Sveučilište u Zagrebu

Filozofski fakultet

Odsjek za anglistiku

Katedra za metodiku

ENGLISH ARTICLES:

INSIGHTS FROM L2 LEARNERS

Diplomski rad

Student: Josip Marijan

Mentor: dr. sc. Renata Geld, doc.

Zagreb, veljača 2016.

University of Zagreb

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English

TEFL Section

ENGLISH ARTICLES:

INSIGHTS FROM L2 LEARNERS

Graduation thesis

Student: Josip Marijan

Supervisor: Assistant professor Renata Geld, Ph.D.

Zagreb, February 2016

Examining Committee:

Stela Letica Krevelj, PhD, postdoc.

assistant professor Mateusz Milan Stanojević

assistant professor Renata Geld

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank professor Siniša Opić from the University of Zagreb, and professors Zsolt Király and Zoltán Kövecses from Eötvös Loránd University for their help and advice.

Also I wish to thank the students and the staff of Eötvös József Gimnázium in Budapest, especially Ms Magdolna Párkányi, for their affability and cooperation.

Table of Contents

Abstract

This thesis compares two approaches to designing teaching materials. One of them is based on the traditional approach to grammar and the other is based on the cognitive approach to grammar. Two groups of high-school students were tested in order to determine their pre-existing knowledge of English articles. After that, the two groups were taught according to two different lesson plans, and they were tested again immediately after the lessons were over. They were tested for the third time two weeks after the lessons. The traditional group showed slight improvement and the cognitive group showed substantial improvement.

Key words: English article system, L2 learners, cognitive grammar, approaches to teaching pedagogy

1. Introduction

This paper aims to analyse the effectiveness of the use of cognitive grammar in teaching the English language, especially focusing on the area of English articles. First, we present the theoretical framework that served as the foundation for the lessons used in the study. The first section deals with the etymological origins and the historical development of the meaning of articles in English and several other European languages. The second section presents the ways articles are described in a number of relevant "traditional" grammar books, and the third section refers to relevant cognitive grammar books. The fundamental concepts of cognitive grammar, like grounding, mental spaces, mental contact, discourse space, etc. are explained. The section also presents notions such as: the indefinite, definite and generic reference and the accompanying use of articles. The fourth section presents and discusses grammar teaching practices and ways of designing teaching material when teaching grammar is concerned, and their change and development over the last thirty years. Special emphasis is put on teaching articles. The fifth section presents the review of the previous research into the effectiveness of using cognitive grammar in various areas of teaching L2 grammar. After the theoretical overview, the sixth section deals with the study conducted. We describe the test results obtained from two groups of pupils, who were taught in two different ways: one with the approach based on traditional grammar and the other with the approach based on cognitive grammar. The results were compared in order to determine the effectiveness of the two ways of teaching.

2. The History of the Development of Articles

Many European languages possess definite and indefinite articles functioning as initial elements in noun phrases. In Germanic and Romance languages the definite article has developed from a demonstrative pronoun. In French it developed from Latin demonstrative pronouns (masc. *le* < Latin *illum*, fem. *la* < *illam*, plural *les* < *illos*, *illas*). In German (masc. *der*, fem. *die*, neuter *das*) and in English (*the*), the definite article developed from a Proto-Germanic demonstrative stem (**de-/da-*). The indefinite article developed from the numeral "one" (French masc. *un*, fem. *une* < Latin *unum, una*; German *ein, eine* from *eins*, English *a*(*n*) from *one*). We can see that in Romance languages (excluding Romanian where the article is suffixed) the same Latin demonstrative pronoun lost some of its deictic content and its independent word stress and was reinterpreted as an article. Exactly parallel process took place in the western Germanic languages and in Greek (Bynon, 1993).

2.1. Significance of Expressing Definiteness and Indefiniteness in English

To express the definiteness or indefiniteness of a noun the English language possesses grammaticalized lexemes known as articles. Let us take a more detailed look at the development of articles in English. Modern English definite article *the* has its origins in the grammatical system of Old English which has its origins in Proto-Germanic. As Barber (2002) explains, Proto-Germanic had a system of cases for the pronouns, articles and similar words. Where Modern English has the one form *the*, Proto-Germanic had a whole series of forms according to the case, number and gender of the noun that followed. This was still so in Old English, where "the woman" is *sē wīfmann* (masculine), "learning" is *sēo lār* (feminine), and "the wife" is *ðæt wīf* (neuter). The complete declension of the old English definite article can be seen in *Table 1*.

	SINGULAR			PLURAL
	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	All Genders
N.	sē	sēo	ðæt	ðā
G.	ðæs	ðǣre	ðæs	ðāra
D.	ðǣm	ðǣre	ðǣm	ðǣm
A.	ðone	ðā	ðæt	ðā
I.	ðȳ, ðon		ðȳ, ðon	

Table 1 Declension of Old English definite article (Baugh & Cable, 1983)

Baugh and Cable (1983) further assert that while the ordinary meaning of *sē, sēo, ðæt* is "the", the word is really a demonstrative pronoun and survives in the Modern English demonstrative *that*.

Barber (2002) explains the origins of modern English articles. The modern form of the definite article *the* arose as late Old English *ðe*, which supplanted *sē* and *sēo*; it had its initial thorn from other case-forms, which all began with *ð*. In the course of Middle English, the other forms disappeared, and *the* became used for all of them. By the end of the Middle English period we have reached the modern position, in which *the* is the only form of the definite article, and *that* (originally that nominative/accusative singular neuter form of the definite article) has become a contrasting demonstrative with its own distinct meaning.

The unstressed form of Old English *ān* "one" led to the modern indefinite article: the vowel was shortened in Old English, because of the absence of stress and then in Middle English the final /-n/ was lost before consonants but not before vowels, giving the forms *a* and *an*.

3. Review of Traditional Grammar Books

According to Karlovčan (2002, p. 165) the chief structural function of the articles *a(n)*, and *the* is that of determiners that precede nouns. The articles have no function independent of the noun they precede. The article implies a certain view of the noun to which it applies. It contains information whether the noun is:

a) known or identified

b) unfamiliar, vague of generalized

c) whether it refers to an actual example or to a representative of a whole class of nouns.

A noun that refers to an actual example of something is called specific, which can be definite or indefinite. A noun that acts as a class designator is called generic.

To be able to assign the correct article to an English noun, six questions must be answered. Is the noun:

1) generic or specific

2) definite or indefinite

3) countable or uncountable

4) postmodified or not

5) common or proper

6) part of an idiomatic phrase.

3.1. The Definite Article

The definite article in specific reference is used when identity has been established by an earlier mention of the same noun.

*Martin ordered **a book** and **the book** that he ordered has just arrived.*

First mention makes ***a(n)*** the correct article for a singular countable noun, ***zero*** article for a plural or uncountable noun. Second mention makes ***the*** correct article both for countable and uncountable nouns (Karlovčan, 2002, p. 166).

Eastwood (2009) confirms this by saying that when something is first mentioned, the noun usually has *a/an*. When the same thing is mentioned again we usually use *the*. He continues by saying that *the* is used for something unique, as in example (1)

(1) *A car stopped and **the driver** got out.* (A car has only one driver.)

The definite article is used when the identity of a noun is established by a postmodifying prepositional phrase or relative clause. This use of *the* is limited to cases where the relative clause restricts the reference of the noun in such a way that it assumes unique reference (Karlovčan, 2002, p. 166) as in example (2):

(2) ***The** wines of France/which France produces are the best in the world.*

Also according to Eastwood (2009) we often use *the* when a phrase or clause comes after the noun and shows which one is meant (example 3).

(3) *Ours is **the house on the corner**.*

But if the phrase or clause does not give enough information to show which one is meant, we use *a/an* (example 4).

(4) *We live in **a house overlooking the park**.*

We often use *the* when an of-phrase follows the noun (example 5).

(5) *We came to **the edge of a lake**.*

But we can use *a/an* in an of-structure expressing quantity (example 6).

(6) *Would you like **a piece of cake**?*

Karlovčan (2002) asserts that the definite article is used before nouns which refer to what is understood to be unique in a particular context. Many nouns, by reason of locality, can represent only one particular thing. For example, in the context of a room, we may refer to the door, the floor, etc. Names of monuments or places may also be considered unique in that the name is associated with only one monument or place: *the Acropolis, the White House*, etc. But the principle does not hold true in all classes. With many names used in daily life of English speakers there is no way of telling when convention or fashion or accident has decided on the use or non-use of the article.

For generalizations Eastwood (2009) asserts that we can use a plural or an uncountable noun on its own, or a singular noun with *a/an* or *the* (example 7).

(7) a) ***Camels** can close their noses.*

   b) ***A camel** can close its nose.*

c) ***The camel*** *can close its nose.*

Karlovčan (2002, p. 167) expands on the topic; the definite article is used with singular countable nouns referring to what is general or typical for a whole class of objects. This is the **generic** use of the definite article (example 8).

(8) ***The tiger*** *is a wild animal.*

In the example above, the definite article emphasizes the uniqueness of the class as a whole and not one individual member of the class. Essentially the same meaning can be expressed by the plural form of the noun without any article and by singular form preceded by the indefinite article (example 9):

(9) a) *Tigers are wild animals.*
    b) *A tiger is a wild animal.*

There is, however, a slight difference in the fact that ***the tiger*** emphasizes the species as a whole, while ***a tiger*** emphasizes an individual representative of the species, in the sense of any. The plural form without any article emphasizes all the representatives of the species.

For mass nouns there is only one generic form, that with no article (example 10):

(10)   ***Water*** *is composed of* ***hydrogen*** *and* ***oxygen***.

English tends to treat mass and plural nouns as generic when they are premodified. But when they are postmodified, especially by an *of phrase*, an article or some other determiner normally has to be present. This is especially the case with abstract nouns: *Chinese history* but *the history of China* (Karlovčan, 2002, p. 169).

Adjectives are used with the generic *the* to denote a class of people (*the poor, the young*, etc.), or an abstract quality (*the evil, the good*). Some nationality adjectives, in particular those ending in –ch or –sh, are used with the definite article to refer to a people collectively: *the French, the Irish*. The generic definite article with plural nouns referring to the people of a nationality or ethnic group in total: *the Croats, the Germans*, etc. When referring to languages, *the* is used when the nationality adjective premodifies the world language: ***the*** *English language*. But when the world language is omitted, so is *the*: *He speaks English* (Karlovčan, 2002, p. 169).

The definite article is used before the superlatives of adjectives and adverbs. The possessive form of a noun or a possessive determiner can be used instead of *the* in front of a

superlative: *Britain's oldest man* instead *the oldest man in Britain*. *The* is used before ordinal numbers: *the first, the second*. *The* is used before the adjectives expressing a time or space sequence: *the next, the last*. With reference to parts of the body and following a preposition, *the* is often used instead of possessive pronouns: *Anna banged herself on **the forehead*** (Karlovčan, 2002, pp. 170-171).

Most names of people and places are without *the*. But some names have *the*. Such examples are names that have a grammatical structure of, see examples 11-13:

(11)   of-phrase: ***the** Duke **of** Edinburgh*

(12)   adjective: ***the American** school*

(13)   plural form: ***the Johnsons***

But according to Karlovčan (2002, p. 171) sometimes proper nouns change into common nouns. This happens when there is a possible confusion between two things of the same name, and in such a case the definite article is used (example 14):

(14)   ***the** Susan next door (not **the** Susan who works in your office)*

Most continents, islands, countries, states and counties are without *the*. Exceptions are names ending with *republic* or *kingdom* or plural names (***the** Dominican Republic, **the** Netherlands*). When the name of a continent or country is modified by another word, we do not use *the* (*to North Wales*). Most other regions have *the* (***the** Midlands*). Most mountains and hills are without *the*, exceptions are ***the** Matterhorn, **the** Eiger*. Mountain ranges and hill ranges have *the*. Lakes are without *the*. Rivers, canals and seas have *the*. Most cities, towns, suburbs and villages are without *the*. Exceptions are ***The Hague*** and ***The Bronx***. Most roads, streets and parks are without *the*, but some names with adjectives have *the* (***the** High Street*). We can also use *the* with some main roads in cities (*along **the** Edgware Road*). We use *the* with by-passes and motorways. Other exceptions to the general rule are ***the** Avenue, **the** Mall* and ***the** Strand*. Some bridges are without *the* (*Westminster Bridge*). This includes the major London bridges. But there are also bridges with *the* (***the** Sydney Harbour Bridge*). *The* is used in American English. Most transport facilities, churches, schools and other important buildings, as well as palaces and houses are without *the*. We use *the* when there is an of-phrase or an adjective or noun modifier. With theatres, cinemas, hotels, museums, galleries and centres we usually use *the* except with a possessive form. Most shops and restaurants are without *the*. We use *the* with shops and restaurants when there is an adjective or noun modifier (Eastwood, 2009).

Karlovčan (2002, pp. 171-173) brings a detailed list of cases when to use and when not to use the definite article. Definite article is used with:

- geographic names composed entirely or partially of common nouns (*the United Kingdom*)
- names composed of common nouns plus proper names contained within of-phrases (*the Dominion of Canada*)
- plural names of continents and geographic groups of nations (*the Americas, the Balkans*). Normally, no article is used with names of countries, states, counties.
- names of mountain ranges (*the Alps*). *The* is not used with names of single mountains (*Mont Blanc*)
- names of groups of islands (*the Philippines*). *The* is not used with the name of one island.
- names of groups of lakes (*the Great Lakes*). *The* is not used with names of single lakes if the word lake precedes. But if the name of the lake comes first, *the* is used (*the Michigan lake,* but *Lake Michigan*)
- all other bodies of water: rivers, seas, oceans, bays, straits, etc.
- deserts, forests, peninsulas and archipelagos
- with points of the compass as names for geographical areas (*the South, the Equator*)
- names of some cities (*the Hague, the Bronx*). With names of other cities and towns, no article is used.
- university or college when the proper noun follows in an of-phrase (*the University of Washington*, but *Oxford University*)
- the names of newspapers

Definite article is not used with:

- names of streets, parks, boulevards
- names of holidays
- names of the days of the week and the names of the months
- names of magazines. Exceptions (*the Reader's Digest, the Saturday Review of Literature*)
- the plural of family names (*the Johnsons*)

Common nouns without the article (Karlovčan, 2002, p. 175):

- No article is used before nouns used in general sense (*Members are requested to pay their membership fee by the end of the month*).
- names of meals hardly ever take an article, unless specially qualified (***Dinner** will be served at 8 o'clock.* But: *Were you at **the dinner** for the ambassador?*)
- no article is used with nouns like: **bed, church, prison, hospital, school, college, sea, market, court** when we think of the function of the object or building. However, the article is used when the reference is made to the building or object (*He is in **hospital**.* But: *We looked for **the hospital***). In American English university and hospital are used with the definite article.
- man or woman take no article when used in a collective or abstract sense (***Man** cannot live by bread alone.*)

3.2. The Indefinite Article

Karlovčan (2002, p. 176)) explains that the indefinite article is normally used before a singular countable noun when it is mentioned for the fist time and represents no particular person or thing. A singular countable noun is first introduced by *a(n)* and then, as soon as the identity of the person, animal or thing has been established, *the* is used. The principal function of the indefinite article is to denote that we are dealing with a single specimen of the class of persons, animals or things indicated by the noun, with the implication that no attempt is made to distinguish one individual member of a class from any other specimen of the same class. That is the true indefinite use of the indefinite article and it is far more common that any other use of *a(n)*: *He ate **an orange**.*

According to Eastwood (2009) we can use *a/an* in a noun phrase to classify something (example 15).

(15)   *Anglesey is **an island** off the north coast of Wales.*

The indefinite article can refer to a class of things as a whole (***A lion** is an animal*). This may be termed a classifying indefinite article. It often occurs in definitions. The classifying *a(n)* may also introduce an apposition (Karlovčan, 2002, p. 176) (example 16).

(16)   *John, **a student at our university**, will compete in the Olympic Games.*

We can do this when we refer to someone's nationality, beliefs or a person's job (Eastwood, 2009).

*The gold medal winner was **an Irishman**.*

*My sister is **a doctor**.*

He emphasised that the true indefinite article and the classifying indefinite article display some differences in forming their plurals. The plural of the true indefinite article is **some** or **no article** (*He ate an apple. He ate **some apples***). The classifying *a(n)*employs no determiner in the plural (*This is an apple, not a pear. These are apples, not pears*). The classifying indefinite article is obligatory when a singular countable noun is complement of the verb to be (*Dr Padovan is a famous surgeon*.)

Eastwood (2009) asserts that many nouns in English have a countable as well as noncountable sense. The indefinite article is naturally used with the singular countable form, as in examples 17-18:

(17)   ***Life** is hard.* (life in general)

(18)   *Joan of Arc had **a difficult life***. (an individual life)

Karlovčan (2002, p. 177) expands by saying that when a noun that is usually uncountable refers to what is thought of as a contained item, the noun becomes countable and may be used with *a(n)* (*Would you like **a beer?***) Changing uncountable nouns into countable form usually requires some kind of container or unit measure (*a glass of water, a piece of advice*). On the other hand, changing countable nouns into their uncountable forms usually requires changing them into a more abstract or generalized form (*a chair – furniture*). *A(n)* used with uncountable nouns may have a sense of: a kind of, the kind of, some: *That restaurant serves **a special French wine***. (A kind of).

Karlovčan (2002, p. 178) also lists some special uses of the indefinite article:

- the indefinite article is required after **such** and **what** with singular countable nouns: *such/what a pretty face*
- *A(n)* is used before certain numerical expressions: *a dozen, a score, a gross, a hundred*, etc.
- **Not a, many a, quite a, rather a**: *Many a man has volunteered.*

- *A(n)* appears in distributive function in expressions of price, speed, ration (approaching the meaning of "each"): *once a day, 5 dollars a bottle, sixty kilometres an hour...*
- *A(n)* with a proper name means **a certain**: *A Mr Smith called you*.
- Informally, *a* is used with **most** in the sense of **very**: *She is **a most** beautiful woman*.
- **Of a** + **a time indication** expresses what is habitual: *Often of a morning a blackbird would call*.
- With most physical ailments or disorders, no article is used: *He has pneumonia*. But: *He has a headache, a fever, a cold* and *He has (the) flu/(the) measles/(the) mumps*.

4. Review of Cognitive Grammar Books

"Grounding is an essential feature of any situation and is grammatically expressed by determiners, tense and modal verbs. Determiners ground things in the current discourse, tense grounds situations in time and reality space, and modal verbs ground situations only in potentiality space." (Radden & Dirven 2007, p. 56)

Each person has a mental space, very partial assemblies constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action; they contain elements and are structured by frames and cognitive models (Fauconnier, 1985). When persons are engaged in conversation they construct a special mental space that we can call the current discourse space. It comprises the elements and relations that are being shared by the speaker and the hearer as a basis for communication at a given moment in the flow of discourse (Langacker, 1991, p. 97). So the speaker tries to make the things[1] he has in his mental space accessible to the hearer. He does so by "grounding" the instance of a thing in an act of reference. An act of reference is achieved by using a referring expression, which is used by the speaker to "anchor", or ground, a referent in the current discourse situation. If the speaker deems that the hearer has as yet no access to the instances meant, he uses indefinite reference. If the hearer can be supposed to be able to access the instances of the things meant, the speaker uses definite reference. We can distinguish between two basic types of reference: **individuative reference**, which applies to an individual instance of a thing; and **generic reference,** which applies to a class. Both types of references can be both indefinite and definite (Radden & Dirven, 2007).

4. 1. Indefinite Reference

Use of the indefinite article to ground a referent is insufficient to put the hearer in mental contact with a uniquely determined instance of a referent. The indefinite article profiles a discrete thing (a schematically characterized bounded region) and indicates that, while the nominal it grounds does establish mental contact between the hearer and the instance of a thing, the nominal itself does not render the choice of the referent unique in relation to the current discourse space (Langacker, 1991, p. 104).

---

[1] "For lack of a better name we will use the term **thing** for a conceptual unit that is expressed in language as a noun." (Radden & Dirven, 2007, 42)

Radden and Dirven (2007, p. 91) introduce the notion of a set. We can define a **set** as a collection of elements that form a whole. We use indefinite reference to single out one particular referent from a set. That is, indefinite reference always implies elements of a set that are singled out for reference and other elements of the set are "excluded" from reference.

They also assert that the indefinite article can be used for specific or non-specific reference. Specific reference is typically used in introducing a new instance or the purpose of singling out a referent among the reference mass. When we wish to speak of no specific real thing, but about a thing from imaginary or virtual reality, we use non-specific reference.

4. 2. Definite Reference

Langacker (1991, p. 98) attempts to characterize the meaning of the definite article by asserting that the use of the definite article implies the referent is unique and maximal in relation to the current discourse space, that the speaker has mental contact with the referent and that either the hearer has mental contact with the referent or the nominal alone is sufficient to establish it.

While indefinite reference was shown to be exclusive, definite reference is inclusive: a definite referent includes all the elements that form its set. For example, in "can you open the window?", the speaker refers to a window that is only one of its kind or somehow attracts our attention in a give pragmatic situation. In "Can you open the windows?", the speaker refers to all windows which form a set in a given pragmatic situation (Radden & Dirven, 2007, p. 96).

In order to refer to all elements that are included in a set, the set has to be mentally shared by speaker and hearer. The referent may be found in the present speech situation, it may be evoked in the current discourse, or it may be part o the social and cultural world shared by speaker and hearer. Accordingly, Radden & Dirven (2007) speak about three subtypes of definite reference: deictic reference, discourse reference and unique reference.

4.2.1. Deictic Reference

Deictic reference includes referents which are accessible in the environment of the speech situation and can be pointed to. In deictic reference it is essential that the speaker reveals the deictic centre of the speech situation. There are three main types of deixis: person, place and time deixis.

4.2.2. Discourse Reference

During a conversation, mental spaces for new referents are continually opened by means of indefinite referents. The information provided by one clause is thus incorporated in the discourse space relative to which the following clause is interpreted. Nothing in the clause containing a *the*-marked nominal is required for establishing coordinated mental contact with the referent other than the nominal itself (Langacker, 1991, p. 98). The speaker may therefore refer to them at any time by means of definite reference.

4.2.3. Unique Reference

Speaker and hearer of the same speech community share knowledge of their immediate environment, their culture, and the world at large. Speakers start from the assumption that the people they are talking to are familiar with many referents of their shared world knowledge. Consequently they may simply refer to such entities as definite referents even if they have not been introduced before. The referents are "unique" within the shared socio-cultural world knowledge of speaker and hearer. Three types of unique reference are: inherent, qualified and framed uniqueness and they are presented in the following paragraphs (Radden & Dirven, 2007, pp. 99-104).

4.2.3.1 Inherent Uniqueness

Referents may be inherently unique by the fact of being the only instance of their kind or a salient, socially recognised sector of life or discipline in a given world of reference. The former type of inherent uniqueness is typically labelled by proper names while the latter type of inherent uniqueness is found with mass nouns such as *education* or *philosophy*. Both are inherently definite and the uniqueness of both is socially sanctioned – by a given social group or society at large.

4.2.3.1.1. Proper Names

Since they are inherently definite, proper names do not need to be grounded by a definite determiner, so they normally do not take an article. Stressed definite article is used when there are more persons of the same name, but one is better known than others (person is famous or we doubt his identity despite knowing the name). Definite article is also used in unstressed form with proper names that are defined in relative clauses (*the Bill Hunter* that lives in Durham road).

When it comes to geographical names, often the use of articles seems unsystematic and it is often matter of historical accident. But there are factors that determine the use of articles such the conceptual factor of boundedness and, in the case of complex toponyms, the morphological factor of its composition. The names of most countries take no article because we conceptualise them as clearly bounded political entities. Countries or geographical areas that are seen as collections of political units take a plural proper name with the definite article (the United States, the Baltics). Individual parts are seen as having a certain independence and may even be discontinuous and further extensible so definite article is needed to mark the uniqueness of the collection.

Natural landscapes that lack clear boundaries are named with the definite article in order to mark them as a unique referent (the Ohio River, the Midwest, the Sahara, the Black Forest, the Grand Canyon, the Alps, etc.). When it comes to names of buildings, bridges, etc. as a rule proper names consisting of noun-noun compounds are seen as denoting a well-established unique thing and take no article (London Bridge, Oxford Street, Buckingham Palace). Adjective-noun compounds look like normal phrases with a qualifying modifier and therefore are seen as less unique and they take the definitive article (the Golden Gate Bridge, the British Museum, the White House). But there are also articles adjective-noun compounds such as *Big Ben*. Some abstract entities such as the Church, the Army and the Government, are referred to by proper names and capitalised in the written form. Their unique status in a society needs to be marked by the definite article to distinguish them from their corresponding common nouns. There are a few institutions that are expressed by a bare proper name like *Parliament*, *Westminster* and *Scotland Yard*.

4.2.3.1.2. Mass Nouns

English uses abstract nouns as articles referring expressions, indicating that many abstract things are seen as inherently unique. These notions are familiar to all members of the English speech community and do not need to be introduced in any discourse. They are coded as mass nouns because they meet the criteria characterising physical substances: they are unbounded, homogeneous and uncountable. We can use the definite article to isolate a portion of a unique abstract entity when we talk about more specific situations (*The education of inner-city children* requires special training).

4.2.3.2. Qualified Uniqueness

In order to establish referent's uniqueness we can use restrictive descriptive qualification. The speaker may point to a salient qualitative aspect of the referent that allows the hearer to distinguish the referent from other referents. Such salient aspects of a referent may be one of its properties, circumstances such as the place where things are, events in which things are involved (My coat is *the green* one. *The girl with the pink sweater*, what is your question?) English has a class of determining adjectives that have the function of uniquely specifying things (*the only solution, the main reason, the very man*). Also superlative forms of adjectives signal unique reference by expressing the extreme instance and therefore they take the definite article.

4.2.3.3. Framed Uniqueness

The immediate speech environment or the wider social situation usually provides clues for activating a conceptual frame in which the situation described is set. When we speak of entities unique to a certain frame we use definite articles (Have you locked *the door*? – frame: house, car, etc. The children are in *the park*. – frame: neighbourhood). We are sometimes more interested in the unique role of the referent within a certain socio-cultural frame (We are going to *the cinema*. I read it in *the newspaper*) where we refer to the unique function of the entities, not specific things.

4.2.4. Generic Reference

Radden and Dirven (2007, pp. 106-110) explain that generic reference is used in generalising about a class. A class is a collection of similar individual elements that are understood as forming a type and having a name. Classes differ from sets in that they have a name. Thus, the class of tigers has the name *tigers*, but the set of three tigers in a zoo has no name.

They also describe the various possibilities of generalising about a class from individual elements. In contrast to individuative reference, in generic reference indefinite and definite referring expressions are often interchangeable. The two dimensions of definiteness (definite and indefinite) and number (singular and plural) lead to four possible generic construals as presented in the examples 19-22:

(19) a) *A tiger* hunts by night.   [indefinite singular generic]
      b) $^?$*An Italian* is fond of children

(20) a) *Tigers* hunt by night.   [indefinite plural generic]
      b) *Italians* are fond of children.

(21) a) *The tiger* hunts by night.   [definite singular generic]
      b) $^?$*The Italian* is fond of children.

(22) a) $^?$*The tigers* hunt by night.   [definite plural generic]
      b) *The Italians* are fond of children.

As we can see not all nouns can be used in all types of generic reference. These differences need to be examined more closely.

4.2.4.1. Indefinite Singular

Attributes that are uniquely shared by all elements of a class are felt to be essential attributes. Such attributes define what we believe to be the "essence" of a thing. That is why *An Italian is fond of children* sounds odd, but dictionary definition *An Italian is a native, citizen or inhabitant of Italy* does not.

4.2.4.2. Indefinite Plural

In generic reference, the indefinite plural generalises over large segments of a class, but not all its elements. We may generalise even on the basis of an indeterminate number of individual elements. People tend to generalise on the basis of relatively few experiences and that is why indefinite plural is well suited for such types of generalizations; it conveys generalisations based on vague, impressionistic judgements and allows for exceptions.

4.2.4.3. Definite Singular

In generic reference, the definite singular refers to a single instance, which is the class as such. It is used to implicitly contrast the class we are referring to compared with some other class. When we use definite singular reference we have a clear mental image of the class and of a prototypical member of a class. Hence the exceptions are not relevant and we can disregard them when making a generalisation of this type.

4.2.4.4. Definite Plural

In generic reference, the definite plural generalizes over a class by referring to many elements, but not necessarily all its elements. The definite plural is mainly used to make generalizations about classes of humans. Since human behaviour is idiosyncratic, it is appropriate to use definite plural for generalizations about humans, since it allows for exceptions.

Generic human groups may also be expressed in English by nominalised adjectives which describe a salient property. These nominalised adjectives always refer to a class, never to a singular entity, and always take plural agreement (*The old* are still running the country.)

5. Grammar Teaching Approaches and Practices

In the last several decades numerous new concepts and approaches to teaching grammar have emerged. During the course of the late 20th century, grammar has moved from a position of the most important segment of language teaching to being completely marginalised and then back to a position of importance but now seen only as one of the components in the model of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972; as cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991). One of the most substantial of them is that the grammar of adolescent and adult L2 learners can no longer be viewed as a system that will spontaneously emerge on its own given enough input and practice. In the context of communicative approach to language teaching, grammar is seen as a tool for creating meaningful communication and not as an end to itself (Celce-Murcia, 1991). But regardless of the different theories about teaching, the underlying pedagogical grammar has remained the same. When we compare traditional grammar books from the 1950s to the 2000s we see very little difference or innovation; in fact, there is a great deal of overlap. Most of the traditional grammar approach is based on psychology, sociology and educational psychology rather than theoretical linguistics. Theoretical linguistics spawned a new approach to grammar, called cognitive grammar. It does not offer a magic formula which will transform L2 learners into a near-native speakers but it offers a somewhat different understanding of the nature and structure of language, which seems more accurate, explanatory and complete than the traditional approach. Most importantly, cognitive grammar sees language inseparable from cognitive processes (Tyler, 2012).

Many authors emphasise the importance of teaching meaning in the process of teaching grammar. To illustrate this, Penny Ur (1998) advocates that teaching grammar should not only focus on accuracy and form; instead, teaching grammar should also include teaching meaning. She emphasizes that it is very important for the learner to know exactly what the difference in meaning between two grammatical structures is, because the meaning of the structures often causes problems for learners. For that purpose she suggests that grammar teaching should not be an end to itself, but it should be the means to improving mastery of the language. Grammar teaching should be used to receive and produce interesting and purposeful meanings within the context of real-life usage.

When it comes to practical teaching of grammatical structures, Ur (1988, p. 7) suggests a fairly traditional four-stage approach to the teaching of grammar items:

1. Presentation – Making the structure salient through an input text in which the item appears.

2. Isolation and explanation – Ensuring that students understand the various aspects of the structure under investigation.

3. Practice – Getting students to absorb and master the language

4. Test – Getting learners to demonstrate mastery.

Out of these four stages special emphasis must be given to presenting and explaining grammatical structures. Gower and Walters (1983) define presentation as basically consisting of displaying grammatical structures to students, helping them to understand what they mean, what rules of form they obey and, if appropriate, who uses them in what context. They continue by claiming that language should be presented in a way that students clearly understand the meaning and the use of the language item.

According to systemic functional linguistics, as mentioned in Nunan (1991), language exists in context and the context and the purpose for which the language is used will determine how the language is used and its grammar. The approach is top-down, it asserts that by studying texts a learner can understand the grammatical rules used in the text. Celce-Murcia (2007) mentions a similar assessment by saying that sentence level drills are not sufficient context to learn various grammatical features of a language. Learners need learning activities which are richly saturated and fully meaningful and contextualized in order to build their own intrinsic grammatical system.

Individual differences between the learners should also be taken into account. In her article, Celce-Murcia (1991) suggests that grammar teaching should take into account the learner's age and proficiency. When teaching to young children and beginners, little explicit grammar instruction is needed. But the learning of adolescents and adults, or learners at the intermediate or advanced level, can be facilitated by some explicit focus on form.

Doff (1989) suggests that when we present a structure, it is important to: "[...] show what structure means and how it is used, by giving examples; and show clearly how the structure is formed, so that students can use it to make sentences of their own" (33).

Ur (1998) continues by claiming that structure's form should be presented in a way that it is clear, simple, accurate and helpful. But it should be done with care because often

there is a conflict between "simple" and "accurate"; oversimplification can lead to inaccuracies, and insisting on accuracy can make things far from simple. It is important to find the fine balance between the two.

Ur (1998) also raises the question of whether grammar should be taught by giving explicit rules. She asserts that a teacher should decide whether this is helpful or not in the first place, and then choose between introducing the rule inductively or deductively. Explicit rules are more helpful for older and more analytically-minded learners. On the other hand, as suggested by Harmer (2007), if the learners can come up with the rules themselves quickly and easily, they should be let and encouraged to do so. But if they find that difficult, and a lot of time is wasted on unfruitful guessing, she suggests that it is better that the teacher provides the rules themselves.

To further expand on these ideas, let us mention Lewis & Hill (1990) who assert that language teachers needs to find a compromise between the accuracy of the rule, and its accessibility. A rule can be accurate, but it is useless for the students if they cannot understand it. On the other hand, making a rule more accessible but inaccurate can help students understand it, but it will often lead to confusion at a later stage. For Lewis and Hill (1990) a rule is a combination of a wide range of natural examples, verbal descriptions and the relationship between the verbalisation and the examples. Some students will benefit more from one that the other and vice versa, but both are needed if everybody is to be given the maximum possible help. The principle is that good rules help students – where "good" means a compromise between accuracy and accessibility, and where "rule" is a combination of cyclically presented well-chosen examples and verbal description:

> At different times structure has been taught in very different ways. One school of thought believed that if students were given a "rule" they could then do examples which followed the rule; in reaction to this, a method evolved whereby students were given a group of examples, were expected to see what those examples had in common themselves, and were then required to produce other similar examples. Arguments have raged about whether to explain before, during, or after presenting examples and so on. All such arguments are unnecessary. Any solution which suggests that one method is likely to succeed when another fails is almost certainly misleading and an over-simplification. (Lewis and Hill, 1990, p. 79)

5.1. Teaching Articles

Learning the system of English articles is particularly hard for most L2 learners. For them, the system looks arbitrary since the rules are overridden by numerous exceptions. Fujita (2004) comments on it: "When learners come across exceptions, when they cannot apply the rules they know to the situation, that is when confusion and frustration arise. They thought they had learned enough, but suddenly there is another exception or new rule to learn!" (p. 59).

As reported in Lee (2013), a large number of studies have shown that a great deal of article-related errors that appear in oral language can be indicative of traces of L1 transfer, especially if the learner's L1 lacks articles. The most common mistake is omitting articles in obligatory contexts followed by over-using *the* where *a* is required. Also the data collected seem to suggest that the definite article is acquired before the indefinite article. A study by Lee (2013) showed that the indefinite article was acquired later than the definite so it requires more time and attention in the classroom.

When it comes to the question of activities that should be used to teach articles, Fujita (2004) suggests that learners receive help from others while speaking and can use context and gestures to make themselves understood. But in writing they need to focus more carefully on the language they will use. Thus it seems it would be advisable to focus more on written activities. Since speech is produced spontaneously it leaves less time to monitor production so it is generally accepted that learners will make less mistakes in written activities, but the hypothesis has not been empirically tested with regard to English articles. This should be taken into consideration when designing lessons dealing with English articles, and focus more on written tasks.

The results of the studies mentioned by Lee (2013) suggest that learners of English tend to produce articles more accurately in written activities, because more time and cognitive attention to grammatical accuracy is at their disposal. Nevertheless, learners have troubles when they need to produce language orally, which is an indication that they experience difficulty when they need to implicitly incorporate the knowledge of the articles in their L2 grammar. Various oral activities should be designed to bridge that gap.

For a long time the transfer hypothesis was used in order to explain the difficulties which the learners experience in the acquisition of English articles. Lee (2013) also uses it to

explain his research findings. Celce-Murcia (2007) has a similar opinion: "Research has shown that 'conceptual situation' and 'conceptual event' are largely language-specific […] and bilinguals and multilinguals transfer their ways of speaking and writing to their use of English" (p. 498).

On the other hand, some other authors disclaim such assertions. The data presented in the article by Abu-Melhim (2014) show that the presence or absence of definiteness in the native language of the learners has negligible influence on the acquisition and use of the English article system: "Therefore, it may be safe to claim that the major factors affecting the use of English articles by these subjects are intra-lingual rather than inter-lingual" (pp. 54-55). This is also supported by Nunan (1991) who mentions that according to the "contrastive" hypothesis, the difference or lack of structures in the learners L1 will be the cause of difficulties in learning the L2. However, he claims that this hypothesis has been revoked and the difficulties in learning an L2 are caused by individual cognitive functioning of a learner.

But to conclude the topic of teaching articles, it should be said that the use of definite noun phrases (NPs) in English is a complex topic. Firstly, the two articles overlap semantically. Secondly, there is no one-to-one correspondence between definiteness and specificity and the definite article. "The choice of an article is determined by grammatical, semantic and pragmatic considerations; hence a clear grammatical account of the use of definite NPs is not possible" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, pp. 508-509).

Concerning the pedagogy, course materials and teachers should include the widest possible range of examples of the use of articles so that the learners could develop their own internal system for using and processing the articles. "A critical awareness of differences and uncertainties in the use of articles is essential; there is no reason to pretend there are iron-clad grammatical rules that determine their use" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 509).

White's (2010) survey, as reported in Lee (2013), shows that many experienced ESL teachers lack confidence and feel frustration when it comes to teaching articles which is a clear indicator that the teaching of articles should be revised and refurbished. Finding effective ways to do this is the current challenge which this paper tries to address.

6. Effectiveness of Using Cognitive Grammar in L2 Teaching

One of the biggest challenges for cognitive linguists is to persuade L2 researchers and teachers that cognitive grammar is likely to be a tool for more effective teaching which works towards greater benefit of the learners (Tyler, 2008). The following paragraphs present many previous studies that have investigated the effectiveness of using cognitive grammar in teaching, especially focusing on the areas of verb tense and aspect, prepositions, modals and the articles.

Bielak and Pawlak (2011) examined the effectiveness of cognitive grammar for teaching tense and aspect. Their study involved two groups, one instructed with materials based on the traditional grammar, the other with materials based on cognitive grammar. Both groups were pre-tested, and twice post-tested. First post-test was implemented a week after the 80-minute instruction, and the second three weeks after. The participants were 50 first and second grade Polish high-school students. The study focused on the present tense and progressive aspect, and also on imperfective and perfective verbs. The results reported suggest that form-focused instruction based on cognitive grammar may be moderately effective. There was no major difference between the two groups on post-test 1, but the cognitive group did significantly better on the post-test 2. The authors point out that the results are not a basis for unqualified enthusiasm in favour of using cognitive grammar, but they also emphasise that cognitive grammar cannot be rejected as a basis for alternative approaches to tense and aspect instruction.

When it comes to teaching prepositions an experiment was done on 73 French-speaking students by Boers and Demecheleer (1998). It showed that the students which had been presented with a definition of the core spatial sense that helps motivate the metaphorical extensions were more likely to correctly interpret the figurative meanings of the word *beyond* in comparison to students who were given full dictionary definitions. Kövecses & Szabó (1996) performed a study focused on English phrasal verbs with *up* and *down*. The group of 15 Hungarian students who studied ten phrasal verbs and were given cognitive linguistic explanations outperformed the group of their 15 colleagues who studied the mentioned verbs with L1 translations by almost 9% on an immediate post-test (a gap-filling exercise). The same test also included ten more *up/down* phrasal verbs not mentioned in the instruction stage but which contained the same cognitive metaphor. The experimental group achieved almost 25% higher results on these items than the control group. Boers (2000) conducted a similar

study with French-speaking students, and once again the students with cognitive-grammar-based instruction outperformed the control group. Like Kövecses and Szabó (1996), both groups were presented with extra items not mentioned in the instruction phase, but this time the extra items contained different cognitive metaphors, and the two groups showed no difference in results.

Cognitive grammar was also used to teach modal verbs. Tyler, Mueller and Ho (2010) conducted a study which examined if cognitive grammar is effective in teaching modal verbs. The study showed that the cognitive group experienced significant gains when compared to the other group (speech act group). However, the effect was moderate (a 2.7-pointgain). The authors argue that the gain was significant due to the limited duration of the treatment. In addition, the cognitive group had many new concepts to learn, while the speech act group was not asked to adopt a new way of thinking about the modals. Also, the researchers admit the possibility that their enthusiasm for the cognitive method may have transferred into their teaching. Abbuhl (2005; Tyler 2008) conducted a study on two groups of law students. Both groups were instructed in the use of modals and were asked to produce a law memo about a case. There was no significant difference in the use of hedges and boosters between the two groups. Both groups received feedback on their work, one group a minimal feedback about the contents only, but the other group received a cognitive-linguistic based feedback. On the second draft of the memo, the group with cognitive instruction used significantly more hedges and boosters than the other group. Similar study by Hama (2005) done in the same law school as in Abbuhl's study. Six students were monitored and received instruction on the modals. During the course of the instruction they started to be given cognitive-linguistic based feedback similar to the one used by Abbuhl. At the beginning of the instruction period, the students supplied modals correctly in 56% of the cases and incorrectly in 44%. At the end they supplied modals correctly in 78% of the cases and incorrectly in 22%.

When it comes to teaching articles, Huong (2005) conducted a study involving university level Vietnamese learners. They were divided into two groups, and one was taught using the traditional approach to teaching articles and the other using the cognitive approach. The groups were pre-tested twice and post-tested twice. The results showed a significant difference between the groups. The cognitive group outperformed the traditional group on the first post-test, but the difference levelled off on the second post-test even though both groups scored higher results on the post-test 2 then on the pre-tests. The results show a need for a consistent cognitive based approach in order to achieve longer-lasting results. Based on this

research and Verspoor and Huong (2008), Verspoor (forthcoming) further developed the instruments used in lessons by adding visuals to help students improve comprehension and retention. She also emphasised the importance of teaching articles through discourse. The results showed that learners do not follow a steady, straight line in their acquisition of the article, but they have many ups and downs in the process (Dimitrijević, 2013). Visuals were also used by Dimitrijević (2010; Dimitrijević, 2013) in her study. The results showed that there is a statistically significant connection between the visual representation of the figure/ground distinction and the use of the definite article (p. 74).

In sum, the results of the various studies presented in this section show that the findings are far from conclusive. In some studies, the students taught by teachers using a cognitive grammar approach showed significant improvements in comparison with their traditionally taught colleagues, and in other studies they achieved only slight improvements. Also the improvements showed not to be long-lasting and with many fluctuations and ups and downs in learners' knowledge. Nevertheless, in all of the studies the cognitive groups outperformed their traditional counterparts.

7. The Study

7.1. Problem and the aim of the study

As it has been already mentioned in this thesis, grammar teaching has made a full circle from being regarded as the most important segment of language teaching to being almost completely disregarded and then it rose back up to a position of renewed importance. This position of grammar in language teaching brings up the question of which kind of grammar should be taught and how. Cognitive grammar is one of the answers to that question. The studies presented in Section 6 suggest that using cognitive grammar in teaching helps students to learn grammatical structures more easily and to use them more correctly and with fewer mistakes. The studies showed that cognitive approach can be used effectively in teaching tense and aspect, prepositions, phrasal verbs, modal verbs, and articles. But some of the authors themselves call for caution because the studies were conducted on small samples and with limited time, and even though the results showed that students taught with cognitive methods outperformed their counterparts taught by other methods, the difference in performance was moderate. Also, the use of cognitive grammar raises other questions. Can cognitive-based teaching materials and methods be used with learners of all age groups, i.e. are the cognitive grammar concepts too complex to be used with young and very young learners. Also, is using cognitive grammar more time efficient given that many aforementioned concepts first need to be taught and explained, which is time-consuming. In order to determine answers to these and other questions, comprehensive longitudinal studies (e.g. year-long study which would involve several classes) need to be conducted.

7.2. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of two different approaches to designing learning material. On the one hand, there is a "traditional" approach which is based on traditional grammar which focuses on grammar rules and is presented in works such as Eastwood (2009) and Karlovčan (2002) which were presented in detail in Section 3 of this thesis. On the other hand, there is a "cognitive" approach, which is based on the cognitive grammar presented in works such as Radden and Dirven (2007) and Langacker (1991) which were presented in detail in Section 4. The research hypotheses used in this study were based on the previous research by Huong (2005) who conducted a research with two groups of Vietnamese university level students in which the cognitive group outperformed the

traditional group but those results levelled off after some time and a similar research done by Toader (2010) which was conducted on Romanian university level students showed similar result compared to Huong's research, where the cognitive group significantly outperformed the traditional group on the first post-test, but on post-test 2 the scores decreased and the traditional group actually had slightly lower scores than it had in the two pre-tests. Based on the results of these two studies the task of this thesis was to test the following research questions:

1) Following the lessons there will be an increase in test scores in both groups (Post-test 1) compared to the pre-test

2) The increase in the scores between the two tests will be significantly higher in the cognitive group than the traditional group

3) Two weeks after the lessons (Post-test 2), the scores will level off and they will be lower than Post-test 1 scores but higher that Pre-test scores, and the cognitive group scores will be higher.

7.3. The Sample

The sample consisted of two groups of eleven students (total of 22) from Eötvös József Gimnázium in Budapest, one of the most prestigious high schools in Hungary. One group consisted of eleven participants who were in their first year of studies (around 15 years of age) and they were selected to be the "cognitive" group. The other group ("traditional") consisted of eleven students from the second year of study (age 16). Several students were absent for various reasons (the study was conducted over a longer period of time, more than one month) during post-tests 1 and 2 so the sample varied in size. These changes are presented in table 2.

	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Cognitive	11	9	8
Traditional	11	8	9

Table 2. The number of participants in each test

7.4. Instruments

The instruments used in this study were two lesson plans. One "traditional" lesson plan based on the grammar books by Karlovčan (2002) and Eastwood (2009), presented in full in appendix 10.1. The other lesson plan was taken from Huong's dissertation (2005), presented in full in appendix 10.2., and was shortened and adjusted due to time constraints and so it could be used with high-school students.

Besides the lesson plans, three tests taken from Huong (2005) were used without any changes. Pre-test, Post-test 1 and Post-test 2 (presented in the following text) were used.

7.4.1. Pre-test

1. Fill in the blanks with *the, a/an,* or *x* (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. *Cai luong*, or "Renovated Opera", is a form of ___ drama, modelled 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, *gao duoc pha che,* 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 Vietnamese 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, the *voïng coả*, ___ audience reacts with gasps of recognition and applause.

25. Vietnam has a rich legacy of ___ orally transmitted folk tales.

26. Visitors can take ____ boat ride along the Hau 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. ___ novel is the most popular form of fiction writing.

37. Reading ___ novel is a good way to relax.

38. "___ Mr. Wilson wanted to see you this morning. I don't think he is your friend since I haven't met him."

39. The train to Paris leaves from ____ Waterloo Station.

40. I didn't have ___ pencil.

41. Do you have ____ penny?

42. He wants to marry _____ princess who speaks five languages.

43. Bill is ____ engineer.

7.4.2. Post-test 1

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. *Cai luong*, or "Renovated Opera", is a form of ___ drama, modelled 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 Vietnam.

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, the *vong co*, audience reacts with gasps of recognition and applause.

27. Visitors can take a boat ride along ___ Hau 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.

7.4.3. Post-test 2

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 the 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. *Cai luong*, or "Renovated Opera", is a form of ___ drama, modelled 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 an end, and I took an end, and we both tugged away at the rope.

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.

7.5. Procedure

The study was divided into three phases. In the first phase the students were tested with the pre-test in order to determine their existing levels of knowledge of the system of English articles. In the second phase, immediately after the participants did the pre-test they were taught the first of the three teaching sessions. The other two followed over a course of a week. The two groups, the traditional and the cognitive, were taught according to corresponding lesson plans mentioned in section 7.4. The third phase included the two post-tests. After the teaching sessions were finished, the students immediately did post-test 1. After a break of two weeks, the students did the post-test 2 and that was the end of their participation. In total the study took roughly a month to conduct, from mid-January 2015 to mid-February 2015.

7.6. Results and Discussion

In total, the participants did 56 tests. Both groups did 28 tests, but the tests were unevenly distributed through the stages of the study. Both groups did the same number of Pre-tests, eleven; but traditional group did nine and cognitive group did eight Post-tests 1. When it comes to Post-test 2 the situation was reversed, traditional group did eight and cognitive group did nine tests. There were 22 Pre-tests, 17 Post-tests 1 and 17 Post-tests 2, in total.

The result of each participant on each of the test can be seen in Table 3 for the traditional group and in Table 4 for the cognitive group. The results of the traditional group in Pre-test ranged from 46.51% to 79.06%. Cognitive group results range from 51.16% to two results of 86.05%. When it comes to Post-test 1, the traditional group results are in a range from 39.39%, which is also the lowest score in the whole study, to two results of 72.73%. Results of the cognitive group ranged from 54.55% to 90.91%. Post-test 2 scores range from 45.45% to 81.82% for the traditional group and from 66.67% to 90.91% for the cognitive group.

Traditional pre-test	Traditional post-test 1	Traditional post-test 2
46.51 %	39.39 %	45.45 %
48.84 %	51.52 %	54.55 %
51.16 %	60.61 %	60.61 %
53.48 %	63.64 %	63.64 %
55.81 %	66.67 %	63.64 %
62.79 %	69.70 %	66.67 %
62.79 %	72.73 %	72.73 %
67.44 %	72.73 %	75.76 %
72.09 %		81.82 %
74.42 %		
79.06 %		

Table 3. Detailed results of the traditional group

Cognitive pre-test	Cognitive post-test 1	Cognitive post-test 2
51.16 %	54.55 %	66.67 %
65.12 %	66.67 %	75.76 %
69.77 %	69.70 %	81.82 %
72.09 %	72.73 %	81.82 %
74.42 %	75.76 %	84.85 %
76.74 %	87.88 %	84.85 %
79.07 %	87.88 %	87.88 %
79.07 %	87.88 %	90.91 %
81.40 %	90.91 %	
86.05 %		
86.05 %		

Table 4. Detailed results of the cognitive group

Traditional pre-test 1

61.31 % T_1

Cognitive pre-test 1

74.63 % C_1

TEACHING

1.32% T_2

3.30% C_2

Traditional post-test 1

62.12 % T_3

5.98%
T_6

Cognitive post-test 1

77.10 % C_3

9.63%
C_6

4.60% T_4

6.12% C_4

Traditional post-test 2

64.98 % T_5
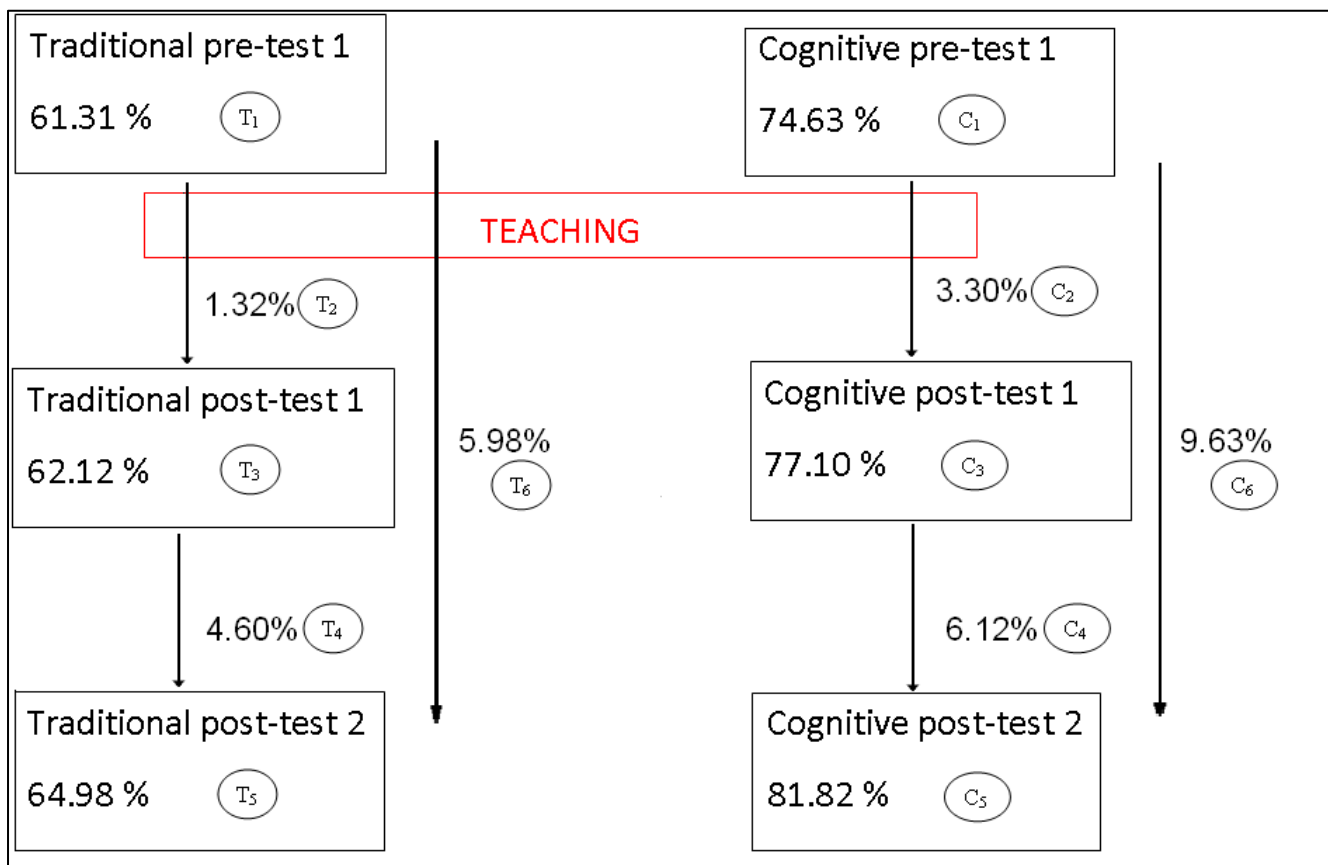
Cognitive post-test 2

81.82 % C_5

Figure 1. Graphical representation of group results

Analysis of the group results is presented in Figure 1. As it can be seen the traditional group achieved an average score of 61.31% (marked T_1 in the Figure) in the pre-test. In the Post-test 1 the group achieved a score of 62.12% (marked T_3) which represents an increase of 1.32% (marked T_2) compared to the Pre-test. The post-test 2 score was 64.98% (marked T_5) which represents an increase of 4.60% (marked T_4) in comparison to Post-test 1. When Pre-test and Post-test 2 are compared the traditional group achieved an overall increase of 5.98% (marked T_6) in the scores.

The cognitive group achieved a score of 74.63% (marked C_1) in the Pre-test. In the Post-test 1 the group's score was 77.10% (marked C_3) which marked an increase in score of 3.30% (marked C_2) compared to the Pre-test. In Post-test 2 the group scored 81.82% (marked C_5) which represents an increase of 6.12% (marked C_4) between post-test 1 and post-test 2. The overall increase in the results when comparing the Pre-test and post-test 2 was 9.63% (marked C_6).

As it can be seen, there was an increase in Post-test 1 scores compared to the Pre-test in both groups. Such increase was expected and logical due to the teaching sessions conducted between the two tests. The increase in the scores of both groups was slight; it amounted to 1.32% for the traditional group and 3.30% for the cognitive group. So if we look at these numbers while taking into consideration the first research question it can be claimed that it is confirmed because both groups improved their scores.

The second research question was that the increase in results would be greater in the cognitive group than the traditional group. Even though the increase was small, the cognitive group achieved two and a half times larger increase. With such findings it can be said that the second research question can also be considered to be confirmed.

The results in post-test 2 were quite surprising. Instead of the anticipated decrease of the scores in comparison to Post-test 1, there was an increase in scores in both groups. The increase of the traditional group was 4.60% while the increase of the cognitive group was 6.12%. If we compare the results of Post-test 2 and the Pre-test, than the increase in scores was 5.98% for the traditional group and 9.63% for the cognitive group. This contradicts the third research question which assumed that the scores in Post-test 2 would be lower than the scores in Post-test 1, but that they would be still slightly higher than the scores in the Pre-test. Quite the contrary, there was a further increase in the scores with the cognitive group still outperforming the traditional group. The assumption that there would be a decrease of the results between Post-test 1 and Post-test 2 was thus not confirmed, but the assumption that the cognitive group would outperform the traditional group was confirmed.

Comparable studies by Huong (2005) and Toader (2010) show different results. In Huong's study the traditional group achieved an increase in scores of 0.63% between Pre-test 1 and Post-test 1, and there was a decrease of 3.63% between Post-test 1 and Post-test 2. Also there was an overall decrease in scores between Pre-test 1 and Post-test 2 of 3%. The traditional group achieved an increase in scores of 11.94% between Pre-test 1 and Post-test 1. The decrease between Post-test 1 and Post-test 2 was 8.12%. The increase between Pre-test 1 and Post-test 2 was slight, only 2.86%. A study by Toader (2010) surprisingly shows identical results.

The difference between our study and the aforementioned studies makes an interesting finding. The assumption was that the results in post-test 2, which was conducted two weeks after the teaching sessions, would be lower that the results in post-test 1, which was conducted

immediately after the teaching sessions, because the students would not retain what they had learned. As it can be seen, that was not the case, but quite the opposite, both groups of students managed to increase their test scores. Some speculations about the reasons for such differences between the studies can be made. In our study the time between Post-test 1 and Post-test 2 was only two weeks; while in Huong's and Toader's studies that period was four weeks. It is possible that the shorter period between the two post-tests helped the students in their retention. Also, it is possible that the participants were interested and studied the system of articles on their own in the meantime between the two post-tests.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether teaching lessons based and designed according to the tenets of cognitive linguistics and cognitive grammar lead to more effective teaching and learning than teaching with lesson plans based on the notions of traditional grammar. As it can be seen, both groups showed an improvement of their test scores, which is not a surprise and was expected because both groups went through three teaching sessions about English articles. But the cognitive group showed a remarkably higher increase in test scores which is a clear indicator that their learning process was more effective. We may assume that this may be attributed to the lessons based on the cognitive grammar approach.

Nevertheless, some uncertainties and open questions remain. Firstly, we could ask ourselves if the cognitive grammar approach is beneficial to all students. What if certain students find the cognitive approach simpler, more understandable and easier to use; and on the other hand, others find it difficult, complicated or confusing. Also we could ask ourselves what aspects of grammar are suitable to be taught by using the cognitive approach.

In order to answer these questions, it would be advisable to conduct a large, long-term comprehensive study, since this and other studies presented in this paper were limited, both in the scope of grammar taught and in the scope of time used. A long, longitudinal study, which would involve a larger number number of participants (possibly on the level of entire classes or schools) and which would deal with different areas and segments of grammar and grammar teaching curriculum should be conducted. Such study which would follow each participant individually; both by measuring their test scores, but also by conducting surveys on the participant's opinions and attitudes towards cognitive approach to grammar teaching would help to answer many of the open questions.

To sum up, this study has shown that the cognitive group achieved better results overall and a higher increase in test scores between each subsequent test, which is a strong suggestion that cognitive grammar is a more effective approach to designing teaching material and that it facilitates students' learning. It should also be noted that the cognitive lesson contained less elements, i.e. the students had to memorise less elements (let us call them rules), and that makes the cognitive lesson more time-efficient; under the condition that the basic concepts are pre-taught.

The results of the study are consistent with the findings of earlier relevant studies by Huong (2005) and Toader (2010), with the exception of the increase in the results between Post-test 1 and Post-test 2, an interesting finding which certainly deserves further detailed investigation. Another important issue that should be taken into consideration is that this study was limited in the number of participants (22), the scope of the linguistic and methodological areas researched and in the time in which it was conducted (one month). For these reasons, the findings of this study are only indicative and a basis for further, more comprehensive studies in the future. It is reasonable to conclude that there is not just one preferred way to teach grammar. Grammar acquisition is a complex process which should be supported by a variety of approaches (Ellis, 2006). Using cognitive grammar to teach will not eradicate all of the learners' mistakes and make them perfect speakers. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the results of other relevant studies and the results of this study it can be said with a high level of certainty, that using cognitive grammar makes teaching more time-efficient and effective.

8. Conclusion

The primary aim of this paper and this study was to determine whether a lesson plan based on cognitive grammar would be more effective than a lesson plan based on traditional grammar. A review of literature concerning previous similar studies was conducted. The literature suggested that using cognitive grammar is indeed a more effective way of language teaching. Also, the reviewed literature was used as a basis for designing the study presented in this paper. Relevant literature was reviewed for the purpose of making the lesson plans used in the study, especially grammar books which were based on traditional and cognitive grammar, respectively. This review was used to make two different lesson plans, both concerning teaching the system of English articles. One lesson plan based on traditional grammar and one lesson plan based on cognitive grammar were made. These lesson plans were then taught to two different groups, and after that, the test results were compared in order to determine the effectiveness of the two lesson plans.

The participants in the study were students from two classes from a high-school in Budapest. Their progress between the test conducted before teaching and two tests conducted after teaching was measured. The test results of both groups increased in both post-tests, but the results of the cognitive group were substantially higher. These results, and the results of other studies about the subject, give proof that using cognitive grammar in designing lesson plans will make teaching more effective and it will make students' learning easier and the retention of the learned will last longer and the forgetting curve will not be so expressed.

This study was limited in its scope and time frame and its results can only be indicative. But the data from this study and other relevant studies are strong indicators that cognitive grammar can be a very valuable tool for teachers, educational policy makers, and ultimately students, because it will make the teaching and learning of the English language quicker, simpler and easier. Further research is surely needed. The tenets of cognitive grammar should be comprehensively incorporated into textbooks and lessons on a wide scale and all age levels to determine the areas and circumstances in which it is most effective. It is definitely a major area of future research in TEFL. But it needs to be said that it is only one part of a never-ending quest for finding more effective ways of teaching, something that all educational workers strive for.

9. References

Abbuhl, R. J. (2005). The effect of feedback and instruction on writing quality: Legal writing and advanced L2 learners. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

Abu-Melhim, A. (2014). The presence or absence of definiteness in the native language and its impact on ESL learning. *English Language Teaching 7*(1), 50-56.

Barber, C. (2002). *The English Language: A Historical Introduction*. Cambridge University Press

Baugh, A.C., & Cable, T. (1983). *A History of the English Language*. Trowbridge, Wiltshire; Redwood Burn Limited

Bielak, J, & Pawlak, M. (2011). Teaching English tense and aspect with the help of cognitive grammar: An empirical study. *SSLLT 1* (3). 365-400

Boers, F. (2000). Metaphor awareness and vocabulary retention. *Applied Linguistics, 21*(4), 553–571.

Boers, F., & Demecheleer, M. (1998). A cognitive semantic approach to teaching prepositions. *ELT Journal, 52*(3), 197–204.

Bynon, T. (1993). *Historical Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1(1)*, 1-47

Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). Grammar pedagogy in second and foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly 25*(3), 459-480.

Celce-Murcia, M. (2007). Towards more context and discourse in grammar instruction. *TESL-EJ 11*(2), 1-6.

Dimitrijević, M. (2013). Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Teaching the English Article System in the EFL Classroom. Od nauke do nastave: zbornik radova sa konferencije Nauka i savremeni univerzitet 2. Niš: Filozofski fakultet. str. 66-76.

Doff, A. (1989). *Teach English: A training course for teachers*. Cambridge University Press

Eastwood, J. (2009). *Oxford Learners Grammar: Grammar Finder*. Oxford University Press

Ellis, R. (2006). Current Issues in the Teaching of Grammar: An SLA Perspective. *TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Mar., 2006)*, pp. 83-107

Fauconnier, G. (1985). *Mental Spaces*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Fujita, K. (2004). *A practical approach to teaching English articles to Japanese learners* (Masters thesis). Bratelboro, Vermont: School for International Training.

Gower, R. & Walters, S. (1983). *Teaching Practice Handbook: A reference book for EFL teachers in training*. Oxford; Heinemann International

Hama, M. (2005). The effects of the minilesson on advanced learners' acquisition of English modals: A case study. Unpublished manuscript, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Harlow, Essex; Pearson Education Limited

Huong, N. T. (2005). *Vietnamese learners mastering English articles* (Doctoral dissertation)

Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (pp. 269-293). Harmondsworth, England: Penguin

Karlovčan, V. (2002). *An Advanced Learner's English Grammar*. Zagreb; Tiskara Millenium

Kövecses, Z., & Szabó, P. (1996). Idioms: A view from cognitive semantics. *Applied Linguistics, 17*(3), 326–355.

Langacker, R. W. (1991). *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Descriptive Application*. Stanford, California; Stanford University Press

Lee, J. (2013). The effects of discourse types on the use of English articles by Korean learners of English: Oral vs. written narratives. *English Language Teaching, 6*(8), 33-43.

Lewis, M., Hill, J. (1990). *Practical Techniques for Language Teaching*. Hove; Language Teaching Publications

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology: A textbook for teachers*. Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire; Prentice Hall International

Radden, G., & Dirven, R. (2007). *Cognitive English grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub.

Toader, D. (2010). *Mastering the English Article* (Doctoral dissertation).

Tyler, A. (2008) Cognitive Linguistics and second language instruction. In Robinson, P. J., & Ellis, N. C.. *Handbook of cognitive linguistics and second language acquisition*. New York: Routledge.

Tyler, A. (2012). *Cognitive linguistics and second language learning: Theoretical basics and experimental evidence*. New York: Routledge.

Tyler, A., Mueller, C.M., Ho, V. (2010) Applying cognitive linguistics to instructed L2 learning: The English modals. In Littlemore, J., & Juchem-Grundmann, C. (Eds.). *Applied Cognitive Linguistics in Second Language Learning and Teaching*. pp. 30-49.

Ur, P. (1998). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge University Press

Ur, P. (2006). *Grammar Practice Activities: A practical guide for teachers*. Cambridge University Press

Verspoor, M. & N.T. Huong. (2008). Cognitive grammar and teaching English articles to Asian students. In J.R. Lapaire (ed.), *From grammar to mind: grammar as cognition*. Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux.

Verspoor, M. (forthcoming). Using Metaphors in Teaching English Articles. In C. Juchem-Grundmann & S. Niemeier (eds.), *KNOWING IS SEEING: Metaphor and LanguagePedagogy*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

White, B. (2010). In search of systematicity: A conceptual framework for the English article system. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University.

10. Appendices

10.1. Lesson plan – traditional

A/an and *the*

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.

When something is first mentioned, the noun usually has *a/an*. When the same thing is mentioned again we use *the*.

The is used if the noun is followed by a phrase.

Sometimes we use *the* even if something is mentioned for the first time because we see the nouns as being unique in a particular context.

    A car stopped and **the** *driver* got out.
    Where's **the** *volume* on this radio?
    I'm just going to **the** *post office*.
    We crossed **the** *English Channel*?
    The *Prime Minister* is very popular.
    The *sun* was shining.

The is used when we mention an institution shared by the community. **the** *theatre,* **the** *cinema,* **the** *radio.*

We use *the* when a phrase or clause comes after the noun and shows which one is meant.

    Ours is **the** *house* on the corner.

But if the phrase or clause does not give enough information to show which one is meant, we use a/an.

    We live in **a** *house* overlooking the park.

We often use *the* when an **of-phrase** follows the noun.

> We came to **the** *edge of a lake*.
> **The** *roof of a house* was blown off in the storm.
> They heard **the** *sound of an aircraft* ahead.

But we can use *a/an* in an of-structure expressing quantity.

> Would you like **a** *piece of cake*?

We use *the* with superlatives and adjectives such as: first, last, next, only, right, same, wrong, etc.

> Is this **the** *first time* you've been in Britain?
> Let's stop at **the** *next services*.
> Who else can I talk to? You're **the** *only friend I've got*.
> I think we went **the** *wrong way* at the lights.
> **The** *best* student will be awarded.

We use *the* when we are talking about playing musical instruments.

> Can you play **the** *piano*?

We use *the bus* and *the train* in general sense as a means of transport.

> I usually go to work on **the** *bus*.

But we say *by bus* and *by train* without *the*.

We say *the police*.

> **The** *police* were called in, but they were unable to find out what had happened to **the** *missing tourist*.

We can use a/an in expressions of frequency, price and speed.

> My brother shaves *twice **a** day*.
> These potatoes cost *one pound twenty **a** kilo*.
> The speed limit on motorways is *seventy miles **an** hour*.

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 <u>underlined</u> word. Use **a/an** or **the** with the word in brackets.

Ex. We didn't have much time for lunch. David made <u>something</u> for us. (omelette) David made an omelette for- us.

1 They ran the race before they held the long jump. Matthew won <u>it</u> easily. (race)
2 The driver turned left. Suddenly <u>someone</u> ran into the road. (child)
3 Vicky was lying on the sofa. She was watching <u>something</u> on television. (film)
4 I had to take a train and then a bus. <u>It</u> was half an hour late. (bus)

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.

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 centre? 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 like …. 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.

Generalizations

As with other parts of its equipment, *an animal* evolves the kind of nose it needs. *The hippo* has grown its ears and eyes on the top of its head, and its nostrils on top of its nose, for lying in water. *Camels* and *seals* can close their noses; they do it in the same way but for different reasons. *The camel* closes its nose against the blowing sand of the desert, and *the seal* against the water in which it spends most of its time.

For generalizations, we can use a plural or uncountable noun on its own, or a singular noun with a/an and the.

But the sentence such as *The camels were carrying a heavy load* refers to a specific groups of camels. We cannot use *the camels* for a generalization.

The most common way of making a generalization is to use a plural or uncountable noun on its own without an article.

> *Blackbirds* have a lovely song.
> *People* should think twice.
> I hate waiting around at *airports*.
> *Time* costs *money*, you know.

In the first example, *blackbirds* means "all blackbirds".

We can use a/an in a generalization.

> *A blackbird* has a lovely song.
> *A computer* will only do what it's told to do.

I the first example, *a blackbird* means "any blackbird" or "a typical blackbird".

We normally use a/an when explaining the meaning of a singular word (defining).

> *A refrigerator* is where you put food to keep it cool.
> *An oar* is a thing you row a boat with.

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.

> *The blackbird* has a lovely song.
> *The redwood* tree grows to an enormous height.

Exercise

Delete any phrase which can't 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

Using articles with names

Most names of people and places are without the.

Daniel   Mrs Parsons   Texas   South Australia

Some place names have *the*, especially names consisting of more than one word, but there are others which do not have *the*. For example, we say *the Black Sea* but *Lake Superior*. Two things affect whether a name has *the* or not. They are the kind of place it is (e.g. a sea or a lake), and the grammatical structure of the name. We often use *the* in these structures.

Of-phrase: the Duke of Edinburgh   the Isle of Wight
Adjective: the American School   the Royal Opera House
Plural form: the Johnsons/the Johnson family   the West Indies

We can sometimes use an article with a person's name.

> There's *a Laura* who works in our office. (= a person called Laura)
> *A Mr Wilson* called to see you. (= someone called Mr Wilson)
> That's *a Hockney*, isn't it? (= a picture by Hockney)

We can also use a/an and the with place names which normally have no article.

> *The Paris* of today is very different from *the Paris* I once knew. (Paris at different times)
> Amsterdam is *the Venice* of the north. (= the place like Venice)

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, but a man 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?

Place names and *the*

Without the	Have the
Most continents, islands, countries, states and counties (*a trip to Europe, on Bermuda, through Ohio, New Shout Wales*)	Names ending with *republic* or *kingdom* or plural names (***the** Dominican Republic, **the** Netherlands*)
When the name of a continent or country is modified by another word, we do not use *the* (*to North Wales, in New England*)	Most other regions (***the** Midlands, **the** South*)
Most mountains and hills (*Kilimanjaro, Mount Everest*)	Exceptions are ***the** Matterhorn, **the** Eiger*. Mountain ranges and hill ranges (*across **the** Alps*)
Lakes (*Lake Ontario, Lake Balaton*)	Rivers, canals and seas (***the** Missouri, **the** North Sea*)
Most cities, towns, suburbs and villages (*in Sydney; Kingswood, a suburb of Bristol*)	Exceptions are ***The** Hague* and ***The** Bronx*
Most roads, streets and parks (*off Station Road, in Baker Street, Madison Avenue, in Central Park*)	some names with adjectives (***the** High Street, **the** Botanical Gardens*) We can also use *the* with some main roads in cities (*along **the** Edgware Road*) by-passes and motorways (***the** York by-pass, **the** M6*) Other exceptions to the general rule are ***the** Avenue, **the** Mall* and ***the** Strand*.
Some bridges (*Westminster Bridge*). This includes the major London bridges	But there are also bridges with *the* (***the** Sydney Harbour Bridge*). *The* is used in American English (***the** Queensboro Bridge*)
Most transport facilities, churches, schools and other important buildings, as well as palaces and houses (*Heathrow, in Slough General Hospital, Leeds Town Hall, Buckingham Palace*)	We use *the* when there is an of-phrase or an adjective or noun modifier (***the** University of Essex, **the** White House*)
With theatres, cinemas, hotels, museums, galleries and centres we usually use *the* except with a possessive form *St Martin's (Theatre)*	Normally we use *the* (***the** Science Museum, shopping in **the** Metro Centre*)
Most shops and restaurants (*shopping at Harod's*)	With shops and restaurants when there is an adjective or noun modifier (***the** Kitchen Shop*)

Hospital vs. The Hospital

There are some nouns that we can use without *the* when we are talking about the normal purpose of an institution. But when we talk about a specific building, we use *the*.

in hospital (as a patient)   in the hospital (as a visitor)
be in prison (as a prisoner)   go to the prison (as a visitor)

Exercise
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.

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.

Exercise

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.

10.2. Lesson plan – cognitive

Mental space

Each person has a mental space. We can imagine them as temporary assemblies of our thoughts which we construct as they think and speak. When two persons are engaged in a conversation they create a new shared mental space (called the current discourse space). It is made up of the information shared by the speaker and the hearer as a basis for communication in the course of the conversation. Speaker tries to make things that are in his mental space accessible to the hearer. If the speaker thinks that the hearer is not sure what things he is talking about, he will used indefinite reference (by using *a* or zero article), if the hearer can be supposed that he knows which things the speaker is talking about the speaker will use definite reference (*the*).

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.
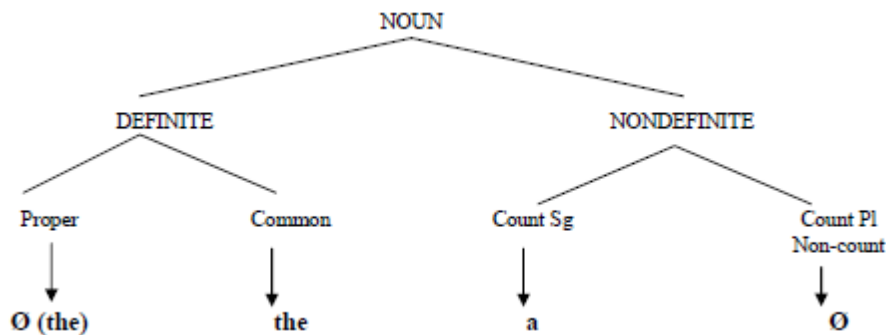
EXAMPLE:

Tom[1] 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.

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 one, he/she will mark a common noun with the definite article.

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 a certain „frame" (in our immediate surroundings, 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.)

   c. *The teacher is writing on the blackboard.* (There is only one blackboard in the classroom.)

   d. *The prime minister proposed a new law.* (A country has only one prime minister.)

   e. *The engine won't start.* (A car has only one engine.)

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 "which specific 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* and superlatives make 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: 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 in the ground.*
18. *We must take care of the environment.*

EXERCISE: 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 <u>food</u> among the Vietnamese <u>population</u>. Pho is commonly eaten for breakfast, although many people will have it for lunch or dinner. Anyone feeling hungry in the small <u>hours</u> of the <u>morning</u> 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 <u>dish</u> is served, its <u>smell</u> and <u>taste</u> is indispensable. The grated rice <u>noodle</u> is made of the best <u>variety</u> of fragrant rice called *Gao Te*. The <u>broth</u> for Pho Bo (Pho with beef) is made by stewing <u>bones</u> 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 <u>soup</u> for Pho Ga (pho with chicken meat) is made by stewing chicken and pig bones together. The white chicken <u>meat</u> 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 <u>advantage</u> 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.

Using *a* and zero article (indefinite reference)

If the speaker expects the hearer not to be able to identify the person(s) or thing(s) referred to uniquely, he or she will use *a* before singular count noun or zero article before a plural count noun or a non-count noun. So, using the indefinite article does make the hearer able to establish mental contact with the thing mentioned, but it is not enough to refer to a unique thing.

We should now mention the notion of a set. Set is a collection of elements that form a whole. We use indefinite article to single out one element of the set in order to establish mental contact with it.

	Singular Count	Plural Count	Non-count
a/an	a toy shop a factory		
zero		toy shops carpets	education factory furniture furniture gold love

A noun is used in a non-definite sense in the following cases:

1. 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)

2. 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 the class of mammals).

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)

3. 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.)

Generic use

There are different ways to express that a noun is used generically to stand for a class as a whole. All the ways have the same basic meaning, but there are some slight differences and all nouns can be used in all types of generic reference. There are four types of generic reference:

A tiger hunts by night.   [indefinite singular generic]
An Italian is fond of children

Tigers hunt by night.   [indefinite plural generic]
Italians are fond of children.

The tiger hunts by night.   [definite singular generic]
The Italian is fond of children.

The tigers hunt by night.   [definite plural generic]
The Italians are fond of children.

Use of *a/*an

We use *a/an* when we talk about an attribute that is essential for a class, an attribute that defines what we believe to be the "essence" of a thing. We use it to talk about *any* member of a group.

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 behaviour.
A computer is a machine designed to carry out complex operations very rapidly.

Use of bare plural

We use it when we talk about large segments of a class, but not all of the elements. People tend to make generalisations on a basis of seeing only a few members of a class and that is why it is suitable to use bare plural for such types of generalisations because it allows for exceptions.

Felines move very graciously.
Novels are fun to read.
Computers make life easy.

Use of *the* + singular

We use it to talk about the class as such. We talk about a prototypical member of a class (imagined average representative of a class). Exceptions with some members of a class are not relevant and we can disregard them when making generalisations of this type. The statement is (most of the time) true for all members of a class.

> ***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.*

Use of *the* + plural

In generic reference, the definite plural generalizes over a class by referring to many elements, but not necessarily all its elements. The definite plural is mainly used to make generalizations about classes of humans. Since human behaviour is different in each human being, it is appropriate to use definite plural for generalizations about humans, since it allows for exceptions. We can also use *the* + plural with adjectives when we use them as nouns that refer to groups of people (*The old* are still running the country).

Count versus Non-count Nouns

When a noun is 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)*, but a plural Count Noun or a Non-Count Noun do not have to be preceded by an article.
In English, entities are mainly classified according to whether they are construed as "bounded" or "unbounded"
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".

Bounded entities

With the term "bounded" we mean "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, do we call the entity 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 a door* *I see a girl.* *I see a boy.* *I see a desk* *I see a table.* *I see a tree.*	*I see houses.* *I see doors.* *I see girls.* *I see boys.* *I see desks.* *I see tables.* *I see trees.*

Things with clear beginnings and ends (boundaries) in time or space are considered bounded. 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: 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

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. 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 gold.* *I see dust.* *I see sand.* *I see grass.* *I see stone.*	*I see some water.* *I see a bar of gold.* *I see a lot of dust.* *I see a heap of sand.* *I see a great deal grass.* *I see a pile of stone.*

EXERCISE: Say whether the following entities would normally be 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?

1. animal	11. lake
2. baby	12. meat
3. beer	13. paint
4. book	14. ring
5. brandy	15. soap
6. bus	16. spot
7. cake	17. sugar
8. cat	18. tea
9. fur	19. week
10. ink	20. wool

Sometimes the same thing can be either bounded or unbounded

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, the nouns have clear boundaries in space.

In a similar way, a distinction can be made between something in its general sense and a specific occurrence 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: In the following sentences say whether the underlined nouns are bounded or unbounded. In your own words, try to explain WHY.

1. I saw a <u>fish</u> in the lake.
2. <u>Fish</u> is good to eat.
3. <u>Time</u> is a valuable commodity.
4. I saw him one <u>time</u>.
5. We should respect the institution of <u>marriage</u>.
6. Theirs was not a good <u>marriage</u>.
7. Do not use too much <u>paper</u>.
8. I have to work on a <u>paper</u> for my English class.
9. She has beautiful <u>hair</u>.
10. I found a <u>hair</u> in my soup.

EXERCISE: 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.

1. acid	6. cream	11. lamp	16. paper
2. book	7. field	12. literature	17. rain
3. bread	8. food	13. meat	18. shoe
4. cap	9. glass	14. milk	19. snow
5. coat	10. horse	15. music	20. time

Other things considered unbounded: mass substances; human values; emotions and mental states; food; acts or actions; human institutions.

a. *Fire is dangerous.* (general phenomenon of combustion)
b. *The fire completely destroyed the house.* (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. The wines of South Africa are very good. (kinds of wine)

a. He suffers from depression.

b. The *many depressions he has had, have left a mark.* (Separate, bounded, periods in which he suffered from depression).

a. I like chicken. (= chicken meat)

b. I saw a few chickens in the road. (= animals)

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. *These countries have shown a great deal of development.* (progress)

b. *What are the recent developments in politics?* (specific events)

a. We go to school early every day. (= general place to study)

b. We visited the school my friend goes to. (= the building)

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: He 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.)

EXERCISE: Fill in the gaps with *the*, *a/an* or leave it 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: Fill in the gaps with *the*, *a/an* or leave it blank

_____ 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.

Proper names

People names usually do not take any article because they are already seen as unique. But if we wish to use them as common nouns then they take articles. We do that when there are more people with the same name and we want to talk about a person with that name.

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.)

Also we can use *the* when one person is more know that the others or defined in some other way.

That is not *the* Brad Pitt. He just has the same name.

That is *the Bill Hunter* that lives in Durham road.

When it comes to geographical names the use of articles often seems unsystematic. But we can use the notions of boundedness.

Names of most countries do not take an article because we see them as clearly bounded.

> *Hungary, Spain, France*

Countries or geographical areas that are seen as collections of political units take a plural proper name with the definite article.

> *the United States, the Philippines*

Natural landscapes that lack clear boundaries are named with the definite article in order to mark them as a unique referent: rivers, mountain ranges, deserts, forests, archipelagos, etc.

the Ohio River, the Midwest, the Sahara, the Black Forest, the Grand Canyon, the Alps, etc.

When it comes to names of buildings, bridges, etc. the general rule is

noun + noun = no article - *London Bridge, Oxford Street, Buckingham Palace*

noun + adjective = definite article - *the Golden Gate Bridge, the British Museum, the White House*. But there are exceptions like *Big Ben*

Some abstract entities such as *the Church, the Army* and *the Government*, are referred to by proper names and capitalised in the written form. Their unique status in a society needs to be marked by the definite article to distinguish them from their corresponding common nouns. There are a few institutions that are expressed by a bare proper name like *Parliament*, *Westminster* and *Scotland Yard.*

Table of figures

Sažetak

Ovaj rad uspoređuje dva pristupa oblikovanju nastavnog gradiva. Jedan od njih je tradicionalni pristup gramatici, a drugi se temelji na kognitivnoj gramatici. Dvije skupine srednjoškolaca su bile testirane kako bi se utvrdilo njihovo inicijalno znanje o sustavu engleskih članova. Zatim su dvije skupine bile poučavane dvama različitim lekcijama. Potom su ponovno testirane odmah nakon završetka poučavanja. Treći put su testirani dva tjedna nakon poučavanja. Tradicionalna grupa je ostvarila malen napredak, a kognitivna grupa je ostvarila znatan napredak.

Ključne riječi: sustav engleskih članova, L2 učenici, kognitivna gramatika, pristupi poučavanju jezika