

Use of Articles in Learning English as a Foreign Language: A Study of Iranian English Undergraduates

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Abstract

The significance of error analysis for the learner, the teacher and the researcher is now widely recognized. Earlier studies of error analysis concentrated on intersystematic comparison of the “native language” and the “target language” and drew the required data largely from intuitions and impressionistic observations. This study was conducted on the basis of the following observations: (1) to restrict to the study of one area viz articles. (2) to avoid comparison in terms of the systems of native and target language. In this study the major areas of difficulties that students face in the target language, i.e. the occurrence of articles in different syntactic features were examined and an attempt was made to establish a hierarchy of difficulties 40 undergraduates faced in the use of articles. For testing the correct retrieval, a slightly modified version of Leacock’s essay ‘My Financial Career’ was prepared. It included sufficient examples of almost all the important uses of articles. The test was given to the subjects in the form of a running text. The responses of the subjects were analysed in terms of noun or noun phrases preceded by articles, noun or noun-phrases preceded by no article, and grammatical

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categories other than noun or noun-phrases proceeded by no article. The findings revealed that most of the errors the students committed were due to the nature as well as the grammatical complexity of the articles in English, i.e. L1 independent which cannot be explained in terms of transfer from the native language. It was also found that students competence on using anaphoric reference is far greater than cataphoric reference. The findings are interpreted to have pedagogical implications for syllabus designers and EFL teachers.

Key terms: Error Analysis, English Articles, Definite, Indefinite, EFL Learners

1. Theoretical Background

1.1. Historical Background of the Theory of Error Analysis

In the area of second language learning, teachers had for many years believed that the major source of errors in their students' second language performance was directly attributable to interference from the learner's native language. The classic view of this issue is clearly stated exemplified in Lado's (1957) *Linguistics Across Culture* "individuals tend to transfer the form and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and cultures both productively when attempting to speak the language and act in the culture, and receptively, when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives" (P.2).

Lado's method, known as contrastive analysis, relied upon a systematic comparison of the native language with the target language in order for the

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researcher/teacher to predict areas of difficulty for the second language learner. Contrastive Analysis (CA) was deeply rooted in the behaviourist and structuralist approaches of the day. Lado claimed that the principle barrier to second/foreign language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language system.

According to Lado (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis stressed that second language learning is primarily, if not exclusively, a process of learning whatever items are different from first language. Such a narrow view of interference ignored the intralingual effects of learning among other factors. It was believed that contrastive analysis would predict the difficulties a learner would encounter and so enable the teachers to concentrate on them and prevent them. But further studies suggest that even in adult learners where mother tongue is deeply entrenched and transferred errors are at peak, only a minority of errors are attributable to mother tongue interference (Ferris 2004; Kubota, 2001).

By the late 1960s, the second language learning began to be examined in much the same way that first language acquisition had been studied for sometime. Learners were considered not as producers of ill formed imperfect language replete with mistakes but as intelligent and creative beings proceeding through logical, systematic stages of acquisition.

The assumptions of structural linguistics based on which the contrastive analysis predicts the area of linguistic difficulties encountered by learners of a second language has been questioned. Richards (1971) claimed that studies of second language learning have tended to imply that contrastive analysis may be most predictable at the level of phonology and least

predictable at the level of syntax. In the 1970s, empirical research revealed that native language was the only one of the several factors that influenced the Second Language Learning. George (1971) found that “one-third of the deviant sentences from second language learners could be attributed to language transfers”. There are other sources such as intra-lingual confusions and faulty pedagogical procedures which contribute to error production. Hence Lado’s approach was challenged by Richards (1971) who claimed that many second language learners made errors which didn’t have their sources in the native language. Such errors can be explained in terms of:

1. Overgeneralization
2. Ignorance of rule restrictions
3. Incomplete application of rules
4. False concepts – hypothesised

In the recent work on error analysis, errors found in any of the foregoing categories are called intra-lingual and developmental errors. Supporting Richard’s recent studies, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) pointed out that many errors, though systematic in nature, can’t be explained in terms of transfer from the native language. Chomsky (1965) Katz (1964) and second language acquisition experts such as Krashen (1981) have put forth a different view of errors, which has gained wide acceptance. The argument in its strong form suggests that a learner must make errors as an unavoidable and necessary part of learning process. So, errors are not bad as once thought but visible proof that learning is taking place. As the student learns a new language, very often they don’t know how to express what they want

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to say, so they make a guess on the basis of their mother tongue and of what they know of the foreign language. The process is one of the hypothesis formulation and refinement, as the student develops growing competence in the language they are learning. They move from ignorance to mastery of the language they are learning through transitional stages and errors they make are to be taken as a sign that learning is taking place (cf. Fodor 1982), (Lardiere 2005).

1.2. Classification of Errors

Corder (1973:36) classified errors into the following four categories, formulated in terms of cognitive learning strategies:

- i) **Omission:** it occurs when certain linguistic forms may be omitted by the learners because of their complexity e.g. **Put books on table*. Both **books** and **table** are needed to be specified by the definite article 'the'. Omission can occur in phonology, morphology and syntax.
- ii) **Addition:** errors can be due to addition of unnecessary items e.g. **The Iran is a great country*. Since 'Iran' is a proper noun thus the definite article is not needed.
- iii) **Substitution:** replacing indiscriminately a phonological or grammatical element by another e.g. **There is an university in our town*, 'an' has been replaced by 'a'.
- iv) **Misordering:** it can be a phoneme, morpheme or a word as in **Good the boy*. The definite article must have occurred before

'good'.

1.3. The Significance of Errors

The realization that the second language learners' errors are potentially important for the process of second language learning, and consequently the designing of the course, incorporating the psychology of second language learning, is a current focus in the literature on modern language teaching.

A learner's errors then provides evidence of the system of the language they are using (i.e. have learned) at a particular point in the course and it must be reported that they are using some system although it is not yet the right system. According to Corder (1981:5) Errors are significant in three ways:

- (a) first to the teacher, in that they tell him how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn.
- (b) they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the rules.
- (c) they are indispensable to the learner himself because we can regard the making of mistakes as a device the learner uses in order to learn.

1.4. Articles in English

The article is a formal (grammatical) word by means of which the subject

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spoken of is closely defined/determined. The primary function of both articles is determinations but the definite article 'the' has also the secondary function of individualisation, specialisation, particularisation, familiarisation of the related noun. The term "definite" apparently means that the noun to which the article is added, stands for something definite. It is nearly equivalent to the terms "determinative", and "defining" (Kaluza, 1981).

Wren and Martin (1998) subdivide the definite article into three categories:

1. Specification due to anaphoric reference

A noun which has been used for the second time is preceded by 'the' because of retrospective specification e.g. *I saw an elephant on the street. The **elephant** was carrying several people.*

In the above example 'elephant' is specified by the definite article 'the' because of its back reference in the preceding statement.

2. Specification due to immediate surrounding

A noun which represents only one particular thing by reason of its locality is preceded by 'the' because it is specified in the immediate surrounding e.g. *I want to consult the **doctor**.*

3. Specification due to cataphoric reference

The specification in the case of cataphoric reference is made clear by the following phrase or clause e.g.

*The **elephant** I saw on the street was very big.*

The specification/determination in all the given three categories

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(anaphoric, cataphoric and immediate surroundings) are determined by the context in which they are used.

This study mainly focuses the use of definite articles based on the above three subcategories.

1.5. Research Questions

1. Does the increase in the length of exposure have any significant impact on the ability to use articles correctly?
2. What is the most difficult pattern of article, anaphoric or cataphoric?

1.6. Research Hypothesis

The longer the length of exposure, the better one can perform the use of the articles.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample for the present study consists of 40 English undergraduates who belong to two different groups (A and B) in terms of their exposure to the English language. The subjects of Group A consist of 20 first semester students of English. Group B which also consists of 20 last semester students. Subjects were divided into two groups with different lengths of exposure to English to see what kind of errors, if any, get automatically repaired over a period of time.

2.2. Instruments

The first instrument of for the data collection was the Oxford Placement to measure the General English Proficiency level of the subjects. The second instrument was a very interesting story from which most of the articles had been deleted and the subjects were asked to insert the concerned article in the appropriate places.

There are 55 (definite and indefinite) missing articles in the passage (see Appendix). The definite articles in the sentence initial position had been left intact. But the rest had all been omitted except one definite article which remained in the text due to the typographical errors.

The test was given to all the subjects in the form of a running text. No blank places were indicated where the articles were to be inserted. The subjects were thus expected to locate the potential places and to insert the articles between the words where they were required.

3. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data involved the following process in using articles in particular:

1. Recognition of errors
2. Classification of errors
3. Explanation of errors
4. Evaluation of errors

The tables below illustrate the mean percentage achievement of the two groups based on their proficiency level the test on articles.

Table 1. Gr. A -Mean Score and Standard Deviation (n=20)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
VAR0000 9	21.3333	4.9377
VAR000 10	23.7333	6.6490

Table 2. Gr. B -Mean Score and Standard Deviation (n=20)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
VAR0000 9	23.9333	3.7696
VAR000 10	22.8000	7.7201

1. As table 1 illustrates, variable 9 gives us the overall language proficiency scores. Group A thus had an approximate score of 53.32 % (21.33 out of 40) and Group B had a score of 59.82 of (23.93 out of 40). The standard deviation was not strikingly high. It seems that in terms of overall levels of proficiency, two extra years of study does make a significant difference.

2. Further more, if we look at the scores of variable 10, we realise that the extra study does not substantially influence the control on the use of articles in English. In fact Group B scored slightly less than Group A. Group A's score was 43.15% and Group B's 40%. Based on these results it can be concluded that:

- a) Cloze scores are much higher than scores on the article test;
- b) Greater proficiency in language does not automatically ensure proficiency in specific areas of grammar;
- c) The standard deviation in the case of articles was high and significant suggesting that the range of variation may have been substantially large.

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The fact that the students of Gr. B have got better marks in the overall language proficiency than Gr. A, but lower marks in the use of articles despite their length of exposure to English may be an indication that the use of articles is independent of overall proficiency though this needs to be further explored.

In table 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 the control over the definite and indefinite articles in each groups was examined in relation to their forms and functions. The use of article was considered in different syntactic structures and an attempt was made to establish the areas of difficulties especially those which were common between the two groups.

Table 3. Group A: The correct insertion of definite and indefinite articles

the	a	an	null	Total achievement
44.88%	40%	44.44%	45%	43.15%

Table 4. Group B: The correct insertion of definite and indefinite articles

the	a	an	Null	Total achievement
40.88%	44.91%	34.44%	45%	40%

It is also clear from tables 3 and 4 that the control on the use of articles was not up to the mark for both the groups. If we combine the scores for ‘a’ and ‘an’, we will notice that as compared to the control on the use of the definite articles the control on the indefinite article was better. What is most surprising is the fact that with greater exposure, the overall control on the use of articles does not seem to have improved.

So far, we had a broad picture of the control of the two groups in the use of articles, the further analysis will provide us with more specific points. We

now turn to the analysis of the use of the definite article in terms of anaphoric, cataphoric and immediate surrounding specifications. The reader will also be provided with the examination of the use of the zero article in terms of text dependent categories /text independent/ using articles before any other categories than noun, and the performance of the students in distinguishing consonantal from vocalic sounds while inserting indefinite articles ‘a’ and ‘an’.

Table 5. Percentage of correctly inserting the definite articles
(Anaphoric reference)

S. No.	NP from the test passage	Gr. A	Gr. B
Anaphoric references:			
1.	The bank	26.66	20
2.	Certainly said the accountant	40	13.33
3.	Opened the door	100	100
4.	Called the accountant	66.66	40
5.	Took the money	40	53.33
6.	Write the sum	26	13.33
7.	It is said the accountant	46.66	26.66
8.	In the bank	66.66	66.66
9.	On the cheque	40	53.33
10.	At the clerk	46.66	40
11.	As the big door	26.66	46.66
Mean		47.81	43

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Table 6. Percentage of correctly inserting the definite article
(Cataphoric reference)

S. No.	NP from the test passage	Gr. A	Gr. B
Cataphoric references:			
1.	The door of a bank	73.33	73.33
2.	The counter marked A/c	60	26.66
3.	The son of a rich man	13.33	0
4.	The accountant's counter	73.33	53.33
5.	The ball of money	40	33.33
6.	The ceiling of the bank	46.66	13.33
Mean		50.99	33.33

Table 7. Percentage of correctly inserting the definite articles
(Immediate surrounding)

S. No.	NP from the test passage	Gr. A	Gr. B
Specifications due to immediate surroundings:			
1.	At the clerk	40	40
2.	To consult the manager	60	53.33
3.	See the manager	46	40
4.	Are you the manager	20	20
5.	Led the way	6.66	26.66
6.	Turned the key	33.33	46.66
7.	In the lock	40	6.66
8.	Showed me the other way	20	46.66
9.	The whole thing	73	80
10.	Pay the money	60	46.66
Mean		39.89	40.66

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Anaphoric reference: is a way of marking the identity between what is being expressed and what has already been expressed. The achievement of the both groups in using the definite article when the specification is due to retrospective reference (anaphoric) is slightly higher (Gr. A 47.81 and Gr. B 43) than the other two kinds of definite articles. The use of ‘the’ with ‘door’ is strikingly high (100% by the two groups). This is possibly due to the most frequent collocation of ‘door’ with ‘the’ and since it has a back reference, the degree of correct retrieval is high. In conclusion we can say that the accurate retrieval of this group of article shows that the learners’ better understanding of the context is satisfactory. This means the overall achievement of the two groups indicates the ability of the learners’ to use the definite article better when it is required because of anaphoric reference. Except for the case of item (6) which proved the difficulty for the learners of the two groups, the achievement in (6) is relatively lower because the noun ‘sum’ itself hasn’t been mentioned earlier. The person taking the test will have to infer that the *six hundred dollars* was mentioned at the beginning of the passage. The cognitive process involved in this retrospective identification may be complicated.

Cataphoric reference: is one way of marking the identity between what is being expressed and what is about to be expressed. For example, I said the following... where the meaning of the ‘following’ must be specified in the subsequent context, where the words refer forward as opposed to anaphoric words which refer backwards. The specification in the case of cataphoric reference is made clear by the following phrase or clause.

Again contrary to our hypothesis, Group A scored higher marks than

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Group B (50.99 vs. 33.33). The highest correct retrieval was identical (both groups have secured (73.33) in the first item 'the door of a bank.

Interestingly enough both of the groups have been unable to insert the correct article in item (3), Gr. B with zero achievement while Gr. A only 13.33.

Those who have found the need for inserting articles e.g. (Gr. B) have preferred the indefinite article 'a'. The result of such a confusion can be better explained if we consider the frequent collocation of son with 'a' in most second language learning situation.

Specification due to immediate surrounding: a noun which represents only one particular thing by reason of its locality is preceded by the definite article 'the'. The correct retrieval of both the groups in the case of using the definite articles in the immediate surrounding is more or less the same. The correct insertion done by (Group A 39.81) and (Group B 40).

In order to wind up our overall analysis regarding the different situations of the definiteness in table (6) we arrive at this conclusion that the performance of the students in both groups in the case of cataphoric reference and specification due to immediate surrounding was not as good as in the case of anaphoric reference. The explanation could be sought in the pressures for communicative effectiveness which are the maximum in the case of anaphoric reference.

The text independent omissions: some noun-like expressions are never preceded by any articles. Thus, names of unique objects like *God, Invocations, salutations and vocatives, school, hospital, home*, such nouns are called text independent because they are not required to be preceded

any definite article. All these nouns constitute exception to the general rule in English that nouns are preceded by articles. There was not any sign of insertion of articles before any of the text independent nouns used in the passage by the two groups, which indicates that second language learners master the exception in the above mentioned cases more completely than the rules.

Grammatical categories other than noun not proceeded by any articles.

Group (A)

- My voice was the deep
- Looked the shyly
- I want to the draw
- Secret to the reveal
- I had the written

Group (B)

- I walked in the digging feet
- I want to the draw
- Was an obliged
- Had a gathered from my manner

We came up with the following results from both the groups (A-B):

1. Insertion in the Infinitival Verbs

Students seldom made the wrong insertion, e.g.

Group (A)

- to the draw money
- to the reveal

Group (B)

- to the draw money

On the whole there are 7 infinitival constructions in the text and 20 students in each group. Of these, there are only two cases of wrong insertion by students of Gr. A. Only definite articles were inserted. There was only one insertion done by Gr. B which was also a definite article.

2. Insertion between the Auxiliary and the Main Verb: Subjects Seldom

Insert Articles as in:

Group (A)

- I had the written

Group (B)

- I was an obliged
- had a gathered form my face

There were five cases in the text where the verb included an auxiliary also.

In about three cases of both the groups inserted articles. Subjects of Gr. A inserted only one which was only definite articles. But subjects of Gr. B inserted two indefinite articles.

3. Insertion of Articles before an Adverb

Group A

- Looked the shyly

There were four adverbs of manner used in the text. Only one case of definite article insertion was observed in the result of Group A.

But in the case of *mass nouns* “water” 26% of the subjects Gr. A used the indefinite article ‘a’ before water “a water while only 13% of Gr. B inserted indiscriminately ‘a’ before a mass noun ‘a water’ which shows that students of Gr. B have a better control.

What seems strikingly significant is the frequent use of the indefinite marker ‘an in the phrase’ such as – ‘*tall an old man*’ 20% from Gr. A and 26% from Gr. B.

The researcher believes such cases can be better explained either in the ‘looking lapses’ which means that as soon as the students noticed ‘*old man*’ they inserted ‘an’ because of the vocalic sound and ignoring the preceding

word 'tall' or it could be because of the complexity of the phrase, which means if we have smaller phrases with single modifiers it could be quite possible for the learners to insert the articles in the proper place, like – *Are you 'a' detective?*

Group (A) – Table 8. Percentage scores for items involving mute 'h' and vowels sounded like consonant

	a	an	the	null
An honest and calm man	40	13.33	6.66	40
A unique experience	-	73	13.33	13

Group (B) – Table 9. Percentage scores for items involving mute 'h' and vowels sounded like consonant

	a	an	the	null
An honest and calm man	60	-	-	40
A unique experience	26.66	60	-	13

From the above tables, it is obvious that the tendency of the two groups in using the indefinite article 'a' and 'an' was high only because of the initial sound of the following noun as in the case of (a unique experience). The researcher believes this is the result of the emphasis on teaching that 'an' is only used before starting with vowels letters a, e, i, o, u. The fact that some vowels are pronounced like consonant is ignored. However, the performance of group B in distinguishing vowels which are accented and can be treated as consonantal sounds is better as in the case of '*a unique experience*' (26.66) than group A which hasn't inserted even a single correct article in the given example. The tendency of both the groups to using the

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indefinite articles 'a' is very high, which again indicates that the students have only been able to internalise the rule that only 'a' is used before consonants and 'an' before vocalic letters without being aware that what really matters is the initial sound and not the letter. The researcher believes in these two examples students have only noticed the physical appearance or structure of the words 'honest' and 'unique' than the way they are actually pronounced.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In fact, knowledge of the definiteness requires integration of a number of properties. Firstly, the feature [\pm definite] must be mapped or reassemble onto the English definite and indefinite articles (see Lardiere 2005, 2007).

White (2003), in a study of a Turkish speaker whose proficiency in English was advanced, reports no definiteness violations, even though the subject did make errors in article suppliance, in the form of omission. Some of the major findings are:

1. The general control on the use of articles is still lower. It shows far greater variation and does not seem to improve with greater exposure in terms of time.
2. The analysis based on proficiency test revealed that Gr. B with more exposure to English has had a better performance in the overall language proficiency than Gr. A which means the overall proficiency of English is influenced by the amount of the time for which students learn English. But as far as the analysis of the data from the test on

article is concerned, the exposure or English general proficiency seemed not to play any role in improving the performance on articles. Such a result leads us to realise that use of articles in English is a grammatical area that should be independently studied and an overall proficiency in English will not guarantee proficiency in the use of articles.

3. The data revealed that in teaching the definite articles ‘the’, teachers generally concentrate on specification based on the use of retrospective reference i.e. in fact both of the groups scored slightly higher when the specification was based on the anaphoric reference e.g. (Gr. A 47.81% and Gr. B 43%). But when the specification was based on cataphoric reference or because of immediate surroundings, the percentage of correct attempts decreased to Gr. A about 40% and Gr. B almost 35%. Therefore, our remedial courses should concentrate on the later two categories.
4. In the use of the indefinite articles ‘a’ and ‘an’, even after studying English for more than four years, students hadn't internalised the real distinction between the two articles. They were merely able to insert ‘a’ before a sound which is orthographically a consonant and ‘an’ before an orthographic vowel e.g. in the case of ‘an honest and calm man’, 40% students of Gr. A have inserted ‘a’ and only 13.33% inserted ‘an’. Remaining students didn't insert any article before ‘honest’.

In the case of ‘*a unique experience*’, 73% of Gr. A have inserted ‘an’ with not a single correct insertion. But Gr. B showed a relatively

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better correct retrieval which was 26.66 in the same example but they were not able to insert any correct article in '*an honest and calm man*'.

5. The results in the above two cases suggests that the teachers of English should not only familiarise the students with the items such as: 'a' occurring before a consonant and 'an' before a vowel sound, but also, they should shift the focus from letters to sounds.
6. The rule that in English only nouns can take articles seems to be well established and rare was the case where learners of the two groups use an article before grammatical categories other than nouns. The various categories of nouns which don't take any articles in any situation were also well understood by both groups of learners, which indicates that high percentage of the students inductively realised that articles normally occur before nouns but in relation to this point we also observed that a remarkable number of articles indiscriminately were omitted i.e. in each group there was 45% of omission (not inserted). In order to minimise the rate of the habit of dropping and inserting the articles indiscriminately, the pedagogical techniques should be based on the following important points:
 - i) It is not enough to tell the students that in English only nouns and noun phrases take articles. They have to be drilled upon intensively and shown sufficient example of other grammatical categories which don't take article. Particularly in the case of 'an', students need to be told that expressions such as 'an obliged' etc. are not possible. Along with other grammatical categories, those nouns (verbs, adjectives, adverbs) which don't take articles, students

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should be introduced to nouns and noun-like expressions which never take articles. This includes such text-independent categories as names of unique objects, greetings, vocatives and nouns like 'home, hospital, school etc. used for their primary purpose. Though the performance of the students in this category was considerably good, the above points are suggested as a general method of teaching the article. Next the students may be introduced to nouns which don't take articles under specific circumstances e.g. unspecified abstract or mass nouns. It is at this stage that the students should be exposed to situations in which articles are inserted before every noun excluding the above mentioned categories; indefinite article if the noun is unspecified and definite if it is specified. This may also help the habit of dropping the articles. Students should be told that all nouns excluding the above categories should be preceded by an article. There are certain areas for example the habit of dropping articles, which have obviously not received sufficient remedial attention at any stage. Moreover is the choice. There are indiscriminate insertions sometimes correct and sometimes incorrect which show that their behaviour is yet not fossilised. It is possible that the situation may improve if the pedagogical implications suggested above are incorporated in remedial courses for those students in teaching articles in English.

- ii) Experiments concerning language teaching have revealed that good teaching affects learning. There will always be a place for intensive work of one kind or another because it is beyond the

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capacity of human being to absorb perfectly and retain indefinitely everything they are presented.

The present study largely confirms the results of some of the earlier studies (e.g. Agnihotri et al. 1994, Agnihotri 1991) which also showed that learning of articles is an extremely complex area, that higher levels of proficiency in the use of articles is generally associated with exposure in English, and that most of the errors in the use of articles are developmental.

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Appendix

Name:

The moment I go through door of bank and attempt to do business there, I become irresponsible fool. That day I knew this before I went in, but my salary had been raised to six hundred dollars month and I felt that bank was best place for it. So I walked in with dragging feet and looked shyly around at clerk. I had idea person about to open account was obliged to consult manager. I went upto counter marked 'Accountant'. The accountant was tall, old man. The very sight of him made me nervous. My voice was deep and hollow. I felt thirsty and looked around for water. 'Can I see manager?' I said, and added solemnly 'alone'. I don't know why I said 'alone'. 'Certainly' said accountant, and fetched him. The manager looked honest and calm man. I held my six hundred and five dollars in screwed up ball in my pocket. 'Are you manager?' I said God knows I didn't doubt it. 'Yes' he said. He felt that I had terrible secret to reveal. 'Come in here', he said, and led way to private room. He turned key in lock. 'Are you detective'? He said. He had gathered from my mysterious manner that I was detective.

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'I am not detective at all'. 'I have come to open account'. I said. A large account, I suppose, he said. He thought I was son of rich man. 'Fairly large', I whispered, I want to deposit six hundred and five dollars now and then six hundred dollars every month. The manager got up and opened door. He called accountant 'Mr. Brown', he said loudly. 'This gentleman is opening account. He will deposit six hundred and five dollars'. 'Come out said the manager coldly and showed me other way. I went up to accountant's counter and pushed ball of money at him. He took money and gave it to another clerk. He made me write sum on piece of paper and sign my name in book. I knew not what I was doing. There were chairs, tables and books around me. 'Is it deposited'? I asked in low voice". 'It is', said accountant. Then I want to draw cheque. Some one gave me chequebook through little window. The people in bank had impression that I was millionaire who had something wrong with him. I wrote something on cheque and thrust it at clerk. He looked at it with surprise. Suddenly I realised that I had written six hundred and five dollars instead of five. I made up my mind. 'Yes, I want to draw all my money whole thing'. The clerk prepared to pay money. I took it and rushed out. As big door swung behind me. I caught laughter that went up to ceiling of bank. As I reached home, I felt it was unique experience.