cases where cognitive grammar does not explicitly state solutions or in cases where cognitive grammar insights are too theoretical to be understood by a non-linguist language learner. In the next chapter, I will move away from these theoretical explanations and look in more detail at how English articles are used in practice.

CHAPTER II
Using Articles

In Chapter 2, I dealt with the English articles from an 'abstract' point of view, and in this chapter, I will investigate how articles are actually used. However, before getting to the main part of this section, I will briefly discuss which forms should actually be regarded as articles and how nouns can be classified. In each sub-section I will introduce different perspectives again and end with the cognitive grammar view.

2.1. Types of articles

Jespersen argues that there is no doubt about the article status of *the* and *a* as a result of their historical origin (see Jespersen 1949: 405-416). However,the status of both unstressed *some* and 'no article' are still controversial. I will first briefly discuss *some* and then 'no article". With respect to the unstressed *some*, it has generally been agreed thatit has the function of an article even though Christophersen (1939) and Jespersen (1949) did not mention it. Hawkins (1978) mentions it explicitly in his work on definiteness. Palmer (1939: 75) calls it the affirmative partitive article. Quirk et al. (1985: 265) categorize it as indefinite with respect to specific reference and note that, as a result of its quantitative trait, it is sometimes regarded as a plural article. The reason for its inclusion in the system is its complementary distribution in relation to *a* (Chesterman, 1991: 45), and "closely corresponds in function to the indefinite article"(Palmer, 1939: 75). It can occur before plural nouns and mass nouns, but not singular count nouns. Here are some examples.

(1) a. I've just bought **a book**.

b. I've just bought **some books**.

c. I've just bought **books.**

d. I've just bought **books** (but not **pens**).

In (1b) *some books* is specific and the number is more than one. It corresponds with (1a) concerning number. (1c) is questionable because the notion *category* is implied, as is seen in (1d), where *some* cannot occur. (See *generic zero* in Chapter 1.) The fact that the use of a bare plural in (1c) is questionable brings us to the 'no article' status in

what follows. Yotsukura (1970) seems to be the first person who suggests adding another category besides the zero article. To Yotsukura, there is distributional evidence suggesting a form other than the zero article. By using a post-modifying restrictive relative clause test, she discovered that the second zero form is found before singular proper nouns and some common nouns. Along similar lines, Sloat (1969: 26) maintains that the second form of the zero article is "a zero allomorph of unstressed *the*" and it occurs before proper nouns, which comprise a special subclass of common nouns. Quirk et al. (1985: 246) describe a proper noun like *Marjon* as having "no article" and a common noun like *music* as having a "zero article". Chesterman (1991) and others such as Kaluza (1963, 1968), Seppanen (1986), (cited in Chesterman, 1991) take the same position. Chesterman suggests using the term *the null form* for the second zero article.

Let us consider examples such as the following from Chesterman (1991).

(2) a. * I like **London** that the tourists see.

   b. I like **the London** that the tourists see.

   c. I like **cheese** that is made of goat's milk.

(3) a. **Word** has come that the Pope has died.

   b. ***Word** that came yesterday was that the Pope has died.

   c. **The word** that came yesterday was that the Pope has died. (p. 17)

(4) a. What about **question** seven?

   b. *What about **question** seven you answered before, then?

   c. What about **the question** seven you answered before, then?

(5) a. **Breakfast** is ready.

   b. *Breakfast you asked for is ready.

   c. **The breakfast** you asked for is ready.

Through a post-modifying restrictive clause test, it can be seen that there is a difference between a proper noun such as *London* (with a presumed null article) and a common noun such as *cheese* (with a presumed zero article). A noun with a zero article can be used with a restrictive clause, but a noun with the null form cannot. In

order to 'identify' the proper nouns in (2b),(3c), (4c), and (5c), *the* should be used instead. According to Langacker (1991), *the* before a proper noun can be explained by the fact that they can also be construed as common nouns. Prototypically, a nominal such as *London* refers to the unique instance of *London*, but when used as a common noun, we can construe of *London* as having many different identities. So, the article *the* is used when we refer to a particular instance of these identities.

As far as the null article is concerned, Chesterman (1991) notes that the count singular common nouns that can be used with the null form are those that some grammarians classify as having 'idiomatic' structures or fixed phrases (e.g. at *church, eye* to *eye*) as well as those in the copular structure (e.g. be *captain* of the team). Master (1997) supports Chesterman when he regards the null form as *the null article*. To him, the null article is the most definite of the articles. It is used to name a set (Chesterman, 1991: 84) or a one-member set (Master, 1997: 223). The notion of familiarity is taken into consideration when Master maintains that a singular count noun used with the null article is considered to be more familiar (6a) than that used with *the* (6b).

(6) a. After **dinner**, we'll see a movie.

b. After **the dinner**, we'll see a movie.

From this presentation, let us see how Langacker (1991) treats these issues from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Langacker also considers unstressed *some* and the 'zero determiner' to have the same status as the articles *the* and *a*, which, together with demonstratives, constitute grounding predications. (*Grounding* is concerned with the relationship between speech-act participants and the designatum. For more detail, see Langacker, 1991: Chapters 2 & 3.)

With respect to unstressed *some,* which occurs with mass nouns (Langacker's term in denoting both mass nouns and plural nouns), he argues that *some* expresses a limited quantity. It is different from the zero article in that the noun used with the latter can refer to an unlimited size, even a maximal quantity of the reference mass described earlier. With respect to the null article and the zero article, Langacker does not explicitly state the distinction as suggested by the linguists mentioned above. To him, maximally general mass nouns, either plural or mass, are similar to proper nouns in that they are semantically unique and one would "not expect an article." (Langacker, June 2004: personal communication).

However, we believe a distinction between the null article and the zero article is useful in distinguishing between a noun conceived as designating a type and a nominal designating an instance. Also according to Langacker (personal communication 2004), a noun such as *captain* in *He is captain of the team* is a noun, not a nominal, because it specifies a type. And for the current purpose, it is enough to understand that a noun, in cognitive grammar, is conceived as designating a type, and as such it has a bare form (i.e. no article form). Therefore, distinguishing between the 'null' article and the 'zero' article will help us distinguish between a *noun* (designating a type) and a *nominal* (designating an instance). To conclude, we will take the position that there are five articles: *the, a , some, zero*, and *null*. Because the use of each of these articles depends on the type of noun it is used with, we will now consider noun classes in English.

2.2. Classes of nouns

Traditionally, nouns are divided into two categories: common nouns and proper nouns (Table 1). Common nouns can be subdivided into two classes: count and non-count noun. In each subclass, a further semantic division is made, which results in concrete count/non-count and abstract count/noncount (Quirk et al. 1985: 247).

As Quirk *et al.* admit, such a classification can be problematic because exceptions should be made with nouns having dual membership. A noun like *cake* can be viewed as both count and noncount as in the following example from Quirk *et al*.

(7) A: Would you like **a cake**?

B: No, I don't like **cake**.

Table 1. The most important noun classes (Quirk et al. 1985: 247)
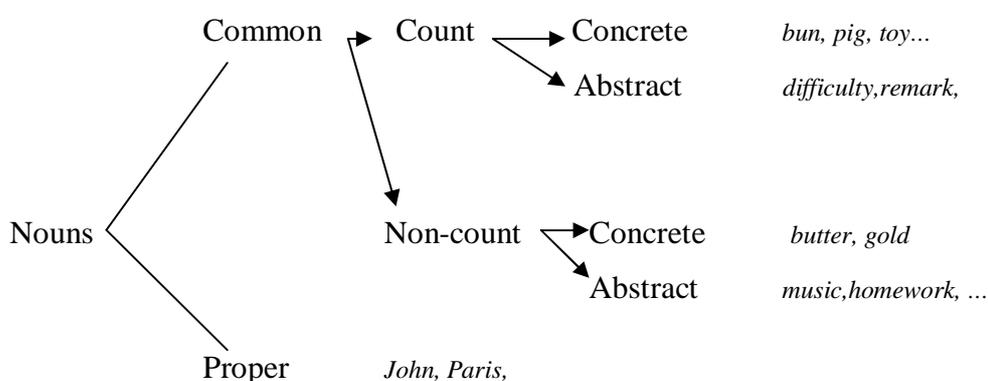
Chesterman (1991), based on Guillaume (1975) suggests considering nouns in overlapping cases as count or non-count based on their typical use.For example, *furniture* is non-count, because it typically rejects the occurrence of the indefinite article. Similarly, *nature* and *mankind* usually reject the presence of *the*. However, this division between typical and non typical is not very useful to the second language learner. How is s/he to know when a noun is used in its typical sense or not? Let us now see how cognitive grammar treats nouns.

Langacker's (1991) categorization of nouns is generally similar to traditional grammar. He also uses terms such as common nouns, count nouns, non-count nouns and proper names, but what Langacker focuses on is why a noun is considered such a noun and relates the semantic aspects of these types of nouns to how we conceive 'the world'. In doing so, he uses the distinction between noun and nominal, along which some other relevant distinctions such as type vs. instance, boundedness vs. unboundedness, and proper names versus nominals.

First, we will see how he explains the differences between a noun and a nominal. Overly simply put, a noun has no article, but a nominal does. A noun (e.g. *site*) and a nominal (e.g. *an excellent convention site, the excellent convention site*) share some conceptual properties. A noun or a nominal profiles (i.e. designates) a thing, which is a region (i.e. set of interconnected entities) in some domain in our mind (i.e. conceptualization).

Langacker's noun/nominal distinction is in line with Guillaume's distinction (1975) between *nom en puissance* and *nom en effet. Nom en puissance* is concerned with an idea (or a type) and *nom en effet* with the realization of an idea (an actual instance).

As far as domain of instantiation is concerned, the noun *sand*, for example, makes us think of material substance, and this substance is located in the domain of space in our mind. The fact that *sand* is conceived of in a certain spatial domain in our thought can be illustrated through the ungrammaticality found in **When is the sand?* rather than *Where is the sand*? Thus space is the *domain of instantiation* (i.e. in our thought) for material substance as profiled by *sand*. Similar applications can be made to such nouns as *moment, note*, or *yellow*. The domain of instantiation for the thing profiled by *moment* is time, *note* is the musical scale, and *yellow* is color.

Although a noun and a nominal have similar conceptual properties, there are differences between them with respect to their semantic function. What distinguishes them is what Langacker calls as the *type/instance* property. A noun names a *type*; a nominal designates an *instance* of that type. Thus a noun like *site* may specify various entities as being representative of the same class (i.e. type specification) without connecting it to any particular instance of that class. We can say that a type specified by a noun provides us with a useful tool in delimiting the potential objects in our thought. It confines our attention to a set of things (i.e. *category*) regarded as equivalent in certain respects.

By contrast, a nominal (e.g. *the site* or *an excellent site*) presupposes instantiation (i.e. elaboration) of the type in question. It mentions a thing and to make it a momentary focus of attention. Its main function is to single out particular instances of the specified type by providing additional information. Two kinds of information that it supplies are *quantity* and *grounding*. The information concerning quantity can be either absolute (e.g. *four dogs*) or proportional (e.g. *most dogs; all dogs*). The information concerning grounding has to do with speech-act participants (i.e. speaker and hearer) and the speech event (i.e. discourse). Simply put, a nominal like *the books* reveals that the number of books is more than one (i.e. quantity) and that the hearer and the speaker share their mental contact by identifying them uniquely and maximally (i.e. grounding) in a given discourse space (i.e. context).

To account for countability of nouns in general and to help account for the fact that a noun like *cake* may occur as a count or non-count noun, Langacker introduces the conceptual notion of boundedness, which refers to whether we can conceive of clear boundaries of an entity or not. For example, boundaries are inherent to the typical conception of *a lake* when defined as "a large area of water surrounded by land and not connected to the sea except by rivers or streams." (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary Online*). The notion of boundedness can be seen through the expression *surrounded by land*. By contrast, the idea of boundary is not imposed on a quantity of a substance profiled by a mass noun. For example, the noun *sand,* referring to a general substance consisting of many particles that are too small to be perceived individually, does not render any clear boundary in our thought. According to Langacker, an entity that is construed as bounded is expressed as a count noun in English and an entity that is not bounded as a non-count noun. A noun like *cake* can be conceived as unbounded when it refers to the substance, but bounded

when it refers to a specific piece. *Sleep* is construed as unbounded when it refers to the general activity of sleeping, but bounded when it is construed as an event with a clear beginning and end. Thus the notion of boundedness can explain the following sets of examples, in which the same noun can be used as a count or non-count noun.

(8) a. I like to eat **cake**.

b. I baked **a cake**.

c. All humans need **sleep**.

d. My baby needs **a sleep**.

To account for the dual membership that Quirk *et al.* (1985) mentions (as exemplified in 7a and b), Langacker introduces the notion of *quality space,* which is defined as "a set of domains supporting the qualitative characterization of a physical or abstract substance" (1991: 551).

The noun *wine*, for instance, is typically unbounded as in "I like wine". It can become bounded, though, if it is conceived of as distinguished from other substances. Conceived in this way, it can be said to occupy a "circumscribed portion of quality space" (Langacker, 1991: 18). For example, in "This is a good wine", "a wine" actually stands for "a kind of wine". This explanation explains cases as noted by Quirk et al. (1985), in which (9a) is ungrammatical. *Sensitivity* is usually construed as an unbounded entity in the domain of human emotions, and is therefore usually non-count. However, as illustrated by (9c), within this unbounded domain there can be "a circumscribed portion of quality space" when we construe sensitivity as consisting of various kinds and refer to one of those.

(9) a. She played the oboe with ***a sensitivity.**

b. She played the oboe with **sensitivity**.

c. She played the oboe with **an** unusual **sensitivity**.

Before we end this part, let us see how Langacker explains the semantic aspects of proper names in relation to the distinctions of type vs. instance, and noun vs. nominal . In cognitive grammar, a proper name like *Mary Smith* has different kinds of information. First, it is construed as having a type specification on the basis of what is conventionally accepted in that Mary Smith suggests a female human. Second, an instantiation is presupposed when a name is taken to be as characteristic of

a specific person. As such, quantity is implied because only one person bears the name. Grounding is also incorporated in the name when the name is considered unique and either the speaker or the hearer can identify it easily. Since different kinds of information are thus conflated in it (i.e. type, instantiation, quantity, and grounding), a proper name has the status of a nominal. Although it is a nominal, it is not used with the definite article to avoid redundancy. Proper names thus have their own semantic structure conveying the essential content of *the*. Therefore, a phrase such as **the Peter Brown* is usually ungrammatical.

Yet, in real life, there are cases in which a name is born by more than one person, or there are people that we know who have the same name.

In these cases, some grounding predications (i.e. articles) are needed. To distinguish *three Mary Smiths* that we know, the article *the* is used together with some descriptive expressions as *the Mary Smith who used to play professional tennis* or *the Mary Smith who married my brother*. When a name is borne by more than one person, an indefinite article should be used like *a Mary Smith phoned you while you were out*. In these cases, the names are grammatically used as a common noun. Now that we have discussed the different types of articles and noun classes, we will proceed with the contexts in which articles occur.

2.3. Usage contexts

Quirk *et al*'s classification of usage types (1985) has been well known and been frequently cited. Their classification is based on notions of reference and genericity: specific reference and generic reference. Yet, as mentioned earlier, this taxonomy has provided overlapping cases which are controversial, notably the relation between genericity and non-specificity.

From a language teaching perspective, this classification has produced lots of 'detailed rules' which can be generalized and re-categorized (Chesterman, 1991). By contrast, Langacker (1991) does not provide a detailed account of usage types. However, his ideas can provide a basis for generalizing the usage rules by Quirk *et al*. In this section, we will start with a summary of the usage types by Quirk *et al*. (1985) and then get into Langacker's account (1991). We will end the section with our suggested usage types based on Quirk et al's descriptions and Langacker's cognitive principles.

2.3.1. Quirk et al.'s classification

As mentioned earlier, definiteness is regarded as the main property that distinguishes the articles. Therefore, in describing usage types, most studies focus on the use of *the*, whose usage is considered a reference point for other articles. This is also the case in Quirk *et al*'s *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985), who incorporate insights by Hawkins (1978).

<u>Endophoric uses</u>

1. Anaphoric use

   a. Direct anaphoric use:

   (10) John bought a TV and *a video recorder*, but he returned **the video recorder**.

   b. Indirect anaphoric use:

   (11) I lent bill *a valuable book*, but when he returned it, **the cover** was filthy, and **the pages** were torn.

2. Cataphoric use:

   (12) **The girls** *sitting over there* are my cousins.

   <u>Exophoric uses</u>

3. Situational use:

   a. Immediate situation use:

   (13) Have you fed **the cat**? [said in a domestic context]

   b. Larger situation use

   (14) **The Prime Minister**; **the airlines**

   4. Logical use:

   (15) This is **the only remaining copy**.

5. Sporadic use:

   (16) My sister goes to **the theatre** every month.

6. Body parts reference use:

   (17) Mary banged herself on **the forehead**.

7. Generic reference use:

   (18) **The bull terrier** makes an excellent watchdog.

The uses are generalized into two main categories: endophoric use (i.e. textual reference) and exophoric use (non-textual reference) (Halliday,1976). Endophoric use is found with anaphoric and cataphoric uses because they are concerned with a text or discourse. Exophoric use is found in (13-18) above. It is worth elaborating these uses. As mentioned, endophoric use is found with anaphoric and cataphoric uses. Anaphoric use can be figured out roughly through the relevant term *second mention*, which has been highly criticized by researchers. Anaphoric use has to do with the backward reference of a definite phrase to a piece of information given earlier in the text or discourse. There are two kinds of anaphoric use: direct and indirect. Direct anaphoric use arises when a definite phrase refers directly to the same noun head that has occurred in the text (10). Indirect anaphoric use lies in association or inference from what has already been mentioned on the basis of the hearer's knowledge. For instance, after mentioning a book, the author can be used because it can be inferred that a book is supposed to be written by one author. Similarly, each book has one cover, and all the pages belong to a book (11). Cataphoric use (12) concerns the reference of a definite phrase based on what follows the head noun. Although cataphoric use is generally related to postmodification, Quirk *et al*. (1985) note that there is no difference between postmodification and pre modification. Exophoric use lies much in pragmatic knowledge. It is not limited to the information provided by a text or discourse. These are cases in which *the* is used without second mention. First, the basis for the use of *the* may lie in the immediate situation (13) and larger situation (14). When we are in a garden, we can mention *the roses*; or (if we are citizens of a certain country) we can talk about *the Prime Minister* on the basis of the knowledge that each country has one Prime Minister. Similarly, knowledge based on anatomy (17) and the logical interpretation of certain words (15) also give grounds for the use of *the*. Besides, the use of *the* can be extended to what Quirk *et al*. (1985) call "sporadic use", which has to do with an institution of human society. Consequently in (16) it is not possible to ask *which theater?* because the reference is made to "an institution which may be observed recurrently at various places and times" (p. 269). In the same line, if reference is made to the whole species as one class, *the* is used as in (18).

Because sporadic use and generic use of *the* seem to share some similarities, Langacker (1991) treats them as *types*. We are going to return to this issue in Langacker's classification.

Before we move on to the uses of the indefinite and *zero* article, it is worth noting that in Quirk et al.'s *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, the use of *the* is also treated in the section on proper nouns, which by default take the zero article. *The* is not treated as an exceptional case, but as a kind of in-between form, which is different from the definite description and the 'frozen' form usually regarded as a name.

Although Quirk *et al* do not mention the role of 'familiarity', we believe this notion can be useful to explain the in-between case in a gradience scale in which a name like *the Oxford Road* can occur:

(i) the Oxford road > (ii) the Oxford Road > (iii) Oxford Road > (iv) Oxford

The Oxford road, being a definite description (i.e. the road to Oxford), has become more familiar in (ii) when Road is capitalized as a sign of conventionalization. The process of becoming a name begins to be obvious when *the* is dropped in (iii) so that Oxford as the purest form of name occurs in (iv). Therefore, in the case of names used with *the*, Quirk *et al.* consider them to be "the in-between" of names (p. 295). Let us now see how Quirk *et al.* describe the uses of *a* and the *zero* article.

The indefinite article *a* and the zero article are also defined in terms of definiteness. The similarity they can have is that the condition for the use of *the* does not obtain, but in some cases the zero article has a definite sense. With singular count nouns, *a* is used, and with plural nouns or non-count nouns, either the unstressed *some* or the zero article is used. A summary of Quirk *et al.*'s description concerning these two articles is as follows:

The indefinite article *a*:

Non-definite use

(19) **An intruder** has stolen a vase. (The intruder) …

Non-referring use

(20) Paganini was **a great violinist**.

Numerical use

(21) The Wrights have two daughters and **a son**.

Generic use:

(22) **A bull terrier** makes an excellent watchdog.

The zero article:

Non-definite use**:**

(23) a. I've been writing (some) letters this morning.

b. Would you like (some) coffee or (some) tea?

Definite meaning use:

Copular relation (e.g. He is captain of the team.)

Sporadic reference

(a) Institutions (e.g. at church)

(b) Means of transport and communication (e.g. by bus; by radio)

(c) Times of day and night (e.g. at dawn; at night)

(d) Seasons (e.g. in (the) spring)

(e) Meals (e.g. have breakfast)

(f) Illnesses (e.g. influenza; (the) flu)

Parallel structure (e.g. eye to eye)

Fixed phrases involving prepositions (at home; on foot)

Generic use:

(24) Bull terriers make excellent watchdogs.

Quirk et al.'s categorization is not quite satisfactory. First, with reference to the use of *the*, it seems that we can blend some uses. For example, sporadic use of *the* is quite similar to a type use (i.e. generic use), and even some cases of larger situation use are quite similar to a generic use. Second, with respect to the zero article, we wonder why those definite meaning uses are not classified under those uses of proper nouns and names. For all the nouns listed in the definite meaning use are singular count nouns. (This is the reason why Chesterman (1991) suggests using the *null* article for those nouns and argues they should have the same status as names.) Let s now see how Langacker describes the use of the articles.

2.3.2. Langacker's classification

Before we start with Langacker again, it is worth remembering that cognitive grammar deals with how we conceive things. As far as the use of he articles is concerned, the focus is on what is happening in our mind on he basis of what our nervous system can capture in our surrounding. Let us begin with the use of *the*.

To Langacker, the condition for the use of *the* lies in the mental contact achieved by the speech-act participants with an instance of a type in the current discourse space. It is through the discourse space (introduced earlier) that the hearer can figure out the instance that the speaker intends.

Here is a recapitulation of Langacker's description of the use of *the*.

> *"Use of the definite article with type description T in a nominal implies that (i) the designated instance t1 of T is unique and maximal in relation to the current discourse space; (2) S has mental contact with t1; and (3) either H has mental contact with t1 or the nominal alone is sufficient to establish it. (p. 98)*

Generally, there are three circumstances engendered from the discourse space. Consider the following examples:

Direct awareness:

(25) a. I bought a palm and a memory stick, but I had to return **the palm**.

b. I have seven cats. **The cats** are very naughty.

Indirect awareness:

(26) I have to sell my motorbike because the engine is almost shot.

Nominal content-based awareness:

(27) **The first day** of Christmas 2004 was filled with tsunami disaster.

(28) **The initial sentences** in these examples introduce an instance of dogs.

(29) A fly is on **the tip** your nose.

Immediate physical context:

(30) Watch out for **the crocodile** behind you.

Present reality context:

(31) Maria goes to **the supermarket** every Saturday.

(32) **The whale** is a mammal.

The first circumstance is direct awareness. Speech-act participants may be aware of a certain instance (i.e. expressed by a nominal) at a given moment in the flow of discourse (25a). And it is worth reminding that if there are many instances, those instances are construed as the most inclusive instance in the discourse space (25b). It can be compared to the direct basis that the discourse space creates for mental contact. This is in line with the direct anaphoric use described by Quirk *et al*. in that the discourse space creates a direct basis for mental contact. The second circumstance has

to do with indirect awareness. For example, mention of *a motorbike* can create the condition for a mental association with *engine* (26). The third circumstance is involved with a situation in which the discourse space does not furnish any basis for mental contact to be achieved. That is, no instance is included in the discourse space for the hearer's awareness. In this case, a domain can still be salient in our mind. It is the domain of present reality or the immediate physical context. This domain "may be adopted as the discourse space by default" (Langacker, 1991: 97). Hence, mental contact in this case can be achieved based on the content of the nominal. The content may invoke our knowledge concerning logic or human anatomy (27-29). Or if no type description (i.e. pre-modification or post-modification) is found in the nominal, then the immediate situation (arising in our mind) will be the clue (30) .

With reference to what Quirk *et al.* classify as sporadic reference and generic reference, Langacker treats the nominals used in these categories as designating *a unique instance of a type*. However, depending on the context or "scenario" (Langacker, 2004: personal communication) in which the nominals occur, they can be considered either a member of a type hierarchy (32) or a role having a global status (e.g. *the Pope*) or a local status (e.g. *the Prime Minister; the supermarket; the theater*) (31).

Now, let us see how Langacker presents the use of the indefinite article *a*, the unstressed *some*, and the *zero* article. The sharing property of these articles is that "the nominals they ground[6] are insufficient to put hearer in mental contact with a uniquely determined instance of a type" (p. 103).Consider the following examples,

Non-unique instances

    (33) a. Maria bought **a motorbike**.

        b. Maria drank **(some) juice**.

        c. **(Some) cats** got into the bedroom.

Maximal instances

    (34) a. The formula for **water** is H2O.

        b. **Whales** are mammals.

Arbitrary instances:

    (35) a. **A beaver** builds dams.

        b. He is **a teacher.**

---

[6] The notion *ground* refers to the speech event, its participants, and its immediate circumstances.

The difference among these indefinite articles lies in their function. *A* is used only with singular count nouns, but the other two are used with mass nouns and plural nouns. Again there is a contrast between *some* and *zero*. These two differ from each other in terms of quantity. The instance designated by a nominal used with *some* is of limited size; however, the size of the instance expressed by *zero* is of any size (33b-c). A maximal instance can be achieved if there is no restricted quantity (34a-b).

Other uses of *a* that are worth mentioning again are its generic and non-referring uses as described by Quirk *et al*.(1985). As introduced in chapter 1, in cognitive grammar, generic *a* (35a) or non-referring *a* (35b) are considered to express an arbitrary instance when they occur with a nominal. The speaker does not have any pre-existing contact with it except that it is "conjured up for a particular immediate purpose and has no status outside the special mental space thereby created" (p. 104).

To conclude this section, Langacker's objective in cognitive grammar is to provide a conceptual framework for the use of the articles. As a result, there are some uses of articles that he does not explicitly deal with. The main aspect that he does not treat is the use of proper names, which can be used with two types of articles: *the* and *zero*. Also, he does not discuss explicitly what Quirk *et al*. consider bare noun phrases with a definite meaning. Therefore, what follows is a classification based on insights from Quirk *et al*. and Langacker. This taxonomy will be the basis for an analysis of article errors and for the design of an approach that can improve the performance of non-native language learners whose language does not have a corresponding system.

2.3.3. Classification of the article environments

The proposed classification is mostly based on Langacker's account. The purpose is to describe all the uses of the articles with as few subcategories as possible. Overall, the articles are categorized under two headings: definite and non-definite. Under the heading of definite, there are three subcategories: names, a type as one instance, and a unique instance of a type. Under the non-definite heading, there are three subcategories: nonunique instances, arbitrary instances, and maximal instances. The following is an elaboration of this taxonomy.

First, let us consider the components of the definite heading. In the category of names, there are three sub-categories: proper names, pseudo-names, and groups. Under the category of proper names, there are three components: names of people (e.g. *Stan Smith*), temporal names (e.g. Easter), and place names (i.e. countries, cities, etc.). The reason for treating temporal names like *Christmas* and place names as *Groningen* as names is that they share semantic properties with people's names.

Under the category of pseudo-names, there are two groups with respect to the forms of articles they are used with: the *Null*-group and *The* group. We use the term pseudo-names to distinguish them from 'true' names. The null-group, consists of singular nouns that Quirk *et al*. classifies under the zero article, with a definite meaning. They are nouns related to institutions (i.e. transport and communication), days' time, season, meals, illnesses, sports, and role (e.g. be captain of the team). The reason for classifying them as pseudo-names is that they seem to be 'completely familiar' (Jespersen, 1949: 418; Chesterman, 1991). They can be construed as specifying a type, and as such they have a 'no-article' form. Although Langacker considers sports names abstract non-count nouns construed with maximal generality, we are inclined to see them as names on the basis of the possibility of construing them as types.

Table 2. *Taxonomy of the use of English articles based on insights by Quirk et al. & Langacker*

				Noun form	Article Form	Examples
		Proper Names	*Persons; Time; Geography*	Singular proper nouns	NULL	**Smith; Easter; France**
	Names	**Pseudo-names (as a type)**	*Institutions; Transport; Day's time; Seasons Meals; Illnesses Sports; Role Geographical names; Public Institutions; Ships/Planes; Newspapers*	Singular noun with(out) modification	THE	**(by) Bus/Radio; (at) Sunrise; (in) Winter; Lunch; Influenza; Tennis; (be) Captain (of a team)**

Definite		Groups	Nationalities; Islands; Adjectives as Ns	Plural proper nouns	THE	*the British Museum* The **Huong river**; The **Titanic**,The **Observer**;The Bible
						The **Philippines**; the **Finns**; The **old**
	A type *computer* as one instance	Member of a type hierarchy	Singular noun	THE		*The lion; the Computer*
	Unique instance	Global/Local role				*The pope; the supermarket*
		Direct awareness	Common noun	THE		A book-*the book*
		Indirect awareness				A book-*the author*
		Physical contextbased awareness	Nominal content			*The water* in this glass
			Immediate situation			*The roses* (in a garden)

Indefinite	Non-unique instance	Actual instance(s)	Singular N	A/An	I bought *a book*
			Mass N	ZERO;unstressed some	I bought *cheese*
			Plural N		I've been writing *letters* this morning.
	Arbitrary instance	An arbitrary member(predicate, nominal, generic a)	Singular N	A/An	*A beaver* is a mammal.
		An arbitrary set of sets	Plural	ZERO	Wombats are mammals.
	Reference mass	Maximal set	Mass	ZERO	The formula of *water* is H_2O.
			Plural	ZERO	*Insects* have six legs

The *the*-group comprises those nouns related to singular nouns thatare used with or without modification, hence, such names as geographicalnames (e.g. *the Huong river*), public institutions (e.g. *the British Museum*),ships and planes (e.g. *the Titanic*), and newspapers (e.g. *the Saigon Times*).These *the*-marked names are what Quirk *et al.* consider in-between or nearly completely familiar.

The third group under the category of names is group-names. These names, marked by *the*, are different from the groups mentioned in that they are plural proper names. Also included in this group are adjectives considered to be nouns. If these nouns are construed as types, they can be considered names in that they are similar to one semantic function of peoples' proper names, which are also construed as specifying a type. A name like *Bob Higgins* specifies a male human.

The second category under the heading of definite is types as unique instances. In this category, there are two members: the type hierarchy member group (e.g. *the whale*), and the global/local role (e.g. *the Pope*; *the supermarket*).

The third category under the definite heading is a unique instance of a type. This category subsumes the three circumstances of discourse space described above: direct awareness, indirect awareness, and tenuous awareness, which in turn consists of two sub-groups: nominal content and immediate situation.

The second heading of the taxonomy, non-definite, includes three categories: non-unique instances, arbitrary instances, and maximal instances. Non-unique instances are actual or specific instances in relation to the discourse space. The three forms of nouns are singular, mass, and plural nouns. These are marked by *a* (i.e. singular nouns) and *zero* or the unstressed *some*.

Concerning the arbitrary instance group, there are two subgroups of nouns: singular and plural. Under this category, there are three members: generic *a*, non-specific *a*, and predicate nominative construction (i.e. nominals as complements of *be*). We are not sure whether or not mass nouns (e.g. It is *water*) should be included in this group because Langacker gives no account of this. For the time being, a case like *water,* will be treated as belonging to the next category: maximal instance. The maximal instance category consists of two groups of nouns: mass and plural nouns. They are used with a zero article.

As can be seen from this classification, the English article system is not easy to capture, but given a language teaching position, we feel that Langacker's distinction between "type" and "instance" helps account for some uses of articles.

CHAPTER III

English Article: A Problem for Romanian students

During past decade or so, The Ministry of Education, has been making increasing efforts to shift the focus of EFL pedagogy from "correctness and accuracy" in English to "communicative ability". In response to this, much emphasis has been placed on students' ability to express themselves orally in class. This has, however, had the (undesired) effect of grammar and lexis being minimised in schools. We are now at a stage whereby the overwhelming majority of students enter universities with an insufficient knowledge of grammar and lexis.

So far many researchers have agreed that article usage is an area of grammar that shows "considerable prominence in any error analysis" (Oller & Redding, 1971: 85). Especially studies focusing on Asian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), namely Japanese and Chinese, have reported a high frequency of article errors among common errors in English (for an overview see Goto Butler, 2002). In this chapter, I will first look at the total number of grammar errors and then see how relatively frequent article errors are. Oller & Redding (1971), who used a multiple-choice format to test mastery of the English article system, found that article errors decrease as proficiency increases, even for students whose first language does not have formal equivalents of the English articles. In my study, I will perform correlation tests on students' proficiency scores and numbers of various errors that students make to find out if the number of article errors indeed decreases as students become more proficient.

The studies reviewed in Goto Butler (2002) are based on different ways of collecting data, ranging from personal experience in teaching to observational and empirical evidence. Tasks used for collecting data also vary from recognition tasks (e.g. multiple-choice, error identification) to production tasks (e.g. composition, gap-filling, interviews). Researchers have commented on a possible relationship between the frequency of each error type and the task or test performed (cf. Ellis 1994, pp138). In general, discrete point tests such as cloze tests provide higher error rates than

production tests like essay writing and interviews. The reason for the difference, according to researchers, lies in the fact that students tend to avoid certain uses they are not sure of in production tasks. In our study, essay writing, a type of production task, is used instead of a discrete point test because we want to see if article errors affect writing grades. Also, because almost every noun phrase produced involves choices in article use, the assumption is that article use cannot be avoided and article errors will be relatively frequent, even in written production. However, the correct or incorrect use of articles does not usually affect understanding, and as Burt (1975) points out does not necessarily affect communication. The assumption, therefore, is that if article errors affect grades, they will do so only to a small degree.

The purpose of the present chapter is to see whether Romanian students have problems with English articles and if so, how these errors relate in number to other kinds of errors, whether the number of article errors decreases as proficiency increases, and finally whether these errors affect their writing grades. The analysis shown below originates in the misuse/overgeneralisation of learning strategies: the usage of articles: *a/an/the*. After analysing this error pattern, an attempt to identify the causes of it will be determined. Finally, a method of helping students deal with this error pattern is proposed.

3.1. An Error Analysis

The total number of words used in the 144 written tasks investigated in this paper was 110,340, which included 2,923 articles. Out of the 144 written tasks, 32 were chosen at random in order to investigate article usage. The following chart shows this breakdown in detail:

	144 written tasks(total)		32 written tasks(random sample)	
	Total number of articles	Percentage of articles to total	Total number of articles	Percentage of articles to total
a/an	758	26	212	28
the	2,165	74	526	72
Total	2,923	-	738	-

Table 3. Types and relative frequency of form errors in essays

The range of articles used in the 32 random written tasks is very close to that of the total 144 written tasks. As mentioned above, the written tasks were written based on the reading of a short story. Since, at the time of writing, they were using *given information,* students preferred the definite *the* (n=526, (or 2,165 in 144 written tasks)) over the indefinite *a/an* (n=2 12 (or 758 in 144 written tasks)). This does not mean, however, that students committed fewer errors concerning the articles when writing in a controlled situation, even though the frequency of errors might be lower than that of the free compositions. The controlled written tasks also can be used effectively enough to determine error patterns of articles.

	144 written tasks (total)		32 written tasks (random sample)	
	Total number of articles	Percentage of articles to total (%)	Total number of articles	Percentage of articles to total (%)
a/an	758	26	212	28
the	2,165	74	526	72
Total	**2,923**	—	**738**	—

Table 4. *Correlations among the errors*

3.1.1. Analysis of Errors

The analysis of the 32 written tasks is as follows:

	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Confusion	Total number of errors
a/an	74	16	33	122
the	128	17	34	179
TOTAL	**201**	**33**	**67**	**302**

Tabel 5: Types of errors

Here, errors of articles are categorised into 3 types: (1) omission, (2) unnecessary insertion, and (3) confusion3. Before continuing, a definition of these terms will be

necessary. Omission refers to the lack of an article (zero article). This type of error had the highest frequency (n=201). Unnecessary insertion indicates articles which were placed where they were not needed (n=33). Confusion expresses situations in which a was used instead of *the,* or vice versa (n=67).

3.1.2 Usages Relevant to Errors

The errors committed by the students in this study fall mainly into three categories: (i) Basic Usage; (ii) Anaphoric Reference; (iii) *the* with Superlative/Unique   Adjectives.

Usage 1: Basic Usage of the indefinite article and the definite article The articles *(a/an* and *the)* are determined mainly by nouns. Therefore, the nature of nouns (count/uncount) and the form of them (the singular or the plural) are significant in choosing which article to use. Referring to Cobuild (1991), the relation between the articles and nouns is thus:

	Singular Noun			Plural Noun	
	(-)	a/an	the	none	the
Count Noun	—	a book	the book	books	the books
Uncount Noun	music		the music		
Count/Uncount	cake	a cake	the cake	cakes	the cakes

Tabel 6: Types of nouns used with articles.

Here, count nouns can have any article *(-/a/an/the),* while uncount nouns take only *the.* Singular nouns can take any article, while plural nouns take only *the.* In addition to this, it is necessary to recognise that *a/an* is used with an unspecific word and *the* is used with a specific one.

Usage 2: **Anaphoric Reference** The definite article is used when identifying

the thing being referred to, regardless of whether it is first mention (Cobuild1991:23).

Observe the following:

(i) A word which has been said earlier in a conversation or text is repeated later.

e.g. She bought a radio, but she returned *the* radio because it was defective.

(ii) "You can also use 'the' and a noun when you are referring to someone and something closely connected with something you have just mentioned:'

(Cobuild 1990:45)

e.g. She stopped and lit a match. The wind almost blew out the flame.

Usage 3: the with Superlative/Unique Adjectives *the* **is determined not only by nouns but also by particular adjectives.**

Superlative adjectives tend to come with *the,* like *"the* highest," *"the* best," **and** *"the* most beautiful." There are also some other adjectives which behave in the same way to "identify unique things" e.g. *"the* same," *"the* last," **and** *"the* right" (Cobuild 199 1:33).

The following symbols have been used in subject samples to show errors:
1. [ ] indicates an omission,
2. * * indicates an unnecessary insertion, and
3 * *[ ] indicates a confused articles

3.1.3 Omission

3.1.3.1 Omission *of* a/an

(i) ... who is killing by [a] tiger, because, it is unpleasant
(ii) And he took out [a] knife that he hid in his pocket.

(iii) ... front of citizen[s] in [an] arena. One of the doors is in [a] very dangerous wild tiger.

(iv) I think, it is not [a] good idea for the people. If the

(v) . . .the king should build [a] peaceful country. But sometimes

(vi) However [an] unhappy day happened to the king

(vii) ... he became unhappy. [A] Few decades later, the brave man

(viii) ... strong man [men]! !" [A] few days later from the day

(ix) ... they lived together [a] few decades. So, she changed her

Errors involving 'omission' reveal students' lack of fundamental understanding of the articles. (i—v) shows the lack of understanding for Usage 1 type errors. 29 errors related to *a/an* + singular count noun such as (i—ui) were found, and 33 errors related to *a/an* + adjective + noun, such as (iv—v) were found in total. It seems that adjectives in particular confuse students when it comes to correct article selection. (vii—viii) show exceptional cases. Sentences involving omission of a can make sense as they are. Considering, however, that each sentence was based on the short story, it has to be assumed that students wanted to express "a few" instead of "few" here

3.1.3.2 Omission of "the"

(i) ... calls on her father, [the] king, [the] lady's future is

(ii) ... a man who [a] crime. Usually [the] criminal was put into a prison

(iii) ... they give a bribe to [the] nation in order to banish [the] king to [the] arena,

(iv) ... is decided by us and [the] people decide for all judgment

(v) I couldn't understand [the] fine parts. Especially I couldn't

(vi) ... was pleased. He liked [the] brave and strong man.

(vii) ... called by the people [the] most greatest king in this

(viii) I couldn't understand [the] third paragraph. I couldn't

(ix) Finally, He opened [the] left door. Because he knew that

(x) ... went to the arena to [the] punishment, because they never...

(xi) ... a little better than [the] compulsory death penalty.

(xii) ... story, I remember [the] Coliseum [the] ancient Rome period.

Errors related to Usage 2, such as (i—vi), were the most abundant. They express old infomation which has already been told (anaphoric reference). This is further evidence that students have a serious lack of understanding concerning article usage, as mentioned above (Section 4.2.3.1). (vii-ix) are related to Usage 3, and (x—xii) to Usage

1.

3.1.4 Unnecessary Insertion/Overuse

3.1.4.1 Unnecessary Insertion of a/an

(i) I think that politician are should get on *a* people.

(ii) people could watch *a* fighting which included soldiers...

(iii) ... law. This law was *a* fairness and clear. So the wrong

(iv) ... treated people as *a* slave[s]. He abolished the arena

(v) They got right as *a* human[s]. His wife was semi

(vi) But this law is *a* severe for the princess.

(vii) ... because the lady is *a* very beautiful and

(viii) I think this story is *a* very interesting in many points

(ix) ... judge them such *a* in this story's way. Surly the king

(x) ... of I didn't know were *a* little [few]. And grammar were

(xi) And grammar were a *a* little [few] too. Before I red this

(i—v) are strongly related to Usage 1. (i—ui) show that 'unnecessary insertion' occurred when it came before plural/uncount nouns ("people," "fighting," and "fairness"). As mentioned in Section 4.2.3.1, plural/uncount nouns are difficult for Japanese students to learn, due to the lack of such a system. Even though it would be easy for students to identify words with the plural marker —s, it is difficult for them to identify that words without it. (iv—v) are also related to students' recognition of plural nouns. They could not identify that the words "slave" and "human" were mentioning other words followed by them ("people" and "They"). (vi—ix) reveal that

errors are caused not only by students' insufficient understanding of the articles but also by their lack of understanding the grammatical structure of English. There was a high proportion of this error type (n=7, from a total of 16 errors committed), exemplified in (vi—viii). Finally, (x—xi) are also exceptional cases as mentioned in Section 3.1.3.1. Both "little" and "a little" can make a sense in the sentences. Assuming, however, what students were going to express from the context, it can be considered that "a little" should come here.

3.1.4.2 Unnecessary Insertion of the

(i) ... of his country and *the* people.

(ii) ... in this country are *the* eccentric characters.

(iii) ... the sight of blood. *The* criminal[s] who was[were]...

(iv) ... barbarity but he had *the* modern idea[s].

(v) ... people liked to see *the* blood. Perhaps, it was excited...

(vi) ... him and get him into *the* prison. I dont treat the people...

(vii) ... from the arena, *the* guilty against his will because...

(viii) ... love and he threw *the* her lover into prison. She had...

(ix) ... dare chose another *the* door what she told him.

(x) And he gave [a] sign, *the* opposite him. He could choose...

(i—ui) show students' misunderstanding of Usage 1 type errors. The confusion concerning plural nouns also can be seen here again (see 3.1.4.1). *(iv—vii)* do not have anaphoric reference, so it can be said that these are due to insufficient understanding of Usage 2. (viii—x) reveal that students do not understand where the could be used.

3.1.5 Confusion
3.1.5.1 An used instead of the

(i) . princess selected *a* [the] tiger's door. And the young...

(ii) And the princess and *a* [the] worker got married and...

(iii) . ..of his eyes. When *a* [the] young man looked at

(iv) . king didn't know that *an* [the] accused worker was

(v) . . built up wealth. *A* [The] new king was very brave...

(vi) . ..is a woman behind *a* [the] right door, and I would give...

(vii) . . .one of the doors was *a* [the] wildest, biggest and...

(viii) . ..that this book is like *a* [the] Japanese

(i—v) are related to Usage 2. *the* used in (i—v) have anaphoric reference.
Therefore, *the* should replace the incorrect article a. (vi—viii) exemplify the
misunderstanding of Usage 3.

3.1.5.2 the used instead of a/an

(i) . ..interested in *the* [a] criminal, the criminal went to...

(ii) . if I was *the* [a] criminal, I do not thinking that...

(iii) *is* difficult for *the* [a] king to govern his country.

(iv) . there was *the* [a] king who had semi-barbarism.

(v) The king had *the* [a] very beautiful daughter and he...

All errors found are caused by the insufficient understanding of Usage 2.
There seems to be a tendency for students to place *the* even before words of
first mention.

3.1.5.3 Pronouns Used Instead of Articles/Articles Used Instead of Pronouns

(i) . in such *this* [a] way. Although it was [a] very interesting story...

(ii) . . beautiful in *this* [the] castle, her lover must marry

(iii) One of *the* [his] modern ideas was a large...

(iv) ...man and he arrested *the man* [him]. After ward, he went...

(i) shows that usage of the grammatical construction "such + a + noun"

is not understood correctly. (ii—iv) are not caused by grammatical misunderstanding.
Each sentence has no grammatical mistake at sentence-level, but it does at discourse
level. This means that students need practice in applying their grammatical knowledge
to discourse. In (ii) *this* is used in conveying old information to the reader in the same
way the definite article would, however, it seems informal and consequently
somewhat inappropriate. (iii—iv), on the other hand, involve some sort of definiteness
being anaphorically referred back to a person.

3.1.6 Result of Error Analysis: Articles

The analysis shown above reveals that there are two main causes for article error. One cause is students' insufficient understanding of articles. It is probable that this cause stems from the way that students learnt the articles at school. As mentioned above (See 3.1.4), it is possible to say that grammar books used in Romanian high schools are oversimplified. The other cause is that students have little practice using articles in discourse. There were cases that articles were used correctly at the sentence-level, but they became erroneous when they were seen in passages. Their lack of experience in using articles at the discourse level compounds their confusion in using them. This means that students probably need more practice to use articles in discourse.

3.2. The Devising of Teaching Procedures

3.2.1 Aim of Writing Activity 2

The errors analysed in the section above reveal that students need to understand the usage of articles to make their English more accurate grammatically, as well as the need for more exposure to it through writing at the discourse level.

Hopefully, this will improve the overall fluency in their writing. Regarding grammatical accuracy, feedback provided by teachers can be very effective to help students deal with error patterns (Frodesen 2001). Moreover, to improve the fluency in writing, exposure to reading could be considered an effective method. Some researchers consider the use of reading in the writing class as one of the ways to resolve problems in writing (Widdowson 1978; Hedge 1988; Knoll 2001). Given that feedback and reading could help students deal with the problematic areas discussed above, another writing activity was designed for students to resolve these issues in their writing.

3.2.2 Procedure

Error corrections were made in two ways: a read aloud activity in the classroom and written correction by e-mail. Students investigated were required to

read, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde,* and then write 100—150 word written tasks concerning the story in English. Finally, a questionnaire was given to students for feedback on the attitudes towards the activities outlined in Sections (3.2.3) and (3.2.4).

3.2.3 In Classroom

After finishing writing their written tasks in English, students were requested to read the original text aloud. The aim of this practice is to listen to the natural rhythm of English passages. Through it, students can learn habitual patterns in grammar used by native English speakers. Students were then requested to read their written tasks. "Many students find that slowly reading their drafts aloud to listen for errors can help them in making corrections" (Frodesen 200 1:245). In the case of this activity, however, they were not requested to let their friends listen to their reading. After making their own corrections, students exchanged their written tasks with their friends'. They then began reading and correcting their friends' written tasks in pairs.

3.2.4. By E-mail

After error correction in pairs, students submitted their first drafts to the author by e-mail. Grammatical error correction, in the form of underlining and/or bracketing, was provided to the students by the author. A message was given telling students to find and correct more errors of the same kind by themselves. The first three errors of articles were corrected by the teacher in order to demonstrate, by way of example, what was expected by the task. The first written tasks were then returned to the students by e-mail.

3.3 Comparison of Errors

Following the return of the first drafts, students made a second error correction in the same way as they had the first time in the classroom: reading the original text, correcting errors by themselves, and finally correcting errors in pairs. The students then submitted their drafts by e-mail a second time. In all, the activity of error correction in the classroom and the teacher's correction by e-mail was repeated twice. That is, their third drafts were considered as the final written tasks. It

can be seen clearly that the number of errors in the final written tasks on *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* had changed, compared with the written tasks about "The Lady, or the Tiger?." The change in the percentage of grammatical errors, seen in five random written tasks, is as follows:

Article Errors

	"The Lady, or The Tiger?" (First Writing Activity)					*Dr .!eIqll and Mr Thde* (Second Writing Activity)				
	Words	Numbers of errors *of/c*	Percentage of error *of/c* in written task	Numbers of error articles	Percentage of error articles in written task	Words	Numbers of errors *of/c*	Percentage of error *of/c* in written task	Numbers of error articles	Percentage of error articles in written task
A	219	8	3.8	19	22.6	95	0	0	6	13.5
B	216	5	2.3	22	18.3	156	2	Li	8	1L8
C	216	7	2.7	32	26	136	2	25	II	17.1
D	199	II	*5.5*	28	28.1	8!	0	0	5	*8.5*
E	204	3	*1.5*	17	*15.2*	152	I	0.8	13	*15.7*

Tabel 7.Analysis of Article Errors

Here, four out of five students' written tasks in the second activity had fewer article errors. This means that the activity for error correction in the classroom and the teacher's error correction through e-mail exchanges could help lessen the number of grammatical errors committed.

3.4 Result

Error corrections by themselves, those in pairs with their friends and feedback from the teacher by e-mail focused on correcting grammatical errors. However, without understanding the articles in their written tasks were corrected, students' grammatical competence cannot be promoted. Here, reading the original text aloud could be exploited sufficiently. One student remarked that she could feel the natural rhythm in writing by native English speakers after having practiced reading

the original text aloud. In fact, from the questionnaire given to students after the final written task, it was found that 29 of the 36 students answered "Strongly agree" (n= 17) or "Agree" (n= 12) in response to the question "Do you think reading the original text aloud helped your writing?"

Hence, it can be said that this reading activity was an effective tool in improving students' awareness of article usage in their target language. The teacher's feedback was also perceived to be effective in error reduction. Since errors except the first three errors per error pattern were not corrected, students had to find other errors to correct by themselves. This forced students to apply their knowledge of the usage of articles to actual writings at both the sentential level as well as at the discourse-level. Moreover, not only the teacher's corrections but also the comments added to them could encourage students to polish their written tasks. It has been said that the role of teachers must be not an instructor of grammatical rules but a fellow writer (Quinn 1996; Brown 2001). Therefore, grammatical error corrections in this writing activity were provided to students along with suggestions/comments to plot designs, rhetorical expressions and so on. As a result, the teacher's corrections could raise not only the grammatical accuracy but also the rhetorical fluency in students' writings.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, written tasks written in English by 36 students were investigated in order to analyse one frequent error pattern, seen in their written tasks. The analysis of this type of error indicated that it derived from their native language Romanian. The error analysed here was articles, the result of which revealed that the difficulty arose in students' insufficient understanding, a lack of experience in using them, and reliance on oversimplified textbooks. Consequently, students used articles almost arbitrarily and therefore tended to overgeneralise.

The difficulty of this type of error showed that students could not avoid such mistakes relying on their knowledge of grammar alone. They need practice in writing at the discourse-level. The experimental error correction exercises discussed above (Section 3.4) could decrease errors in students' written tasks. Moreover, the grammatical

accuracy students gained brought fluency to their writing, which in turn raised their communicative competence.

Considering English as a means of communication, it is no wonder that writing with perfect grammar is not the final product for second language learners. Communicative competence consists of grammatical competence, as well as sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. For the purpose of gaining accuracy and fluency in writing, it is necessary to recognise that grammar is "a resource to be accessed for effective communication, not just an isolated body of knowledge" (Frodesen 2001:234).

Obviously articles are a pervasive problem for Romanian learners of English as they are the most frequent of all errors, which do not decrease as proficiency increases. In other words, they are not learned "automatically" in the acquisition process. However, it is also clear that holistic essay grades are not much affected by the number of article errors, most probably because article errors are "local" errors that do not affect meaningful communication much.

The question then is should we pay attention to these errors at all and bother teaching the English article system since they are so problematic for Romanian learners. It seems to us that at the lower levels, students learning English who will be using English in a local variety do not need much focus on article use because it does not seem to affect meaningful communication. However, the issue is still worth pursuing for advanced learners of English who may have to write professionally for an international public.

For, as Berry notes (1991: 252), if a writer keeps making this kind of 'unimportant' error, he or she may create a negative effect on readers. Readers may have the idea that the writer has an imperfect control of the language and his or her integrity may be undermined.

CHAPTER IV
Approaches To Teaching The English Article System

Chapter 3 has shown that the acquisition of English articles is indeed a problem for Romanian students and that they do not acquire the system automatically as they become more proficient. Chapters 1 and 2 have shown that the English article system is so complex that philosophers and linguists have difficulty in agreeing on the underlying notions designated by the different forms. However, with the great emphasis on communicative language teaching in recent decades, many researchers such as Pica mentioned do not believe that teaching these rules and conventions explicitly leads to improved acquisition. On the other hand, several studies have shown the usefulness of attention to form or forms (cf. Norris and Ortega 2000). No matter which view one holds, it is a fact that grammar books are published and used widely. Teachers, especially non-native language teachers of English as a foreign language, look for help in pedagogical grammar books such as Quirk et al. (1985) and reference books such as Swan (1994), and use textbooks such as Murphy (1985) to help improve their students' performance. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the Romanian students we tested, who have no doubt been exposed to such books, have not yet mastered the English article system to any great degree, and there seems to be very little systematicity to their interlanguage. In other words, the methods used so far have not proven to be very effective. Without taking a position on the usefulness of focus on form or forms, I believe that one problem in the current books is that they do not address the article system in a manner that makes clear the meaning of the forms to the second language learners whose language does not have a similar system.

In this chapter, I will first survey pedagogical studies, books teachers may use, on teaching articles and some current grammar-cumpractice books, books students use. At the end of this chapter, I will present a description I feel would be more effective.

4.1. Pegagogical suggestions of teaching the English article system

As Beaumont remarks (1994), it is not an easy task to set up a working basis for teaching articles, but there has been agreement that formal instruction is

needed to achieve a positive effect in helping non-native students acquire the English article system (Lindstromberg, 1986; Berry, 1991; Master, 1997).

This is also reflected through the different attempts on proposing different approaches of teaching the English articles on the grounds of students' errors and of objections to either a linguistic theory or problems
from approaches found in grammar books. In the following paragraphs we will present a brief overview of these studies. During the time the generative-transformational paradigm was dominant in linguistic theory, Grannis (1972) was the first to object to using this theory in explaining article use and propose a non-formal approach.

One of his main objections was related to the fact that the theory could not account for differences in meaning between the following pairs of sentences with a restrictive relative clause.

1. a. I saw the man *whom Albert told me about*.
   b. I saw a man *whom Albert told me about*.
2. a. I saw every man *whom Albert told me about*.
   b. I saw that man *whom Albert told me about*.

He, therefore, advised teachers to ignore the dominant theoretical framework and "fall back into a basically unstructured, traditional approach to the description of English" (p.288).

Whitman (1974), also reacting to the inadequacy of the linguistic theory at the time to explain meaning, proposes a pedagogical sequence on the assumption that English article structure "is a sequence of quantification and determination rather than a choice between specified and unspecified" (p.253). He suggests six consecutive steps for teaching the English articles based on ease of explanation and frequency of occurrence:

1. Quantity (singular/plural distinction)

   This is a book vs. Those are three books.

2. Generic plural:

   All apples are red > Apples are red.

3. Non-count nouns (count nouns vs. non-count nouns)

   A lot of *books* vs. A lot of *water*

Many *books* vs. Much *water*

    4. Determiners: (Which-NP question; second mention)

        Which books are green? *The books* on the table.

        I saw *a book*. *The book* was called "Moby Dick."

    5. Quantity and determiner:

        One of the books on that table is blue.

    6. Generic articles

        A mouse is smaller than a rat.

        The mouse is smaller than the rat.

        Mice are smaller than rats.

Whitman introduces quantity first because "the concept of 'counting' is easier to talk about than the concept of 'known groups'" (p. 258). Then, since the generic plural is closely related to the concept of quantity, Whitman introduces the generic plural in step two and retains generic articles *a/an* and *the* until the last step because generics *a* and *the* are not commonly found.

McEldowney (1977), without referring to a particular grammatical theory, advocates the idea of simplifying the grammar of the English articles. She based her study on the 'common errors' tradition of French (1949) and her experience of training teachers of English as a foreign language. In simplifying the grammar of the English article system, she raises the importance of establishing one form for one function (i.e. code marker). To her, three concepts that comport with the three markers are: (a) choice marked by *a* in the sense of *any*; (b) specification coded through special *the*; (c) and generalization through general *–s* and *a* and *the*. On the basis of these three forms, she suggests a four-stage teaching approach, which can be summarized into three main stages.

Stage 1:   count nouns used in the sense of "any one" and "the special one."

Stage 2: uncountable nouns distinguished by "the substance in general" and "the special substance" (e.g. mud vs. the black mud).

Stage 3: generalizations conveyed through the three markers (i.e. a + N;   the + N; the + N + s).

Lindstromberg (1986) also suggests that teaching the rules of article usage can make a difference to learners in helping them understand and use the system. However, his approach is not to simplify the system as suggested by McEldowney but

to make the complex system manageable on the basis of simplifying the terminology. Master (1991) (discussed below) has incorporated some of these suggestions.

Berry (1991), after studying current approaches in some grammar cum-practice books, finds that they "are not yet well in the matter of teaching articles." Three main problems that he identifies are (1) incorrect or misleading formulation, (2) unwarranted emphasis on certain usage types, and (3) lack of variety in formats. A typical misleading formulation is second mention usage. Berry states that there are cases in which *the* is not used after *a* is used for the first time (see Chapter 3). Cases of unwarranted emphasis are generic usage, *the* used with proper nouns, and also second mention usage, which are uses that are not commonly found.

The lack of variety in formats has to do with the over-use of gap filling in exercises designed to practice usage. According to Berry, a harmful effect of this type of exercise is that it can reinforce learners' beliefs about the redundancy of the articles. For learners can wonder why they should fill in the articles based on "the information in the rest of the text" when the information is there already.

Based on these three objections, Berry proposes seven principles in designing materials for teaching the articles, which can be summed up into three main points: (1) use a principled descriptive account; (2) make exercises / activities varied in terms of production, comprehension and perception, and (3) apply some principles of presentation methodology (e.g. simplicity, appropriateness). Berry uses Quirk *et al.* (1985), who incorporates insights from Hawkins (1978), as a source of such a principled descriptive account.

In line with Lindstromberg's recommendation to simplify rules is Master's account. Master (1990) introduces a binary system in which article use is reduced to a meaning contrast between "identification" (marked by *the*) and "classification" (marked by *a* or ø). The binary system, in fact, is an effort to manipulate various descriptions by simplifying them with attention to the principle of *one form* for *one function* (McEldowney, 1977; Bolinger, 1977). Although he does not refer to the cognitive grammar framework, his method is rather 'cognitive' in that he ignores "specificity" in definite and indefinite nouns (Table 1).

In Cognitive Grammar, Langacker (1991, vol. 2: 104) argues that the notion of specificity may be useful in establishing a discourse referent, but should be put aside "as a red herring" in explaining English articles. Master's schema (1990) is based on his original 6-point schema (1988b) and is improved in that it focuses on

helping students identify (1) countability, (2) definiteness, (3) modification, (4) specificity vs. genericity, (5) common noun vs. proper noun, and (6) idiomatic usage.

Master (1987, quoted in Master, 1997) tested his original approach and found a significant improvement in test performance, but he wonders if the improvement might have arisen from "the focusing of students' attention on the need for articles in English rather than from any explicit method for choosing the article correctly" (1990: 465), which in our opinion might well have been a direct effect after explicit teaching. In his study, Master did not contrast his approach with another one, nor did he test for long-term effects.

Table 8. *Master's Summary of Aspects of Classification and Identification* (1990)

Classification *(a; o)*	Identification *(the)*
Count/noncount	
First mention	Subsequent mention
	Ranking adjectives
	Shared knowledge
Defining postmodification	Limiting postmodification
Partitive of-phrase	Descriptive of-phrase
Intentional vagueness	
General characteristics	
Existential *there* and *it*	
	Generic *the*
Classified proper nouns	Proper nouns (o and *the)*
Idiomatic phrases	Idiomatic phrases

From the studies mentioned so far, some observations can be made. Overall, all suggestions include producing a simplified framework for teaching the articles. Emphasis is found either on the sequence between form and function (Whitman, 1974) or in the correspondence between those two entities (McEldowney, 1977; Master, 1990). That is, one form should correspond with one function. The second aspect is the categorization of the notions concerning the semantic function of

the articles. The division is centered around the specific-generic distinction (McEldowney, 1977; Berry, 1991) and definiteness (i.e. classification vs. identification) (Master, 1990). Another general agreement among the studies is that generic usage should not be overly emphasized (Berry, 1991) or should be presented only after all other aspects of article usage are mastered (Whitman, 1974; McEldowney, 1977; Master, 1990).

The studies mentioned so far also have some shortcomings. The main shortcoming, in our opinion, is that readers are not explicitly made aware of the general meanings of the articles (null, definite, indefinite and zero) nor the underlying concepts of notions ascribed to them such as "definiteness", "genericity", "count", "non-count", and so on, so that each case is treated as a separate case rather than as part of a whole system.

Another shortcoming is the fact that the treatment of proper names is left out completely or treated only as item-learnt chunks (Berry, 1991; Beaumont, 1994), without giving underlying principles to help students memorize those chunks. Finally, even though there have been suggestions for sequencing article lessons (Whitman, 1974; McEldowney, 1977; Master, 1990) and using appropriate 'ingredients' for different levels (Master, 1997), none of the studies include suggestions to adapt a pedagogical approach to the needs of a particular student population (e.g. like Romanian), ignoring the idea that a good pedagogic rule should be able to answer a question that "is generated by [a learner's] interlanguage" (Swan, 1994: 51).

Finally, these proposals lack empirical evidence. Recommendations are made, but no statistical results of the applications are reported. Master did mention his experiment (1987) on spoken article usage by 20 non-native speakers, but only short-term effects of the teaching method were measured. However, on the whole, Master's account is in our eyes pedagogically the most sound in that it gives the students one general "rule" that is easy to remember and apply: "If the noun is definite, use *the*; if not, use *a* or zero".

We will use this system as a starting point, but we will pay more explicit attention to why a noun may be used in a definite sense and how, through "construal" the same noun, even in a similar context, may be used in a definite or non-definite sense (e.g "Please, I would like to order a tuna fish sandwich" versus "I would like to order the tuna fish sandwich").

Another difference between Master's system and ours will be the fact that in our system emphasis is given to why a noun may be considered count or non-count, again related to construal as in "I need *sleep*" versus "I need *a sleep*".

In the next section, we will see to what extent the suggestions mentioned above in treating the article system have found their way in the textbooks students actually use.

4.2. Student textbooks and the English Article

In this section I turned my attention to currently commonly used grammar textbooks to see how article usage is actually described. Four grammar books that are surveyed are: (1) *Advanced Grammar in Use* (Hewings, 1999), (2) *Oxford Practice Grammar* (Eastwood, 1999), (3) *English Grammar in Use* (Murphy, 1985), (4) *Mosaic one: A Content-based Grammar* (Werner, 1996). These are also called grammar-cum-practice books because they give considerable amounts of grammatical information along with exercises (Chalker, 1994). All four stress that they are self-study reference and practice books and that they are for intermediate level students and upwards. The following questions will guide this survey:

1. What issues concerning article use are dealt with?
2. What are the general presentation patterns of these issues?
3. How are the contents sequenced?
4. How are the rules designed (i.e. described)?

4.2.1. Usage Content and Categorization

In the four books, the following issues are treated: countability of nouns, specific uses and generic uses of the articles with common nouns, and use of the articles with proper names and in fixed phrases.

Concerning countability of nouns, two issues are often dealt with: countability vs. non-countability and number. Number is treated based on countable nouns which can take two forms: singular or plural. Under the non-count noun category are mass nouns.

With respect to the articles, besides the definite article *the* and the indefinite articles *a/an* and zero, some textbooks mention the use of *some*. In describing the uses of the definite article, textbook writers focus on four main issues: anaphoric reference use (i.e. prior awareness in relation to speech-act participants), immediate and larger situation reference (i.e. unique things), cataphoric reference use (i.e. nominal content), and logical use (e.g. with superlatives). It is worth noting that some authors have categorized anaphoric use, immediate situation, and cataphoric use under one category as 'known things'. Larger situation is treated under the category of unique things. Under the category 'known things', except Hewings, the other authors did not mention indirect anaphoric use. Under the category of unique things, a kind of 'forced' categorization is found in some authors. For example, the use of *the* with a superlative (e.g. It's *the biggest hotel* in town) is treated as an exception under the category of nonspecific uses of *a/an* (e.g. It's a big hotel).

With reference to the indefinite articles, besides the typical use as 'not saying which one,' (Eastwood, 1999), non-specific usage is found through such descriptions as to classify things, to describe people, or to define things (Murphy, 1985; Eastwood, 1999; Hewings, 1999).

Regarding proper names, textbook writers focus on the following categories: people, places, meals, and temporal terms (including holidays).

4.2.2. Patterns of Article Usage Presentation

Two general patterns are found from the presentation of the usage contents mentioned above: a discrete presentation or a contrastive one. A discrete presentation is noticeable through the separate treatment of two main kinds of articles (i.e. *the* and the indefinite articles) in separate parts or lessons (Werner, 1996). By contrast, a contrastive presentation is the treatment of the articles, namely *the* and *a/an* at the same time in each chapter or lesson based on a certain usage content (Murphy, 1985; Eastwood, 1999; Hewings, 1999). The contents that the authors often make use for a contrastive presentation are centered on the three main specific uses of *the*: known things (i.e. second mention and immediate situation), unique things, and things in general (i.e. generic use).

4.2.3. Sequencing

From those two general presentations, some sequencing patterns are also found based on the main content areas. Overall, the general sequence is that countability is presented before the uses of the articles with common nouns. Proper names and fixed expressions come last. Concerning article usage, some sequencing patterns are discerned based on a particular kind of presentation. In a discrete presentation, uses of the indefinite articles are presented before those of the definite article (Werner, 1996). In a contrastive presentation, specific uses are presented before generic uses (Murphy, 1985; Eastwood, 1999; Hewings, 1999).

Further observations can be made with generic uses based on presentation patterns. In a discrete presentation, use of indefinite generics (i.e. *a/an, some* and *zero*) are addressed before generic *the*. In a contrastive presentation, generic *the* is compared first with generic *zero*, and then with generic a/an. It is also worth noting that, in both ways of presentation, each lesson or section will end with sets of exercises that are related to the grammatical points introduced.

4.2.4. Rule descriptions and presentation

Recent developments in linguistic theory and suggestions from pedagogical theorists seem to have left some 'traces' in these books. For example, Eastwood uses such terms as *old* vs. *new* information when explaining the anaphoric use of *the* with a noun when later references are made to it . Or the role of the speech act participants is stressed in *Advanced Grammar in Use* (Hewings, 1999). For instance, after introducing an example about an apple pie, Hewings explains that "we say 'an apple pie' when we first mention it, and 'the apple pie' after that, when the listener or reader knows which apple pie we mean." (unit 58). The importance of context in determining the use of *the* is also addressed. This is found in the introduction to the use of the definite article in Werner's (1996).

Improvements on the formats of exercises, as suggested by Berry (1991), are also found in some authors, especially those textbooks that have been published recently. Besides the traditional gap filling format, which is one form of production exercises, forms of recognition exercises are also found. These kinds of exercises range from error recognition to identifying meaning difference. A variety of formats

of production exercises are also perceived. Some of them are: error correction, sentence completion, paraphrasing, and reproduction based on a 'bare' text (i.e. without articles). Besides those positive traits, some inadequacies can be detected from these books. The first problem is concerned with the usage rules. In some cases, there are many detailed rules. These cases are found in sections dealing with non-specific uses of a/an. The rules are stated as functional uses (e.g. to describe things; to describe people's jobs) based on the complement construction (i.e. be + complement). Proper names are also the case. No general principles were provided as guidelines for the retention of many rules and exceptions.

The second problem has to do with vague descriptions. Such terms as 'particular' or 'identified' are an example. The description such as "we say *the* when we mean something in particular" (Murphy, 1985) may raise skepticism. For, as discussed in chapter 1, *a car* in "I bought *a car* this morning" also refers to a particular car and can be distinguished from other cars I have in my mind (Lyons, 1999). A similar problem can also be perceived through the term 'identified' as used in the following description: "*The* is used before a singular or plural count noun when that noun is specifically identified" (Werner, 1996: 205). Suppose that in the 2004 presidential election of the United States, an American may say: "I wonder who *the president* is this term." One question can be asked is: "can he – as the speaker - identify the referent of the definite noun phrase? The answer is probably not. He or she cannot identify the president as Kerry or Bush. But *the president* is possible because there is an association with the election or that the president is associated with the fact each country should have only one president. Eastwood (1999) seems to avoid this problem by describing that "we use *the* when it is clear which one we mean." The situation is, however, not much better than the former. Students may wonder how they are able to know "when it is clear which one we mean." Potential misunderstandings from the rule descriptions are another problem. First, although some authors, in describing the cataphoric use of *the*, are careful in wording the rule by adding the word 'often', the attempt cannot eliminate the possibility of causing a misunderstanding in students that: 'use *the* whenever a noun is modified by a modifying phrase or clause.'

Second, the contrastive introduction of *the* with predicate nouns modified by superlatives or ordinals (e.g. *He is **the tallest person***) after demonstrating the use of *a/an* with predicate nouns functioning as describing things (e.g. *This is **a book***) or

jobs (e.g. He's *a teacher*) may give rise to the fact that the definite article is used limitedly to the superlatives or ordinals in those structures in which the nouns act as complement of the verb *be*. Another problem is found with the explanation of the definite article in generic usage. We feel doubtful about the 'appropriateness' of a description such as "we don't use *the* before a plural noun when we mean something in general" (Murphy, 1985). For how we can explain the phrase *The Finns* as in "***The Finns** are fond of sport*" (Quirk, 1985: 284).

Simplicity, a criterion in designing pedagogic rules (Swan (1994) can be a factor that accounts for the problems discussed. However, the relationship between truth and simplicity is not in good terms sometimes given "some trade-off with truth and/or clarity" (Swan, 1994: 48). In relation to the vague description "use *the* when it is clear which one we mean" mentioned above, a simplified-but-unmanageable rule is not efficient. Some detailed descriptions concerning the contexts in which *the* is used should have been provided. Also other aspects of *the*-usage should have been mentioned rather than having been left out as a result of oversimplification. Indirect anaphora (i.e. latent awareness), also remarked by Berry (1991) in his survey, and the lack of giving demarcation rules concerning cataphoric use (i.e. a noun followed by a modifying phrase or clause) are examples (Werner, 1996; Hewings, 1999, Eastwood 1999). Explanations should be given, for example, about the possibility that a *zero* determiner is likely to be used with a noun followed by a modifying phrase or clause. Though Murphy (1985) admits that in some cases the difference between something in general and something in particular is not easy to distinguish, he provides no more general 'guidelines' or elaboration on the issue.

To sum up, the survey of the four commonly used grammar books has shown that there are several problems in treating the article system. The descriptions of the rules are often either vague, inadequate, or actually contradictory and confusing. Moreover, even though some of the books have a 'notional-functional' approach, none of the books give an overall principled introduction to the article system, leaving it up to the student to make sense of a maze of separate, seemingly arbitrary uses of the article system. Clearly, all of the methods are based on a traditional description of the article system. To deal with the article in a more principled way, I developed an approach based on Master's schema, augmented with insights from cognitive grammar.

4.3. English Article Usage: A Cognitive Grammar-based Approach

Our approach is concerned with textbook instruction for high-intermediate or advanced Romanian students who aim to obtain a high level of fluency and accuracy in their second language. The main aim was to present the "rules" of using English articles in such a way that students whose first language has a system completely different from English, could "reason out" a native speaker's intuitive "rule" step by step by means of a flow chart that is kept as general and simple as possible. We felt the reasoning should go from most general principles and prototypical cases to peripheral or less frequent cases.

Because article use may seem completely arbitrary in some cases, such as "He needs education" versus "He needs an education" or "I've been writing letters" vs. "I've been writing some letters" we felt students needed to be made aware of the principles that cause the differences in meaning. We also felt that "simple" rules such as first and second mention should be avoided or reformulated as they are simply inaccurate and may cause more harm than good (Berry, 1991; Beaumont & Gallaway, 1994). However, because our students have been exposed to such rules extensively already, they should be warned explicitly against the use of such rules in our lessons. In the same line, we felt that such rules as "use *the* when a noun is modified by a phrase or a clause" should be reinterpreted on the basis of the fact zero or a can still be used. On account of this, students should also be warned to be vigilant with this kind of rules.

I assumed Romanian students have a different intuition about what is considered "definite" or "non-definite" in English because the Romanian language has a different way for marking definiteness. I also assumed Romanian learners would have great difficulty in developing an intuition about whether an English noun is count or non-count because most nouns are mass nouns in Romanian. Finally, I assumed that Romanian learners have more problems with using the articles in unique type and maximal set environments as reported in Chapter 2. Obviously, these two environments have to do with genericity. It is the context that plays an important role in determining whether or not an instance is construed either as a unique type or with maximal generality; as such an appropriate article form can be decided. Therefore, I devoted a separate section as a 'consolidation part' to help students get an overview of the issue after the main principles (i.e. concerning definiteness) have been presented. .

In the remainder of this section I will discuss the general principles on which this approach is based and point out the similarities and differences between other approaches were applicable.

4.3.1. General Principles

First the students are told that English has two general classes of nouns: common nouns and proper nouns and that to avoid confusion, proper nouns will be dealt with at the end. Students are told that the first step is to decide whether a common noun is used in a definite sense or not. If so, the noun requires *"the"*. If not, the noun requires *"a"* if it is a singular count noun and zero if it is not a singular count noun.

NOUN

DEFINITE   NONDEFINITE

Proper   Common   CountSg

CountPl

o(**the**)   **the**   **a**

0
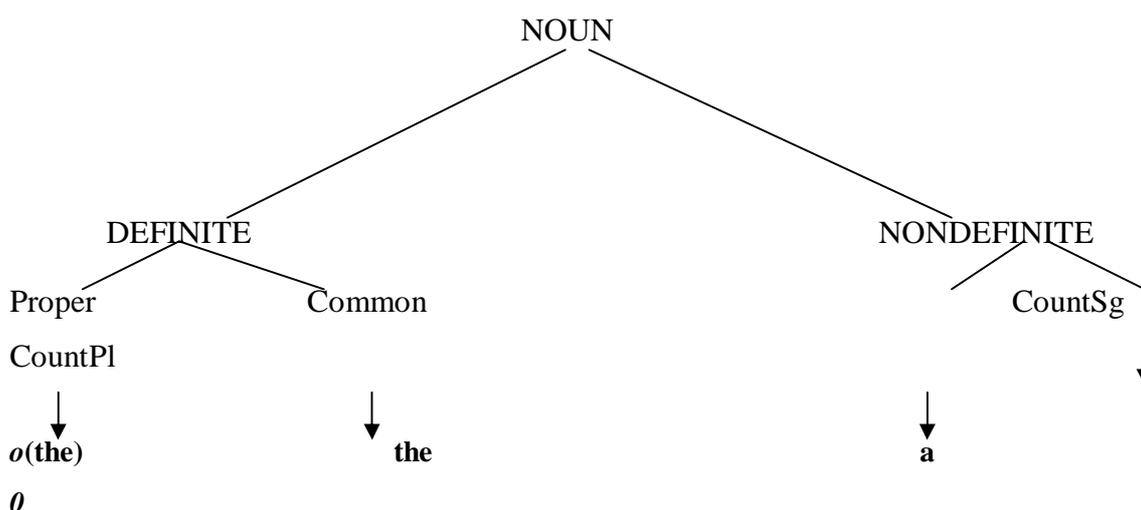
Figure 1. *Flow chart showing article use*

This flow chart (fig.1) reminds one of the phrase found in most traditional grammar textbooks "use *the* when a noun is definite" or "use *a/an* when a noun is indefinite," but also accounts for the fact that a proper noun may have a *zero*-determiner. Moreover, this approach emphasizes the importance of meaning in that students are to discover the sense in which a noun is used, i.e. in a definite or non-definite sense, before finding out which article to use. In fact, we are implicitly referring to the Langacker's concept of "grounding" by asking students to discover whether a noun is used in a definite sense or not and to Langacker's concept of

"quantity" when we ask whether a noun is used as a count noun or not and if so whether it is singular or not.

Another difference between this approach and traditional ones is the fact that definiteness is treated before countability. This has been done for several interrelated reasons. First of all, if a common noun is used in a definite sense, it will always take *the*, so a student can be spared the extra trouble to find out whether the noun is count or not, especially because the notion of countability is tied up with the notions of "boundedness" and "construal" and reasoning out whether a noun is countable or not takes several more steps than reasoning out whether it is definite or non-definite.

Also, the notion of definiteness is so unfamiliar to our student population that we felt it needed a great deal of attention. This approach also implies a discrete presentation of the different articles: first ***the*** for definiteness and then ***a*** **or** ***zero*** for non-definiteness.

Contrastive presentations are given only after students have been given the general underlying principles in meaning and to make clear what the subtle differences in meaning might be when using different articles in similar situations. For example, at the end of Lesson 3 I illustrate the subtle differences in meaning between generic statements such as "***A tiger*** is a fierce animal, ***Tigers*** are fierce animals, and ***The tiger*** is a fierce animal" based on the general principles already discussed.

This approach may seem oversimplified in that it ignores a distinction between specific and generic, but we feel this distinction is not needed. When a noun phrase is definite, it is implied that it is also specific as a result of the mental contact coordinated by the speaker and the hearer with a unique instance of a type (Langacker, 1991: vol.2) and can thus be ignored. Besides, generic ***the*** is not that different from specific *the* and can be seen through the difference between two notions: the physical domain of instantiation and the abstract domain of instantiation. Using Master's terms

> *(1990: 468), the physical domain of instantiation can be construed as "a real or actual noun," while the abstract domain of instantiation, called type space in cognitive grammar, has to do with the idea or concept that a noun suggests or profiles.*

In the physical domain of instantiation, each type (i.e. kind) such as a *computer* has many instances, and if the speaker and the hearer share mental contact

on one particular instance of a computer, it is uniquely identified and therefore definite and implicitly specific.

In the abstract domain of instantiation, there are many types, such as tables, chairs, computers, wheels, tigers, dogs, and so on. In other words, a class of entities as a whole is considered a "type" and our world can be considered a "type space" and the world has many instances of types. If the speaker and hearer coordinate mental contact on one particular type as a whole, it can also be construed as uniquely identified and therefore definite, but in this case implicitly generic. Therefore, we feel it is warranted to use the notion of definiteness for both specific *the* and generic *the*, the more because it keeps the schema as simple as possible.

Also in the case of indefinite noun phrases, the distinction between specific and generic reference can be partly ignored because as far as Langacker is concerned, they both are non-definite. This is in line with Master who argues that "whether or not we mean a specific, actual tick [as in *A tick entered my ear*] or a generic one [as in *A tick carries disease*], we still classify that tick when we use the article *a*" (p. 467). The distinction between specific and generic may be important, however, when the noun is referred to again by a pronominal, as for example in "I needed *a digital camera*, but I couldn't find *it*" versus "I couldn't find *one*". We agree with Master that this distinction can be dealt with later in the instruction of an advanced class of English as a second or foreign language.

One difference between the cognitive schema and Master's lies in terminology. Master justifies the terms *identified* **and** *classified* by saying that they "embrace a larger concept than definiteness" (p. 466). We do not agree because in almost all discussions the general notion *definiteness* subsumes such notions as familiarity, identifiability, uniqueness, and inclusiveness. Therefore our schema will use the traditional terms: definiteness and non-definiteness.

Also, there is one major conceptual difference between the cognitive schema and Master's binary schema. In his classification, Master mentions two features: [±identified] and [±count], which are somewhat similar to the cognitive notions of "grounding" and "quantification". In CG a nominal (i.e. article-marked noun) should be grounded and quantified (see Fig.2).

```
                        ARTICLE-MARKED
                            NOUN

GROUNDED                                              QUANTIFIED
(Speaker-Hearer)
```
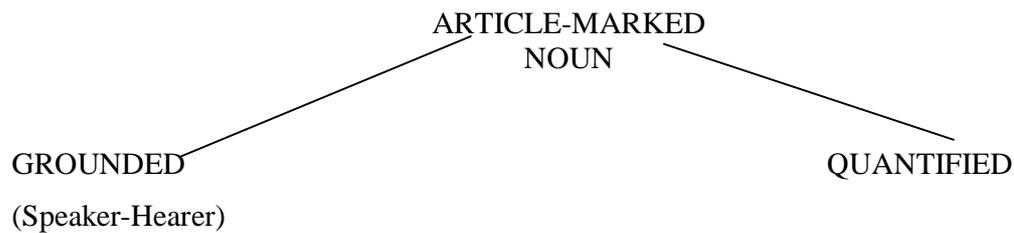
Fig.2. *Cognitive schema for grounding and quantification*

The main difference is that the notion of *grounding* stresses the role of speech-act participants in relation to the current discourse space. In other words, in cognitive grammar it is up to the speech-act participants to construe an entity as definite or not, as can be exemplified with the previously mentioned example of "I will have a tuna fish sandwich" versus "I will have the tuna fish sandwich". Even though the objective situation may be entirely the same, the speech act participant may construe an entitity as uniquely identifiable or not. The noun phrase also contains information about quantity, both *a* + singular noun and *the* + singular noun in these examples signify that there is one instance of the type sandwich. Another important difference between our schema and Master's is the fact that ours is a scalar one, ranging from definiteness to nondefiniteness in line with Jespersen's scale of familiarity (i.e. complete familiarity, nearly complete familiarity, and complete unfamiliarity). Under the category of definiteness, there are three groups of items: (a) proper names, (b) types as unique instances, and (c) instances uniquely identified in the current discourse space. Under the category of non-definiteness, there are also three groups of items: (a) particular or actual instances, (b) arbitrary instances, and (c) maximal generality.

Corresponding to the aspects of meaning in Figure 3 are the forms ranging from *zero* to *zero* (See Fig.4). Although we favor the idea of one form for one meaning (Bolinger, 1977), it is not entirely possible in his schema. Both a proper name, which is on the utmost left of the scale, and a maximally general noun, which is at the utmost right of the scale, take a *zero*-determiner. However, to avoid confusing students with one form for two different senses, proper names are treated separately in the lessons.

Proper names are often used with the *null* article, but they can also be found with the definite article, causing confusion. Traditional approaches often favor offering them as item-learnt chunks to be memorized. However, this may be almost impossible to do without some understanding of underlying principles. Our approach includes explaining the principle of *familiarity* (Jespersen, 1933), which is similar to Quirk's (1985) gradient between descriptions (i.e. the + proper name + common noun) and names. Recall an example from Chapter 3. During the course of language change, a phrase such as *the Oxford Road* may experience changes as it becomes more and more familiar to language users and eventually may be referred to simply as *Oxford*:

The Oxford road >> The Oxford Road >> Oxford Road >> Oxford.

This principle of familiarity can be used to explain the fact that some Proper Names still have a definite article as in "the Nile river" and some common nouns used with zero article with a definite sense (Quirk, 1985) such as (by) *bus*, (on) *TV*, (to) *bed* and so on.

NOMINALS

DEFINITENESS   NON-DEFINITENESS

| PROPER NAMES | TYPES AS INSTANCES | UNIQUE INSTANCES | | ACTUAL INSTANCES | ARBITRARY INSTANCES | MAXIMAL GENERALITY |
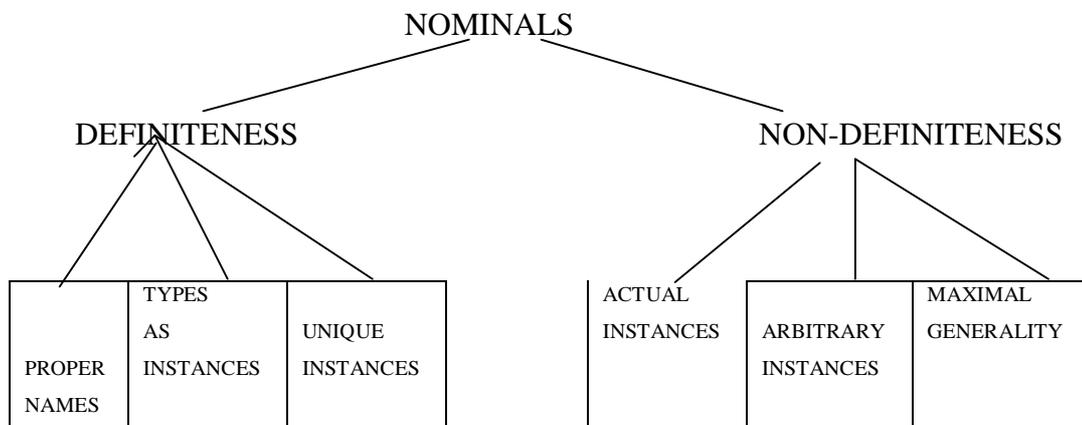
Fig. 3. *Entities that are considered definite and non-definite*

```
┌─────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────┐
│   Definiteness      │──────────────│  Non-Definiteness   │
└─────────────────────┘              └─────────────────────┘
```

┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ NULL+Proper │ │ The+Proper Name+ │ │ A+Singular noun │ │ ZERO+Mass/Plural │
│ Names   │ │ Common noun   │ │ (/sm/)+Plural/   │ │   │
│   │ │ The+ Common   │ │ Mass   │ │   │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘

┌──┐
│ Completely definite >>>> Nearly completely definite >>>>>>>>>>>> Completely   │
└──┘

Fig. 4. Form and meaning of articles

On the whole I have tried to limit the number of separate explanations, starting with the two notions of "definiteness" and "nondefiniteness" and their prototypical uses and then extending them to less frequent cases. In each case we try to explain how the non-prototypical cases are motivated. Now that we have given reasons for the general choices we have made in our approach, we will present a brief outline of the actual lessons (see *Appendix*) with a rationale for the choices.

4.3.2. Elements of the Approach

After students are presented with the flow chart (see Figure 5), they are made aware of the difference in meaning between the different forms of the article by asking them which one of the four following sentences would be the most efficient and appropriate way for a speaker to obtain three black balls.

a. Please pick up black balls.
b. Please pick up the black balls.

c. Please pick up the three black balls.

d. Please pick up three black balls.

Sentences (a) and (d) would not be appropriate. Both (b) and (c) could reflect what the speaker wants, but (b) would be more efficient. This activity is intended to raise student's awareness of the fact that the use of articles is meaningful. The notions of definiteness, non-definiteness, and through it, the sense of 'maximality' are implicitly introduced. After this general introduction there are separate lessons on definiteness, non-definiteness, count-non-count nouns and proper names.

Definiteness

The first lesson deals with the notion of definiteness. In line with insights from cognitive grammar, the role of the Speaker and Hearer in sharing their awareness of the sense of a noun is stressed. To keep the schema and definitions as simple as possible, we give one general definition, which stresses the notion of "uniquely identifiable to Speaker and hearer":

> *A noun is used in a definite sense when both the Speaker and Hearer*
>
> *(or*
>
> > *writer and reader) know exactly which one(s) is/are meant. In other*
> > *words, when a Speaker thinks that the Hearer can identify it as unique*
> > *or the only ones, he/she will mark a common noun with the definite*
> > *article (or another definite determiner, which will be discussed later).*

Then the different contexts in which a noun can be considered "uniquely identifiable" are given: when there is only *one* in our world (general world or immediate surroundings), when there is only *one* that can be meant in the immediate context (text or conversation), when only *one* can be logically meant, and when a class as a *whole*

is referred to (this is also called a generic sense). Each of these cases is followed by elaborations and exercises.

Non-definiteness

The lesson on non-definiteness starts with a reminder of what is considered definite and the statement is made that if a nominal is not definite, it will be non-definite by default. Students are reminded of the notion of "mental contact" as it is also a useful notion in introducing non-definiteness. Because many advanced students have already been exposed to the notion of specificity before, the lesson points out with several examples that English does not mark for specificity, but only for definiteness and nondefiniteness.

Two main non-definite uses are presented: an actual member of the class (e.g. I bought *a TV*), and an arbitrary member of the class (e.g. *A whale* is a mammal). To limit the number of different classes as much as possible, the notion of arbitrary case member is extended to include nominals in complement constructions (e.g. A whale is *a mammal*). To counteract the incorrect "second mention rule" that Romanian students no

doubt have been exposed to, the lesson points out that the second mention rule applies only to actual members of a class. (e.g. I bought *a TV and a camcorder. But the TV* …)

Also, because students have "learned" the incorrect rule that nouns followed by a modifying phrase are always definite, a section points out how to determine what article is used when a noun is modified by a phrase or clause. Also, a separate section is devoted to the difference between *the*, *a/an* and *zero* when used generically and relates these to the general notions definiteness and non-definiteness that were introduced earlier.

Countability

Once students know which nouns are used in a non-definite sense, they have to be able to determine whether the noun is count or not. The underlying conceptual notions of "boundedness" and "construal" are first introduced. For example, a noun like *stone* can be construed either as bounded (i.e. He lifted *a stone*.)

or unbounded (i.e. The house is built of *stone*). After giving examples and explanations with prototypical concrete mass nouns the notions are extended to abstract entities such a "transportation", "education" and so on.

Proper nouns and names

In the introduction, proper nouns and names are first mentioned, but because they seemingly behave in an opposite manner from common nouns they are dealt with separately to avoid confusion. Proper names, when used in a prototypical sense are definite, but do not take an article. When used as a common noun, then they use articles.

a. Mrs. Johnson called. (Proper name used in a prototypical sense; Mrs. Johnson is uniquely identifiable by Speaker and Hearer)
b. A Mrs. Johnson called. (Proper name used as a common noun; Mrs. Johnson is not uniquely identifiable by Speaker and Hearer)

I have tried to show what the problems may have been in traditional approaches in teaching the English article system to Romanian students and have presented a description and rationale for a new approach that takes Master's schema as a starting point and is enhanced with insights from cognitive grammar. The overall aim has been to show the English article system as a coherent system, but also to present as simply as possible. The main choices are between definite and non-definite and these notions are made clear by showing the role of both the speaker and hearer in construing the entity.

4.4. Teaching the English Article System

An effective, systematic approach to teaching English articles in English as a second language instruction is described, with specific exercises using the approach presented. Background information on count and non—count nouns and determiners in English is outlined. Four principles underlying the choice of definite or indefinite articles in English are discussed: (1) first and second mention: simple; (2) first and second mention: complex; (3) unique, one of a kind mentions; and (4)

modifiers before and after the noun. Appendices include 18 exercises involving doze procedures, rewriting, and explanations illustrating the application of the four principles. (CB)

English articles (a, an, the) present serious difficulties for both learners and teachers of English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL). Appropriate use of articles is one of the last aspects of English grammar mastered by most non—native speakers, no matter what their first language is. Articles present particular difficulties for native speakers of languages without articles, but they also pose a challenge for speakers whose native languages have articles that are used differently from English, e.g. Spanish and Arabic. Generally, native speakers "intuitively know how to use the articles appropriately, but when pressed, they cannot explain why they are used in that way (thus, the infamous "it doesn't sound right" or "it just sounds better that way").

Certainly, articles cannot be considered among the most important aspects of English for communication. In oral communication, they are often spoken with such weak stress that they are inaudible. In addition, because they rarely carry significant information, they can usually be deleted in "telegraphic" speech, including telegrams and newspaper headlines.

Nevertheless, given the fact that *the, a,* and *an* are among the most frequent words in English, students writing university level papers in English need some control over article usage. There is also evidence 'that lack of knowledge of the English article system may seriously interfere with reading comprehension in certain cases. Almost all EFL/ESL textbooks touch on articles, but very few present any systematic approach or enough practice to positively affect student performance.

Teachers perceive the need for better understanding of the system, and many advanced learners request help with articles. Thus, I believe that a systematic approach to teaching English articles has a significant, place in EFL/ESL pedagogy.

In this paper, the principles are presented in an analytic form, but the concepts could be modified for inductive presentation and/or used for practice in communicative situations. This approach presents basic principles necessary for understanding the English article system. Because much of the article system works

on a discourse rather than sentence level, sentence—level exercises often fail to provide the necessary context for appropriate article selection. Thus, the exercises included in the appendices of this paper are mainly extended, paragraph or text—length discourse.

In this chapter, I will first go over some background information about count and non—count nouns and the determiner in English before proceeding with our discussion of the principles of the article system itself.

Then, I will explain my approach to teaching the principles underlying the choice of indefinite article in English. Finally, I will present four basic principles governing choice of definite vs. indefinite article in English. This sequence represents the order in which we present these concepts to upper intermediate and advanced EFL/ESL students in the classroom.

4.4.1. Count and non-count nouns

Common nouns in English can be used as either <u>count</u> or <u>non—count</u> nouns. <u>Count</u> nouns refer to objects and concepts which are perceived as separate, identifiable entities with their own shape or boundary. They may be tangible physical object e.g. a <u>chain</u> or a <u>person,</u> or intangible ones, such as an <u>idea</u> or an <u>event.</u> These entities can all be counted and must be expressed in either a singular or a plural form.

In contrast, <u>non—count</u> nouns refer to substances, e.g. mud, or concepts, e.g. <u>happiness,</u> which are not perceived as separate entities and which cannot be counted. Thus, <u>non—count</u> nouns cannot be pluralized. The following table summarizes these differences.

	Count nouns	
	Singular	Plural
Objects	A chair	Chairs
	A car	Cars

People	A friend	Friends
	A mechanic	Mechanics
Abstract entities	An idea	Ideas
	A democracy	Democracies
Events	A party	Parties
	A discussion	Discussions
	A divorce	Divorces

	Non-count nouns
Substances	water, air, mud, milk
Mass	cotton, wool, plastic
Qualities	anger, beauty, boredom, friendliness, frustration, humor, love, sincerity
Emotions	
Processes	self—government, discussion, divorce, dancing, entertainment
Fields of study	anthropology, mathematics, science, geology, English

Table 9.Differences between count and non-count nouns.

Some nouns in English can be used as both count and non—count nouns with a difference in meaning. This often depends on the point of view of the speaker or writer. For example, liquids like wine and beer are usually thought of as non—countable substances, as in "I enjoy drinking wine with dinner" and "I don't like beer."

However, looking at different varieties of wine or beer, we can show that we are referring to a particular kind by using a count noun, such as "This is a very fine wine" and "California produces a variety of wines." Similarly, when an action is seen as an EVENT, with a beginning and an end, this can be indicated by using a count

noun, e.g. "That was an interesting discussion" and "They went through a nasty divorce." In contrast, when the action is perceived as a PROCESS, rather than a particular event, this can be indicated with a non—count noun, e.g. "Discussion is important in the classroom" and "Many people are traumatized by divorce," where discussion and divorce are equivalent to the processes of discussing and divorcing.

As will become clear below, an understanding of the difference between count and non—count nouns is intricately connected to an understanding of which indefinite article to choose.

Therefore, students can benefit by being given practice in identifying count vs. non—count nouns before they are presented with the principles for choosing indefinite articles in English. Because the same noun can often be used as •either a count or a non—count noun, exercises should be firmly based in a clear context in order to accurately identify the count vs. non—count function of each noun.

4.4.2.Determiners

An important subset of adjectives in English is the <u>determiner,</u> a category of words that indicate which noun is being discussed. The determiner in English consists of articles, possessives, demonstratives, and a few quantifiers:

<u>Determiner</u> **:** a/an **/** the   my /your /his /her / its   our /their   some /any /no

        one   this /that /these /those

Two principles governing the use of determiners in English need to be clearly understood by students:

(1) Only one <u>determiner</u> can modify a noun at one time. For example, mother," "the best students," "their unusual approach," "these two people" but NOT "a mother," "his the best students" or "their the unusual approach." (indicates an ungrammatical construction.)

(2) The determiner goes before other modifiers and the noun, e.g. very own ideas" NOT "very own ideas" "a simpler solution" NOT "simpler a solution" "the two most important points" NOT "two the most important points"

Exceptions include the modifiers "all" and "such," which go before instead of after determiners,

e.g. "all the other parts" NOT "the all other parts"

"such a sound idea" NOT "a such sound idea"

"all your vast experience" NOT "your all vast experience"

Possible exercises on determiners include:

(a) having students underline all the determiners in a paragraph or newspaper article and

(b) asking and answering questions about which one of some group is being discussed. For example, "Which of these people looks older?" ("The one on the right" or "That one with the red shirt") or "Which brother lives in Tokyo?" (" older brother" or "The one that looks like me")

If either of the above principles (1) and (2) above poses a problem for the students, the teacher can give them practice editing sentences containing mistakes in co-occurrence or placement of determiners.

4.4.3.Articles

The most common kind of determiner in English is the article. English articles include a, an, the, and *0* (the null or zero marker). The two categories of article are traditionally called indefinite and definite articles. Singular count nouns take a or an as indefinite articles. Plural nouns and non—count nouns take *0* as their indefinite article. All categories of nouns take ***the*** as the definite marker. This system is summarized in the following chart:

		INDEFINITE ARTICLE	DEFINITE ARTICLE
COUNT NOUN	Singular	a/an	the
	Plural	*0*	the

NON –COUNT NOUN	*0*	the

Table 10. **The** *is used with all categories of nouns*

4.4.3.1. Indefinite Articles

First, I will discuss indefinite articles. For reasons of conformity with other grammarians and textbooks, I will keep the terminology "indefinite," although it may at times mislead English learners. For example, if we say, "I have a book you may be interested in," we are referring to a definite, specific book. Nonetheless, we use the indefinite article *a* to signal that the book is not known by the listener, that is that we are introducing it into the conversation. The section dealing with definite articles below will explain and develop this concept further.

4.4.3.2.Indefinite articles *a a*nd *an*

The indefinite articles **a and an** can be used only before singular count nouns. Essentially, a and an mean "one," so they cannot precede plural er non—count nouns. An is simply a variant of a: when the article a comes before a word beginning with a vowel sound, an is used instead,

e.g. a game, an old game; a very new idea, an extremely new idea; a humane solution, an honorable solution; a usual case, an unusual case; a B grade, an F grade, a failing grade, an excellent grade

Although this is a very simply concept, many intermediate and advanced students can benefit from practice with it before going on to more difficult aspects of indefinite articles. Some students have never learned the rule, and others apparently learned an inaccurate or incomplete version of it (e.g that an comes before vowel letters). (See sample exercise 1 in Appendix A.)

4.4.3.3.A and an vs (-) with count nouns

Every singular count noun in English must have a determiner before it. Most commonly, the article a will be used. In contrast, plural count nouns do not need a determiner before them, and a/an cannot be used before them,

e.g. a glass, 0 glasses; an orange, 0 oranges; a contest, 0 contests

4.4.3.4. (-) **before non-count nouns**

Like plurals, non—count nouns cannot take a or an before them. The indefinite article with non—count nouns is *(-).* Often the choice *of a vs. (-)* signals a difference in meaning or focus. For example, compare the following pairs of sentences:

la. We appreciate *(-)* beauty when we see it. (non—count: abstract quality)

lb. We appreciate a beauty when we see one. (count: person or thing having that quality)

2a. It was (-) honor that led to his action. (non—count: abstract quality)

2b. It was an honor for her to be selected. (count: an event confer—, ring that quality) (See Appendix A, exercise 2, for a sample exercise dealing with the distinction between (-)and a/an).

4.4.5. **Special cases**

In almost all cases, the choice of indefinite article (a/an vs. *zero)* is determined solely by the category of the following noun, regardless of adjectives modifying the noun. If the following noun is a singular count noun, a/an is used, e.g. a movie, a strange movie, an extremely strange movie; a television, a new television, a very new television, a very new color television.

If the following noun is a plural count noun, *(-)* is used,

e.g. (-) movies, (-) strange movies, (-) extremely strange movies; (-) televisions, (-) new televisions, (-) very new televisions, (-) very new color televisions

The same is true for non—count nouns,

e.g. (-) fruit, (-) strange fruit, (-) extremely strange fruit; (-) confusion, (-) new confusion, (-) very new confusion, (-) very new, debilitating confusion

However, two exceptions to this general rule should be noted:

(1) A little and *(-)* little both modify non—count nouns and a few and *(-)*

few both modify plural count nouns. The difference is a semantic one, conveying a difference in the attitude of the speaker.

In the case of a little and a few, the speaker (or writer) is conveying a positive or neutral attitude toward the small quantity,

e.g. "I have a little extra time" and "I have a few minutes."

In contrast, the expressions *(-)* little and *(-)* few indicate a negative attitude regarding the small quantity,

e.g. "I have *(-)* little extra time" (i.e. not enough extra time) and "I have few opportunities" (i.e. not very many opportunities).

English learners generally need a lot of practice with this rather subtle distinction in meaning.

(2) In the case of possessive modifiers, a singular count noun which is being used as a possessive requires th indefinite article a, even if the main noun is plural or non—count, *e.g. a friend's ideas, a friend's loyalty, a woman's beliefs, a man's pride, an idea's usefulness, a paper's length, a scientist's theories* .Again, many students need practice with this exception to the general pattern.

4.4.6. Indefinite vs. Definite Articles

Often, when speaking or writing, we want to signal 1:0 our listener or reader that something we are talking about should be understood as unique, the only one around, in the context of our conversation. In simple cases, we are referring to exactly one thing, or one group of things, and we want the listener or reader to recognize that it is unique.

Normally.we do this by putting the word the in front of the noun or noun phrase that refers to that one thing or group. In a sense, we are telling our listeners or readers that WE know that <u>THEY </u>know which thing we are talking about. Here are some examples:

a. The best students in my class study four hours a day.

b. I don't like the way they test students here.

c. I saw the USA basketball team play yesterday.

d. I listened to a debate yesterday where a student and a professor got into a shouting match. The student won.

I will now consider four ways to indicate this uniqueness in English.

PRINCIPLE 1 — FIRST AND SECOND MENTION: SIMPLE

Very often, we mention something several times. We introduce it by using an indefinite noun phrase in one sentence (e.g. a boy or(*-)* milk or (-) books*)* and then in a later sentence, or in a later part of the same sentence, we refer to it by using the same word or phrase, but this time with the definite article the. We use *the* and *the noun phrase* to indicate that we are referring back to the unique thing or things we have been talking about. Sentence d. above is an example of this. Another example is the following:

e.g. I bought a bottle of milk yesterday. When I got home, I discovered the bottle had a crack in it.

This is a very simple and important way of providing cohesion in a text9 and keeping the listener or reader oriented in a discourse. (See Appendix B, exercises 1—3 for sample practice exercises with this principle.)

PRINCIPLE 2 — FIRST AND SECOND MENTION: COMPLEX

Sometimes, a writer wants to mention the same thing or things twice but wants to use different words (i.e. a synonym) for them. This is done by putting the in front of the new words to show that they refer back to the same thing or things already mentioned. For example,

a. He bought a sofa and an armchair. He had the furniture delivered to his house.

b. They were carrying (-) bags of groceries home from shopping. As they walked, the packages got heavier and heavier.

c. A man and a woman entered the restaurant together. The couple had obviously been fighting, for he was scowling and she was crying.

d. She ordered an anthology of (-) poetry. Unfortunately, the book turned out to be of poor quality and the verse was difficult to understand.

Sometimes instead of a synonym the writer uses different words to focus on some part of the thing referred to earlier. Again *the* is used in front of the new word to show that the new word refers to the same thing. For example,

e. I made a casserole yesterday, but it wasn't very good because the potatoes weren't fully cooked.

f. We visited an art museum last week. The exhibits were interesting, and the paintings were superb.

The same thing is possible with events. The second time, the writer can focus on some aspect of the event and use the in front of the word to show that it refers back to the same event.

For example,

g. I heard in a news report that a helicopter had crashed near the airport. The flames could be seen for miles. (See sample exercise 4 in Appendix B.)

When the writer is using **the** to focus on a part of a thing or event, the word the is being used as a "shortcut" which makes it unnecessary to introduce the part before talking about it. For example,

a. A: He is having difficulty with his car.

B: Oh, what's wrong?

A: The catalytic converter isn't working.

is short for:

b. A: He is having difficulty with his car.

B: Oh, what's wrong?

B: It has a catalytic converter. The catalytic converter isn't working.

Similarly,

c. They are impressed with this University. It has (-) classes and professors. The classes are varied, and as a rule the professors are knowledgeable.

would ordinarily be expressed without the middle sentence, which is "understood" in the shorter:

d. They are impressed with this University. The classes are varied, and as a rule the professors are knowledgeable.

However, if the existence of a part of a thing or event is introduced (for example with it has, they have, there is, or there are), the indefinite article is used. For example,

e. He is having difficulty with his car because it has a catalytic converter which is not working.

f. They are impressed with the University because it has (-) varied classes and (-) professors who are knowledgeable.

g. She is disgusted with that course because there is (-) irrelevant discussion every day. At the same time, the professor gives (-) boring lectures and reading.

The last example can be compared to the following, shorter version:

h. She is disgusted with that course because the discussion every day is irrelevant, and at the same time the lectures and reading are boring.

Notice that when the part is preceded by the, it comes before the verb, whereas when it is preceded by the indefinite article, it comes after the verb. (See sample exercises 5—8 in Appendix 2.)

PRINCIPLE *3* — ONE OF A KIND

There are many things we think of as being unique, and because we think of them as unique, we insert **the** in front of the words we use to characterize them. The following list presents only a portion of the many things that English speakers consider unique in the environment and therefore usually precede with **the.**

At home: Normally we live in only one house (or apartment), and we thus speak of.**the living room, the kitchen, the bathroom,** etc. When sit down to a meal we ask others to pass **the salt, the salad, the meat.** We sit on **the couch** we clean with **the broom or the vacuum cleaner** we cook on **the stove.**

At school: We deal with many people who have special jobs. We make applications to **the registrer,** we seldom see **the president**, we deal with **the foreign student advisor,** and we speak with the **Biology professor.**

Political institutions: In politics, there are many positions that are thought of as unique, **e.g the mayor of the city, the governor of the state, the President of the United States**. And, since in each country there is only one form of government, we speak **of the Constitution, the Senate, and the House of Representatives or the Parliament, the Supreme Court, the government.**

The total physical environment: We speak of ***the sun*** and ***the moon*** in relation to our planet, ***the sky, the earth, the North American continent, the world***. These are only some of the things we thing of as being unique. There are many more, and with all of them, we put the word the in front of the word or phrase that we use to refer to them. For example, when we refer to the bus or ask where the bathroom is, we assume that our listener knows that we mean the closest appropriate bus or bathroom in the context. (See sample exercises 9—12 in Appendix B.)

PRINCIPLE 4 — MODIFIERS BEFORE AND AFTER THE NOUN

Very often, the uniqueness of the thing being talked about is indicated by adding limiting modifiers to the noun being used to refer to that thing. This is why superlative noun phrases, for example, are always preceded by the.

a. the best students in the class...

b. the highest mountain in the world...

c. the person that I love most...

But uniqueness is not always indicated by superlatives; there are many other ways. In effect, when the meaning of the modifier limits the meaning of the noun so that it can refer to just one thing or things, then, as usual, the is used in front of the noun, e.g.

d. the only way to finish this assignment on time...

e. the very same day...

f. the girl that we met at the party yesterday

In many cases, the use of the before a noun qualified by eliciting modifiers can be seen as another "shortcut" for the writer. Instead of saying, "There are people. They live in China." the writer can simply say, "The people of China.. ." The following examples are similar:

g. the student in the corner... (There is a student; the student is in the corner.)

h. the man who came by... (There is a man; he came by.)

i. the idea that you gave us... (There is an idea; you gave it to us.)

j. the woman watching us... (There is a woman; she is watching us.)

k. the people interested in economy... (There are people; they are interested in economy.) (See Appendix B, sample exercises 13 and 14.)

If a writer is talking about something in general (i.e. non—unique), the indefinite article is used, no matter how many times it is referred to again. But if it is made specific with limiting modifiers, then the definite article is used. For example, when the word ***curiosity*** in the following passage is used in a general sense, the indefinite article *(-)* is used; however, when curiosity is limited to a specific kind by the use of limiting modifiers, the definite article ***the*** is used.

We all need (-) curiosity. (-) curiosity is important because it can stimulate us to look for new truths and learn new lessons. Unfortunately, much of education stifles (-) curiosity. For example, the curiosity to know how things work is often discouraged by adults who grow tired of children's constant questioning. These adults have long ago lost the curiosity they once felt as children. it sometimes takes furthter education to stimulate (-) curiosity again for such people. (See Appendix 2, exercises 15—18.)

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CHAPTER V

Comparing Cognitive Grammar And Traditional Grammars In The Acquisition Of The English Article System In Romanian students:

Chapter 4 attempted to show some possible problems in traditional approaches in teaching the English articles to Romanian students and presented a description and rationale for a new approach that takes Master's schema (1990) as a starting point together with insights from cognitive grammar. It is assumed that the new approach (i.e. cognitive grammar-based approach) is pedagogically more sound than traditional ones because it may alleviate the burden which students have in memorizing many separate and seemingly arbitrary rules. To test this hypothesis, an experiment has been conducted.

The purpose of this chapter is to find out whether or not there is a difference in performance between fourth-year Romanian students who were treated under the cognitive approach and those under the traditional ones in acquiring the English article system. From a general level, it is hypothesized that the cognitive group will outperform the traditional group in acquiring the English article system to the exclusion of the hypothesis that there is no difference between two treatments in helping students master the English article system. And if the cognitive group outperforms the traditional group, then it is expected that the cognitive should perform well in the major NP environments in which the articles occur. That is, the cognitive group will have higher mean scores than the traditional in the areas of definiteness and genericity.

5.1.METHOD

5.1.1Subjects

The research subjects were 67 fourth-year Romanian students majoring in English as a foreign language. The reason for the selection of fourth-year students was based on the results of the pilot study: even advanced students still make errors in

using the articles. The students, consisting of three groups of about 20 to *25* students, attended a regular class on language testing and were invited to take part in the experiment. All students volunteered and attended extra classes during the five weeks of treatment. Class 1 and half of Class 2 were asked to become group A (the traditional group; N=33) and half of class 2 and all of class 3 group B (the cognitive group; N=34). Splitting class 2 two was done randomly. Subjects of both groups acted as their own controls (N=67) in that two Pre Tests with a four-week interval without explicit article instruction were administered before the treatment started.

5.2.Materials
5.2.1.Teaching Materials

The cognitive group was given lessons based on the cognitive approach prepared by the author (See Appendix H). The lessons for the traditional group were drawn from two popular grammar books. They were *Oxford Practice Grammar* by Eastwood and *Advanced Grammar in Use* by Hewings (1999). (See Appendix G.) The language used in class instruction was English. Explanations in Romanian were made when students found certain concepts difficult to understand. Each group had five lessons that focused on the meanings and uses of the articles; the organization of the lessons was different for each approach. The traditional group was presented the topic of countability before the anaphoric use of *the* contrasted with the use of a. Lesson 3 introduced the use of *the* concerning unique things in the world (i.e. *the)* and the functions of a concerning describing things and classifying things. In lesson 4, the difference between *a and one* was introduced before the generic use of *a and zero* (0) article was mentioned. Lesson *5* focused on fixed expressions (i.e. by bus; to school, etc.) and proper nouns names.

The cognitive group was first introduced to the notion of definiteness and the use of *the,* the main element of definiteness in Lesson 1. Lesson 2, which focused on non-definiteness, presented the use of the articles *a and 0.* After the presentation of other determiners in Lesson 3, the notion of boundedness and unboundedness was introduced in Lesson 4. Lesson *5* was on use of the articles with proper nouns or names.

The author was the instructor for the two groups. To avoid experimenter

effects relating to differential treatment of subjects as much as possible, we applied a lecture approach to both groups and aimed to create a neutral tone and focus strictly on the contents designed for each group. To avoid students working on their own in advance, I distributed the handouts of each lesson to the groups at each meeting instead of distributing the materials of the whole course at one time. During the lecture, a quasi task-based approach was applied when students were asked to read the handouts and to discuss lists of comprehension questions with their partners before we checked their comprehension and reformulated the main points of the lessons. Exercises were then assigned as homework. The language used for the presentation of the materials was in English. Romanian was used to explain concepts when students had problems in understanding English.

5.3. Tests and Scoring Methods

Four tests on the use of the articles were administered: two Pre Tests before the treatment and two Post Tests after the treatment. All four tests had two parts: gap-filling and error correction. The gap-filling items were of two forms: discrete sentences and a passage of integrated items. The discrete items were selected from exercises in current grammar books and the passage was from a two-paragraph story on the Vietnamese custom of chewing betel and areca nuts. The basis for the selection of the items was based on the constructs related to use of the English articles as described in chapters 2 and *3*.

The initial length of the four tests was as follows: 71 items (Pre Test 1); *58* (Pre Test 2); *75* Post Test 1 and Post Test 2). (See Appendices *C-F.)* However, because of time limits the tests could not be piloted extensively and I found several problems while scoring. The first kind of problem had to do with items having two possible responses, for example because of usage variation between British and American English. An item such as ***While I was in hospital, they gave me an X-ray*** has two ways of answering (e.g. *be in* **0** *hospital* or *be in* ***the*** *hospital),* depending on what variety students have been exposed to.

Specificity or non-specificity was the second case concerning twooption responses, for they can affect the choice between *the* or a. The item ***Sharing a quid of***

betel nut with an old friend is like expressing gratitude for relationship, for instance, can be filled in by either *the* or *a.* If the speaker has a certain old friend in mind, she will use *the* before *relationship.* By contrast, a will be used when she thinks of an old friend as an arbitrary instance (i.e. one among many). Such a problem occurred especially in the integrated items in a text.

Also, the availability of two optional responses in some items was found as a result of the different meanings that a noun may have when it is combined with different articles. Either the *null* article or the definite article is adequate for such a noun as *sea,* which can be interpreted differently (e.g. *to be at o sea; to spend the holiday by **the** sea).*

The last case with reference to two optional answers was found with items used either cataphorically or anaphorically. That is, *the* or *zero* is acceptable on the basis of intentional or unintentional vagueness. For example, both o *cold winter days* and ***the** cold winter days* are acceptable as in *A quid of betel and areca nuts makes people feel warm on cold winter days.* Also, either *the* or **0** is quite satisfactory in a sentence begun with *most* as in *most valuable minerals are found in common rocks everywhere.*

Another kind of the problem that arose during the process of scoring was related to students' unexpected and incomplete responses. The unexpected responses were those that did not satisfy the construct to be tested. The reason for the "unexpectedness" did not lie in the students' performance, but rather in the unclear contexts that led to that kind of performance. For example, we expected a *IvIrs. Wilson* as the answer for the item *When I answered the phone, Mrs. Wilson said she wanted to talk to you,* but it turned out that a no-article form was quite acceptable also. Moreover, there were items that students did not complete, mostly with items related to error correction.

Mechanical errors also created problems for students in choosing the correct articles. Misspelling resulting from typing (i.e. technical errors) was another type of the problems found during the scoring process (i.e. *bad temper* instead of *bad tempers ; chewing betel nut* instead of *chewing betel nuts).*

However, in some cases where two choices could be argued to be possible, the choice that most native speakers make prototypically was taken as correct. For example, a native speaker would probably say in a standard context "He went to the supermarket" rather than "He went to a supermarket". This decision was made on the assumption that the prototypical expression is also the one that has been dealt with in most textbooks.

Problem items were not scored. This was the first step in ensuring the reliability of the tests. The second step in ensuring the reliability of the four tests, which had to do with post-scoring, was performed through the process of improving alpha (i.e. Cronbach) if items were deleted. A right-wrong scoring was performed instead of partial credit scoring. That is, if the item was correct, it would receive a *one*. If not, it would receive a *zero.*

Table 11. Alpha coefficients of the four tests

Test	A (Cronbach)	n (items)
Pre-test 1	.6967	40
Pre-test2	.6178	37
Post-test 1	*.7056*	*52*
Post-test 2	.7486	*53*

5.3.1.Design and Procedures

A pretest-posttest comparison group design was used in this study. Instead of having a separate control group, the experimental groups acted as their own controls by taking two Pre Tests with a four-week interval without instruction. The main reason for this choice is that Romanian students are used to sharing study books and aids and I was afraid that I could not control for exposure to the different materials otherwise. The same reason motivated me to teach the traditional group first. All subjects had already been exposed extensively to traditional methods during

their English lessons and we felt that if the cognitive group were exposed to some of the traditional materials during the experimental period, it would not affect the experiment to a great extent. Nevertheless, subjects were told that they were taking part in an experiment and were asked not to share study materials until after the experiment.

5.3.2.Analyses

With reference to statistical decisions, some considerations were made at two levels: test performance and error identification on the basis of different research hypotheses.

First, at the test performance level, mean comparisons between the two groups (i.e. to know their performances) were performed by using independent samples T-test. Since the tests had different lengths, standardization and comparison of the students' scores in terms of the proportion of correct answers was necessary.

With reference to error classification, we used our taxonomy as described in Chapter 2 . It is repeated here as Table 3 for ease of reference.

There are six major NP-environments: names, unique type, unique instance, actual instance, arbitrary instance, and maximal set. Each of these environments has sub-environments in which different articles may be used. Hence, when computing, we would look at both environments and the appropriate contexts in which each article occurs.

For example, to get an overview of whether students performed well in the contexts of the article *the,* we would look at three environments: A3-4, B 1-2, and C 1-3.

Table 12. Environments for the occurrence of the English articles

Code	Environments	Article form	Examples
	*Code Environments Article form*		*Examples*
Definite contexts			
A *Names*			
	1. Proper names **2. Pseudo-names** **3. Pseudo-names (The-name)** 4. **Groups**	**Null Null** **The** **The**	**Smith; London; Christmas** *(by)* **bus; sunrise; winter; lunch; tennis;** *(be)* **captain** *of the team* **the Bible, the Titanic; the Huong river; the Times the Bahamas; the public/old; the Finns**
B	*Unique types*		
	1. Type therarchy member **2. Global / Local role**	**The** **The**	**the lion; the environment; the altar** **the world; the Pope; the President; the supermarket**
C	*Uniquely identified instances*		
	Endophoric contexts 1. Direct prior awareness 2. Indirect prior awareness *Exophoric contexts* 3. Context-based awareness	The The The	*(I bought a book.)* **The book...** *(I bought a book)* **The cover...** The **water** *in this glass;* **the last member; the mouth;**
Non-definite contexts			
D	*Actual instances*		
	1. Actual instance: singular 2. Actual instance: mass 3. Actual instance: plural	A Zero; *sm* Zero; *sm*	*I bought* **a book.** *Ihave bought (some)* **juice.** *I have been writing (some)* **letters.**
E	*Arbitrary instances* *(predicate*	constructions;	generic 'a'; opaque contexts)
	1. Singular 2. Mass and plural	A Zero	*He is* **a teacher. A lion** *is a mammal. Hillie wants to marry* **a** **Finn.** *Lions are* **mammals.**
F	*Maximal set*		
	1. Mass 2. Plural	Zero Zero	Necessity *is the mother of invention.* Lions are mammals.

Computations were conducted in two stages. In the first stage, computations were made to see how well the students used the articles at a general

level.

In the second stage, the six major NP-environments mentioned above were examined more closely to see if there were differences between the two groups. Because it was assumed that there would be no performance difference between the two groups in Pre-Test 1 and Pre-Test 2, the two Pre Tests were taken together in comparing the mean differences in subcategories between the two groups. Because differences were expected in performance between the two Post Tests (short-term and long-term effects) separate mean comparisons were made for each Post Test (i.e. of the two Post Tests).

5.4. Results

Tables 13 a-b present a general picture of the performance of the two groups before and after the treatment. At the test level, no difference was found between the two groups before the treatment. In Pre Test 1, the mean score of the cognitive group was .7402 and that of the traditional was .7568. In Pre Test 2, while the score of the traditional was .7437, the cognitive's score was **7504.** The fact that the two groups did not differ significantly indicated that there was no significant occurrence of maturation, implying that the students became more "knowledgeable" as a result of natural learning.

Table 13a Group Statistics

	GROUP	N	Mean scores	Stil. Deviation	Stil. Error Mean
PRETEST 1	Cognitive Traditional	33 33	.7402 .7568	.11506 .09728	.02003 .01693
PRETEST2	Cognitive Traditional	34 33	.7504 .7437	.11564 .08577	.01983 .01493
POST1	Cognitive Traditional	34 33	.8286 .7617	.07294 .09663	.01251 .01682
POST2	Cognitive Traditional	34 33	.7614 .7341	.11396 .10863	.01954 .01891

Table 13b Independent Samples Test

Tests	t-test for Equality of Means		
	T	Df.	Sig.
PRETEST 1	*-.635*	*64*	*.527* (two-tailed)
PRETEST 2	.271	*65*	.788 (two-tailed)
POST 1	3.208	*65*	.001 (one-tailed)
POST 2	1.001	*65*	.160 (one-tailed)

After the treatment, a significant difference between the two groups was found in Post Test 1, where the cognitive group (x =.8484) outperformed the traditional (x —. 7685) at the probability level set at *cV.05,* directional (p=.000). The hypothesis was confirmed. Moreover, the cognitive group performed more homogeneously, as can be seen from the lower standard deviations .

However, in the long term no significant differences are found between the two groups even though there is a mean difference of .0272.

To see if groups differed in the types of errors they made, we looked at the errors in the different environments. Twelve t-tests were performed to find out differences between the two groups in using the articles (i.e. *null, the, a, zero)* in their appropriate contexts. Table 14a shows that there are no significant differences between the two groups in their pre-tests.

Table 14a Group performance in using the articles at their appropriate contexts in Pretest

Constructs	Pretest				
	C (n=34)		T (n=33)		Sig. 2-tailed
	- x	SD	-x	SD	
Null	.9353	.10410	.9606	.05556 .	109
The	. 6443 .	14009 .	6601 .	10897 .	305
A	7549	.27596 .	7879 .	24746	.304
Zero	7626	11353 .	7742 .	11067 .	337

C=Cognitive group; T= Traditional group

Table 14b shows that in Post Test 1 the cognitive group has significantly fewer errors in using *the* than the traditional group.

Table 14b Group performance in using the articles in their appropriate contexts in Post-test

Articles	Post test 1				
	C (n=34)		T (n=33)		Sig. 2-tailed
	- x	SD	-x	SD	
Null	8971 .	20521	.9697	17408	061
The	8367	09156	7119.	12073	000
A	8529	23125 .	8485	23335	469
Zero	8146	11218	7835	12048	139

C=Cognitive group; T= Traditional group

Table 14c *Group performance in using the articles in their appropriate contexts in Post-test 2*

Articles	Post test 2				
	C (n=34)		T (n=33)		Sig. 1-tailed
	- x	SD	-x	SD	
Null	6616	18274	6250	20192	223
The	7130	15900	7223	15107	405
A	7172	23748	7500	23947	290
Zero	8157	13273	7432	12354	013

C=Cognitive group; T= Traditional group

Further analyses were made into the six NP environments (table 15a- c). Eighteen t-tests were performed to see which group performed better in Pre Test, Post Test 1, and

Post Test 2.Table15a shows that there were no significant differences between the two groups in the Pre Test

Table 15a *Group performance at six NP environments in Pretest*

NP Environments	Pretest				
	C (n=34)		T (n=33)		Sig. 1-tailed
	-x	SD	-x	SD	
Names	6882	14579	7238	12297	142
Unique type	6833	19915	6826	13557	493
Unique instance	8049	13566	8108	09638	419
Actual instance	6977	21976	6515	21618	194
Arbitrary instance	7265	17975	7212	16537	450
Maximal set	7482	22002	7765	18224	284

C=Cognitive group; T= Traditional group

Table 15b shows that there are significant mean differences between the two groups in Post Test 1. The cognitive group performed better than the traditional one in the environments of names, unique types, and maximal sets. Table 15c shows that there are no significant differences between the two groups in Post Test 2.

Table 15b *Group performance at six NP environments in Post-test*

NP Environments	Post - test 2				
	C (n=34)		T (n=33)		Sig. 1-tailed
	-x	SD	-x	SD	
Names	6202	16833	5875	18717	230
Unique type	7475	27988	8229	18422	101
Unique instance	8128	14819	7939	12184	289
Actual instance	7138	22400	7292	20727	387

| Arbitrary instance | 6606 | 24231 | 7063 | 26389 | 235 |
| Maximal set | 8118 | 17182 | 7542 | 15924 | 083 |

Cognitive group; T= Traditional group

Table 15c Group performance at six NP environments in Post-test 2

NP Environments	Post - test 2				
	C (n=34)		T (n=33)		Sig. 1-tailed
	$\bar{x}$	SD	-x	SD	
Names	6202	16833	5875	18717	230
Unique type	7475	27988	8229	18422	101
Unique instance	8128	14819	7939	12184	289
Actual instance	7138	22400	7292	20727	387
Arbitrary instance	6606	24231	7063	26389	235
Maximal set	8118	17182	7542	15924	083

Cognitive group; T= Traditional group.

5.5. Conclusion

The two groups performed the same on the two Pre Tests, and the cognitive groups scored better on Post Test 1, but this difference between the two groups disappeared after two weeks on Post test 2. In Post Test 1 the cognitive group performed significantly better when the use of *the* is required, and in the following environments: names, unique type and maximal set. The hypothesis that the cognitive approach is more effective in learning articles is therefore only partly confirmed.

VI.CONCLUSION

In this conclusion, I will restate in a more condensed form the central issues discussed in this book. The chapter is organized in three sections. The first reviews the process of ascertaining why it is important to look at articles in particular and reports on the results of the experiments. The second provides some limitations that this research encounters. The third presents some implications for the new approach and gives an overview of the areas that could benefit from additional research.

The paper has the objective to find a solution to help Romanian learners address problems in using English articles. The results in Chapter 3 show that articles are a pervasive problem for Romanian learners and that they do not decrease as proficiency increases. Because even advanced students still make these errors--even though they do not seem to affect essay grades--we find that the issue is worth pursuing because errors may undermine a student's 'integrity' if s/he has to write professionally for an international public. To find a solution,I first analyzed the article errors. To do so, I needed to categorize the errors into different types. Hence an exploration of meanings and uses of English articles was made in Chapter 1. Definiteness is considered the main property distinguishing the articles. Four features of definiteness that different research traditions have advocated are uniqueness, familiarity, identifiability, and inclusiveness.

I argued that these features can be amalgamated into two: identifiability and inclusiveness. However, difficulty arises when these meanings intersect with specificity and referentiality. As such, issues have been raised relating to whether or not there is a difference between specificity and referentiality and whether or not definite noun phrases are non-specific and non-referential.I argued that the only prerequisite for definiteness is Langacker's (1991) notion of mental contact, which is based on insights by Fauconnnier (1985). If a speaker and hearer achieve mental contact, then they can uniquely identify an entity, and factors such as referentiality and specificity are redundant. Awareness and nothing else is sufficient. Also, in discussing definiteness, genericity is often mentioned. This is a notion that is not easy

to capture. From a cognitive grammar perspective, it can be said that each article still retains some of its prototypical sense when it is used generically. The article *the* can denote a type (e.g. genus, species, etc.) as a unique instance. The article a may be used to profile an arbitrary instance which is independent from the reality of discourse. And a maximal construal (i.e. a full generic sense) is obtained when a noun phrase is used with the *zero* article.

Although different research traditions have afforded different explanations on definiteness and genericity, I believe the cognitive grammar framework is the more useful in language teaching because only a few principles are needed to explain the many uses of articles coherently. Therefore, I chose cognitive grammar as the basis for taxonomy in describing the usage of English articles in Chapter 2, but useful insights from 'objective' research traditions are not excluded. They are used in explanations either when cognitive grammar does not explicitly state solutions or when cognitive grammar insights are too theoretical to be understood by a non-linguist language learner.

Insights obtained in Chapters 1 and 2 into the intricate English article system provided a basis for the error analysis of Romanian learners using English articles. Once I identified where errors occurred, I also wanted to know what the sources of confusion might be. The results show that students have most problems using the articles *the* and *zero.* As far as NP-environments are concerned, students have difficulty with "unique type" and "maximal set" environments and the overuse of *zero* and *the* more so than a. Even though there is some systematicity in the errors, students clearly have problems with all articles. The error corpus shows that Romanian students make errors in using English articles and suggests that the methods students have used so far have not been very effective. Therefore, Chapter 4 surveys pedagogical studies on the teaching of articles and some current grammar-cum-practice books on the use of English articles to identify problems in current teaching methods.

The survey of the pedagogical studies indicates that there has been an attempt to produce a simplified framework for teaching the articles with a focus on one form for one function. However, what teachers do not obtain from these studies is an understanding of the general meanings of the articles based on the distinguishing

property: definiteness. Also, the studies suggest that proper names, especially what we term pseudo-names should be treated as item-learnt chunks without underlying principles given to help students memorize these chunks. Also little empirical evidence has been reported, and no suggestions are given to adapt a pedagogical approach to the needs of a particular student population.

I expected the suggestions in pedagogical studies on the teaching of articles to have some impact on grammar textbooks. A survey of the four textbooks described in Chapter 4 reveals that there have been improvements relating to usage content, usage presentation patterns, sequencing, and rule descriptions, but several problems occur in the way rules are described. They are either vague , inadequate, or actually contradictory and confusing. Moreover, none of the books give an overall principled introduction to the article system, leaving it up to the student to make sense of a maze of separate, seemingly arbitrary uses of the article system.

The problems (noticed in the pedagogical studies and grammar books) have created a basis for us to develop an approach that deals with the article in a more principled way. My approach is based on Master's schema, augmented with insights from cognitive grammar. The rationale behind this approach was as follows. First, since my main aim was to present the "rules" of using English articles in such a way that article-less language learners could "reason out" a native speaker's intuitive "rule" step by step by means of a flow chart, which is kept as general and simple as possible, we felt the reasoning should go from the most general principles and prototypical cases to peripheral or less frequent cases. Because the use of English articles may often lie in a speaker's choice, I also felt that students needed to be made aware of the principles that cause the differences in meaning.

Since students have often been exposed to oversimplified rules of thumbs such as "first mention use a, second mention use *the*" or "use *the* when a noun is modified by a phrase or a clause," we felt that students should be warned explicitly against the use of such rules in our lessons. On the whole, I assumed that the new approach is pedagogically more sound than traditional ones because it gives a coherent account of the article system as a whole, and it may alleviate the burden for students to memorize many separate and seemingly arbitrary rules.

To judge the effectiveness of the approach suggested, an experiment was conducted as found in Chapter 5. The aim of the experiment was to compare the new approach with a traditional one that has been applied in current grammar textbooks. Three levels of analyses were performed:

(1) a general one in which we looked at which group performed better in using articles in general,

(2) a more detailed one in which we looked at differences in particular article forms, and

(3) a detailed one in which we looked at differences in the semantic environments in which articles occur. At the general performance level, the results showed that immediately after the treatment, the group treated with the new approach performed better than the group treated with the traditional approach. The 'cognitive' group performed better than the traditional group in using *the*. The cognitive group also performed better than the traditional group in three environments: names, unique type, and maximal set. However, when we measured for a long-term effect, we found no significant difference between the two groups even though the mean scores of the cognitive group were somewhat higher. Analyses of particular errors revealed that a significance difference was still found between the two groups in that the cognitive group still performed better than their counterparts in using *zero* and in using *zero* in maximal set environments.

Despite the disappointing long-term results, I still feel that this paper has given quite a few new insights into the reasons why Romanian students have such difficulty with the English articles and in the principles that seem to govern article use. Therefore, it might be worth pursuing our approach to teaching articles further.

List of Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Sample exercises for indefinite articles.

<u>**Exercise 1:**</u> **Fill in each blank with a or an, depending on the following sound.**

  When _____ foreign visitor goes to _____ new country, he or she may face _____ entirely different set of rules. For example, in the United States, _____ used piece of furniture or _____ appliance may be worth _____ enormous sum of money, whereas in Japan it is not _____ unusual experince to see _____ nearly new television or table sitting as trash in the street. It could become _____ habit for _____ American resident in Japan to become _____ scavenger looking for whole new set of furniture every month.

<u>**Exercise 2:**</u> **Use *a* or *an* before singular count nouns. Use *(-)* before plural and non—count nouns. (NOTE*: the* will not be accepted in this exercise.)**

        There was _____ old man in _____ country far away who had _____ extraordinary luck one day. He was walking through _____ open field and happened to see _____ small package on the ground. When he opened it, he was filled with _____ amazement to see _____ tiny diamonds inside _____ glass bottle. When he took the package to the authorities, he was told that _____ great number of _____ lost packages are turned in but never claimed. After three months, the package would be his if they could not locate _____ person who claimed it and could prove _____ ownership.

APPENDIX 2: **Sample exercises for indefinite vs. definite articles.**

Principle I

Exercise 1: **Listen as your teacher reads the following passage, filling in the articles you hear the teacher say. Then review the passage and see how many occurrences of the word *the* can be accounted for by Principle 1.**

Before going out of town, I asked _____ friend to keep my car in his garage for _____ couple of days. He agreed. When _____ emergency arose, he used my car and accident occurred in which _____ car suffered damages. Is _____ friend responsible for _____ damages? Yes. Without clear permission to use _____ car, he has no right to use it for his personal benefit.

Exercise 2: Listen as your teacher reads this passage, again filling in the blanks.

During _____ evening drive on the highway, _____ driver struck _____ pedestrian while the latter was crossing at _____ intersection. Actually, ____driver was unable to see _____ pedestrian because the headlights of _____ car coming in the opposite direction blinded him for _____ few seconds. Is he free from responsibility because _____ headlights of _____ other car blinded him? No. Since it was at an intersection, _____ pedestrian had the right of way. If _____ headlights prevented _____ motorist from seeing _____ pedestrian, he would need _____ witness to support that claim. _____ pedestrian's case is stronger, however.

Exercise 3: In this exercise, you must decide for yourself which articles to use: *a, an, (-) or the.*

_____ long time ago, there lived _____ king and queen, who said every "If only we had _____ child." But for a long time, they had none. day, as _____ queen was bathing, _____ frog crept out of the water said to her, "Your wish will be fulfilled. Before _____ year has passed, you shall bring _____ daughter into the world." _____ frog's words came true. _____ queen had _____ little girl who was so beautiful that _____ king could not contain himself for joy. He prepared _____ great feast and invited all his relations and friends....

Principle 2

Exercise 4: Explain the underlined articles on the basis of Principle 2.

1. The Queen was bathing, and a frog jumped out of the water.

2. The rebel aimed at the dynamite to blow up the plane. The danger was avoided when the captain knocked the gun out of his hand.

3. While I was driving to school, my car stopped dead. The engine had overheated.

4. They enjoyed the lecture "Can Man Survive the Next Hundred Years?" because the speaker was both entertaining and informative.

5. After waiting in line for 45 minutes, I finally was able to get my movie ticket. The theater was quite crowded when I entered.

Exercise 5: Fill in the blanks with *a, an, (-) or the*, as appropriate.

1. Last week, the students had _____ difficult exam. _____ questions were challenging, and there was _____ section covering _____ material they had never seen.

2. They found _____ old copy of _____ book that was out of print but looked interesting. It had torn cover, but _____ pages inside were in perfect condition.

3. Last night, I overheard _____ nasty fight. next door. _____ screaming and yelling didn't bother me so much, but _____ crash of dishes being thrown against the wall was very loud, and there were even _____ sounds of physical blows that were quite disturbing. _____ battle ended when somebody called the police.

4. "Creative visualization" is an exercise to stimulate _____ creative thinking, _____ technique involves imagining _____ blank movie screen, after performing _____ certain preliminary steps to relax and focus

the mind, _____ result is sometimes quite startling, according to

some who had followed directions carefully.

Exercise 6: You have had bad luck reent1y and many of your things need to be fixed. Answer the questions in the following dialogue with your friend by

explaining <u>what part of each item</u> is broken or not working. For example, "What happened to your calculator?" "It has a cracked viewing screen" or "The battery is too old" or "There is a button missing."

1. A: What happened to your bicycle?

B: _____

2. A: That's too bad! What about your car?

B: _____

3. A: Oh, no! What went wrong with your television?

B: _____

4. A: That's terrible! What happened to your stereo?

B: _____

5. A: Oh. Why doesn't your typewriter work?

B: _____

6. A: You can borrow mine while it's being fixed. What's wrong with your glasses?

B:_____

7. A: What a shame! What happened to your watch?

B: _____

8. A: Oh dear! What about your telephone?

B: _____

<u>Exercise 7:</u> Add a, an or the a necessary to correct the following dialogue between a real estate agent (A) and a prospective homebuyer (B).

A: I found interesting house for you to look at.

B: Great! What's house like?

A: It's two—story house with large living room, two bedrooms, and enormous backyard.

B: It sounds good. What about kitchen?

A: It's modern kitchen with built—in dishwasher. Refrigerator and stove are brand new, and cupboards are custom—built.

B: I can't wait to see it! How many bathrooms are there?

A: There are two bathrooms, one on each floor. Bathroom on the main floor is small,

with only toilet, sink and shower, but one upstairs is quite large and has sunken bathtub, as well as two sinks, shower, and separate toilet.

B: Terrific! Does it have fireplace?

A: Yes, and it is heated with gas furnace, as well.

B: Where is house located?

A: It's in nice neighborhood that has stores and school.nearby.

B: Good. What about price?

A: It's within reasonable range for your budget.

B: So far, place sounds perfect. When can I see it?

Principle 3

Exercise 9: Decide which article to use in each blank.

1. *I* like this class very much because _____ teacher is always prepared.

2. The train was racing down _____ tracks at 150 miles per hour.

3. I was so tired after climbing Mt. Fuji that I slept right on the grass near _____ top. However, _____ exercise did me a lot of good.

4. I can't see through this window because _____ glass is covered with _____ dirt.

5. This plant needs _____ water. — leaves are beginning to wilt and fall on _____ floor.

6. The children were screaming and yelling while playing — cowboys and Indians in _____ front yard. _____ woman nect door was furious because of _____ noise.

7. Sue and John just decided to file for _____ divorce. Apparently, _____ marriage was not a very happy one.

8. The cat and dog had _____ furious fight at 3 a.m. _____ animals woke up the whole neighborhood.

9. The heavy rains filled up the lakes and rivers to overflow and eventually caused the dam to break. _____ flood created chaos in the surrounding countryside.

10. I went down to _____ beach to go swimming, but _____ sand was so hot that it burned my feet.

Exercise 10: In the following passage, you must again decide which article to use. Your choice will depend in part on what has been said in earlier sentences.

Last night I decided I wanted to eat _____ big tomato pizza. I looked in _____ telephone book and located _____ pizza parlor near my home. _____ restaurant was really close, just down _____ street on _____ corner. I went in and sat at _____ wooden table which had _____ bowl of cheese and _____ jar of dried hot pepper on it. _____ waitress came over to take my order. She suggested I try _____ large dish of lasagna instead.

Here are some more difficult passages, the first taken from an encyclopedia and the second taken from a newspaper. Using just Principle 3, you should still be able to determine when to use the and when to use a or (-)

Exercise11: _____ Constitution of the United States of America, _____ fundamental organic law embodying _____ governing principles of _____ country, was adopted in 1787. This document was _____ end product of many years of —— discussion and attempts at _____ self—government by each of _____ original colonies. By virtue of its preamble, _____ Constitution is _____ creature of " people" of the U.S. and not of any one group. It was _____ product of _____ compromises. As _____ condition to ratifying — Constitution, _____ number of the states insisted that _____ bill of rights should be adc3ed in the form of amendments which would specifically guarantee _____ individual rights. These amendments affirm _____ American doctrine that _____ government is made for man and that _____ rights of _____ free people are superior to _____ powers of their government.

Exercise 12: During _____ Watergate scandal of _____ early seventies, everyone from Joseph Alsop to President Gerald Ford was pleading that _____ country should forget about Watergate so _____ President could devote his time and efforts to such important matters as _____ energy crisis. Dr. Siegfreed, _____ psychiatrist who wrote _____ book, How much can Americans Take?, supports _____ opposite view, lie says it would have been more advantageous if _____ country could forget about _____ energy crisis so _____ President could devote his full time to Watergate. _____ truth is, he claims, that everyone in _____ country got _____ fiendish delight in reading about Watergate, while very few people got any fun out of reading about

_____ oil crisis. Watergate was _____ pure entertainment. It had _____ comedy, _____ mystery and _____ melodrama. He would have preferred that it have _____ little sex as well, but he realizes that you can't have everything, _____ people identified with — Watergate characters. Without Watergate• you would have had _____ mass mental depression in this country. "Show me anyone who enjoys reading about _____ energy crisis. Produce one soul who gets _____ pleasure out of seeing long lines of _____ cars at _____ gas stations. Find me _____ person who gets any p1easire out of watching Administration officials give _____ daily conflicting stories on _____ oil, situation in _____ country."

Principle 4

Exercise 13: Compare the meaning of the *a.* **sentence with** the **b. sentence.**

1. a. This is the book that I would like you to read.

   b. This is a book that I would like you to read.

2. a. The Constitution without the Bill or Rights would be a very weak document.

   b. A constitution without a bill of rights would be a very weak document.

3. a. I 'wouldn' t like to live in the house that Jack built.

   b. I didn't like to live in a house that Jack built.

4. a. Did you see the broken headlight in the film?

b. Did you see a broken headlight in the film?

        You will notice that the a. and the b. sentences are the same except for the articles. In these *cases,* there is nothing in the sentencs which will tell whether to use indefinite or definite articles. It is up to the writer to decide. If the writer is referring to some unique specified thing or event in the context, then **the** is used. If the thing or event is not specific or unique, then **a, an, or** *(-)* is inserted...

Exercise 14: Listen as the teacher reads the following passage, filling in the articles tbat you hear the teacher say. Then review the passage and see how tinny occurrences of the can be accounted for by principle 4.
____ name of Henry Burgh is synonymous with ___birth of America' s humane movement. ____ organization he founded, — American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as ____ first society of its kind in ____ new world.

In America today, there are about 600 organizations carrying on ____ work of animal protection and it is natural that all of them would provide such basic things as food and shelter. ____ number of them offer considerably more, however.____Humane Society of Missouri operates four ambulances with radios; places 5,000 animals in homes annually; conducts ____ humane education program; *has* ____ staff of 22; and has ____ annual budget of 150,000 dollars. The Massachusetts SPCA operates ____ pet placement bureaus and - 24-hour ambulance service. New Jersey's SPCA, operates ____ most modern dog and cat handling equipmentt and three ambulances which have ____ separate compartments for male and female animals.

In the passages below, you must decide which article to use. Use *the* if you think the modified noun refers to one specific or unique thing; otherwise, use *a, an, or (-).* In some cases, either definite or indefinite articles could be used. Insert what you think is the most appropriate choice in the context and be prepared to defend your choice.

Exercise 15: Fill in each blank with a, an, *0*, or the, as appropriate.

 We beard ____ interesting story the other day. Apparently there was ___ begger enjoyed ___ expensive clothes, ___ best food, and — luxurious house. This was possible because ____ clothes came from ____ rich neighborhoods, ____ food came fron ____ expensive restaurants, and ____ house belonged to ____ old friend who went away on ____ long trip and asked ____ begger to take care of it for him while he was away. — friend became ill on ___ trip and had not yet returned. So — fortunate begger lived ____ most comfortable life of *any* begger known in ____ worId for ____ long time and continued to do so until ____ end of his life.

Exercise 16: Use a, an, *(-),* or the, as appropriate in the context.

____ most strongly built house is not complete protection against ____ earthquakes. However, if ____ well-built structure were situated directly on top of a fault, and ____ earth opened up along this fault, ____ building would probably be

torn apart. Some types of buildings are particularly vulnerable in ____ earthquakes; others are very resistant to - earthquake damage. Model buildings are tested on ____ shaking platforms where, as far as possible, conditions in an earthquake are simulated. From such tests, and ____ actual experiences in earthquakes, ____ most earthquake-resistant types of structures have been devised, ____ conditions governing the building of earthquake-resistant structures vary according to ____ geology of the area. It is estimated that to erect ____ earthquake-resistant buildings instead of ____ normal one of good quality adds, at most,7%to the cost.

Appendix 3

Pretest 1 on the English Articles

Name: _____

Undergraduate year: _____

Class: _____

Institution: _____

1. Fill in the blanks with *the, a/an,* orx (zero article).

1. ___golf is my favourite sport.

2. ___koala bear is becoming almost extinct.

3. ___ most valuable minerals are found in common rocks everywhere.

4. ___ origins of that fairy tale are unknown.

5. ___ train that I took yesterday was delayed.

6. ___water in the North Sea is usually quite cold.

7. A composer can choose among many variations to express _____ anger.

8. *Cal luong,* or "Renovated Opera", is a form of ___ drama, modeled after French comedy.

9. Climatologists say that ___ world's climate is changing.

10. Eaten with some locally picked mint leaves or greens, the rice concoction, provides ___balanced diet.

11. He is _____ best student of the class.

12. He left for _____ capital a month ago.

13. He lives in _____ Philippines.

14. I listened to _____ radio for a while.

15. Judy goes to work by _____ bus.

16. Not all _____Romanian folk tales are based on foreign influence.

17. Packing for the trip to Asia requires _____ balance between bringing all you think you will need for your visit and packing as lightly as possible.

18. Paris is the capital of _____France.

19. The earth is made up of _____ minerals.

20. The organization's aim is to educate _____public about the dangers of smoking.

21. The wheel was invented by ____Chinese.

22. The word-of-mouth form of *veø* took the place of newspapers and TV in illiterate society.

23. Tom went to ____ supermarket to buy some eggs.

24. Upon hearing the first bars of the well-loved sad tune, ____audience reacts with gasps of recognition and applause.

25.Romania has a rich legacy of ____orally transmitted folk tales.

26. Visitors can take ____boat ride along the Nile river and observe the changing landscapes and life on the river.

27. We can finish the rest of the bread for _____breakfast.

28. We went swimming in the river, water was very clear.

29. We went to ____ mountains on vacation.

30. Yesterday we went for a long walk and enjoyed ____ sights.

31. They have a cat and two dogs. _____ cat is over fifteen years old.

32. Mary stopped to look at a house, _____ door was open.

33. Sue invited Tom to visit her garden. When entering the garden, Tom uttered, "___ roses are very beautiful".

34. How can we combine economic growth and respect for ____ environment?

35. This is ____only remaining copy.

36. Circle the right choice: Have you broken (your / the) arm?

37.____ novel is the most popular form of fiction writing.

38. Reading ____ novel is a good way to relax.

39. "____ Mr. Wilson wanted to see you this morning. I don't think he is your friend since I haven't met him."

40. The train to Paris leaves from ___ Waterloo Station.

41. I didn't have ___ pencil.

42. Do you have ___ penny?

43. He wants to marry _____ princess who speaks five languages.

44. Bill is ____engineer.

The Custom of Chewing Betel and Areca Nuts

According to the legend, __45__ custom was popularized during __46__ Hung Vuong Era, and closely follows __47__ famous fairy tale of "48 Story of the Betel and Areca Nut". A quid of betel consists of four materials: __49__ areca leaf (sweet taste), __50__ betel bark (hot taste), chay root (bitter taste), and __51__ hydrated lime (pungent taste). The custom of chewing __52__ betel nut is unique to __53__ Vietnam. __54__ old health books claim that "chewing betel and areca nut makes __55__ mouth fragrant, decreases bad temper, and makes digesting __56__ food easy". A quid of betel makes __57__ people become closer and more open-hearted. At 5S_____ wedding ceremony, there must be __59__ dish of betel and areca nut, which people can share as they enjoy __60__ special occasion.

2. Correct these sentences if necessary. Give reasons for your choices. Use the other side of the last sheet for the descriptions.

61. A computer is an important research tool.

62. The computer is an important research tool.

63. A computer has revolutionised publishing.

64. The computer has revolutionised publishing.

65. Children should be given a sense of how the business works.

66. The aerospace business actually lost S6billion this year.

67. The corkscrew is a gadget for getting corks out of bottles.

68. She has become the important figure in Norwegian politics.

69. Circle two right choices.

There was a *rope* lying on the ground.

a. Bill took <u>an end,</u> and I took <u>an end,</u> and we both tugged away at <u>the rope.</u>

b. Bill took the end, and I took the end, and we both tugged away at the rope.

c. Bill took some ends and tied a knot in the rope.

d. Bill took the ends and tied a knot in the rope.

70. Circle one right choice.

How many houses are there at the corner of two streets when Peter said to Mary as

follows: "I am looking for the house at the corner"?

        a. One

        b. More than one

        c. Neither (a) nor (b) are possible.

Appendix 4

Pretest 2 on the English Articles

Name: _____

Class/group: _____

1. Fill in the blanks with *a, the* or zero (no article).

1. ___biggest deposits of minerals are distributed unequally around

world.

2. ___black market is the illegal sale of products.

3.___ dangers of white water rafting are underestimated.

4. ___girl sitting over there is my neighbour.

5. ___sand on the Mediterranean beaches is quite yellow.

6. ___school starts at nine o'clock.

7. ____tennis is my favourite sport.

8. ____tiger is becoming almost extinct.

9. ____Chinese eat a great deal of rice.

10. A camera lets in light from an image in front of it and directs ____light onto

photographic film.

11. A composer can choose among many variations to express ____ joy.

12. "Renovated Opera", is a form of drama, modeled after ____French comedy.

13. Cantho is a thriving commercial center, with ____busy shipping industry.

14. Experts say that ____earth's surface is changing.

15. He lives on ____Princess street.

16. I listened to____ wind blowing through the trees.

17. I really ought to eat ____dinner

18. In addition to ____ formally penned literature, Romania has a rich legacy of orally

transmitted folk tales.

19. Lying by ____ Nile River, Cantho is a (46) junction of communication.

20. Mary went to ____ park to take the dog for a walk.

21. She is ____ only student who handed in her work on time.

22. Some Vietnamese folk tales are adaptations of ancient ____Chinese fables.

23. That's Terry—he's the third person on ____right.

24. The gross national product (GNP) is the total value of goods and services produced in ____country during a specified period of time (usually a year).

25. The most valuable minerals are found in ____common rocks everywhere.

26. There were several cars in the parking lot, ____cars all looked rather old.

27. To make bread you need wheat flour, ____flour needs to be ground fine.

28. We saw ____president on TV.

29. We took a long walk through ____woods.

30. We walked bare footed through a field, ____grass was wet.

31. We walked over the rice fields and could see that ____rice seedlings had been growing.

32. Yesterday I bought a new car, but _____radio did not work.

33. Yesterday we went to the movie theatre, but ____movie was disappointing.

During festivals or Tet Holidays, betel and areca nut is used for inviting 34___visitors and making 35___acquaintances. Sharing a quid of betel with 36___old friend is like expressing 37___gratitude for 38___relationship. A quid of betel and areca nut makes 39 people feel warm on 40___cold winters days, and during 41 funerals it relieves 42__sadness. Betel and areca nuts are also used in 43____offerings. When 44____Vietnamese worship their ancestors, betel and areca nut must be present at 45 altar. Nowadays, the custom of chewing betel remains popular in 46____Vietnamese villages and among 47 old.

2. Correct these sentences if necessary. Give reasons for your choices. Use the other side of the last sheet for the descriptions.

48. A computer is an important research tool.

49. The computer is an important research tool.

50. A computer has revolutionised publishing.

51. The computer has revolutionised publishing.

52. Children should be given a sense of ho the business works.

53. The aerospace business actually lost S6billion this year.

54. The corkscrew is a gadget for getting corks out of bottles.

55. She has become the important figure in Norwegian politics.

56. Circle two right choices.

There was a *rope* lying on the ground.

        a. Bill took <u>an end,</u> and I took <u>an end,</u> and we both tugged away at the

        b. Bill took the end, and I took the end, and we both tugged away at the rope.

        c. Bill took some ends and tied a knot in the rope.

        d. Bill took the ends and tied a knot in the rope.

57. Circle one right choice.

How many houses are there at the corner of two streets when Peter said to Mary as follows: "I am looking for the house at the corner"

a. One   b. More than one   c. Neither (a) nor (b) are possible.

Appendix 5

Post test 1 on the English Articles

Name: _____

Class/group: _____

Student code: _____

1. Fill in the blanks with *a, the* or zero (no article).

1. _____ adventures of Moby Dick are well known.

2. Minerals are abundant in nature. The earth is made up of _____ minerals, and even the most valuable minerals are found in common rocks everywhere.

3. _____black market is the illegal sale of products.

4. _____boy living next door to me is 15 years old.

*5.*_____ Japanese make a lot of cars.

6. _____soccer is my favourite sport.

*7.*_____ tiger is becoming almost extinct.

8. A composer can choose among many variations to express _____ sadness.

9. Alice bought a TV and a video recorder, but she returned _____ video recorder because it was defective.

10. "Renovated Opera", is a form of   drama, modeled after French comedy.

11. Cantho is a thriving commercial center, with _____ busy shipping industry.

12. Experts say that _____ world's climate is changing.

13. He comes from _____South of Romania.

14. He died in_____ war.

15. I feel we have to take care of _____environment.

16. In the restaurant, all of tables were set with white _____table cloths.

17. In 1910, farmers represented 33 percent of the U.S.work force and it took more than an hour of_____ work to produce a bushel of corn..

18. Many minerals near the earth's surface exist in _____small amounts.

19. Many Vietnamese folk tales explain _____ natural phenomena.

20. Mary is ____ third person on the left.

21. Mary went to the park to take ____dog for a walk.

22. These are only two examples of the dramatic changes that have occurred in agriculture. Through the advances in science and technology, _____ modern agriculture has become one of the greatest success stories of this century.

23. The organization's aim is to educate ____public about the dangers of smoking.

24. Population growth is not the only problem that we face in terms of the world food supply. _____Changes in eating habits are also causing problems..

25. To make dough you need flour and water, _____ water needs to be lukewarm.

26. Upon hearing first bars of the well-loved sad tune, ____ audience reacts with gasps of recognition and applause.

27. Visitors can take a boat ride along ____ Nile River and observe the changing landscapes.

28. We walked for an hour on the beach, ____sand got into our shoes.

29. We went to ____mountains on vacation.

30. We were at _____ sea for three weeks.

31. While I was in _____ hospital, they gave me an X-ray.

32. Yesterday I bought _____ new computer, but the screen did not work.

33. Yesterday we went to the theatre, but ____ play was disappointing.

The Custom of Chewing Betel and Areca Nuts

According to the legend, (34) custom was popularized during *(35)* Hung Vuong Era, and closely follows (36) famous fairy tale of (37) "Story of the Betel and Areca Nut". A quid of betel consists of four materials: (38) areca leaf (sweet taste), (39) betel bark (hot taste), chay root (bitter taste), and (40) hydrated lime (pungent taste). The custom of chewing (41) betel nut is unique to (42) Vietnam. (43) old health books claim that "chewing betel and areca nut makes (44) mouth fragrant, decreases *(45)* bad temper, and makes digesting (46) food easy". A quid of betel makes (47) people become closer and more open-hearted. At (48) wedding ceremony, there must be (49) dish of betel and areca nut, which people can share as they enjoy *(50)* special occasion. During festivals or

Tet Holidays, betel and areca nut is used for inviting (51) visitors and making (52) acquaintances. Sharing a quid of betel with (53) old friend is like expressing (54) gratitude for (55) _____ relationship. A quid of betel and areca nut makes (56) people feel warm on (57) cold winters days, and during (58) funerals it relieves (59) sadness. Betel and areca nuts are also used in (60) offerings. When (61) Vietnamese worship their ancestors, betel and areca nut must be present at (62) altar. Nowadays, the custom of chewing betel remains popular in (63) Vietnamese villages and among (64) old.

2. **Correct the following sentences, if necessary. Give reasons for either the sentences you have changed or the sentences you have not changed.**

65. How does one open oneself to Zen and get the clear mind?

66. I think that this decision needs the discussion before it is applied because each student might have a different answer.

67. The manager can decide on a profitable plan for next period based on the income statement.

68. The line has the variations such as its length, bending, and thickness.

69. He came by night train.

70. He walked through woods.

71. This box is made of the wood.

72. A special award was given to film director Ingmar Bergman.

73. He lives near church on the hill.

74. He is captain of the team.

75. The book fills leisure time for many people.

Appendix 6

Post test 2 on the English Articles

Name: _____

Class/group: _____

Student code: _____

1. Fill in the blanks with *the, a/an,* or *zero (x).*

1. A camera lets in light from an image in front of it and directs ____light onto photographic film.

2. There were several cars in the parking lot, ____cars all looked rather old.

3. Yesterday I bought a new car, but _____ radio did not work.

4. He is in ____ class now.

5. We went to ____ mountains on vacation.

6. He went to____ town yesterday.

*7.*____ origins of that fairy tale are unknown.

8. ____town is very old.

9. When I answered the phone, ____ Mrs. Wilson said she wanted to talk to you.

10. _____ class works hard.

11. We saw _____Prime Minister on TV.

12. I feel we have to take care of _____ environment.

13. ____Japanese make a lot of cars.

14. He usually goes by ____bus.

15. Where's John? He's on ____ bus.

16. He comes from _____ South Vietnam

17. She comes from ____Philippines.

18. ____biggest deposits of minerals are distributed unequally around world.

19. The gross national product (GNP) is the total value of goods and services produced in ____country during a specified period of time (usually a year).

20. Cantho is a thriving commercial center, with busy shipping industry.

21. Minerals are abundant in nature. The earth is made up of _____ minerals.

22. "Renovated Opera", is a form of drama, modeled after French comedy.

23. Population growth is not the only problem that we face in terms of the world food supply.____ Changes in eating habits are also causing problems.

24. These are only two examples of the dramatic changes that have occurred in agriculture. Through the advances in science and technology, _____ modern agriculture has become one of the greatest success stories of this century.

25. Many Vietnamese folk tales explain ____ natural phenomena.

26. In the restaurant, all of ____tables were set with white table cloths.

27.____ tiger is becoming almost extinct.

28. We were at _____ sea for three weeks.

29. Yesterday I bought _____ new computer, but the screen did not work.

30-31.Circle two right choices.

There was a *rope* lying on the ground.

    a. Bill took <u>an end,</u> and I took <u>an end,</u> and we both tugged away at <u>the rope.</u>

    b. Bill took the end, and I took the end, and we both tugged away at the rope.

    c. Bill took some ends and tied a knot in the rope.

    d. Bill took the ends and tied a knot in the rope.

32. Which of the following sentences is incorrect?

    a. A book fills leisure time for many people.

    b. The book fills leisure time for many people.

    c. Books fill leisure time for many people.

33. Which of the following is correct?

    a. These are pencils.

    b. These are some pencils.

The Custom of Chewing Betel and Areca Nuts

According to the legend, (34) custom was popularized during *(35)* Hung Vuong Era, and closely follows (36) famous fairy tale of (37) "Story of the Betel and Areca Nut". A quid of betel consists of four materials: (38) areca leaf (sweet taste), (39) betel bark (hot taste), chay root (bitter taste), and (40) hydrated lime (pungent taste). The custom of chewing (41) betel nut is unique to (42) Vietnam. (43) old health books claim that "chewing betel and areca nut makes (44) mouth fragrant, decreases *(45)* bad temper, and makes digesting (46) food easy". A quid of betel makes (47) people become closer and more open-hearted. At (48) wedding ceremony, there must be (49) dish of betel and areca nut, which people can share as they enjoy *(50)* special occasion. During festivals or Tet Holidays, betel and areca nut is used for inviting *(51)* visitors and making *(52)* acquaintances. Sharing a quid of betel with *(53)* old friend is like expressing *(54)* gratitude for *(55)* _____ relationship.

A quid of betel and areca nut makes *(56)* people feel warm on *(57)* cold winters days, and during *(58)* funerals it relieves *(59)* sadness. Betel and areca nuts are also used in (60) offerings. When (61) Vietnamese worship their ancestors, betel and areca nut must be present at (62) altar. Nowadays, the custom of chewing betel remains popular in (63) Vietnamese villages and among (64) old.

2. **Correct the following sentences, if necessary. Give reasons for either the sentences you have changed or the sentences you have not changed.**

76. How does one open oneself to Zen and get the clear mind?
77. I think that this decision needs the discussion before it is applied because each student might have a different answer.
78. The manager can decide on a profitable plan for next period based on the income statement.

79. The line has the variations such as its length, bending, and thickness.

80. He came by night train.

81. He walked through woods.

82. This box is made of the wood.

83. A special award was given to film director Ingmar Bergman.

84. He lives near church on the hill.

85. He is captain of the team.

86. The book fills leisure time for many people.

Appendix 7

Traditional grammar lessons

Lesson 1

Part A

Ship and water: countable and uncountable nouns

A. What is the difference?

    a ship   two boats   water

COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
A countable noun (e.g ship) can be singular or Plural. We can count ships. We can say one shipp or two ships. water. We can say water or some water but NOT a water or two waters.	An uncountable noun (e.g. water) is neither singular nor plural.We cannot count
Here are some examples of countable nouns. of uncountable nouns	Here are some examples
We could see a ship in the distance.	Can I have some water?
Claire has only got one sister.	Shall we sit on the grass?
I've got a problem with the car.	The money is quite safe.
Do you like these photos?	I love music.
I'm going out for five minutes.	Would you like some butter?

B. Nouns after the, a/an and numbers

There are some words that go with both countable and uncountable nouns. One of these is **the.**

We can say the ship (singular), the ships (plural) or the water (uncountable).

But other words go with one kind of noun but not with the other.

COUNTABLE   UNCOUNTABLE

A/an or one goes only with a singular noun.	We do not use a/an with an uncountable noun.
I need a spoon.	NOT: a money.
	Numbers above one go only with plural nouns. We do not use numbers with an uncountable noun
We eat three meals a day.	NOT: three moneys

C. Nouns after some, many/much, etc

Some and any go with plural or uncountable nouns. We can also use plural and uncountable nouns on their own, without some or any.

PLURAL.	UNCOUNTABLE
Tom told some jokes.	We had some fun.
Do you know any jokes?	That won't be any fun.
Tom usually tells jokes.	We always have fun.
But NOT He tells joke. .	
Many and a few go only with plural nouns.	Much and a little go with uncountable nouns.
There weren't many bottles.	I don't drink much wine.
I made a few sandwiches.	There was only a little bread left.

Exercises

1. What is the difference? (A)

Look at the underlined nouns. Are they are countable or uncountable?

- There was a car behind us countable

- I never eat meat uncountable

    1 Do you play golf?

2 I had to wait ten minutes

3 Just tell me one thing

4 Love makes the world go round.

5 Good luck in your new job.

6 Power stations produce energy.

7 I'm taking a photo.

8 Would you like an apple?

2. A and some(B—C)

Laura has been to the supermarket. What has she bought? Use a or some with these words: *banana, biscuits butter, cheese, eggs, flowers, lemon, light bulb, mineral water, magazine, soap, wine*
Ex: some flowers; a magazine; some wine

3. Countable and uncountable nouns (A—C)
Complete the conversation. Choose the correct form.

Jessica: What are you doing, Andrew?

Andrew: I'm writing (zero) essay / an essay.

Jessica: Oh, you've got (1) computer / a computer. Do you always write (2) essay / essays on your computer?

Andrew: Yes, but I'm not doing very well today. I've been working on my plan for about   three (3) hour / hours now.

Jessica: You've got lots of books to help you, though. I haven't got as (4) many / much books as you. That's because I haven't got much (5) money / moneys. Quite often I can't even afford to buy (6) food / a food.

Andrew: Really? That can't be (7) many / much fun.

Jessica: I'd like to get (8) lob / a lob I can do in my spare time and earn (9) a / some money. I've got (10) a few / a little ideas, but what do you think I should do?

Andrew: I know someone who paints (11) picture / pictures and sells them. Why don't you do that?

Jessica: Because I'm no good at painting.

Part B

Nouns that can be countable or uncountable

A. A potato or potato?

Some nouns can be either countable or uncountable. For example, a potato is a separate, individual thing, but potato cannot be counted.

Potatoes	potato
COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
I'm peeling the potatoes.	Would you like some potato ?
Melanie baked a cake for David.	Have some cake/a piece of cake.
Vicky was eating an apple.	Is there apple in this salad?
Someone threw a stone at the police.	The house is built of stone.
There's a hair on your shirt.	I must brush my hair.

B. A sport or sport?

Often the countable noun is specific, and the uncountable noun is more general.

COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
Rugby is a sport. (— a particular sport)	Do you like sport? (= sport in general)
That's a nice painting over there.	Paul is good at painting.
We heard a sudden noise outside.	Constant noise can make you ill,
John Lennon had an interesting life.	Life is complicated sometimes.

C. A paper or paper?

Some nouns can be countable or uncountable with different meanings.

COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
I bought a paper. (= a newspaper)	I need some paper to write on.
I'll have a glass of orange juice, please.	I bought a piece of glass for the window.
Have you got an iron? (for clothes)	The bridge is made of iron.
I switched all the lights on.	There's more light by the window.
I've been to France many times.	I can't stop. I haven't got time.
The journey was a great experience.	He has enough experience for the job.
I run a small business. (= a company)	I enjoy doing business. (= buying and selling)
We finally found a space in the car park.	There's no space for a piano in here.
	There are hundreds of satellites out in space.

D. A coffee or coffee?

Words for drink are usually uncountable: Coffee is more expensive than tea.

But when we are ordering or offering drinks, we can say either a cup of coffee or a coffee.

Two coffees, please. (two cups of coffee)

Would you like a beer? (= a glass/bottle/can of beer)

Some nouns can be countable when we are talking about a particular kind or about different kinds.

Chianti is an Italian wine. (a kind of Italian wine)

The use of plastics has greatly increased. (= the use of different kinds of plastic).

Exercises

1. A potato or potato? A sport or sport? (A—B)

Complete the conversations. Choose the correct form.

Ex: Can I pick an apple from your tree? Yes, of course.

1 I think sport / a sport is boring. Me too. I hate it.

2 We ought to buy some potato /some potatoes. -~ OK, I'll get them.

3 I think painting / a painting is a fascinating hobby. Well, you're certainly very good at it.

4 Did you hear noise /a noise in the middle of the night? -~ No, I don't think so.

5 Is there cheese / a cheese in this soup? Yes, a little.

6 I had conversation / a conversation with Vicky last night. Oh? What about?

7 Shall I put a chicken /some chicken in your sandwiches? -~ Yes, please.

8 Are you a pacifist? Well, I don't believe in war /a war, so I suppose I am.

9 It isn't fair. -- No, life /a life just isn't fair, I'm afraid.

10 What's the matter? -~ You've got some egg / some eggs on your shirt.

2. A paper or paper? (C)

Complete the conversations. Put in these nouns: *business (x2), experience (x2), glass, iron, light, paper, space, time*. Put a/an or some before each noun.

Ex: Harriet: Did you manage to park in town?

Mike: It took me ages to find a space. And all I wanted was to buy some paper to wrap this present in.

1 Sarah: Are you busy tomorrow?

  Mark: I'm meeting someone in the office. We've got……….. to discuss.

2 Trevor: Do you think I need to take……….. with me for my shirts?

  Laura: Oh, surely the hotel will have one.

3 Vicky: I was going to have some juice, but I can't find …….

  Rachel: If you turned …….. on, you might be able to see properly.

4 Claire: I've never met your brother.

  Mark: Oh, he's usually very busy because he runs ….. .But he's been ill recently.
The   doctor has ordered him to spend ……. resting.

5 Daniel: How did your interview go?

Emma: Well, I didn't get the job. I think they really wanted someone with …. of the work, and that's what I haven't got. So it was a bit of a waste of time. And the train coming back was two hours late. That's …….don't want to repeat.

3. Countable or uncountable? (A—B)

Complete Claire's postcard to her sister. Choose the correct form.

The island is very peaceful. (0) Life / A life is good here. Everybody moves at a nice slow pace. People have (1) time / a time to stop and talk. It's (2) experience / an experience I won't forget for a long time. There aren't many shops, so I can't spend all my money, although I did buy (3) painting / a painting yesterday. Now I'm sitting on the beach reading (4) paper / a paper. The hotel breakfast is so enormous that I don't need to have lunch. I've just brought (5) orange / an orange with me to eat later. I've been trying all the different (6) fruit / fruits grown in this part of the world, and they're all delicious.

Lesson 2

A/an and The

A. Introduction

1. Read this true story about an American tourist in Britain.

A man from California was spending a month in Britain. One day he booked into a hotel in Cheltenham, a nice old town in the West of England. Then he went out to look around the place. But the man didn't return to the hotel. He disappeared, leaving a suitcase full of clothes behind. The police were called in, but they were unable to find out what had happened to the missing tourist. It was a mystery. But two weeks later the man walked into the police station in Cheltenham. He explained that he was very sorry, but while walking around the town, he had got lost. He had also forgotten the name of the hotel he had booked into. So he had decided to continue with his tour of the country and had gone to visit a friend in Scotland before returning to pick up the case he had left behind.

2. Answer the following questions based on the reading:
a. With what kind of nouns do you use 'a/an' and 'the'?
b. When do you use 'a/an'?
c. When do you use 'the'?

B. Basic Uses

1. Fill in the blanks with appropriate articles:

a. When the story first mentions something, the noun has _____.
b. The noun phrases 'a man' or 'a hotel' in A man booked into a hotel in Cheltenham are ___(old/ new)___ information. We do not know which man or which hotel.

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c. The noun has _____ when the same thing is mentioned again. The noun phrases like 'the man' and 'the hotel' in The man didn't return to the hotel' are ____(old / new))___ information. Now we know which man or which hotel.

d. We use _____ when it is clear which one we mean.

e. We use _____+noun or someone/something when we aren't saying which one.

f. We use _____ + noun or _____/ _____/ it when we know which one.

2. With a partner, explain the difference between two sentences in each set with reference to the use of 'the' and 'a'.

g. Would you like to see *a show?*

   Would you like to see *the show?*

h. The cyclist was hit by *a car.*

   Whose is *the car* outside?

i. In the office *a phone* was ringing.

   I was in bed when *the phone* rang.

j. Has Melanie got *a garden?*

   She was at home in *the garden.*

k. The train stopped at a station.

   Turn left here for the station.

l. We took a taxi.

   We went in the car.

m. We could hear a noise.

   We could hear the noise of a party.

n. I wrote the number on an envelope.

   I wrote it on the back of an envelope.

C. The sun, etc:

1. Study the following examples and explain why 'the' is used in these examples:

a. The sun was going down.

    b. The government is unpopular.

    c. A drive in the country would be nice.

    d. We shouldn't pollute the environment.

2. What do you think of the following nouns: earth, moon, ozone layer, Prime Minister, sea(side), sky, weather? What kind of articles should be used with?

3. The following nouns are also used with 'the': cinema, theatre and (news)paper. Can you explain why?

4. Note that we say a/the police officer but the police.

A police officer came to the hotel. NOT A police came to the hotel.

The police came to the hotel (=one or more police officers).

D. A nice day, etc.

1. Do you think the following sentences are well-formed when 'the' is used?

    a. It was the lovely day.

    b. Cheltenham is the nice old town.

    c. It's the big hotel.

    d. This is the better photo.

    e. The play was the comedy.

    f. My sister is the secretary.

    g. Nick is the car salesman.

    h. The man's disappearance was the mystery.

2. Do you think you can use 'the' in the following sentences?

    a. It's the biggest hotel in town.

    b. This is the best photo.

3. From (1) and (2) can you draw some rules about the use of 'the' and 'a/an'?

E.A or an?

Use a or an with the following nouns or phrases:

cup; aspirin; poster; egg; shop; umbrella; one-way street; uniform; open door; holiday; hour; U-turn; MP.

Exercises

1 The use of a/an and the

Complete this true story. Put in a/an or the.

A man decided to rob (1)… bank in the town where he lived. He walked into (2) … bank and handed (3) … note to one of (4) … cashiers. (5) … cashier read (6) … note, which told her to give (7) … man some money. Afraid that he might have (8) … gun, she did as she was told. (9) … man then walked out of (10) … building, leaving (11) … note behind. However, he had no time to spend (12) … money because he was arrested (13) … same day. He had made (14) … mistake. He had written (15) … note on (16) …back …of (17) … envelope. And on (18) …other side of (19) … envelope was his name and address. This clue was quite enough for (20) … detectives on the case.

2 A man/he and the man/someone (C)

Replace the sentences which contain an underlined word. Use a/an or the with the word in brackets.

Ex. We didn't have much time for lunch. David made something for us. (omelette) David made an omelette for- us.

1 They ran the race before they held the long jump. Matthew won it easily. (race)

2 The driver turned left. Suddenly someone ran into the road. (child)

3 Vicky was lying on the sofa. She was watching something on television. (film)

4 I had to take a train and then a bus. It was half an hour late. (bus)

5. A shoplifter tried to steal some clothes. 'The camera videoed her. (thief)

3 The use of a/an and the

Complete the conversations. Put in a/ an or the.

Laura: Look outside. The sky is getting very dark.

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Trevor: I hope there isn't going to be a storm.

1. Mike I'm going out for …. walk. Have you seen my shoes?

   Harriet: Yes, they're on …… floor in …. kitchen.

2. Melanie: Would you like …. tomato? There's one in ….. fridge.

   David: Oh, yes, please. I'll make myself ………cheese and tomato sandwich.

3. Sarah: If you're going into ….. city centre, can you post these letters for me?

   Mark: Yes. I'll take them to …. main post office.

4. Rita: I've got …. problem with my phone bill. Can I see someone about it?

Receptionist: Yes, go to …… fifth floor. …….. lift is along the corridor.

5. Tom: I didn't know Melanie had …… dog.

   David: It isn't here. She's just taking it for a walk while …… owner is away.

6. Vicky: I've got ……. headache. I've had it all day.

   Rachel: Why don't you go to ……. health center? It's open until six.

7. Andrew: Guess what. I found ……..€50 note on the pavement this morning.

Jessica: You really ought to take it to ……….police station, you know.

4. Complete these sentences about pollution and the environment. Put in a/an or the.

Ex There was a programme on television about dangers to the environment.

1 There was also ……. article about pollution in ….. paper.

2. ………ozone layer will continue to disappear if we don't find .. .way to stop it.

3 …..world's weather is changing. Pollution is having. …..effect on our climate.

4 Last week, ……….oil tanker spilled oil into …….sea, damaging wildlife.

5. Some professors have signed …..letter of protest and have sent it to…..government.

6 If …… earth was….. human being, it would be in hospital.

5.Complete the conversations. Put in a/an or the.

Ex: David: How was your trip to the coast?

Trevor: Wonderful. The sun shone all day. We had a great time.

1. Henry: Would you Iike .... cigarette?

   Nick: No, thanks. I've given up smoking. It's .. .. bad habit.

2. Sarah: What's your brother doing now? Has he got .. . good job?

   Laura: Yes, he's …soldier. He's in …army. He loves it. It's …great life, he says.

3. Rita: I went to see Doctor Pascoe yesterday. She's … best doctor I've ever had.

   Harriet: She's very nice, isn't she? You couldn't meet …nicer person.

4. Rachel: You were .... long time at … supermarket. Vicky: Yes, I know. There was .... enormous queue. I was thinking of complaining to manager.

5. Mark: Why were you late for your meeting?

   Sarah: Well, first I had to go to …hotel I'd booked into. I took. … taxi from ... .. airport, and ...driver got completely lost. It was ….terrible nuisance. ... man was ... complete idiot.

6. Matthew: Is this ... . book you were telling me about?

 Emma: Yes, it's … really interesting story.

Matthew: What did you say it's about?

Emma: I knew you weren't listening to me. It's .. science fiction story. It's about … beginning of. .. .... universe.

6. A or an? Put in the abbreviations with a or an.

Ex a National Broadcasting Company reporter _____ an NBC reporter

1 a Disc Jockey

2 a Very Important Person

3 an Irish Republican Army member

4 a Personal Computer

5 a Los Angeles suburb

6 an Unidentified Flying Object

7 an Annual General Meeting

8 a Member of Parliament

Lesson 3

SOME and ZERO ARTICLE with Plural and Uncountable nouns

I. Some

A. Consider the following sentences in which 'some' is used.

1. Some furniture arrived for you this morning.

2. Would you like to hear some good news?

3. Some teachers never seem to get bored with being in the classroom.

4. I enjoy some modern music.

B. Circle the right choice:

1. We use 'some' in affirmative sentences and questions with plural and uncountable nouns when we talk about (limited/ unlimited), but (definite/ indefinite) or (known / unknown) numbers or quantities or things. When we use 'some' in this way, we pronounce it with its weak form .

2. We also use 'some' to talk about particular, but (specified / unspecified), people or things. When we use it in this way, we pronounce 'some' with its strong form .

II. Zero article

A. Compare the following sentences:

1. I always like getting good news.

Would you like to hear some good news?

2. Furniture is a costly item when you are setting up a home.

Some furniture arrived for you this morning.

3. Teachers like having long holidays.

Some teachers never seem to get bored with being in the classroom.

4. I enjoy modern music.

In enjoy some modern music.

5. We need food, medicine, and blankets.

There are some old blankets in the wardrobe. Shall I throw hem out?

6. A post office is a place where you can buy stamps.

I'd like some stamps, please.

B. From the observations, fill in the blank in the following sentence about the use of zero article. We use zero article with uncountable and plural nouns when we talk _____ about people or things.

III. Some vs. Zero; Some vs A/an

Read the use descriptions in column A, and match them with the examples in column B.

Uses	Examples
a. When we want to emphasize that we can't say exactly which person or thing we are talking about because we don't know or can't remember, we can use 'some instead of a an with a singular noun. When it is used in this way, some is pronounced sm . We use the phrase some .. or other in a similar way.	1. Some 800o of all those eligible took part in the vote.
b. We sometimes use some or zero article with very little difference in meaning.	2. I was asked a really difficult question by some student in class two.
c. *Some* is used before a number to mean 'approximately'.	3.Before serving, pour (some) yoghurt over the top.
	4. I bought them from some shop or other in the High Street.
	5. There were some 20,000 people at the protest march.
	6. 'Where were you last week?' 'I was visiting (some) friends.

Exercises

1 Put some in the spaces where necessary. If no word is needed, write --.

1. I read about his death in The Post, but .... newspapers didn't report it at all.

2. My uncle bought .... valuable new stamps for his collection.

3. It is now known that .... cigarettes can seriously damage your health.

4. Don't disturb me. I've got .... really difficult homework to do.

5. I know that .... parents work so hard they don't have time to talk to their children, but Roy and Amy aren't like that.

6. My hobby is making .... candles.

7. As we all know, ... air is lighter than water.

8. Did you hear that .... monkeys escaped from the zoo last night?

9. I prefer cooking with .... oil, as it's better far you than .... butter.

10 We first met in .... restaurant in London, but I can't remember what it was called.

11 Although most left early, ... students stayed to the end of the talk.

12 I don't think I've ever met a child who doesn't like .... chips.

Look again at the sentences where you have written some. I f these were spoken, which would have the strong form of some and which the weak form?

2 Add some to these sentences where necessary, or put a /if they are already correct.

      1. Can you smell gas?

      2. Medicines can be taken quite harmlessly in large doses.

      3. I can't drink milk. It makes me feel ill.

      4. Water is a valuable commodity. Don't waste it!

      5 .You should always keep medicines away from children.

      6 Do you like my new shirt? It's made of silk.

      7. I'm really thirsty.' ``Would you like water?'

      8 There are people here to see you.

      9 Books for young children are rather violent and not suitable for them at all.

3. Decide whether the following phrases mean approximately the same thing (write same), or mean something different (write different). (A, B & C)

      1. I bought some oranges / oranges, but forgot to get the apples you asked for.

      2. Some sports clubs / Sports clubs do not allow women members.

      3 .There are some examples / examples of this on the next page.

4 .Some wild animals / Wild animals make very good pets.

5 .Some metal alloys / Metal alloys made nowadays are almost as hard as diamond.

Lesson 4

The, zero article and a/an: `things in general'

1. In generalisations we use zero article, but not the, with plural or uncountable nouns:

> • Before you put them on, always check your shoes for spiders.
>
> • I'm studying geography at university.
>
> • I can smell smoke!

When we use the with a plural or uncountable noun, we are talking about specific things or people:

> • The books you ordered have arrived.
>
> • All the information you asked for is in this file of papers.

Compare these pairs of sentences:

• Flowers really brighten up a room.

  The flowers you bought me are lovely.

• Industry is using computers more and more.

  The tourism industry is booming in Malaysia.

• Children should be given a sense of how business works.

  The aerospace business actually lost $6 billion this year.

• She's an expert on Swedish geology.

  She's an expert on the geology of Sweden.

2. We can use the with a singular countable noun to talk about the general features or characteristics of a class of things or people rather than one specific thing or
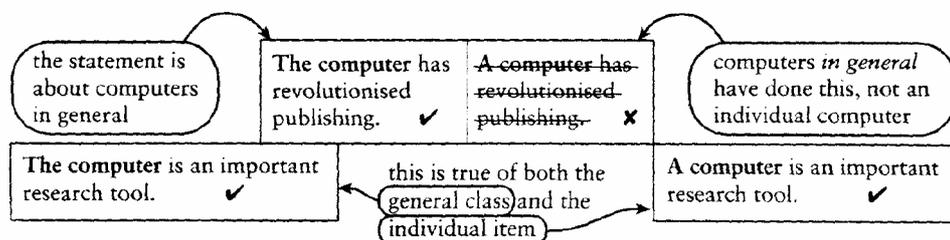
person. In

> • *Nowadays, photocopiers are found in both the office and the home.*

we are talking about offices and homes in general rather than a particular office and home. Notice that we could also say `in both offices and homes' with little difference in meaning. Compare the use of *the* and *a/an* in these sentences:

talking about a general class	talking about an unspecified example
The novel is the most popular form of fiction writing. (*or* Novels are...)	Reading a novel is a good way to relax. (*or* Reading novels is...)
The customer has a right to know where products are made. (*or* Customers have...)	When the phone rang, I was busy serving a customer.

Study the use of the and a/an in these sentences:

the statement is about computers in general	The computer has revolutionised publishing. ✔	A computer has revolutionised publishing. ✘	computers *in general* have done this, not an individual computer
The computer is an important research tool. ✔	this is true of both the general class and the individual item		A computer is an important research tool. ✔

Notice that when we define something we generally use a/an rather than the:
- A Geiger counter is a device for detecting and measuring the intensity of radiation.
- A corkscrew is a gadget for getting corks out of bottles.

Exercises

1. Complete these sentences using one of these words. Use the where necessary. Use the same word in both (a) and h) & each pair. (A)

advice coffee food French history

magazines music teachers

1 a all over the world have published photos of the royal baby.

b Emily left … we asked for on the table.

2 a …… played a very important part in his life.

b I thought ….. used in the film was the best part.

3 a I've forgotten most of I learnt at school.

b I'm learning ….. at night school.

4 a I'll always be grateful for …. he gave me.

b I asked my father for …. about the problem.

5.   a Put … you bought straight into the fridge.

   b ….. at that new Indonesian restaurant was excellent.

6.   a I never did enjoy studying …… .

   b I'm reading a hook about …. .of the New Zealand Maori.

7   a The world price of …. has reached a record high.

   b ….. we got last week from the Brazilian café was excellent.

8   a In my opinion, …… .... deserve to be better paid.

   b ….. need to have enormous patience.

2. Delete any phrase which can be used to form a correct sentence. (B)

1 The white rhinoceros/A white rhinoceros is close to extinction.

2 The bicycle / A bicycle is an environmentally friendly means of transport.

3 The development of the railway / A development of the railway encouraged tourism throughout Europe.

4 The fridge / A fridge is today considered an essential in most homes.

5 Writing the letter / a letter is often cheaper than telephoning.

6 Laszlo Biro is normally credited with having invented the ball-point pen/a ball-point pen.

7 The experienced test pilot / An experienced test pilot earns a considerable amount of money.

8 The Jumbo Jet/A Jumbo jet has revolutionized air travel.

9 The credit card / A credit card is a convenient way of paying for purchases.

Lesson 5

- **Part A**

People and Places

I. Particular uses of 'the':

A. Zero article is usually used before the names of particular people. Here are some examples:

a. President Clinton is to make a statement later today.

b. The name of Nelson Mandela is known all over the world.

B. However, there are cases in which 'the' will be used instead. As an exercise, match the uses of 'the' in column A with the examples in column B.

Uses **of 'the': We use 'the':**	**Examples**
1. when there are two people with the same name and we want to specify which one we are talking about:	a. The late (=dead) Buddy Holly; the wonderful actor Harrison Ford;
2. when we want to emphasize that a person is the one that everyone probably knows; when it is used this way, the is stressed and pronounced *I&:I*	b. The Robinsons are away this weekend.
3. with an adjective to describe a person or their job:	c. That's not the Stephen Fraser I went to school with.
4. when we talk about a family as a whole:	d. Do they mean the Ronald Reagan, or someone else?
	e. the Aboriginal writer Sally Morgan; the artist William Turner

II. **Hospital** vs. The hospital.	
A. Study these examples and with a partner give explanations about their differences.	
They say he'll have to stay in hospital for six weeks.	Tom's mother goes to the hospital to see him every day.
Sue's at university studying French.	Frank works as a security guard at a university.
School should be a place where children are taught to	They' it building a school at the end of our street.
enjoy learning.	
She usually stays in bed till late at the weekend.	'Have you seen my socks?' 'You left them on the bed.'
I try to go to the cinema at least once a week.	We usually go to the cinema in New Street
Not many children enjoy open.	

C. Consider the following examples, and with your partner, explain why 'a/an', or sometimes 'zero article', is used:

     1. Jane plays tennis well, but she'll never be (a) Steffin Graf.

     2. There's a Dr Kenneth Perch on the phone.

II. Hospital vs. The hospital.

A. Study these examples and with a partner give explanations about their differences.

They say he'll have to stay in hospital for six weeks.	Tom's mother goes to the hospital to see him every day.
Sue's at university studying French.	Frank works as a security guard at a university.
School should be a place where children are taught to enjoy learning.	They' it building a school at the end of our street.
She usually stays in bed till late at the weekend.	'Have you seen my socks?' 'You left them on the bed.'
I try to go to the cinema at least once a week.	We usually go to the cinema in New Street
Not many children enjoy open.	

B. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences by using the cues provided:
a form of art– in general– particular – intended purpose – Institutions

1. We use zero article when we talk about _____ such as hospital, university, prison, school, college, or church being used for their _____: medical treatment in hospital, studying in university, and so on.

2. We use articles when talk about those institutions as _____ places or buildings.

3. When we talk about cinema, opera or theatre _____, or when we refer to a building where this type of entertainment takes place, we use the. However, if we are talking about a _____, we generally prefer zero article.

Exercises

1. Put a/an, the or zero article in the spaces. If two answers are possible, give them.

1. Are we talking now about … John Smith who led the Labor Party?
2. We're going to a barbecue with … Simpsons.
3. There's … Linda Jones to see you.
4. A special award was given to … film director Ingmar Bergman.
5. The prize is to be given each year in memory of … late Ayrton Senna.
6. We met our old friend … Romey Thompson in Sydney.
7. That surely can't be … Jenny Watson we knew in Zimbabwe.
8. I found myself sitting next to … Boris Yeltsin!. Not … Boris Yeltsin, of course, with the same name.
9. I didn't realize how rich he was until I heard that he owns … Picasso.
10. He's really keen on football. He likes to think of himself as … Paul Gascoigne.
11. Have you heard that … Woodwards are moving house?

2. Write the where necessary in these sentences. If the sentence is already correct, put a tick next to it.

1. Can I drive you to (the) university? It's on my way.
2. When I'm, in London, I always go to theatre.
3. Margaret believes that all children should go to church every Sunday.
4. In Sweden, children start school when they are six or seven.
5. Jim's been in hospital for six weeks now.
6. He lives near church on the hill.
7. She's going to university to do French.
8. There was a fire at school in Newtown.
9. Even her most dedicated fans wouldn't call her new play a great work of theatre.
10. Have you heard hospital is going to close?
11. It's time the children went to bed.

12. He's been in and out of prison since he left school.

Look again at those in which zero article is correct before the place or institution. Which of them could have the? What would be the difference in meaning?

- **Part B**

Holidays, times of the day, meals, etc.

We often use zero article with the names of holidays, special times of the year, or with the names of months and days of the week:

- Easter Ramadan New Year's Day September Monday

But compare:

- I'll see you on Saturday. (= next Saturday)

- We met on Saturday. (= last Saturday)

- They arrived on a Saturday as far as I can remember. (= we are only interested

in the day of the week, not which particular Saturday)

- They arrived on the Saturday after my birthday party.(= a particular Saturday,

specifying which one)

With winter, summer, spring, autumn, and New Year (meaning the holiday period), we

can often use either the or zero article:

- In (the) summer I try to spend as much time in the garden as I can.

- In Scotland, they really know how to celebrate (the) New Year.

We use the when it is understood which summer, spring, etc. we mean:

- 'When did you meet Beth?' 'In the summer.' (= last summer)

- 'When are you going to university?' 'In the autumn.' (= next autumn)

- I first went skiing in the spring of 1992.

We say 'in the New Year' to mean at or near the beginning of next year:

- I'll see you again in the New Year.

When we want to describe the features of a particular holiday, season, etc., we use a/an:

- That was a winter I'll never forget.

We use the and a/an in the usual way when we talk about the
morning/afternoon/evening
of a particular day:

- I woke up with a sore throat, and by the evening my voice had disappeared.
- We're going in the afternoon.
- 'You look upset.' 'Yes, I've had a terrible morning.'

However, we use zero article with at night and by night. Compare:

- She kept us awake all through the night. and
- I don't like driving at night.

We use zero article with midnight, midday, and noon:

- If possible, I'd like it finished by midday.

We usually use zero article when we talk about meals:

- What have we got for dinner?
- I don't like drinking coffee at breakfast.

We wouldn't say, for example, 'I had a/the breakfast before I went out'. However, if we
want to describe a particular meal, then we can use an article:

- We didn't get up until 10 o'clock and had a late breakfast.
- The dinner we had at Webster's restaurant was marvellous.

When we talk about a formal dinner or lunch for a special occasion, we use 'a dinner'
or 'a lunch':

- We're having a dinner to welcome the new manager.

Exercises

**1. Put a/an, the or zero article, whichever is most likely, in the spaces in these
sentences. In some cases, you can use either the or zero article (write the/x).**

1.   a. She starts work on … Monday next week.

       b. I last saw her in town earlier in the year. I'm sure it was … Monday,
because that's when I go shopping, but I can't remember the exact date.

       c. They phoned on … Monday before the accident.

2.   a. I remember when Frank was last here. It was.... Christmas I got my new
bike.

b. It was… Christmas to remember.

c. We're returning after … Christmas.

3.   a. The race is always held in … June.

b. We last saw Dave … June your mother was staying with us.

c. Even though it was March, the weather reminded me of … hot June day.

4.   a. With the wedding and the new job, it was … summer she would always remember.

b. There was a long drought in South Africa in … summer of 1993.

c. I'm hoping to visit Italy in … summer.

5.   a. We had a really good time over … New Year.

b. Have … happy New Year!

c. I'll contact you in … New Year.

2. Study these extracts from newspapers. Decide which of them need an article (the or a/an) with the highlighted word.

1. …They had to spend night in a hotel because the flight was delayed….

2. …will be able to wake up in morning and find their video-recorder…

3. …was often kept awake at night by their song which floated up through the window…

4. …or are old people who go to bed in afternoon because they can't afford to heat their houses …

5. …until deliberations were completed. On Saturday morning, the jury embarked on its most difficult task…

6. …be put into the sculpture itself; lights can be used at night which focus on the works; better alarms at the …

7. …storm area grew and drifted southwards during afternoon, while other storms developed over the North…

8. …can doze off in the sunshine, or wander out at night. Single parents are, particularly on holiday, out on their…

9. …reflect the pain of the story. But, then, it was evening of celebration. It all ended with audience…

10. …because in my head was a dream I had during night and I wanted to continue that dream to…

APPENDIX 8

**A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO USING DETERMINERS IN ENGLISH
CORRECTLY**

The basic "rules" for using the article correctly are actually rather simple, but the problem is that there are confusing cases. We will first start with the "basic" rules and then later go into the problem areas. To find out which article to use, you first have to know whether the noun is used in a definite sense or not. If it is, you must use the definite article the, unless it is a Proper Noun or not. (Proper nouns usually do not have a definite article, but there are some exceptions.) If the noun is not used in a definite sense, you have to ask yourself a second question. Is the noun Count and Singular? If yes, you must use the indefinite article "a". If not, you must use the "zero" article. The following figure shows the choices.
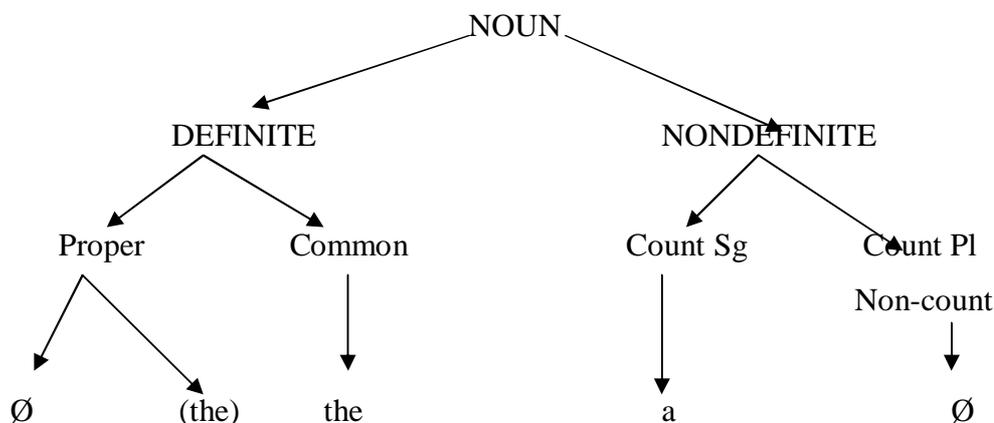
EXAMPLE:

Tom[7] went to the supermarket[2] next door and bought rice[3] and vegetables[4].

    1. Tom is a Proper Noun: NO article.

2. Supermarket is a Common Noun used in a definite sense because it is identified by "next door": use THE

3. Rice is a Common Noun, not used in a definite sense because the exact kind or quantity of rice is not known. It is not a singular Count Noun but a Non-Count Noun: use NO article.

4. Vegetables is a common noun, not used in a definite sense because the exact kind or quantity of vegetables is not known. It is not a singular Count Noun, but a plural Count Noun: use NO article.

Another way to illustrate the use of articles is with the help of the following picture. Suppose a Speaker (Richard) wants someone else (Steven), who can see the balls too, to pick up some of the balls. Richard, however, only wants three balls and they have to be black. What would be the most efficient and appropriate way for Richard to express this in English in this situation? What do the other constructions mean?

a. Please pick up black balls.

b. Please pick up the black balls.

c. Please pick up the three black balls.

d. Please pick up three black balls.
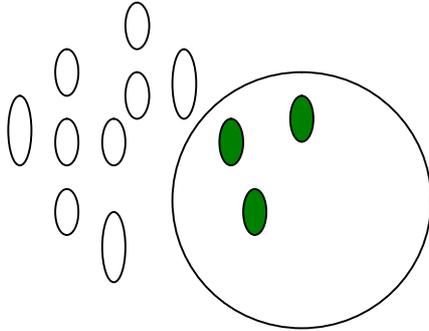
Answers:

With (a) Richard means: "Pick up some black balls, which could be two, three or more." So Steven may hand him either two or three black balls. With (b) Richard means: "Pick up the whole set of black balls that you and I can see (we can identify as the only ones)." Steven will therefore pick up all three black balls.

With (c) Richard means: "Pick up the whole set of three black balls that you and I can see (we can identify as the only three that can be meant)." So Steven will pick up the whole set of three black balls.

With (d) Richard means: "Pick up any three black balls." With that he implies that there are more than three black balls. So Steven will pick up three black balls, but he will look around for more black balls. He will be confused and wonder if he has understood Richard correctly.

Of these four constructions, both (b) and (c) would be appropriate, but (b) would be more efficient. The word "the" already means "the ones you and I can see or know about", so the word "three" is not necessary.

1. Definiteness

A noun is used in a definite sense when both the Speaker and Hearer (or writer and reader) know exactly which one(s) is/are meant. In other words, when a Speaker thinks that the Hearer can identify it as unique or the only ones, he/she will mark a common noun with the definite article (or another definite determiner, which will be discussed later). There are four cases in which the Speaker assumes that the Hearer knows exactly which one(s) is/are meant.

- .. When there is only one in our world (general world or immediate surroundings),
- .. When there is only one that can be meant in the immediate context (text or conversation),
- .. When only one can be logically meant,
- .. When a class as a whole is referred to (this is also called a generic sense).

Uses of 'The'

A. There is only one in our world or immediate surroundings

1. There is only one in our world.
    a. The sun was shining. (There is only one sun in the world).
    b. We must take care of the environment. (There is only one general ecological environment in our world.)

2. There is only one in our immediate surroundings (in our country, our neighbourhood, our house, and so on)
    a. The roses are beautiful. (The Speaker is referring to the roses in the immediate surroundings, e.g. the garden or a vase, which the Hearer can see or knows about.)
    b. There is a vase of flowers on the television. (The Speaker assumes that the Hearer knows exactly which television set is meant.)

3. Even though there may be more than one in the area, we use the in

English with park, cinema, movies, bus and train because we can

figure out that it is the one closest or most convenient to us, or the one

we usually go to.

> a.   I took the bus to town. (Here the Speaker assumes that the Hearer understands that the bus refers to a bus on a particular route, namely the one from my house to town.)

> b.   I went to the park yesterday. (The Speaker assumes that the Hearer knows which park is meant. In this case, the Hearer may not know exactly which one, but he/she will know that it is one in the Speaker's neighbourhood or one that the Speaker goes to more regularly.)

B. The person or thing is identified enough in the text (or conversation) through what has been mentioned or what is going to be mentioned so the reader knows "whichspecific one" is meant.

> 1. Text-reference back

>> a) I bought a TV and a video recorder, but the video recorder did

>>   not work after it was connected to the TV.

>> b) I took a taxi to the airport today and the driver told me that the planes were running late. (From this context we know that the driver is the driver of the taxi, the airport is the one in the area, and the planes are the ones arriving and departing from that airport).

> 2. Text-reference forward

>> c) She is studying the history of Europe. (History, which is a very general subject, is limited to the history of Europe.)

>> d) How did you get the mud on your coat? (This question implies that both the speaker and listener are aware of the fact that there is mud on the coat, so that is the mud the speaker is referring to. If the speaker had said "How did you get mud on your coat, he would imply that he does not think that the hearer is aware of the mud.)

C. There is only one person or thing that can be meant logically. In this case a word like only, most, least, first, or last makes clear that only one can be meant.

a) He is the most popular student in my class. (Only one student can be the most popular, so therefore there is only one.)

b) Mary banged herself on the forehead. (Mary has one forehead.)

D. The class as a whole is referred to. In this case one exemplar stands for the whole class; as a result, 'the' is generally used with count singular nouns. This use is often called a "generic" use.

a) The cat is a feline. (Here the word cat refers to the whole class of cats, and there is only one such class in the world.)

b) Life would be more quiet without the telephone. (Here the word telephone refers to the whole class of telephones, and there is only one such class in the world.)

EXERCISE 1. In the following sentences, explain why the definite article is used: a (there is only one in world or surroundings), b (in the context only one can be meant), c (there is only one that can be meant logically), or d (the class as a whole is referred to).

1. He is always talking about the past.

2. I always eat sticky rice in the morning.

3. I always watch the news on television.

4. Many people try to see the first show.

5. More help should be offered to the old and the unemployed.

6. My friend has written a book on the definite article in English.

7. My sister goes to the cinema very often.

8. No one knows precisely when the wheel was invented.

9. She learned to play the violin.

10. The atmosphere is very pleasant.

11. The best student in the class will receive a prize.

12. The cat has disappeared.

13. The president will address the population today.

14. The roses are beautiful.

15. The sun was shining.

16. There is a vase of flowers on the television.

17. There were huge cracks <u>in the ground</u>.

18. We must take care of <u>the environment</u>.

EXERCISE 2: In the following passage, explain why the underlined nouns are used in a definite sense. Identify with A (only one in the world/surroundings), B (the noun is identified in the text), C (only one can be meant logically), or D (a class as a whole is meant),

Pho is the most popular food among the Vietnamese population. Pho is commonly eaten for breakfast, although many people will have it for lunch or dinner. Anyone feeling hungry in the small hours of the morning can also enjoy a bowl of hot and spicy pho to fill their empty stomachs.

Like hot green tea, which has its particular fragrance, pho also has its special taste and smell. Preparations may vary, but when the dish is served, its smell and taste is indispensable. The grated rice noodle is made of the best variety of fragrant rice called Gao Te. The broth for Pho Bo (Pho with beef) is made by stewing bones of cows and pigs in a large pot for a long time. Pieces of fillet mignon together with several slices of ginger are reserved for Pho Bo Tai (rare fillet). Slices of well done meat are offered to those less keen on eating rare fillets. The soup for Pho Ga (pho with chicken meat) is made by stewing chicken and pig bones together. The white chicken meat that is usually served with Pho Ga is boneless and cut into thin slices. You could consider Pho Bo and Pho Ga Vietnam's special soups. Pho also has the added advantage of being convenient to prepare and healthy to eat.

Summary:

'The' is used with a noun phrase to show that something is definite. If something is definite, it can be identified by both the Speaker and the Hearer as the only one within their shared knowledge of their world (general, immediate, imagined, written text, conversation, and so on). "The" with a singular noun can also be used to denote a class as a whole.

2. Non-definiteness

In the preceding lesson, we saw that nouns are used in a definite sense when they refer to one person or thing (or a definite number of persons or things) that both the speaker and hearer (or writer and reader) can identify uniquely because of their shared knowledge. If the speaker does not expect the hearer to be able to identify the person(s) or the thing(s) referred to uniquely, he or she will mark the noun as non-definite by putting "a" before a singular count noun or no article (zero) before a plural count noun or a non-count noun .

	Singular Count	Plural Count	Non-Plural
a/an	A toy shop A factory		
zero		Toy shops factories	Education Factory Furniture gold love

One thing that is confusing to many students is that something can be specific, but still non-definite. English does not mark whether something is specific or not; it marks only definite versus non-definite. Read the following example.

EXAMPLE:

Allan and Barbara have bought a TV. When they talk together, both know exactly which TV is meant and will refer to it as a definite one:

Allan to Barbara: The TV sure has a clear picture. (Specific and Definite)

However, when Allan talks to his friend Collin, who has not seen the TV yet and does not even know about its existence, Allan will refer to the TV as a non-definite one (even though it is a specific one):

Allan to Collin: I bought a TV yesterday. (Specific and Non-Definite).
Later on, after Collin knows Allan is talking about the TV he just bought, Allan can refer to the TV as a definite one:

Allan to Collin: The TV was not expensive. (Specific and Definite)

A noun is used in a non-definite sense in the following cases:

1. The noun refers to one or more specific, actual members of a class (but one(s)
    that the hearer/reader cannot identify exactly). In the case of a non-count noun, the hearer/reader cannot identify the exact quantity or kind.
2. The noun refers to any arbitrary member of a class.
3. The noun names a class to which a person or thing belongs.

A. In the case of a count noun, the noun refers to a specific, actual member (or members) of a class, but the hearer is not expected to know exactly which one(s). In the case of a non-count noun, the hearer is not expected to know the exact kind or quantity.

A(n) + NOUN = A certain or particular NOUN.

NOUN + s = Some NOUNs

Zero + noun = Some NOUN.

Singular

1. I bought a TV and a video recorder. (At the store there were many TVs and video recorders, and I bought a particular member of that class; however, I don't expect the hearer to identify it.)
2. The police are looking for a man who was in the bank at the time of the robbery.
3. Tom got a job at last.
4. At the restaurant, I ordered a dish of hot and spicy food. (The speaker mentions a dish of hot and spicy food that he knows, but he does not expect the hearer to identify it.)
5. A Mr. Smith called to see you this morning. (There are many people whose last

names are Smith. There is a person who belongs to the class 'Smith', and this person called to see you. I (speaker) do not think you (hearer) are able to identify him).

Plural

1. The zoo has just bought (some) new dolphins.

2. I've bought melons but not grapes.

Non-count

1. There's cheese in the fridge. (some cheese of some kind)

2. Could you please serve tea for breakfast? (some tea of some kind)

B. The noun refers to any arbitrary member(s) of a class.

Singular

1. A zebra has stripes. (Any representative member of the class of zebra has stripes).

2. A whale is a mammal. (Any whale is a member of xxx).

3. As a professor, Derek should know better. (As a member of the class of professors, Derek, should know better).

4. You can never find a paper clip in this office. (You cannot find any representative member of the class of paper clips in this office).

Plural

1. Cigarettes are bad for your health. (Any members of the class of cigarettes)

2. Cars must be fitted with safety belts. (Any members of the class of cars)

3. Those aren't dolphins-they're whales. (Those do not belong to the class of dolphins but to the class of whales.)

Non-count

1. Hydrogen is lighter than oxygen. (Any substance that belongs to the class of hydrogen is lighter than any substance that belongs to the class of oxygen.)

2. I would like to eat rice for breakfast. (any kind of rice).

3. Research (some research of a non-definite kind) shows that it is the elderly who are the prime victims of inflation. (some inflation of a non-definite degree)

C. The noun names a class or category to which a person or thing belongs.

1. Mozart was a great musician. (Mozart is classified as belonging to the class of great musicians).

2. Mary became a doctor. (Mary became a member of the class of doctors).

3. He isn't a doctor. (He is not a member of the class of doctors).

Plural

1. They have become vegetarians. (They have become members of the class of vegetarians.)

Noun Count

1. It's sugar (It belongs to the class of sugar).

2. These shoes are made of leather. (Something that belongs to the class of leather.)

NOTE: A second mention of nouns in the A examples becomes definite, but only if it refers back to that/those particular one(s); however, second mention of the nouns in the B examples always remains non-definite (=never 'the').

1. The zoo has just bought a new dolphin. The dolphin is very young.

2. The zoo has just bought a new dolphin. If I had a dolphin of my own, I would communicate with it.

3. Minerals are abundant in nature. The earth is made up of minerals, and even the most valuable minerals are found in common rocks everywhere.

If you look back at the ball example in the introduction, you will understand that a definite sense implies a very definite number. When a noun is used in a definite sense, the article the (or another definite determiner) must be used. But if the number is vague, no 'the' is used.

EXERCISE 3: In the following passage, explain why the underlined nouns are used in a "non-definite" sense.

a. The noun refers to one or more specific, actual members of a class (but one(s) that the hearer/reader cannot identify exactly).

b. The noun refers to any arbitrary members of a class.

c. The noun names a class or category to which a person or thing belongs.

Pho is the most popular food among the Vietnamese population. Pho is commonly eaten for breakfast, although many people will have it for lunch or dinner. Anyone feeling hungry in the small hours of the morning can also enjoy a bowl of hot and spicy pho to fill their empty stomachs.

Like hot green tea, which has its particular fragrance, pho also has its special taste and smell. Preparations may vary, but when the dish is served, its smell and taste is indispensable. The grated rice noodle is made of the best variety of fragrant rice called Gao Te. The broth for Pho Bo is made by stewing bones of cows and pigs in a large pot for a long time. Pieces of fillet mignon together with several slices of ginger are reserved for Pho Bo Tai. Slices of well done meat are offered to those less keen on eating rare fillets.

The soup for Pho Ga (pho with chicken meat) is made by stewing chicken and pig bones together. The white chicken meat that is usually served with Pho Ga is boneless and cut into thin slices. You could consider Pho Bo and Pho Ga Vietnam's special soups. Pho also has the added advantage of being convenient to prepare and healthy to eat.

Forget old rules!!

One "rule of thumb" that many students have learned is that a noun followed by a phrase or clause is used in a definite sense. However, this rule is not always correct. Compare the following two sentences, both of which are correct, and look at the figures below it.

> a. The boys in the room next door are noisy.
> b. Boys in the room next door are noisy.

In both sentences, the noun "boys" is followed by the phrase "in the room next door", but it is possible to use the definite article as in (a) or not as in (b). The difference in meaning is symbolised in the pictures below. In (a) "the whole definite set of boys" and in (b) "a vague number of boys" is referred to.
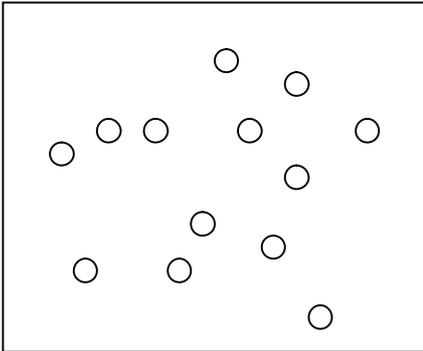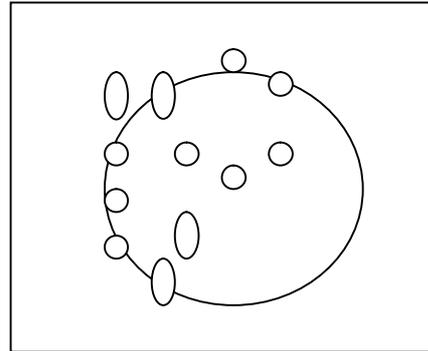
Figure a.   Figure b.

EXERCISE 4: Explain why the underlined nouns (except number 9) are used in a non-definite sense, even though they are followed by a prepositional phrase or other modifier.

Traditional costumes

Traditional COSTUMES1 of Romanian people tend to be very simple and modest. Men wear brown shirts and white trousers. Their headgear is simply a PIECE2 of cloth wrapped around the head and their footwear consists of a PAIR3 of plain sandals. For

formal ceremonies men would have two additional items, a long GOWN4 with slits on either side, and a TURBAN5, usually in black or brown made of cotton or silk. In feudal times, there were strict dress codes. Ordinary people were not allowed to wear CLOTHES6 with dyes other than black, brown or white. COSTUMES7 in yellow were reserved for the King. Those in purple and red were reserved for high ranking court officials, while DRESSES8 in blue were exclusively worn by petty court officials. Men's dress has gradually changed along with social development. The traditional SET9 of a long gown and turban gave way to more modern looking suits, while business shirts and trousers have replaced traditional long sleeved shirts and wide trousers. Traditional costumes still exist and efforts are increasingly being made to restore traditional FESTIVALS and ENTERTAINMENT10 which incorporate traditional costumes.

Different ways to express generic use

You have seen so far that there are different ways to express that a noun is used generically to stand for a class as a whole. Although these different ways are somewhat similar in meaning, they cannot all be used the same way. First, try to understand the subtle differences in meaning with the help of the figures below. The small circles represent cats, and the large circle, the class of felines.

| a. **The** cat is a | b. **A** (= any) cat is a | c. Cat**s** are |
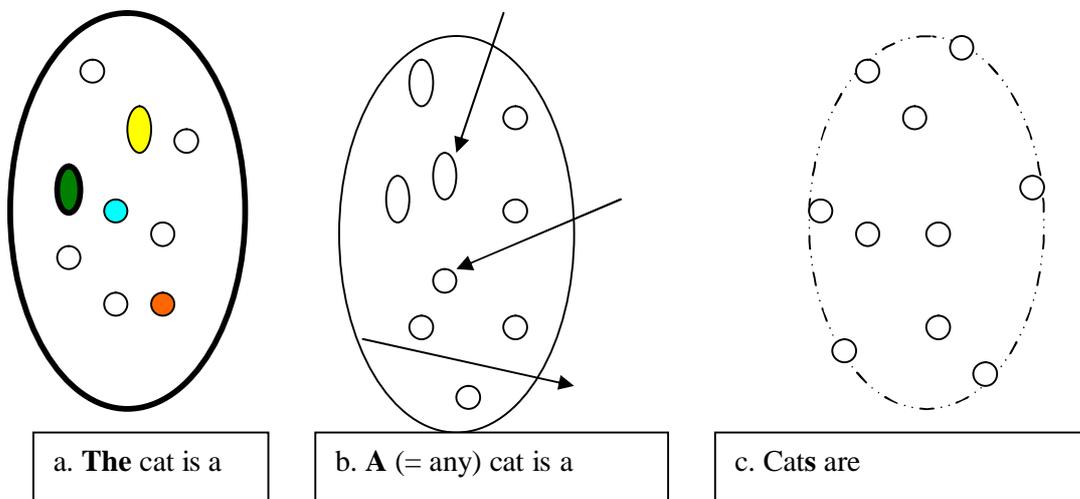
In example (a) one cat stands for the class of felines as a whole; in (b) any cat is a member of the class of felines. In (c) all individual members are members of the class of felines. As you can see, the constructions still have their basic meaning. The definite article as in (a) is very definite and allows no single exception. The indefinite article as in (b) is non-definite and expresses any individual member. The plural construction as in (c) is the vaguest and allows for possible exceptions that might exist.

When the definite article is used, we talk about the class as a whole, without any exception, so this type of construction can be used only for very general statements that are true for all members.

The novel is the most popular form of fiction writing.
The customer has a right to know where products are made.
The computer has revolutionized publishing.

The following example is incorrect because it would imply that you are reading the whole class of novels at one time to relax!

> INCORRECT: Reading _the_ novel is a good way to relax.

In this context, it would be fine to use the indefinite article or the plural. The indefinite article would imply that reading any one novel (no matter which one) at any one time is a good way to relax. The plural would imply that novels (no matter which ones) are usually (at different possible times) a good way to relax.

> _Reading a novel is a good way to relax._
> _Reading novels is a good way to relax._

In definitions, the (b) construction with the indefinite article is most common:

> A feline is an animal of the cat family.
> A novel is an imaginative prose narrative of some length, usually concerned with human experience and social behavior.
> A computer is a machine designed to carry out complex operations very rapidly.

In general statements that may not necessarily be true for all members in all cases, the plural construction is usually preferred.

> _Felines move very graciously._
> _Novels are fun to read._
> _Computers make life easy._

3. Other determiners

Besides the, a(n) and zero (= no article) other determiners like this, that and so on may be used with English nouns. There are different determiners for nouns used in a definite or non-definite sense. In each case of these cases, there are also different determiners for Count and Non-Count nouns. A Count Noun may be preceded by a determiner that implies a specific number (like a, both, each and every) or that implies more than one (like two, three, these, those, few, many or several). A Non-Count Noun may not use these.

Determiners for nouns used in a definite sense		Determiners for nouns used in a non-definite sense	
for Count Nouns	for Non-count Nouns	for Count Nouns	for Non-count Nouns
the	the	"vague quantity"	"vague quantity"
this	this	all	all
that	that	any	any
these	my	enough	enough
those	your	little	little
my	his	more	more
your	etc.	most	most
his		much	much
etc.		no	no
both		other	other
each		some	some
either		"implying a specific number"	
every		a	
		an	
		another	
		few	
		many	
		neither	
		one	
		two	
		three	
		etc.	

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NOTE: Whenever a determiner is followed by OF, you must use THE.	
Most people	Most OF THE people
Both boys	Both OF THE boys
Each day	Each OF THE days
Either week	Either OF THE weeks
Every month	Everyone OF THE months
All day	All OF THE day
Any book	Any OF THE books
Enough time	Enough OF THE time
Little ice cream	Little OF THE ice cream
More bread	More OF THE bread
Most students	Most OF THE students
Much noise	Much OF THE noise
No time	none OF THE time
Some day	Some OF THE day

EXERCISE 5. In the following excerpt all nouns have been underlined. Determine whether they are used in a definite or non-definite sense and explain why.

Definite: A (there is only one in world or surroundings), b (in the context only one can be meant), c (there is only one that can be meant logically), or d (the class as a whole is referred to).

Non-definite: E (the noun refers to one or more specific, actual members of a class, but one(s) that the hearer/reader cannot identify exactly); F (the noun refers to an arbitrary member or arbitrary members of the class); or G (the noun names a class to which another entity belongs).

A snake is a reptile without legs. A reptile usually has scales, lays eggs, breathes air, and doesn't spend much time taking care of its babies. It is also cold-blooded, which means that its body doesn't stay the same temperature all the time. (Our bodies stay at 98.6 F all day.) Snakes get very cold on winter days and very hot in the summer. Because of this,

snakes usually stay in burrows during very hot and cold weather. A burrow is a hole in the ground where they can live.

All snakes are carnivores or meat-eaters. There are no snakes that can eat people in Florida. Small snakes eat bugs and frogs. Larger ones eat fish, birds, mice, and rabbits. They use sharp teeth and strong muscles to catch the prey. If the prey animal is bigger than the snake's mouth, the snake can dislocate its bottom jaw to fit the big animal in.

Venom is a poison the snake puts into its prey through its fangs. This either kills the prey animal or makes it so the prey can't move. Once venom gets into the prey, it is easy for the snake to eat it. Some venomous snakes have bright colors or patterns which can warn us. Rattlesnakes have rattles to scare away animals or people that might hurt them.

4.Count versus Non-count Nouns

If a noun is used in a definite sense, it does not matter much whether it is Count or Non-count, because both take the as article, but when used in a non-definite sense, it is very important to know whether it a Count Noun or a Non-Count Noun. A singular Count Noun must be preceded by a(n) or another non-definite determiner, but a plural Count Noun or a Non-Count Noun do not have to be preceded by an article or determiner. Why is the distinction between Count and Non-Count Nouns so difficult for many learners? To use articles and classifiers correctly in Vietnamese or other Asiatic language, you often need to know whether an entity[8] is a human, an animal, a concrete thing or an abstract thing. For example, in Romanian the following distinctions may be made:

    a human

    an animal

    a concrete thing

    an abstract thing

---

[8] The term "entity" stands for a person, animal or thing (concrete or abstract)

In determining what kind of determiner to use in English, the conceptual distinction between humans, animals, concrete things and abstract things is not made. In English, entities are mainly classified according to whether they are construed[9] as "bounded" or "unbounded" (no matter whether they are concrete or abstract).

When an entity is construed as "bounded", it will be referred to with a Count Noun such as a house and when construed as "unbounded" with a Non-Count Noun such as water. Therefore, to help you understand which nouns are used as Count Nouns or Non-count Nouns, we will explain the notions of "bounded" and "unbounded".

4.1. Bounded entities

With the term "bounded" we mean "delimited", "enclosed", or "clearly a separate entity". Some good examples of bounded entities are persons, animals or things. A typical bounded entity has distinct, separate parts that together make up the entity. A BICYCLE is a good example of a bounded entity. It consists of wheels, a seat, a handle bar, and so on. All the parts together constitute a bicycle, but none of the parts by themselves constitute a bicycle. For example, the handlebar is not a bicycle. The wheel is not a bicycle. Only when (almost) all the parts are in place, In other words, when you have a part of the bicycle (for example, the handlebar), you do not have a bicycle. Other good examples of bounded entities are HOUSE, DOOR , GIRL, BOY, DESK, TABLE, TREE, and so on. When a bounded entity is named, it is a Count Noun. In the case it is unspecified, it is preceded by an indefinite article if it is singular and no article is used when the noun is plural .

BOUNDED ENTITY	
naming one (unspecified)	naming more than one (unspecified)
I see a house.	*I see houses.*
I see a door	*I see doors.*
I see a girl.	*I see girls.*

---

[9] to "construe" something means to "think of or see as" as

I see a boy.	*I see boys.*
I see a desk	*I see desks.*
I see a table.	*I see tables.*
I see a tree.	*I see trees.*

HOUSE, DOOR, BICYCLE, and so on are typical examples of bounded entities because they consist of clearly different parts. Other bounded entities do not necessarily have clearly different parts, but are also construed as bounded because they are things with clear beginnings and ends (boundaries) in time or space. For example SPOT, which is a small area, is clearly bounded in space. BEEP, which is a short high sound, is a sound bounded in time. Entities denoting an event like TRICK, BIRTH, or SACRIFICE are also bounded because they have clear beginnings and ends in time. See the table for more examples of entities that are usually considered bounded.

EXERCISE 6: Identify whether the following entities are bounded in time (T) or space (S). Some are bounded in both time and space.

1. apartment	11. phrase
2. attack	12. pond
3. beep	13. province
4. birth	14. row
5. climate	15. sacrifice
6. crop	16. shadow
7. field	17. spot
8. intermission	18. temperature
9. journey	19. trick
10. operation	20. wall

4.2 Unbounded entities

Some good examples of unbounded entities are substances like WATER, AIR, and GOLD. An unbounded entity usually has no distinct separate parts. Suppose you have a lake with water and you take some water out in a bucket, you still have water in the lake

and in the bucket, and it is impossible to see the difference between the water in the lake or in the bucket. Even though water is made up of separate molecules, we cannot perceive them separately with the naked eye. GRASS and DUST are like WATER because we usually do not see GRASS as separate little blades, but as one whole green entity. In other words, an unbounded entity is not seen as having clear separate parts and one small part of it is the same as the whole. Other good examples of unbounded entities are DUST, SAND, CORN, GRASS, TILE, STONE, and so on. An unbounded entity is named with a Non-Count Noun and when used in a non-definite sense, it is not preceded by an article. If you want to indicate the quantity of the entity, you have to add a quantifier like some, a lot of, a little, or a partitive construction like a pile of or a heap of.

UNBOUNDED ENTITY	
naming an unspecified quantity	Naming a specified quantity
I see water.	*I see some water.*
I see gold.	*I see a bar of gold.*
I see dust.	*I see a lot of dust.*
I see sand.	*I see a heap of sand.*
I see grass.	*I see a great deal grass.*
I see stone.	*I see a pile of stone.*

EXERCISE 7: Indicate whether the following entities would be normally construed as bounded or unbounded. In other words, are these nouns Count or Non-count? Which ones could be used as either a Count Noun of a Non-Count Noun? Illustrate the difference in meaning with a short sentence.

1. animal
2. baby
3. beer
4. book
5. brandy
6. bus

7. cake
8. cat
9. fur
10. ink
11. lake
12. meat

13. paint   17. sugar

14. ring   18. tea

15. soap   19. week

16. spot   20. wool

Nouns referring to typically "bounded" entities and usually used as Count Nouns			
persons	**places**	**things**	**units of time**
actor	address	account	day
adult	beach	article	hour
artist	camp	bag	minute
baby	city	ball	month
boy	corner	bell	week
brother	Country	bill	year
captain	edge	boat	**events bounded in time**
child	field	book	
daughter	garden	bottle	accident
doctor	hall	box	answer
driver	hill	card	battle
father	island	case	dream
friend	kitchen	chapter	effect
girl	lake	cigarette	election
husband	nation	computer	film
judge	office	cup	idea
king	park	desk	issue
lady	path	door	job
man	river	engine	journey
member	road	gate	meeting
sister	room	gun	message
son	stream	handle	method
student	street	key	mistake
teacher	town	line	plan
woman	valley	list	problem
body parts	**buildings**	machine	project
chest	apartment	magazine	scheme
ear	bank	model	shock
eye	bridge	motor	smile
head	castle	newspaper	task
face	church*	page	tour
finger	factory	picture	walk
foot	farm	product	programme
hand	hospital*	ring	question
head neck	hotel	spot	**vehicles**
groups of people	house	star	bus*
class	library	window	car*
club	prison*	**pieces of furniture**	plane*

crowd	school*	chair	ship*
party	shop	table	
pieces of clothing	station	bed*	
coat	tent		
dress	university*		
hat	**plants and animals**		
shirt	bird		
heart	cat		
	dog		
	horse		

These nouns may also be used in a Non-Count sense.

4.3. Construing the same thing as either bounded or unbounded

The distinction between "bounded" and "unbounded" is very useful, but one problem is that people can see the same thing in different ways. Therefore, some entities may in some cases be considered "bounded" and in other cases "unbounded". Compare the following two sets of sentences:

(a) This house is made of stone.

(b) This stone is heavy.

(a) People can survive on water and bread.

(b) I bought two breads today.

(a) Coats made of fur are nice and warm.

(b) I bought a nice fur to make a coat.

In the (a) examples, the words stone, bread and fur refer to the substance in general and are construed as unbounded entities and are therefore realized as Non-count Nouns. In the (b) examples, on the other hand, stone, bread, and fur refer to bounded entities made of that material and are realized as Count Nouns. The stone is "a piece of stone", the bread is a "loaf of bread", and the fur is "a piece of fur". So in the (b) cases, a specific instantiation of the substance is referred to and has clear boundaries in space. In a similar way, a distinction can be made between an entity in its general sense and a specific instantiation or kind of that entity.

(a) Rain is good for our crops.

(b) That was a heavy rain.

In (a) the noun rain refers to the unbounded entity of water falling from the sky at any time, but in (b) rain denotes a bounded time period in which rain occurred.

(a) Vegetarians do not eat meat.

(b) Pork is a white meat.

In (a) meat refers to any instantiation of meat. In (b) meat refers to a separate category of meat. In fact, the article a means something like "a kind of".

(a) We used a lot of paper today.

(b) We read two papers today.

In (a) paper refers to any instantiation of the substance PAPER, but in (b) paper is used in a different sense, namely an essay or other type of document.

EXERCISE 8: In the following sentences indicate whether the underlined nouns refer to an entity that is construed as bounded and therefore realized as Count Nouns or unbounded and realized as Non-count Nouns. In your own words, try to explain WHY.

1. I saw a fish in the lake.

2. Fish is good to eat.

3. Time is a valuable commodity.

4. I saw him one time.

5. We should respect the institution of marriage.

6. Theirs was not a good marriage.

7. Do not use too much paper.

8. I have to work on a paper for my English class.

9. She has beautiful hair.

10. I found a hair in my soup.

EXERCISE 9: Indicate whether the following nouns indicate a bounded (B) entity or an unbounded (U) entity. Some nouns can refer to both. If so, illustrate the difference in meaning by giving two short example sentences.

acid	cream	lamp	paper
book	field	literature	rain
bread	food	meat	shoe
cap	glass	milk	snow
coat	horse	music	time

With substances like WATER, GOLD, or STONE, it is relatively easy to understand why they are construed as unbounded, but with other types of entities, especially abstract entities, it may be more difficult. Try to keep in mind that in English something is construed as unbounded when it does not really have clear separate parts or clear limits in time or space. We will discuss quite a few examples of entities that can be considered either bounded or unbounded and what the difference is in meaning between the two. Do NOT try to memorize the lists or examples, but try to UNDERSTAND the differences in meaning, so that you can develop some intuition about whether a noun is Count or Non-Count.

Mass (natural) entities	
usually unbounded	sometimes bounded (which may also occur in plural)
atmosphere	fire
china (dishes made of porcelain)	flood
earth	ground
electricity	paper
energy	rain
flesh	wind
fur	wine
grass	
hair	
ice	
nature	
salt	
sand	
snow	
soil	
water	
weather	

As you saw earlier, mass entities (substances) are usually construed of as unbounded. The entities in the left-hand column usually occur as Non-count Nouns as in *Have you bought some new china?*. The entities in the right-hand column, however, may be construed as bounded or unbounded. Some examples of the different senses are given below.

a. Fire is dangerous. (general phenomenon of combustion)

b. There were three fires in my town last night. (specific bounded occurrences of the general phenomenon)

a. He owns a great deal of ground. (land, the surface of the earth)

b. The grounds are very well kept. (a bounded area around a building)

a. Wine contains about 6% alcohol. (the substance in general)

b. South Africa produces many good wines. (kinds of wine)

Human values, emotions or mental states			
usually unbounded		usually unbounded, but may also have a bounded sense (these nouns may be used in the plural)	
anger	loneliness	(im)purity	language
confidence	luck	absence	pleasure
courage	magic	beauty	power
duty	mercy	comfort	reality
evil	patience	death	security
existence	poverty	depression	strength
faith	pride	fear	thought
freedom	respect	joy	
fun	safety		
happiness	silence		
health	spite		
independence	status		
intelligence	violence		
justice	worth		

Because human emotions or states of mind are rather vague, abstract entities, they are usually considered unbounded. For example, what exactly is "confidence"? You cannot say that one particular thing is an example of "confidence". It is a whole range of mental attitudes and behavior a person may have. In other words, like water, confidence does not exist of clear separate parts. They do not have clear beginnings or ends.

> *a. She has confidence.*
>
> *b. They have courage.*
>
> *c. We want freedom and justice.*

Note, however, how some of these emotions or mental states may occur in a bounded sense:

> *a. He suffers from depression.*
>
> *b. He has had many depressions (Separate, bounded, periods in which he suffered from depression).*

> *a. This never happens in reality.*
>
> *b. People may have different realities. (A bounded sense of reality occurs as each reality pertains to separate people)*

a. Romania is a Country of great beauty. (the state of being beautiful in general)
b. Among those horses, there are three real beauties. (specific, separate horses that are beautiful)

a. Is human thought influenced by language? (both the notion of thought and language are used in their general sense, encompassing all kinds of thought and any instantiation of language)
b. Many thoughts went through his mind. (thought is used here in the sense of separate ideas)
c. How many languages does he speak? (specific languages that are spoken in separate countries.)

Food	
usually construed as unbounded	construed as bounded or unbounded
pork beef	chicken food meat lamb

Nouns like school and hospital are used in an unbounded sense when referring to their function, but bounded when referring to the actual building. Meat is unbounded when it refers to food in general, but bounded when it refers to kinds of meat. Compare the following sets of sentences.

a. I like chicken. (= chicken meat)

b. I saw a few chickens in the road. (= animals)

Acts or action		
(Nouns related to verbs)		
Entities usually construed as unbounded		entities usually construed as unbounded, but may also have a bounded sense (these nouns may be used in the plural)
advice	Waste	concern
attention	work	experience
design	education	growth
behaviour	insurance	trade
help	pollution	training
labour	protection	travel
teaching	relief	access
transport	research	
trust	sleep	

Many nouns refer to acts or actions and are related to verbs; for example, the noun sleep is related to the verb sleep. When used in their verb like sense, to refer to a range of actions that do not have clearly separate parts, these nouns are Non-Count. But again, many of these nouns have different senses, some of which may be Count.

NOTE: Advice, research, and work are always used in an unbounded sense and are therefore always Non-Count.

> *a. He gave me good advice. (NOT: A gave me a good advice.)*
> *b. He has done a great deal of research. (NOT: He did a research.)*
> *c. He has work. He has gone to work. (NOT: He has a work.)*

Some of the other nouns may be used in either a bounded or unbounded sense.

> *a. People need about eight hours of sleep per night. (= the general*
> *activity of sleeping)*
> *b. I had a very good sleep. (= a bounded period of sleep)*
>
> *a. This problem is of great concern. (= a matter that worries all of us)*
> *b. A concern of mine is that I will not pass the test. (= a specific*
> *worry for a particular person)*
>
> *a. He has a lot of experience in working with horses. (experience in a*
> *general sense, not bounded in time)*
> *b. He had three bad experiences while working with horses. (separate*
> *events)*

Human institutions

usually construed as unbounded	construed as bounded or unbounded
Education	school
health	hospital
wealth	temple
welfare	university
	development
	government
	industry
	power
	society
	tradition

A noun like "education" refers to an entity that has no clear separate parts. What is "education"? Is it the books you read or the classes you take? Obviously, the concept of education is rather vague and therefore construed as unbounded. The nouns in the right hand column may have a bounded or unbounded sense.

a. These Countries have shown a great deal of development.

(progress)

b. What are the recent developments in politics? (specific events)

a. We do not want any industry in our area because it may cause

pollution. (factories in general)

b. This area has three main industries. (kinds of industry)

a. We go to school early every day. (= general place to study)

b. We visited the school my friend goes to. (= the building)

a. He went to temple yesterday. (= place to worship)

b. The tourist admired the beautiful temple (= the building)

The lists above were meant to give you an idea of the different types of words that may be used in unbounded senses and also to show you how an unbounded and bounded sense of the same word may differ. However, the lists are by no means complete and when in the future you wonder about a particular word, you should look it up in a good learner's dictionary.

EXERCISE 10: In the following sentences, decide whether the underlined noun is used in a bounded or unbounded sense. Try to explain why.

1. All humans have the capacity for <u>language.</u>
2. English is a difficult <u>language</u> to learn.
3. <u>Is thought</u> dependent on language?
4. I will give you a penny for your <u>thought.</u>
5. Romania has a rich <u>culture.</u>
6. Does language affect <u>culture?</u>
7. I approached the lion with <u>fear.</u>
8. One of my <u>fears</u> is to be stuck in an elevator.
9. There are many problems in <u>society.</u>
10. There are many problems in this <u>society.</u>

EXERCISE 11: In the following passage decide whether the underlined noun is used in a bounded (= Count) or unbounded (= Non-Count) sense.

The <u>question</u> of whether or not <u>language</u> affects the thought and culture of the people who use it remains to be answered. Even if we were to agree that it does, we would have <u>difficulty</u> calculating the extent to which the <u>language</u> we use influences our <u>society</u>. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that a <u>language</u> reflects the <u>thoughts</u>, attitudes and culture of the people who make it and use it. A <u>rich</u> vocabulary on a given subject reveals an area of concern of the society whose <u>language</u> is being studied. The <u>choice</u> between positive and negative t<u>erms</u> for any

given concept (as, for example, in the choice between freedom fighter and terrorist) reveals the presence or absence of prejudicial feelings toward the subject . The presence of taboo reveals underlying fears and superstitions of a society . The occurrence of euphemism (passed away) or dysphemysm (croaked) reveals areas which the society finds distasteful or alarming.

EXERCISE 12: Read the text below and decide (1) if the noun is used in a definite sense. If yes fill in the. (2) If not, decide if the noun is Count or Non Count. If the noun is Count Singular, fill in a. If not, leave the blank blank.

A camera is _____ piece of _____ equipment used for taking _____ photographs. The camera lets in _____ light from _____ image in front of it and directs _____ light onto _____ photographic film. The light has _____ effect on _____ chemicals which cover _____ film and forms _____ picture on it. When _____ film is developed it is washed in _____chemicals which make _____ picture permanent. It is then possible to print _____ picture onto _____ photographic paper.

EXERCISE 13 : Read the text below and decide (1) if the noun is used in a definite sense. If yes fill in the. (2) If not, decide if the noun is Count or Non Count. If the noun is Count Singular, fill in a. If not, leave the blank blank.

Mineral resources

_____ minerals are abundant in _____ nature. _____ earth is made up of _____ minerals, and even _____ most valuable minerals are found in _____ common rocks everywhere. Nevertheless, many of _____ minerals near ___earth's surface exist in _____ small amounts. As a result, they cannot be mined economically. Only _____ big deposits can be mined at a reasonable cost. _____ biggest deposits of _____ minerals are distributed unequally around _____ world. Some minerals, like _____ iron in the Mesabi Mountains in Michigan, are almost gone.

Others, like _____ copper, cobalt, and _____ petroleum, are located under the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Persian Gulf. We have already taken many of _____ mineral deposits that were easy to mine. Today _____ companies have to look harder and deeper to find __ minerals, and _____cost of _____ minerals reflects this. Unless ___exploration and _____ technology keep up with our use of _____ resources. _____ cost of _____ minerals will increase dramatically.

5. Proper nouns and names
(adapted from Quirk et al. pages 292-297)

Proper nouns and names are basically names of specific people (George Bush), place names (Romania, King's college), months (June), days (Monday), festivals (Easter), names of magazines, books (Time), names of meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), names of sports and games (football, tennis, Monopoly, chess, etc.).

Usually proper nouns and names, which are often used in a definite sense because they are unique, do NOT take an article. However, in some cases these proper nouns and names may be used as a common noun and receive an article. Compare the examples below.

> *Mr. Wilson is absent from work today. (normal use)*
> *I also know a Mr. Wilson. (There are many persons by the name of Mr. Wilson and I also know one of those.)*
> *I met a Mr. Wilson yesterday. (meaning a person called Mr. Wilson.)*

Names of sports:

> *I like to play tennis. (Here tennis is a used as the name of a sport.)*
> *Tennis is an invigorating sport. (Here tennis is used as the name of a sport.)*
> *The tennis played by John McEnroe was stimulating. (Here "the tennis" stands for "the kind of tennis")*

Names of meals

Breakfast is served at 9. (Breakfast is used as the name of a meal.)

I had breakfast at 8 this morning. (Breakfast is used as the name of a meal.)

I had eggs and sausage for breakfast. (Breakfast is used as the name of a meal.)

I had a good breakfast. (Here "a breakfast" stands for "a kind of breakfast".)

I liked that hotel for the breakfast they served. (Here "the breakfast" stands for "the kind of breakfast".)

Temporal names and seasons:

I moved here in January. (Here January is used as a name. It means either the January of this year or any January in the past.)

I moved here in the January of 1993. (Here a particular January is meant.)

Most proper nouns and names do NOT have an article, but sometimes "the" is part of the name. Below you will find a list of examples.

Plural names:

Countries: The Netherlands, the Midlands, the United States, the British Isles

Groups of islands: the Bahamas, the Philippines

Ranges of mountains: the Himalayas, the Alps

Names with the compass points in them:

The North, the North West, etc.

Names consisting of a common noun with post modification.

The House of Commons, the District of Columbia, the Ohio University

Press, the British Broadcasting Company

Names of water ways, big bodies of water, and ships:

Rivers: the Avon, the Hau River, the Mississippi

Seas and oceans: the North Sea, the Pacific (ocean)

Canals: the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal

Other geographical features of coastline: the Gulf of Mexico, the Cape of

Good Hope, the Isle of Wight.

Ships and airplanes: the Victory, the Spirit of Saint Louis

Some public institutions and facilities (usually with a common noun as part of the name):

> *Hotels and restaurants: the Grand (Hotel), the Waldof Astoria*
>
> *Theatres, opera houses, cinemas, and clubs: the Pathé, the Globe (Theatre)*
>
> *Museums, libraries, hospitals, etc.: the British Museum, the National Museum, the Bodleian (Library), the Middlesex Hospital.*
>
> *Names of newspapers and periodicals: The Economist, The New York Times, The Observer.*
>
> *Names of religious books: the Bible, the Koran*

Names of peoples to refer to the people of that country in a general sense:

> *The Romanian, the Chinese, the French, the English, the Dutch*

EXERCISE 14: Write the announcements and headlines of the articles in a travel magazine on the basis of the cues provided. Use the spaces provided below each item for the answer.

holiday / in / Bahamas

_____

tour / of / White house

_____

Harrisburg / is / capital / of / Pennsylvania

_____

train / to / Paris / leaves / from / Waterloo Station

_____

walk / along / Princes Street

_____

EXERCISE 15: Read the story about Banh chung and decide (1) if the noun is a proper noun. If yes, do NOT use an article unless it involves one of the exceptions mentioned above. (2) If it is a common noun, decide if it is used in a definite sense. If yes, fill in

the. (3) If not, decide if the noun is Count or Non Count. If the noun is Count Singular, fill in a. If not, leave the blank blank.

Banh chung

Banh chung or _____ New Year's rice cakes, _____ specialty for Tet, are _____ moist rice squares wrapped in _____ banana leaves, which give _____ desired light green color to _____ rice. In _____ south, _____ cakes are called _____ Banh Tet and are round. _____ Vietnamese attribute their victories in _____ historic battles to _____ Banh chung, _____ present-day equivalent of C-rations. For _____ days, in either _____ hot or cold weather, _____ rice packet remains unspoiled. Eaten with some locally picked mint leaves or greens, _____ rice concoction provides _____ balanced diet. In _____ battle of _____ Dong Da, for example, _____ individual portions of Banh Chung tied around _____ soldiers' waists allowed emperor Quang Trung to travel quickly, and thus surprise _____ Chinese—lending further _____ credibility to _____ adage that _____ army does, indeed, travel on its stomach.

EXERCISE 16: Read the story about Cantho and decide (1) if the noun is a proper noun. If yes, do NOT use an article unless it involves one of the exceptions mentioned above. (2) If it is a common noun, decided if it is used in a definite sense. If yes fill in the. (3) If not, decide if the noun is Count or Non Count. If the noun is Count Singular, fill in a. If not, leave the blank blank.

_____ Cantho

Situated 112 miles southwest of _____ Ho Chi Minh City in _____ Cantho province. Cantho is _____ main rice-producing area of _____ country. _____ rice planting takes place in July; _____ rice seedlings are transplanted a month later. Lying by _____ Hau Giang River, Cantho is _____ junction of _____ communication. It is _____ thriving commercial center, with _____ busy shipping industry. _____ visitors can take _____ boat ride along _____ the Hau river and observe _____ changing landscapes while observing _____ life on _____ river. Also of _____ interest in _____ Cantho are _____ tours of _____Song Hau State Farm and _____ Fruit Plantation, _____ OrchidGardens,

_____ Cantho University, _____ Medical School and hospital, and _____ Museum of _____ Ninth Military Zone.

EXERCISE 17: Correct article errors, if necessary.

1. Sri Lanka has the wonderful climate.

_____

2. The organization's aim is to educate the public about the dangers of smoking.

_____

3. We need an environment free from pollution.

_____

4. She has worked in a fashion industry since she left school.

_____

5. The wind is blowing dust all the way from Africa.

_____

6. We can look forward to a warm southerly wind this weekend.

_____

7. The USA is a country with the high level of immigration.

_____

8. How can we combine economic growth and respect for an environment?

_____

9. Car exhaust emissions are having a major effect on a world's climate.

_____

10. That's Terry—he's the third person on the right.

_____

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