Explicit instruction and translation: A generative view of the acquisition of English articles

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Acknowledgments

To the memory of the inspirational Dr Sabah Safi

Abstract

Articles' substitution errors are commonly documented in L2 research. Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004) tested the 'Fluctuation Hypothesis'', which predicts that learners overuse 'the' with indefinite specific contexts of article use and overuse 'a' with definite non-specific contexts. They demonstrated that specificity has an effect on learners whose L1s are article-less, but left open the question of fluctuation regarding learners whose L1s have articles. Additionally, genericity distinctions (Noun-phrase vs. Sentence-level Generics) are rarely addressed by L2 researchers (Ionin et al., 2011). Meanwhile, classroom instruction is lacking in terms of article semantics, as specificity and genericity are currently not taught to learners of English, whereas definiteness is. This study aims to discover whether explicit instruction in definiteness, specificity and genericity, and translation activities that target article use can contribute to accurate article choice.

The study adopts an experimental design including 67 Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English and 23 native English speakers. The participants took three tasks (Article Elicitation, Acceptability Judgment and Elicited Written Production) as a pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test. They were divided into four intervention groups. Over a period of three weeks, each group was subjected to either explicit or implicit instruction and to either translation or gap fill activities.

The results are consistent with Ionin, Ko and Wexler's (2004) predictions, Slabakova's (2008) semantic principles and Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer/ Full Access Hypothesis. The findings show fluctuation in indefinite specific contexts, which suggests sensitivity to specificity. Learners also distinguished between genericity types even though this distinction is not morphologically marked in Arabic, but showed evidence of L1 transfer in article generic use/interpretation. The study shows that explicit instruction and translation activities did not have a clear effect on article accuracy. It also discusses implications for SLA research and article pedagogy and methodological challenges.

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Abbreviations

Generative Second Language Research (GenSLA)

First language (L1)

Second language (L2)

Ionin, Ko and Wexler (IKW)

Article Choice Parameter (ACP)

Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH)

Article-less (−ART)

With articles (+ART)

Noun phrase (NP)

Determiner phrase (DP)

Explicitly stated knowledge (ESK)

Noun-phrase Generics (NPG)

Sentence-level Generics (SLG)

Forced Choice Elicitation Task (FCET)

Article Elicitation Task (AET)

Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT)

Elicited Written Production Task (EWPT)

Translation Explicit Group (TEG)

Translation Implicit Group (TIG)

Gap Fill Explicit Group (GFEG)

Gap Fill Implicit Group (GFIG)

Native Control Group (NCG)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

This study is rooted in a generative research line, namely Generative Second Language Acquisition (henceforth GenSLA), in which researchers are attempting to bridge the gap between theory and practice (e.g. Master, 1990; White, 1991). The main premise motivating GenSLA is the following: "Research carried out within the generative tradition has something to say regarding language teaching. It is a valuable resource that should not be squandered." (Bruhn de Garavito, 2013 p.32).

Whong, Gil and Marsden (2013) declared that while the relationship between second language research and teaching practice might seem clear, in reality this is not the case, especially in terms of formal linguistic approaches. In this regard, they argued that classroom instruction that is theoretically informed would be more beneficial to L2 learners than instruction with no understanding of theory. They made this argument particularly because of the idea that "the grammar included in most language teaching textbooks is lacking in terms of certain basic properties of language now well understood among linguists" (Whong et al., 2013, p.2). Their argument calls for researchers to explore the areas of GenSLA research in terms of their implications for the language classroom. However, Whong et al. explained that adopting this view does not mean that GenSLA is the only useful approach to the classroom, but that GenSLA offers language classrooms an understanding of language properties and how these properties develop in relation to the language input given to learners. Relative to this argument, numerous attempts have been made in the field to establish a link between theory and practice. Examples of such research include earlier well-known attempts, such as White (1991), and Trahey and White (1993), and recent attempts, such as Snape and Yusa (2013), among others.

In accordance with this line of research, this project investigated the development of the English article system by Saudi (Hejazi)[1] Arabic-speaking learners of L2 English. Hence, an understanding of the linguistic properties of 'articles' across languages and how any difference in these properties between learners' first language (L1) and second language (L2) might affect learners' article performance was essential to the nature of this project. It is well-documented in SLA research that 'articles' is an area where L2 learners often commit omission and substitution errors in spite of the fact that the English articles (a/an and the) constitute two of the ten most frequently used words in English (Master, 1987). Additionally, it is well-documented (e.g. Master, 1987; Ionin, Ko and Wexler (IKW), 2004; Ionin et al., 2011) that language textbooks often devote very little space to articles and that classroom instruction of articles is often lacking in terms of full understanding of articles' linguistic properties. From a linguistic point of view, 'articles' is an area where learners often commit errors because the acquisition of articles requires mappings of form and meaning. This type of mapping is especially challenging for L2 learners especially when it is different in the learners' L1 (Slabakova, 2008).

While article omission errors tend to decrease as learners become more proficient in L2, substitution errors (i.e. using 'the' instead of 'a/an' and vice versa) often persist in the production of L2 learners even at advanced language proficiency levels. Ionin (2003) proposed a theoretical explanation for article substitution errors in non-generic contexts that has influenced many studies in the field (e.g. Hawkins et al., 2006; Garcia-Mayo, 2009; and Sarko, 2009). In particular, Ionin (2003) introduced the Article Choice Parameter (ACP) and the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH). According to this parameter, any two-article language will encode articles on the basis of 'definiteness' or 'specificity', but not on both. In her work, 'definiteness' is related mainly to the shared knowledge of the referent between the speaker and the hearer, whereas 'specificity' is related only to the speakers' knowledge of the referent. Consequently, a language like English, which encodes articles on the basis of 'definiteness', will have the definite

[1] Hejaz refers to the western region of Saudi Arabia, which is the western border on the Red Sea.

article 'the' in contexts where the speaker and the hearer share knowledge of the referent, but the indefinite article 'a/an' in contexts where such shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer does not exist. Conversely, a language like Samoan, which encodes articles on the basis of 'specificity', will have the specific article 'le' in contexts where the speaker has knowledge of the referent, but the non-specific article 'se' in contexts where the speaker does not have such knowledge. Based on the ACP, Ionin (2003) hypothesized that in the context of learning an L2, learners will fluctuate between assigning articles on the basis of 'definiteness' and on the basis of 'specificity' until they receive a sufficient amount of input to assign articles correctly.

Ionin (2003) and IKW (2004) proposed that the Fluctuation Hypothesis could explain L2 learners' substitution errors. By assuming learners' full access to UG parameters and that L2 grammar is constrained by UG, IKW claim that learners will fluctuate between the two article settings until the input leads them to set the appropriate parametric value. The hypothesis predicts that L2 learners might fluctuate between the definiteness setting and the specificity setting. That is, it is expected that learners will overuse 'the' with indefinite specific contexts and overuse 'a' with definite non-specific contexts. By testing Russian and Korean learners of English, as neither employs an article system, IKW (2004) found that learners misused articles in the contexts predicted by the fluctuation Hypothesis (i.e. indefinite specific and definite non-specific).

IKW (2004) left open the question of article fluctuation regarding learners whose L1 has an article system that encodes definiteness. To address this gap, Snape (2006), Hawkins et al. (2006), Ionin et al. (2008) and Garcia-Mayo (2009) each conducted a study that compared article development between two groups of learners (learners from +ART languages vs. learners from −ART languages). The performance of their −ART groups confirmed IKW's fluctuation predictions, whereas the performance of their +ART groups indicated no fluctuation. For example, Garcia-Mayo (2009) found that her group of L1 Spanish (a language similar to English in encoding definiteness) did not fluctuate and that they had successfully transferred their knowledge of definiteness to English. On the other hand, Sarko (2009) tested learners whose L1 is Arabic (a language that encodes definiteness), did find that her learners fluctuated in certain

contexts, but she also found this behaviour to be an outcome of L1 transfer rather than an outcome of the specificity effect.

The findings of these studies provide interesting implications for article pedagogy. To put it simply, these findings suggest that classroom instruction that explains the notions of definiteness and specificity in terms of the presence or absence of shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer might help learners achieve better accuracy in their article production (i.e. in selecting the proper 'form' of articles). To the best of my knowledge, the first and the only published study thus far that has applied this pedagogic approach is Snape and Yusa (2013); however, they reported that this type of linguistically informed article instruction did not have any effect on their Japanese learners' article production. The reason for the failure of article instruction, as put by Snape and Yusa, is that article instruction compared with instruction in other properties of grammar is very complex. Additionally, they stated that the lessons given to the experimental group might have caused confusion because the distinction between the three article semantic notions is very subtle. Finally, another reason why instruction did not work according to Snape and Yusa (2013) is the short period of instruction (70 minutes).

While L2 learners' non-generic article use has received significant attention in SLA (e.g. IKW, 2004; Ionin et al., 2008; and Snape, 2006 among others), learners' generic article use is a topic that is less researched in the field (Ionin et al., 2011). Ionin et al. (2011) attempted to find whether Russian and Korean learners of English can distinguish between the two types of genericity (i.e. Noun-phrase Generics (NPG) and Sentence-level Generics (SLG)). The results of a written acceptability judgment task showed that these learners are sensitive to the two types of generics despite the fact that neither of the L1s encodes this distinction morphologically. These learners were target-like in interpreting bare plural and indefinite singular generics, but not target-like in interpreting definite singular generics.

Advancing research on generic article acquisition offers interesting implications for article pedagogy. For example, classroom instruction that highlights the two types of

generic contexts and the appropriate article choice in each context might help learners overcome article misuse in generic statements. This implication is especially compelling because this generic distinction is rarely found in current language textbooks, an absence documented in a survey conducted by Ionin et al. (2011). Consequently, this study is the first attempt to explore the distinction of genericity by learners whose L1 is Arabic and how it is interpreted.

As the above overview shows, advancing research on article acquisition overall offers interesting implications for classroom research. Such classroom research operates on the assumption that 'positive evidence' alone is not enough for certain language properties to be fully acquired; consequently, such research will incorporate 'negative evidence' in the context of the L2 at hand (White, 1991). 'Negative evidence', which can come in more than one form, includes corrections, recasts and prompts to focus on form and to focus on meaning among other forms (Ellis, 1994a). One form of 'negative evidence' that has been found to be superior in the context of L2 is 'explicit instruction' (Norris and Ortega, 2000). That is, providing learners with explicit metalinguistic information of the linguistic item under investigation might facilitate the development of this item.

Classroom research, furthermore, considers 'practice' of the explicit rules given about linguistic items an essential component for the success of instruction. Again, practice can come in different forms of activities and tasks. One form of activities, namely translation, has been forbidden in language classrooms due to the idea that translation in language teaching is harmful to the learning process. However, Cook (2010) argued that arguments against using translation lack validity, that translation in fact facilitates learning a second language and that translation was rarely researched empirically. The very few researchers who have explored the effect of translation activities versus activities that target the L2 found that translation can promote success with vocabulary learning (Laufer and Girsai, 2008), but that translation has a minimal effect with the morphosyntactic properties of language (Källkvist, 2004, 2008).

In light of this background, a question remains as to whether more investigations into the development of the English article system from an article semantic point of view in relation to learners' L1 background may allow us to fully understand patterns of article misuse and those patterns' implications for explicit article instruction. Therefore, this thesis explores patterns of article use/interpretation by Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners of English in generic and non-generic contexts. It further explores (by adopting a traditional classroom experimental design) the effect of explicit instruction (metalinguistic information on article meaning components) and the effect of translation activities that target article use on L2 learners' development of the English article system. The findings of this thesis show that the Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners' article choice in non-generic contexts exhibits sensitivity to 'specificity' and that their article choice in generic contexts exhibits sensitivity to the two generic types and also shows an L1 transfer effect in article generic use/interpretation. Furthermore, the findings of this study show limited evidence in favour of explicit instruction and no evidence in favour of translation activities. Based on these findings, the study comes to the conclusion that more measures of 'specificity' should be constructed in order to understand its role in L2 learners' article choice and that linguistically informed instruction is more beneficial to L2 learners than standard language instruction, which usually lacks a full explanation of language properties.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study researched the applicability and the effectiveness of linguistically informed explicit instruction in article meaning and the effectiveness of translation activities that target article use in generic and non-generic contexts in teaching the English articles to Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners. This project thereby took a step forward towards a theory-based language classroom where learners are expected to benefit from instruction in problematic linguistic properties and thus improve their production accuracy.

Four contexts of non-generic article use were tested to cover the different combinations of the 'definiteness' and 'specificity' features. The non-generic contexts tested in this study are: [+definite, +specific], [+definite, −specific], [−definite, +specific]) and [−definite, −specific]. In doing so, the project replicated IKW's (2004) study and tested their predictions of article use on Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners' non-generic article use. The research then explored the effect of classroom intervention (explicit instruction and translation activities) on learners' article performance in the contexts that were found to be problematic for learners (i.e. the contexts in which learners' performance was inaccurate compared to that of native English speakers).

Moreover, the study tested learners' article use/interpretation in the two generic contexts (NPG and SLG). In doing so, the study replicated Ionin et al.'s (2011) study on genericity distinctions. The study then explored the effect of classroom intervention on learners' article performance in generic contexts in which they experienced non-target-like performance/interpretation.

The findings of this project (mentioned in the previous section) are relevant to more than one area of research. First, the project serves as an example of classroom research with pedagogical methods that can be used in the instruction of the English articles, which are usually not covered fully in language textbooks and curricula. Second, this study is an attempt to show that the English article system, considered to be difficult for learners to fully develop, can in fact be taught as independent meaning elements, which might make it easier for learners to comprehend and retain the system. Finally, the intended treatment attempts to engage learners in translation activities that target article use in the specified contexts. Introducing the meaning components of articles can help L2 learners capture a unified picture of how articles are used in the English language.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

The thesis begins with a literature review (Chapter 2) that outlines the theoretical background of the field of article semantics; the details included are those that led to the formulation of my theoretical assumptions in terms of Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners'

article production. The chapter discusses the three notions of article meaning (definiteness, specificity and genericity) and provides theoretical explanations for article substitution errors. It also gives an account of L2 learners' acquisition of the English article system and how learners' L1 affects their article choice. Chapter 2 concludes with discussing the pedagogical implications of article semantics.

The literature review continues in Chapter 3, where conceptual issues of instructed second language research are presented. After defining the essential terminology, the chapter provides a discussion on types of language knowledge and how they can be measured. The chapter also presents the types of instruction utilized in the project and provides support for explicit instruction as found in previous work. Finally, Chapter 3 highlights the factors that are involved in the success of classroom instruction.

Chapter 4 is the last literature review chapter. It reviews the field of translation in language teaching. The chapter provides criticism of the arguments against use of translation in the language classroom and shows that those arguments mostly lack validity. It also provides justification for using translation in the contexts of the L2 based on the very few existing empirical studies in the field. The chapter further discusses the types of translation activities used in this project.

The methodology of my research project is detailed in Chapter 5, which begins by reporting a pilot study that was conducted in preparation for the main experiment. The chapter describes how the outcomes of this pilot study contributed to the design of the main experiment. The chapter then offers the main experiment details regarding the research questions, the specific hypotheses, the participants, the data collection instruments, the data collection procedures, the data analysis, the classroom materials and the research ethical issues.

The findings of the research experiment for both language proficiency groups (intermediate and low) are presented in Chapter 6. The chapter provides descriptive statistics for each of the three experimental tasks, and additionally covers several inferential statistics: Kruskal Wallis Test, Mixed ANOVA and repeated-measures

ANOVA.

The findings of the study are discussed in Chapter 7. The first part of the chapter is dedicated to a summary of the results in relation to the research questions and the specific hypotheses. The implications of the research findings for article semantics, instructed SLA and translation in language teaching are then explained. The chapter concludes by discussing the methodological measures and highlighting potential directions for future research.

Finally, the conclusion (Chapter 8) provides a summary of the thesis as a whole by assessing the extent to which my research questions have been answered and, after reiterating the reasons why I believe more research is needed, suggests that this thesis represents a step towards formalizing an adequate account of how generative theory can inform the language classroom.

Chapter 2: Article semantics

2.1 Introduction and theoretical background

This project is based on generative approaches to second language acquisition (GenSLA). The investigation conducted in this study is built on the field of article semantics and forms a replication of Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004) (henceforth IKW) and Ionin, Montrul, Kim and Philippov (2011), but with the addition of a classroom intervention experiment.

Articles are a linguistic property that second language learners do not show a mastery of even at advanced language proficiency levels. One proposed explanation of why articles are challenging for learners is that the article system requires mapping of form and meaning (Ionin, Montrul, Kim, & Philippov, 2011). This explanation was also spelled out earlier by Master (2002), who pointed out that "the article system stacks multiple functions onto a single morpheme" (p.332). In other words, a single article might encode number, countability, definiteness, specificity or genericity for the noun it modifies. Therefore, learners might experience difficulty assigning those functions/meanings to the correct article form. In addition, articles is an area where sources of linguistic knowledge interact as noted by Ionin et al. (2008), who offered an account for the sources of linguistic knowledge that are involved in the acquisition of articles; namely L1-transfer, accessibility to UG semantic universals, and input provided for L2 learners. The current project explores the acquisition of English articles by Saudi Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners in the light of these three factors that are very relevant for such an investigation.

Ionin (2003) and Ionin et al. (2004, 2008, 2009) argued that languages cross-linguistically encode articles on the basis of one of two discourse-related properties, which are 'definiteness' and 'specificity', but not on both. Article choice in languages like English and Arabic is determined by 'definiteness'. English has the morphological marker 'the' for definite structures, 'a/an' for indefinite singular structures and the

'null' article for indefinite plural nouns. Similarly, Arabic has the article 'al-' for definite structures and the 'null' article for both singular and plural indefinite structures. From a discourse point of view, both English and Arabic articles are operationalised on the basis of definiteness. From a phonological point of view, however, Arabic differs from English in having "no phonologically overt indefinite article in its spoken varieties" (Sarko, 2011, p.2)[2]. In other words, Arabic has a 'null' article with both indefinite singulars and indefinite plurals unlike English, which lacks an overt article only with indefinite plurals. On the other hand, languages like Samoan encode articles on the basis of 'specificity'. Evidence from natural languages that encode specificity was used to highlight the distinction between definiteness and specificity as two meaning components of articles that highly contribute to learners' article choice.

Research that dealt with second language acquisition of English articles has found that learners from article-less (−ART) languages (such as Russian and Korean) fluctuate in their choice of articles between definiteness and specificity until a certain amount of input guides them towards the expected selection; it was this finding that led to the formulation of the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) by Ionin (2003). However, it was found that learners whose first language has an article system (+ART), which encodes definiteness (such as Spanish and Greek), do not fluctuate in their article choice (Garcia-Mayo, 2009 and Hawkins et al., 2006). Consequently, the predictions and findings regarding article choice usually depend on learners' different L1 backgrounds.

Besides the semantic notions of definiteness and specificity, the notion of genericity also forms a part of article semantics. SLA research has recently dealt with the distinction of the two kinds of generics, which are Noun-phrase Generics (NPG) and Sentence-level Generics (SLG). In English, each type requires a certain article choice in

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[2] In the written form of Standard Arabic, a nunation (ٍ), which is a vowel sign that usually occurs at the end of a noun, is sometimes interpreted as a marker of indefiniteness. However, Lyons (1999) rejected this view since nunation can appear with proper nouns or with a definite plural or plural common nouns that can be attached to both the definite article and to nunation at the same time. Because of these two contrasts, Lyons argued that nunation does not seem to encode indefiniteness, and therefore "it is probably a semantically empty marker of nominality . . indirectly indicating indefiniteness. These properties put Arabic among languages which have a definite, but no real indefinite article" (p. 93-94).

order to have an accurate generic reading in that context (Ionin et al., 2011). Learners' L1 realization of generic structures often determines their L2 acquisition patterns of generics in English. In line with this argument, Ionin et al. (2011) predicted that learners from (−ART) languages might find 'indefinite singular generics' easier to acquire than the 'definite singular generics' based on these structures' input frequency and their linguistic features. That is, 'indefinite singular generics' shows more frequency than 'definite singular generics' and based on their frequency occurrence they might be easier to acquire. Moreover, 'definite singular generics' requires the acquisition of an additional feature [+taxonomic] unlike 'indefinite singular generics', which only required [−definite] feature. Additionally, learners of (+ART) languages will show evidence of L1 transfer when acquiring generic structures in English (Ionin et al., 2010).

Arabic-speaking learners of English as a foreign/second language often commit errors when using the English articles in spite of the fact that Arabic, like English, encodes articles on the basis of definiteness. Evidence for Arabic-speaking learners' misuse of the English article system has been found in numerous studies that deal with data taken from Arabic-speaking learners using a traditional error analysis method (e.g. Kharma, 1981; Willcot, 1978). There is also anecdotal evidence from English language teachers who often report that their learners encounter difficulty with articles. To the best of my knowledge, the only studies that dealt with the acquisition of English articles by Arabic-speaking learners from a generative semantic point of view are those of Sarko (2009 & 2011). It should be noted here that Sarko's studies did not deal with the generic distinction, which is unlike this project. Details of Sarko's studies are presented in section 2.6.2. The present study explored the role of article semantics in Arabic-speaking learners' acquisition of English articles and added an experimental investigation into the effectiveness of classroom instruction on Arabic-speaking learners' acquisition of the English article system; this represents an investigation that was not conducted by IKW or Sarko. A detailed account of classroom instruction research, conceptual issues surrounding the field and the types of intervention utilized in the study are given in the next chapter. In this chapter, however, article semantics (definiteness, specificity and genericity) are introduced. In addition, SLA accounts of

the acquisition of article semantics by learners of various L1 backgrounds are reported. Finally, implications of SLA theory for article pedagogy that are motivating the current study are discussed.

2.2 Definiteness and specificity: An overview

At first glance, the distinction between definiteness and indefiniteness seems simple to explain, but a careful search of the extensive discussion of definiteness in SLA literature reveals a completely opposite view, as definiteness involves several meaning components that are often difficult to distinguish. Lyons (1999) provided an in-depth account of this notion in his book *Definiteness,* in which he relies on J. Hawkins's (1978) discussion of some of the meaning components of the notion. Fodor and Sag (1982) are also among the researchers who dealt with definiteness. However, there is no unified definition of definiteness because of the various meaning factors it involves.

According to Lyons (1999), there is no general agreement about the distinction between definite and indefinite nouns. Instead, as Lyons highlighted, there are two basic meaning elements that are involved in definiteness: (a) familiarity and identifiability and (b) uniqueness and inclusiveness. To explain these meaning elements, the difference between examples (1) and (2) below is based on *familiarity*. 'The' denotes that the noun referred to is familiar to both the speaker and the hearer, whereas 'a' signals no shared familiarity. In addition, the *identifiability* of a referent can be achieved through 'general knowledge' of the world, as in example (3), or by 'association', as in (4). 'The moon' in (3) is definite because it is *a unique* entity that both speaker and hearer can identify due to their general knowledge of the world. Identifying a referent through association is seen in example (4), in which the identifiability of 'the driver' is achieved through our knowledge of the fact that taxis have drivers by association. Finally, *inclusiveness* is seen in example (5), in which the reference includes a set of dogs guarding the property. 'The' here refers to the set of dogs and not to an individual dog.

(1) I bought **a car** this morning.

(2) I bought **the car** this morning.

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

(4) I had to get a taxi from the station. On the way **the driver** told me there was a bus strike.

(5) Beware of **the dogs**.

<div align="right">(Taken from Lyons, 1999, p. 2-3)</div>

In a nutshell, there is no clear-cut definition of definiteness as it involves several meaning components. These meaning components are not always easy to tease apart, as integration is evident in meaning. For this reason, it is beyond the scope of the current research to argue in favour of one definition of definiteness over the others. The preferred choice is to adapt a definition that can be applicable for classroom intervention purposes and to avoid linguistically complex definitions so to ensure learners' understanding of the notion. The definition adopted will be explained shortly. Note that the term 'definite' is used throughout this thesis to refer to either the definite article 'the' or to any noun phrase the meets the criterion of shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer and hence constitutes a definite structure. A definite article can either be found in non-generic (referential) contexts or generic ones as will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition to definiteness, specificity has received the same kind of attention in SLA research and in most works (e.g. IKW, 2004; Ionin, 2006; Tryzna, 2009). The two semantic notions are nearly inseparable as discourse-related properties of articles. Unlike definiteness, specificity is not realized morphologically in English or in Arabic. Another difference between definiteness and specificity is that specificity is mostly associated with knowledge of the speaker, and therefore the hearer's knowledge is not involved in assigning specificity to a referent. Trenkic (2008) highlighted two main views of specificity that have been already established in SLA research. The first view revolves around 'scope' and shows that a narrow scope is 'specific' as in example (6) below whereas a 'wide scope' is 'non-specific' as in (7). According to Lyons (1999),

certain contexts that include verbs of 'propositional attitude' (such as want), questions and negations (among other linguistic elements) can lead to what he labelled as "opaque contexts". In opaque contexts, the non-specific referent prohibits a coreferential expression as a substitute. In (6) 'a merchant banker' can be substituted with any other expression (such as a social worker) without affecting the truth value of the sentence, but the same substitution would change the meaning in (7). While the distinction between 'narrow scope' and 'wide scope' exists at the conceptual level, it is not morphologically realized in English.

(6) Peter intends to marry a merchant banker – even though he doesn't get on at all with her.
(7) Peter intends to marry a merchant banker – though he hasn't met one yet.

<div align="right">(Taken from Lyons, 1999, p. 176)</div>

The second view of specificity reported by Trenkic (2008) considers specificity as either referential (specific) or quantificational (non-specific). This view is discussed in Fodor and Sag (1982) and in IKW (2004). The main differentiating element in this view is whether a speaker has a particular referent in mind that he/she intends to refer to (8) or not (9). The distinction can be seen in the following examples:

(8) A man just proposed to me in the orangery (though I'm much too embarrassed to tell you who it was).
(9) A man is in the woman's bathroom (but I haven't dared to go in there to see who it is).

<div align="right">(Taken from Fodor and Sag, 1980, p. 359)</div>

Ionin (2006) added an additional component to specificity, which is the concept of specificity as 'a noteworthy' property and which was built on Fodor and Sag's (1982) view of referentiality. To put it simply, if a noun is specific, the speaker must think that this noun has a property worthy of note. Accordingly, a given discourse determines if a property is noteworthy or not. In an example such as (10), the property of being a blue apple is noteworthy because apples are not usually blue. On the other hand, if this

sentence was uttered by a participant who is playing a game in which plastic apples of different colours are to be collected, then the apple being blue is not noteworthy (Ionin, 2006). Ionin's concept of noteworthiness was criticized in Trenkic (2008) because it does not seem to conceptually differ from the established view of specificity as speaker's intent to refer and thus brings "considerable confusion into the operationalisation of specificity in SLA studies" (p. 4).

(10) I found this blue apple.

<div align="right">(Taken from Ionin, 2006, p. 188)</div>

As stated earlier, the purpose of this research is not to focus on issues surrounding the definitions and the meaning elements of definiteness and specificity. The focus is rather on whether definiteness and specificity can account for Arabic-speaking learners' errors and to see whether a pedagogic approach that is based on article semantics can lead learners to achieve better accuracy in using the English article system. The next section will provide the definitions of definiteness and specificity that were utilized in the current study.

In this research, IKW's (2004) definitions of definiteness and specificity were adapted. They based their definition of definiteness on Heim's (1991) and their definition of specificity on Fodor and Sag's (1982) definition. These definitions are:

If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is…
  a. [+definite], then the speaker and hearer presuppose the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP.
  b. [+specific], then the speaker intends to refer to a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP, and considers this individual to possess some noteworthy property.

<div align="right">(Taken from IKW, 2004, p.5)</div>

These definitions indicate that the major difference between the feature [+definite] and the feature [+specific] relies on whether or not knowledge of the referent is shared

between the speaker and the hearer. A noun is definite when both speaker and hearer share knowledge of the referent. On the other hand, a noun is considered specific when only the speaker has knowledge about what is referred to by the noun. It follows from this that definite and indefinite nouns can each be either [+specific] or [−specific] depending on the state of the speaker's knowledge. Examples (11) and (12) illustrate [+specific] and [−specific] in English with definite nouns whereas (13) and (14) illustrate the same feature with indefinite nouns. In the remainder of the thesis, the definitions of definiteness and specificity proposed by IKW (2004) above and IKW's predictions of learners' acquisition patterns of the English article system (to be reported shortly) provide the guiding assumptions that are tested empirically.

(11) **[+definite, +specific]**

Joan wants to present the prize to <u>the winner</u> – but he doesn't want to receive it from her.

(12) **[+definite, −specific]**

Joan wants to present the prize to <u>the winner</u> – so she'll have to wait around until the race finishes.

(13) **[−definite, +specific]**

Peter intends to marry <u>a merchant banker</u> – even though he doesn't get on with her at all.

(14) **[−definite, −specific]**

Peter intends to marry <u>a merchant banker</u> – even though he hasn't met one yet.

(Taken from Lyons, 1999, p.167)

As seen in examples (11), (12), (13) and (14), English does not have a grammatical marker for specificity in its standard variety. However, Ionin (2006) provided an extensive analysis of 'this'[3] as a 'colloquial' marker of specificity in English. In this

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[3] Ionin (2006) pointed out that the 'this' used in (16) denotes referential indefiniteness, and therefore it is different from the deictic use of 'this'.

analysis, she relied on Maclaran's (1982) examples and pointed out that 'this' is found to be infelicitous in (15) where the identity of the referent is irrelevant or, in other words, where no more information is going to be given about the referent later in the discourse. Conversely, 'this' is found to be felicitous where the identity of the referent is important in the coming discourse, as in example (16); based on this analysis, Ionin regarded 'this' as a specificity marker.

15) He put on ✔a/#this 31 cent stamp on the envelope, so he must want it to go to airmail.

(16) He put on ✔a/ ✔this 31cent stamp on the envelope, and only realized later that it was worth a fortune because it was unperforated.

<div style="text-align:right">(Taken from Maclaran, 1982, p.88; cited in Ionin, 2006)</div>

Since the learners in this study were native speakers of Arabic who had never spent long periods in an English speaking country, it was assumed that they had never been exposed to 'this' as a specificity marker. Furthermore, it was assumed that the learners were often exposed to the Standard English variety in their education in Saudi Arabia. IKW (2004) also make this assumption when they write "It is highly unlikely that L2 learners receive enough exposure to referential this to incorporate it into their article system and to consider English a three article language" (p. 12-13). Therefore, the study did not investigate the acquisition of 'this' and no further mention of 'this' as a specificity marker will be employed in the remainder of the thesis.

Conversely, some languages (such as Samoan) have markers for specificity, which determines their article choice. In Samoan, the article 'le' is used to indicate that the speaker has a particular referent in mind. On the other hand, the article 'se' is used whenever the speaker does not have a particular referent in mind. Article choice in Samoan is demonstrated in the following examples.

(17) **[−definite, +specific]**

'O   le   ulugali'i, fanau   l=a   la tama 'o   le

PRES ART   couple give birth   ART-Poss3.du. child PRES ART

teine   'o   Sina.

 girl   PRES Sina

"There was a couple who had a child, a girl called Sina."

 (18) **[+definite, +specific]**

Masani   'o   le   tamaloa e usua'i=ina   lava ia. .. .

 used   PRES ART   man   GENR get up early=ES   EMPH 3sg

'ae nonofo   'o   le   fafine   ma   l=a=na   tama i   le   fale

but.stay(pl)   PRES ART woman and ART=POSS=3.sg child LD. ART house

"It was the man's practice to get up early and . . . while the woman stayed at home with
her child."

(19) **[−definite, −specific]**

Au=mai   se   niu!

take=DIR   ART(nsp.sg.) coconut

"Bring me a coconut [no matter which one]!"

(20) **[−definite, −specific]**

Sa   fesili mai   se   tamaitai   po=o   ai

PAST ask   DIR   ART (nsp.sg.) lady   Q-PRES   who

l=o   ma   tama

ART=Poss.   l.exc.du   father

"A lady asked us who our father was."

(Taken from Mosel and Hovdhaugen, 1992, p. 259, 261)

It should be noted here that in the linguistic analysis of article semantics studies, the specificity distinction is morphologically marked with indefinites, but never with definites. Evidence that specificity is only marked in indefinite contexts comes from

natural language data (such as Samoan), which marks the specificity distinction with indefinites as can be seen in examples (17), (19) and (20) above. Hence, the article 'le' can be found in [+definite, −specific] while 'se' is bound to [−definite, −specific] contexts. Lyons (1999) stipulates that although the specificity distinction can be realized conceptually with definites (examples (11) and (12)), no language marks the specificity distinction with definites.

Trenkic (2008) differentiates between two views of specificity that exist in SLA literature. The first view is *discourse specificity*, which means not only that the speaker has a particular individual/object in mind, but also that he/she intends to refer to it (as in example (16)). The second view is *speaker specificity,* which means that the speaker has a particular referent in mind rather than a random member of a class (examples (21) and (22)). She further asserts that the speaker's intention to refer is the most important element of determining specificity regardless of whether speakers have particular referents in mind or not. In other words, a speaker's intention to refer presupposes having a particular referent in mind, but having a particular referent in mind does not presuppose the intention to refer. Thus, it is only *discourse specificity* that is marked in languages like Samoan. *Speaker specificity*, on the other hand, does not seem to be marked by any language either lexically or grammatically (Lyons, 1999).

 (21) **[−definite, +specific]:** The speaker has a specific referent in mind, but she explicitly denies that she knows the identity of the person being talked about.
Office gossip
Gina: . . .and what about the others?
Mary: Well, Dave is single, Paul is happily married, and Peter . . . he is engaged to <u>a merchant banker</u>, but none of us knows who she is, or what she's like.

 (22) **[−definite, −specific]:** The speaker does not have a specific referent in mind, and she explicitly denies that she knows the identity of the person being talked about.
At a university
Professor Clark: I'm looking for Professor Anne Peterson.
Secretary: I'm afraid she is busy. She has office hours right now.

Professor Clark: What is she doing?

Secretary: She is meeting with <u>a student</u>, but I don't know who it is.

<div align="right">(Taken from Trenkic, 2008, p. 12-13)</div>

It was assumed in this study that the difference in meaning between *discourse specificity* and *speaker specificity* is hard to explain to learners in a language classroom. L2 learners might find it difficult to differentiate between having a particular referent in mind and the intention to refer. Consequently, specificity was treated in the current experiment more like *speaker specificity* than *discourse specificity*, as the former is more straightforward to explain to learners. To be more precise, the idea of specificity as having a particular entity in the mind of the speaker as opposed to an arbitrary member of a class was included in the classroom instruction.

To summarize, the current project associates definiteness in a given discourse with identifiability of referents by both the speaker and the hearer and to the uniqueness of referents. The grammatical marker of definiteness that is relevant to this study is the overt article 'the' in English and 'al-' in Arabic. The markers for indefiniteness are 'a/an' in English and 'null' in Arabic. The study also associates specificity with the state of speakers' knowledge and asserts that no morphological marker is required for this feature in either English or Arabic.

2.3 Genericity: An overview

Whereas definiteness and specificity have been explored in a considerable amount of SLA research, genericity has received "little prior attention in the L2-acquisition literature" (Ionin, Montrul, Kim & Philppov, 2011, p. 244). Besides advancing SLA research on genericity, the present study also attempted to explore the acquisition of constructions that implicate genericity by Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners because this is an area where these students often err and where L1 transfer effect might be evident (as will be discussed later in this section).

Krifka et al. (1995) provided an extensive discussion of genericity in which they highlighted the distinction between two basic varieties of generic structures (Noun-phrase Generics (NPG) and Sentence-level generics (SLG)). According to Krifka et al. (1995), NPG refer to a well-established kind with kind predicates such as 'be extinct', as shown in examples (23) and (24). In these examples, 'the panda' and 'pandas' refer to a kind and not to a certain individual. In English, indefinite singulars are incompatible with NP genericity (Krifka et al., 1995). Consequently, 'a panda' is incompatible with a kind predicate, such as 'be extinct'.

(23) The panda will become extinct soon.
(24) Pandas will soon become extinct.

(Taken from Krifka et al., 1995, p. 65)

On the other hand, SLG refer to those generics that indicate generalizations based on the characteristics of individual objects such as in examples (25) and (26) below. According to Krifka et al. (1995), only indefinite singulars and bare plurals can be interpreted generically at the sentence-level in contrast to definite singulars, which do not indicate a generic reading in this context. That is, only characterizing sentences like those in examples (25) and (26) can give a generic reading. A sentence like (27) can only refer to a specific dog, not to any dog in general and therefore it is ungrammatical in this context.

(25) A dog barks.
(26) Dogs bark.
(27) The dog barks. *

(Taken from Krifka et al., 1995, p.16)

As such, genericity in English is related to three types of generic noun phrases that are not interchangeable: indefinite singulars (25) with SLG, definite singulars (23) with NPG and bare plurals (24 and 26) with both types of generics (Ionin et al., 2011).

In the remainder of this section, a brief review of Ionin and Montrul (2010) and Ionin et al. (2011) is presented because of their direct relevance to this project. Ionin and Montrul (2010) hypothesized that Spanish-speaking learners of English transfer the interpretation of definite plurals from their L1. The participants were 24 Spanish speakers and 29 Korean speakers of matched proficiency. All participants took a truth value judgment task. Ionin and Montrul found clear evidence of L1 transfer in the acquisition of L1 Spanish learners, who showed much more overacceptance of the English definite plurals (since this structure is interpreted generically in Spanish) than did the Korean speakers, whose L1 is a (−ART) language. They followed up this study with another one in which more advanced language proficiency learners were involved (11 Spanish speakers and 9 Korean speakers). The results of the follow up study showed that the Spanish speakers, similar to the Korean speakers, performed in a target-like way. From these findings, Ionin and Montrul (2010) argued that it is possible to recover from L1 transfer as L2 proficiency level increases.

Based on the distinction of the two varieties of genericity accounted for by Krifka et al. (1995), Ionin et al. (2011) conducted what might have been the very first SLA study that dealt with this distinction. By considering article semantics and the frequency of input, they predicted that Korean and Russian (−ART languages) learners would find indefinite singular generics easier to acquire than definite singular generics. Ionin et al. (2011) gave a linguistic explanation for this prediction. They stated that learning about indefinite singular generics forms a part of learning about indefiniteness in a more general way (assigning a [−definite] feature to *a*). Conversely, learning about definite singular generics requires adding a feature to definiteness, which is [+taxonomic]. They further hypothesized, based on Slabakova's (2008) proposal that semantic principles are available to L2 learners, that learners can distinguish between the two generic varieties even though this distinction does not morphologically exist in their L1s. The results of the Acceptability Judgment Task (the same test utilized in this study) were consistent with these two predictions. In other words, L1 Russian (n=33) and L1 Korean (n=45) speakers were sensitive to the two types of generic structures. Moreover, they were more successful with indefinite singular generics and bare plural generics than with definite singular generics.

Relative to the generic distinction and how genericty is realized differently between Arabic (+ART) and Russian and Korean (–ART), different behavior in generic interpretation/article use is expected from Arabic-speaking learners. To explain this, in languages like Russian and Korean there are no articles, hence morphologically and semantically speaking, the generic distinction is absent from the two L1s. This is different to Arabic because Arabic has a definite article to indicate a generic reading, but there is no morphological or semantic distinction between NPG and SLG. We can expect three patterns of generic interpretation/use based on this difference. First, Arabic-speaking learners may find 'definite singular generics' easier to acquire than 'indefinite singular generics' and 'bare plural generics' because they have this structure in their L1, which is unlike Russian and Korean speakers. Second, Arabic-speaking learners are expected to overaccept/overuse 'definite plurals' with NPG and SLG and are expected to overaccept/overuse 'definite singulars' with SLG because of their L1 effect. Lastly, despite Arabic learners expected transfer effect, they will still distinguish between NPG and SLG (since this distinction is absent in their L1 morphologically and semantically) in the sense that they are expected to show more acceptance for 'indefinite singulars' in SLG than in NPG, accept 'bare plurals' equally in the two generic contexts and show more acceptance for 'definite singulars' in NPG than in SLG assuming they are guided by semantic principles.

Having introduced the three discourse-related meaning components of articles (definiteness, specificity and genericity), SLA findings in relation to them and the implications of article semantics for classroom research are going to be highlighted later in this chapter. The next section will focus on the three semantic notions in Arabic.

2.4 Definiteness, specificity and genericity in Arabic

Arabic is a language that encodes articles on the basis of definiteness, which is like English. However, it differs from English in having indefinite bare NPs. That is, there is no morphological form for the indefinite article in Arabic as it is always realized as bare singular or bare plural NPs. With 'definiteness', on the other hand, the languages are similar in having a morphological marker; 'the' in the case of English and 'al-' in the

case of Arabic (either Standard or Non-Standard) that is used in both written and spoken varieties of the two languages. 'The' and 'al-' have similar distribution in which both can appear in anaphoric, encyclopedic and associative definite contexts (Almahboob, 2009). In addition, 'the' and 'al-' are not constrained by number or gender like articles in other languages (e.g. Spanish).

Definite NPs in Arabic do not always require the presence of the definite marker 'al-' as some, such as pronouns, are regarded as definite in the linguistic analysis of the Arabic DP (Almahboob, 2009). To explain, definiteness in Arabic is realized by the use of several forms: (a) the use of the definite article (al-) that is attached to nouns as a prefix (28); (b) in a noun construct relationship called (ida:fa) in which the first noun is considered definite because it is related to a second noun that is definite (29); (c) the use of a possessive suffix (30) (Sarko (2011). These are some examples of how definiteness is realized in Arabic, but they will not be considered in the present study. Instead, the focus of the study will be on simple definites (expressed through the presence or absence of the definite marker al-) as illustrated by Lyons (1999) in the following quote:

> Noun phrases with *the* and *a* and their semantic equivalent (or near-equivalents) in other languages can be thought of as the basic instantiations of definite and indefinite noun phrases, in that the definiteness or indefiniteness stems from the presence of the article, which has as its essential semantic function to express this category. (p. 2)

(28)

us:fir	ila:	dimaśq	bi-*al*-sajja:ra	da:jman
travel-I-PRES	to	Damascus	by-the-car-FEM	always

"I always travel to Damascus by car"

(29)

ʔstaʕrt	kita:b	*al*-walad
borrow-I-PAST	book	the-boy-GEN

25

"I borrowed the boy's book"

(30)

ʔstaʕrt	kita:bu
borrow-I-PAST	book-his-MASC

"I borrowed his book"

(Taken from Sarko, 2011, p.25-26)

To clarify the status of the Arabic definite article 'al-', it should be added that 'al-'is not always used to indicate definiteness. The contexts when 'al-' is not considered definite include names of the days of the week, certain places and some adjectives modifying a definite noun as can be seen in (31) below (Ryding, 2005).

(31)

a. Names of places:	al-ʔurdun
	def-ɉourdan
b. Days of the week:	al-sabt
	def-Saturday
c. Times of day:	al-subh
	def-morning
e. Adjectives:	al-ahmar
	def-Red

(Taken from Almahboob, 2009, p. 46)

With 'indefiniteness', English realizes the concept with the use of 'a/an' with singular NPs and 'null' with plural NPs in both written and spoken varieties, while Arabic realizes it differently in its written variety (standard Arabic) and its spoken variety (Hejazi dialect in this study). In relation to standard Arabic, some linguists (such as Ryding, 2005) consider the suffix 'n' (nunation or tanwiin in Arabic) as the indefinite marker, as it appears in complementary distribution with the definite prefix 'al-' (see example (32) below), but this argument has been rejected by contemporary linguists

such as Lyons (1999), as seen in footnote (2) in this chapter. The argument against nunation as indefinite marker (see example 33) is that "nunation is permissible with a proper noun, which is considered definite, indicating that if nunation were a true marker of indefiniteness it is feasible to think that it should not occur with a definite noun" (Almahboob, 2009, p. 53)[4].

(32)

baabu-**n**

door (Masc-Sing-Nom) indef

 "a door"

(Taken from Bardeas, 2009, p. 29)

(33)

Hind-u-**n**

Hind-nom-nunation

Hind (a proper noun-female name)

(Taken from Almahboob, 2009, p. 52)

While some linguists argue that the written variety of Arabic has an indefinite marker, there is an agreement in most works that have dealt with the linguistic analysis of the Arabic DP that indefinite nouns are not marked with any overt article in its spoken variety (Bardeas, 2009). Put another way, the absence of the definite marker indicates indefinites as seen in example (34). As a consequence, the 'null' article is used with both singular and plural indefinites in the spoken varieties of Arabic (the native language of the learners of the present study). Following Almahboob (2009), I will take the position that the Arabic indefinite article is the null article.

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[4] For more details about the linguistic analysis of the Arabic DP, refer to Brustad (2000), Holes (1995) and Ryding (2005) among others, as this study only presented the linguistic properties of the Arabic articles informing the classroom experiment.

(34)

bait

house-Masc.Sing

'a house'

<div align="right">(Taken from Bardeas, 2009, p. 31)</div>

In Arabic, as in English, the specificity distinction (i.e. +specific vs. –specific) is found in the discourse, but not grammatically/morphologically (as can be seen in examples (35), (36), (37) and (38) below).

(35) [+definite, +specific]

bedi:	ʔaʕmo	muqabala	mʕ	al-fajez
want-1SG	make-1SG	INDEF-interview-FEM	with	the-winner-NOM-MASC

huwa	ṢaḌi:qi:
he-BE	friend-Poss

"I want to interview the winner. He is my friend."

(36) [+definite, −specific]

bedi:	ʔaʕmol	muqabala	mʕ	al-fajez
want-1SG	make-1SG	INDEF-interview-FEM	with	the-winner-NOM-MASC

mabaʕref	mi:n	huwa
know-NEG-1SG	who	he-BE

"I want to interview the winner. I don't know who he is."

(37) [−definite, +specific]

al-ustaz:	ʕla	śu	ʕm	ddawer
the-teacher-MASC	on	what	AUX-PROG	search-2SG-MASC

al-Ṭaləb:	ʕm	ddawer	ʕla	kita:b
the-student-MASC-SG	AUX-PROG	search-2SG-MASC	on	INDEF-book

nsitu	hon	məbarħa
forget-PAST-1SG	here	yesterday

The teacher: "What are you looking for?"; The student: "I am looking for a book I forgot here yesterday."

(38) **[−definite, −specific]**

A: leś   rajeħ   al-maktaba?

A: why   go-PROG-2SG-MASC   the-library-FEM

B: bukra   mesafar.   bbeddi   ʔśtri: kita:b

tomorrow   travel-1SG   want-1SG buy-1SG   INDEF-book

 laqra   ʕla   al-Ṭari:k

to-read   on   the-way

A: "Why are you going to the library?" B: "Tomorrow I am travelling. I want to buy a book to read on the way."

<div align="right">(Taken from Sarko, 2011, p.35)</div>

In examples (35) and (36), the speaker and the hearer can identify the referent through general knowledge (by knowing that each race has a winner). Hence, the definite article 'the' is used in both examples. However, it is clear in example (35) that there is a particular winner in the mind of the speaker, while there is not a particular individual in the mid of the speaker in example (36), which indicates a nonspecific referent. On the other hand, examples (37) and (38) indicate an indefinite NP since it is only the speaker who can identify the referent. The distinction between specific and nonspecific is also established from context. There is a particular book in the mind of the speaker in (37) unlike the referent in (38).

According to Sarko (2009), the absence of an overt marker for indefiniteness raised the question of "whether an underlying D is present in the representation of indefinite NPs or not" (p.47). Based on this question, Sarko hypothesized that if D is present in the representation of indefinites, then spoken Arabic has a phonologically null exponent, but if it is absent, then spoken Arabic indefinites have a similar status to the NPs in languages like Korean and Russian (−ART). By accepting the Full Transfer/ Full Access hypothesis, which indicates that L2 learners initially transfer their L1 grammatical properties to the initial L2 grammar, Sarko predicted that a presence or

absence of D in the representation of indefinites would have a different impact on the performance of her Syrian Arabic learners. In particular, Sarko predicted that if D is present in the representation of indefinites, then her Arabic learners would not substitute 'the' for 'a' in indefinite contexts. Sarko also predicted that if D does not exist in their L1 grammar, then her learners would fluctuate. Sarko's results show that her Syrian Arabic learners only fluctuated in contexts where relative clause modification was present (a context that always requires a definite article in Arabic) even if the context was indefinite in English, as seen in the Arabic example in (39) compared to the English example in (40) below; the learners did not fluctuate in contexts that did not include relative clause modification. Based on these results, Sarko argued that what appeared to be a fluctuation effect is in fact a transfer effect. Sarko's argument will be revisited in Chapter (7).

(39)
beddi aʃtri al-eleʒdan   yali sˤarli   zaman ˁm   daawer ˁle
want-I buy-I the-handbag-Mas-SG that   be-I-past long   PROG   look
for.it
'I want to buy a handbag that I have been looking for for a long time'

(40)
A: Kylie went to Tim's party
B: Did she have fun?
A: She met a man who I knew at school.

(Taken from Sarko, 2009, p. 61)

Definiteness and specificity have been researched extensively (e.g. Bustard, 2000) relative to genericity in Arabic, which has received very little attention by linguists. Unlike English, in which the distinction between NPG and SLG is encoded morphologically, genericity in Arabic can only be interpreted with a singular or a plural NP modified by the definite article '-al' (Ryding, 2005). Put another way, no morphological or semantic distinction of the two basic varieties of generics exists in Arabic as the definite article 'al-' is obligatory for achieving a generic reading of a singular or a plural NP (consider examples (41) and (42) below. Following this,

indefinite singulars and bare plurals do not have a generic reading in Arabic, which is unlike English where these NPs can be interpreted generically.

(41)

al-kalbu   y-anbaħu

the-dog-SG-MAS   bark-PRES

"The dog barks"

(42)

al-ḑ̣afa:dʔu   zakija

the-frogs-PL-   clever-FEM

"Frogs are clever"

<div align="right">(Taken from Sarko, 2011, p.38)</div>

Based on the differences between Arabic and English in generic structures, the study predicted that Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners of L2 English will show evidence of L1 transfer in the interpretation of generic structures (using the Acceptability Judgment Task) and in their production (using the Elicited Written Production Task). That is, it was expected that the learners would overaccept definite plurals with both NPG and SLG and overaccept definite singulars in SLG since overacceptance of definite singulars is grammatical in NPG. The learners were also expected to overuse 'the' in their production to express genericity. While L1 transfer is expected to take place, it was predicted that learners can still distinguish between NPG and SLG as guided by semantic principles since this distinction does not exist in their L1. In other words, I predicted that learners will show more acceptance of indefinite singulars with SLG than with NPG, more acceptance of definite singulars with NPG than with SLG and equal acceptance for bare plurals in both generic contexts. It should be noted here that Sarko (2009, 2011) did not deal with the acquisition of the two types of English generic structures. Therefore, the current study is the first attempt to shed light on the acquisition of both types of generic varieties by L1 Arabic-speaking learners replicating Ionin et al. (2011).

2.5 Ionin, Ko and Wexler's account of L2 article acquisition

One reason why IKW (2004) is influential is that it explains why L2 learners produce substitution errors. That is, this approach accounts for the L2 learner error patterns in article production that resulted from substitution errors rather than omission ones. The proposal is centred on two basic ideas: the ACP and the FH. These ideas were initially proposed by Ionin (2003) in her PhD thesis. She based the ACP on the difference between English and Samoan data taken from Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992). Ionin (2003) based her FH on data taken from a series of studies that she conducted with Russian and Korean participants (article-less languages). The details of Ionin's proposal are given below.

2.5.1 The Article Choice Parameter

Based on the issues raised about definiteness and specificity above and the specificity distinction that can be found in languages like Samoan, Ionin (2003) proposed the ACP that semantically accounts for article choice in languages cross-linguistically. This parameter has two settings and it is spelled out as follows:

The Article Choice Parameter (for two-article languages)

A language that has two articles distinguishes them as follows:
The Definiteness Setting: Articles are distinguished on the basis of definiteness.
The Specificity Setting: Articles are distinguished on the basis of specificity.

(Taken from IKW, 2004, p.12)

This parameter indicates that languages either encode articles on the basis of definiteness (such as Standard English and Arabic) or on the basis of specificity (such as Samoan). These two possibilities of article choice are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1 Article grouping cross-linguistically: Two-article languages

Article Grouping by Definiteness   Article Grouping by Specificity

	+definite	−definite
+specific		
−specific		

	+definite	−specific
+specific		
−specific		

<div align="right">(Taken from IKW, 2004, p. 13)</div>

Based on data taken from Russian and Korean learners, Ionin (2003) found that learners from (−ART) languages are assumed to have access to UG parameters (i.e. the two article choice settings), and therefore they might sometimes select articles on the basis of definiteness and other times on the basis of specificity. This finding led Ionin to the formulation of the FH, the topic of the following section.

2.5.2 The Fluctuation Hypothesis

The ACP proposed by Ionin (2003) and the assumption that learners have full access to UG parameters led Ionin to formulate the *Fluctuation Hypothesis*. This hypothesis is stated as follows:

> The *Fluctuation Hypothesis*
> a. L2 learners have full access to UG principles and parameter-settings.
> b. L2 learners fluctuate between different parameter-settings until the input leads them to set the parameter to the appropriate value.

<div align="right">(Taken from IKW, 2004, p.16)</div>

Based on this line of reasoning, L2 learners are expected to fluctuate in their article choice between the association of articles with definiteness and with specificity. This fluctuation would result in substitution errors that can be detected in contexts where definiteness and specificity do not match. In consequence, if learners access the specificity setting, then 'the' instead of 'a/an' might be used in [−definite; +specific]

contexts and 'a/an' instead of 'the' in [+definite; −specific] ones. However, in contexts where there is no clash between definiteness and specificity, substitution errors are not expected. In other words, in [+definite; +specific], 'the' will always be predicted and in [−definite; −specific], 'a/an' is always triggered. The predictions for article choice are spelled out in Table **2** below:

Table 2 Predictions for article choice in L2 English (Taken from IKW, 2004, p. 19)

	[+definite]: target *the*	[−definite]: target *a*
+specific	correct use of *the*	**overuse of *the***
− specific	**overuse of *a***	correct use of *a*

The theoretical basis behind these predictions, as stated in Ionin et al. (2011), revolves around Slabakova's (2008) proposal of *semantic principles*. Slabakova argued that *semantic principles* and constraints are universal and accessible to all L2 learners and that learners usually encounter difficulty in the semantic and overt morphology mapping. That is, L2 learners can acquire complex structures that involve the syntax/semantic interface, but find difficulty in mapping L2 morphemes to their target meanings when form/meaning mappings differ in their L1 and L2. Ionin et al. (2011) linked Slabakova's proposal to Lardiere's Feature Assembly Hypothesis (2009), which is framed within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995). According to this approach, L2 learners select the required features for lexical items in the L2: e.g. the [+plural] feature for the '−s' suffix. These possible linguistic features are assumed to be universal. However, languages differ in the features they use and how these features are associated with lexical items. In this regard, L2 learners, as opposed to L1 learners, start the L2 initial stages with their L1 system in which linguistic features have been already selected and bundled in certain ways. Consequently, L2 learners have to select new features for the L2 if these features are not selected in the L1. They also have to reassemble the existing features if these features are differently selected in the L1 and the L2. Based on feature selection, Ionin et al (2011) proposed that "learners do not know whether the [+definite] or the [+specific] feature should be selected for the definite article *the*" (p. 243). As a result, L2 learners are expected to show a fluctuation

pattern in their use of English articles in the contexts where definiteness and specificity do not match as seen in table 2 above.

IKW (2004) tested the predictions of the FH by looking at article elicitation data of Russian and Korean L2 learners of English. These learners were chosen because their L1s do not have articles, and this would exclude L1 transfer of the parameter setting. This logic is in accordance with the Full Transfer/Full Access Hypothesis proposed by Schwartz and Sprouse (1996), who claimed that L1 grammar forms the initial stage in L2 acquisition. IKW's (2004) results provided support for L2 learners' access to ACP and for the FH. However, IKW (2004) left the question of L2 acquisition of English articles unanswered for learners whose L1 has articles. Details of IKW's (2004) study are reported in the following section.

2.6 L2 acquisition of English articles in the light of Ionin and colleagues' account

IKW's (2004) account of article semantics influenced many studies in the field to provide an explanation for learners' article misuse. Some of these studies attempted to see if learners from languages that have an article system, unlike the learners tested in IKW (2004), would fluctuate in their article use or not since IKW (2004) left this question open for future investigation. Such studies include Hawkins et al. (2006), Snape (2006), Garcia-Mayo (2009), and Sarko (2009, 2011). In particular, Hawkins et al. (2006) and Snape (2006) replicated IKW's work by testing learners from article-less languages (Japanese) for the purpose of comparison with learners from languages with articles (Greek in Hawkins et al. and Spanish in Snape). On the other hand, Garcia-Mayo (2009) and Sarko (2009, 2011) only dealt with learners who come from an L1 that has an article system (Spanish in Garcia-Mayo and French and Arabic in Sarko). In this section, a brief description of the major findings in the area of L2 acquisition of article semantics is presented according to learners' L1 backgrounds. First, IKW's (2004) findings are reported along with findings from other studies, which tested learners who also come from article-less languages. Second, the results of studies that dealt with second language acquisition of articles by learners from (+ART) languages

are presented. Finally, the implications of article semantics for pedagogy are highlighted.

2.6.1 Studies on learners from article-less languages

To evaluate the ACP, the FH and UG accessibility, IKW (2004) elicited learners' article choice by creating a Forced Choice Elicitation Task (henceforth FCET) that consisted of 76 short dialogues[5] and a written production task in which learners were required to answer five English questions. The focus in this thesis is on the results obtained from IKW's FCET since the same measure was used in the present study. Participants were asked to provide 'the', 'a' or 'null' (no article) in gaps. Their choice was based on the context established for each dialogue. The participants were 30 Russian and 40 Korean speakers. According to the written portion of the Michigan test of L2 proficiency, learners were found to belong to either an intermediate or to an advanced language proficiency level. According to IKW, these participants were chosen to evaluate their account of article semantics because the students came from languages where no article system exists morphologically, and consequently L1 transfer of article settings would not affect the results.

Analysis of the elicitation data taken from the Russian and Korean speakers revealed that both the L1 Russian and L1 Korean speakers fluctuated in their article choice between definiteness and specificity. The LI Russian learners used 'a' in [+definite, −specific] contexts 33% of the time, whereas the L1 Korean speakers did this in 14% of the contexts. On the other hand, 'the' overuse in [−definite, +specific] items was higher with Russian speakers, who selected the definite article in 36% of the questions as opposed to 22% for the Korean learners. In contrast, the error rates for definite specific and indefinite non-specific contexts were between 4 and 8% for both groups of learners. These results are displayed in Table **3**, and they confirm the article choice predictions presented in table 2 above. In spite of the fact that L1 Korean speakers were more accurate in their article selection than the Russian speakers, IKW (2004) found that

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[5] The Forced Choice Elicitation Task was adapted and utilized in the pilot study. Chapter 5 includes a full description of this measure.

individual patterns of article choice were very similar across the two groups. It was concluded that errors in L2 English article choice are not random, but actually reflect L2 learners' access to the universal settings of definiteness and specificity.

Table 3 IKW's (2004) results (Tables 12 and 13, p. 30)

	+def (target *the*)		− def (target *a*)	
	the	*a*	*the*	*a*
L1 Russian (n=26)				
+spec	79%	8%	**36%**	54%
− spec	57%	**33%**	7%	84%
L1 Korean (n=39)				
+spec	88%	4%	**22%**	77%
− spec	80%	**14%**	4%	93%

Ionin, Zubizarreta and Philppov (2009) conducted a study in which they compared article use in the L2 English of adult and child[6] speakers of Russian. The 2009 study added more conceptual explanations and some modifications (to be discussed shortly) to the 2004 study. Ionin et al. (2009) tested 26 adults who were mostly university students and 58 children between the ages of 10 and 12. The modification involved an Article Elicitation Task[7] that was modelled after the FCET used in the 2004 study. The main difference between the two tasks is that the Article Elicitation Task is less explicit in nature than the FCET. A discussion of the concept of explicit vs. implicit and its role in SLA is provided in the following chapter.

Whereas the 2004 study generalized that L2 English learners' production is sensitive to the specificity distinction with both definites and indefinites, the 2009 study showed that specificity distinction is mainly found with indefinites, as can be seen in natural language data (such as Samoan data). Additionally, Ionin et al. (2009) linked learners'

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[6] It is beyond the scope of this study to shed light on the acquisition of English articles by children, and therefore no account for child acquisition is given.
[7] Chapter 5 provides full description of the task.

sensitivity regarding the specificity distinction to language proficiency levels. They found that learners of higher proficiency levels tend to be sensitive to the specificity distinction with indefinites only. Conversely, lower proficiency learners tend to show sensitivity to this distinction with both indefinites and definites.

An extra essential explanatory factor of learners' article choice that was highlighted by Ionin et al. (2009) is the employment of explicit strategies. That is, learners might rely on contextual cues such as the presence or absence of what Ionin et al. (2009) referred to as Explicitly Stated Knowledge. As such, learners might infer whether a speaker has a particular referent in mind (as in example (13) above) or whether a speaker does not have a particular referent in mind (14). This inference might lead learners to overuse 'the' in (13) and to overuse 'a' in (12). According to Ionin et al. (2009), "this explicit strategy overextends the specificity distinction to definites as well as indefinites, and results in overuse of *the* with specific indefinites as well as overuse of *a* with non-specific definites" (p. 355). This, as stated by the authors, draws attention to the nature of the elicitation task that is explicit and thus guides learners towards formulations of explicit strategies, which overextends the distinction of specificity to definite contexts. However, Ionin et al. (2009) found that L2 learners were sensitive to the specificity distinction with indefinites only in results taken from production data. Production tasks, unlike the elicitation tasks, are considered as tests of implicit knowledge and consequently more reliable (see section 3.6 in chapter 3).

Ionin et al.'s (2004 & 2009) influential work led many researchers to explore the nature of article acquisition from a semantic point of view by using data from languages other than Korean and Russian. Even though some of these researchers have different explanations for the substitution errors found in contexts where definiteness and specificity do not match, their results still show that learners err in the contexts highlighted by Ionin and colleagues. Among those researchers who hold opposing views to Ionin's are Hawkins et al. (2006), who found a similar pattern of fluctuation in the article choice of Japanese learners (−ART). The participants took a FCET that is similar to the one utilized by IKW (2004). In spite of the fact that Hawkins et al.'s findings lend some support to the Fluctuation Hypothesis, the authors proposed an

account of article acquisition that is not motivated by the article choice parameter or by fluctuation. Their account is a feature-based one that is minimalist in nature.

Along the same lines, Trenkic (2008) tested the assumptions made by the ACP and the FH on L1 Mandarin/ L2 English bilinguals. Even though she criticized IKW's operationalization of specificity and presented an argument against the FH, namely that learners are treating 'the' and 'a' as adjectives[8], she found a pattern in Mandarin learners' article selection similar to that found in IKW's learners' article selection. In this regard, Trenkic (2008) stated:

> Of course, if one chooses to view specificity as 'speaker specificity', i.e. as a difference between whether the speaker thinks of a particular entity (implying familiarity), or of an arbitrary member of a class (implying non-familiarity), then specificity obviously plays a part. (p. 14)

Trenkic's critique was mainly based upon the measure used by IKW (2004), the FCET, which suggests that a different task can additionally be constructed to validate the assumptions of the ACP and the FH (a topic to be revisited in the discussion of chapter 7). What is important here is that Trenkic's Mandarin speakers of English committed article errors in [−definite, +specific] contexts, as this is a finding that echoes the current study's results.

2.6.2 Studies on learners from languages with articles

As shown above, IKW (2004) found that learners who come from (−ART) language backgrounds fluctuate in their article choice between 'the' and 'a', but the question of fluctuation was left unanswered for learners who come from languages that have articles. In this respect, Garcia-Mayo (2009) tested sixty low-intermediate and advanced Spanish learners of English (whose L1 has articles that encode definiteness) using the same FCET and found that learners whose L1 has articles do not show evidence of

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[8] Trenkic's account of article acquisition will be explained in section 2.7.

fluctuation in their article choice. The most significant finding is that learners transferred the semantic properties of Spanish articles onto the English articles (i.e. their knowledge of definiteness). That is, Spanish learners were target-like in both definite and indefinite contexts, which led Garcia-Mayo to the conclusion that transfer overrides fluctuation.

Of particular interest to the current project is the work done by Sarko (2009, 2011) in which she tested two populations of learners whose L1s included an article system (Syrian Arabic and French). Both languages involved in Sarko's study encode articles on the basis of definiteness, but they differ from English and from each other in their morpho-phonological distribution of articles. Syrian Arabic does not have a phonological overt exponent of indefinites unlike English, which does have an overt marker (a/an). French differs from English in having overt exponents in all contexts whereas English articles are not used with all types of NPs: e.g. plural generics and some mass NPs. That is, "French disallows bare NPs, and requires an overt article form in all singular, plural and mass contexts" (Sarko, 2009, p. 48). An additional difference between the French and the English articles is that articles in French denote number and gender and not only definiteness. In her study, Sarko tested the FH (to account for the commission/substitution errors) found in her data.

Sarko's (2009) participants were 57 Syrian speakers, 18 French speakers and 9 native English speakers. The participants were mostly undergraduates or postgraduates, and most ranked at an intermediate or advanced language proficiency level based on the Oxford Quick Proficiency Test. Sarko used a Forced Choice Elicitation Task (FCET), which replicated tasks used in previous work (i.e. Hawkins et al., 2006; IKW, 2004) and an oral production task (story-recall). The FCET includes 88 dialogues that each consisted of 3 turns and included an article gap in the third turn. The dialogue's texts were in participants' L1 (Syrian Arabic or French) except for the target sentence. The reason for this, according to Sarko, was to ensure that learners completely understood the sentences. The task was designed to focus on the contrast between count singular, count plural and mass nouns in both definite and indefinite contexts. It further included other variables, such as a three-way contrast between the anaphoric, general knowledge

and associative use of the definite article and a division of the non-specific contexts based on the notion of scope. The instruction asked learners to provide 'the', 'a/an' or 'null', and once learners made a choice, they were not allowed to change it.

The story-recall task was adapted from Snape (2005) and included 5 short stories. The participants listened to each story twice and were given bare nouns as written prompts. Participants were expected to produce a considerable number of count singular nouns in definite and indefinite contexts. The native speakers' production of the stories established a comparison basis for learners' production.

The results of Sarko (2009) showed different behaviour between Syrian Arabic and French in certain contexts and some unexpected patterns of article use. First, whereas it was expected that both the L1 Syrian Arabic and L1 French learners would use 'the' accurately with [+definite, +specific], the learners showed only target-like performance with count singulars, and their performance was non-target-like with count plurals and mass nouns. The reason for this unexpected result, as put by Sarko, was because count plurals and mass nouns show more variability. They appear bare with indefinite structures and with generic ones while count singulars always occur with an article. Therefore, it is assumed that intermediate-level learners "have not yet fully worked out how English realizes definiteness with count plural and mass NPs" (p. 60). Indefinite contexts, on the other hand, showed that only the Syrian Arabic group differed significantly from the native control group in [−definite, +specific] contexts. While this result can be treated as evidence that supports the FH, Sarko argued that Syrian Arabic learners used 'the' mainly in this context whenever the noun was modified by a relative clause where there was an overt complementiser (L1 transfer effect), and no such use of 'the' was detected in this context in the absence of relative modifiers. Additionally, Syrian Arabic learners showed more use of 'null' with [−definite, −specific] contexts in the story recall task (under communication pressure) than in the FCET. According to Sarko, these results are consistent with the Full Transfer/Full Access Hypothesis, but not consistent with the FH.

Sarko's findings provide interesting implications for the current study, as L1 Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners' production of articles in [−definite, +specific] contexts, where no relative clause modification exists, was thoroughly examined. In other words, examining learners' article choice in a [−definite, +specific] context, where the L1 transfer effect is not expected, has the potential to show if Arabic-speaking learners are sensitive to the specificity distinction or not.

Finally, a brief reference should be made to Hawkins et al. (2006) and Snape (2006) since they compared learners whose L1 encodes definiteness with learners from article-less languages. Hawkins et al. tested L1 Greek learners of English using the FCET used in IKW (2004). The variables included in the test were the same ones employed by Sarko (2009), namely a three-way contrast in definite nouns and the division of non-specific contexts on the basis of scope. They found that the Greek speakers rarely chose 'the' in [−definite, +specific] contexts, which is consistent with the findings of Garcia-Mayo (2009), who argued that speakers from an L1 that encodes definiteness are unaffected by specificity.

In a similar vein, Snape (2006) tested L1 Spanish and L1 Japanese learners of L2 English using a grammaticality judgment task, forced choice elicitation tasks and oral/written production tasks. He found that the Japanese learners substituted 'the' for 'a' and vice versa in the forced choice elicitation tasks. According to Snape, the Japanese learners' substitution errors is not the result of their inability to set the appropriate article parameter, but the results of remapping features that are already available by UG/L1 to L2 forms. On the other hand, Snape found that the Spanish learners (an L1 that grammaticalizes definiteness) did not fluctuate/ substitute articles and performed native-like in all tasks, which is consistent with Full Transfer/ Full Access Hypothesis.

2.7 Other accounts of L2 acquisition of English articles: an overview

The core rationale behind exploring L1 Hejazi learners' acquisition of English articles from an article semantic perspective was pedagogically driven (this rationale is elaborated upon in section 2.9). Despite the fact that the approach proposed by Ionin and colleagues is very influential for the reasons mentioned earlier, other theoretical accounts of article use/misuse also exist. One example is Trenkic's (2007, 2008) Syntactic Misanalysis Account, in which she argues that L1 learners of an article-less language misanalyse articles as adjectives. The evidence given is that these learners showed more omission errors with nouns that are modified by adjectives than with nouns that are not modified. As for substitution errors, Trenkic (2008) postulated that these are not the results of the specificity factor; rather they occur because of the effect of stated vs. denied familiarity of the referent, which is an extra-linguistic factor (non-UG-based). Ionin et al. (2009) was clearly against this proposal and stated that, based on the typological varieties of article-less languages such as Russian, Korean and Mandarin, "it is unlikely that every single one of these languages treats determiners as adjectives" (p. 354). Ionin et al. (2009) further argued that marking of specificity with indefinites in natural languages supports the operationalization of specificity as explicitly stated knowledge and that evidence taken from learners' self reports showed that learners are influenced by specificity, not by explicitly stated knowledge, when producing articles. The current research adapts Ionin et al.'s stance of the specificity effect as a source of article substitution errors rather than Trenkic's view of articles misjudged as adjectives.

Another account for substitution errors is the feature-based account proposed by Hawkins et al. (2006). Their account is consistent with UG and it is based on Distributed Morphology, which is advocated by Halle and Marantz (1993), and the Morphological Underspecification Hypothesis proposed by McCarthy (2004). The key assumption of this account is that the interlanguage of learners from L1 article-less languages differs from that of native speakers in having different identification of features. To put it simply, learners whose L1s do not include an article system fail to

acquire some features because there might not be a UG constrained development for adult L2 learners at the level of features.

In addition to Hawkins et al. (2006) and Trenkic (2008), Tryzna (2009) also disagrees with the idea of the Fluctuation Hypothesis. Based on a fieldwork experiment she conducted with three native speakers of Samoan and a study on intermediate and advanced L1 Polish and L1 Mandarin Chinese learners of L2 English, she first proposed a reduced version of the ACP and second presented an argument against the FH, namely that it cannot capture the patterns of article errors found in the production of L2 learners. In other words, it is better to describe article misuse as an effect of 'optionality' rather than 'fluctuation'. Tryzna's criticism of the ACP revolves around the argument that it cannot explain error patterns that fall outside the definiteness setting, the specificity setting and the expected fluctuation pattern, such as overuse of 'the' with all indefinites. As such, Tryzna argues that the ACP "should be regarded as a crosslinguistic generalization rather than a parameter in the sense of Chomsky's Principles and Parameters" (p.75). The results of her study on Polish and Chinese learners showed differences between the two advanced groups. The Chinese group was more target-like in their article use than the Polish group and the non-target like learners exhibited fluctuation in their article use. On the other hand, the advanced Polish group showed more variability (four miscellaneous patterns) in their use of articles. Additionally, the intermediate Polish group showed more variability in their use of articles and did not fluctuate unlike their Chinese counterpart. According to Tryzna, this variability led her to question the FH and suggest a developmental pattern of article acquisition that starts with optionality of article use and "finally constrained by the fluctuation between the two parameter settings" (p.84).

As this research is mainly influenced by IKW's (2004) account of article semantics and attempts to test the assumptions they raised, the test items used in this project (adapted from IKW 2004 and Ionin et al. 2009) did not include the items that were particularly created to test the assumptions of the different accounts of article acquisition in studies such as Trenkic (2008) and Hawkins et al. (2006). Various explanations of substitution errors exist, but the value of SLA theory from the original aim of this project is that it

informs the language classroom that these problematic areas exist. Learners' awareness of these problematic contexts in the L2 classroom may improve their English article accuracy.

2.8 Article Pedagogy

In spite of articles' frequent occurrence in the input, "The English article system is one of the most difficult aspects of English grammar for nonnative speakers and one of the latest to be fully acquired" (Master, 1990, p.461). For this reason, we find that the study of the acquisition of English articles by L2 learners has motivated some pedagogical research over the last 25 years. Among earlier well-known attempts in the field to discover the effect of classroom instruction on learners' article use are studies conducted by Master (1990, 1997 & 2002) and Pica (1983). However, since Master's work on article pedagogy, there has been relatively little discussion in this area (Snape & Yusa, 2013). In this section, a summary of Master's pedagogical framework is given to establish a comparison with IKW's theoretical implications for article pedagogy, as these implications are motivating this project.

2.8.1 Master's pedagogical framework

Master (1997) proposed that speakers of (−ART) languages acquire the English articles in a certain order; this proposal is based on his 1987 quantitative study of spoken article usage by 20 non-native speakers. Master found that these learners start using the 'null' article first and then use 'the' and finally 'a' appears in their use. On the other hand, speakers of (+ART) languages overuse 'the' at the early stages of acquisition and show less use of the 'null' article than the (−ART) speakers. Accordingly, (+ART) learners are considered one level ahead of (−ART) counterparts. Master further stipulated that this L1 influence often decreases as learners become more proficient in the L2.

Master (1987) presented details for a schema of teaching the English article system. The schema was in a hierarchical sequence of six questions that form the basis for the

classifications that were used in tallying his data. According to this schema, teaching the English articles is based on the answers to these six questions, each of which must be asked before assigning an article to a noun. Consequently, Master's article instruction revolved around these six questions, which are:

(43)
1. Is the noun countable (singular or plural) or uncountable (singular)?
2. Is the noun indefinite or definite?
3. Is the noun post-modified or not?
4. Is the noun specific or generic?
5. Is the noun common or proper?
6. Is the noun non-idiomatic or idiomatic?

Master declared that his framework is not suitable for learners who are at the lowest proficiency level, but it can be unitized for learners at the intermediate proficiency level. To test this framework, Master (1987) conducted an intervention experiment in which he used two groups of learners: an experimental group that was exposed to a systematic teaching of the article system and a control group that was subjected to a simple marking of errors on compositions. Master found significant improvement ($r=$. 79) in the experimental group's learners' article usage on an article test between the pre-test and the post-test. The improvement of the experimental group, according to him, stemmed from focusing learners' attention on the importance of articles.

In Master's (1990) later work, the idea of his pedagogical framework was refined, showing a movement towards a feature-based approach. The main element of the framework centred on the idea of teaching the English article system to intermediate-level learners as a binary division between **classification** (*a* and *null*) and **identification** (*the*). Instead of dealing with the four different contexts ([+definite +specific], [+definite −specific], [−definite +specific], [−definite −specific]), as was done in the current study, Master (1990) collapsed the features [+/−definite] and [+/−specific] into one feature [+/−identified]. Consequently, [+identified] (**identification**) implies [+definite, +specific] whereas **[−identified]** (classification) includes the features

[−definite, −specific]. This collapsing thus disregards indefinite specifics (44) and indefinite generics (45) and allows indefinite non-specifics as in (14), repeated here as (48). Similarly, this collapsing allows only definite specifics (46), but excludes definite non-specifics as in (12) above repeated here as (49) and definite generics (47). Consequently, Master's framework excludes the two structures that are predicted by IKW (2004) to be problematic for L2 learners (i.e. definite non-specifics and indefinite specifics).

(44) <u>A tick</u> entered my ear.

(45) <u>A tick</u> can carry disease.

(46) <u>The computer</u> is down today.

(47) <u>The computer</u> is changing our lives.

<div align="right">(Taken from Master, 1990, p. 466)</div>

(48) Peter intends to marry <u>a merchant banker</u> – even though he hasn't met one yet.

(49) Joan wants to present the prize to <u>the winner</u> – so she'll have to wait around until the race finishes.

<div align="right">(Taken from Lyons, 1999, p.167)</div>

What we conclude from reviewing Master's (1990) pedagogical framework for teaching the English articles is that specificity as a feature was equated to definiteness and that any [−specific] structure, according to this view, is regarded as [+generic] (p. 467).

The theoretical considerations made by Krifka et al. (1995) and the data collected by Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992) of Samoan form observations that were gathered together by Lyons (1999) which provided the basis for IKW (2004) to test certain theoretical assumptions about SLA in regards to the L2 acquisition of English articles. Therefore, the pedagogical implications drawn from IKW's account and used in this project show a departure from Master's pedagogical framework in the sense that definiteness and specificity are treated as totally different meaning components of articles that should not be collapsed into one feature.

2.8.2 Ionin, Ko and Wexler's implications for article pedagogy

As discussed above, L2 learners' error patterns reflected what was predicted by IKW (2004). That is, research findings strongly suggest that specificity is important, but in language classrooms learners are taught only about definiteness as will be seen below. Based on theory, we can predict that learners will benefit from instruction that introduces specificity and highlights the meaning difference between definiteness and specificity focusing on the problematic contexts.

To show how article semantics can inform the language classroom, I am first going to briefly review the standard instruction usually offered to learners in language textbooks; especially the one offered to learners of English in Saudi Arabia. Within the standard teaching approach, articles are introduced to learners as a list of rules from the students' earliest encounters with English. The complexity of these rules increases along with the increase in language proficiency levels. These rules revolve around whether a noun is count or non-count, mass or concrete and whether it starts with a vowel or constant (to account for the use of 'a' vs. 'an')[9]. It was found that all of the materials (mainly from Soars and Soars (2013) New Headway Plus series (beginners, elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels), which is the language textbook series taught in King Abdulaziz University, where my experiment was conducted, focused only on definiteness. This could be an outcome of textbook writers adapting the definition of Master (1990) in which specificity is considered as part of definiteness. In addition, I could not find any published language teaching materials that provide rules on the specific/non-specific contrast. A possible reason why this contrast is missing is that textbooks cannot go into great detail and provide all examples because there is not enough space. However, reviewing language textbooks shows a clear divide between how the English articles are taught to L2 learners and the SLA findings about the acquisition of English articles.

Furthermore, some textbooks of English as a foreign language (such as Bailey, 2006) often treat the term 'specific' as a synonym for 'definite', which might lead learners to

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[9] See appendix (C5) for a sample of these teaching materials.

be confused about these meaning components (consider the underlined terms in example (50) below). In other words, this could lead learners to believe that all specific contexts are definite and hence suggests that pedagogical grammar is not always linguistically accurate. Because of this "L2 English learners may adopt the strategy of overusing 'the' with specific indefinites" (IKW, 2004, p. 52).

(50) Unless they are uncountable, all nouns need an article when used in the singular. The article can be either *a/an* or *the*. Compare:
a) Research is an important activity in universities.
b) *The* research begun by Dr Mathews was continued by Professor Brankovic.
c) *A* survey was conducted among 200 patients in the clinic.

In (a) *research*, which is usually uncountable, is being used in a general sense.
In (b) a specific piece of research is identified.
In (c) the survey is not specified and is being mentioned for the first time.

(Taken from Bailey, 2006, p. 130)

The rules given in textbooks for generic expressions revolve around the idea of 'general' reference and do not introduce the difference between NPG and SLG in explicit terms. In article pedagogic research, we saw that Master's (1990) framework included the distinction between generic and specific, but not the one between the two varieties of genericity. Moreover, Master relied on Whitman's (1974) pedagogical approach, which stipulated that genericity is better taught at later stages because generic structures are not commonly found in the input, unlike referential structures. Because English language textbooks usually offer very little instruction regarding the use of articles in generic contexts and never mention the meaning distinction (Ionin et al., 2011), the distinction between NPG and SLG provides interesting implications for article pedagogy. As the first published work that dealt with teaching the generic distinction, namely Snape and Yusa (2013), stated, "no textbook mentions that there are two types of genericity: NP-level and sentence-level generic sentences" even though this distinction is an important factor in teaching the English article system to L2 learners (p. 167).

This overview has shown that there is no general rule in the standard instruction that accounts for the meaning difference between definiteness and specificity or for the meaning distinction of the genericity types as illustrated in article semantics. Therefore, the current study attempted to design teaching materials that could tease apart the two meaning components of articles (definiteness and specificity) and the two generic structures to explore the effect of such material on learners' article production/interpretation. In the remainder of this section, I propose how the meaning components of articles can be presented to learners in a linguistically informed way.

A linguistically informed instruction in definiteness can present definiteness as the shared knowledge between a speaker and a hearer and indefiniteness as the lack of such shared knowledge. Learners can simply be told that they can use 'the' whenever the speaker and the hearer can both answer the question 'which one?' Consequently, if a noun cannot be identified by *both* the speaker and the hearer, the indefinite article 'a/an' is used. The effect of this metalinguistic explanation can be maximized if it is followed by certain activities (in this study, those activities are gap fill and translation) to allow learners practice the point that they have just learned.

On the other hand, a linguistically informed instruction in specificity can present specificity as the knowledge of the speaker 'only'. Specificity can be taught without mentioning the 'noteworthy property' proposed by Ionin (2006) to simplify the concept. Therefore, specificity is to be presented in relation to the speaker's knowledge. In other words, if the speaker has one particular individual in mind, then the noun is considered 'specific', as in (51) below. If the speaker refers to any individual within a group, then the noun is considered 'non-specific' as in (52). Learners could also be instructed that that the hearer's ability to identify the individual/object does not matter in determining whether the referent is specific or non-specific and that there is no grammatical marker for specificity in Standard English. Again, the effect of this metalinguistic explanation might increase if it is followed by practice activities that highlight the points raised.

(51) I am going to watch <u>a movie</u> after school tonight. (A particular movie)

(52) I want to watch <u>a movie</u> when I finish my exams. (Any movie)

Finally, a linguistically informed instruction in genericity can present the concept as 'a general referent' and consequently elicit no particular individual/object in the speaker's or the hearer's mind. The difference between generic and non-generic reference can be presented with examples such as (53) and (54) below. Then, the difference between NPG and SLG can be introduced. NPG can be associated with the idea of 'kind' whereas the SLG can be associated 'generalization'. Learners can be made aware that NPG statements express facts about kinds (55), whereas SLG are generalizations based on observations of individual characteristics (56). Learners should also be taught that each type of generics requires different forms of articles (i.e. definite singulars and bare plurals with NPG and indefinite singulars and bare plurals with SLG).

(53) I have an appointment with a dentist tomorrow. (A particular dentist)

(54) A dentist helps people have healthy teeth. (All dentists in general)

(55) The dinosaur is extinct.

(56) Dogs bark.

To reiterate the implications of article semantics for language teaching, we saw that definiteness is taught, but that specificity is not taught. We also saw that the standard teaching of English articles might be problematic because it treats specific contexts as definite ones and because it does not introduce the genericity distinction to learners. In this regard, I argue that article meaning is a field that informs the language classroom. Article pedagogy is an interesting area for further research in which the effect of explicit metalinguistic instruction on learners' article accuracy can be explored.

2.8.3 Current research in article pedagogy

As reported above, little discussion has taken place about instruction in relation to article pedagogy since Master's (1990) work. Snape and Yusa (2013), to the best of my knowledge, provide the only example of classroom research that is based on IKW's

account of article acquisition. In their experimental pilot study, Snape pre- and post-tested two groups (experimental and control) of Japanese learners (n=7 in each group) using the FCET (from IKW, 2004), the Acceptability Judgment Task (from Ionin et al., 2011) and a Transcription Task that is not reported in this thesis. The experimental group received one 70-minute instruction session on article semantics per week over a period of three weeks. The control group received no instruction and was asked to return to take an immediate post-test and a delayed one.

In their instruction, Snape and Yusa (2013) pointed out the importance of showing to L2 learners how definiteness and specificity function in English. They decided (based on Ionin and colleagues' studies) to focus more on [+definite, −specific] contexts during the instruction period because they expected learners to err in this context since their L1 is a (−ART) language. Furthermore, they associated specificity to the knowledge of the speaker and stated that "Learners can be told that the person is a non-specific person, but in the mind of the speaker it is clear that a particular individual has been identified within a set of individuals" (p. 165). Snape and Yusa found that Japanese learners did not benefit from instruction in definiteness, specificity and genericity. The authors provided several factors as to why instruction did not work; one of these is the confusing nature of the three article meaning components. Snape and Yusa's explanatory factors are drawn upon in the discussion of chapter 7.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the theoretical background of the current study. It showed that definiteness and specificity are two discourse-related semantic properties of articles and that languages differ crosslinguistically in whether they encode articles on the basis of definiteness or on specificity. In consequence, assuming a Full Transfer approach, the L1 setting of this linguistic parameter is expected to determine the type of errors learners produce when learning English as a second/foreign language. Learners from (−ART) languages like Russian and Korean often produce substitution errors (fluctuation) supplying 'the' where 'a/an' are required and vice versa. However, learners from (+ART) languages that encode definiteness (like English) such as Spanish

do not often fluctuate, as transfer overrides fluctuation in this case. Therefore, the current study attempted to replicate IKW (2004) and Ionin et al. (2011) in order to test the assumptions of the *Fluctuation Hypothesis, the Semantic Principles* and the *Full Transfer/ Full Access Hypothesis*.

Genericity as a third essential semantic component of articles was also introduced. Due to linguistic differences between English and Arabic, this study expected that Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners would experience difficulty interpreting/producing indefinite singulars and bare plurals in English generic contexts. This prediction was supported in previous studies whose participants' L1s (such as Spanish in Ionin et al., 2010) showed non-target-like interpretation of definite plurals as generic. As was shown earlier, Sarko's (2009, 2011) studies, the participants of which shared the same L1 of the participants of this study, did not focus on the distinction between NPG and SLG. As a result, the present project is the first attempt to focus on the acquisition of the two varieties of generic contexts by L1 Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners of L2 English.

Finally, we saw that generative findings in the area of article semantics offer interesting pedagogical implications that might be useful in teaching the English article system. This study will add to a growing branch of Applied GenSLA that is trying to take a theoretical linguistics approach to classroom research (Whong, Gil & Marsden, 2013). A classroom instruction that is designed to highlight the meaning differences between definiteness, specificity and genericity might help reduce learners' article errors. It is under these implications that this experiment of article development in a classroom context was designed and conducted.

Chapter 3: Instruction in SLA

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the English article system was introduced as the linguistic structure that this study investigated. In addition, the differences between learners' L1 and L2 parameter settings of articles and articles' form/meaning mapping differences were discussed as possible sources of L2 learners' difficulty with article use. This study explores the effect, if any, that explicit instruction in article meaning has on the development of the English article system in Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners of L2 English; this chapter introduces the conceptual and theoretical factors motivating the choice of this classroom instruction. The field of Instructed SLA has mainly developed under a general cognitive approach to language acquisition since "generative SLA has developed without much interest in the questions of the language classroom" (Whong, 2011, p. 48). Consequently, applied linguists working on research from a teaching perspective tend to partly base their work on cognitive approaches because these approaches have "clearer compatibility with questions of pedagogy" (Whong, 2011, p. 49). However, there is a now a growing body of generative applied research which aims at showing how generative theory can inform the language classroom. Regarding the various language approaches, Whong et al. (2014) proposed that classroom research should be an area of shared focus between generative researchers and general cognitive researchers and that sharing this focus would allow both theories to transcend their fundamental differences to establish a 'theory-neutral' approach to classroom research. From this standpoint, this chapter draws on some studies, findings and terminologies that mainly align with the field of cognitive linguistics, as generative research that attempts to explore the role of classroom instruction in SLA (generative applied linguistics) is an area of research that has only recently started to develop.

SLA literature reveals an ongoing debate between natural language use (positive evidence/acquisition), which is advocated by Krashen (1982), and instructed language teaching (negative evidence/learning), which is advocated by Ellis (1994b). Natural

language use advocates do not emphasize instructed language teaching. Conversely, instructed language teaching proponents argue that instruction can be beneficial for L2 acquisition, as can be seen in the work of Bleyhl (2009), Rohde (2009) and VanPatten (1996), among others. Linguistic research comparing L1 and L2 acquisition has revealed that L1 acquisition is mainly dependent on positive evidence and that negative evidence plays a minor role in L1 development. On the other hand, L2 development relies on both positive as and negative evidence and thus negative evidence plays a more significant role in this context than in the case of L1 (White, 1991). This finding suggests a need to include negative evidence in the context of L2 learning (N. C. Ellis, 1994). In accordance with this, the current study is built on the view that while certain L2 language structures can be acquired naturally; the development of certain other structures can be facilitated by classroom instruction (white, 1991). These structures are problematic because they involve form/meaning mapping differences between learners' L1 and L2 (Ionin et al., 2011).

Gregg (1993) is well known for arguing that a fuller explanation of SLA can be achieved by establishing a property theory and a transition theory. According to him, a property theory should account for the representation of language knowledge in a learner's mind whereas a transition theory should deal with changes of knowledge representations. Carroll (2001) stated that Principles and Parameters Theorists in SLA (as advocated by Chomsky (1986) previously) have given much less focus to developing a transition theory than to developing a property theory, and this has consequently precluded the development of a full explanation for a theory of SLA. The need to explore the nature of language development has motivated a thriving line of research (including Instructed SLA) in which some research aims at exploring learners' responses to types of instruction to detect any change of knowledge types. Based on this rationale, the field of SLA has developed three theoretical positions regarding the nature of linguistic knowledge in which the claim that learned knowledge can become acquired knowledge is supported, rejected or constrained. These theoretical positions are discussed in section 3.5.

This chapter first introduces explicit and implicit instruction as types of formal instruction. Then, it introduces relevant important conceptual distinctions in SLA research, namely the distinctions between positive vs. negative evidence and explicit vs. implicit knowledge/learning. The chapter additionally defines the role that instruction/ negative evidence plays in SLA. It then sheds light on the nature of L2 linguistic knowledge and the three well-documented theoretical positions associated with knowledge representations in SLA. Finally, an overview of factors related to researching instruction in previous literature is reported.

3.2 Input and formal instruction in SLA: Background and definitions

The concepts of 'input' and 'formal instruction' (henceforth instruction) are very much related and sometimes overlapped. Input is straightforwardly defined in SLA literature as anything that a language learner hears or sees (Young- Scholten & Piske, 2009). Instruction, on the other hand, has been understood to refer to grammar teaching (Ellis, 1997). Consequently, the relationship between input and instruction is an inclusive one in which input is a more general term covering instruction as a type of input that learners might receive. Because there is no meaningful difference between the two concepts in this study, the terms 'input' and 'instruction' are used interchangeably throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Ellis (1994a) categorized formal instruction into two main types: language-centred and learner-centred instruction. In language-centred instruction contexts, the goal is a specific linguistic feature, and all learners receive the same instruction. However, in learner-centred contexts, instruction is still directed at a single aspect of language, but there are additional attempts to match instruction to the learner. It is important to clarify that the current project used instruction that falls into the category of language-centred instruction rather than learner-centred because this study is linguistically motivated, and consequently no attempts were made to cover learners' educational needs and preferences.

Discussion in this thesis draws upon explicit vs. implicit instruction, as these types of instruction are the ones used in this project. The question about the effect of explicit vs. implicit instruction is huge and was investigated in many studies. The project predicted that explicit instruction on article semantics would be more effective than implicit instruction. This prediction was highly driven by the positive role of explicit instruction reported in numerous studies that explored the role of explicit vs. implicit instruction in the context of SLA and concluded that explicit instruction is superior to its implicit counterpart (Andringa, de Glopper, & Hacquebord, 2011; Norris & Ortega, 2000).

Explicit instruction involves overt attention to grammatical rules in the target language or to particular forms, and therefore explicitness mainly refers to the extent to which teachers utilize linguistic metalanguage in language classrooms (Sharwood Smith, 1981). In other words, explicit instruction refers to input in which learners are given a rule that they then practice using (Ellis, 1997). By using explicit instruction in language classrooms, teachers can provide L2 learners with hints using examples as clues, or they can provide a complete statement of the linguistic rule of the form to be learnt. This was reiterated by Ellis (1994a) in his observation that "…the available evidence indicates that an explicit presentation of rules supported by examples is the most effective way of presenting difficult new material." (p. 643).

Use of explicit instruction emerged because some linguistic features tend to remain undeveloped if second language learning depends entirely on meaning alone (Doughty & William, 1998). In other words, positive evidence is not always sufficient for providing access to L2 forms and features that are not salient enough in the context of teaching. This has been supported by studies that increased the abundance of the input in spoken and written texts through "input flood" to find only disappointing results (Trahey & White, 1993). Therefore, researchers have explored alternative methods of promoting access to forms that are not usually noticeable for learners through positive input. In studying English, for example, learners might find it difficult to notice forms such as articles and determiners on their own, and for this reason, these forms might be good candidates for instruction (Pica, 2008).

On the other hand, implicit instruction involves instruction in which learners are not asked to attend to grammatical rules or to particular language forms; rather learners are required to focus on meaning, and no presentation or explanation of rules is given (Ellis, 1994a). Based on the distinction of instruction types, the classroom intervention used in this thesis was divided into implicit and explicit instruction to see which of the two instruction types is more effective for learners to achieve better accuracy in the English article system. The explicit and implicit instruction targeted the semantic notions of definiteness, specificity and genericity. By using explicit instruction, each one of these features was explained to learners metalinguistically to describe what meaning cues are associated with each feature and what form of articles is to be expected in each case. Conversely, using implicit instruction did not include rule explanation or attention to grammar, but the same amount of exposure to the target structures and to the chosen tasks used was involved.

The terms 'explicit' and 'implicit' are used not only to refer to types of instruction in SLA literature, but also to cover knowledge and learning distinctions. While these explicit/implicit distinctions (explicit/implicit instruction, explicit/implicit knowledge, explicit/implicit learning) are somehow related in the field, it is crucial to define these knowledge and learning types as separate entities and to discuss their relationship to explicit/implicit instruction. The distinction between explicit vs. implicit instruction and explicit vs. implicit knowledge is an important one to make due to this distinction's involvement in the research design and methodology of this study. These definitions and their implications for instruction are the topic of the next section.

3.3 Implicit vs. explicit language knowledge/language learning

As pointed out in the previous section, it is useful in this study to make a clear distinction between explicit vs. implicit language knowledge and explicit vs. implicit language learning. Implicit language knowledge (also referred to as acquired knowledge) is intuitive and enables spontaneous language use. That is, a learner will not be aware of it simply because s/he does not know it exists (Ellis, 1994b). It should be noted here that the difference between the terms 'implicit' and 'acquired' was defined

by Whong et al. (2014) in the following way: "Acquired knowledge is understood to be knowledge that is specific to the domain of language, while implicit knowledge includes a wide range of knowledge beyond the purely linguistic" (p. 554). Similarly, the term 'explicit knowledge' applies to all types of knowledge whereas 'learned knowledge' applies exclusively to language knowledge. While I agree with Whong et al.'s statement, I use implicit/acquired and explicit/learned as if they are equal since the meaning difference is irrelevant for the purpose of this study.

On the other hand, explicit language knowledge (also referred to as learned knowledge) is knowledge about the language that is conscious and controlled. To put it simply, learners can verbalize rules of a linguistic item because they are aware that its knowledge exists (Ellis, 2005b). A very important point to consider in this regard is that of Whong, Gil and Marsden (2014); namely, "…we prioritize the testing of implicit knowledge rather than explicit knowledge as the former is understood across frameworks to be 'better'" (p. 565). The reasons why implicit knowledge is superior to explicit knowledge, according to Whong et al. (2014), are that implicit knowledge is fast, automatic and, perhaps most importantly, long lasting.

As for the distinction of implicit vs. explicit language learning, Hulstijin (2005) defined these two types of learning as follows:

> Explicit learning is input processing with the conscious intention to find out whether the input information contains regularities and, if so, to work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured. Implicit learning is input processing without such an intention, taking place unconsciously. (p. 131)

Akakura (2010) explained the relationship between explicit/implicit learning and explicit/implicit knowledge by stating that explicit/implicit learning refers to the 'process' whereas explicit/implicit knowledge refers to what has become 'uptake'. Therefore, both knowledge types are considered products of learning (Schmidt, 1990).

In pedagogical research, explicit and implicit learning can either be achieved with or without the presence of grammatical rules (Hulstijn, 2005).

From these distinctions (explicit/implicit instruction, explicit/implicit knowledge, explicit/implicit learning), we can conclude that explicit/implicit instruction is an external classroom treatment (on the part of the teachers) whereas explicit/implicit learning is an internal process in which treatment is perceived and processed (on the part of the learner), and finally knowledge types are the product of this explicit/implicit learning process. However, the "relationship of explicit to implicit features, whether about learning, instruction, or knowledge, continues to perplex and fascinate scholars throughout the field" (Pica, 2008, p. 2). As such, this study did not attempt to provide an investigation into the process of learning or to measure the two types of knowledge. In accordance with research that has revealed the positive role of explicit instruction (Norris and Ortega, 2000), the study explored the effectiveness of explicit instruction in teaching the English article system to Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners. Bearing in mind that implicit knowledge is superior to explicit knowledge and longer lasting, it was assumed that any gains achieved from instruction in the immediate post-test that were persistent in the delayed post-test might suggest that instruction can have an effect in the long term. Such a delayed effect of instruction would give some insight into implicit knowledge development. Yet, as we will see in chapter 6, since no delayed effect of instruction was present in this study, implicit knowledge development in the context of articles requires further research and investigation.

The effect of explicit knowledge on implicit language learning is mostly discussed within cognitive psychology research, as seen in N. C. Ellis (2005). In such research, it is mainly argued that the bulk of language acquisition is usage-based implicit learning. That is, frequency of usage determines the extent to which a linguistic property can be implicitly learned. Implicit language learning is further associated with memory in the since that implicit learning implies retention and spontaneous use in the long-term memory. Cognitive psychological states of implicit learning are not explored here, but the current project was highly motivated by Ellis's (2005b) argument that "Irrespective of the role played by explicit knowledge in the acquisition of implicit knowledge, there

is wide acceptance that explicit knowledge can contribute to performance" (p. 44). The learners' performance in the contexts of article use chosen in this project was carefully examined before and after the intervention course took place.

3.4 The role of positive and negative evidence in SLA

The distinction between positive and negative evidence in SLA is crucial to developing an understanding of the difference between L1 and L2 development and to discovering what implications this difference might offer to SLA. Positive evidence is defined as "utterances in the input" (White, 1991, p. 134). On the other hand, negative evidence is defined as "information about which strings of words are not grammatical sentences" (Marcus, 1993, p. 53). Generative language acquisition theorists argue that in L1 acquisition, UG parameters are stimulated by input that is mainly dependent on positive evidence (Krashen, 1982). Unlike L1 acquisition, L2 development was found to rely on both positive and negative evidence (VanPatten, 2009).

According to White (1991), L2 learners' incorrect assumptions, when based on positive evidence, led L2 acquisitionists to consider the role of negative evidence and thus to conclude that L2 acquisition often relies on both positive and negative evidence. Furthermore, White (1991) argued that negative evidence may have a more significant role in L2 than in L1. Further support for the role of negative evidence comes from VanPatten's (2009) input processing work, in which he viewed negative evidence as a facilitator for comprehension. Based on VanPatten's view, when learners are told that their answers are wrong, this means that they are getting information that their comprehension is wrong and this comprehension is "a precursor to acquisition" (VanPatten, 2009, p.59)

However, in SLA literature, theorists have either wholly supported or rejected the view that negative evidence is essential in L2 acquisition. Schwartz (1993) argued that negative evidence is not essential in SLA. The claim behind this view is that, as in first language acquisition, only positive evidence can affect the structure of the interlanguage grammar. Schwartz further indicated that negative evidence and explicit instruction

result in a type of knowledge that cannot be equated with linguistic competence. Other views have acknowledged the necessity of negative evidence and that it facilitates language development. In this regard, Carroll and Swain (1993) stated that "In theoretical terms it is imperative to provide explicit content to a theory of language learning, to show how the development of knowledge of specific linguistic phenomena could be explained by the basic mechanisms of induction" (p. 358). This supports the view that type of input may result in restructuring the nature of the linguistic knowledge underlying linguistic structures.

White (1991) argued that providing form-focused classroom instruction that includes negative evidence to French learners will help them better understand the principles of adverb placement in the English language than will providing positive evidence alone. In English, unlike French, an adverb is not grammatically allowed to occur between a verb and its direct object. In her experimental study, White recruited two groups of 11 and 12 year-old francophone learners of English. The first group received explicit instruction in adverb placement while the second group received instruction on question formation. Both groups were pre-tested prior to the instruction period and immediately post-tested after the instructional period. Participants also took a delayed post-test five weeks after instruction had ended, and some of them were tested again a year after the experiment took place. The results showed that the group that received positive and negative evidence on adverb placement came to know that adverbs cannot occupy a position between the verb and object. However, White's study showed results in favour of negative evidence only in the immediate post-test. The follow up results showed no advantage of instruction, suggesting that the knowledge is not retained in the long term.

Following the lines of White's research, I take the position that positive evidence is not enough to trigger development of the semantic properties of the English article system. That is, achieving target-like accuracy in using the English articles requires negative evidence in the form of explicit instruction in definiteness, specificity and genericity.

3.5 The nature of linguistic knowledge: theoretical positions

An understanding of second language acquisition entails an understanding of the nature of linguistic knowledge, its types and the interaction between these types. SLA literature has developed three main theoretical positions regarding the nature of linguistic knowledge. The first position is the non-interface position, supported first by Krashen (1985) and then by Schwartz (1993), which posits that learned/explicit knowledge cannot be converted into acquired/implicit knowledge, no matter how much the linguistic structure is practiced. The second position is the strong interface position supported by Sharwood Smith (1981) and DeKeyser (2003), who argued that explicit knowledge can eventually evolve into implicit knowledge and vice versa. Proponents of this position subscribe to the view that explicit metalinguistic knowledge can be automatized by practice to the point that L2 learners cannot recall the explicit knowledge that started the learning process (DeKeyser, 2003). The third theoretical position is the weak interface position supported by Ellis (1997), who asserted that the conversion of explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge could be possible under certain conditions. Specifically, explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge if learners are developmentally ready to acquire a new form and if rules of this form are developmentally constrained, which means that the linguistic form is in the right sequence to be acquired. While Ellis (1994b) supported the weak interface position, he agreed with Krashen that the majority of SLA has resulted from implicit rather than explicit learning. Thus, the weak interface position acknowledges that by focusing learners' attention on linguistic features in the input, explicit metalinguistic knowledge can help learners develop greater control over both types of L2 knowledge (N. C. Ellis, 1994).

Ellis (2005b) declared that these theoretical interface positions have not been tested empirically because of the lack of valid measures of the constructs of explicit and implicit knowledge (the topic of the next section) and because it is almost impossible for learners not to use both types of knowledge simultaneously, which makes knowledge types methodologically challenging to measure. The proposition of the weak interface position, namely that explicit knowledge plays an essential role in implicit

knowledge development, highly motivated this study. As such, the study explored the effect of classroom instruction (as a facilitator of acquisition) on learners' article accuracy.

3.6 A note on measuring explicit vs. implicit knowledge

Norris & Ortega (2000) stated (based on a meta-analysis they conducted) that there is no definitive conclusion to date about the role of instruction in second language acquisition. One important reason for the lack of a conclusion, according to Andringa et al. (2011), is that "there are no accepted measures of explicit and implicit knowledge" (p. 871). A second reason for the lack of a conclusion is that studies that compared both explicit and implicit instruction using free response measures are relatively fewer than studies that used controlled measures (DeKeyser, 2003; Spada & Tomita, 2010).

Ellis (2005) indicated that the types of knowledge should be tested independently and that certain criteria should be provided for each knowledge measure. Ellis's criteria for testing implicit knowledge include response according to feel, time pressure and focus on meaning. Conversely, explicit knowledge testing criteria include response according to rule, no time pressure and focus on form. However, the question of what tests tap into implicit knowledge vs. explicit knowledge is very controversial and is still open to investigation and discussion.

The operationalization of explicit/implicit instruction in the current project necessitated a consideration of the instruction's effect on explicit and implicit knowledge using both controlled and free measures. The measures used in this study (the Article Elicitation Task, the Acceptability Judgment Task and the Written Production Task) were chosen in light of Ellis's criteria of explicit vs. implicit L2 knowledge measures. It was predicted that these measures would provide some insights into L2 Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners' implicit and explicit knowledge of the English article system before and after the instruction period.

Based on Ellis's criteria, the Article Elicitation Task and the Acceptability Judgment Task are considered as measures of explicit knowledge (in spite of the fact that they were timed) whereas the Written Production Task is considered as a measure of implicit knowledge. Although learners in free production tasks might rely on implicit knowledge, using explicit resources might also be possible while performing such tasks (Whong et al., 2014). Reliance on both types of knowledge can also occur with measures of explicit knowledge. In accordance with this view, the categorization of the tasks administrated in this study, as to whether they tap into implicit or explicit knowledge, should be treated with caution until an agreement in SLA literature is reached about an accurate measure of linguistic knowledge.

In the case of measuring knowledge of the English article system, I argue for measures of articles that tap into implicit knowledge because article use in terms of definiteness, specificity and genericity is very subtle. In other words, future research utilization of measures of the implicit knowledge of articles is required because the object of the study is somehow 'hidden'. In fact, learners are found to be more accurate with articles when using imitation tasks (where half of the target sentences are missing articles) than when using the forced choice elicitation task, which suggests that tasks of explicit knowledge direct learners' attention towards explicit grammatical rules (Ionin, personal communication).

3.7 The role of explicit instruction in SLA

Broadly speaking, explicit instruction in SLA is found to be effective and potentially useful in language classrooms, as reported in a wide range of studies (e.g. Andringa et al., 2011; Housen et al., 2005; Carroll and Swain, 1993). These studies suggest that attention to form, either through explicit teaching of grammar or through explicit error correction, has a positive role in SLA (DeKeyser, 2003). However, there is no absolute evidence, to date, for the effectiveness of L2 instruction, and this is mainly due to an inadequate research methodology, as stated earlier (Doughty, 2003).

The current project's comparison between the effect of explicit instruction and the effect of implicit instruction on learners' article production and interpretation was highly inspired by SLA research that investigated the role of explicit instruction in facilitating second language development. In particular, the meta-analysis of Norris and Ortega (2000, 2001), in which they compared effect sizes taken from 49 experimental and quasi-experimental studies published between 1980 and 1998, and the study recently conducted by Spada and Tomita (2010) are widely cited in support of the role of explicit instruction in L2 development. These meta-analyses revealed that explicit types of instruction are more effective than implicit ones and that focused L2 instruction leads to target-like language gains. As such, Norris and Ortega (2000) found that explicit instruction leads to large effects whereas implicit instruction leads to medium effects.

In addition, a strong evidence in favour of explicit instruction comes from the field of cognitive neuroscience. Yusa et al. (2011) investigated whether L2 learners' knowledge would go beyond the input provided in instruction by testing the acquisition of a rule in syntax called negative inversion. Two groups (instruction and non-instruction) of Japanese learners underwent functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) twice. fMRI of the instruction group taken after the instruction period ended showed a highly noticeable activation in Broca's area (an area assumed to be responsible for syntactic processing); in the non-instruction group, no such activation was witnessed. The results further revealed that classroom-based L2 instruction could lead to neural plasticity by causing changes in the brains of adult learners.

However, while some studies detected usefulness of using explicit instruction in facilitating L2 acquisition of certain structures (Spada, Lightbown and White, 2005), others found no effectiveness for such use (Felix & Weigl, 1991). These mixed findings resulted in what Ellis (1994b) called the "paradox of formal language instruction" (p. 107). Put simply, while formal instruction can lead to the facilitation of language learning, it sometimes fails to do so with certain linguistic structures. One possible explanation for this paradox, as proposed by Ellis, is that the effect of formal instruction on implicit knowledge can be delayed. As a result, more empirical investigations are

required before a unified account of the role of explicit instruction can be found; as indicated by Carroll and Swain (1993), "At best we may say that results are mixed and the topic deserves more empirical study." (p. 361).

Explicit instruction in the form of giving metalinguistic information to L2 learners has been found to be superior to other forms of negative evidence. In a study that dealt with the effect of corrective feedback, Carroll and Swain (1993) compared the effect of four different types of feedback on the acquisition of the English dative alternations by 100 adults (L1 is Spanish) who were divided into four groups. The first group received explicit metalinguistic information about the generalization of dative alternations. The second group was told that their response was wrong, but was not corrected. The third group was corrected when they erred and was given an example of the correct response. Participants in the last group were asked if they were sure about their response when they made an error. Carroll and Swain (2003) found that the first group outperformed the other three groups and concluded that "Despite the informativeness of the context, simply telling a subject that he or she was wrong, providing indirect feedback, and even providing the right forms did not help as much as the explicit metalinguistic information." (p. 372). For this reason, explaining linguistic properties metalinguistically might lead learners to achieve better accuracy of the form under investigation. Such findings inspired this project to explore the effect of explicit instruction in teaching the semantic properties of the English articles to L2 learners. By doing so, this research contributes to the field of instructed SLA by showing, when L1 transfer and form/meaning mappings are predicted, there is a possible effect of formal instruction on such linguistic structures.

3.8 Instruction in previous research

Ellis (1994a) categorized the research in the area of instructed SLA into four types. These types explored the role of instruction on: (1) learners' general language proficiency, (2) a specific linguistic item, (3) the sequence of acquisition or (4) the durability of instruction. This section deals with issues raised in studies that investigated the role of instruction on the development of specific linguistic structures and those that

explored the durability of instruction because of their relevance to the theoretical assumptions behind the project. Within the findings of the studies that dealt with the role of instruction on specific linguistic properties, results are often associated with one of two main factors or with both, namely the complexity of the linguistic structures under investigation and the type of measures used to assess L2 learners' knowledge of those particular linguistic properties. Within the findings of research dealing with the durability of instruction, results are often associated with delayed measures of linguistic knowledge.

A central argument in Instructed SLA research is that the success of instruction is usually dependent on the degree of complexity of the target linguistic structure (De Graaff, 1997; Robinson, 1996). Housen et al. (2005) designed a study to question the validity of this argument. They defined structure complexity in terms of the functional markedness of the linguistic structure. In their study, they provided explicit instruction in two grammatical structures, namely French sentence negation (considered as a simple structure) and French passive constructions (considered as a complex structure), to 69 Dutch-speaking learners of French (14-15 years old) who were assigned to three intact classes. The first class was exposed to explicit instruction in the simple structure while the second class received explicit instruction in the complex structure. The third group served as a control group and was given no instruction. All groups were pre- and post-tested using a grammaticality judgment task, a controlled written production task, and an unplanned oral production task. The researchers' findings provided evidence for two main claims in Instructed SLA. First, they showed that learners gained more from instruction in complex structures than from instruction in simple structures. Second, based on results taken from the unplanned oral production task, and considering the SLA assumption that production tasks are measures of implicit knowledge, Housen et al. (2005) concluded that explicit instruction promotes implicit knowledge and not only explicit knowledge.

Other examples of studies that show the role of complexity of the target structure in determining the success of instruction include Robinson (1996) who found that explicit instruction has more positive effects on simple rules than on complex ones and De

Graaff (1997) who found the opposite. In other words, De Graaff (1997) postulated that complex structures may not be easily learnt implicitly, and thus explicit learning might be required. What we can conclude from the findings of these studies is that results in this regard are not at all unified. The main reason why this is the case is that the relationship between the effect of instruction and structure complexity remains unclear (Housen, Pierrard, & Van Daele, 2005). Another possible reason why a unified account that explores the relationship of successful instruction and structure complexity does not exist is the lack of a clear-cut definition of the notion of 'complexity'. According to Whong et al. (2014), 'complexity' is a problematic notion because linguistic properties that appear to be 'simple' at the superficial level might be very 'complex' in their underlying linguistic structure.

Structure complexity is not the only characteristic of linguistic properties involved in the success of classroom instruction. DeKeyser (2003) highlighted the difference between what he labelled as 'structure objective difficulty' and 'structure subjective difficulty'. Whereas the former is related to how complex a structure is linguistically, the latter refers to learners' perception of how complex a structure is. In this regard, DeKeyser (2003) pointed out both objective and subjective difficulty might affect the degree to which instruction is successful.

Besides structure complexity and its objective and subjective difficulty, other factors are also involved in determining the success of instruction. Spada, Lightbown and White (2005) argued that learners tend to benefit more from instruction in structures that usually result in communication breakdown if misused than from instruction in structures that do not often lead to communication disruption when misused. In their classroom experiment, the researchers pre- and post-tested 90 French speaking students (11-12 years old) who were assigned to four experimental groups using an oral production task and paper and pencil tasks. Two classes received instruction in the possessive determiners (his/her) whereas the other classes were exposed to instruction in question formation with a particular focus on inversion with noun subjects. The explicit instruction used was accompanied by highlighting linguistic contrasts of the target structures between L1 (French) and L2 (English). The researchers found that the

groups instructed on possessive determiners showed more improvement than the groups instructed on question formation. According to Spada, Lightbown and White, what explains the improvement of the group instructed on possessive determiners is the difference between the linguistic features under investigation. Misused possessive determiners are more likely to result in problems in communication than a question without inversion.   They indicated that possessive determiner errors lead to communication disruption whereas errors in adverb placement (tested in White 1991) and questions' word order (tested in Spada and Lightbown, 1999) usually do not. In addition, Spada, Lightbown and White maintained the effectiveness of explicit instruction that includes contrastive grammar information about L1 and L2 over explicit instruction without such a contrastive element.

Regarding research which dealt with the durability of L2 instruction, Norris and Ortega (2000) indicated that the average effect sizes remain large for delayed post-tests, which could be regarded as evidence in favour of a long-term instruction effect. However, they declared that these results are inconclusive because of the small numbers of studies that have administered delayed post-tests. As a consequence, the results of the meta-analysis point to the need for delayed measures and for tests that can tap into the acquisition of implicit L2 knowledge. Along the same lines, White's (1991) study, which investigated the effect of instruction in adverb placement (reported earlier in the chapter), did not find a long-term effect of instruction in a follow up that took place one year after the experiment had ended. The conclusion that could be drawn based on the meta-analysis of Norris and Ortega (2000) and White's (1991) study is that more experimental research, especially research that includes delayed testing, must be conducted before a clear picture of the durability of instruction can emerge.

Success of instruction was, additionally, found to be mainly evident with controlled measures of linguistic properties. Andringa et al. (2011) based their methodological design on the assumption that claims of the superiority of explicit instruction over implicit instruction are highly dependent on studies that administered controlled production tasks rather than free written ones. They compared explicit and implicit instruction using a free written response task. Their findings showed equal gain effects

for both explicit and implicit instruction. The only context where explicit instruction was slightly superior to implicit instruction was when there was structural similarity between learners' L1 and the L2 target structure.

In summary, several considerations must be taken into account to determine the success of instruction, such as structure complexity and the effect of structure misuse on communication breakdown. Furthermore, durability of instruction can only be detected if delayed measures of linguistic properties are carefully included in the research design. Based on the previous research in Instructed SLA that is highlighted in this chapter (e.g. Housen et al., 2005; Spada and Lightbown, 1999), this study predicted that L2 Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners who received explicit instruction in the semantic properties of articles will outperform learners who received implicit instruction. It is believed that explicit knowledge of form/meaning associations can have a huge impact on implicit language learning.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, we found that explicit and implicit instruction are types of formal instruction and that explicit instruction is usually more effective in the context of L2 learning that its implicit counterpart (Norris and Ortega, 2000). Instructed SLA research is mainly motivated by the insufficiency of positive evidence especially with forms that are low in salience. While explicit instruction has been found to play a positive role in SLA, there is no final answer in the field regarding which types of linguistic properties can be facilitated by instruction and the reasons why instruction can be facilitative in certain cases and not in others. N. C. Ellis (1994) asserted that "The role of conscious rules in language acquisition remains mysterious not only for want of further empirical investigation." (p. 5). In addition, the relationship of these types of instruction with the nature of linguistic knowledge/learning is not yet clear. However, it is strongly assumed in the field that these types of instruction might have different impacts on learners' knowledge even though theoretical positions that claim changes in the linguistic knowledge have never been tested empirically because of the lack of valid measures of knowledge types. Measures of knowledge need to rely on certain criteria in order to be

valid. Such criteria were proposed by Ellis (2005b) and were consulted during the context of this research to test the accuracy of learners' use of the English articles relying on tasks of both explicit and implicit knowledge. Finally, it is important to consider that success of instruction is not dependent on just one factor, but rather on multiple of the numerous factors involved in the context of instruction research.

Chapter 4: Translation in language teaching

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the choice between explicit and implicit types of language-centred instruction as an essential variable in this experiment was justified by providing supporting theoretical positions and findings of previous studies. In this chapter, I address the question of using translation in language teaching and discuss the factors motivating its choice as the second experimental variable.

For many years, both researchers and teachers rejected the use of translation (from the L2 to learners' mother tongue) in language classrooms on the basis of the argument that translation leads learners to commit errors in the L2. However, Cook (2010) argued that this idea is not based on actual experimental research; rather it is an outcome of several language teaching trends, movements and beliefs that were popular during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, and for this reason he calls for a proper empirical exploration of the effectiveness of translation in language teaching. A review of translation in language teaching literature reveals numerous arguments in support of translation. Such arguments are based on evidence taken from learners and/or teachers' attitudes/perceptions (e.g. Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989; Kelly & Bruen 2014; and Scheffler 2014), from limited empirical work in the field (e.g. Källkvist, 2004 & 2008; Laufer and Girsai, 2008) or from theoretical assumptions (e.g. Cook, 2010; Leonardi, 2010; Machida, 2011).

Empirical studies that dealt with translation in language teaching provide interesting findings in spite of the fact that they are limited in number. For the purpose of this research, the findings of such empirical studies are reported based on two types of research: work that investigates the role of translation in language teaching on vocabulary learning/retention and work that investigates the role of translation in language teaching on morphosyntactic accuracy. The reason is that vocabulary learning and morphosyntax are two different domains, and consequently translation in language teaching might have a different impact on each one of them. That is, any vocabulary

item forms part of the lexicon, which is separate from syntax and morphology. Understanding of such findings provides a basis for considering the effect of translation on the accuracy of English articles produced by Arab learners.

In this chapter, translation in language teaching (also referred to as pedagogical translation) is defined. Then, the chapter discusses why translation can be considered as a useful language-teaching tool. After that, an overview of previous empirical studies that dealt with pedagogical translation, their arguments, findings and implications for this study are reported. Finally, the chapter includes a note on translation tasks as a focus-on-formS type of activity and introduces the tasks that were adapted in this study.

4.2 Translation in language teaching: Definition

The general definition of translation in the literature is the transfer of meaning from one language to the other (Hatim, 2001). It should be noted that the term 'transfer' does not refer here to what is traditionally known in SLA by this term, namely L1 influence (as discussed in chapter 2); instead it means the conversion of meaning from one language into another. Furthermore, translation has been classified by Jakobson (1959) into three main well-documented types that are still the most commonly employed today. First, the transfer could be within the same language, which can be accomplished by using paraphrases or synonyms. Second, the transfer could be from one language to another. Third, the transfer could occur from a verbal language to a non-verbal one. In this study, only the second type of translation (also called interlingual translation) is relevant, and therefore this chapter is built upon this type.

Leonardi (2010) made an important distinction regarding translation in language teaching. Leonardi differentiated between use of translation for pedagogical purposes (which aims at helping learners to develop and strengthen their knowledge in the L2) and use of translation for professional purposes (which aims at training professional translators). In this respect, Leonardi states that it is important to distinguish between two phrases: pedagogical translation and translation pedagogy. Whereas the former refers to translation as a language-teaching tool, the latter refers to teaching of

translation for professional training purposes. Throughout this thesis, translation in language teaching will also be referred to as pedagogical translation, translation as a language-teaching tool and translation in language classrooms, but never as translation pedagogy, which is not relevant to the thesis. Factors motivating use of this type of translation are the topic of the next section.

4.3 Why use translation in language classrooms?

Broadly speaking, the use of translation in language classrooms in this study is mainly motivated by the fact that the arguments against translation mostly lack validity and the limited research available has shown evidence in favour of translation. The core argument established by Cook (2010) and Leonardi (2010) is that the criticism of translation in language teaching is not based on scientific evidence; it is built on the popularity of various teaching methods/trends that rejected translation either directly or indirectly. In addition, research that supports translation depends on the advantages of pedagogical translation, as found in Atkinson (1987), on findings from instructed SLA studies such as that of Spada, Lightbown and White (2005), and on learners and/or teachers' attitudes towards translation, as in the work of Kelly and Bruen (2014), Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) and Scheffler (2013) among others.

According to Cook (2010), the birth of the Reform Movement (at the end of the nineteenth century) and the Direct Method (at the beginning of the twentieth century) resulted in abandoning translation because these movements focus on speech in the target language and neglect grammar. In relation to this, Cook argued that the teaching methods that rely on translation, such as the American Army Method, Suggestopaedia and Total Physical Response, were successful and popular methods among early language teaching movements. Another teaching method that is responsible for the rejection of translation is the Grammar Teaching Method, which was popular at the end of the nineteenth century. This is mainly because pedagogical translation is usually associated with the Grammar Translation Method, a completely different teaching approach from translation in language teaching (Leonardi, 2010) . The Grammar Translation Method was criticized mostly because it focuses on writing rather than on

speaking, and hence pedagogical translation was outlawed because it " has never really shaken off its association with grammar translation" (Cook, 2010, p. 37).

Another crucial factor in rejecting the use of translation is the association of translation with Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (which was prevalent between the 1940s and 1970s). Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis attempts to describe and compare similarities and differences between two language systems, which allow leaners to recognise the differences between their L1 and the L2 and consequently to overcome L1 interference with L2 target structures (Leonardi, 2010). This association was made because use of translation implies comparison of structures between L1 and L2. However, Leonardi (2010) argued that even though Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis was heavily criticized at the time, it was practiced popularly and proved successful between the 1960s and early 1970s. One last movement to mention that resulted in the negativity towards translation is (as put by Cook, 2010) theories about interlanguage and natural language use proposed by Selinker (1972) and Krashen (1982) respectively. These theories claim that interference of the mother tongue is a major source of learners' L2 errors, but this claim was questioned later by researchers who argued that using L1 in the context of L2 enriches language competence and proficiency (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009).

Besides the fact that the arguments against translation lack validity, research in translation in language teaching shows why translation can be an effective tool in the language classroom and highlights many advantages. According to Atkinson (1987), use of translation can be less time consuming and involves less ambiguity than other teaching methods, such as visual aids and mime. Additionally, Atkinson stressed that pedagogical translation can assess understanding of the concepts behind certain linguistic structures and that giving instruction in the first language can be very useful for beginners. More importantly, Atkinson (1987) provided interesting grounds for the current study in his support of translation activities. He asserted, "An exercise involving translation into the target language of a paragraph or set of sentences which highlight a recently taught language item can provide useful reinforcement of structural, conceptual, and sociolinguistic differences between the native and target languages" (p.244). He explained further by stating that there are certain aspects of language that

learners find to be difficult due to the fact that these aspects are differently structured in learners' L1; for example, Greek beginners learning English may struggle with *demonstrative adjective + noun* constructions, as these constructions lack the definite article that is necessary in Greek. Atkinson clearly declared that in cases like this, " the most efficient approach can be simple explanation or demonstration of the rule, followed by a translation exercise" (p. 244). Accordingly, translation of texts that contain the target structures might force learners to focus on the misleading similarities between their L1 and L2. In connection with this point, Harbord (1992) also stated that translation within a specific context allows learners to be fully aware that what works in their L1 may not work in English. A very important issue to note in the current study, and one which aligns with Atkinson's assertions, is that these translation activities are recommended only as tools to complement other activities in the classroom (especially activities targeting the L2 only), not as tools to 'replace' other activities.

Using translation in the language classroom can further rely on studies that focus on the role of input/instruction in SLA. As reported in the previous chapter, Spada, Lightbown and White (2005) found that instruction that involves a contrastive element of L1 and L2 structures (when there is a specific difference between L1 and L2) is more effective than instruction with no such contrastive component. Studies like this lend indirect support to the use of pedagogical translation in facilitating L2 learning of certain structures. Therefore, SLA research which supports the inclusion of negative evidence in language teaching also reveals that some information, namely information that is explicitly instructed and includes contrastive metalinguistic elements involving the L1 and L2, assists the process of learning (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009).

Translation in language classrooms can sometimes be inevitable. This idea comes from language learners themselves, who often tend to associate L2 language meanings with their native ones (even if they are asked not to do so). Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) indicated that translation is inevitable while learning a second language because L2 learners may continue translating in their minds even if forbidden to do so. In addition to this, learners are found to think highly of translation use as seen in Scheffler (2013), who asked 45 secondary school Polish learners of English (aged 16-19) to evaluate a

grammar translation task and a communicative language task. Scheffler found that the learners considered translating sentences from Polish into English to be as useful as the communicative task.

Among earlier qualitative studies that explored learners and teachers' attitudes towards the use of translation in the language classroom is the work by Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) and Sood (1981) among others. For example, Kharma and Hajjaj found (based on a questionnaire addressed to 200 male and female teachers, observations of language classes over several months and interviews with teachers) that the majority of teachers and students considered the use of translation as the most beneficial tool in the language classroom. Furthermore, they found that teachers and students believe that translation facilitates teaching and learning a second language.

Along the same line of research conducted in academic settings, Sewell (1996) conducted a survey that focused on teaching translation in British universities. He reported that 19 universities (of the 21 universities which took part in the survey) declared that translation was taught in their language modules as a method to improve learners' linguistic proficiency, consolidate L2 constructions and improve L2 comprehension. Such work shows that while scientific research in support of pedagogical translation does not exist, its application in curriculums is reported to be successful.

Kharma and Hajjaj's (1989) and Sewell's (1996) findings regarding teachers' attitudes were recently echoed in Kelly and Bruen (2014), who attempted to see if the negativity commonly found towards translation is reflected in the attitudes of university lecturers who are involved in language teaching. In order to answer this question, they conducted a case study in an Irish Higher Education Institution in which they interviewed six lecturers in Japanese and six in German and reviewed the lecturers' course outlines and module descriptions. The results indicated a positive attitude from all twelve lecturers towards using translation in language teaching. The reasons why translation should be used, as put by the participants, are as follows: translation aids acquisition of vocabulary, aids comprehension, increases learners' familiarity with particular

grammatical structures and highlights gaps in learners' knowledge. Kelly and Bruen (2014) argued (based on the positive outcome they found from language teachers) that the effect of translation on learning should be experimentally explored in future research.

In summary, there are several reasons why translation should be given another chance in the language classroom. One crucial reason is that rejecting pedagogical translation on the basis of belief in certain teaching methods and movements lacks validity. Other reasons include how advantageous translation can be in classrooms and how a contrastive element in classroom instruction that compares L1 and L2 structures could enhance learning of certain linguistic structures. This usefulness of translation is also reported by L2 learners and teachers who are engaged in language learning/teaching. Since empirical research on the role of translation is scarce, it is, therefore, the responsibility of future research to focus on translation in experimental terms to explore the extent of its effectiveness and to explore what language forms/meanings can be facilitated by the use of translation. In the next section, the existing empirical work in the field is reported.

4.4 Existing empirical studies

Because belief in the teaching movements (mentioned above) was deep and unquestioned, translation as a pedagogical tool was not considered by many SLA researchers and was not assessed in any way (Gonzalez Davies, 2004). This widespread belief that translation is harmful in the language classroom is not the only factor why researchers were hesitant to experiment with the role of translation until recently. Other factors include a lack of methodological measures of translation as a language-teaching tool (Leonardi, 2010). In a call to investigate the role of translation in language teaching, V. Cook (2001) asserted that "it is time to open a door that has been firmly shut in language teaching over a hundred years, namely the systematic use of the first language (L1) in the classroom" (p. 403).

Earlier studies that investigated the role of translation relied on qualitative methods rather than quantitative ones (e.g. Khrarma and Hajjaj, 1989). However, a few studies have since attempted to explore the role of translation in the language classroom quantitatively, such as Källkvist (2004, 2008) and Laufer and Girasai (2008). The arguments in these studies mostly support the use of translation in language classrooms. I believe that the effect of translation is determined by the nature of the linguistic structures under investigation, namely either lexical or morphosyntactic structures, as a positive effect of translation has been found clearly in the studies that used translation for vocabulary teaching, but not as clearly in the studies that used translation for teaching morphosyntactic properties.

Empirical studies that explored the effect of translation on vocabulary learning (see Hummel (2010) and Laufer and Girsai (2008) among others) are mostly conclusive about the positive role that translation plays in vocabulary retention. To cite one example in this context, Laufer and Girsai (2008) compared three high school groups of learners of the same L1 and comparable L2 English proficiency. Each group was presented with a different instruction type. The first group received contrastive analysis and translation. The second and third groups received form-focused and meaning-focused approaches respectively. After the instruction period had ended, participants' retention of the target words was tested by using active recall and passive recall tasks. Laufer and Girsai found that the translation group scored significantly higher on both tests than did the other two groups.

Empirical work that investigated the effectiveness of translation activities on the acquisition of L2 morphosyntax structures is scant (e.g. Källkvist, 2008). To the best of my knowledge, Källkvist (2004, 2008) offers the only published empirical studies testing the effect of pedagogical translation on L2 morphosyntax (the use of English articles by Swedish learners). In particular, Källkvist (2004) conducted a pilot study to compare the effectiveness of translation exercises versus gap fill exercises on the use of the null versus the definite article with non-count nouns and with plural countable nouns that have generic reference. The subjects of the study, 55 Swedish university students at the start of the experiment, were randomly assigned to one of three groups (2

experimental and 1 control). The first experimental group (Translation Group) was given translation exercises that focused on the target structures and required the students to translate full sentences or part of a sentence; these students were also given explicit instruction. The second group (No Translation Group) was given gap fill exercises that targeted the same structures for the same number of times; these students received the same explicit instruction that the first group received. The third group (No Grammar Group) was not given a grammar component like the other two groups. It should be noted here that Källkvist did not provide any details about the nature of the explicit instruction she utilized in her study. Subjects were considered to be at an advanced proficiency stage based on the amount of classroom instruction in English they had received (8-9 years) prior to the experiment. The subjects took a pre-test, an instruction period and an immediate post-test, but there was no delayed testing. The instruction period lasted for 13 weeks and included 15 lessons (each 90 minutes long). The pre-test and the post-test included a multiple-choice task, a translation task and a written retelling task.

In addition to the pre-test and the post-test, Källkvist's (2004) subjects took an 'interval test' which took place in week 3. The difference between the interval test and the pre- and post-test was that the former measured learning over one week and focused on one grammatical structure (the use of the null versus the definite article in English noun phrases) unlike the latter tests, which focused on several grammatical structures over 13 weeks. Again, no details of these grammatical structures were given in her study. The interval test included a translation task and a gap fill task in English. The target structure of the interval test was also included in the translation part of the pre-test. Källkvist only reported the results of the 'interval test' since analysis of the other tests was still in progress. Consequently, learners' pre-test scores of this structure were calculated and compared to their scores in the interval test.

The results of the interval test indicated that both groups (Translation and No Translation) increased accuracy and performed similarly on the interval test, unlike the control group, which scored much lower. Källkvist (2004) stated that explicit grammar instruction is the factor causing improvement and that types of exercises did not play a

role. Consequently, it is the lack of such explicit instruction for the control group that led to their low performance. These results show that translation exercises are as effective as gap fill ones. However, Källkvist indicated that this result is inconclusive mainly due to the small number of subjects and the small number of test items that constitute the interval test, which resulted in only descriptive analysis of the results. She, further, pointed out several factors that could contribute to this result, such as the nature of exercises and the time allocated to them. In other words, she believed that translation exercises require more cognitive load and more time than gap fill exercises. Källkvist (2004) concluded that her work was only a pilot study on a very small scale and recommended further investigation of the role of translation in language classrooms.

While Källkvist's (2004) results of the interval test did not show evidence in favour of translation, her subsequent (2008) study, which reported the results of the pre-test and post-tests results (which were not completed in 2004), did. Källkvist (2008) found similar results to her 2004 study; namely that the Translation Group and the No Translation Group outperformed the No Grammar Group in all three tests at the post-test stage. There was no statistically significant difference between the Translation Group and the No Translation Group using measures of inferential statistics in the multiple-choice test and the translation test. However, there was an exercise effect in the retelling task in which the gain for the Translation Group approached significance (p=.07). Källkvist (2008) argued that if the number of participants had been larger and if the retelling task had contained more test items, the difference between the Translation Group and the No Translation Group would have reached statistical significance. The fact that both experimental groups outperformed the No Grammar Group indicates that explicit instruction plays a major role in enhancing accuracy of morphosyntactic structures while exercise type plays a minor role. Her findings further show that combining translation exercises with exercises mainly targeting L2 "would be a sensible, good practice" (p.198). In general, though, these results support the use of exercises that contain deliberate attention to certain forms. Finally, Källkvist (2008) stated that the inclusion of a free production task and a delayed post-test might shed

more light on the use of translation activities in the sense of their impact on free production and long-term gains.

Following the findings of previous empirical work, the effect of translation was more strongly attested in vocabulary development than morphosyntactic development. One reason why translation was more successful in Laufer and Girsai's (2008) study than in Källkvist (2004) might be related to the fact that the former is testing vocabulary, a domain that is independent from the core linguistic structures, such as morphosyntax. In other words, vocabulary teaching/learning requires learners' awareness of certain words whereas learning linguistic structures such as articles requires restructuring part of L2 learners' grammatical system. However, it is not possible to generalize this conclusion based on so few empirical studies. Therefore, the existing findings will be considered inconclusive until a sufficient amount of experimental studies have been conducted to explore the role of translation in the development of morphosyntactic properties.

4.5 Translation activities

Ellis (2005a) stated that translation activities used as a pedagogical tool can be considered as a type of focus-on-formS instruction because the target structures were chosen in advance for deliberate attention in L2 classrooms. Even though this classification by Ellis might be true, the current study did not attempt to compare or to test assumptions of the focus-on-form (which involves attention to form only when this is needed in tasks that are otherwise meaning centered) versus focus-on-formS (which requires prior selection of a specific form for treatment) approaches proposed by Long (1991). Källkvist (2008) argued that although focus-on-formS has lost its popularity, translation activities could significantly raise levels of awareness among learners, especially advanced level learners. Particularly, language structures in which the L1 and L2 differ and which posit challenges to L2 learners are better treated with deliberate attention in exercises such as translation activities. In accordance with Källkvist's (2008) view, I believe that incorporating some focus-on-formS exercises into a course that is mainly meaning based may enhance learners' competency of L2 difficult structures.

According to Källkvist (2004), the reason why L1 to L2 translation exercises can be more beneficial to learners than exercises that deal with the L2 only is that translation exercises "lead to deeper and more elaborate cognitive processing and thus enhanced memory retention compared to exercises which involve no such comparison" (p. 163). However, the effect of using translation exercises as opposed to other types of exercises in the language classroom is definitely an area that requires more investigation. This is reiterated by Källkvist (2008), who wrote: "Given the limited use of focus-on-formS instruction, the relative benefits of translation as compared to other kinds of focus-on-formS exercises in the context of a communicative, meaning-oriented curriculum become an issue in need for well-documented answers" (p.184).

Based on her (2004 & 2008) studies that explored the use of translation exercises in teaching problematic morphosyntactic structures to Swedish learners of English, Källkvist (2013) argued that translation exercises are important for teaching morphosyntactic properties only if the sentences used are devoid of challenging vocabulary and expressions for learners. This is because learners might be too distracted by such vocabulary to comprehend their meaning, and therefore learners will fail to pay attention to the required forms. Additionally, Källkvist (2013) indicated that while use of translation activities plays an important role, its application is limited to classes of homogenous learners (who are sharing the same L1). Consequently, applying translation in a classroom where learners come from various L1 backgrounds might be impractical. In this situation, exercises that only focus on L2 might be the ideal solution. This limitation did not present a challenge to the current project because all learners participating in the experiment are speakers of L1 Arabic.

One of the main arguments in the current research is that translation activities can be as effective as other activities targeting the L2 and that including translation activities will complement classroom materials if L2 learners belong to a homogeneous group. The translation material which was used in the present experiment is called activity or exercise interchangeably. The definition of a translation activity is adapted from Gonzalez Davies (2004). She defines translation activities as brief exercises that

facilitate practicing specific points. Several translation exercises that present communicative and interactive elements were provided by Cook (2010), Gonzalez Davies (2004) and Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009). Relative to the acquisition of articles, certain translation exercises were chosen for the main experiment, and these activities were also utilized in the pilot study. The rationale for choosing more than one type of translation activities was to provide learners with more practice and different ways of translating article structures.

The three translation activities used in the classroom intervention were Corrected Close Translation (adapted from Cook, 2010), The Article and the Gapped Translation (both adapted from Gonzalez Davies, 2004). A full description of each of these activities is provided in chapter 5. It should be pointed out here, however, that all three of these activities were chosen on the basis of 'focus'. These translation activities specifically focus on the target structures, leaving no room for learners' reliance on avoidance strategies. Avoidance of problematic structures is often witnessed by learners in free tasks such as free written compositions, but not in translation tasks (Källkvist, 1998). It was, therefore, predicted that such focus would help the learners deal with errors that they often encounter in the use of the English article system rather than permit learners to rely on other forms of determiners, such as personal pronouns, possessive pronouns and demonstratives.

Following Källkvist (2004, 2008), the aim of this study was to explore the effect of translation exercises, if any, on learners' accuracy of the English article system. It was predicted that using translation exercises would help learners apply the explicit instruction of article semantics they were receiving repeatedly in such exercises and so to use the target structure with more accuracy. However, by using translation exercises in the language classroom, the current project does not advocate using the Grammar Translation Method since these are by no means the same thing, as indicated by Cook (2010). Additionally, the current project's support of translation exercises does not imply that other exercises in the target language should be excluded. To put it simply, use of translation exercises that enhance the accuracy of certain language structures has to be in conjunction with other types of exercises.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the support for pedagogical translation from researchers (such as Cook, 2010) who have argued that the criticism of translation in language teaching is not strong and that translation was simply an ignored field in which "the issue of using translation for enhancing L2 proficiency is rarely addressed empirically" (Källkvist, 2004, p. 163). Based on the fact that the use of translation in the classroom was not empirically researched, Cook (2010) called for studies to explore the use of translation and argued that translation could aid the learning process.

Translation should be the subject of future experiments not only because arguments against translation lack validity, but also because it has many advantages in language classrooms and is usually regarded with a positive attitude by L2 learners and L2 teachers (Kelly and Bruen, 2014). While existing empirical work shows stronger evidence of the effect of translation on vocabulary than on morphosyntactic properties, more work should be done before this finding is considered conclusive.

The discussion in this chapter gives ample grounds to argue for the inclusion of translation activities in L2 teaching along with other types of exercises, especially in the contexts of homogenous L1 groups. Translation exercises can be as effective as any other exercises targeting L2, and SLA researchers and language teachers should therefore stop treating translation as harmful for the language learning process.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Having established the theoretical background of the study in the previous chapters, this chapter discusses the methodology utilized in this experiment. A report of a pilot study conducted in preparation for the main experiment is given first. The main findings of the pilot study showed that learners benefited from explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity regardless of the activity type used to practice article use (translation activities vs. gap fill activities). Explicit instruction in genericity, on the other hand, had less positive effect than instruction in the other two semantic notions of articles. Following that, the chapter provides the details of the research methodology used in the experiment and explains how these decisions were based on the outcome of the pilot study.

5.2 The pilot study

The main intentions behind conducting the pilot study were to:

- explore the non-target like use/interpretation of English articles by Arabic-speaking learners in the light of Ionin, Ko and Wexler's (2004) and Ionin et al.'s (2011) study
- test the classroom materials designed for the study and the chosen tests of article use/interpretation.
- see if learners showed improvement in the non-target like structures after receiving metalinguistic instruction in article meaning and performing the translation activities that targeted the use of articles.

The details of the pilot study are given in this section.

5.2.1 Research questions

The pilot study addressed two specific questions that gave rise to a number of hypotheses. Question one was based on IKW's (2004) predictions about article use in non-generic contexts (see table 2 in chapter 2) while question two was based on the assumptions raised in Ionin et al.'s (2011) study of the genericity distinctions. Additionally, the pilot study explored the role of explicit instruction and the role of translation in the development of English articles by Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners. The pilot study research questions are:

RQ1. The **Non-generic** context: Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners show target-like use of English articles in non-generic contexts before and/or after being exposed to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity and to translation activities?

H 1: In accordance with IKW's (2004) account, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners will show incorrect use of 'the' in [−definite, +specific] contexts before being exposed to instruction and to translation activities.

H 2: In accordance with IKW's (2004) account, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners will show incorrect use of 'a' with [+definite, −specific] contexts before being exposed to instruction and to translation activities.

H 3: Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners will benefit from instruction in definiteness and specificity and from translation activities.

RQ 2. The **Generic** context: Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners show target-like interpretation of English articles in generic structures before and/or after being exposed to instruction in genericity and to translation activities?

H 1: In accordance with Slabakova's account of semantic principles, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners will distinguish between Noun-phrase Generics and Sentence-level Generics before being exposed to instruction and to translation activities.

H 2: In accordance with Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer/ Full Access Hypothesis, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners will be more successful with definite singular generics (a structure that exists in their L1) than with indefinite singular generics and bare plural generics (structures that do not exist in their L1) before being exposed to instruction and to translation activities.

H 3: Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners will benefit from explicit instruction in genericity and from translation activities, and this will result in a more accurate interpretation of indefinite singular generics and bare plural generics since these structures are expected to be problematic for learners because they do not exist in their L1.

5.2.2 Participants

The participants of the pilot study were eight foundation year university students. At the English Language Institute of King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (which is where my data are drawn from), students are required to take English language courses as part of the academic requirements of the first year in the university. At the time of the pilot study, the foundation year students were required to take four language modules starting at level 1 and going to level 4. The participants of this study were level 4 students. They were all native speakers of Hejazi Arabic. It was reported in a language background questionnaire that none of the participants had spent any long period of time studying English outside of their hometown.

Upon starting the experiment, two language classes from level 4 were scheduled to participate. The number of participants registered in these two classes was 23 and 13 respectively. However, only four students of each class were chosen because few participants both attended all of the experimental sessions and belonged to the language

level required for this study. It should be noted here that no standardized language proficiency test was given to learners to determine their language level due to serious time constraints. To compensate for this, I relied on the students' scores in the previous language module/level 3. Students who scored 75 or above out of 100 in level 3 were selected for the experiment. Based on the type of assessment used in the Language Institute (not standardized), it was assumed that learners who scored no less than 75 might belong to an intermediate language level. No attempts were made to validate this assumption, but the inclusion of a standardized language proficiency test was planned to be an essential component of the main experiment to avoid an inaccurate representation of participants' language levels. These two issues, namely having a small number of participants and having no standardized language proficiency measure, are further discussed in section 5.2.7.

5.2.3 Procedure

The pilot study followed a traditional classroom experimental design. Participants took a pre-test and a post-test that each included two tasks (a Forced Choice Elicitation Task and an Acceptability Judgment Task) adapted from IKW (2004) and Ionin et al. (2011), respectively. Between the pre-test and the post-test, there was a period of classroom intervention that lasted for three days (an hour per day).

A week after taking the pre-test, students were randomly assigned to one of two groups (translation and gap-fill), which both received explicit instruction in article meaning, but with different kinds of activities. The Translation Group received explicit instruction in definiteness, specificity and genericity and was given translation activities that targeted article use (see section 5.3.6.3 for more details about the explicit instruction and the translation activities). The explicit instruction was delivered in English (L2), but Arabic (L1) was used while presenting the instruction of the translation tasks. The Gap-fill Group, on the other hand, received the same type of instruction, but was given gap-fill exercises that also targeted articles (see section 5.3.6.3). In short, though the activities were different in nature, both groups received a metalinguistic explanation of definiteness, specificity and genericity rules in article use.

All sentences that were used in each of the two groups' lessons were different from the ones included in the pre-test and the post-test tasks to avoid the possibility of rote learning. A week after the treatment sessions ended, both groups took a post-test that included the same tasks as the pre-test.

5.2.4 Measures

This section gives a description of the two tasks used in the pilot study.

5.2.4.1 The Forced Choice Elicitation Task

The Forced Choice Elicitation Task consisted of 76 items that targeted use of articles with singular count nouns. For every target sentence there was a missing article for which participants had to choose between 'a', 'the' and 'null'. The test items fell under four basic context types, in which the features of definiteness and specificity were combined in all possible ways (+definite +specific, +definite, −specific, −definite +specific, and –definite −specific). These four context types were further subdivided by IKW (2004) according to the notion of scope. In this project, the notion of scope was disregarded in the experimental article instruction and in testing due to the complexity of this notion. The decision to ignore the notion of scope was supported by Snape (2012, personal communication), who stated that the notion of scope is too complex to be explicitly taught; especially that article instruction is usually provided in the L2 and that there is limited time spent on it. Examples of the four context types are presented in (57), (58), (59) and (60) below. For the full set of the task, refer to appendix B1.

(57) **[+definite, +specific]**
Conversation between two police officers
Police Officer Clark: I haven't seen you in a long time. You must be very
busy.
Police Officer Smith: Yes. Did you hear about Miss Sarah Andrews, a famous
lawyer who was murdered several weeks ago? We are trying to find
(a, the,—) murderer of Miss Andrews—his name is Roger Williams, and

he is a well-known criminal.

(58) **[+definite, −specific]**

Conversation between a police officer and a reporter

Reporter: Several days ago, Mr. James Peterson, a famous politician, was murdered! Are you investigating his murder?

Police officer: Yes. We are trying to find (a, the, —) murderer of Mr. Peterson—but we still don't know who he is.

(59) **[−definite, +specific]**

In an airport, in a crowd of people who are meeting arriving passengers

Man: Excuse me, do you work here?

Security guard: Yes.

Man: In that case, perhaps you could help me. I am trying to find (a, the, —) red-haired girl; I think that she flew in on Flight 239.

 (60) **[−definite, −specific]**

 In a children's library

Child: I'd like to get something to read, but I don't know what myself.

Librarian: Well, what are some of your interests? We have books on any subject.

Child: Well, I like all sorts of things that move—cars, trains. . . . I know! I would like to get (a, the, —) book about airplanes! I like to read about flying!

5.2.4.2 The Acceptability Judgment Task

Whereas the Forced Choice Elicitation Task described in the previous section focused on the non-generic use of articles, the Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) mainly dealt with the interpretation of article choice in generic contexts. The description of the AJT in this section is based on Ionin et al.'s (2011) task description.

The task consists of 40 questions (20 test questions and 20 fillers). Each question is a very short story followed by five sentences. Learners had to rate the five sentences on a

scale from 1 to 4 according to their suitability as a natural continuation of the story. 1 is for completely unacceptable sentences, 2 is for less acceptable sentences, 3 is for nearly acceptable ones and 4 is for completely acceptable sentences. It is stated on the test instruction page that two or more sentences could receive the same rating. For this reason, there is no requirement for learners' responses to be ranked; the availability of four choices and no middle choice for the five target sentences means that at least two sentences have to receive the same rating. According to Ionin et al. (2011), "the use of a four-point rating scale, instead of a binary yes/no scale, allowed us to probe participants' responses to fairly subtle distinctions" (p. 261). Ionin et al. further indicated that they decided to include several test sentences after the same story in order to create a shorter version of the task than what would have resulted from presenting each story five times, each time with a different sentence. They also stated that a shorter task would prevent boredom, as participants would not have to read the same story several times. The question types include two test categories: Noun-phrase Generics (NPG) and Sentence-level Generics (SLG). Examples of these test categories are presented in (61) and (62) respectively. The 20 fillers mainly deal with aspectual interpretations unlike the test categories that dealt with nominals. The purpose of including fillers is to distract learners' attention from the main focus of the task. For the full set of items, see appendix B2.

Noun-phrase Generics

(61) The Netherlands is a great country to visit. It has wonderful museums, great food, and excellent public transportation. And, of course, it's a great place to buy flowers. As you probably know…

a) Tulips are very popular in the Netherlands.	1	2	3	4
b) The tulip is very popular in the Netherlands.	1	2	3	4
c) Tulip is very popular in the Netherlands.	1	2	3	4
d) A tulip is very popular in the Netherlands.	1	2	3	4
e) The tulips are very popular in the Netherlands.	1	2	3	4

Sentence-level Generics

(62) I would like to give my daughter a pet for her birthday; perhaps I will give her a puppy. My daughter is going to be eight, and she is very responsible. This is really important. As everyone knows…

a)	Little puppies need a lot of time and attention.	1	2	3	4
b)	A little puppy needs a lot of time and attention.	1	2	3	4
c)	Little puppy needs a lot of time and attention.	1	2	3	4
d)	The little puppy needs a lot of time and attention.	1	2	3	4
e)	The little puppies need a lot of time and attention.	1	2	3	4

The 40 questions are divided equally between test items and fillers. The test items include the two test categories, which are NPG and SLG (four items each). The test items also include two control categories (eight items) that deal with article choice in non-generic contexts. The reason for adding two control categories as put by Ionin et a. (2011) "was to ensure that the learners had acquired the basic patterns of English article use, namely that the is required on second-mention with both singular and plural NPs" (p.262). Also, comparing nominals across different contexts will inform us whether learners can differentiate between singular and plural NPs. A fifth category (four items) in the test is a distractor that tests generic mass nouns. This was added to present an example where bare singulars can be fully grammatical. These 20 test items focus on contrasting the interpretation of nominals in the two generic contexts and the two non-generic contexts; specifically, these items test the interpretation of definite singular, indefinite singular, definite plural, bare plural and bare singular as being acceptable or unacceptable in each context.

5.2.5 Results

This section reports the results of the pilot study (n=8) on the use/interpretation of articles in the target contexts before and after the instruction period for each group to determine learners' state of article development. It also compares the effect of the different types of activities used (translation and gap fill) and the effect of instruction (metalinguistic language) on the article performance of the two groups of participants. Following Snape and Yusa (2013), the results of both tests were descriptively analysed because of the small number of participants; the analysis showed the frequency of

article use in the specified contexts and the effect of the treatment on each group of learners. Frequency distribution bar-plots were used to explore the descriptive characteristics of the underlying data. Therefore, comparisons between the pre-test and the post-test results in this section are based on numerical trends (i.e. descriptive statistics) rather than inferential statistics.

5.2.5.1 Results of the Forced Choice Elicitation Task

The results of the Forced Choice Elicitation Task are discussed in relation to each context type included in the task. These context types are definite specific, definite non-specific, indefinite specific and indefinite non-specific. For all definite specific/non-specific contexts, the target response is 'the', and for all indefinite contexts; the target response is 'a/an'. Figures 1 and 2 below show the proportion of times each type of article was used by the two groups (translation and gap-fill) in definite contexts. Figure 1 illustrates the pre-test results for the definite specific context and Figure 2 shows the pre-test results for the definite non-specific context. Note that a complete target-like response would be 100% suppliance of 'the' in figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 and 100% suppliance of 'a/an' in figures 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Figure 1 Pilot study pre-test results for definite specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))
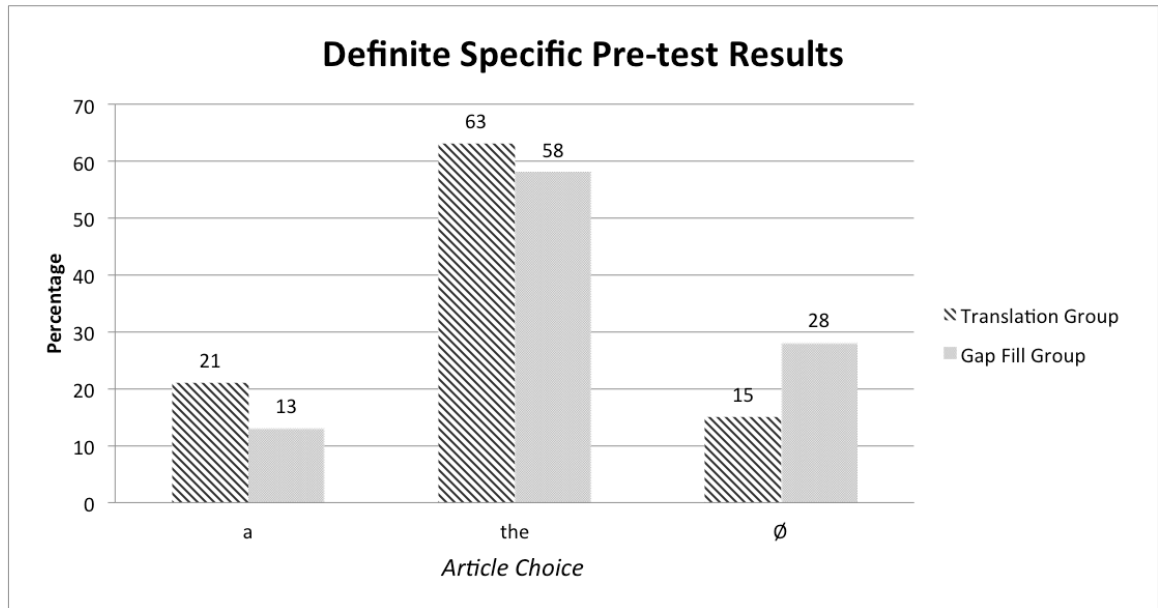
Figure 2 Pilot study pre-test results for definite non-specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))
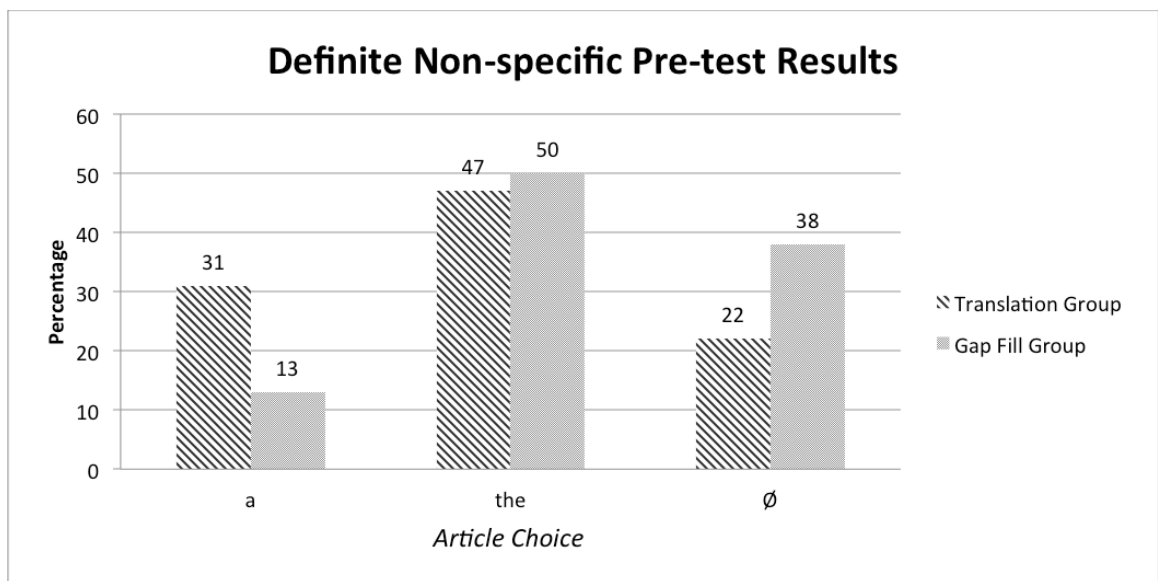
Figure 3 Pilot study post-test results for definite specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))

Definite Specific Post-test Results
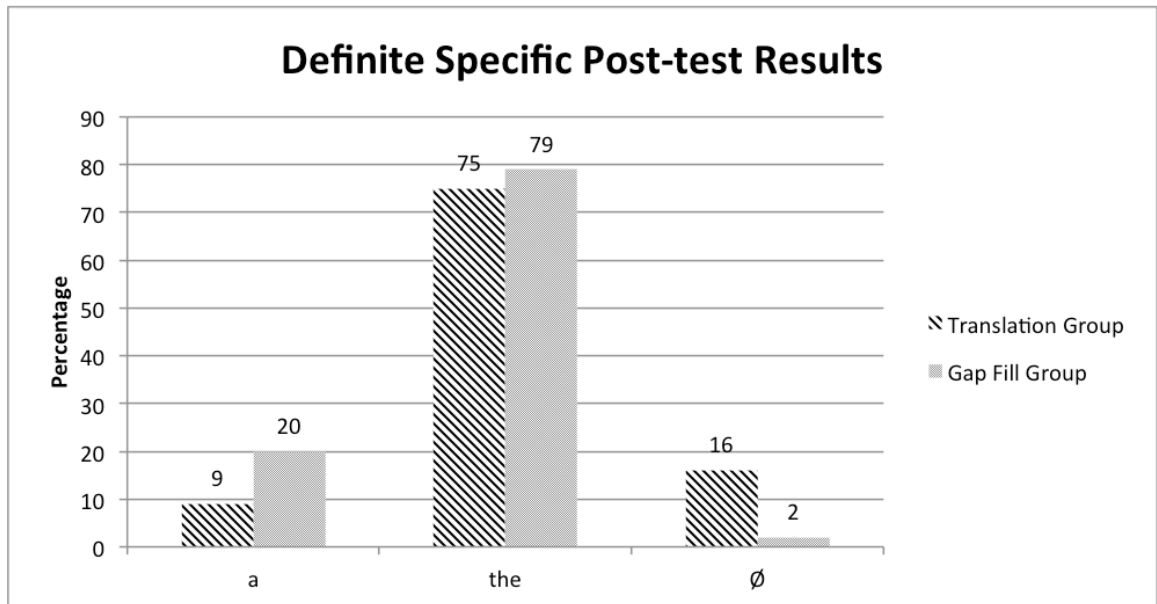
Figure 4 Pilot study post-test results for definite non-specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))

Definite Non-specific Post-test Results
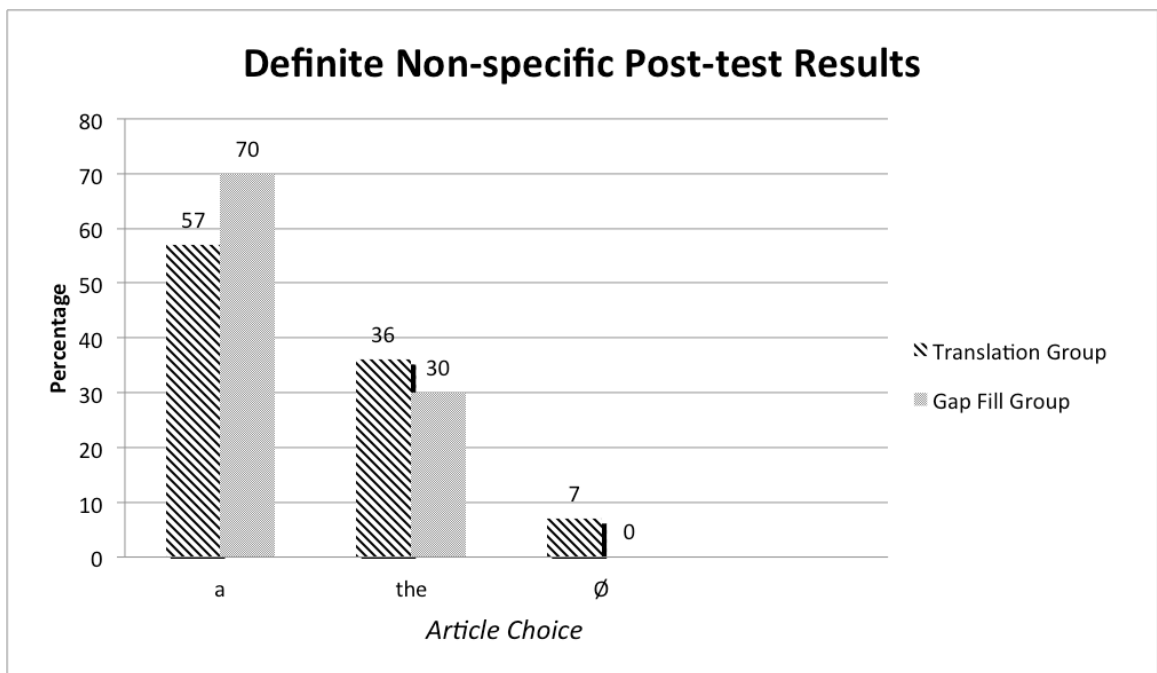
The pre-test in figure 1 showed that participants in both groups used 'the' correctly with definite specific contexts, but less correctly with definite non-specific contexts (figure 2) as sometimes they made incorrect choices of 'a/an' and 'null'. This suggests that learners were sensitive to specificity prior to the intervention. On the post-test as compared to the pre-test, learners showed more accuracy in using 'the' in specific contexts but less accuracy in non-specific contexts. This result suggests that learners might be at a stage where they are trying to differentiate between the two meaning concepts (definiteness and specificity) after instruction. In other words, the decrease in learners' performance in non-specific contexts at the post-test could be due to the article instruction, which drew participants' attention to the notions of definiteness and specificity and might have led them to overgeneralize the rules they had just learned.

Indefinite contexts in the tests demonstrated that 'a/an' was used correctly in indefinite contexts around half of the time in the pre-test, as shown in figures 5 and 6. In the post-test, on the other hand, learners showed improved performance in both indefinite specific and indefinite non-specific contexts, which suggests that learners benefited from instruction. To put it more simply, what figures 5 & 6 show is that with indefiniteness, learners' performance was inaccurate in the pre-test. That is, there was no variation between the percentages of responses assigned to 'a/an', 'the' and 'null'. Figures 7& 8 indicate a more target-like response in the post-test from both groups especially with the indefinite non-specific context.

Figure 5 Pilot study pre-test results for indefinite specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))
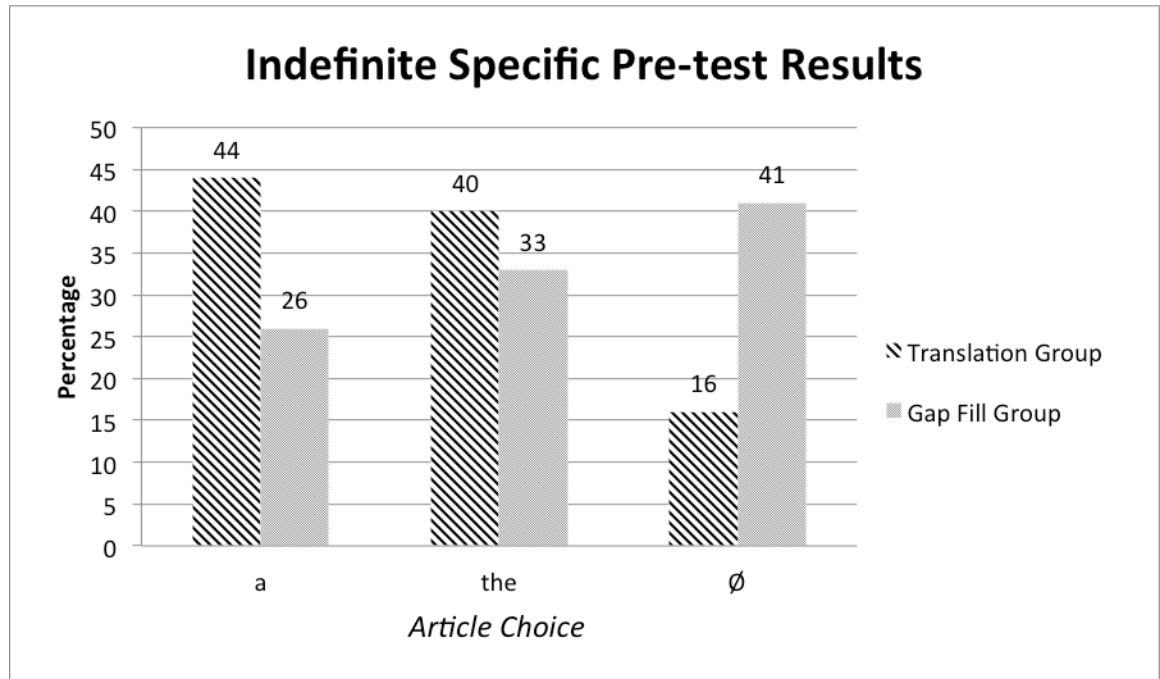
Figure 6 Pilot study pre-test results for indefinite non-specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))
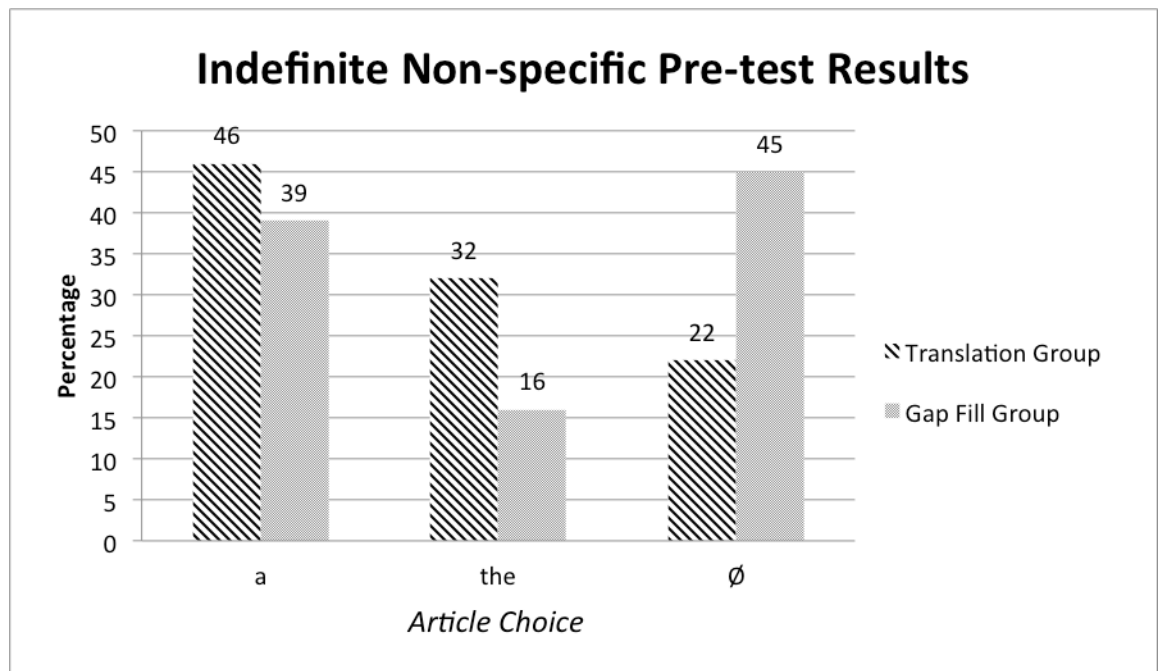
Figure 7 Pilot study post-test results for indefinite specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))

Indefinite Specific Post-test Results

Article Choice	Translation Group	Gap Fill Group
a	57	52
the	39	48
∅	4	0
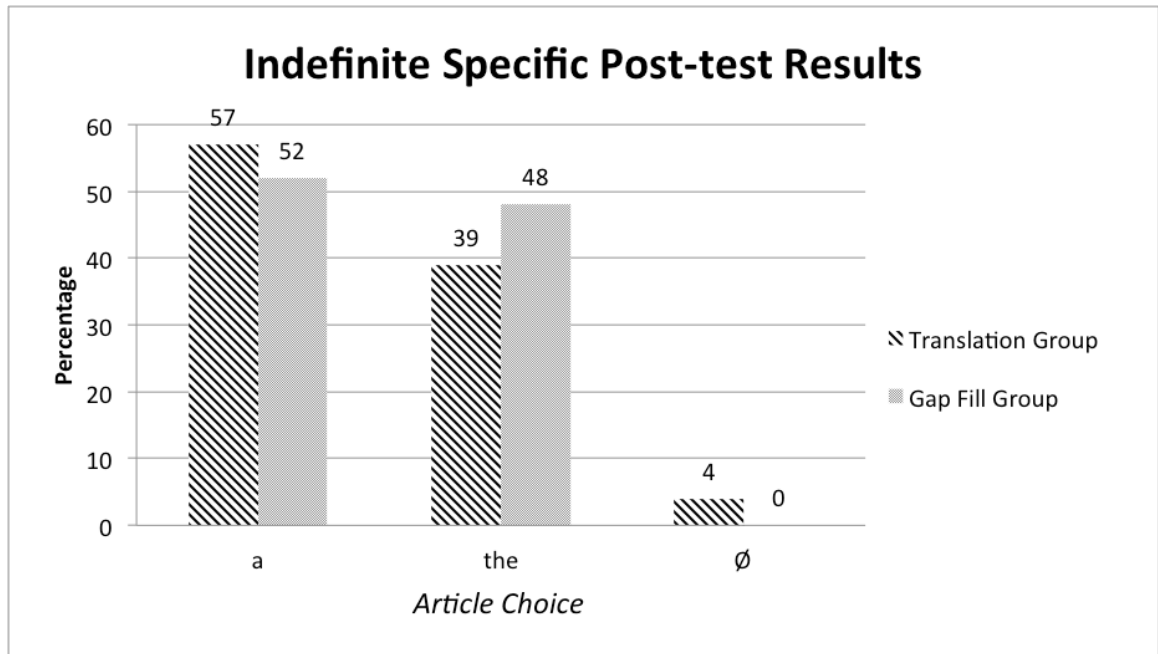
Figure 8 Pilot study post-test results for indefinite non-specific contexts (Translation (n=4) and Gap Fill (n=4))

Indefinite Non-specific Post-test Results

Article Choice	Translation Group	Gap Fill Group
a	57	70
the	36	30
∅	7	0
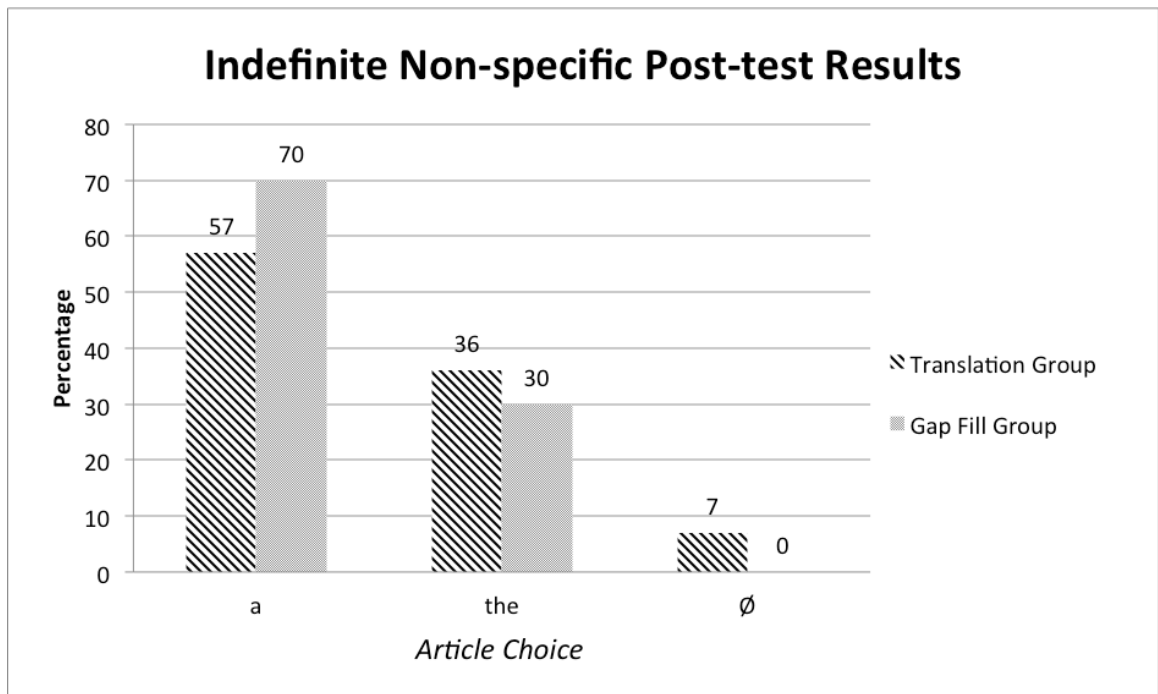
To summarize, both groups achieved increased accuracy with the definite specific contexts on the post-test. On the other hand, both groups showed much less accuracy with the definite non-specific context on the post-test. In addition, a positive effect of instruction in indefinite structures is seen in the post-test. The Translation Group and the Gap Fill Group increased accuracy in their choice of 'a/an' in indefinite specific and indefinite non-specific contexts.

Since both groups were exposed to explicit instruction in the form of metalinguistic explanation of article meaning, it was concluded that the two groups benefited from article instruction in definiteness and specificity regardless of the activity type. Explicit instruction had a positive effect on all the contexts tested here except for the definite non-specific context.

5.2.5.2 Results of the Acceptability Judgment Task

The results of the Acceptability Judgment Task showed what sentence types learners judged as acceptable and what sentence types were judged as unacceptable for the two test categories of generic contexts (Noun-phrase Generics and Sentence-level Generics). For each type, learners had to judge 5 sentence types: bare singular, bare plural, definite singular, definite plural and indefinite singular. The results of the Acceptability Judgment Task are divided into acceptable (3 or 4) and unacceptable choices (1 or 2) and the results of the Translation Group are shown in figures 9, 10, 11 &12 below. For each of the five sentence types given in the task, the percentage of participants' correct and incorrect choices are given.

Figure 9 Pilot study pre-test results for Noun-phrase Generics (Translation Group (n=4))
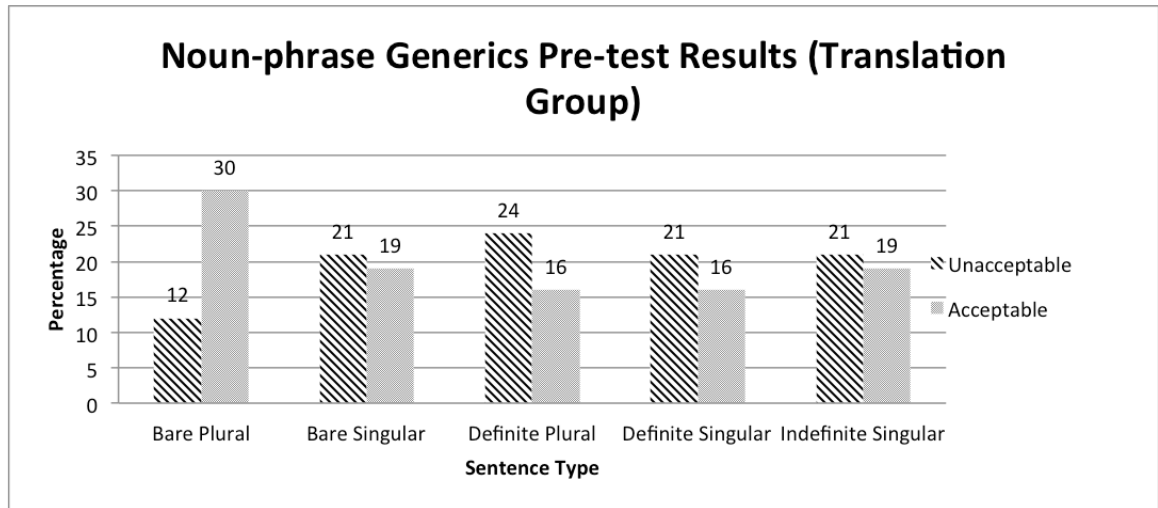
Figure 10 Pilot study post-test results for Noun-phrase Generics (Translation Group (n=4))
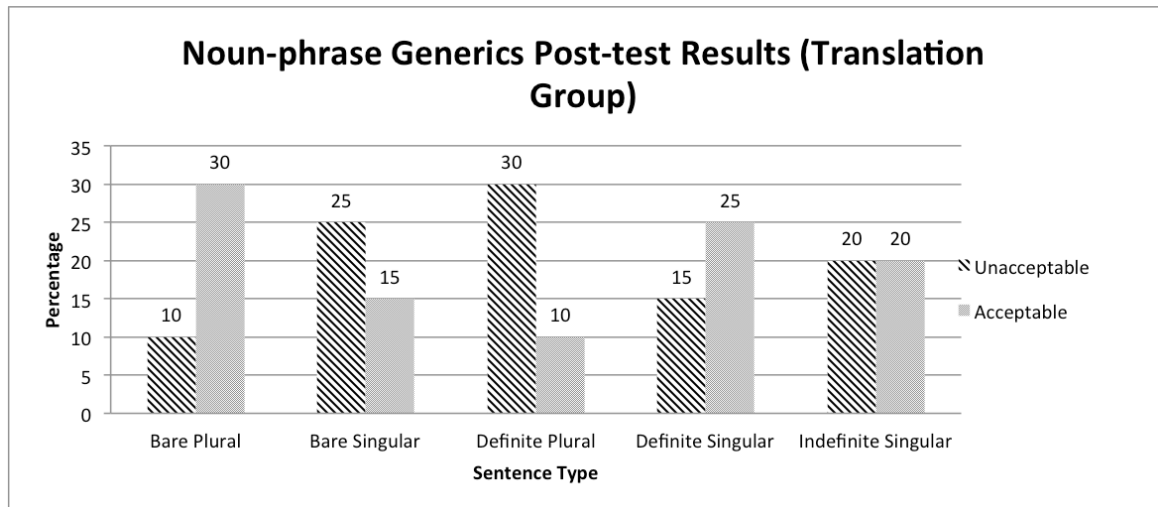
Figure 11 Pilot study pre-test results for Sentence-level Generics (Translation Group (n=4))
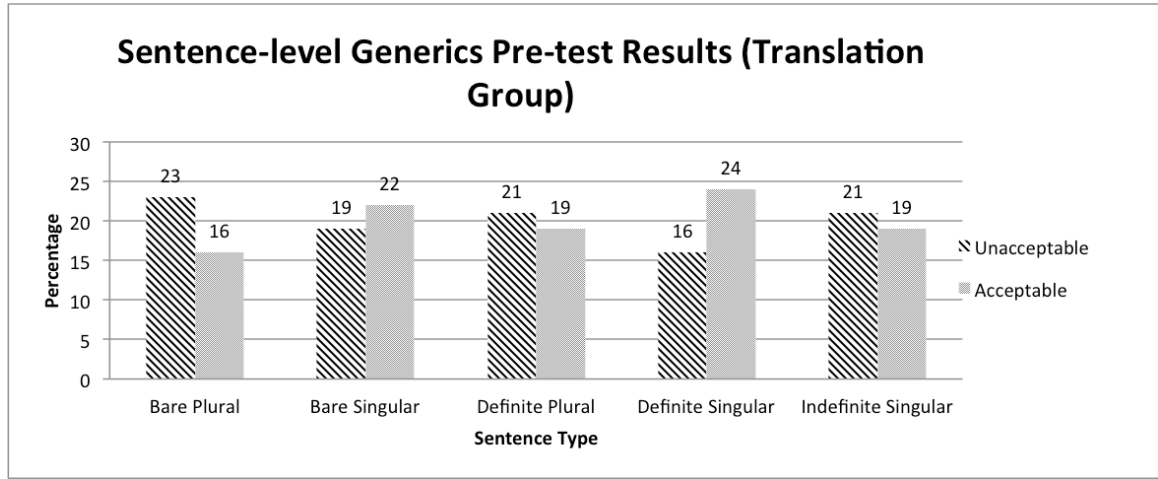
Figure 12 Pilot study post-test results for Sentence-level Generics (Translation Group (n=4))
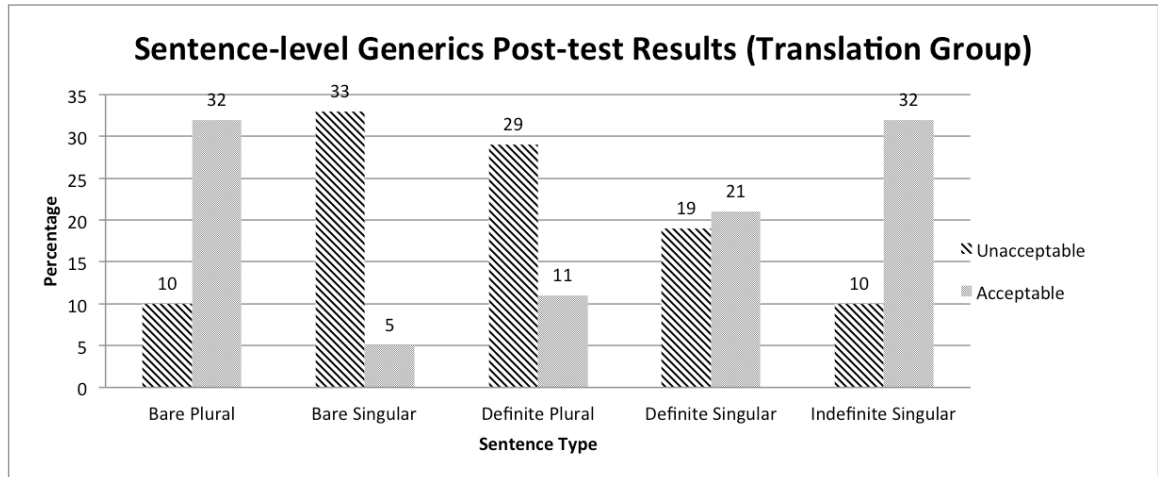
In NPG contexts, the target response would normally be definite singular and bare plural, but indefinite singulars are incompatible with a generic reading here. The results of the NPG showed that the Translation Group considered bare plural as the most acceptable continuation of the story in both the pre-test and the post-test, although there is no variation between the percentages of responses that makes this a clear trend. The participants' performance suggested more acceptability of definite singulars in the post-

test (from 16% in the pre-test to 25% in the post-test), but this cannot signal some advantage from instruction as the percentage difference is very small to determine a clear trend.

With SLG, indefinite singular and bare plural are the target sentence types in this context. The results from the generic statements category demonstrated that the Translation Group expressed non-target like choice of definite singulars in the pre-test. In the post-test, however, the same group showed target-like responses for both bare plurals and indefinite singulars (figure 12), which suggests some positive effect of article instruction on learners' accuracy in generic statements. The variation between the percentages of responses is not clearly found in this test category either.

Turning to the results of the Gap Fill Group for comparison, the results in figures 13 & 14 showed that learners in this group overaccepted indefinite singulars in the NPG pre-test. The post-test showed better performance in choosing bare plurals over indefinite singulars as the most acceptable sentence type in this context. For sentence-level generics, the results in figure 15 show that the Gap Fill Group exhibited non-target-like rating of definite singulars as the most acceptable in the pre-test. In the post-test, however, this group achieved more accuracy in rating bare plurals as the most acceptable among the other sentence types. The Gap Fill Group also showed more acceptability for indefinite singulars in the post-test.

Figure 13 Pilot study pre-test results for Noun-phrase Generics (Gap Fill Group (n=4))
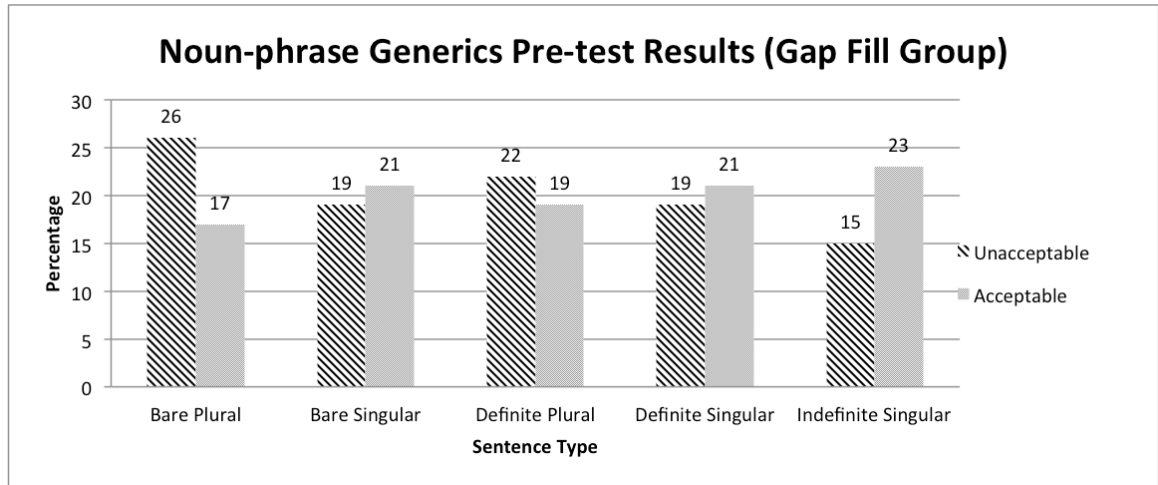
Figure 14 Pilot study post-test results for Noun-phrase Generics (Gap Fill Group (n=4))
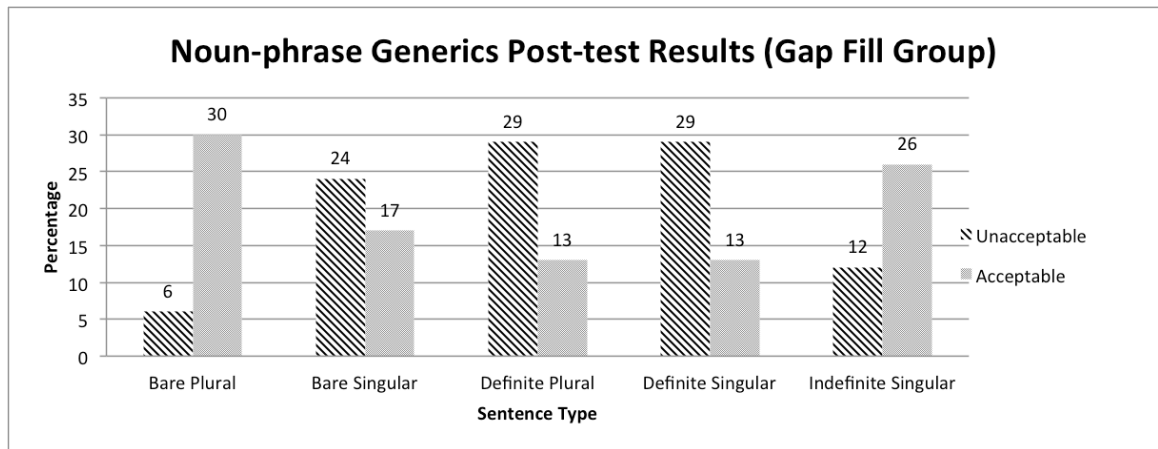
Figure 15 Pilot study pre-test results for Sentence-level Generics (Gap Fill Group (n=4))

Sentence-level Generics Pre-test Results (Gap Fill Group)

A bar chart titled "Sentence-level Generics Pre-test Results (Gap Fill Group)." The y-axis is labeled "Percentage" ranging from 0 to 30. The x-axis is labeled "Sentence Type" with categories Bare Plural, Bare Singular, Definite Plural, Definite Singular, and Indefinite Singular. Legend: Unacceptable, Acceptable.

- Bare Plural: Unacceptable 19, Acceptable 21
- Bare Singular: Unacceptable 26, Acceptable 17
- Definite Plural: Unacceptable 19, Acceptable 21
- Definite Singular: Unacceptable 15, Acceptable 23
- Indefinite Singular: Unacceptable 22, Acceptable 19

Figure 16 Pilot study post-test results for Sentence-level Generics (Gap Fill Group (n=4))

Sentence-level Generics Post-test Results (Gap Fill Group)

A bar chart titled "Sentence-level Generics Post-test Results (Gap Fill Group)." The y-axis is labeled "Percentage" ranging from 0 to 50. The x-axis is labeled "Sentence Type" with categories Bare Plural, Bare Singular, Definite Plural, Definite Singular, and Indefinite Singular. Legend: Unacceptable, Acceptable.

- Bare Plural: Unacceptable 6, Acceptable 32
- Bare Singular: Unacceptable 22, Acceptable 18
- Definite Plural: Unacceptable 44, Acceptable 0
- Definite Singular: Unacceptable 11, Acceptable 27
- Indefinite Singular: Unacceptable 17, Acceptable 23

To summarize, both groups showed limited improvement in the post-test with both types of generic contexts as indicated by the percentage increase of the target sentence types. However, the variation between percentages of the responses was not high enough to determine a conclusive numerical trend and therefore the effect of instruction on learners' interpretation accuracy with generic structures cannot be seen as clearly as its effect on the non-generic contexts.

5.2.6 Discussion

The results of the pilot study suggested that both groups of learners were sensitive to the specificity effect prior to intervention as observed in their article choice with [+definite, −specific] and with [−definite, +specific] compared to the other two non-generic contexts where definiteness and specificity match. The results, additionally, suggested that both groups performed better on the post-test than on the pre-test in the Forced Choice Elicitation Task (non-generic article use). This indicated that regardless of the type of activities involved, explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity is of benefit to L2 learners. This is in line with studies that acknowledged the role of instruction on the development of linguistic structures and that established evidence from an empirical basis, as seen in White (1991); VanPatten and Cadierno (1993); and Yusa et al. (2011) among others. Bearing in mind the small number of participants involved in this pilot, the results here cannot be generalizable, but they encouraged conducting the main experiment.

The results from the Acceptability Judgment Task, on the other hand, showed a slightly higher acceptability of bare plurals (a target sentence type) and indefinite singulars (non-target sentence type) for the NPG context than of the other sentence types. They also showed a higher acceptability of the indefinite singulars (target sentence type), definite singulars (non-target sentence type) and bare plurals (target sentence type) for SLG contexts than of the other sentence types from both groups. However, these percentages are not found to be high enough to see a clear numerical trend, to determine whether learners differentiate between the two genericity types and to detect an L1 transfer effect in generic contexts. Consequently, the effect of explicit instruction on generic interpretation was not as clear as its effect on non-generic article use.

The pilot results of the post-test further revealed that the Translation Group performed similar to the Gap-fill Group, which might suggest that translation activities can be as effective as the gap fill activities. The Translation Group was slightly superior with indefinite non-specific contexts and with NPG. The Gap Fill group performed slightly better than the Translation Group in definite non-specific contexts.

To conclude, article instruction had some positive effects on non-generic article use, but it did not clearly show the same effect on genericity. This could be, according to Snape and Yusa (2013), because "genericity is too complex to reasonably teach in a short period of time" (p. 178). These results necessitated much more thorough investigation of article instruction in definiteness, specificity and genericity; the main experiment therefore adapted accordingly.

5.2.7 Limitations

As expected in pilot studies, problematic situations arose while trying to collect these data. One of the problems was that students in the same English language module did not belong to the same language level. This is because the system in the English Language Institute in King Abdulaziz University, which is where my data are drawn from, allows all students who pass a language course to move to the next level regardless of their actual language ability. To overcome this issue in the pilot study, learners' scores in the previous English module were checked, and students who scored a 75 or above were included while the rest of the students were excluded from my study. This solution was not ideal, but since there was no time to make participants take a standardized language proficiency test, that was the only option left. For the main experiment, the Oxford Quick Proficiency Test was used to determine participants' actual language level.

Another problematic situation in the pilot study was that during the time of data collection, participants were lost because of their inability to commit to all the experimental sessions. To interpret the results of the pilot study correctly, only those who attended all of the sessions were included. These two challenging situations resulted in a total of 8 participants out of the 37 present upon the start of the study. Therefore, a plan for recruiting more participants was implemented for the main experiment.

Some of the test items in the Forced Choice Elicitation Task also created a minor problem. In this task, there were question items that were excluded from analysis. These

questions included the word 'certain' after the article. While the correct choice was 'a', almost all students chose 'the' whenever the word 'certain' was presented in the context. It was concluded that the students' choice was apparently based on the lexical meaning of the word 'certain', which seems to be associated with definiteness for most students. These problematic lexical items were replaced in the test version of the main study. Details about the semantics of 'certain' and its consequence on article choice are fully discussed in Ionin (2003).

Another significant limitation was that participants did not take a delayed post-test, which is necessary to assess the role of instruction in the long term. The importance of delayed post-tests is that they provide evidence for the robustness of grammar restructuring which might be caused by instruction. In relation to this, Ellis (1994a) proposed that instruction might lead to improved linguistic accuracy even though learners may not respond immediately to what they have been instructed in. Consequently, a delayed post-test was included in the main experiment to shed some light on this issue.

Following Källkvist (2004), the task versions used in the pre-test and in the post-test in the pilot study were the same. The reason behind using the same test for both the pre-test and the post-test was to ensure that the level of vocabulary and participants' familiarity with it did not affect the interpretation of results. However, it was later decided that it might be better to alter vocabulary of the tasks and thus to have a different version for each time point to exclude the rote learning possibility. Additionally, the order of the test items was different in all three versions of the tasks. Consequently, learners at each time point (pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed-post-test) in the main experiment were given a different version of the tasks by altering vocabulary and the order of the test items.

Lastly, a drawback in the pilot study design was its grouping. Having only two groups did not contrast the variables (translation vs. gap fill and explicit instruction vs. implicit instruction) in a proper experimental way. The study, furthermore, did not include a native English speaker group, which is necessary to establish a language norm as a point of comparison. Therefore, the main experiment included four experimental groups (Translation Explicit, Translation Implicit, Gap Fill Explicit and Gap Fill Implicit) and a Native Control Group. The rationale for the main experiment grouping was to ensure that any conclusions made on the effect of activity types were not confused with conclusions on the effect of instruction types. The details of the main experiment methodology are given in the next section.

To summarise, the limitations of the pilot study design contributed to the design of the main study in three different ways. First, it was important to include a standardized language proficiency test in the main experiment to get a more accurate measure of learners' language level. Second, participants did not take a delayed post-test in the pilot study because of time constraints. However, a delayed post-test was added in the main experiment, as delayed testing is essential in determining the effect of the intervention in the long-term. Finally, the pilot study included two experimental groups of L2 participants whereas more experimental groups were required in the main experiment to compare the effect of the two instruction types (explicit vs. implicit) and the effect of the two types of activities (translation vs. gap-fill).

5.3 The main experiment

The study explored the acquisition of the English article system by Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners. It also explored experimentally the effect of explicit instruction and translation activities on the development of article structures that are predicted by IKW (2004) to be contexts where L2 learners often commit substitution errors and on the development of article structures where L1 transfer is predicted. To test the predictions of IKW (2004), contexts where the features of definiteness and specificity are involved were chosen; these contexts are [+definite, +specific], [+definite, −specific], [−definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific]. As mentioned

earlier in this chapter, the choice of structures of article use/interpretation was based on IKW's (2004) predictions of article choice and Ionin et al.'s (2011) assumptions of article interpretation in generic contexts. The choice of these contexts was further supported by the results of the pilot study, which went in line with the findings of previous research as discussed in chapter 2. To test the assumptions of L1 transfer and Slabakova's (2008) proposal of semantic principles, the study tested learners' article use and interpretation with NPG and SLG. This section discusses the research methodology utilized in the main experiment based on the outcome of the pilot study.

5.3.1 Research questions

The pilot study research hypotheses (reported in section 5.2.1) were revised and expanded to account for the state of Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners' article use/interpretation in generic and non-generic contexts and the effect that explicit instruction and translation activities, if any, have on learners' article accuracy. Participants' L1 (Hejazi Arabic) is a language that encodes articles on the basis of definiteness, which is like English, but differs from English in having no indefinite article. As such, it is expected that learners find difficulty mapping the English indefinite form (a/an) to the correct meaning feature (indefiniteness) since there is no equivalent to 'a/an' in their L1. However, if they were successful in supplying 'a/an' in [−definite, −specific] and less successful in [−definite, +specific], then this could signal a specificity effect rather than an L1 transfer effect. Since IWK (2004) predictions were mainly based on ACP in terms of encoding articles on the basis of definiteness and specific regardless of any particular characteristics related to languages (such as having no indefinite article), my hypotheses followed accordingly. That is, the research hypotheses followed IKW's predictions regarding article choice in non-generic contexts assuming no particular effect for the lack of an indefinite article in Arabic on learners' article choice. In respect to Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners' generic article use/interpretation, it is expected that they will be more successful with 'definite singular generics' than the other two English generic structures (bare plurals and indefinite singulars) since the former exist in their L1 whereas the latter do not. Additionally, it is expected (by assuming access to semantic principles) that Hejazi learners will be able to

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exhibit some sensitivity to the generic distinction even though it does not morphologically and semantically exist in their L1. In other words, it is expected that their ratings of 'indefinite singulars' might be higher in the SLG than in the NPG even if these ratings were not entirely target-like. Similarly, learners' ratings of bare plurals are expected to be the similar in both generic contexts even if they are not target-like. Additionally, learners' ratings of 'definite singulars' are expected to be higher in NPG than SLG signalling sensitivity to the generic distinction, but not necessarily target-like. Lastly, it is predicted that L1 transfer effect will play a role on learners' generic interpretation and generic article use. This will be seen as overacceptance/overuse of 'definite singulars' in SLG contexts, which is non-target-like, and overacceptance/ overuse of 'definite plurals' in both generic contexts, which is again a non-target-like performance.

The research hypotheses are framed in terms of IKW's account (the Article Choice Parameter and the Fluctuation Hypothesis), Slabakova's (2008) semantic principles, which fall under Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer/ Full Access Hypothesis and acknowledge the role of L1 transfer effect in learners' article development. The two main research questions and their subsequent hypotheses are given below. It is possible that all specific hypotheses can be found true.

RQ1. The **Non-generic** context: Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English show target-like use of English articles in non-generic contexts before and/or after exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity, and exposure to translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts?

H 1: In accordance with IKW's (2004) article semantic account:
A) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are expected to show target-like use of articles in [+definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific] before exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity and translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts.

B) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are expected to show non-target-like use of articles in [+definite, −specific] and in [−definite, +specific] contexts before exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity and translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts.

H 2: If Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are not target-like in [+definite, −specific] and/or [−definite, +specific] at the pre-test stage, then learners who received explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity will achieve better accuracy when using articles in these contexts after the intervention than those who received implicit instruction and learners who received translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts will achieve better accuracy when using articles in these contexts than those who received gap fill activities.

H 3. Explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity will result in long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

H 4: Translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts will result in long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

RQ2. The **Generic** context: Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English show target-like use/interpretation of English articles in generic contexts before and/ or after exposure to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and exposure to translation activities that target article use in generic contexts?

H 1: In accordance with Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer / Full Access Hypothesis:
A) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'definite singulars' equally high in Noun-phrase Generic and Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

B) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'definite plurals' equally high in Noun-phrase Generic and Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

H 2: By assuming access to semantic principles proposed by Slabakova (2008):

A) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'indefinite singulars' and 'bare plurals' higher than other sentence types in Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

B) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'bare plurals' higher than other sentence types in Noun-phrase Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

H 3: Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English who received explicit instruction in genericity distinction, as compared to learners who received implicit instruction, will show better accuracy in contexts where their ratings of target generic sentence types significantly differed from the ratings of native speakers prior to the intervention and will show long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

H 4: Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English who received translation activities that target article use in generic contexts, as compared to learners who received gap fill activities, will show better accuracy in contexts where their ratings of target generic sentence types significantly differed from the ratings of native speakers prior to the intervention and will show long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

5.3.2 Participants

The study started with 126 female undergraduates who were studying at the Department of European Languages and Literature of King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia at the time of the experiment. However, some participants could not attend all 13 sessions of the experiment and therefore dropped out after missing several sessions. Only 74 completed the whole experiment. Additionally, 7 participants (of the 74) were found by the language proficiency measure to belong to either an advanced or a very advanced English language level. These learners were excluded because they constituted two very small groups (3, 4 learners respectively), which might not be representative as a sample size and because the study aimed for intermediate-level learners. Based on this exclusion of absentees and advanced-level learners, the total number of the participants was 67. All participants' native language is Hejazi Arabic. Most students at King Abdulaziz University usually study English as a foreign language for at least 6 years before joining the university.

After conducting the classroom experiment, the 67 participants were divided into two groups according to the results of the Oxford Language Proficiency Test for the purpose of analysis. The first group included 54 participants who belong to upper and lower intermediate language levels (i.e. scored between 30-47 out of 60). The decision to combine upper and lower intermediate learners was to have a larger sample size especially since the lower intermediate group's performance did not differ significantly from the upper intermediate group's performance by using means of inferential statistics. Both groups were compared in each context and all the *p* values were greater than .05. The second group included 13 low proficiency learners (i.e. an elementary level (scored between 18-29 out of 60) in Oxford's proficiency measure). The big difference in the number of participants in the two groups is attributed to the fact the researcher had to work with the volunteers available. Consequently, it was difficult to predict the language level of participants before the experiment actually took place.

The participants completed a language background questionnaire in addition to the experimental tasks (to be reported in the next section). The participants reported in the

background questionnaire that they had never spent any long period of time in an English speaking country and that they mainly use English in the language classroom or in social media sites. Recruitment was achieved through the head of their academic department. Table **4** below shows details of the L2 learners that were obtained by the language background questionnaire and the Oxford Quick Proficiency Test.

Table 4 Participants language level and language background information

Number of Participants	Language level	Number of years English has been studied (at the time of the study)	Age
13	Elementary	M=6.77	M=23.38
18	Upper Intermediate	M=9.06	M=22
36	Lower Intermediate	M=8.67	M=22.67

In addition to the Hejazi Arabic learners, a group of 23 native English speakers took the same experimental tests that were administered to the L2 learners. The experiment's total number of participants, including the Native Control Group, was 90. The native speakers were mostly students at Leeds University and were recruited by word of mouth. The Native Control Group's mean age is (M=20.43), which is close to the L2 participants' mean ages reported in Table 4. The native speakers' performance acted as a comparison key in deciding if L2 learners' responses were acceptable in each target structure test item.

5.3.3 Measures

For the main experiment, the choice of the pilot study tests was revised and only the Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) was kept in the experiment. The Forced Choice Elicitation Task (adapted from IKW, 2004) was substituted with an Article Elicitation Task (AET) (adapted from Ionin et al., 2009). The reasons for this task substitution are given in section 5.3.3.2. An Elicited Written Production Task (EWPT) was also included in the main experiment. What motivated the decision to add a writing task in the experiment was the desire to include a measure of implicit knowledge (see section

5.3.3.1). Both newly used tasks (the article elicitation and the writing tasks) were piloted to check their suitability for learners' levels prior to actual experimenting, but no report of this pilot will be given because it was conducted on a very small scale (n=4).

 The participants were given a pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test that each included three tasks (EWPT, AET and AJT). In addition to these tests, participants answered a language background questionnaire and a language proficiency test as indicated above. The tasks were administered in the following order: the Elicited Written Production Task, the Acceptability Judgment Task and the Article Elicitation Task. The EWPT was designed by the researcher to suit the research objectives.

The Oxford Language Proficiency Test is a standard test of L2 proficiency consisting of 60 questions that are mostly multiple choice and gap fill questions. The test comes with a standardized scale that places L2 learners as beginner, elementary, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced or very advanced. The test was used to determine the language level of participants since the experiment was designed for intermediate and proficiency learners. This decision was based on IKW's (2004) findings, in which they reported that advanced learners are more accurate with article use than intermediate-level learners. For this reason, lower and upper intermediate proficiency learners were good candidates for the experiment and for the assessment of the effect of instruction and translation on their use/interpretation of the English article system. A description of each measure is given in this section. However, the AJT will not be described here as a complete description of it was provided in section 5.2.4.2 above.

5.3.3.1 The Elicited Written Production Task (EWPT)

The EWPT was prepared to elicit learners' production of articles in a relatively uncontrolled way compared with the other two tasks (the AET and AJT). This writing test included six questions that asked participants to write a short paragraph describing certain situations/events or objects in their lives. Each question was designed to elicit one of the target structures (reported in 5.3), but it was expected that learners' writing would include all other structures of article use since this is a free written task. In fact,

one of the drawbacks of such writing tasks is that no control can be exercised over the types of structures in learners' production. Consequently, pictures and word prompts were added to increase the occurrence of target structures in each context type. That is, the inclusion of pictures and word prompts was to push learners to produce the required answers. In addition, learners are expected to avoid using the elicited structures if they are not confident in their use. Therefore, it is not always the case that learners respond to test questions in the desired way. However, in this case, a considerable number of participants resorted to using the target structures in their writing since the task was directing them towards such use; this was further observed when the task was piloted. The EWPT questions are provided in appendix B3.

The decision to include a written task in the main experiment, in spite of the fact that the pilot study did not utilize one, was made in an effort to have a measure of article choice that was less explicit in nature than the other two tasks. Writing tasks are classified according to Ellis's (2005b) criteria as tests of implicit knowledge because, by nature, they focus on meaning rather than form. Ionin et al. (2009), furthermore, supported Ellis's opinion and mentioned that her writing task clearly taps into the implicit knowledge of articles. Even though L2 learners can monitor their writing, they are not expected to monitor it for specificity and genericity, which makes the writing task a measure of the implicit knowledge of these semantic notions. Another reason why a writing task was included is that the article system is suitable for this kind of open-ended task because the three forms of articles (the, a & an) occur very often. According to Master (1987), "…*a* and *the* constitute two of the ten most frequently used words in the English language and it is hard to find a spoken or written sentence that does not contain at least one of the three articles" (p. 2).

5.3.3.2 The Article Elicitation Task (AET)

The AET was adapted from Ionin, Zubizarreta and Philippov (2009) and is modelled after the Forced Choice Elicitation Task of IKW (2004) that was used in the pilot study. Ionin et al. (2009) created two important changes in this version. First, whereas the 2004 Forced Choice Elicitation Task asks participants explicitly to choose *a*, *the* or null,

the task involved here asks participants to provide the missing word that is most appropriate according to the context or to use a dash if no word is required. Participants taking the AET are very unlikely to discover that the aim of the task is to test articles unlike participants who take the Forced Choice Elicitation Task, which mentions article choices right in the beginning of the task instruction page. Second, the test includes fillers that test structures other than articles, unlike the previous test, in which articles are the only linguistic items tested. These changes were made to make the task less explicit in nature. The fillers test function words like pronouns, auxiliaries and prepositions, but not articles. These fillers show (besides distracting learners from the aim of the task) if learners are competent enough in English to understand the dialogues of the target items. Thus, following Ionin et al. (2009), those who scored 16 out of 24 were included in the study. All 67 participants' fillers scores were found to match this criterion.

The AET used in this study included 48 short dialogues that targeted the use of articles with singular count nouns. These 48 dialogues included 24 target items which cover definiteness and specificity in various combinations (i.e. [+ definite, +specific], [+definite, − specific], [−definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific]) with 6 test items for each context and 24 fillers. Examples of the target items are presented in (63), (64), (65) and (66) below. For the full set of the task, refer to appendix B4.

(63) **[+definite, +specific]**
<u>At a bookstore</u>
Chris: Well, I've bought everything that I wanted. Are you ready to go?
Mike: Almost. Can you please wait a few minutes? I want to talk to _____ owner of this bookstore – she is a very nice lady, and I always say hi to her.

(64) **[+definite, −specific]**
<u>After a girls' soccer game at school</u>
Child: Excuse me! Can you please let me in?
Coach: What do you need?

Child: I am a reporter for my school newspaper! I need to talk to _____ winner of this game – I don't know who she is, so can you please help me?

(65) **[−definite, +specific]**

<u>Father comes home</u>

Father: Thank you for taking care of Karen. How did you spend the day?

Baby-sitter: Well, we went to a park. Karen played in the sandbox for a while. And then she met _____ beautiful friendly boy – he was very well behaved, and Karen played with him for almost an hour.

(66) **[−definite, −specific]**

<u>After school</u>

Father: Do you have any homework?

Child: Yes, I need to write a book report.

Father: So what will you read?

Child: Hmm… I don't know yet. But I like to read about things that move – cars, trains… I know! I would like to read _____ book about airplanes! I'll go to the library tomorrow!

5.3.4 Ethical issues

All the ethical practice guidelines involved with conducting this research were carefully checked. First, the approved protocol obtained from the University of Leeds Research Ethics Committee, UK was followed. Second, the permission of the head of King Abdulaziz University's European Languages and Literature Department was obtained. Finally, the project's consent forms and information sheets were delivered to participants. Participants recruited went on to give their consent and to take part in the study. The researcher collected the consent forms by hand after the papers were signed by the participants. The ethical approval letter is given in appendix A1 and the research information sheet and the consent form are each given in appendix A2 & A3 respectively.

5.3.5 Procedure

The study followed a traditional classroom experimental design similar to that of the pilot study. Besides conducting a pre-test and an immediate post-test, a delayed post-test was also administered a month after the intervention period ended. The tasks were given to learners in two sessions in the following order: the EWPT (30 minutes), the AJT (40 minutes), the AET (30 minutes) and finally the Oxford Quick Proficiency Test (30 minutes). In addition, all participants were asked to answer a language background questionnaire before taking the pre-test tasks as indicated previously. The rationale behind this order was to start with implicit measures of article use before moving to explicit ones. As a consequence, the Oxford Quick Proficiency Test was administered after all other tasks because, per its nature, this test puts a great deal of emphasis on grammatical rules and forces learners to think of explicit strategies.

The intervention period lasted for three weeks. All the experimental sessions took place during the students' class time as was arranged with their teachers except for the post-tests. A lecture theatre was booked to administer both post-tests outside participants' class times. The 67 participants were registered in 8 different academic courses of the Department of European Languages and Literature bachelor degree's requirement curriculum. Pairs of classes were combined to form one experimental group (based on the number of students registered in the course). From the eight sections, four experimental groups were created. These groups are the Translation Explicit Group, the Translation Implicit Group, the Gap-fill Explicit Group and the Gap-fill Implicit Group[10]. One week after administering the pre-test and the language proficiency test, students were randomly assigned into these four experimental groups. The purpose of this grouping variable was to investigate the effectiveness of each intervention type and to see if any of the four intervention methods would lead to greater gains than the standard instruction in article use often provided in language textbooks.

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[10] Note that this study did not have a control group (no instruction group), unlike many intervention studies in SLA. The lack of a control group was due to the complexity of the design and the number of participants in the study. It was difficult to spread this number of participants around five groups, as this would have created groups of a very small number of participants. The small sample size might have affected the analysis and any results obtained from inferential statistics measures. Support for this decision was found in Laufer and Girsai (2008), in which no control group was included in their experimental design.

According to the results of the Oxford Quick Proficiency test, each group was comprised mainly of lower and upper intermediate learners. However, each group also contained a minority of students who either belonged to an advanced or an elementary language level. Advanced and very advanced learners were excluded from analysis after the experiment ended because they formed a very small group that cannot be representative and because this level was not targeted when the experiment was designed. It should be noted here that while each experimental group, created by combining students of two courses, started with roughly the same number of participants as indicated above, the total number of participants in each group became different as some learners started to drop out of sessions. As a result, the Translation Explicit Group ended with having more participants than the other three groups. The researcher could not control for this factor, as it was difficult to predict if participants would commit to all of the experimental sessions or not. For details of groupings, number of participants in each group and their language level, refer to Table **5** below.

Table 5 Number of participants in each experimental group by language level

Group Type	Elementary	Lower Intermediate	Upper Intermediate	Advanced	Very Advanced	Total
Translation Explicit	3	11	7	2	1	24
Translation Implicit	4	7	2	2	0	15
Gap Fill Explicit	2	9	6	1	0	18
Gap Fill Implicit	4	9	3	1	0	17

Each experimental group received a different lesson that contained different classroom materials. A detailed description of these classroom materials is presented in the following section. The total number of the lessons provided in the intervention course for each of the four experimental groups was six in a period of three weeks (two lessons per week). The duration of each lesson was 60 minutes. The reasoning behind this decision was based on the amount of time given to me by the course teachers as the timing of learners' classes after the arranged three weeks would differ according to the schedule of their mid-term exams and consequently they would not be available to continue participating in this experiment. The first three lessons covered the four

structures that involve definiteness and specificity while the last three sessions focused on the two types of genericity. It should be pointed out that all sentences that were used in each of the lesson's class materials were different from the ones used in the pre-test and the post-tests to exclude the rote learning possibility; this practice was similar to the one done for pilot study.

After the treatment sessions ended, all four groups took an immediate post-test that included the same type of tasks as the pre-test, but which were changed only by altering the lexical items in the task. A month after the immediate post-test, they were given a delayed post-test that also consisted of the same tasks of the pre-test and the immediate post-test, again with altered vocabulary. The timeline in Table 6 shows how the experimental sessions were distributed throughout the experimental period.

Table 6 The experiment timeline

Weeks (March-May 2013)	Session Type	Allocated Time
1 (16-20 March)	Introducing the project+ language background questionnaire+ pre-test+ language proficiency test	Session 1, March 16th (1 hour) Session 2, March 18th 1st (1 hour) Session 3, March 20th (1 hour)
(23-27 March)	Midterm break	
2 (30 March-3April)	Lessons	Lesson 1, March 30th (1 hour) Lesson 2, April 1st (1 hour)
3 (6-10 April)	Lessons	Lesson 3, April 6th (1 hour) Lesson 4, April 8th (1 hour)
4 (13-17April)	Lessons	Lesson 5, April 13th (1 hour) Lesson 6, April 15th (1 hour)
5 (20-24 April)	Immediate Post-test	Session 1, April 20th (1 hour) Session 2, April 22nd (1 hour)
6 (27 April- 1 May)		
7 (4-8 May)		
8 (11-15 May)		
9 (18-22 May)		
10 (25-29 May)	Delayed Post-test	Session 1, May 25th (1 hour) Session 2, May 27th (1 hour)

5.3.6 Classroom intervention materials

This section describes each classroom material that was given to the four experimental groups. These materials included explicit and implicit instruction in article meaning; translation activities and gap fill activities.

The Translation Explicit Group was given translation activities that targeted article use in the four non-generic contexts listed in examples (63), (64), (65) and (66) and in the two generic contexts (examples (61) and (62)). The group was also exposed to explicit instruction in article semantics/meaning (i.e. definiteness, specificity and genericity). The type of explicit instruction was different than the standard instruction in articles often found in language textbooks. The experimental instruction was linguistically informed and used metalinguistic expressions, such as specific, non-specific, generic and non-generic, in order to provide a clear distinction between these meaning notions of articles. The discussion in section 2.9.2 provides a thorough description of the difference between the standard language textbook instruction in article use and the linguistically informed instruction used in this project. This explicit instruction was presented in the form of a PowerPoint presentation that dealt with the semantic properties of articles presented in a simplified way for students to understand and accompanied by examples. Each student in this group was given a translation worksheet and a handout of the explicit instruction presentation (see appendix C5).

The Translation Implicit Group took the same translation activities, but received implicit input on articles in the form of listening to real-life conversations. Each lesson for this group included a translation worksheet with the same sentences as the worksheet given to the Translation Explicit Group, but with no direct focus on translating articles. In other words, learners were asked to translate other elements in the sentences. Additionally, each lesson included listening to two real-life conversations, and each conversation was followed by a series of questions that elicited the use of the target structures in students' answers without explicit reference to articles. No handouts or scripts were given to this group, but the group did receive a translation worksheet.

The Gap Fill Explicit Group, on the other hand, was given gap-fill activities that targeted articles and was exposed to explicit instruction in article meaning (the same type of instruction that the Translation Explicit Group received). The Gap Fill Explicit Group was also given a gap-fill worksheet and the same handouts of the PowerPoint presentation that the Translation Explicit Group saw. The Gap Fill Implicit Group took the same gap-fill activities of the Gap Fill Explicit Group, but the gaps were replacing adjectives or nouns, not articles. This group, in addition, experienced the same implicit input that the Translation Implicit Group experienced; this input was also delivered in the form of real-life conversations. A description of each classroom material is provided in the coming sections.

5.3.6.1 Article explicit instruction

Only the Translation Explicit Group and the Gap Fill Explicit Group were given explicit explanation of the semantic properties of articles. The notions of definiteness, specificity and genericity were presented to learners in simple metalanguage and supported with numerous examples to ensure learners' understanding. To explain definiteness, the PowerPoint slides revolved around the idea of speakers and hearers' shared knowledge. The rule in simple language is that a noun phrase can be definite if both the speaker and the hearer can identify the noun (the referent). In other words, a noun is definite if both the speaker and the hearer can answer the question, "Which one?". Learners were told that if both the speaker and the hearer share such knowledge, then the definite article 'the' is the correct choice. If such shared knowledge does not exist, then the correct article choice is a/an.

Instruction in specificity, on the other hand, revolved particularly around the idea of speaker's knowledge. Learners were presented with a rule that states that a noun is specific when *only* the speaker can answer the question, "Which one?" Instruction in specificity further stressed that article selection is not based on this notion and that the distinction between specific and non-specific is mainly derived from context.

Lastly, the genericity rule distinguished between Noun-phrase Generics and Sentence-level Generics. To achieve a clear distinction, NPG were associated with the idea of 'kind' or 'species' whereas SLG were associated with the idea of 'generalization' that are based on observation. Learners were made aware that NPG statements express facts about kinds or species (e.g. the dinosaur is extinct), whereas SLG are generalizations based on observations of individual characteristics (e.g. dogs bark). Learners were additionally taught that in order for a noun phrase to have a NPG reading, a native-like generic reading would be achieved with either definite singular nouns or bare plural nouns. They were also taught, on the other hand, that SLG are compatible only with indefinite singulars and bare plurals. To support this instruction, many examples were presented to learners for practice during the sessions; these examples were meant to help the learners realize the differences between various article choices. Learners were also given handouts at the end of each session. These handouts are included in Appendix C1.

5.3.6.2 Article implicit instruction

The Translation Implicit Group and the Gap Fill Implicit Group were exposed to an implicit input where article use of the target structures was presented in real-life conversations instead of having a presentation of articles' explicit rules like the other two groups. The conversations were chosen carefully so that every conversation matched the explicit lesson given to the explicit groups. To put it simply, when the Translation Explicit and the Gap Fill Explicit Groups were instructed on definiteness and specificity, the conversations of the implicit groups also included the same structures. The rationale for this was to give learners an input that was rich in article use in its various forms and thus to contrast the two methods of intervention. A total of eleven 11 conversations were used in the experiment. The length of each conversation was around 10 minutes. The researcher prepared a list of questions for each conversation to be addressed to learners after the listening took place. The questions were created to elicit article use in the lesson specified structure. The source of the conversations used in the experiment was an educational website called

BetterAtEnglish.com. The conversations were downloaded as an audio track and as a script file, but learners were not given a copy of the script at the end of the session. See Appendix (C2) for a conversation script sample.

5.3.6.3 The translation activities

Several translation exercises that present communicative and interactive elements were provided by Cook (2010), Gonzalez Davies (2004) and Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) as mentioned in chapter 4. Relative to the acquisition of articles, certain translation exercises were chosen for the main experiment; these activities were the same ones given to learners in the pilot study. The rationale for choosing more than one type of translation activity was to provide learners with more practice and different ways of translating article structures. As stated in the previous section, the Translation Explicit Group and the Translation Implicit Group received the same translation activities. The difference between the two groups' activities relies on two different kinds of exercise instruction. The Translation Explicit Group was instructed to translate the noun phrase and hence to target articles explicitly. Conversely, the Translation Implicit Group was asked to translate complete sentences, so no particular reference to articles was established. The translation activities used in this study are:

Corrected Close Translation (adapted from Cook, 2010)

In this activity, students were asked to produce a literal translation of Arabic sentences in English. They were asked to make the translation as close as possible to the original sentences. In contrast to free translation, this form-focused translation does not allow learners to avoid structures that they might find difficult by replacing them with other structures that could convey the same meaning (Cook, 2010). Therefore, participants were expected in this activity to produce the target structures. That is, learners were obliged to use articles and not pronouns or demonstratives that could have the same meaning as the articles. A sample of this exercise is given in appendix C3.

The Article (adapted from Gonzalez Davies, 2004)

Gonzalez Davies's (2004) original description of this activity states that it is designed for beginner levels and focuses on the definite use of articles particularly. This activity was adapted, but with some modifications to make it serve the purpose of the current study. To clarify, more items were created to show the difference between the two meaning components of articles (i.e. definiteness and specificity). In addition, activity items that focus on the two types of generic structures were added. The exercise followed certain steps. First, the researcher explained in Arabic (learners' L1) how to deal with instances in which generic and non-generic (definite or specific) use of articles arise in the L2. This step was accompanied by a contrastive account of article properties in L1. Second, a reverse dictation was carried out. The researcher dictated Arabic sentences to students, who had to write down the sentences they heard in the L2. These sentences included instances of articles in generic and non-generic contexts. Finally, these sentences were corrected and comments were given to learners. Appendix C3 includes this activity.

Gapped Translation (adapted from Gonzalez Davies, 2004)

In this activity, students were presented with two texts, each exact translations of the other. The text in English had gaps that corresponded to articles' positions where target structures were the focus. Students had to fill in the blanks of the English version in which the noun phrases were gapped. This exercise offered learners the opportunity to observe how article contexts are realized in both languages. Gapped translation examples are provided in appendix C3.

5.3.6.4 The Gap Fill activities

The gap fill groups' activities followed standard language-textbook exercises. These gap fill questions were language-textbook inspired, but the sentences utilized were created to cover the target structures. Activities that were used mainly asked students to

fill in blanks with the appropriate article choice. The Gap Fill Explicit Group and the Gap Fill Implicit Group were given the same exercises, but again the difference between the two groups was mainly a different task instruction. The Gap Fill Explicit Group, for example, was asked to fill in the blanks that directly corresponded to articles whereas the Gap Fill Implicit Group was instructed to fill in the blanks that corresponded to adjectives, nouns or other function words in the same activity sentence. One important factor that was deliberately considered is that The Gap Fill activities exactly matched the translation activities in the number of items and in the context types. A sample of these activities is provided in appendix C4.

5.3.7 Scoring procedure

In this section, the scoring criteria of each of the three experimental tasks are explained.

5.3.7.1 The Elicited Written Production Task (EWPT)

Learners' article errors were categorized according to the context of article use. While coding the writing task data, it was straightforward to determine if learners' article production was definite or indefinite. The context that is already set in each question, word prompt and picture helped in deciding whether learners should have used a definite or an indefinite structure. However, it was more challenging to determine if a structure was specific or non-specific, as specificity is related to a speaker's knowledge/intention. To categorize article usage as specific or as non-specific in learners' writing, several factors were checked. First, the verb tense used by the participants was one of the important indications in deciding whether a learner has a particular reference in mind or not. For example, if the question is asking learners to describe something they experienced in the past and learners responded in the past tense while referring to objects/individuals, that would count as 'specific', as in example (67) below. On the other hand, non-specific use was found when some learners responded in the present tense to indicate habitual actions using non-specific nouns, as shown in the contexts they give; see example (68).

(67) I met <u>neighbours</u> who were really nice

(68) I like meeting <u>neighbours</u> who are really nice.

Furthermore, Ionin (2003) argued that certain language structures can be used as clues to specificity. For instance, the use of 'certain' in some contexts suggests that speakers intended to refer to particular individuals/objects, as in example (69). In addition, 'there' and 'have' constructions can be specific in the right context as in (70) and (71) (IKW, 2004). Reliance on the verb tense used by learners, certain language constructions such as 'certain', 'have' and 'there' and, more importantly, the context used by learners were good indictors in distinguishing between specific and non-specific article usage.

(69) I read a certain book yesterday – it's the one that my brother recommended. I didn't find it very interesting.

<div align="right">(Taken from Ionin, 2003, p.158)</div>

(70) I have <u>a really neat new coffeemaker</u> in my kitchen. It has a timer and it turns itself off automatically.

(71) There is <u>a peculiar bird</u> in the garden? It doesn't look like anything I've ever seen!

<div align="right">(Taken from IKW, 2004, p. 47)</div>

The Native Control Group's answers to the EWPT were key to establishing the number of errors in learners' writing. Native speakers' articles preceding the word prompts provided in the task were compared with articles used by learners with the same word prompts. An error was counted when learners' article selection did not match the native speakers' choice. Article deletion was also counted as an error. Accordingly, an error rate in each of the six context types (definite specific, definite non-specific, indefinite specific, indefinite non-specific, Noun-phrase Generics and Sentence-level Generics) was calculated for each learner by dividing a learner's number of errors in that particular context by the number of all relevant contexts used by that learner in the task question to assign an error percentage for each learner. Thus, each learner's error rates

for each of the six contexts on the pre-test, the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test were calculated for the purpose of analysis.

5.3.7.2 The Article Elicitation Task (AET)

This task focused on non-generic contexts and it included four test categories (definite specific, definite non-specific, indefinite specific, indefinite non-specific). Each context included 6 questions. When learners did not provide the required article in the target context, they scored 0. Conversely, when they provided the required article in the given context, they scored 1. A total score (out of 6 as a total score) in each test category was created for each learner and a native speaker at each time point. The total scores were used in the statistical tests to analyse this task. Learners' scores were also compared with Native speakers' scores with means of inferential statistics to determine learners' state of article development prior to the experiment.

5.3.7.3 The Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT)

For each test item of the two test categories (NPG and SLG), mean ratings (from 1 to 4) of each of the five sentence types (definite singulars, indefinite singulars, bare singulars, definite plurals and bare plurals) to be rated under each test category were calculated for each L2 participant and for each native speaker. These mean ratings were utilized in the statistical tests for the purpose of analysis. Native speakers ratings were also used in the statistical tests to determine learners' interpretation of generic structures.

5.3.8 Analysis

The study has two categorical independent variables and one continuous dependent variable. The first independent variable is a between-group variable (the intervention type), which consists of four levels (Translation Explicit, Translation Implicit, Gap Fill Explicit and Gap Fill Implicit). The second independent variable is a within-group variable (Time), which consists of three levels (the pre-test, the immediate post-test, and

the delayed post-test). The dependent variable is the total score in the AET, the mean rating in the AJT, and the error rates in the EWPT of each participant's performance at each time point. Each one of these three types of scores (the dependent variable) was analysed separately (i.e. one dependent variable was used in each analysis).

In line with the 3X4 mixed design, a two-way mixed ANOVA was run for statistical analysis. This test was conducted to compare the impact of the four different interventions on participants' accuracy in the AET, the AJT and the EWPT at the three time points.

In addition to the Mixed ANOVA that was used to assess the impact of the intervention on learners' development of the English articles, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare learners' performance with that of native speakers prior to intervention. This test is the non-parametric alternative to the One-way Between Groups ANOVA. The Kruskal-Wallis was conducted because data at the pre-test stage showed violation of normality assumptions as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk Test. The Kruskal-Wallis test compares two variables. In this case, the first variable (group type) is a categorical independent variable that has five levels (Translation Explicit, Translation Implicit, Gap Fill Explicit, Gap Fill Implicit and Native Control). The second variable (score/mean rating/error rates in each test context) is a continuous dependent variable. More details of the research analysis will be given while reporting the results in the next chapter.

5.3.9 Methodological challenges

The biggest methodological challenge for this project (and for any project of a classroom experimental nature) was recruiting participants. The main reason is that academic institutions are often reluctant to allow a researcher in their institutes out of concern that the researcher might disturb their curriculums' schedule or their students' examinations. Before conducting the current experiment in Saudi Arabia, I made several attempts to recruit Arab learners who were studying in the UK at the time, but these attempts failed because the language institutes where these learners were studying

refused to cooperate. Finally, I found support after appealing to my employer, King Abdulaziz University; the head of the Department of European Languages and Literature encouraged their students to participate in the study, and I received approval from the head of the academic department to conduct the experiment.

The next challenge was scheduling. I had to arrange periods for the experimental sessions while coordinating with the courses' teachers about how to divide the class time between the actual course classes and the project sessions without disturbing the learners' course progress and examinations.

Lastly, it was also challenging to find learners willing and able to voluntarily commit to 13 different experimental sessions. Participants often preferred a one-off session rather than a series of sessions because of their other life commitments and responsibilities. A serious outcome that resulted from this, as reported earlier in this chapter, is that 50 of the participants who started the experiment ended up being excluded because they did not complete all the required experimental sessions.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reported the outcome of a pilot study and showed how it contributed to the main experiment design. The results of the pilot study suggested that Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English misused articles in some contexts, as predicted in the literature, before they received the experiential treatment. It further showed some advantages of instruction on learners' post-test results. These results consequently encouraged conducting the main experiment. Both the pilot and the main study followed a traditional classroom experimental design in which learners were pre-tested and post-tested on their use/interpretation of articles. The main experiment differed from the pilot study in including a delayed post-test, a standardized language proficiency test and a writing task. Furthermore, the main study included two more experimental groups than the pilot study to contrast the experimental variables. The next chapter concerns the results obtained from the analysis and the comparison of the three pre- and post-tests measures.

Chapter 6: Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the data taken from the three experimental tasks: (1) the Article Elicitation Task (AET); (2) the Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT); and (3) the Elicited Written Production Task (EWPT) at the pre-test stage (Time 1), immediate post-test (post-test 1/Time 2) and delayed post-test (post-test 2/Time 3). The first part of this chapter is based on the results obtained from the group of 54 intermediate level learners. The second part is based on the results obtained from the group of 13 low proficiency learners. Because the majority of the participants were found to be at an intermediate language level by the Oxford Quick Proficiency Test, their results are presented first. In terms of the experimental design, each language proficiency group was divided into four groups of learners according to the intervention type received. These groups are the Translation Explicit Group (TEG), the Translation Implicit Group (TIG), the Gap Fill Explicit Group (GFEG) and the Gap Fill Implicit Group (GFIG). The results of both the intermediate and the low proficiency participants were compared with the results drawn from 23 native English speakers, i.e. the Native Control Group (NCG), who undertook the same three tasks mentioned above.

In accordance with IKW's (2004) article semantic account, Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer Hypothesis and Slabakova's (2008) account of semantic principles (discussed in chapter 2), two main questions motivated the current study. This chapter attempts to provide answers to these research questions and the research hypotheses. The first research question focuses on definite and specific (**non-generic**) contexts and relates to the AET and EWPT tasks. The second research question focuses on **generic** contexts and relates to the AJT and EWPT tasks. The two research questions and the research hypotheses were first presented in section 5.3.1 in the previous chapter; they are repeated here again for ease of reference.

RQ1. The **Non-generic** context: Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English show target-like use of English articles in non-generic contexts before and/or after exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity, and exposure to translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts?

H 1: In accordance with IKW's (2004) article semantic account:

A) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are expected to show target-like use of articles in [+definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific] before exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity and translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts.

B) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are expected to show non-target-like use of articles in [+definite, −specific] and in [−definite, +specific] contexts before exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity and translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts.

H 2: If Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are not target-like in [+definite, −specific] and/or [−definite, +specific] at the pre-test stage, then learners who received explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity will achieve better accuracy when using articles in these contexts after the intervention than those who received implicit instruction and learners who received translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts will achieve better accuracy when using articles in these contexts than those who received gap fill activities.

H 3. Explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity will result in long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

H 4: Translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts will result in long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

RQ2. The **Generic** context: Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English show target-like use/interpretation of English articles in generic contexts before and/ or after exposure to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and exposure to translation activities that target article use in generic contexts?

H 1: In accordance with Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer / Full Access Hypothesis:

A) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'definite singulars' equally high in Noun-phrase Generic and Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

B) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'definite plurals' equally high in Noun-phrase Generic and Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

H 2: In accordance with Slabakova's (2008) account of semantic principles:

A) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'indefinite singulars' and 'bare plurals' higher than other sentence types in Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

B) Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'bare plurals' higher than other sentence types in Noun-phrase Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

H 3: Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English who received explicit instruction in genericity distinction, as compared to learners who received implicit instruction, will show better accuracy in contexts where their ratings of target generic

sentence types significantly differed from the ratings of native speakers prior to the intervention and will show long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

H 4: Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English who received translation activities that target article use in generic contexts, as compared to learners who received gap fill activities, will show better accuracy in contexts where their ratings of target generic sentence types significantly differed from the ratings of native speakers prior to the intervention and will show long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

6.2 The intermediate proficiency learners' results

The results of the three experimental tasks' (AET, AJT and EWPT) data obtained from the intermediate proficiency group will be reported in this section

6.2.1 The intermediate proficiency learners' Article Elicitation Task results

This section presents the AET results. It principally aims to: (1) see if learners fluctuate in their article use between 'the' and 'a/an'; (2) discover the contexts in which L2 intermediate learners' performance significantly differ from the English native speakers' performance before introducing the classroom treatments and to see if learners benefited from the classroom intervention by analysing their performance in these contexts in the immediate and the delayed post-tests compared to their performance in the pre-test. The AET of this study focused on non-generic contexts and included four test categories/contexts (definite specific, definite non-specific, indefinite specific and indefinite non-specific). A total score (out of 6) was given in each test category for each participant at the pre-test, the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test. The following table shows the descriptive results for the intermediate group's performance on the AET at Time 1 (pre-test). The asterisks mark the contexts in which the learners' scores differ significantly from those of the English native speakers.

Table 7 The Article Elicitation Task pre-test mean score and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners compared with the NCG

| Group Type | N | Context Type | | | | | | | |
| | | Definite Specific | | Definite Non-specific | | Indefinite Specific | | Indefinite Non-specific | |
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	6	0	5.67	.49	**4.67***	1.13	5.22	1.31
Translation Implicit	9	5.78	.67	5.78	.44	**4.56***	1.51	5.56	1.01
Gap Fill Explicit	15	5.87	.35	5.93	.26	5.47	.74	5.67	.49
Gap Fill Implicit	12	5.75	.45	5.42	1.16	**4.67***	1.15	5.67	.65
Native Control	23	6	0	5.69	.47	5.78	.52	5.61	.66

*Significant at $p < .05$, ***Significant at $p < .001$.

In order to detect a specificity effect on learners' article use, a total of 14 ANOVAs (reported in 6.2.1.1) were run for the lower and upper intermediate learners and for the Native Control Group on the use of 'the' and the use of 'a/an'. Additionally, before assessing the impact of the intervention it was important to observe whether learners' pre-intervention performance was significantly different from that of native speakers. To achieve this, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was chosen. The reason for this choice is that the data was not normally distributed according to the Shapiro-Wilk Test. The Kruskal-Wallis test was run four times for each group (once for each context type). Tests on the data obtained from the definite specific, definite non-specific, and indefinite non-specific contexts revealed no statistically significant difference between the intermediate learners' scores and the NCG's performance in these contexts. These results are shown in Table **8**. However, the indefinite specific context (see section 6.2.1.2) was found to be an area in which the learners' performance (except for the Gap

Fill Explicit Group) differed significantly from that of native speakers' performance prior to intervention. Therefore, sections (6.2.1.2) and (6.2.1.3) present detailed results regarding only the indefinite specific context data because learners' target-like performance in the other three non-generic contexts indicated no need for intervention in these three contexts. That is, learners scored significantly lower than the NCG in indefinite specific contexts, whereas their performance excelled in the other three non-generic contexts.

Table 8 The Article Elicitation Task Kruskal-Wallis test pre-test results for the intermediate-level learners compared with the NCG (non-significant contexts)

Definite Specific	Definite Non-specific	Indefinite Non-specific
$H(4) = 8.90, p=.06$	$H(4) = 4.10, p=.39$	$H(4) = 1.36, p=.85$

6.2.1.1 The intermediate proficiency learners' use of 'the' vs. use of 'a/an' in non-generic contexts

Following the practice in IKW (2004) and Ionin et al. (2009), separate statistical analyses on the use of 'the' vs. 'a/an' were conducted. The rationale according to Ionin et al. (2009) is that:

> Each test item could potentially receive one of four responses: *the, a,* "no article", or "other" (such as *some*, a demonstrative, a possessive pronoun, etc.). Given that our predictions concern both *the* use and misuse, and *a* use and misuse, we need to examine the effects that definiteness and specificity had on both article types. (p. 346)

Separate ANOVAs were conducted on the use of 'the' vs. use of 'a/an' for the lower intermediate group, the upper intermediate group and the Native Control Group. The results of these ANOVAs are presented in the following tables.

Table 9 Results of repeated-measures ANOVAs for the Native Control Group

Factor	Use of *the*	Use of *a*
Definiteness	F (1, 22)= 5808***	F (1, 22)= 3480***
Specificity	F (1, 22)= .581	F (1, 22)= .042
Definiteness X specificity	F (1, 22)= 9.85**	F (1, 22)= 2.77

***p<.001, **p<.01

Table 10 Results of repeated-measures ANOVAs for L2 English learners (pre-test)

Proficiency	Factor	Use of *the*	Use of *a*
Lower Intermediate	Definiteness	F (1, 31)= 992***	F (1, 31)= 669***
	Specificity	F (1,31)= 13.95**	F (1, 31)= 15.77***
	Definiteness X specificity	F (1,31)= 1.04	F (1, 31)= .99
Upper Intermediate	Definiteness	F (1,17)= 1299***	F (1,17)= 750***
	Specificity	F (1,17)= 7.38*	F (1,17)= 9.80**
	Definiteness X specificity	F (1, 17)= .41	F (1,17)= .42

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 11 Results of repeated-measures ANOVAs for L2 English learners (post-test 1)

Proficiency	Factor	Use of *the*	Use of *a*
Lower Intermediate	Definiteness	F (1,35)= 2800***	F (1,35)= 1078***
	Specificity	F (1,35)= 2.56	F (1,35)= 24.65***
	Definiteness X specificity	F (1,35)= 1.89	F (1,35)= 5.69*
Upper Intermediate	Definiteness	F (1,17)= 2939***	F (1,17)= 1048***
	Specificity	F (1,17)= 4.85*	F (1,17)= 5.27*
	Definiteness X specificity	F (1,17)= 2.42	F (1,17)= 5.27*

***p<.001, *p<.05

Table 12 Results of repeated-measures ANOVAs for L2 English learners (post-test 2)

Proficiency	Factor	Use of *the*	Use of *a*
Lower Intermediate	Definiteness	F (1,35)= 217***	F (1,35)= 281***
	Specificity	F (1,35)= .601	F (1,35)= 3.33
	Definiteness X specificity	F (1,35)= 6.63*	F (1,35)= .340
Upper Intermediate	Definiteness	F (1,17)= 76.51***	F (1,17)= 103***
	Specificity	F (1,17)= .001	F (1,17)= .412
	Definiteness X specificity	F (1,17)= 1.85	F (1,17)= .186

***p<.001, *p<.05

The results of the native speakers reported in table (9) show that they performed as expected. The definiteness variable is found to be highly significant indicating that there is a clear distinction between [+definite] vs. [-definite] in their article use. On the other hand, there is no statistical significance for specificity variable and when definiteness is crossed with specificity in testing the use of 'the'. This means that there is no fluctuation in the article choice as expected.

Results of L2 English learners in the pre-test reported in table (10), compared with the Native Control Group, show that definiteness is highly significant. Additionally, specificity has a highly significant effect on the use of 'the' and the use of 'a/an'. This means that both proficiency groups are fluctuating between 'the' and 'a/an'. The interaction between definiteness and specificity is not significant. The same results were found post-test 1 except that no effect for specificity was found in the use of 'the' among the low intermediate group. Finally, the results of post-test 2 show no effect of specificity on the use of 'the' and the use of a/an' in the performance of the two proficiency groups.

6.2.1.2 Indefinite specific context pre-test analysis

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed statistically significant differences in the indefinite specific scores across the five groups (Gp1, *n*=18: Translation Explicit, Gp2, *n*=9: Translation Implicit, Gp3, *n*=15: Gap Fill Explicit, Gp4, *n*=12: Gap Fill Implicit, Gp5, *n*=23: Native Control); *H* (4) = 18.48, *p*< .005. The NCG and the GFEG recorded a higher median score (*Md*=6) than the other three groups. The remaining three groups recorded median values of 5. This indicates that the GFEG outperformed the other groups in the pre-test despite the learners in this group having the same language proficiency level as those in the other groups.

To discover which of the groups differed significantly from the NCG, pairs of follow-up Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted; these tests compared the results for each of the intervention groups with those of the control group. For the TEG, the Mann-Whitney U test showed a statistically significant difference between this intervention group's indefinite specific scores and those of the NCG; *U*= 83.00, *z*= -3.67, *p*< .001, and *r*= .57 (according to Cohen's (1988) criteria, this is a large effect). The test also indicated a statistically significant difference between the TIG's indefinite specific scores and the NCG's scores; *U*= 56.50, *z*= -2.49, *p*< .05, and *r*= .4 (a medium effect). Similarly, the GFIG's test yielded a statistically significant difference between their indefinite specific scores and those of the NCG; *U*= 52.50, *z*= -3.54, *p*< .005, and *r*= .59 (a large effect). However, the GFEG's Mann-Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant difference between their indefinite specific means and those of the NCG; *U*= 132.50, *z*= -1.550, and *p*= .12.

Since the pre-intervention analysis took place after the experiment ended, it could not have been predicted that the GFEG would not differ significantly from the NCG, especially since, by the Oxford Quick Placement test, the learners' language level was comparable in all groups. This unexpected outcome from the pre-test results led to exclusion of the GFEG from further analysis. After all, since this group performed like native speakers on this structure before the intervention, there is no longer any reason to consider their results after the intervention. Therefore, only the TEG, the TIG and the

GFIG were considered to be good intervention candidates for exploring the stated research questions.

6.2.1.3 Indefinite specific context post-tests analysis

The results in the previous section revealed that three of the four intermediate groups' performance in the indefinite specific context in the pre-test differed significantly from that of the native speakers. These were the TEG, the TIG and the GFIG. Consequently, these three groups' data were analysed in post-tests 1 and 2 in relation to the pre-test to assess the effects of the three intervention types. The descriptive data, which include mean scores of the indefinite specific context for the three groups (Figure 17), showed a mean increase for the two translation groups in post-test 1, but this increase regressed in post-test 2. The analysis in this section will determine whether these mean differences are statistically significantly different from the pre-test mean scores, and whether the intervention types differed in their effect on learners' accuracy when using the indefinite article in an indefinite specific context.

Figure 17 indefinite specific contexts mean scores in Time 1, 2 & 3 for intermediate-level learners (Error bars show standard deviation)

Indefinite Specific Context Scores
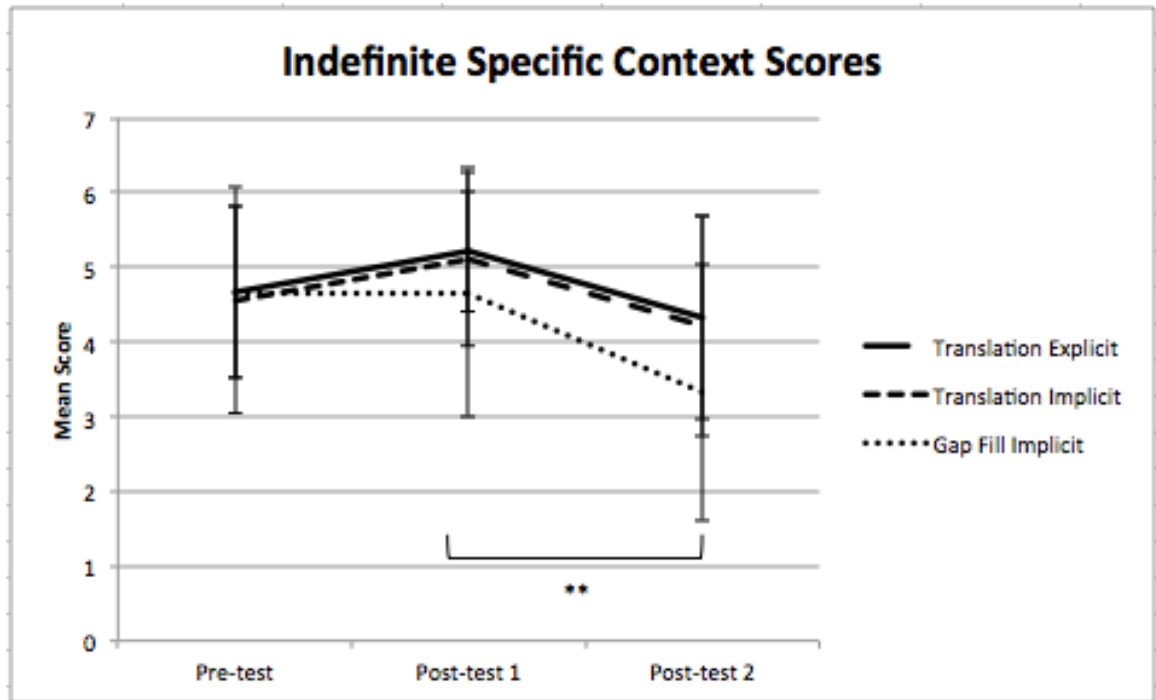
To ascertain the impact of the intervention on indefinite specific article use, only a subset of the AET data was used (indefinite specific scores of the TEG, the TIG and the GFIG in times 1, 2 & 3). The Shapiro-Wilk normality test for this subset demonstrated that assumptions of normality are met. Consequently, this subset of data is assumed to be normally distributed. Following this, a mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess the three intervention types at the three time points. The test was conducted to establish the within-group effect (time) and the between-group effect (group type) on the learners' use of articles (scores) in indefinite specific contexts. It should be noted here that in addition to reporting the F and P values, the following analysis also reports partial eta-squared values. The partial eta-squared is a measure of effect size. It states what proportion of the variance in the dependent variable is attributable to the variable in question. According to Cohen (1988), .01 is considered a small effect size, .06 is a medium effect and .14 is a large effect.

The mixed ANOVA, which was conducted to evaluate the impact of the three intervention types (Translation Explicit, Translation Implicit and Gap Fill Implicit) on participants' scores for the indefinite specific test items across the three time points, yielded a highly significant main effect of time; $F_{(1.69, 61.03)}= 7.54$, $p< .005$, partial eta-squared= .17 (a large effect). The main effect comparing the three types of intervention was not significant; $F_{(2, 36)} =1.13$, $p= .33$. This indicated no difference between the effectiveness of each of the three intervention types. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated no significant interaction between intervention type and time; $F_{(3.39, 61.03)}= .79$, and $p= .52$.

In order to identify the source of the significant interactions between the three time points, the ANOVA was followed up with pairwise comparisons (Bonferroni corrected). Bonferroni alpha levels were adjusted for these multiple comparisons. Each test that was run applied a criterion of significance at the α-level divided by the number of tests conducted (.05/3=. 02). Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction showed the mean differences at times 1 and 2 of no statistical significance ($p=. 24$). This indicates that intervention did not have any effect on learners' performance in the immediate post-test. Similarly, at times 1 and 3 the mean difference was not statistically significant ($p=. 09$). However, at times 2 and 3 there was a statistically significant difference ($p< .02$). That is, learners' scores in the delayed post-test were significantly lower than their scores in the immediate post-test. These results indicate that learners' performance on post-test 1 was not significantly different from their performance on the pre-test, leading to the conclusion that the intervention has not been effective for any of the three groups of intermediate learners.

6.2.1.4 Summary of the intermediate proficiency learners' Article Elicitation Task results

The pre-test analysis revealed that the intermediate-level Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of L2 English were target-like in the contexts of definite specific, definite non-specific and indefinite non-specific article use at the pre-test stage. However, the majority of learners did not achieve target-like accuracy in the indefinite

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specific use of articles (consider figure 18 below); suggesting this might be an area in which classroom intervention/instruction is useful. In fact, the analyses carried out found no positive effect on the indefinite specific use of English articles from any of the interventions.

Figure 18 AET pre-test results for intermediate-level learners
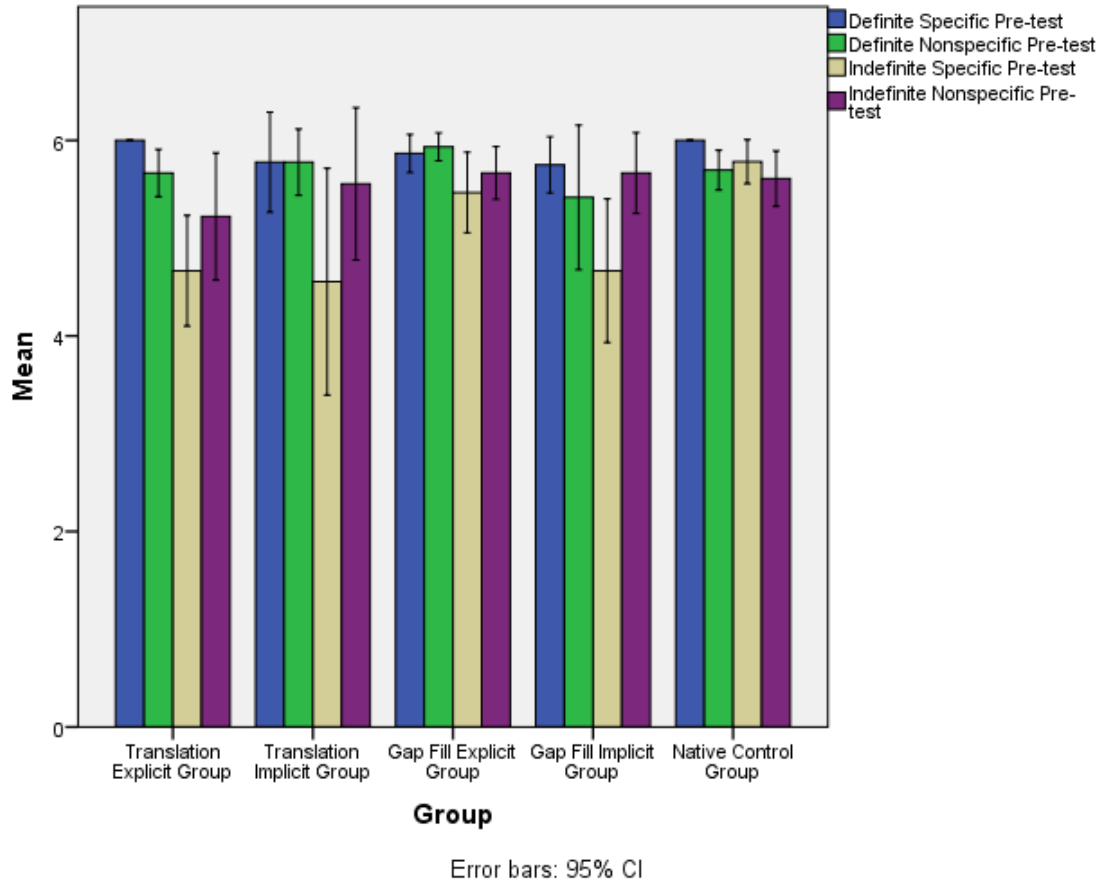
6.2.2 The intermediate proficiency learners' Acceptability Judgment Task results

This section presents the AJT results of both the Noun-phrase Generics (NPG) and the Sentence-level Generics (SLG) contexts. To answer the second research question (the generic one), two types of pre-test analysis were conducted. First, to see if Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners differentiate between the two types of singular generics and the two types of genericity, and to see if native speakers also make these distinctions, the four intervention groups were combined to make one group (learners) in order to

examine the between-group patterns by using a repeated-measures ANOVA (see section 6.2.2.1). Second, to determine the effect of instruction on the rating of each sentence type in both NPG and SLG contexts, the sentence types in which L2 learners' mean ratings significantly differed from those of the English native speakers at the pre-test stage were identified (see sections 6.2.2.2 & 6.2.2.4). Additionally, a mixed ANOVA was used to see the effect of the intervention; this test used the data of the immediate and the delayed post-test in both test contexts in addition to the pre-test data (6.2.2.3 & 6.2.2.5).

For each test item of the two test categories (NPG and SLG), mean ratings (from 1 to 4) for each of the five sentence types (definite singular, indefinite singular, bare singular, definite plural and bare plural) were calculated. This section first presents the pre-test descriptive data for the five groups (the TEG, the TIG, the GFEG, the GFIG and the NCG). This overview of the groups' pre-test data then makes it possible to determine the learners' interpretation of English articles in generic contexts (before intervention) and to examine the effectiveness of the intervention (at the immediate and delayed post-tests stage). The native English data set serves as a baseline, illustrating the distinctions between NPG and SLG as predicted in the literature. Native speakers are expected to give high ratings to definite singulars and bare plurals in the NPG context. In contrast, they are expected to give high ratings to indefinite singulars and bare plurals in the SLG context. Table 13 and Table 16 show the descriptive results for the intermediate groups' performance on the AJT at the pre-test stage in the two test contexts. The ratings reflect the scale between 1 as unacceptable and 4 as acceptable. The asterisks mark the sentence types in which learners' mean ratings differ significantly from the English native speakers' ratings. Additionally, this section presents the immediate and delayed post-test descriptive data in tables 14, 15, 17 and 18. Note that no statistical comparison was done of learners' versus native speakers' ratings on the post-tests because Mixed ANOVA will deal with any significant differences between learners' performance in the pre-test and post-test 1 and 2. As a consequence, only the pre-test data were subject to this comparison since it was important to determine in which contexts learners significantly differ from native speakers and consequently to assess the impact of the

intervention on these particular contexts. The results of inferential statistics are reported in the following subsections.

Table 13 Noun-phrase Generics pre-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	2.86	.52	1.57	.51	1.67	.52	1.86	.67	3.82	.25
Translation Implicit	9	2.78	.36	1.67	.67	2.22	1.00	2.33	.93	3.67	.35
Gap Fill Explicit	15	2.70	.78	2.01	.78	**2.47****	.96	**3.20*****	.62	**3.55****	.29
Gap Fill Implicit	12	2.46	.75	2.12	.70	**2.73*****	.69	**3.13*****	.76	**3.33***	.86
Native Control	23	2.84	.48	1.57	.53	1.65	.53	1.86	.66	3.82	.26

*Significant at $p < .05$, **Significant at $p < .01$, ***Significant at $p < .001$.

Table 14 Noun-phrase Generics post-test 1 mean ratings and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	2.57	.88	2.24	.85	2.32	.87	1.89	.78	3.33	.53
Translation Implicit	9	2.89	.67	1.44	.48	2.53	1	2.83	.59	3.61	.49
Gap Fill Explicit	15	2.35	.93	2.19	.84	2.13	.81	2.22	1.05	3.32	.79
Gap Fill Implicit	12	2.59	.49	1.82	.61	2.28	.69	2.92	.66	3.44	.61
Native Control	23	2.84	.48	1.57	.53	1.65	.53	1.86	.66	3.82	.26

Table 15 Noun-phrase Generics post-test 2 mean rating and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	2.49	.94	2.42	1.06	2.40	.73	1.80	.71	3.35	.58
Translation Implicit	9	2.44	.46	1.97	1	2.50	.71	2.61	.98	3.11	.85
Gap Fill Explicit	15	2.77	.97	2.48	.93	2.16	.99	2.46	1	3.16	.86
Gap Fill Implicit	12	3.04	.86	1.89	.68	2.27	.79	3.26	.81	3.33	.56
Native Control	23	2.84	.48	1.57	.53	1.65	.53	1.86	.66	3.82	.26

Table 16 Sentence-level Generics pre-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	1.47	.527	3.83	.21	1.08	.26	1.59	.58	3.65	.33
Translation Implicit	9	1.94	.854	3.31	.85	**1.56****	.66	2.36	1.11	3.81	.24
Gap Fill Explicit	15	**2.88*****	.944	**2.63*****	1.00	**2.35*****	.72	**2.88*****	.77	3.52	.45
Gap Fill Implicit	12	**2.71*****	.864	**2.52*****	.80	**2.75*****	.72	**2.73*****	.88	3.19	.89
Native Control	23	1.47	.534	3.83	.21	1.08	.23	1.59	.58	3.67	.31

**Significant at *p*< .01, ***Significant at *p*< .001.

Table 17 Sentence-level Generics post-test 1 mean ratings and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	2.29	.99	3.39	.59	2.57	.98	1.49	.42	2.92	.69
Translation Implicit	9	2.56	.86	2.78	.78	3	1	2.13	.82	2.92	.93
Gap Fill Explicit	15	2.40	.94	3	.88	2.27	.88	2.08	.85	2.92	.74
Gap Fill Implicit	12	2.71	.62	2.83	.73	3	.87	2	.74	2.79	.92
Native Control	23	1.47	.53	3.83	.21	1	.23	1.58	.56	3.67	.31

Table 18 Sentence-level Generics post-test 2 mean ratings and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	2.33	.85	2.94	.83	2.21	.59	1.95	.69	3.19	.82
Translation Implicit	9	1.97	.73	2.69	.58	2.47	.65	2.22	.72	3.14	.66
Gap Fill Explicit	15	2.73	.86	3	.69	2.27	.98	2	1	2.96	.89
Gap Fill Implicit	12	2.92	.66	2.75	.83	2.31	.89	2.92	.72	2.99	.59
Native Control	23	1.47	.53	3.83	.20	1	.23	1.59	.58	3.67	.31

The pre-test descriptive results of the AJT show that learners overaccepted 'definite plurals' and 'bare singulars' in NPG contexts. Learners also showed less acceptance for 'bare plurals' in this context than native speakers. Details of the NPG pre-test results are given in section (6.2.2.2). Descriptive results of the SLG contexts show that learners overaccepted 'definite singulars', 'bare singulars' and 'definite plurals'. Learners also showed less acceptance for 'indefinite singulars' than native speakers in this context. Details of the SLG pre-test results are given in section (6.2.2.4).

6.2.2.1 The intermediate proficiency learners' interpretation of articles in generic contexts

To determine the state of the intermediate proficiency learners' (the four intervention groups combined) interpretation of generic structures prior to the intervention, a repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted for each group (native speakers and learners separately) on the test categories, crossing context (2 levels: NPG and SLG) and

sentence type (5 levels: definite singular, indefinite singular, bare singular, definite plural and bare plural). The dependent variable was the mean rating on a scale from 1 to 4. The main results of these three ANOVAs are reported in table 19 below.

Table 19 Results of Repeated-Measures ANOVA on the two generic test categories for the intermediate-level learners

Test Categories	Native Control Group	Intermediate Proficiency Learners
Context	F (1, 22)= .19	F (1, 53)= .42
Sentence type	F (2. 45, 53)= 17*	F (2.52, 133)= 52.9*
Context X Sentence type	F (3, 67)= 19*	F (2.38, 126)= 36.1*

* Significant at $p <. 05$.

Analysis revealed that the main effect of context (i.e. NPG vs. SLG) was not significant. The main effect of sentence type and the interaction between context and sentence type in both groups were significant as seen in table 15. In order to find the source of this interaction, the ANOVA was followed by 25 pairwise cell-by-cell comparisons, using paired-sample t-tests: 10 comparisons between each pair of sentences in the NPG context, 10 comparisons between each pair of sentences in the SLG context and five comparisons comparing each sentence type across the two test categories. The alpha level was set at .002 (Bonferroni correction, .05 divided by 25).

Pairwise comparisons across sentence types in the two generic contexts

For the NPG test category, the target sentence types are definite singulars and bare plurals whereas the target sentences for the SLG context are indefinite singulars and bare plurals. For the NCG, pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction indicated that each of the two target sentences within each category was rated significantly higher than each of the three non-target sentence types. In the NPG context, the two target sentence types (definite singulars and bare plurals) differed significantly from each other since bare plurals were rated significantly higher than definite singulars. In the SLG context, the two target sentence types (indefinite singulars and bare plurals) did not differ significantly from each other, but were rated

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significantly higher than each of the three non-target sentence types as mentioned above. Comparing across test categories, for the NCG, definite singulars were rated significantly higher with NPG than with SLG while the reverse was the case for indefinite singulars as predicted. Bare plurals were rated equally high across both contexts. The two non-target sentence types (bare singulars and definite plurals) were rated equally low across both contexts, but bare singulars were more acceptable in NPG than in SLG.

In the case of the intermediate proficiency group, the target definite singular sentence type was rated significantly higher than indefinite singulars and bare singulars in NPG. However, there was no statistically significant difference between definite singulars and definite plurals in this context. Bare plurals were also rated significantly higher than definite singulars and the other three non-target sentence types (see figure 19). In SLG, both target sentence types (indefinite singulars and bare plurals) were rated significantly higher than each of the three non-target sentence types, but differed significantly from each other, as bare plurals were rated significantly higher than indefinite singulars. The ratings of the non-target sentence types (definite singulars and definite plurals) did not differ significantly from each other, but were significantly higher than the other the third non-target sentence type (bare singulars) (see figure 20). Comparing across contexts, bare plurals were rated equally high in both NPG and SLG contexts. Learners rated indefinite singulars significantly higher with SLG than with NPG. Similarly, definite singulars were rated significantly higher with NPG than with SLG. Definite plurals were more acceptable with NPG than with SLG ($p=$ .002, approaching significance of the Bonferroni corrected alpha level of .002). Bare singulars were also rated significantly higher with NPG than with SLG.

Figure 19 Intermediate-level learners' ratings in the NPG context
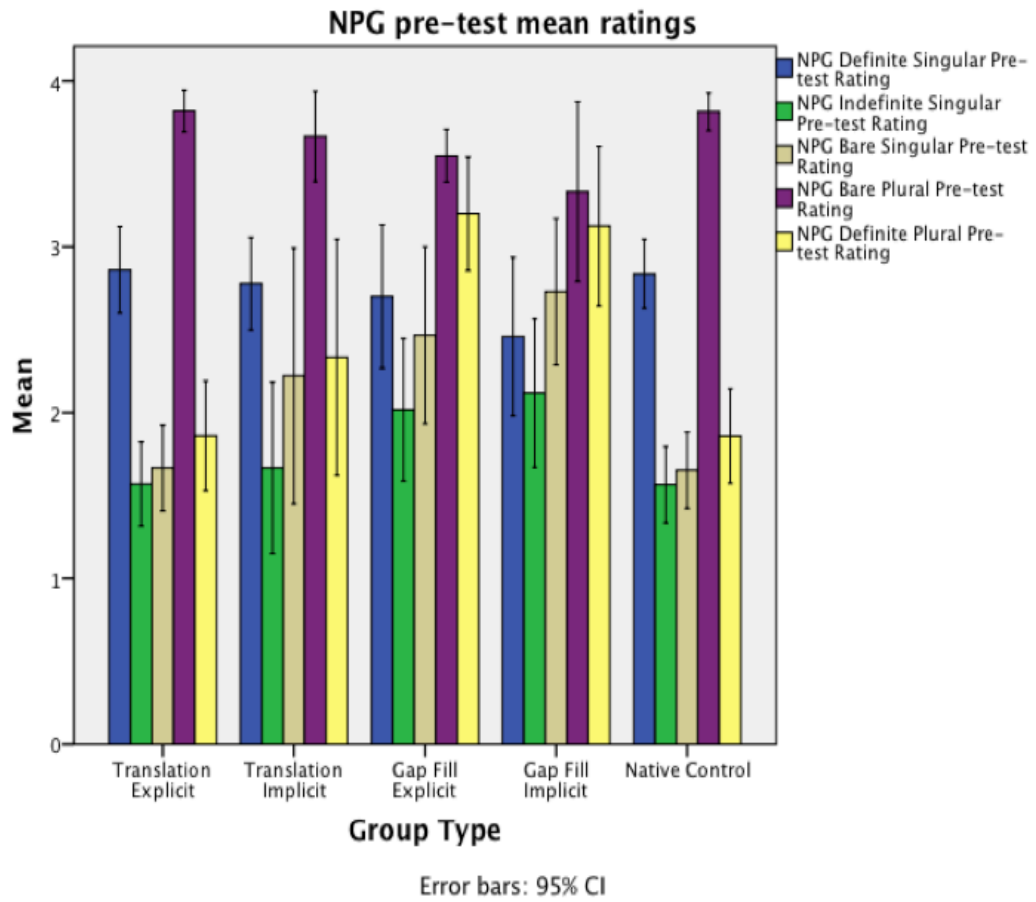
Figure 20 Intermediate-level learners' ratings in the SLG context
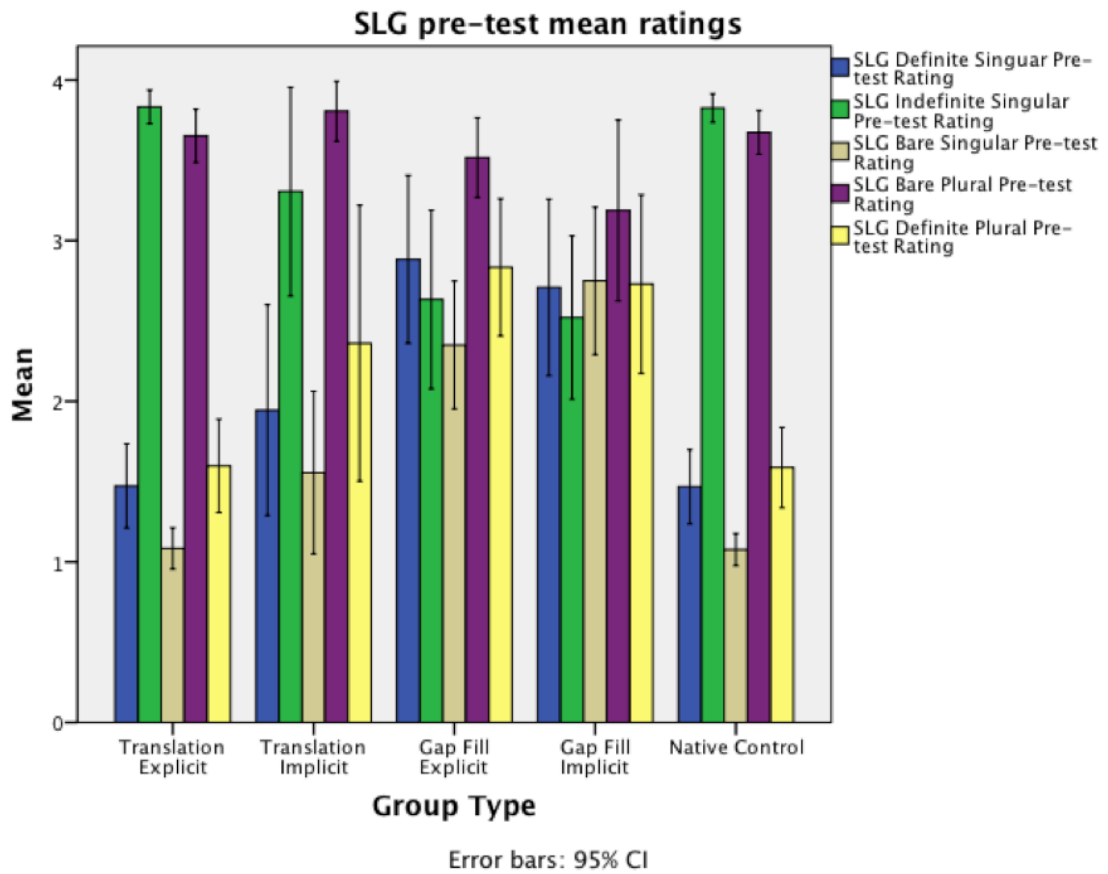
To summarize, learners were mostly target-like in their judgments of sentences in both contexts, rating definite singulars significantly higher in NPG contexts than in SLG contexts. They were also target-like in rating indefinite singulars significantly higher in SLG contexts than in NPG contexts while rating bare plurals high in both contexts. The only non-target like performance was overaccepting definite plurals in NPG contexts and overaccepting definite singulars and definite plurals in SLG contexts.

6.2.2.2 Noun-phrase Generic context pre-test analysis

In line with the pre-test analysis conducted for the AET, the analysis of the AJT pre-test data determined if learners' interpretation of each sentence type in each test category differed significantly from native speakers' interpretation of these sentence types before the classroom intervention. Each group of learners' ratings were separately compared

with the Native Control Group's. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test stated that the AJT data also violated normality assumptions. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. The test was run for ten separate analyses (once for each sentence type ratings in NPG and SLG contexts).

Of the five tests conducted for the NPG sentence types, only three are reported here in detail. Each Kruskal-Wallis test involved bare singulars, bare plurals and definite plurals. This is because the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed learners' ratings were significantly different from native speakers' ratings of these sentence types. In particular, the Gap Fill learners overaccepted bare singulars and definite plurals even though both are ungrammatical in this context. Additionally, the Gap Fill groups' ratings of bare plurals differed significantly from the native speakers' ratings. However, the four groups of learners' ratings of both definite singular and indefinite singular were not found to be statistically significantly different from native speakers' ratings of these sentence types, indicating that learners are target-like in their choice of definite singulars as grammatically acceptable in NPG and that learners find indefinite singulars grammatically unacceptable in this context. Definite and indefinite singular pre-test analysis results are displayed in the following table. They are not included in the analysis of the post-tests.

Table 20 The Acceptability Judgment Task Kruskal-Wallis pre-test results for the intermediate-level learners (non-significant contexts)

NPG Pre-test Results	
Definite singulars pre-test ratings	**Indefinite singulars pre-test ratings**
$H(4) = 4.19, p= .38$	$H(4) = 8.14, p= .09$

In the remainder of this section, the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test, as conducted to examine learners' rating of bare singulars, bare plurals and definite plurals, are reported in detail.

Bare singulars

The Kruskal-Wallis Test revealed a statistically significant difference in bare singular ratings in NPG contexts across the five groups (Gp1, $n=18$: Translation Explicit, Gp2, $n=9$: Translation Implicit, Gp3, $n=15$: Gap Fill Explicit, Gp4, $n=12$: Gap Fill Implicit, Gp5, $n=23$: Native Control); $H(4) = 19.52$, $p< .005$. The TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG recorded medians ($Md= 2$, 2.5, 2.75 respectively) that were higher than the NCG's median ($Md= 1.75$). However, the TEG recorded the same median as the NCG.

The follow-up Mann-Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant difference in the bare singular ratings for the TEG and the NCG; $U= 204.00$, $z= -.08$, and $p= .94$. In addition, the TIG's bare singular ratings were not significantly different from those of the NCG's ratings ($Md=1.75$, $n=23$); $U= 71.00$, $z= -1.38$, and $p= .16$. Conversely, the GFEG's test indicated a statistically significant difference in the bare singular ratings and those of the NCG; $U= 85.50$, $z= -2.63$, $p< .01$, and $r= .42$, which is a medium effect. Lastly, a Mann-Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference in the bare singulars ratings of the GFIG and the NCG ($Md=1.75$, $n=23$); $U= 31.00$, $z= -3.75$, $p< .001$, $r= .63$ (a large effect).

These results demonstrate that the two Translation Groups show target-like interpretation of bare singulars as ungrammatical in the case of NPG at the pre-test stage. Conversely, the two Gap Fill Groups show non-target-like interpretation. The unexpected outcome from the pre-test analysis resulted in the exclusion of translation groups, including only the GFE and GFIGs when assessing the impact of the intervention.

Bare plurals

A Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a statistically significant difference when rating bare plurals in NPG contexts across five groups; H (4) = 12.62, $p<$ .05. The TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG recorded medians (Md= 3.75, 3.5, 3.62 respectively) lower than the native group's (Md= 4). However, the TEG recorded the same median as the NCG.

The same follow up test showed that the TEG's (Md=4.00, n=18) ratings of bare plurals in NPG do not reveal a statistically significant difference from the NCG's (Md=4.00, n=23); U= 206.50, z= -.02, and p= .99. A similar result was found for the TIG; U= 75.500, z= -1.27, and p= .20. In addition, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference between the bare plural ratings of the GFEG (Md=3.50, n=15) and the NCG (Md=4.00, n=23); U= 83.00, z= -2.79, p=< .01, and r= .45 (a large effect). Finally, there was also a statistically significant difference between the bare plural ratings of the GFIG (Md=3.62, n=12) and those of the NCG (Md=4.00, n=23); U= 79.00, z= -2.17, $p<$ .05, and r= .36 (a medium effect).

Since the translation groups interpreted bare plurals similarly to the native speakers prior to the intervention, their data is excluded when assessing the effect of the intervention. Therefore, assessment of the intervention will mainly rely on the gap fill groups' data in both post-tests.

Definite plurals

The Kruskal-Wallis test showed a statistically significant difference when rating definite plurals in NPG contexts across the five groups; H (4) = 33.92, $p<$ .001. The TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG recorded medians (Md= 2.25, 3.25, 3.25 respectively) that were higher than the NCG's (Md= 2). The TEG recorded the same median as the NCG.

The Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant difference in the definite plural ratings of the TEG (Md=2.00, n=18) and the NCG (Md=2.00, n=23); U= 206.00,

z= -.027, and *p*= .98. Furthermore, the test showed no statistically significant difference in the definite plural ratings for the TIG (*Md*=2.25, *n*=9) and the NCG (*Md*=2.00, *n*=23); *U*= 70.00, *z*= -1.42, and *p*= .156. By contrast, the test yielded a statistically significant difference in the definite plural ratings of the GFEG (*Md*=3.25, *n*=15) and the NCG (*Md*=2.00, *n*=23); *U*= 25.50, *z*= -4.41, *p*< .001, and *r*= .71 (a large effect). Finally, the definite plural ratings of the GFIG (*Md*=3.25, *n*=12) and the NCG (*Md*=2.00, *n*=23) were found to be statistically significantly different; *U*= 27.00, *z*= -3.89, *p*< .001, and *r*= .65 (a large effect). For this reason, further analysis is conducted below excluding the translation groups, as their performance appears to be native-like. The following table summarises the results obtained from pre-test analysis of the NPG context.

Table 21 Summary of Noun-phrase Generic context pre-test analysis for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	Noun-phrase Generics				
	Definite Singular	**Indefinite Singular**	**Bare Singular**	**Definite Plural**	**Bare Plural**
Translation Explicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like
Translation Implicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like
Gap Fill Explicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**
Gap Fill Implicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**

6.2.2.3 Noun-phrase generic context post-tests analysis

For the reasons mentioned in section 6.2.1.2 above, a mixed ANOVA was conducted three times to ascertain the effect of intervention on learners' ratings of bare singulars, bare plurals and definite plurals across the three time points. It should be noted that the

results are reported for the two Gap Fill groups, but not for the TEG or the TIG. The rationale behind this decision was that the translation groups unexpectedly appeared to achieve target-like accuracy at the pre-test stage, which led to the conclusion that there is no longer any reason to consider their results after intervention. The effect of the intervention on learners' interpretation of these three sentence types was examined because the Gap Fill learners' ratings in these categories differed significantly from those of the NCG, as reported in the previous section. The mixed ANOVA results that show the effect of the intervention on each one of these three sentence types are reported below.

Bare singulars

The mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess the impact of the two intervention types (Gap Fill Explicit and Gap Fill Implicit) on the participants' ratings of bare singulars in NPG contexts, across the three time points. The analysis yielded no significant main effect of time; $F (2, 50)= 2.41$, and $p= .10$. The main effect comparing the two types of intervention was not significant, e.g. $F (1, 25)=2.44$, and $p= .13$. This indicates that there is no difference in the effectiveness of the two intervention types. The interactions between intervention type and time are, moreover, not significant; $F (2, 50)=1.159$, and $p=.32$. The results suggest that the intervention has not effectively reduced learners' ratings at the post-test stage.

Bare plurals

The mixed ANOVA showed no significant main effect of time; $F (2, 50)= .68$, and $p= .51$. There was also no main effect for group type, $F (1, 25) =. 02$, and $p= .89$. This indicates no difference in the effectiveness of the two intervention types. Finally, there was not a significant interaction between the intervention type and time; $F (2, 50)= .77$, and $p= .47$. The results showed no clear effect towards a target-like response from the intervention on the rating of bare plurals in this context.

Definite plural

The mixed ANOVA revealed a significant effect of time; $F_{(2, 50)}$= 6.85, $p< .005$, partial eta-squared= .215 (a large effect). The main effect comparing the two types of intervention is also significant; $F_{(1, 25)}$ = 4.39, $p< .05$, partial eta-squared= .149 (a large effect), demonstrating that the GFEG outperformed the GFIG. Furthermore, there is a marginal significant interaction between the intervention type and time; $F_{(2, 50)}$= 3.11, $p= .05$, and the partial eta-squared= .111 (a large effect).

Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction, with adjusted alpha level (.02), revealed that Time 1 and Time 2 mean differences are approaching significance ($p= .03$). This indicates that learners' ratings for definite plurals in post-test 1 differ significantly from their ratings of this sentence type in the pre-test. In other words, learners' ratings for definite plurals in post-test 1 are significantly lower than at Time 1, which shows improvement after the intervention. Times 1 and 3 also differ significantly ($p< .02$). However, the mean ratings difference for Times 2 and 3 is not statistically significant ($p=1$). This indicates the improvement shown in post-test 1 is retained in post-test 2. The line graph in figure 21 shows the definite plural ratings over the three time points in this context.

Figure 21 NPG definite plural mean ratings in Time 1, 2 & 3 for intermediate-level learners (Error bars show standard deviation)
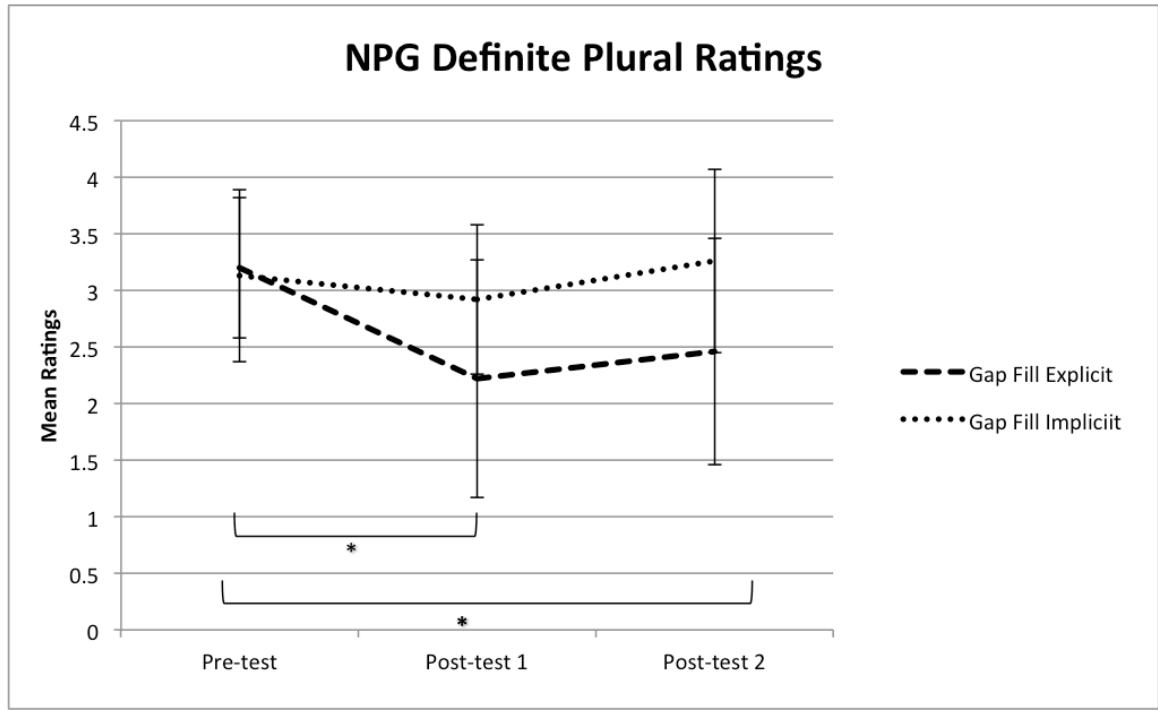
The following table summarises the results obtained from the mixed ANOVA tests in the NPG context.

Table 22 Summary of Noun-phrase Generics immediate and delayed post-test analysis
for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	Noun-phrase Generics					
	Definite Singular	**Indefinite Singular**	**Bare Singular**	**Definite Plural**	**Delayed Effect**	**Bare Plural**
Translation Explicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like		Already Target-like
Translation Implicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like		Already Target-like
Gap Fill Explicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Successful**	**YES**	**Intervention Unsuccessful**
Gap Fill Implicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Successful**	**YES**	**Intervention Unsuccessful**

6.2.2.4 Sentence-level generic context pre-test analysis

The pre-test analysis of SLG shows that the results in relation to the groups' ratings of
definite singulars, indefinite singulars, bare singulars and definite plurals differ
significantly from those of native speakers. This means that learners tended to interpret
definite singulars as acceptable, a performance which is non-target-like. They also
considered indefinite singulars to be unacceptable, which is again non-target-like.
Similarly, they judged bare singulars and definite plurals as acceptable, indicating a
non-target-like response. However, learners' bare plural ratings did not differ
significantly from native speakers' bare plural rating (H (4) = 5.95, p= .20), which
suggests learners interpreted bare plurals correctly. Therefore, this section does not refer
to bare plurals in the AJT in the assessment of the remaining results on the impact of the
intervention. This section reports the pre-test analysis of learners' ratings of definite
singulars, indefinite singulars, bare singulars and definite plurals.

Definite singulars

The Kruskal-Wallis test found a statistically significant difference across the five groups when rating definite singulars in SLG contexts (Gp1, *n*=18: Translation Explicit, Gp2, *n*=9: Translation Implicit, Gp3, *n*=15: Gap Fill Explicit, Gp4, *n*=12: Gap Fill Implicit, Gp5, *n*=23: Native Control); H (4) = 28.93, *p*< .001. The TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG recorded medians of *Md*= 1.50, 3, 2.75 respectively whereas, the NCG and the TEG medians were the same (*Md*= 1.25).

Follow up Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no statistically significant difference in regard to definite singular ratings for the TEG and the NCG; *U*= 205.00, *z*= -.05, and *p*= .96. Furthermore, the test showed no statistically significant difference in regard to the definite singular ratings of the TIG and the NCG; *U*= 68.00, *z*= -1.52, and *p*= .13. However, the test revealed a statistically significant difference in the definite singular ratings for the GFEG and the NCG; *U*= 41.00, *z*= -3.97, *p*< .001, and *r*= .64 (a large effect). Finally, the test yielded a statistically significant difference in terms of the definite singular ratings for the GFIG and the NCG; *U*= 35.50, *z*= -3.61, *p*< .001, and *r*= .60 (a large effect). As mentioned previously, this unexpected outcome led to exclusion of the translation groups from further analysis.

Indefinite singulars

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a statistically significant difference in the ratings of indefinite singulars in SLG contexts across the five groups; H (4) = 34.95, *p*< .001. The TEG, the TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG recorded medians (*Md*= 3.78, 3.75, 3, and 2.5 respectively), whereas the Native Group recorded (*Md*= 3.75).

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated the indefinite singular ratings of the TEG (*Md*=3.87, *n*=18), and the NCG, showing no statistically significant difference (*Md*=3.75, *n*=23); *U*= 201.50, *z*= -.16, and *p*= .87. Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U test yielded no statistically significant finding in the indefinite singular ratings for the TIG (*Md*=3.75, *n*=9) and the NCG (*Md*=3.75, *n*=23); *U*= 60.00, *z*= -1.94, *p*= .06. By

contrast, the test revealed a statistically significant difference in the indefinite singular ratings of the GFEG (*Md*=3.00, *n*=15) and the NCG (*Md*=3.75, *n*=23); *U*= 38.00, *z*= -4.13, *p*< .001, and *r*= .67 (a large effect). There was also a statistically significant difference in the indefinite singular ratings of the GFIG (*Md*=2.50, *n*=12), and the NCG (*Md*=3.75, *n*=23), *U*= 20.00, *z*= -4.22, *p*< .001, and *r*= .71 (a large effect). Consistent with these results, the assessment of the intervention will be conducted on the gap fill groups' data.

Bare singulars

The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated a statistically significant difference in the rating of bare singulars in SLG contexts across the five groups (Gp1, *n*=18: Translation Explicit, Gp2, *n*=9: Translation Implicit, Gp3, *n*=15: Gap Fill Explicit, Gp4, *n*=12: Gap Fill Implicit, Gp5, *n*=23: Native Control); *H* (4) = 50.30, *p*< .001. The TEG, the TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG recorded medians of *Md*= 1, 1.25, 2.5, and 2.75 respectively. The Native Group recorded *Md*= 1.

The Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant difference in the bare singular ratings of the TEG and the NCG; *U*= 204.00, *z*= -.14, and *p*= .89. In addition, the test revealed a statistically significant difference in the bare singular ratings of the TIG and the NCG; *U*= 56.00, *z*= -2.62, *p*< .01, and *r*= .46 (a large effect). The ratings for the GFEG, and the NCG differed significantly; *U*= 28.50, *z*= -4.79, *p*< .001, and *r*= .77 (a large effect). Finally, the Mann-Whitney U test showed a statistically significant difference in the bare singular ratings of the GFIG and the NCG; *U*= 2.50, *z*= -5.22, *p*< .001, and *r*= .88 (a large effect). Unlike previous generic sentence types' analyses, the TIG will be included in the coming analysis of bare singulars in SLG contexts, because this group's interpretation of bare singulars appeared to differ from that of native speakers. In summary, the results on the impact of the intervention on learners' bare singular ratings, which remain to be reported, include the TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG.

Definite plurals

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a statistically significant difference in the rating of this sentence type across the five groups; $H(4) = 27.91$, $p< .001$. The TEG, the TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG recorded medians (Md= 1.5, 2.5, 2.75 and 2.62 respectively). The NCG's median was 1.5.

The follow-up Mann-Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant difference in the definite plural ratings of the TEG (Md=1.50, n=18), and the NCG (Md=1.50, n=23); U= 204.500, z= -.067, and p= .94. There was also no statistically significant difference in the definite plural ratings of the TIG (Md=2.50, n=9), and the NCG (Md=1.50, n=23); U= 60.50, z= -1.83, and p= .067. The Mann-Whitney U test further indicated a statistically significant difference in the definite plural ratings of the GFEG (Md=2.75, n=15) and the NCG (Md=1.50, n=23); U= 35.50, z= -4.09, $p< .001$, and r= .66 (a large effect). Finally, the test yielded a statistically significant difference in the definite plural ratings of the GFIG (Md=2.62, n=12) and the NCG (Md=1.50, n=23); U= 38.00, z= -3.51, $p< .001$, and r= .59 (a large effect). As seen previously, only the gap fill groups were part of the tests assessing the effect of the intervention on the interpretation of this sentence type, as is reported in the following section. Table 23 below summarises the SLG pre-test results.

Table 23 Summary of Sentence-level Generics pre-test analysis for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	Sentence-level Generics				
	Definite Singular	**Indefinite Singular**	**Bare Singular**	**Definite Plural**	**Bare Plural**
Translation Explicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like
Translation Implicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	**Intervention reported**	Already Target-like	Already Target-like
Gap Fill Explicit	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	Already Target-like
Gap Fill Implicit	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	**Intervention reported**	Already Target-like

6.2.2.5 Sentence-level generic context post-tests analysis

A mixed ANOVA was conducted four times to ascertain the effect of the intervention on learners' ratings of definite singulars, indefinite singulars, bare singulars and definite plurals. These four sentence types were examined because the Gap Fill Explicit and the Gap Fill Implicit ratings of these sentence types differed significantly from the NCG's ratings, as reported in the previous section. In addition, the TIG's ratings for the bare singulars were found to differ significantly from the NCG's. Therefore, the mixed ANOVA included the two gap fill groups in all four sentence types tested. Additionally, the TIG was included in the bare singular sentence type test.

Definite singulars

The mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess the impact of the two intervention types (Gap Fill Explicit and Gap Fill Implicit) on the participants' ratings of definite singulars in SLG contexts, across the three time points. The test yielded no main effect of time; F (2, 50)= 1.89, and p= .16, indicating no improvement in the post-tests. The main effect comparing the two types of intervention was not significant either; F (1, 25)=. 16, and p= .69. This means the learners from the two groups performed similarly in Times 1, 2 and 3. Furthermore, there was no significant interaction found between intervention type and time; F (2, 50)= 1.37, and p= .26.

Indefinite singulars

Analysis indicated that the main effect of time to be not significant; F (2, 50)= 2.22, and p= .12. In addition, the main effect comparing the two types of intervention was also not significant; F (1, 25)=. 59, and p= .45. This indicates no difference in the performance of the two intervention groups across any of the three time points. Finally, there was no significant interaction found between intervention type and time; F (2, 50)= .12, and p= .89.

Bare singulars

As explained in the beginning of this section, three groups were compared to examine the effect of the intervention on the learners' interpretation of this sentence type. These are the TIG, the GFEG and the GFIG. Analysis yielded a highly significant main effect of time; F (2,66)= 5.48, p< .05, partial eta-squared= .142, indicating a large effect size. The main effect comparing the three types of intervention was insignificant; F (2, 33)=1.503, and p= .24. This indicates the three groups performed alike. Analysis further revealed a significant interaction between the intervention type and time; F (4, 66)= 4.56, p< .005, partial eta-squared= .216 suggesting a very large effect size.

Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction showed the mean ratings' differences between Times 1 and 2 were statistically significant (p= .02). Despite a statistical significance between the pre-test and post-test 1, the mean difference was not target-like. At Time 2 learners awarded higher ratings to bare singulars, which are ungrammatical in this context. At Times 1 and 3, the mean rating differences were not statistically significant (p= 1). Times 2 and 3 mean differences, however, approached statistical significance (p= .03). This indicates that learners judgment of bare singulars was increasingly non-target-like in the post-test 1 phase until the ratings reverted to pre-test levels, which are still considered non-target-like. Learners recorded a non-target-like mean rating increase in post-test 1; this determines the intervention given to the three groups of intermediate learners was ineffective as a tool for supporting recognition of bare singulars as inappropriate in SLG contexts.

Definite plurals

In this context, the GFEG and the GFIG were compared. The test showed a highly significant main effect of time; F (2, 50)= 8.05, p< .01, partial eta-squared= .244 (a large effect). The main effect of group type was not significant; F (1, 25)= .926, and p= .34. This indicates that groups did not differ in their ratings of definite plurals. There was also a significant interaction between intervention type and time; F (2, 50)= 4.42, p< .05, and partial eta squared= .150 (a large effect).

Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction showed the mean rating differences for Times 1 and 2 were statistically significant (p< .02). The Time 1 and Time 3 mean difference was not statistically significant (p=45). In addition, Times 2 and 3 was not statistically significant (p= .04). This suggests that learners showed less tendency to prefer definite plurals as grammatical on post-test 1, which is target-like. This indicates that the intervention given to the two groups of intermediate learners was an effective means of helping the learners to interpret definite plurals as inappropriate in the SLG context. However, this significance was not present in the results of post-test 2 as can be seen in the following figure.

Figure 22 SLG definite plural ratings in Time 1, 2 & 3 for intermediate-level learners (Error bars show standard deviation)
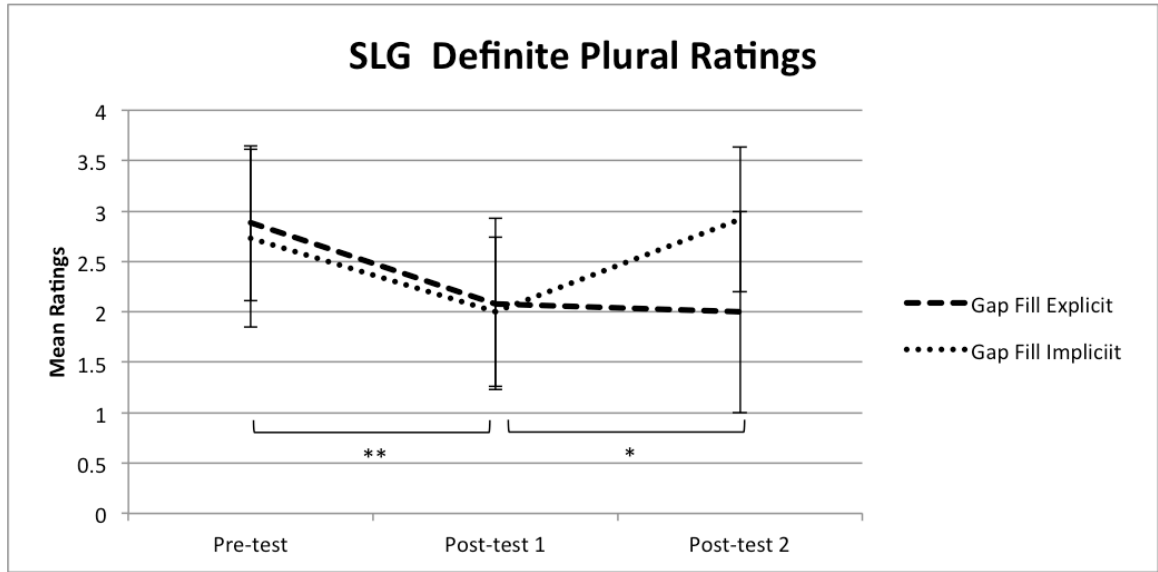
A summary of the SLG post-test analysis is given in Table 24 below.

Table 24 Summary of Sentence-level Generics post-tests analysis for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	Sentence-level Generics					
	Definite Singular	Indefinite Singular	Bare Singular	Definite Plural	Delayed Effect	Bare Plural
Translation Explicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	Already Target-like		Already Target-like
Translation Implicit	Already Target-like	Already Target-like	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	Already Target-like		Already Target-like
Gap Fill Explicit	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Successful**	**NO**	Already Target-like
Gap Fill Implicit	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Unsuccessful**	**Intervention Successful**	**NO**	Already Target-like

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6.2.2.6 Summary of intermediate proficiency learners' Acceptability Judgment Task results

In Noun-phrase Generic contexts, the TEG and the TIG were found to be target-like in their interpretation of definite singulars as grammatical in this context. They also matched native speakers' ratings for indefinite singulars as ungrammatical, thereby indicating that they do not assign a generic reading to this sentence type. However, the GFE and GFIGs were not target-like in their interpretation of bare plurals, definite plurals or bare singulars. The learners considered bare plurals unacceptable in generic statements, which is not correct. They also showed more acceptability for definite plurals and bare singulars, unlike the NCG.

Following the intervention, the analysis of learners' ratings of the three sentence types that were statistically significantly different from the NCG's ratings revealed an effect that was observed among the gap fill groups on definite plural ratings in the NPG contexts. The GFEG's and the GFIG's results showed significantly lower ratings for definite plurals on post-test 1 and post-test 2, indicating that the groups no longer assigned a generic reading to definite plurals, which is a target-like performance. However, the intervention was not successful with the bare singulars and bare plurals interpretation accuracy in the NPG context.

The SLG context results, on the other hand, showed the TEG to be the only group showing no difference in their ratings of the five sentence types in the SLG context compared to native speakers' ratings. The TIG also appeared to be target-like in all contexts, except in the case of the rating of bare singulars. The TIG showed a preference for bare singulars as acceptable, although this is ungrammatical. Conversely, the two gap fill groups showed a statistically different interpretation of all sentence types except for the bare plurals. They judged bare plurals as acceptable as the native speakers did. However, the gap fill groups accepted ungrammatical sentence types in this context, e.g. definite plurals, bare singulars and definite singulars. Furthermore, they rejected indefinite singulars, showing a non-target-like response.

The SLG intervention assessment demonstrated a positive effect in definite plural ratings, which is similar to that found for the NPG context. Learners in the gap fill groups showed a significantly reduced preference for definite plurals as generic in post-test 1. As a result, their ratings achieved a target-like accuracy following the intervention, although this positive effect did not continue on post-test 2. Moreover, analysis showed that the intervention had no effect on helping learners to accurately interpret definite singulars, indefinite singulars and bare singulars.

6.2.3 The intermediate proficiency learners' Elicited Written Production Task results

To analyse this task, native speakers were asked to take the same EWPT as the learners, using the same word prompts. The NCG's answers served as a baseline to compare the number of errors in the learners' writing by comparing learners' article choice with native speakers' article choice with the same word prompts. Accordingly, error rates for each context type were calculated by dividing the learners' number of errors in a particular context by the number of relevant contexts to give a percentage. Therefore, no scores were obtained from native speakers in this free production task, unlike the AET and AJT, and no statistical tests comparing learners and native speakers were run. This section reports the learners' error rates and standard deviation in each context in the three time points. The test contexts included here are definite specific, definite non-specific, indefinite specific, indefinite non-specific, NPG and SLG. Typically, learners from all four groups showed higher error rates in response to generic questions rather than non-generic ones. Table 25 shows the pre-test error rates, while Tables 26 and 27 show a + or – error rate based on how much the mean increased or decreased from the pre-test error rate. As a general trend, the immediate and delayed post-tests descriptive statistics showed decreased error rates in most contexts in post-test 1 and 2, but this trend is examined by means of inferential statistics in the following subsection to investigate the effectiveness of the intervention on learners' article use in each context separately.

Table 25 The Elicited Written Production Task pre-test error rates and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

		Context Type											
		Definite Specific		**Definite Non-specific**		**Indefinite Specific**		**Indefinite Non-specific**		**Noun-phrase generic**		**Sentence-level Generic**	
Group Type	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Translation Explicit	18	13	13	9	14	18	22	7	11	53	34	54	51
Translation Implicit	9	18	23	6	12	29	25	14	24	41	26	84	49
Gap Fill Explicit	15	8	11	1	4	19	17	8	17	34	27	83	50
Gap Fill Implicit	11	7	12	7	11	29	25	5	10	54	29	84	73

Table 26 The Elicited Written Production Task post-test 1 error rates and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

		Context Type											
		Definite Specific		**Definite Non-specific**		**Indefinite Specific**		**Indefinite Non-specific**		**Noun-phrase generic**		**Sentence-level Generic**	
Group Type	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Translation Explicit	18	−9	7	−7	12	+13	35	+14	26	−13	32	−9	56
Translation Implicit	9	−10	13	−6	0	+12	23	+33	45	−5	28	−7	60
Gap Fill Explicit	15	−8	0	−0	3	−4	13	+14	26	−17	15	+3	60
Gap Fill Implicit	12	−7	0	−6	5	−12	19	+14	25	−23	26	+2	47

Table 27 The Elicited Written Production Task post-test 2 error rates and standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners

Group Type	N	Context Type											
		Definite Specific		Definite Non-specific		Indefinite Specific		Indefinite Non-specific		Noun-phrase generic		Sentence-level Generic	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Translation Explicit	18	−6	12	−8	5	+9	28	+5	21	−13	36	−22	49
Translation Implicit	9	−17.5	16	−6	0	+1	26	+3	21	−1	31	−12	62
Gap Fill Explicit	15	−7	5	−1	0	+5	28	+4	17	−9	43	+3	56
Gap Fill Implicit	11	−1	9	−5	7	−0	36	+3	13	−10	35	−6	58

6.2.3.1 Elicited Written Production Task post-tests analysis

A mixed ANOVA was conducted six times to measure the intervention's effect on learners' article use in each context in the writing task. The reasons informing this choice are discussed in section 6.2.1.2 above. The results from each context are presented in detail below.

Effect of the intervention on article use in definite specific contexts

The mixed ANOVA was conducted to assess the impact of the four intervention types (Translation Explicit, Translation Implicit, Gap Fill Explicit and Gap Fill Implicit) on the participants' definite specific article use in the writing task across the three time points.

The analysis yielded a main effect of time; $F (1.717, 84.12)= 6.58, p< .005$, partial eta-squared= .118 (a large effect). The main effect comparing the four types of intervention was also significant; $F (3, 49)=5.18, p< .005$, partial eta-squared= .241 (a large effect).

This indicated a statistically significant difference in the four groups' use of articles in definite specific contexts. However, there was no significant interaction found between intervention type and time; $F (5.15, 84.12)= .53$, and $p= .75$.

To locate the source of the significant difference between the three time points, post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction were run. Pairwise comparisons showed the error rate difference for Times 1 and 2 were statistically significant ($p< .02$). The difference in Time 1 and Time 3 error rates was not statistically significant ($p= .08$). Similarly, Time 2 and Time 3 did not show a statistically significant difference ($p= .79$). This suggests error rates decreased in post-test 1, but learners' performance was less accurate in the delayed post-test than the immediate post-test as seen in the figure below.

Figure 23 Article use in definite specific context in Time 1, 2 & 3 for intermediate-level learners (Error bars show standard deviation)
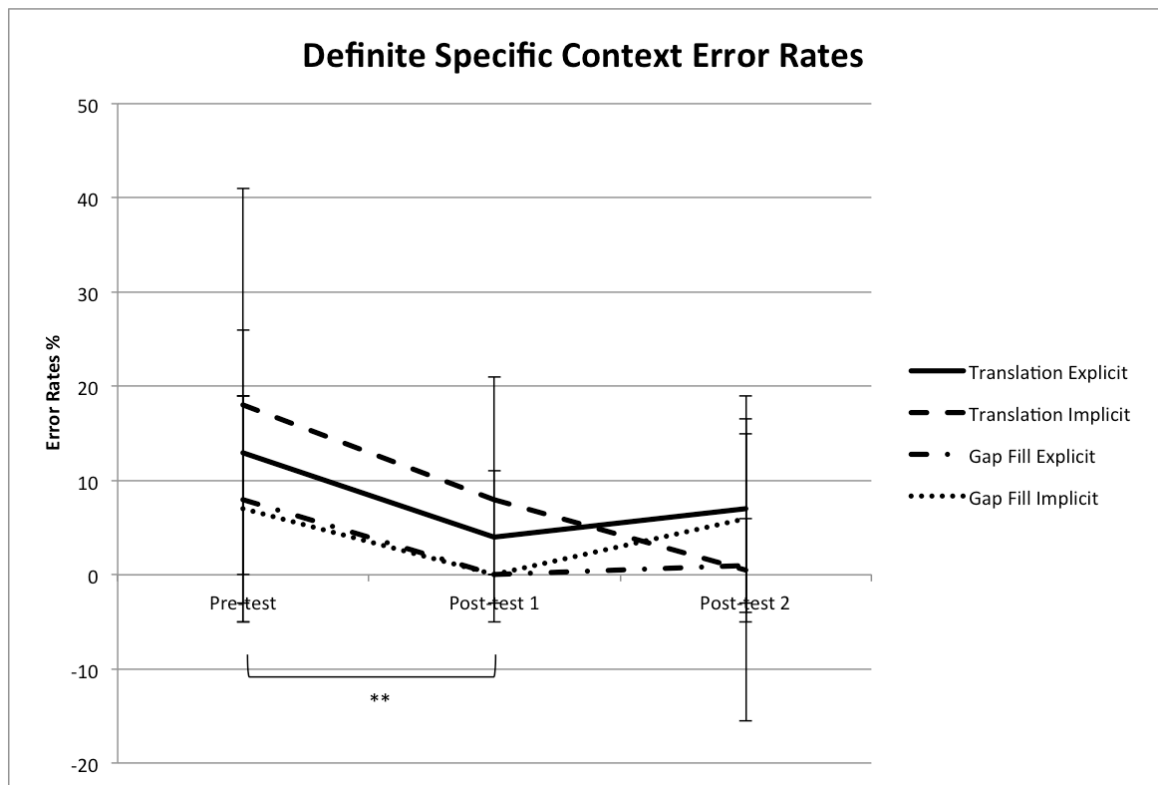
Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction (.008) further indicated the definite specific error rate for the TEG is not significantly different from that of the GFEG (p=. 03). In addition, TIG's error rate differs significantly from the GFEG's (p= .008). Combinations from other groups do not reveal any significant differences. That is, the GFEG outperformed the translation groups in post-test 1 context, reporting (0) error rates (pre-test= 8 and post-test 1= −8) (Table 21 & 22).

Effect of the intervention on article use in definite non-specific contexts

The mixed ANOVA showed main effect of time; F (1.43, 69.87)= 6.26, p< .05, partial eta-squared = .113 indicating a large effect size. The main effect comparing the four types of intervention was found to be not significant; F (3, 49)= 1.79, and p= .16. This indicates there are no statistically significant differences in the four groups' error rates in this context. In addition, there is no significant interaction between intervention type and time; F (4.27, 69.87)= .91, and p= .47.

Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction showed that error rate differences in Time 1 and Time 2 are not statistically significant (p= .09). However, the error mean difference in Time 1 and Time 3 was statistically significant (p< .02). Time 2 and Time 3 mean differences were not statistically significant (p= 1). This suggests that the error rate decreases for post-test 1 were not significant, but the decrease for post-test 2 was significant. Learners' performance in this context over time is illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 24 Article use in definite non-specific context in Time 1, 2 & 3 for intermediate-level learners (Error bars show standard deviation)
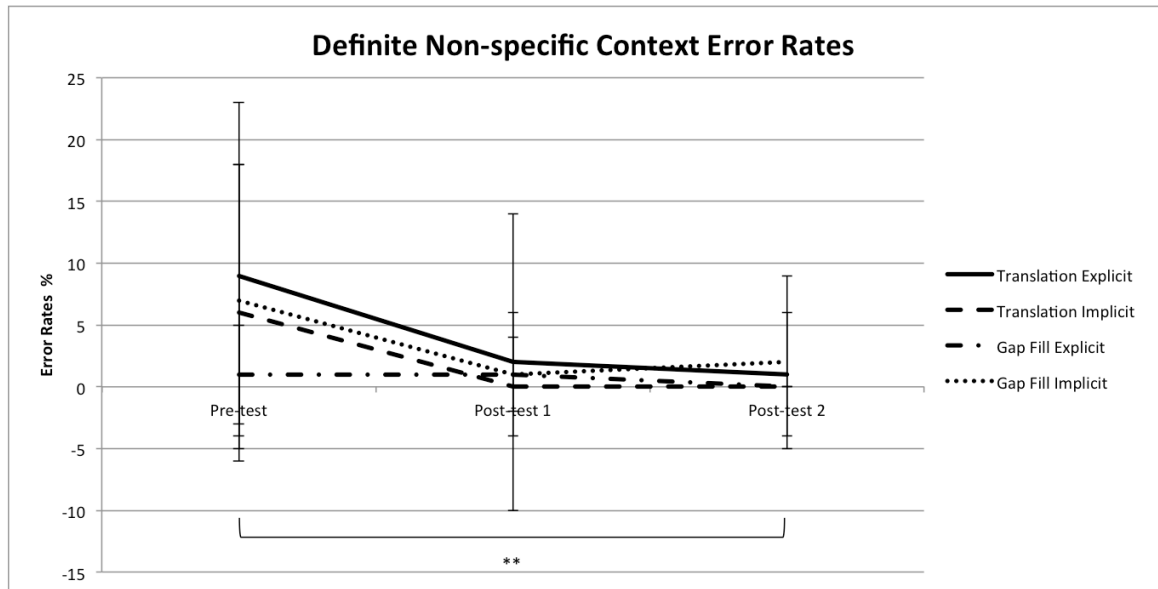
Effect of the intervention on article use in indefinite specific contexts

The statistical results showed no main effect of time; $F (1.77, 87.06)= .35$, and $p= .68$. The main effect of group type is not significant either; $F (3, 49)= 1.35$, and $p= .27$. Moreover, there was not a significant interaction between intervention type and time; $F (5.33, 87.06)= 1.02$, and $p= .42$. The results indicated no statistical evidence in favour of instruction in this context of article use.

Effect of the intervention on article use in indefinite non-specific contexts

 The ANOVA test showed a main effect of time as $F (1.70, 83.29)= 10.54$, $p< .001$, partial eta-squared= .177 (a large effect). The main effect comparing the four types of intervention is found to be not significant; $F (3, 49)= 2.06$, and $p= .11$. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference in the four groups' error rates in indefinite non-specific contexts. Furthermore, there was no significant interaction between intervention type and time; $F (5.09, 83.28)= .76$, and p= .58.

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Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction indicated the difference in error rates for Time 1 and Time 2 were statistically significant ($p<. 02$). Times 1 and 3 error mean difference was not statistically significant ($p=. 77$). Similarly, Times 2 and 3 showed a statistically significant difference ($p<. 02$). This suggests the error rate increase (non-target-like) in both post-test 1 and post-test 2 differs significantly from the pre-test error rate in this context of article use. Learners' error rates in this context over the three time points are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 25 Article use in indefinite non-specific context in Time 1, 2 & 3 for intermediate-level learners (Error bars show standard deviation)
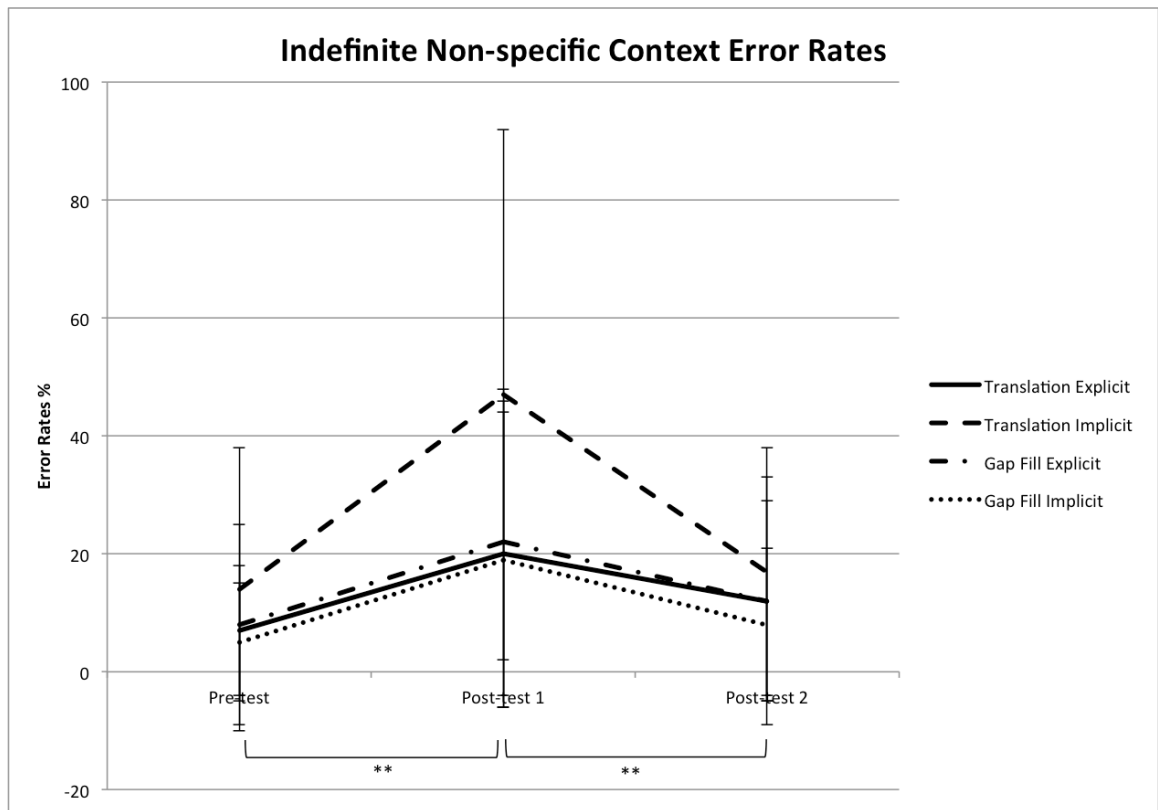
Effect of the intervention on article use in Noun-phrase Generic contexts

The mixed ANOVA revealed a significant effect of time; $F (2, 98)= 3.30, p< .05$, partial eta-squared= .16 (a large effect). The main effect of group type was not significant, $F (3, 49)= 1.1$, and $p= .35$, indicating no difference in the four groups' error rates in NPG

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contexts. Additionally, there was not a significant interaction between intervention type and time; $F_{(6, 98)}= .76$, and $p= .60$.

Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that error rate differences at Times 1 and 2 were statistically significant ($p< .02$). The error rates differences for Times 1 and 3 were not statistically significant ($p= 1$). Similarly, Time 2 and Time 3 showed no statistically significant difference ($p= .25$). This indicated an immediate effect from intervention, although later participants were found to regress to the pre-test level in post-test 2 as can be seen in the following figure.

Figure 26 Article use in Noun-phrase Generic context in Time 1, 2 & 3 for intermediate-level learners (Error bars show standard deviation)
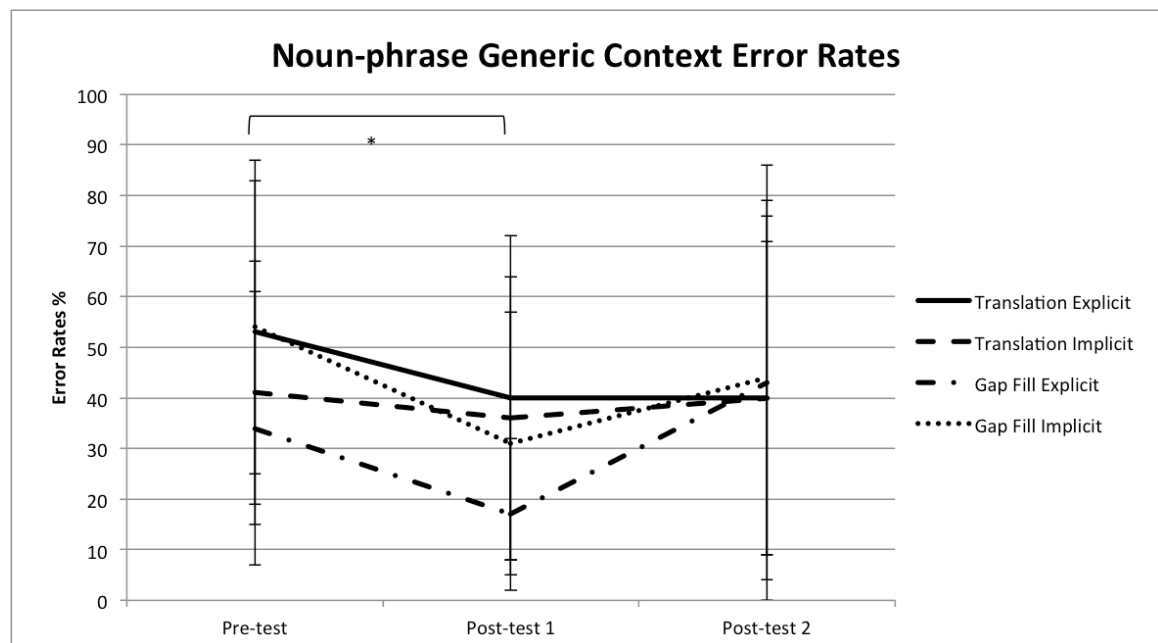
Effect of the intervention on article use in Sentence-level Generic contexts

Analysis yielded no significant effect of time; $F_{(2, 98)}= .71$, and $p= .49$. The main effect of group type was also not significant; $F_{(3, 49)}= 1.16$, and $p= .33$. This suggests no statistically significant difference in the four groups' error rates for article use in

SLG context. Finally, there is no significant interaction between intervention type and time; $F(6, 98)= .19$, and $p= .98$.

6.2.3.2 Summary of the intermediate proficiency learners' Elicited Written Production Task results

The EWPT results showed that the intermediate-level learners are sensitive to specificity by scoring the highest error rate in [– definite, +specific] context among the other three non-generic contexts. The results also showed that the intermediate-level learners are much more inaccurate with generic article use than with generic article use.

The EWPT results provide evidence in favour of classroom intervention in some areas of article use, but not in all contexts. Intervention has had a positive effect on definite specific, definite non-specific, and NPG contexts. In definite specific article use, evidence in favour of classroom intervention is attested to in post-test 1 results. However, learners' initial progress was found to have regressed by the time of post-test 2, and their performance returned to that at the starting point in Time 1. A delayed effect was found for the definite non-specific article use, in which learners showed significantly fewer errors in post-test 2 than the pre-test stage. Noun-phrase Generic errors further exhibited the same pattern of positive effects on post-test 1 in addition to a regression to Time 1 error rates in this test category. Meanwhile, classroom instruction was found to be ineffective in both of the indefinite contexts. Classroom instruction did not show any effect on the SLG context either.

6.3 The low proficiency learners' results

The results of the three experimental tasks' (AET, AJT and EWPT) data obtained from the low proficiency group are reported in this section

6.3.1 The low proficiency learners' Article Elicitation Task results

We began this chapter by looking at the results of the intermediate proficiency group as obtained from the AET, the AJT and the EWPT. Because the results showed that around half of the intermediate learners were already target-like in the pre-test contexts, it was important to see if the expected results are revealed within a lower level group. The low proficiency group included 13 participants who were at the elementary language level, according to the Oxford proficiency measure. The TEG included 3 low proficiency learners. The TIG included 4 low proficiency learners. The GFE and the GFIGs included 2 and 4 low proficiency learners respectively. Thus, the low proficiency group's sample size was very small and not representative. Consequently, a descriptive statistical account of their data is provided in this section and the subsequent ones, and no inferential statistics tests were run for this group because of the sample size. Another decision made due to the small number of learners in this group was to combine the four intervention groups to make one group of 13 learners. That is, the grouping variable is not be considered in analysing the data of the lower level learners since assessing the effect of each intervention type by measures of mixed ANOVA is not applicable here due to the very small sample size. It should, additionally, be noted here that the results obtained from this group were not statistically compared with native speakers' results for the same reason. Therefore, the low proficiency group results should be treated with caution; the results should be considered as suggestive rather than indicative.

The descriptive pre-test results of the low-level learners AET (see table 28) show patterns that are consistent with the theoretical assumptions made in this research and to the intermediate group's performance in this task. To put it simply, the low-level learners' lowest mean score in the AET (M=3.9) is found in the [−definite, +specific] context. This mean score demonstrates more errors in this context than in the other three non-generic contexts, which goes in accordance with the performance of the higher proficiency group.

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Table 28 The Article Elicitation Task pre-test mean score and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Specific		Definite Non-specific		Indefinite Specific		Indefinite Non-specific	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	4.1	.72	4.7	1	**3.9**	.78	4.4	1.38
Native Control	23	6	0	5.69	.47	5.78	.52	5.61	.66

The descriptive immediate post-test results of the low-level learners on the AET (see table 29) show that the learners did not benefit from instruction in articles with definite structures. On the other hand, mean scores of the indefinite structures show improvement (bolded figures). The mean score of the [−definite, +specific] increased from (3.9) to (4.3). Similarly, the mean score of [−definite, −specific] increased from (4.4) to (5).

Table 29 The Article Elicitation Task immediate post-test mean score and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Specific		Definite Non-specific		Indefinite Specific		Indefinite Non-specific	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	3.9	1.34	4.7	1.4	**4.3**	1	**5**	1
Native Control	23	6	0	5.69	.47	5.78	.52	5.61	.66

Lastly, the descriptive delayed post-test results of the low-level learners on the AET (see table 30) show a pattern of decreased mean scores that is similar to what was found for the intermediate-level learners. Low-level learners' mean scores in the delayed post-test are lower than their mean scores in the pre-test. Possible reasons why such a pattern was found are discussed in Chapter 7.

Table 30 The Article Elicitation Task delayed post-test mean score and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Context Type							
		Definite Specific		Definite Non-specific		Indefinite Specific		Indefinite Non-specific	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	3.8	1.7	2.7	1.8	3.8	1.2	3.8	1.2
Native Control	23	6	0	5.69	.47	5.78	.518	5.61	.66

To summarize, the low proficiency learners, as did the intermediate proficiency learners, committed more errors of article use in [−definite, +specific] context. Additionally, low-level learners showed a pattern of improvement on the immediate post-test. This improvement was evident in indefinite contexts whether [−definite, +specific] or [−definite, −specific]. No such improvement was found with the two definite contexts. However, this improvement disappeared on post-test 2.

6.3.2 The low proficiency learners' Acceptability Judgment Task results

This section provides a descriptive account of the low-level learners' mean ratings for the five sentence types (definite singular, indefinite singular, bare singular, bare plural and definite plural) in NPG and SLG contexts at the three time points. Again, unlike the analysis of the intermediate group's data, the grouping variable was not considered in

this analysis because of the small sample size and no statistical comparison with native speakers was made.

6.3.2.1 Noun-phrase Generic context results

In NPG contexts, definite singulars and bare plurals are expected to receive higher ratings than the other sentence types, as indicated by the data obtained from the native speakers. The descriptive pre-test results of the low proficiency learners' AJT data in Noun-phrase Generic contexts (see table 31) show that the low-level learners' mean ratings of 'definite singulars' and 'bare plurals' were higher than those of all other sentence types in this context (as seen by the bolded figures). Their ratings of the two target sentence types were very close to the ratings of the Native Control Group. The low proficiency group's performance is also consistent with the performance of the intermediate group. Furthermore, the low group showed overacceptance of 'definite plurals', which is similar to what was found in the data of the intermediate group.

Table 31 Noun-phrase Generic pre-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	**2.8**	.83	2.5	.42	2.3	.76	2.4	.85	**3.1**	.59
Native Control	23	2.84	.48	1.57	.53	1.65	.53	1.86	.66	3.82	.26

The descriptive results of the low-level learners' AJT immediate post-test data (see table 32) showed that the low-level learners' ratings of 'bare plurals' increased, which indicates improvement. An improvement is further seen in the decreased ratings of 'definite plurals' in this context. Improvements are shown in this table by the bolded figures.

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Table 32 Noun-phrase Generic immediate post-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	2.7	.60	2.6	.53	2.5	.45	**2.1**	.78	**4**	.52
Native Control	23	2.84	0	1.57	.53	1.65	.53	1.86	.66	3.82	.26

The descriptive results of the low-level learners' AJT delayed post-test data (see table 33) show decreased performance of the target sentence types. Low-level learners' ratings of the target sentence types were less accurate than their ratings of these sentence types in the pre-test. Again, the bolded figures show the trend in these results, which is a lower rating for 'definite singulars' and 'bare plurals' than the pre-test ratings.

Table 33 Noun-phrase Generic delayed post-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	**2.4**	1.2	3.1	.41	2	.69	2.3	1.2	**2.1**	.69
Native Control	23	2.84	0	1.57	.53	1.65	.53	1.86	.66	3.82	.26

To summarize, the low proficiency learners' ratings of 'definite singulars' and 'bare plurals' were target-like prior to intervention. Their ratings in the immediate post-test showed improvement in the interpretation of 'bare plurals' as grammatically acceptable in this context and in the interpretation of 'definite plurals' as grammatically

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unacceptable in NPG context. However, the delayed post-test ratings showed less accurate interpretation of the target sentence types than did the pre-test ratings.

6.3.2.2 Sentence-level Generic context results

In the SLG context, indefinite singulars and bare plurals are expected to receive higher ratings than the other sentence types, as shown in the data taken from the native speakers. The descriptive pre-test results of the low-level learners' AJT data in Sentence-level Generic contexts (see table 34) show that the learners' interpretation of the target-like sentence types in this context is less accurate than their interpretation of the target sentence types in the NPG context. With SLG, low-level learners overaccepted 'definite singulars' and 'bare singulars', which is not-target-like. However, their ratings of 'indefinite singulars' are relatively high. Overall, the low proficiency learners are less accurate than the intermediate level learners in their interpretation of the target sentence types in the Sentence-level Generic context.

Table 34 Sentence-level Generic pre-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	**2.9**	.93	**2.8**	.97	**3.7**	.52	2.4	.38	2.4	.78
Native Control	23	1.47	.534	3.83	.21	1.08	.23	1.59	.58	3.67	.31

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The descriptive immediate post-test results of the low-level learners' AJT data in the Sentence-level Generic context (see table 35) show improvement in the low-level learners' increased mean ratings of 'indefinite singulars', decreased mean ratings of 'definite plurals' and decreased mean ratings of 'bare singulars'. However, learners' overacceptance pattern of 'definite singulars' persisted in the immediate post-test.

Table 35 Sentence-level Generic immediate post-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	**3.1**	.58	**3**	.52	**2.4**	.52	**1.8**	.89	2	.76
Native Control	23	1.47	.53	3.83	.21	1.08	.23	1.58	.56	3.67	.31

The descriptive delayed post-test results of the low-level learners' AJT data in the Sentence-level Generic context (see table 36) also show improvement in the learners' increased mean ratings of 'indefinite singulars'. However, in this context learners' mean ratings of 'definite singulars' remained high, and their mean ratings of 'bare plurals' remained low.

Table 36 Sentence-level Generic delayed post-test mean ratings and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Group Type	N	Definite Singular		Indefinite Singular		Bare Singular		Definite Plural		Bare Plural	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Low Proficiency	13	**2.8**	.92	**3.1**	.66	2.1	.48	2.3	.98	**2.2**	1
Native Control	23	1.47	.53	3.83	.21	1.08	.23	1.59	.58	3.67	.31

To summarize, the low proficiency learners' ratings of 'indefinite singulars' and 'bare plurals' were not target-like prior to intervention. Their ratings in the immediate post-test showed improvement in the interpretation of 'indefinite singulars' as grammatically acceptable in this context. No improvement was found in the rating of 'bare plurals', which remained low in both post-tests.

6.3.3 The low proficiency learners' Elicited Written Production Task results

Unlike the intermediate group's error rates in the writing task, the low proficiency group's error rates were less consistent. The reason for this inconsistency is that low learners' writing showed substantially more article omission than did the intermediate learners' writing. Generally speaking, the low proficiency learners' pre-test results (see table 37) showed more writing errors in both contexts of generic article use, which corresponds with the results taken from the intermediate-level learners in section 6.2.3. Additionally, low-level learners scored a higher error rate in [−definite, +specific] than in the other three non-generic contexts, which echoed the intermediate-level learners' performance in the writing task. Again, there was no attempt to compare low-level leaners' performance with native speakers' performance by means of inferential statistics.

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Table 37 The Writing Task pre-test error rates and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Context Type											
Definite Specific		Definite Non-specific		Indefinite Specific		Indefinite Non-specific		Noun-phrase Generic		Sentence-level Generic	
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
26	15.5	6	9.75	**27.75**	37.75	19	14.5	**58.75**	24.25	**130.75**	27.35

The descriptive immediate post-test results of the low-level learners' EWPT (see table 38) showed that the low-level learners' error rates decreased from their the pre-test ratings (a negative score (–) is based on how much the mean decreased from the pre-test level).

Table 38 The Writing Task post-test 1 error rates and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Context Type											
Definite Specific		Definite Non-specific		Indefinite Specific		Indefinite Non-specific		Noun-phrase Generic		Sentence-level Generic	
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
−15.25	16.25	−3.25	5.75	−17	26.75	−4.75	12.25	−2	20	−68	29.5

The descriptive delayed post-test results of the low learners' EWPT (see table 39) showed that the low-level learners' error rates increased in most of the test contexts (a positive (+) or a negative (–) score is based on how much the mean increased or decreased from the pre-test level), demonstrating a performance less accurate than the immediate post-test performance.

Table 39 The Writing Task post-test 2 error rates and standard deviation for the low-level learners

Context Type											
Definite Specific		Definite Non-specific		Indefinite Specific		Indefinite Non-specific		Noun-phrase Generic		Sentence-level Generic	
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
−14.5	11.75	+1.75	6.5	+11	19.25	+2.25	14.25	+3.75	22.75	−38.5	67

To summarize, low proficiency learners' writing data showed more errors when using articles in generic contexts than in non-generic contexts. This performance is similar to that of the intermediate-level learners'. Low-level learners' errors in all contexts were reduced at post-test 1. However, learners' article use was less accurate on the delayed post-test than on the immediate post-test.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the three experimental measures for each group of language proficiency (intermediate and low). The intermediate proficiency group results showed that learners are sensitive to specificity because their performance in the indefinite non-specific context was significantly different from that of the English native speakers. Furthermore, the results showed no evidence in favour of classroom instruction/intervention in this context of article use.

Analysis of generic article use/interpretation showed that intermediate-level learners were mostly target-like in their judgments of target sentences in both generic contexts, rating indefinite singulars significantly higher in the SLG context than in the NPG context while rating bare plurals high in both contexts. The only non-target like performance was overaccepting definite plurals in the NPG context and overaccepting

definite singulars and definite plurals in the SLG context, which is predicted based on L1 transfer effects. Additionally, results showed evidence in favour of instruction in the interpretation of 'definite plurals' as ungrammatical in NPG and SLG contexts. Intervention had a delayed effect in NPG, but not in SLG, contexts. The results of the writing task showed that intermediate learners committed more errors in generic article use than in non-generic article use. The EWPT results provided positive evidence of classroom intervention in some areas of article use, but not in all contexts.

The low proficiency group results showed patterns that are mostly consistent with the intermediate group results. That is, low-level learners were less target-like in indefinite specific contexts than in the other three non-generic context types. They were also accurate in interpreting generic structures in NPG contexts, but less accurate in SLG contexts. Their writing further revealed more errors with article generic use than with non-generic use.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the classroom experimental study are summarized and discussed in relation to the two main research questions and their subsequent hypotheses. The chapter also reviews some implications for second language research, namely in relation to the acquisition of article semantics, instructed SLA and translation in language teaching. Some methodological considerations regarding one of the tasks involved in this project are also highlighted. Finally, some areas for future research are identified.

7.2 Summary of the Results

As reported in chapter 6, the results were taken from two groups of learners: the intermediate proficiency group and the low proficiency group. For the low-level group results, no inferential statistics were run, and the data were only analysed descriptively as the group was very small in size (13 learners). Therefore, the discussion in this chapter mainly focuses on the intermediate group results, as the intermediate group was bigger and thus more representative.

One important outcome that resulted from the pre-test analysis (reported in chapter 6) is that some experimental groups, specifically those whose learners belong to intermediate language proficiency levels, were exceptionally target-like prior to the intervention in certain contexts; these groups were consequently excluded from further analysis of these particular contexts in post-tests 1 and 2. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that these groups' pre-test performances were not significantly different from the performance of the native speakers. Exceptions found in the behaviour of these excluded groups might be due to learners' individual variations. Since participants are students studying linguistic courses at the Department of European Languages and Literature, they might be more linguistically sophisticated than other L2 learners of English who are taking general language courses. Therefore, any generalisations or conclusions given in this chapter are mainly related to the groups of learners who were

included in the pre-test analysis and the subsequent analysis of results including immediate and delayed testing. This section presents a summary of the research results in terms of the two research questions.

7.2.1 The non-generic research question

RQ1. Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English show target-like use of English articles in non-generic contexts before and/or after exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity, and exposure to translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts?

The analysis of the Article Elicitation Task revealed that the intermediate-level Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners were target-like in using articles in the contexts of [+definite, +specific], [+definite, −specific] and [−definite, −specific] prior to the intervention. However, Saudi learners (all experimental groups (total n=39) except for the Gap Fill Explicit Group (n=15) were non-target-like in the [−definite, +specific] context. The analysis, which included the two post-tests for the [−definite, +specific] context, revealed no positive effect of any of the three intervention types on the 'indefinite specific' use of English articles in post-test 1 and post-test 2. There was also no difference in the performance of learners across these intervention groups.

The analysis of the Elicited Written Production Task revealed that the intermediate-level learners showed a higher mean error in the [−definite, +specific] context than in [+definite, +specific], [+definite, −specific] and [−definite, −specific] prior to the intervention. After the intervention, the results showed that intervention had a positive initial effect on [+definite, + specific] (an effect that did not last until post-test 2) and a delayed effect on [+definite, −specific] (an effect that only appeared in post-test 2). Meanwhile, classroom instruction was found to be ineffective in the indefinite contexts (i.e. [−definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific]).

Along the same lines, the low proficiency mean scores (obtained from the Article Elicitation Task) show patterns that are consistent with the patterns of article use found in the intermediate group's performance. That is, the low proficiency group's lowest mean score was found in [−definite, +specific]; the demonstration of more errors in this context is in accordance with the performance of the higher proficiency group. Additionally, low-level learners scored a higher error rate in [−definite, +specific] than in the other three non-generic contexts in the writing task. The effect of the intervention was not assessed by means of inferential statistics because of the low-level group's small sample size.

7.2.2 The generic research question

RQ2. Can Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English show target-like use/interpretation of English articles in generic contexts before and/ or after exposure to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and exposure to translation activities that target article use in generic contexts?

The pre-test analysis of the Acceptability Judgment Task revealed that the intermediate-level Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English (all four experimental groups) were target-like in their interpretation of 'definite singulars' as grammatically acceptable and 'indefinite singulars' as grammatically unacceptable in Noun-phrase Generic (NPG) contexts. The two Gap Fill Groups (total n=27) were not target-like in their interpretation of 'bare plurals' as grammatically acceptable, 'definite plurals' as grammatically unacceptable and 'bare singulars' as grammatically unacceptable in the NPG context. That is, they considered bare plurals unacceptable in generic statements, which is not the case. They also showed more preference for 'definite plurals' and 'bare singulars' as acceptable, unlike the Native Control Group. After the intervention, analysis that involved the ratings of these three sentence types (bare plural, definite plural and bare singular) showed a positive effect on learners' interpretation of the 'definite plural' sentence type. The results showed significantly lower ratings for 'definite plurals' in post-test 1 and post-test 2, indicating that learners no longer assigned a generic reading to 'definite plurals', which indicates improvement towards a

target-like interpretation. However, the intervention was not successful with 'bare singulars' and 'bare plurals' interpretation accuracy in the NPG context as learners' ratings remained high for the former and low for the latter.

The pre-test analysis of the Acceptability Judgment Task revealed that the intermediate-level Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English (all groups) interpreted 'bare plurals' correctly in Sentence-level Generic (SLG) contexts. The two Gap Fill Groups showed a preference for 'bare singulars', 'definite plurals' and 'definite singulars' as acceptable, which are ungrammatical here. Furthermore, they rejected 'indefinite singulars', showing a non-target-like response. After the intervention, the results showed a positive effect in 'definite plural' ratings, which is similar to what was found in the NPG context. Learners showed a significantly lower preference for 'definite plurals' as generic. Consequently, their ratings of 'definite plurals' achieved a target-like accuracy following the intervention, but this positive effect had dissipated by post-test 2. Moreover, it was found that the intervention did not have an effect on helping learners to accurately interpret 'definite singulars', 'indefinite singulars' and 'bare singulars' in the SLG context.

The analysis of the Elicited Written Production Task revealed that the intermediate-level learners' mean errors in both generic contexts (NPG and SLG) were relatively high. After the intervention, the results showed that intervention had a positive initial effect on article use in the NPG context. NPG errors further exhibited the same pattern of positive effects in post-test 1 period, in addition to a regression to Time 1 error rates in this test category at Time 3. Meanwhile, classroom instruction was found to be ineffective in the SLG context. There was also no difference across the four intervention groups.

Consistent with the intermediate proficiency learners' results in generic contexts, the low-level group's mean ratings of 'definite singulars' and 'bare plurals' were higher than those of all other sentence types in the NPG context. In the SLG context, on the other hand, the same learners showed less accurate ratings than the intermediate group with 'bare plurals' and 'definite singulars', but the low-level learners still showed high

ratings of 'indefinite singulars' in this context, which is a target-like performance. Similar to the performance of the intermediate-level learners in the writing task, the low proficiency learners showed more errors in their writing when using articles in generic contexts than in non-generic contexts.

7.3 Evidence for and against specific hypotheses

In this section, the results of the study are discussed in the light of the specific research hypotheses. The hypotheses were mainly based on non-generic article use, generic article use and the effect of explicit instruction and translation activities on article use/interpretation accuracy.

7.3.1 Hypotheses about the non-generic use of articles

H1. A. *In accordance with IKW's (2004) article semantic account, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are expected to show target-like use of articles in [+definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific] contexts before exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity and to translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts.*

The findings of the Article Elicitation Task (AET) and the Elicited Written Production Task (EWPT) that involved the [+definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific] contexts support this hypothesis. Analysis shows that Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are target-like in contexts where definiteness and specificity match; namely in [+definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific] contexts. All four experimental groups behaved similarly in these contexts and no exceptions were found. This finding is congruent with IKW's (2004) article choice predictions. IKW (2004) argued that learners would not have difficulty in these contexts based on the assumptions IKW made for the Article Choice Parameter and the Fluctuation Hypothesis. This finding, additionally, goes in accordance with previous research that tested the assumptions of Ionin and colleagues' account, as seen in Garcia-Mayo (2009), Hawkins et al. (2006),

Sarko (2009) and Snape (2006). Comparison of the current work with these studies in particular is essential because these researchers tested learners whose L1 encodes articles on the basis of definiteness much like the Arabic language does. As indicated earlier, this study differs from the aforementioned studies in testing only one group of learners (+ART) whereas the other studies compared two groups of learners (+ART and −ART).

Moreover, studies that dealt with the acquisition of the English article system by learners whose L1 encodes articles on the basis of 'definiteness' (e.g. Garcia Mayo, 2009) found that learners' L1 transfer of definiteness (i.e. their knowledge of definiteness) will lead to accurate article use in these contexts. As such, this current research finding is also consistent with Full Transfer/ Full Access (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994, 1996) and indicates that intermediate-level learners can successfully transfer/access their knowledge of definiteness (the feature +/−definite) to L2 articles and acquire the accurate use of articles in English once they have been exposed to the language (input triggers).

In spite of the fact that learners achieved target-like accuracy in these two contexts, there was a reoccurring error in most of the learners' productions in the writing task's [+definite, +specific] question. The error was using the 'null' article with the word 'Sphinx'; this is a usage opposite to the native speakers' production in this particular question, in which every native speaker tested used 'the'. In relation to this error, I argue, similar to Snape (2006), that learners might be treating the word 'Sphinx' as a proper noun and thinking that no article is required especially because the word is capitalised. Thus, capitalisation is a visual prompt, which might have also led learners to conclude that 'Sphinx' is a proper noun. This performance might be an outcome of English language textbooks' article rules, which usually state that articles are not used with proper nouns. In other words, even though learners have acquired the [+definite] feature, they sometimes fail to use it in some contexts (Wakabayashi, 2009). If this explanation is on the right track, this error is hence lexically motivated and consequently not driven from the assumptions of article semantics. Lexically motivated article errors were not investigated in this study, but they could explain why learners err

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in contexts that theoretically are not expected to be problematic for L2 learners of English. This suggests that lexical classification awareness can help reduce article errors that deal with matching the correct article feature to the correct lexical category (Wakabayashi, 2009).

The absence of problematic lexical items (such as Sphinx) could account for learners' higher mean accuracy in the immediate post-test in the [+definite, +specific] and [−definite, −specific] contexts of the writing task. Learners' accuracy in these contexts at the post-test stage is in line with IKW's predictions and supports the assumption that learners' errors on the pre-test are more likely to be lexically motivated. Following this conclusion, what appeared to be evidence in favour of instruction in article meaning based on statistical test results may in fact be the effect of the absence of certain 'vocabulary items' that might be difficult for learners to categorise and consequently to assign the appropriate article to.

H1. B. *In accordance with IKW's (2004) article semantic account, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are expected to show non-target-like use of articles in [+definite, −specific] and [−definite, +specific] contexts before exposure to explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity and to translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts.*

The analysis of the AET and EWPT that involved the [+definite, −specific] and [−definite, +specific] contexts partly supports this hypothesis. It shows that Saudi Arabic speakers are not target-like in their use of articles in [−definite, +specific], but are target-like in [+definite, −specific]. Learners' target-like use of articles in [+definite, −specific] goes against Ionin and colleagues' predictions of article choice; those predictions, originally illustrated in table 2, are repeated here as table 40 for ease of reference, but goes in line with L1 transfer effects. The explanation of learners' target-like use of articles in [+definite, −specific] is twofold. First, learners' target-like use of articles in [+definite, −specific] is consistent with Master's outline of article acquisition order mentioned earlier, which indicates that learners who come from (+ART) language backgrounds are more successful with the definite article than with

the indefinite article and tend to correctly use the definite article from the earliest stages of acquisition. Second, learners' target-like use of articles in [+definite, −specific] goes in accordance with the article semantics field in which the discourse specificity distinction is marked only in natural language data in 'indefinite' contexts as witnessed in the Samoan data taken from Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992) in examples (17), (18), (19) and (20) in Chapter 2.

Table 40 Predictions for article choice in L2 English (from IKW, 2004, p. 19)

	[+definite]: target *the*	[−definite]: target *a*
+specific	correct use of *the*	**overuse of *the***
−specific	**overuse of *a***	correct use of *a*

Marking specificity in 'indefinite' contexts in natural language data could, therefore, explain why learners were not target-like in [−definite, +specific], a finding that is compatible with IKW's (2004) predictions. All intermediate-level experimental groups (total n=39) except for one group (the Gap Fill Explicit, n=15) were non-target-like in the [−definite, +specific] context in the AET. In addition, all groups showed a higher error rate in this context than in the other three non-generic structures in the writing task. Because some natural languages (such as Samoan) mark specific/nonspecific in this context, it follows that this information is part of the specificity parameter setting. L2 learners are assumed to have access to the specificity parameter and also to the definiteness parameter. Based on the Fluctuation Hypothesis, it is expected that learners will produce errors in this context. In other words, learners may sometimes choose 'a/an' correctly in indefinite contexts based on the lack of shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer (the definiteness setting) and sometimes incorrectly choose 'the' based on speakers' knowledge of the referent regardless of hearers' state of knowledge (the specificity setting).

Other factors also contribute to the explanation of learners' performance in [−definite, +specific]. Among these factors are overgeneralisation errors that might have resulted from previous instruction in the English article system. Standard instruction (as pointed

out in Chapter 2, section 2.9.2) usually uses the term 'specific' as a synonym for 'definite'. That is, standard article instruction often associates the use of 'the' with the speaker's having a particular referent in mind and the use of 'a/an' with the speaker's not having a particular referent in mind. Consequently, it could be that the learners used 'the' here because they associated its use with speakers' knowledge of the referent. This justification was also used by Snape and Yusa (2013), though they found that their (−ART) L1 learners of English overused 'a' in [+definite, −specific], which contradicts the findings of the current study. In this respect, Snape and Yusa argued that their learners might have associated 'a' with the lack of speaker's knowledge of the referent. In spite of the fact that the findings of this study contradict Snape and Yusa's, both findings are supported by the same argument. That is, learners' reliance on what Ionin et al. (2009) called the 'explicit strategy' could account for both Snape and Yusa's results (i.e. more errors in [+definite, −specific]) and the current project's results (i.e. more errors in [−definite, +specific]).

While Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners' performance in [−definite, +specific] is consistent with IKW's (2004) prediction, this finding challenges existing work on the acquisition of English articles by learners who come from (+ART) L1s. In particular, this work found a different pattern of article use than what was found by Garcia-Mayo (2009), Hawkins et al. (2006), Sarko (2009) and Snape (2006). These previous studies found that L2 learners with an L1 that encodes articles on the basis of definiteness do not fluctuate in contexts where definiteness and specificity do not match. However, this project found that the learners participating in this project (i.e. learners with an L1 that encodes articles on the basis of definiteness) clearly showed evidence of fluctuation in the [−definite, +specific] context. This evidence is based on the results of the repeated-measures ANOVAs (reported in section 6.2.1.1), which showed that specificity had an effect on intermediate learners' choice of 'the' vs. 'a/an' where it did not have an effect on the performance of the native English speakers. Also, by comparing learners' performance in this context and the Native Control Group's in this exact context (reported in section 6.2.1.2), a clear statistical significant difference was found.

The discrepancy between the current research's findings and the findings of previous work could be attributed to two main reasons. First, this difference could possibly be attributed to certain linguistic characteristics of the Arabic article system (lack of an indefinite article) that might differ from other languages involved in previous work (Greek and Spanish). Second, participants in this study (compared to Sarko (2009)) used EFL learners, which might account for some of the differences in the findings found in this study. In relation to IKW's (2004) mention of input triggers as an important factor for learners to set the appropriate parameter value, it could be argued that learners in this study are receiving less input in comparison with ESL learners, which suggests that it would take them longer to set the ACP to the appropriate setting.

Though the findings of the current project regarding learners' fluctuation in 'indefinite specific' might lend direct support to Sarko's (2009) prediction that the Arabic language lacks D in the representation of indefinites and that learners are performing similarly to (−ART) learners, the overall findings of the present study do not unanimously support Sarko's conclusion. The situation here shows that even though the learners participating in this study (i.e. the Hejazi Arabic students) and Sarko's learners (Syrian Arabic students) belong to the same language origin, their performance in the [−definite, +specific] context is different. To be more precise, Sarko's learners showed fluctuation in this context only in the presence of relative clause modification; no fluctuation was found elsewhere. My learners, in contrast, fluctuated in this context in the absence of relative clause modification. In this regard, I argue that additional measures of specificity (besides the FCET used by Sarko and this study) should be constructed to test learners' article production, especially in contexts where definiteness and specificity do not match, before any conclusions are drawn about the status of the indefinite article in Arabic as an explanation for learners' article production. A single measure is by no means satisfactory and cannot explain clearly why learners who belong to the same language background and language proficiency level can perform differently in the same context (i.e. [−definite, +specific]).

7.3.2 Hypotheses about the generic use/interpretation of articles

H1. A. In accordance with Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer/ Full Access Hypothesis, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'definite singulars' equally high in Noun-phrase Generic and Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and to translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

Ionin et al. (2011) predicted that their Korean and Russian (−ART languages) speakers would rate 'definite singulars' equally low in both contexts of genericity. However, a different pattern of use emerged in my learners' data that shows support for this hypothesis. Participants' ratings of 'definite singulars' were not statistically significantly different from native speakers' ratings in the NPG context as indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis test, which shows a target-like interpretation. On the other hand, Saudi learners showed overacceptance of 'definite singulars' in the SLG context, as indicated by the statistical analysis, which shows a non-target-like interpretation. Even though learners' rating of 'definite singulars' in the SLG context was non-target-like, they still showed more preference for 'definite singulars' in the NPG context than in the SLG context. To the best of my knowledge, since little has been said about genericity in Arabic, the Arabic language does not encode the distinction between NPG and SLG morphologically, nor semantically; nonetheless, I argue that access to universal semantics as proposed by Slabakova (2008) is most likely why learners have a higher rating for 'definite singulars' in the NPG context than in the SLG context and higher rating for 'indefinite singulars' in the SLG context than in the NPG context. The learners' non-target-like performance in the SLG context is consistent with Full Transfer since genericity is only morphologically realized in Arabic by the use of the definite article; this usage leads learners to the pattern of overacceptance of 'definite singulars' having a generic reading in the SLG context. These results could be further explained by a survey conducted by Ionin et al. (2011), which found that the genericity distinction is never taught in L2 classrooms and therefore learners' distinction of the two generic structures cannot be attributed to classroom instruction.

H1. B. *In accordance with Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer/ Full Access Hypothesis, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'definite plurals' equally high in Noun-phrase Generic and Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and to translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.*

Findings show support for this hypothesis. Saudi learners' rating of 'definite plurals' in NPG was close to their rating of 'definite plurals' in SLG. Statistical analysis further indicates that ratings of 'definite plurals' of two of the four groups (the gap fill Groups) were statistically significantly different than those of the NCG in both contexts. Overacceptance of 'definite plurals' is evidence of L1 transfer where definite plurals are assigned a generic reading in Arabic.

H2. A*. By assuming access to semantic principles proposed by Slabakova (2008), Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will rate 'indefinite singulars' and 'bare plurals' higher than other sentence types in Sentence-level Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and to translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.*

The findings are partly congruent with Slabakova's (2008) proposal that semantic principles are available to all L2 learners, though the form/meaning (morphology and semantics) mappings are difficult for L2 learners when such mappings differ in the L1. The Saudi Arabian learners of L2 English rated 'indefinite singulars' as having a generic reading in the SLG context, which is a target-like performance. However, statistical analysis shows that two of the four groups (the gap fill ones) showed a statistically significantly different lower rating of 'indefinite singulars' than did the Native Control Group. Interestingly, the gap fill groups gave higher ratings to 'definite plurals' than the translation groups in this context, which shows a clearer effect of L1 transfer that led to inaccurate ratings of the 'indefinite singulars'. What can be concluded from this is that Saudi Hejazi learners are more target-like in rating 'definite singulars' in NPG than in rating 'indefinite singulars' in the SLG context, which is contra Ionin et al. (2011).

Ionin et al. (2011) argued that Korean and Russian learners will be more successful with 'indefinite singulars' than with 'definite singulars' because 'definite singulars' require the acquisition of an additional feature [+taxonomic] which (according to Ionin et al.) is more difficult to acquire than the [−/+definite] feature. Because participants in the current project come from a language background where genericity is realised by 'definite singulars' and 'definite plurals' and thus have the [+taxonomic] feature in their L1 grammar, their performance with 'definite singulars' was target-like. These learners contrasted Ionin et al.'s Korean and Russian participants, whose native languages lack articles and consequently made it difficult for the participants to acquire the [+taxonomic] feature.

Furthermore, Saudi learners were target-like in interpreting 'bare plurals' as generic in the SLG context even though 'bare plurals' are not realised generically in Arabic, which is again consistent with Slabakova's (2008) proposal and the findings of Ionin et al. (2011). Statistical analysis supports this because the learners' ratings did not differ significantly from the NCG ratings of 'bare plurals'. We can say, based on these findings, that data provides evidence in support of this hypothesis.

H2. B. By assuming access to semantic principles proposed by Slabakova (2008), Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English will also rate 'bare plurals' higher than other sentence types in Noun-phrase Generic contexts before being exposed to explicit instruction in genericity distinction and to translation activities that target article use in generic contexts.

This hypothesis was partly supported by the findings of the research as half of the learners' rating of 'bare plurals' was target-like (as hypothesized), while two groups' (the gap fill ones) rating of 'bare plurals' was statistically significantly different from the NCG's ratings. The target-like performance of the translation groups in this context could be attributed to semantic universals. Conversely, the non-target-like performance of the gap fill Groups could be related to L1 transfer since these groups also rated 'definite plurals' higher than did the translation groups in the NPG context. In other words, the gap fill groups interpreted 'definite plurals' generically and therefore

assigned a lower rating to 'bare plurals'. What is interesting is that the gap fill groups' 'bare plurals' ratings were non-target-like in the NPG context, but target-like in the SLG context, and the gap fill groups rated 'definite plurals' higher in the NPG context than in the SLG context. This could signal their awareness of the distinction (through access to semantic principles) between the NPG and the SLG contexts by overextending use of the definite article to plurals as well in NPG contexts, in which only 'definite singulars' are grammatical.

7.3.3. Hypotheses about the effect of explicit instruction

H1. *If Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are not target-like in [+definite, −specific] and/or [−definite, +specific] at the pre-test stage, then learners who received explicit instruction in definiteness and specificity will achieve better accuracy when using articles in these contexts after the intervention than those who received implicit instruction.*

This hypothesis was not supported in this project by findings of the AET and the EWPT. The post-test results of the [−definite, +specific] context in the AET, the only context in which the role of instruction was explored, taken from the three groups as reported earlier showed that both types of instruction (explicit as well as implicit) did not have an impact on learners' article choice. Even though all groups showed a higher mean score in the immediate post-test, the mean difference between the pre-test and the immediate testing was not significantly different. Furthermore, there was no significant difference across the two types of instruction. This finding is consistent with Snape and Yusa's (2013) study, in which they found no effect of the instruction they used, which is less than the instruction used in this study, on learners' article use. Additionally, these results go against the well-known claims of the meta-analyses which have demonstrated the superiority of explicit instruction over implicit instruction (cf. Andringa et al., 2011; N. C. Ellis, 1994; Norris and Ortega, 2000; Spada and Tomita, 2010 among others), but they are in line with counterevidence found in Sanz and Morgan-Short (2004) and VanPatten and Oikkenon (1996). One explanation for such discrepancy in the findings of the field of instructed SLA could be that, according to Sanz and Morgan-Short

(2004), "different assessment measures might be responsible for the contradictory results, as is typical in SLA studies" (p. 71).

Research attempts to demonstrate a relationship between instruction and SLA research usually face many difficulties (Doughty, 1991). Consequently, numerous factors could account for finding no effectiveness for the explicit instruction utilized in this project. One factor reported previously is that the nature (degree of complexity) of the linguistic structure determines the effectiveness of instruction (Housen et al., 2005). One possibility that this implies is that morphosyntactic properties of language such as articles might be a complex area where instruction might not easily result in a positive effect. As was indicated by Snape and Yusa (2013), the notions of definiteness and specificity might be too complex and too subtle to be taught, especially if instruction is given in the L2.

Another factor that might be responsible for the ineffectiveness of explicit instruction in SLA research is inadequacy in the research design, as argued by Doughty (1991). In this regard, the period of instruction in this experiment was short and probably insufficient to cover three complex semantic notions. Learners participating in this project were explicitly taught definiteness and specificity over a period of one week and a half, during which they spent three hours in total receiving instruction. Consequently, the period of instruction might have been insufficient for such complex semantic notions to be fully learned and practiced.

Finally, another possible factor that might be involved is that, during the period of instruction, learners' attention to the explicit rules given to them could not be controlled for. Some learners might not have been listening during the experimental session or may have been distracted by other academic, health or social matters or mobile phones during the intervention time. Such possible lapses in the attention of some learners could explain why learners' performance did not improve after intervention. Källkvist (2004) supported this possibility, as it is impossible "to gain control over students' different attention span patterns in lessons" or to know if "the attention level of a

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particular student was low for an entire lesson due to fatigue or stress" (p. 170-171). A possible lack of attention would definitely have an impact on the learning process.

H2. *Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English who received explicit instruction in genericity distinction, as compared to learners who received implicit instruction, will show better accuracy in contexts where their ratings of target generic sentence types significantly differed from the ratings of native speakers prior to the intervention.*

The pre-test analysis showed that learners in the two gap fill groups were non-target like in their interpretation of 'bare singulars', 'bare plurals' and 'definite plurals in the NPG context prior to the intervention. They were also non-target-like in their interpretation of 'definite singulars', 'indefinite singulars', 'bare singulars' and 'definite plurals' in the SLG context prior to the intervention.

The analysis of the immediate and delayed post-tests showed that intervention was successful with 'definite plurals' in both types of generics regardless of the intervention type. To put it more simply, learners in the Gap Fill groups showed lower ratings for definite plurals after intervention, which indicates an improvement in the immediate post-test. This improvement was retained in the delayed post-test for the NPG context, but not in the delayed post-test for the SLG context. This suggests that learners' performance in the immediate testing was less affected by L1 transfer after the learners were introduced to article pedagogy. The analysis further revealed a pattern of improvement in rating 'definite plurals' in NPG contexts in learners' writing in post-test 1 regardless of the intervention type, but this performance regressed to the pre-test level in the delayed test. The results of the SLG context in the writing task, however, showed no effect of the intervention on either post-tests.

The outcome of the post-test analysis suggests that L1 transfer persists in learners' interpretation as well as production on the delayed post-test. A study where intervention is designed to be longitudinal might be more effective in reducing L1 transfer errors in generic use and interpretation. In particular, it might help learners whose L1 interprets

'definite plurals' generically to avoid overacceptance/overuse of this sentence type with both types of generics.

H3. *Explicit instruction in definiteness, specificity and genericity will result in long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.*

Since explicit instruction did not have any immediate effect, it was important for the purpose of this study to see if any effect would appear later. The delayed post-test results showed that neither type of instruction had any short-term or long-term effects. No comparison can be made regarding the effect of instruction in the long-term with previous research since it is readily acknowledged by Norris and Ortega (2000) and Spada and Tomita (2010) that very little research reports long-term effects of explicit instruction.

What this study also found is that some learners' performance on the delayed test was even worse than their initial performance on the pre-test. The regression detected in post-test 2 could be attributed to the period in which learners took this test. The delayed post-test was held during the very last weeks of the academic semester, which coincided with final exams. Learners probably were distracted by their exams or may not have been motivated to take the tasks seriously since they had taken them twice before (in the pre-test and the immediate post-test).

Such findings do not show a clear effect on implicit knowledge since an effect on implicit knowledge entails automatization of linguistic structures under investigation and consequently the ability to retrieve the items learned in the long term. Results show support for Lightbown's (1983) argument that what is learned quickly is forgotten equally fast. The findings further point to the need of longitudinal studies of L2 acquisitional phenomena as was suggested by Norris and Ortega (2003). In this case, for example, a long-term effect may have been achievable if learners had received sufficient instruction and practice to transform their explicit knowledge of articles into implicit (automatic) knowledge.

7.3.4 Hypotheses about the effect of translation in language teaching

H1. *If Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English are not target-like in [+definite, −specific] and/or [−definite, +specific] at the pre-test stage, then learners who received translation activities that target article use in non-generic contexts will achieve better accuracy when using articles in these contexts than those who received gap fill activities.*

The results obtained from the AET and the EWPT do not support this hypothesis. Neither type of activities (translation and gap fill) had a clear effect on learners' article performance. The lack of exercise impact could be related to the fact that instruction in complex semantic notions requires more practice to achieve a clear effect. As teaching definiteness and specificity lasted for three hours only and half of this time was dedicated to instruction, the time spent on translation activities was clearly insufficient. This is especially because translation activities differ from gap fill activities in that translation activities require more 'cognitive load' than do gap fill and consequently require more time (Källkvist, 2004). Therefore, little can be said about the effect of translation as a language-teaching tool since the duration of the intervention in this study was not enough for conclusions to be drawn on this matter. Designing longitudinal studies such as Källkvist's (2008) in which more time is allocated for translation activities will provide a conclusive answer as to whether or not translation activities can be helpful in highlighting form/meaning mappings of articles for L2 learners.

While this project shows no clear effect of translation activities, it also shows that using translation activities did not cause any decrease in learners' performance or interference errors compared to the gap fill activities. In other words, using translation activities in conjunction with other types of exercises that mainly target the L2 in a homogenous classroom environment might not lead to inaccurate L2 performance as believed.

H2. Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English who received translation activities that target article use in generic contexts, as compared to learners who received gap fill activities, will show better accuracy in contexts where their ratings of target generic sentence types significantly differed from the ratings of native speakers prior to the intervention.

The outcome of the post-test analysis suggests that translation activities did not have a particular effect on learners' interpretation and production of English articles in generic contexts. Current findings in generic contexts suggest that L1 transfer (overacceptance of definite plurals) persists in learners' interpretation as well as production in the delayed post-test. It is hard though to be conclusive about the effect of translation from such a short course of instruction. Longitudinal studies might shed more light on whether translation activities can be effective in reducing L1 transfer errors in generic use and interpretation. In other words, translation activities that are practiced over a considerable amount of time might help learners whose L1 has 'definite plural generics' to avoid overacceptance/overuse of this sentence type with both types of generics in English.

H3. Translation activities that target generic and non-generic article use will result in long-term gains as tested by the delayed post-test.

Again, this hypothesis was not supported by the current findings. The delayed post-test did not show any evidence in favour of translation. In other words, no long-term effect was detected. For this reason, it is difficult to say that translation can help in developing implicit knowledge of the English article system since implicit knowledge requires automatic target-like use. Learners' performance on the delayed post-test showed decreased accuracy that was even lower than the pre-test level. As noted, this could be related to the fact that the learners were probably distracted by their final exams. It could also be the case that the learners were exposed to translation activities dealing with definiteness, specificity and genericity structures for only a short amount of time, and for that reason they did not have time to fully practice the use of articles through translation. Consequently, everything they learned in this short period was forgotten by

the time of the delayed test. Conducting classroom intervention studies in a longitudinal way will likely give a conclusive answer about the effect of translation exercises in the acquisition of morpho-syntactic properties of language in the long term. Support for longitudinal studies that dealt with translation exercises is reported previously as in the work of Källkvist (2008), who found that though the difference between her 'translation group' and her 'no translation group' was not significant, it did approach significance (p=0.07), which went against her 2004 pilot study (conducted over a short course of time) where no positive effect of translation was reported.

7.4 Implications for SLA research

In this section, the research implications for the Article Choice Parameter, the Fluctuation Hypothesis, instructed SLA and translation in language teaching are spelled out.

7.4.1 In relation to article semantics

The first research question investigated in this research relates to whether Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners of English exhibit the patterns of non-generic article use that were predicted by IKW (2004) and in what way their article production is influenced by L1 transfer. The results suggest that the production of English articles by Arabic-speaking learners, whose L1 encodes articles on the basis of definiteness as does the English language, shows a pattern of fluctuation between definiteness and specificity similar to the pattern shown by L2 learners who come from languages that do not have an article system. This is not consistent with the findings from a number of studies in the field (Garcia-Mayo, 2009; Hawkins et al., 2006; Sarko, 2009; and Snape, 2006) who found that learners whose L1s encode definiteness will successfully transfer this knowledge to English, and consequently these learners will not fluctuate in contexts where definiteness and specificity do not match.

The second part of the first research question, which relates to the effect of L1 transfer on learners' article use in non-generic contexts, is answered through the learners' target-like performance, which was found in three out of the four non-generic contexts tested in this study. Learners appeared to be successful in transferring their knowledge of definiteness in these particular contexts of article use. The experiment reported here clearly demonstrated L2 learners' transfer to L1 grammar as proposed by Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer Hypothesis.

Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners' fluctuation (using 'the' instead of 'a/an') in the [−definite, +specific] context raises two theoretical questions related to the nature of L1 transfer. Both questions are inspired by Whong-Barr (2006), who argued that the role of L1 beyond the initial stage of acquisition is not entirely clear and that SLA research should attempt to explicitly articulate what exactly transfers. These questions are: (1) What linguistic properties are exactly transferred to the L2? (2) If we are to assume a Full Transfer / Full Access approach, what language properties form the initial stage of L2 learning, and what properties appear later as part of interlanguage development? These questions emerged because the learners' L1 background does not differ from English in that definiteness is realized morphologically, specificity is not realized morphologically, and the distinction between specific vs. non-specific can be interpreted from context. Hence, if learners are successfully transferring their knowledge of definiteness into English by using 'the', which corresponds to the Arabic 'al-' in definite contexts, why did the learners fail to correctly assign 'a/an', which corresponds to the Arabic 'null', in indefinite non-specific contexts? Would this mean that morphological properties are transferred whereas the mapping of form/meaning to articles is difficult to transfer because this mapping differs from the L1?

In a similar vein, learners' were found to successfully use 'the' in all definite contexts except with the word 'Sphinx'. This suggests that learners were able to transfer their knowledge of the morphological realization of definiteness, but could not map the morphology onto its appropriate lexical category. Thus, "in the absence of agreement as to the domain of 'L1 grammar', what transfers remains controversial" (Stringer, 2008, p. 234). This first theoretical question directly feeds the second in the sense that it

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is not clear what linguistic properties of the L1 form the initial stage and what elements of the L1 can be transferred at a later stage of acquisition. Learners' fluctuation could be interpreted as a developmental stage in interlanguage, which does not necessarily mean a failure in transferring L1 properties. In other words, Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners' article use in this context could be, as put by Whong-Barr (2006), "a manifestation of IL development as it interacts with transfer" (p. 196).

The second research question relates to whether Saudi Arabian learners are able to distinguish between the two types of generics even though this distinction does not morphologically exist in Arabic, and to whether their use/interpretation of generics is influenced by L1 transfer. The results suggest that L2 learners are able to differentiate between NPGs and SLGs. This is compatible with findings from Ionin et al. (2011) that Korean and Russian learners were aware of the genericity distinction (even though their L1s do not have an article system) and is in line with Slabakova's (2008) proposal of semantic principles.

The second part of the second research question, which relates to the effect of L1 transfer on learners' article use/interpretation in generic contexts, is answered through learners' overacceptance of 'definite singulars' with SLGs and of 'definite plurals' with both types of generics. Learners appeared to transfer their L1 generics knowledge that only definite singulars or definite plurals are allowed in generic contexts; this transfer resulted in a non-target-like generic use/interpretation of articles. The findings support the Full Transfer Hypothesis, thus demonstrating that learners' L1 grammar forms the initial stage of acquisition.

7.4.2 In relation to instructed SLA

One of the main aims of this project was to see whether explicit instruction on article semantics could lead to better accuracy of article use/interpretation and in which contexts learners could benefit from instruction. Even though the statistical findings of this experiment did not lend support to instructed SLA, article instruction that is linguistically informed could have the potential to help L2 learners overcome article

misuse, especially 'substitution' errors, if the experimental limitations could be overcome.

However, the outcome of this experiment stresses the fact that the success of explicit instruction is related to many factors. These factors include the nature of the linguistic item that will be studied, the duration of the course, the language proficiency level of the learners and their state of acquisition prior to the intervention course. While the linguistic structure and the language proficiency levels were controlled for in this experiment, there was no control over the state of learners' knowledge; some of the learners were found to be exceptionally target-like in certain contexts, which resulted in having fewer participants in the complete analysis. Accordingly, the theoretical background motivating the current study implies that linguistic structures that show form/meaning mapping differences between learners' L1 and L2 is a good candidate for instruction, but several other factors must be considered as well if researchers are to obtain a conclusive result regarding the role of explicit instruction in article pedagogy.

The findings also highlight issues to restate the argument found in Rebuschat (2013), in which he raised the question of what it means to have acquired unconscious (implicit) knowledge according to the measure in question. That is, classroom researchers attempting to test the effect of instruction on implicit knowledge should carefully choose the appropriate measure that taps into this unconscious knowledge (e.g. Hulstijin, 2005; Ellis, 2005b; and Rebuschat, 2013). They should also attempt to see the effect of instruction in the long term (Ellis, 1997).

7.4.3 In relation to translation in language teaching

The project also investigated the effect of translation as a language-teaching tool. Translation in language teaching is readily assumed to be bad in the context of learning an L2. However, Cook (2010) and Leonardi (2010), among others, argued that it is time to use translation activities in L2 classrooms along with other types of exercises, especially in homogenous classroom environments. Even though the findings of this project did not show evidence in favour of translation, neither did the findings show

evidence against translation. Studies exploring the effect of translation exercises should consider the fact that translation requires a greater cognitive load than exercises that mainly target the L2. This factor requires researchers to consider allocating more time for translation exercises than for other types of language activities. In addition, it is important that the translation exercises are chosen carefully to highlight the linguistic phenomenon under investigation. These factors are, therefore, essential in experimenting with the role of pedagogical translation.

7.5 Discussion of the experimental tasks

The experiment conducted in the current project used three different tests to measure the acquisition of English articles. These tests are: the Article Elicitation Task (i.e. the AET, which was adapted from Ionin et al., 2009), the Acceptability Judgment Task (i.e. the AJT, which was adapted from Ionin et al., 2011) and the Elicited Written Production Task (i.e. the EWPT, which was designed by the researcher. Discussion in this section will revolve around the first test (the AET), as there are some issues about the quality of the test (partly mentioned in Trenkic, 2008) and about the quantity (being the only test for specificity so far). No such issues were found (during the course of the experiment) in relation to the other two tests.

Trenkic's (2008) main critique of the Forced Choice Elicitation Task (FCET) used in IKW (2004) is that it conflated two unrelated factors: the speaker's explicit statement of his/her familiarity with the person/object being referred to as 'explicitly stated knowledge' (ESK) and the speaker's intention to refer 'specificity'. Examples taken from IKW's test are illustrated in (72) and (73) below (the target form is bolded and the statement of explicitly stated knowledge is underlined). Trenkic further explained that the speaker in (72) explicitly states that she has knowledge of the "real-world identity" of the referent and her "noteworthy" properties (e.g. name: Angela; character: nice), which makes this context [+specific]; the speaker in (73), conversely, denies knowledge of the "real-world identity" of the referent, and the example is consequently classified as not having properties worthy of note, and hence as [−specific]. According to Trenkic

(2008), IKW's learners' article choice was influenced by whether familiarity with the person being referred to was claimed or denied in the test; as such, the learners were employing "extra-linguistic considerations and strategies" rather than acknowledging specificity as 'noteworthiness' (p. 9).

(72) **[−definite, +specific]**

Gary: I heard that you just started college. How do you like it?

Melissa: It's great! My classes are very interesting.

Gary: That's wonderful. And do you have fun outside of class?

Melissa: Yes. In fact, today I'm having dinner with **a girl** from my class – her name is Angela, and she is really nice!

(73) **[−definite, −specific]**

At a university

Professor Clark: I'm looking for Professor Anne Peterson.

Secretary: I'm afraid she is busy. She has office hours right now.

Professor Clark: What is she doing?

Secretary: She is meeting with **a student**, but I don't know who it is.

Trenkic (2008) suggested that the Fluctuation Hypothesis should thus be tested on examples such as (74), in which no conflation of explicitly stated knowledge and specificity as 'noteworthiness' exists (denial of both identity of the referent and characteristics). In (74), the speaker appears to have a referent in mind (the merchant banker who Peter is engaged to), but the speaker does not know her name or her characteristics. However, this context is still classified as [+specific], as tested by the appropriate use of 'this' in this context, which is considered as a marker of specificity as argued by Ionin (2003). In this context, the speaker clearly has an intention to refer, that is to say something about Peter's fiancé in spite of the fact that the speaker is not familiar with the referent.

(74) **[−definite, +specific]**

Office gossip

Gina: . . . and what about the others?

Mary: Well, Dave is single, Paul is happily married, and Peter . . . he is engaged to
a/this merchant banker , <u>but none of us knows who she is, or what she's like.</u>

<div align="right">(Taken from Trenkic, 2008, p.9)</div>

In response to Trenkic (2008), Ionin et al. (2009) argued that the operationalization of specificity as 'explicitly stated knowledge' is supported by specificity marking in indefinite contexts as seen in natural language data. They further argued that "the operationalization of specificity as ESK influenced not just L2-English learners' judgments, but those of the native English speakers as well" (p.353).

Based on the issues raised by Trenkic (2008) and the position of explicitly stated knowledge in the test (to be explained shortly), I argue that different measures of specificity should be constructed to tease apart specificity as 'explicitly stated knowledge' and specificity as 'noteworthiness'. The main reason behind my argument does not stem from a disagreement with IKW's operationalization of specificity as 'explicitly stated knowledge', but because of the position of this explicitly stated knowledge in the test. In all of IKW's test items (see 72 & 73 above as examples), statements of explicitly stated knowledge were placed at the very last sentence of the dialogue. This could lead to the possibility that some learners might be answering the test without reading the very last bit. If this is the case for many learners, then the Forced Choice Elicitation Task might not be an accurate measure for specificity.

As one suggestion for different tests of specificity, researchers can design tests that rely on video films in which a meaningful context is acted showing clearly the state of speakers and hearers' knowledge of the referent and whether the speakers has a noteworthy property in relation to the object/individual being referred to. Another suggestion, could be measuring the electrical activity of the human brain (through ERP) in relation to specific vs. non-specific structures as a linguistic stimulus.

A final note to be made about the FCET is related to quantity. In most of the studies reported in this thesis (Ionin et al., 2004; Garcia-Mayo, 2009; Hawkins et al., 2006; Snape, 2006; and Snape and Yusa, 2013 among others), versions of the same FCET were mainly used by these researchers to measure specificity. In this regard, I side with Norris and Ortega (2003) in that "SLA researchers must acknowledge that a single measure will not provide a sufficient evidence for informing the range of interpretations typically sought in most SLA studies" (p.748). In consequence, even if there are no issues raised about quality of this test, being the only test for specificity as a semantic notion suggests a strong need for additional types of measures. Therefore, I argue that no conclusive statement about the validity of the Fluctuation Hypothesis can be achieved until more measures of specificity are constructed and successfully tested on learners from various L1 backgrounds.

7.6 Summary of findings and directions for future research

The current research replicated the study of IKW (2004) to test non-generic use of English articles by Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners and the study of Ionin et al. (2011) to test learners' generic interpretation of English articles. It further included written production data to supplement the results and a classroom experiment to see the effect of explicit instruction and translation on learners' article accuracy. In non-generic article use, it was found that the participants made article errors in the [−definite, +specific] context; these participants were thus similar to the learners of (−ART) languages tested in IKW (2004) and different from the learners from (+ART) languages tested in Garcia-Mayo (2009), Hawkins et al. (2006), Sarko (2009) and Snape (2006). Based on this discrepancy of the findings of the current project and those of previous research, it was argued that additional measures of specificity should be constructed in order for SLA researchers to reach a conclusive opinion about the role of specificity in L2 acquisition of the English article system.

In generic use/interpretation of articles, it was found that the Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners' performance was consistent with Slabakova's (2008) proposal of semantic

universals. Learners clearly differentiated between NPG and SLG contexts in spite of the fact that this distinction is not morphologically encoded in their native language. However, there was also clear evidence of L1 transfer manifested in learners' overacceptance of 'definite plurals' with both types of generics and overacceptance of 'definite singulars' with the SLG context. This is compatible with the assumptions of Full Transfer.

The last statement of the findings is that explicit instruction and translation activities did not have a clear positive effect on learners' performance in the contexts of article use where learners erred the most. However, this finding is not conclusive as it could be the outcome of some methodological challenges that were highlighted earlier. This points to the need for more research in the field of Applied Generative Second Language Research.

One important direction for future research (as proposed previously) is to test the assumptions of article semantics using additional measures of specificity. The FCET used in IKW (2004), as well as the related AET used in Ionin et al. (2009), was adapted for the purpose of this study. It is unlikely that any one single measure can lead to accurate conclusions that are generalizable over a wide context of research. Examples of other measures for specificity include the application of ERP or the use of videos that show the situation being acted out in real life in order to ensure learners' understanding of the state of the hearer vs. the speaker's knowledge.

Furthermore, future classroom intervention research should aim at longitudinal studies rather than short-term ones since the former might provide promising and conclusive results. As reported earlier, instruction in newly introduced semantic notions can be complex for learners to grasp and is better when given over a longer period of time. Therefore, a sufficient amount of time should be allotted for instruction as well as for practice of the points raised during the instruction course. Notions of definiteness, specificity and genericity can be explained separately at first and then jointly with examples, pictures and practice exercises. For example, we might teach 'definiteness'

and then teach the relevant articles instead of teaching 'articles' without reference to their meaning components.

Finally, the research reported in this thesis shows that theory has implications for future classroom research. In particular, it shows that generative theory can indeed inform the language classroom. That is, linguistically informed classroom instruction might enhance learning of certain linguistic structures, especially the ones that involve different form/meaning mappings in learners' L1s and L2s. Such research will shed additional light on the effect of negative evidence vs. positive evidence in relation to the acquisition of certain linguistic structures and will help eliminate the divide between theory and practice.

7.7 Conclusion

The goal of this study was to present a detailed account of the acquisition of the English article system by Saudi (Hejazi) Arabic-speaking learners. It was found that the Saudi learners experienced a pattern of fluctuation in indefinite non-specific contexts. The study also found that the Saudi learners distinguished between the two types of genericity, but still showed overacceptance of the definite article in generic statements.

The findings of this research constitute support for the theoretical assumptions that past researchers have proposed as an explanation for the acquisition of the English articles. Thus, the Fluctuation Hypothesis (IKW, 2004), the semantic principles (Slabakova, 2008) and the Full Transfer Hypothesis (Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994), all of which fall within the generative theoretical approach that motivated this project, are additionally supported by the findings.

The theoretical and methodological issues raised in this thesis along with the answers given are an attempt to provide a better understanding of the acquisition of article semantics and how different form/meaning mappings can be an area of difficulty for L2 learners. Research within Generative Applied Linguistics has a long way to go before

an adequate explanation can be achieved. Therefore, this study supports the on-going attempt towards formalizing an adequate account of how generative theory can inform the language classroom.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This research project started from theory-informed and practice-rooted interests in the factors that may help L2 learners better develop language by focussing on the English article system. Specifically, the aims of the project were 1) to see if Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners of English commit errors in contexts where definiteness and specificity do not match; 2) to see if these learners are able to distinguish between the two types of genericity despite the fact that the learners' L1 does not encode this distinction morphologically and to see to what extent the learners' performance in generic contexts is influenced by L1 transfer; and 3) to see if learners' article misuse and misinterpretation can be overcome by explicit instruction on article semantics and by translation activities that target article use.

Considering the analysis and the discussion of my findings, it can be concluded that Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners are sensitive to specificity since their performance in the 'indefinite specific' context was significantly different from native speakers' performance in this same context. It was, furthermore, concluded that Hejazi Arabic-speaking learners are sensitive to the two types of genericity, but they are influenced by L1 transfer. Evidence of L1 transfer in the learners' generic interpretation and use was found in their overacceptance/overuse of 'definite singulars' in the Sentence-level Generic context and their overacceptance/overuse of 'definite plurals' in both generic contexts. Finally, the findings of the research experiment showed limited evidence in favour of explicit instruction on genericity, as the learners' exhibited more accurate interpretation of 'definite plurals' after intervention, and showed no evidence in favour of translation activities.

My literature review discussion ended by stating several reasons why I consider explicit instruction and translation activities useful in the context of L2. One of the reasons for using a linguistically informed explicit instruction is that language textbooks are often lacking in terms of accurate grammar presentation of certain linguistic properties (Whong et al., 2013). It is also the case that certain linguistic properties cannot be

developed fully based on the presence of positive evidence alone (White, 1991). More importantly, the potential of explicit instruction to aid learning has been supported in SLA research in numerous experimental studies (Norris and Ortega, 2000). The reasons for using translation activities include the fact that very little research has empirically tested the use of translation in the language classroom (Cook, 2010). Additionally, translation in language teaching, especially in homogenous language classrooms, can highlight a recently taught language item and reinforce structural and conceptual differences between the native and the target language, which can lead learners to realize that what works in the L1 may not work in the L2 (Harbord, 1992).

The Hejazi Arabic learners' target-like article use in non-generic contexts (definite specific, definite non-specific and indefinite non-specific) is congruent with IKW's (2004) findings and with the findings of previous work (e.g. Hawkins et al., 2006 and Garcia-Mayo, 2009). The learners' target-like use in these three contexts is also consistent with Full Transfer, as the learners transferred their knowledge of definiteness into their use of the English articles. However, in spite of the fact that the learners are mostly accurate in these contexts, it was found that awareness of the lexical category of the vocabulary item might have affected their ability to assign the correct article choice.

The Hejazi Arabic learners' non-target-like article use in the only non-generic context (indefinite specific) is consistent with IKW's (2004) predictions. Such non-target-like use could also be an outcome of the standard classroom instruction in which the terms (specific) and (definite) are often treated as synonyms, which could cause confusion to L2 learners. This particular finding is different than what was found in existing work (e.g. Garcia-Mayo, 2009) in which participants (whose L1 is +ART) did not commit substitution errors and therefore did not fluctuate in their article use. In this respect, I argue that additional measures of specificity should be constructed before an argument about Arab-speaking learners' fluctuation in the 'indefinite specific' context can be conclusive.

The Hejazi Arabic learners' article interpretation in generic contexts goes in accordance with semantic principles and Full Transfer. The learners showed target-like ratings of

'definite singulars' with the Noun-phrase Generic context, and less target-like ratings of 'bare plurals' in this context. Their ratings of 'bare plurals' were target-like in the Sentence-level Generic context, but the ratings were less target-like with 'indefinite singulars' in this context. Learners' results further showed strong evidence for L1 transfer, as seen in the overacceptance of 'definite plurals' in both generic contexts and the overacceptance of 'definite singulars' in the Sentence-level Generic context.

Despite the fact that explicit instruction (explaining specificity and genericity in addition to definiteness) did not have an effect on learners' article production accuracy in this experiment, instruction on articles that is linguistically informed could be more beneficial to L2 learners than standard article instruction, which only focuses on definiteness, if several experimental factors are considered. To put it simply, researchers should acknowledge the fact that success of instruction is dependent on many factors. These factors include the 'complexity' of the structure to be learnt, the duration of the instruction, the measures used to assess the development of the linguistic property and the type of knowledge these measures tap into and finally learners' attention to this instruction.

Along the same lines, translation activities might be useful to highlight form/meaning mapping differences between learners' L1 and L2. However, using such activities requires more time than do other activities that mostly target the L2. Additionally, using translation activities is also mostly limited to language classrooms of homogenous groups for practicality reasons.

In conclusion, future research should consider adding more measures of 'specificity' so that its role in L2 learners' article choice can be fully explored and understood over a wide context of research. Additionally, more experimental investigations into the effectiveness of translation in language teaching are needed since very little research has addressed translation empirically. Overall, my project has shown not only that learners' article use/interpretation can be predicted by theory, but also that article semantics is an area where Generative theory can inform the language classroom. While further research is certainly needed before drawing any definite conclusions, this link

between classroom practice and theory is an important indication that we are heading towards linguistically informed language classrooms. It is, therefore, the role of SLA researchers who are interested in classroom practice to deliver the linguistic information that is often lacking in language textbooks to classroom teachers and curriculum designers.

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Appendices A: Research ethics documents

Appendix A1: The Ethical Approval Letter

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Mona Sabir
Department of Linguistics and Phonetics
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

PVAR Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds

Dear Mona

Title of study: **The role of translation in the syntax-semantics acquisition at the interfaces**

Ethics reference: **PVAR 11-072**

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the Arts and PVAC (PVAR) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
PVAR 11-072 Ethical_Review_Form_V3.pdf	1	18/04/12
PVAR 11-072 PhD Research Information Sheet.pdf	1	18/04/12
PVAR 11-072 Consent Letter .pdf	1	18/04/12
PVAR 11-072 Vice dean email .pdf	1	18/04/12

Committee members made the following comments:

UREC form section or title of supporting documentation	Comment
C18	A risk assessment for the field work needs to be completed and approved through Health & Safety services
C20	Electronic data should be stored on a secure University server such as your M drive.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment

methodology. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at www.leeds.ac.uk.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie
Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service
On Behalf of Dr William Rea, Chair, PVAR FREC
CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Appendix A2: The Research Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

PhD Research Information Sheet

The Effectiveness of Different Teaching Methods in Second Language learning

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of this project?

Second language learners often encounter difficulty in learning certain language forms. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of different teaching methods on teaching difficult points. These methods are designed as language activities that aim at enabling students to use English in a better way. Duration of the project is two months.

Why have I been chosen?

Participants in this study are chosen based on their language level. Because of the level of the language material provided in the study, intermediate to advanced level students will be recruited. Since this is an experimental study, a total number of 80 students is needed.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

What do I have to do? /What will happen to me if I take part?

Participants will have to take pre-tests that will take two hours and a half. Then, they will attend 6 sessions. Each session lasts for an hour and is comprised of language activities that will be administered by the researcher. After that, participants will take a post-test and a delayed post-test.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The study will take place during the same course time. As far as I know, there will be no disadvantages or possible risks.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that this work will lead to better mastery of English.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential? /What will happen to the results of the research project?

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Results of this study will be part of a PhD thesis. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

Results of both tests (pretest and posttest) will answer the research main question of how we can improve teaching for the benefit of English language learners.

Who is organising/funding the research?

This research is funded by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Higher Education.

Contact for further information

For more information, feel free to contact me:
Mona Sabir
mlmhs@leeds.ac.uk

Thank you for your time
☺

Appendix A3: The Consent Form

Consent to take part in [**The Effectiveness of Different Teaching Methods in Second Language Leaning**]

	Add your initials next to the statements you agree with
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated { /03/2013} explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Mona Sabir
Signature	
Date	

Appendices B: The experimental measures

Appendix B1: The Forced Choice Elicitation Task

Choose the correct answer according to each dialogue

1. Andrea: I went for a walk last night – I really enjoyed it.
   Jodi: Were you scared walking when it was so dark?
   Andrea: It wasn't dark! I saw (a, the, --) moon.

2. Angela: How was your dinner with your aunt and uncle last night?
   Charles: Quite boring. They are very nice people, but we don't have much to talk about. So we talked about (a, the, --) weather. And about my uncle's health.

3. Roberta: What did you on your last vacation?
   Fred: I went to Egypt!
   Roberta: Wow, that's really exciting. What did you see there?
   Fred: I saw (a, the, --) Great Pyramids. They are really huge!

4. *Phone conversation*
   Jeweler: Hello, this is Robertson's Jewelry. What can I do for you, ma'am? Are you looking for some new jewelry?
   Client: Not quite – I heard that you also buy back people's old jewelry.
   Jeweler: That is correct.
   Client: In that case, I would like to sell you (a, the, --) beautiful silver necklace. It is very valuable – it has been in my family for 100 years!

5. *At a gallery*
   Sarah: Do you see that beautiful landscape painting?
   Mary: Yes, it's wonderful.
   Sarah: I would like to meet (a, the, --) author of that painting – unfortunately, I have no idea who it is, since the painting is not signed!

6. *At an airport*
   Security guard1:   I saw that you just talked to an old man who looked very nervous. What did he want?
   Security guard2:   He said that he is trying to find (a, the, --) little girl from American Airlines flight 142. He said it's his granddaughter. I couldn't help him, unfortunately – flight 142 is not here yet.

7. Bill: I'm looking for Erik. Is he home?
   Rick: Yes, but he's on the phone. It's an important business matter. He is talking to (a, the, --) owner of his company! I don't know who that person is – but I know that this conversation is important to Erik.

8. Karen: Where's Beth? Is she coming home for dinner?
    Anne: No. She is eating dinner with (a, the, --) colleague; she didn't tell me who it is.

9. ***Conversation between two police officers***
    Police officer Clark: I haven't seen you in a long time. You must be very busy.
    Police officer Smith: Yes. Did you hear about Miss Sarah Andrews, a famous lawyer who was murdered several weeks ago? We are trying to find (a, the, --) murderer of Miss Andrews – his name is Roger Williams, and he is a well-known criminal.

10. ***At a bookstore***
    Chris: Well, I've bought everything that I wanted. Are you ready to go?
    Mike: Almost. Can you please wait a few minutes? I want to talk to (a, the, --) owner of this bookstore – she is my old friend.

11. Gertrude: Guess what? My cousin Claudia is in Washington, D.C. this week.
    Richard: That's great. What's she doing there?
    Gertrude: She is doing some interviews for her newspaper. She is interviewing (a, the, --) politician; I'm afraid I don't know who, exactly. I'll find out when I read her article!

12. ***In a children's library***
    Child: I'd like to get something to read, but I don't know what myself.
    Librarian: Well, what are some of your interests? We have books on any subject.
    Child: Well, I like all sorts of things that move – cars, trains… I know! I would like to get (a, the, --) book about airplanes! I like to read about flying!

13. Kathy: My daughter Jeannie loves that new comic strip about Super Mouse.
    Elise: Well, she is in luck! Tomorrow, I'm having lunch with (a, the, --) creator of this comic strip – he is an old friend of mine. So I can get his autograph for Jeannie!

14. Molly: How is your grandpa Sam's farm doing?
    Tom: All right, thanks. Last summer, grandpa needed some new animals, so he went to an animal market.
    Molly: Did he find any?
    Tom: Yes – he found a big cow and a small, friendly horse. But he didn't have enough money for both. In the end, he bought (a, the, --) horse.

15. ***After a women's running race***
    Reporter: Excuse me! Can you please let me in?
    Guard: What do you need?
    Reporter: I am a reporter. I need to talk to (a, the, --) winner of this race – I don't know who she is, so can you please help me?

16. Alice: What did you do last night?
    Robin: I went to a video store and got two videos – a German film and a video game. Then, I came home and watched (a, the, --) film.

17. ***Phone conversation***
    Sam's mother: Hi, Sam. How are you doing?
    Sam: Hi, mom. I'm good. I have a new roommate – his name is George.
    Sam's mother: Do you like him? Do you see him a lot?
    Sam: He is nice. I don't see him very much. I know that I will not see him tonight. He said that he is planning to have dinner with (a, the, --) girl from work tonight; I don't know who she is, but George was very excited about seeing her!

18. Tom: How was your trip to New York?
    Susan: Great! I went to many museums, and ate in lots of wonderful restaurants. I also visited many friends. And I saw (a, the, --) play.

19. ***In a school***
    Student: I am new in this school. This is my first day.
    Teacher: Welcome! Are you going to be at the school party tonight?
    Student: Yes. I'd like to get to know my classmates. I am hoping to find (a, the, --) new good friend! I don't like being all alone.

20. Julie: What did you do last night?
    Peter: Not much. I just worked on (a, the, --) my physics homework.

21. Louise: I just saw a movie about a ship that was hit by an iceberg, a long time ago. But I can't remember what this ship was called!
    Betsy: It was called (a, the, --) Titanic. It was very famous!

22. ***In a "Lost and Found"***
    Clerk: Can I help you? Are you looking for something you lost?
    Customer: Yes… I realize you have a lot of things here, but maybe you have what I need. You see, I am looking for (a, the, --) green scarf. I think that I lost it here last week.

23. Louise: You seem nervous about something.
    Dorothy: I am very nervous! Tomorrow morning, I am going to see (a, the, --) certain lawyer… He always gives me bad news!

24. Peter: Is Sally home? I need to talk to her right away.
    Kim: You'll have to wait a few minutes. She is talking on (a, the, --) telephone. I'll tell her you are here.

25. ***Meeting on a street***
    Roberta: Hi, William! It's nice to see you again. I didn't know that you were in Boston.
    William: I am here for a week. I am visiting (a, the, --) friend from college – his name is Sam Brown, and he lives in Cambridge now.

26. Louise: I tried to call you yesterday, but the line was busy.
    Angela: My husband was talking to (a, the, --) his mother.

27. ***Phone conversation***
    Christina: Hello, you've reached Christina Jones's office.
    Rob: Hi, Christina. This is Rob. Do you have time to talk?
    Christina: Not right now. I'm sorry, but I'm busy. I am meeting with (a, the, --) student from my English class – he needs help with his homework, and it's important.

28. ***Phone conversation***
    Mathilda: Hi, Sam. Is your roommate Lewis there?
    Sam: No, he went to San Francisco for this week-end.
    Mathilda: I see. I really need to talk to him – how can I reach him in San Francisco?
    Sam: I don't know. He is staying with (a, the, --) mother of his best friend – I'm afraid I don't know who she is, and I don't have her phone number

29. Reporter 1:   Guess what? I finally got an important assignment!
    Reporter 2:   Great! What is it?
    Reporter 2:   This week, I am interviewing (a, the, --) governor of Massachusetts – Mitt Romney. I'm very excited!

30. Mary: I heard that it was your son Roger's birthday last week. Did he have a good celebration?
    Roger: Yes! It was great. He got lots of gifts – books, toys. And best of all – he got (a, the, --) puppy!

31. Rick: Did you have a good week-end?
    Bonnie: Yes, thanks! For example, last night I went to the cinema. I wanted to see (a, the, --) certain movie; it's British, and I've read a lot about it.

32. Laura: I'd like to go for a walk. Is it nice outside?
    Jenny: I think so – I can see (a, the, --) sun!

33. Roger: I just saw Billie. He looked really excited!
    Anne: Of course! He said that he is planning to see (a, the, --) certain girl tonight; I don't know who she is, but I know that Billie really likes her!

34. Rose: Did you have a good trip to California?
    Bill: Yes, it was wonderful. I saw lots of interesting things. And I swam in (a, the, --) Pacific Ocean. It was quite warm.

35. Rudolph: My niece Janet likes animals a lot. Last week, she decided to get a pet and went to a pet shop.
    Lisa: Did she find any pets that she liked?
    Rudolph: Yes – she saw three beautiful puppies and six lovely kittens. She couldn't decide! Finally, she bought (a, the, --) kitten.

36. Sophie: I spent last week-end in my summer cottage.
    Elise: Did you have a good time?
    Sophie: No! When I got to my cottage, the weather was terrible! I couldn't go swimming or walking. And I didn't have anything to do inside my cottage – nothing to read, nothing to watch. So, finally, I went to the library, and got out two books and three videos. After I came home, I watched (a, the, --) video.

37. Timothy: I just saw Lucy at a newsstand. She was there for a really long time - I wonder why? Do you have any idea what she was doing there?
    Gabrielle: She said that she was looking for (a, the, --) certain magazine; she didn't tell me what magazine it is, but she said it had some interesting articles.

38. Tom: You know my uncle Ed? He is a doctor, and once, he went on an expedition!
    Louis: Where did he go?
    Tom: He went to (a, the, --) South Pole! He spent a year down there!

39. Debra: What are you planning to do after you graduate from college? Are you going to get a job?
    Alex: Not yet. My parents gave me a wonderful graduation gift: a year-long trip. I am going to travel around (a, the, --) world!

40. Janet: I just came back from Paris. It's so beautiful!
    Peter: What did you see in Paris?
    Janet: I saw lots of beautiful buildings. And I went to lots of museums. I went to (a, the, --) Louvre. It's such a wonderful museum!

41. Sam: Hi, Ben. I didn't know that you were in Boston! How did you get here?
    Ben: I drove here from my home in Virginia.
    Sam: That's a long way! Were you bored?
    Ben: A little. I listened to (a, the, --) radio while I drove. That made my trip more exciting.

42. Eric: My friend Tom was in his office at the university, but he really didn't want to work.
    Bill: So what did he do?
    Erik: Well, he walked around my department. He had some coffee and checked his e-mail. And he talked to (a, the, --) student.

43. ***Conversation between a police officer and a reporter:***
    Reporter: Several days ago, Mr. James Peterson, a famous politician, was murdered! Are you investigating his murder?
    Police officer: Yes. We are trying to find (a, the, --) murderer of Mr. Peterson – but we still don't know who he is.

44. ***In a clothing store.***
    Clerk: May I help you?
    Customer: Yes, please! I've looked through every store, without any success. I am looking for (a, the, --) warm hat. It's getting rather cold outside.

45. Chris: I need to find your roommate Jonathan right away.
    Clara: He is not here – he went to New York.
    Chris: Really? In what part of New York is he staying?
    Clara: I don't really know. He is staying with (a, the, --) friend – but he didn't tell me who that is. He didn't leave me any phone number or address.

46. Gary: I heard that you just started college. How do you like it?
    Melissa: It's great! My classes are very interesting.
    Gary: That's wonderful. And do you have fun outside of class?
    Melissa: Yes. In fact, today I'm having dinner with (a, the, --) girl from my class – her name is Angela, and she is really nice!

47. ***At a university***
    Professor Clark: I'm looking for Professor Anne Peterson.
    Secretary: I'm afraid she is busy. She has office hours right now.
    Professor Clark: What is she doing?
    Secretary: She is meeting with (a, the, --) student, but I don't know who it is.

48. Gabrielle: My son Ralph didn't have anything to read last week-end. So, he went to the library.
    Charles: Did he find something to read?
    Gabrielle: Yes – he took out three books and four children's magazines. And as soon as he came home, he read (a, the, --) book.

49. Judy: Last Saturday, I didn't have anywhere to go, and it was raining.
    Samantha: So what did you do?
    Judy: First, I cleaned my apartment. Then I ate lunch. And then I read (a, the, --) book.

50. ***In a "Lost and Found"***
Clerk1:   That lady you were talking with looked very upset. What was the matter?
Clerk2:   She was upset because I couldn't help her. She said that she is looking for (a, the, --) gold necklace. She said that she lost it here last night, and that it's really valuable; unfortunately, I couldn't find it.

51. Child: Can you please give me a blue pencil?
Mother: Here you go. What are you drawing?
Child: I am drawing (a, the, --) sky.

52. ***At a supermarket***
Sales clerk: May I help you, sir?
Customer: Yes! I'm very angry. I bought some meat from this store, but it is completely spoiled! I want to talk to (a, the, --) owner of this store – I don't know who he is, but I want to see him right now!

53. Sam: I'm having some difficulties with my mathematics homework.
Julie: What are you going to do?
Sam: Well, I need some advice. So I am trying to find (a, the, --) tutor with lots of experience. I think that's the right thing to do.

54. ***In a restaurant***
Waiter: Are you ready to order, sir? Or are you waiting for someone?
Client: Can you please come back in about twenty minutes? You see, I am waiting. I am planning to eat with (a, the, --) colleague from work. She will be here soon.

55. Eric: I really liked that book you gave for my birthday. It was very interesting!
Laura: Thanks! I like it too. I would like to meet (a, the, --) author of that book some day – I saw an interview with her on TV, and I really liked her!

56. ***In an airport, in a crowd of people***
Man: Excuse me, do you work here?
Security guard: Yes.
Man: In that case, perhaps you could help me. I am trying to find (a, the, --) red-haired girl; I think that she flew in on Flight 239.

57. ***In a school***
Becky: Tom seemed very nervous to me. I think he is having problems in class. He looked really nervous just now!
Ben: I am not surprised. He said that he is going to meet with (a, the, --) certain professor; I don't know who it is, but Tom is really afraid of this person!

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58. Marian: I came to school very early yesterday.
    Jim: So were you the first person there?
    Marian: No. I saw five other students and two teachers at the school. I didn't have anything to do. So I talked to (a, the, --) student.

59. Rose: Let's go out to dinner with your brother Samuel tonight.
    Alex: No, he is busy. He is having dinner with (a, the, --) manager of his office – I don't know who that is, but I'm sure that Samuel can't cancel this dinner.

60. Teacher: Tell me about London.
    Student: London is in (a, the, --) United Kingdom. It's a very big city.

61. Paul: Do you have time for lunch?
    Sheila: No, I'm very busy. I am meeting with (a, the, --) president of our university – Dr. McKinley; it's an important meeting.

62. Leo: My grandfather is a hero.
    Chris: In what war he did he fight?
    Leo: He fought in (a, the, --) Second World War. He fought for four years!

63. *Meeting in a park*
    Andrew: Hi, Nora. What are you doing here in Chicago? Are you here for work?
    Nora: No, for family reasons. I am visiting (a, the, --) father of my fiancé – he is really nice, and he is paying for our wedding!

64. Julie: My friend Nancy went to the museum yesterday.
    Rose: Did she go to see anything in particular?
    Julie: Yes – she went to the room with 18th-century French art. She said that she wanted to see (a, the, --) certain painting there; She didn't tell me what painting it is, but she said it's really wonderful!

65. *Phone conversation*
    Art dealer: Hello? How may I help you?
    Agent: Hello. I am calling on behalf of my client, Ms. Kathy Rogers. Ms. Rogers said that she would like to sell you (a, the, --) famous 19th century painting; she said that she just bought it last week in France. She didn't tell me what it is, but she praised it highly.

66. *At the end of a game*
    Laura: Are you ready to leave?
    Betsy: No, not yet. First, I need to talk to (a, the, --) winner of this game– she is my good friend, and I want to congratulate her!

67. *In a library*
    Librarian: May I help you, miss?
    Client: Yes, please. I am looking for (a, the, --) certain book; it's by John Wyndham, and is called "The Chrysalids".

68. Ron: Where is your little daughter?
    Janine: She is playing with (a, the, --) her dolls.

69. Rick: I haven't seen your sister Clara in a long time.
    Marilyn: That's because she is away. She is doing research in South America. She is living near (a, the, --) Amazon River. She studies birds that live in that area.

70. Reporter 1:   Hi! I haven't seen you in weeks. Do you have time for lunch?
    Reporter 2:   Sorry, no. I'm busy with a story about local medicine. Today, I am interviewing (a, the, --) doctor from Bright Star Children's Hospital – he is a very famous pediatrician, and he doesn't have much time for interviews. So I should run!

71. Pauline: There is so much happening in our world today.
    Rob: I know! It's hard to follow everything.
    Pauline: Well, I watch (a, the, --) news every day. That way, I know what's happening.

72. Vicky: Where were you yesterday? I tried to call you, but you weren't home.
    Rachel: I went to a bookstore yesterday.
    Vicky: Oh, what did you get?
    Rachel: I got lots of things – several magazines, two red pens, and an interesting new book. I really liked (a, the, --) book.

73. Mike: Guess what? You remember my friend Jessie, who is a reporter?
    Angela: Yes, what about her?
    Mike: She has a really important job right now, with a big newspaper. Today, she is interviewing (a, the, --) governor of Arizona! I don't remember who that is… but this is a really important assignment for Jessie!

74. Sam: What's wrong?
    Ed: I'm so sorry. I broke (a, the, --) your favourite teacup.

75. Robert: Hi, Cathy. Do you have time to talk?
    Cathy: Sorry, not right now – I am about to leave. I am planning to have coffee with (a, the, --) certain friend; she is very punctual, so I should be on time

76. Sarah: Yesterday, I took my granddaughter Becky for a walk in the park.
    Claudia: How did she like it?
    Sarah: She had a good time. She saw one little girl and two little boys in the park. Becky is a little shy. But finally, she talked to (a, the, --) girl.

Appendix B2: The Acceptability Judgment Task

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Name _____

Student #: _____

Please read each short story first. Then, decide which sentences (a,b,c,d,e) are acceptable and unacceptable for the continuation of the story.

For **unacceptable** sentences please choose 1.
For **acceptable** sentences please choose 4.
For sentences you are unsure about please choose 2 (**less acceptable**) or 3 (**nearly acceptable**).

Two or more sentences can receive the same rating for each story.

For example:

Mary is planning her vacation for the summer by herself. For example ….

a.	He thinks Hawaii is a good place to visit.	①	2	3	4
b.	She thinks Hawaii is a good place to visit.	1	2	3	④
c.	They think Hawaii is a good place to visit.	①	2	3	4
d.	Think Hawaii is a good place to visit.	①	2	3	4
e.	Mary thinks Hawaii is a good place to visit.	1	2	③	4

The acceptable and nearly acceptable answers are b and e. The unacceptable and less acceptable answers are a, c and d.

Please practice before starting the task:
John and Emily bought a new car. But John still has his old car. Maybe ….

a.	He will sell the old car.	1	2	3	4
b.	You will sell the old car.	1	2	3	4
c.	They will sell the old car.	1	2	3	4
d.	I will sell the old car.	1	2	3	4
e.	We will sell the old car.	1	2	3	4

1) My friend Charles is a teacher. He really loves his job, and the children love Charles. Charles is a very experienced teacher, too:

    f) Charles works as a teacher for fifteen years.   1   2   3   4
    g) Charles had worked as a teacher for fifteen years. 1   2   3   4
    h) Charles has worked as a teacher for fifteen years. 1   2   3   4
    i) Charles is working as a teacher for fifteen years. 1   2   3   4
    j) Charles worked as a teacher for fifteen years.   1   2   3   4

2) I really like going to this museum. It's a small museum. Usually, it's almost empty. But yesterday, I came to the museum and I heard lots of voices. Then I saw that…

    a) A group of tourists were looking at the pictures. 1   2   3   4
    b) A group of tourists is looking at the pictures.   1   2   3   4
    c) A group of tourists looked at the pictures.   1   2   3   4
    d) A group of tourists was looking at the pictures. 1   2   3   4
    e) A group of tourists are looking at the pictures.   1   2   3   4

3) It's important to conserve natural resources. We can all do this in our daily lives. For example, as we all know…

    a) The waters are an important resource.   1   2   3   4
    b) Water is an important resource.   1   2   3   4
    c) A water is an important resource.   1   2   3   4
    d) The water is an important resource.   1   2   3   4
    e) Waters are an important resource.   1   2   3   4

4) Last night, Ruth went to a party. She asked her roommate Clara to go with her. But Clara couldn't go because she was in the middle of her history class assignment. When Ruth left…

    a) Clara has written an essay for history class.   1   2   3   4
    b) Clara had written an essay for history class.   1   2   3   4
    c) Clara wrote an essay for history class.   1   2   3   4
    d) Clara was writing an essay for history class.   1   2   3   4
    e) Clara writes an essay for history class.   1   2   3   4

5) Sam lives on a farm. He owns one pig and three cows. Sam says that his animals are really wonderful. For instance…

    a) The pig is very intelligent.   1   2   3   4
    b) Pig is very intelligent.   1   2   3   4
    c) The pigs are very intelligent.   1   2   3   4
    d) A pig is very intelligent.   1   2   3   4
    e) Pigs are very intelligent.   1   2   3   4

6) Yesterday was Susie's birthday. She turned six years old. Her father decided to prepare a big surprise for her. In the morning, after Susie left for school…
   a) Her father was baking a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
   b) Her father bakes a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
   c) Her father had baked a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
   d) Her father baked a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
   e) Her father has baked a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4

7) The Netherlands is a great country to visit. It has wonderful museums, great food, and excellent public transportation. And, of course, it's a great place to buy flowers. As you probably know…
   a) Tulips are very popular in the Netherlands.   1   2   3   4
   b) The tulip is very popular in the Netherlands.   1   2   3   4
   c) Tulip is very popular in the Netherlands.   1   2   3   4
   d) A tulip is very popular in the Netherlands.   1   2   3   4
   e) The tulips are very popular in the Netherlands.   1   2   3   4

8) A long time ago, I had a neighbor named Robert. We were good friends. But eight years ago, Robert moved to Canada. I am sorry that he is gone. I really miss him. After all…
   a) Robert had lived here for eight years.   1   2   3   4
   b) Robert was living here for eight years.   1   2   3   4
   c) Robert lives here for eight years.   1   2   3   4
   d) Robert lived here for eight years.   1   2   3   4
   e) Robert has lived here for eight years.   1   2   3   4

9) My four-year-old son has a cartoon about two trains and one airplane. My son thinks that this cartoon is very funny: it's not like real life at all. For instance…
   a) The train swims in a lake.   1   2   3   4
   b) Train swims in a lake.   1   2   3   4
   c) The trains swim in a lake.   1   2   3   4
   d) A train swims in a lake.   1   2   3   4
   e) Trains swim in a lake.   1   2   3   4

10) My brother has been in a bad mood lately. And no wonder – his apartment is so uncomfortable, it must be very depressing to live there. And he has a very dim and unpleasant overhead light. I told him he should buy a new lamp – something pleasant. For example, I know that…
   a) A green lamp is very relaxing.   1   2   3   4
   b) Green lamp is very relaxing.   1   2   3   4
   c) The green lamps are very relaxing.   1   2   3   4
   d) The green lamp is very relaxing.   1   2   3   4
   e) Green lamps are very relaxing.   1   2   3   4

11) My great aunt Dora had a stroke five years ago. As a result, she does not
   remember how to play her violin. It's very sad. Dora loves the violin! After all…
   a) Dora had played the violin for five years.   1   2   3   4
   b) Dora was playing the violin for five years.   1   2   3   4
   c) Dora has played the violin for five years.   1   2   3   4
   d) Dora plays the violin for five years.   1   2   3   4
   e) Dora played the violin for five years.   1   2   3   4

12) Amy has three pets: one turtle and two birds. Amy's pets make unusual noises.
   For instance…
   a) Birds bark loudly.   1   2   3   4
   b) A bird barks loudly.   1   2   3   4
   c) Bird barks loudly.   1   2   3   4
   d) The bird barks loudly.   1   2   3   4
   e) The birds bark loudly.   1   2   3   4

13) Yesterday, I went out for a walk in our neighbourhood park. There were lots of
   people there. At first, I didn't understand why. But then I saw that…
   a) A team of athletes was running through the park. 1   2   3   4
   b) A team of athletes ran through the park.   1   2   3   4
   c) A team of athletes are running through the park. 1   2   3   4
   d) A team of athletes is running through the park. 1   2   3   4
   e) A team of athletes were running through the park. 1   2   3   4

14) My niece has a picture book about two airplanes and one big truck. This book is
   really funny: it is not like real life at all. For example…
   a) A truck flies in the air.   1   2   3   4
   b) The trucks fly in the air.   1   2   3   4
   c) Truck flies in the air.   1   2   3   4
   d) The truck flies in the air.   1   2   3   4
   e) Trucks fly in the air.   1   2   3   4

15) I am going to buy a house. James is my real-estate agent. All my friends
   recommend James. He is really good at his job! He knows the town really well,
   because…
   a) James has sold houses for ten years.   1   2   3   4
   b) James sells houses for ten years.   1   2   3   4
   c) James is selling houses for ten years.   1   2   3   4
   d) James had sold houses for ten years.   1   2   3   4
   e) James sold houses for ten years.   1   2   3   4

16) I would like to give my daughter a pet for her birthday; perhaps I will give her a puppy. My daughter is going to be eight, and she is very responsible. This is really important. As everyone knows…
   a) Little puppies need a lot of time and attention.   1   2   3   4
   b) A little puppy needs a lot of time and attention.   1   2   3   4
   c) Little puppy needs a lot of time and attention.   1   2   3   4
   d) The little puppy needs a lot of time and attention.   1   2   3   4
   e) The little puppies need a lot of time and attention. 1   2   3   4

17) Thomas left for work early this morning. But his neighbour Anne was already awake. Anne is a singer, and she practices a lot. When Thomas left…
   a) Anne has sung a song.   1   2   3   4
   b) Anne was singing a song.   1   2   3   4
   c) Anne sang a song.   1   2   3   4
   d) Anne had sung a song.   1   2   3   4
   e) Anne sings a song.   1   2   3   4

18) I know that you like birds. Well, if you ever visit California, you'll see lots of different kinds of birds there. For example…
   a) Pelican is widespread on the California coast.   1   2   3   4
   b) The pelicans are widespread on the California coast.1   2   3   4
   c) The pelican is widespread on the California coast.   1   2   3   4
   d) Pelicans are widespread on the California coast.   1   2   3   4
   e) A pelican is widespread on the California coast.   1   2   3   4

19) My friend Eric has been very tired lately. I'm worried that he is not getting enough iron in his diet. I tell him to eat foods with iron in them. For example…
   a) Rices contain iron.   1   2   3   4
   b) A rice contains iron.   1   2   3   4
   c) The rice contains iron.   1   2   3   4
   d) Rice contains iron.   1   2   3   4
   e) The rices contain iron.   1   2   3   4

20) Chris had a lot of homework last night: several math problems, and an essay for his English class. But he didn't want to work. He just watched TV all evening, until his mother came home and scolded him. After his mother came home…
   a) Chris wrote an essay for class.   1   2   3   4
   b) Chris has written an essay for class.   1   2   3   4
   c) Chris writes an essay for class.   1   2   3   4
   d) Chris was writing an essay for class.   1   2   3   4
   e) Chris had written an essay for class.   1   2   3   4

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21) Little Audrey loves her uncle Kevin. Yesterday, Kevin came to visit, and Audrey was very excited. She wanted to do something nice for Kevin. So after Kevin came in...

a) Audrey had sung a song.	1	2	3	4
b) Audrey sings a song.	1	2	3	4
c) Audrey sang a song.	1	2	3	4
d) Audrey has sung a song.	1	2	3	4
e) Audrey was singing a song.	1	2	3	4

22) Ralph has three pets: one dog and two birds. Ralph's pets have very unusual habits. For instance...

a) Dogs climb trees.	1	2	3	4
b) Dog climbs trees.	1	2	3	4
c) The dog climbs trees.	1	2	3	4
d) A dog climbs trees.	1	2	3	4
e) The dogs climb trees.	1	2	3	4

23) My cousin Julia is a pianist. She is quite famous: she gives a lot of concerts. She is very good, and she has lots of experience...

a) Julia is playing the piano for twenty years.	1	2	3	4
b) Julia has played the piano for twenty years.	1	2	3	4
c) Julia plays the piano for twenty years.	1	2	3	4
d) Julia played the piano for twenty years.	1	2	3	4
e) Julia had played the piano for twenty years.	1	2	3	4

24) These woods are really beautiful. And you can do a lot in them: you can hike, pick mushrooms and have picnics. But be very careful – don't leave food around! Otherwise, you might attract animals. You see...

a) Brown bear is common in these woods.	1	2	3	4
b) The brown bears are common in these woods.	1	2	3	4
c) A brown bear is common in these woods.	1	2	3	4
d) The brown bear is common in these woods.	1	2	3	4
e) Brown bears are common in these woods.	1	2	3	4

25) I drove out to the country yesterday. At first, the road was quite empty. But then there was a traffic jam: all the cars were stopped. I got out of my car, and I saw that...

a) A herd of cows were walking across the road.	1	2	3	4
b) A herd of cows was walking across the road.	1	2	3	4
c) A herd of cows is walking across the road.	1	2	3	4
d) A herd of cows walked across the road.	1	2	3	4
e) A herd of cows are walking across the road.	1	2	3	4

26) I'm worried about my mother. She is growing old, and her bones are not so strong anymore. I tell her that she needs to eat more calcium. For example, as we all know…

   a) The milk contains a lot of calcium.   1   2   3   4
   b) Milks contain a lot of calcium.   1   2   3   4
   c) A milk contains a lot of calcium.   1   2   3   4
   d) The milks contain a lot of calcium.   1   2   3   4
   e) Milk contains a lot of calcium.   1   2   3   4

27) It's my niece's birthday this Saturday – she is going to be three years old. I'm not sure what to get her. Maybe I'll just get her some toy, like a stuffed dog or bear. I can't go wrong with that. We all know that…

   a) The toy animal is a good children's gift. 1   2   3   4
   b) Toy animal is a good children's gift.   1   2   3   4
   c) A toy animal is a good children's gift.   1   2   3   4
   d) Toy animals are good children's gifts.   1   2   3   4
   e) The toy animals are good children's gifts. 1   2   3   4

28) I want to sell my old car, so I'm going to ask my friend Bill for advice. Bill knows all about buying and selling cars. Bill retired five years ago, and he doesn't work with cars anymore. But…

   a) Bill sold used cars for twenty years.   1   2   3   4
   b) Bill was selling used cars for twenty years. 1   2   3   4
   c) Bill sells used cars for twenty years.   1   2   3   4
   d) Bill had sold used cars for twenty years. 1   2   3   4
   e) Bill has sold used cars for twenty years. 1   2   3   4

29) My friend Gilbert bought some furniture for his kitchen: two chairs and one table. Gilbert likes colorful furniture: for instance…

   a) Chairs are bright orange.   1   2   3   4
   b) The chairs are bright orange.   1   2   3   4
   c) The chair is bright orange.   1   2   3   4
   d) A chair is bright orange.   1   2   3   4
   e) Chair is bright orange.   1   2   3   4

30) Ben went to visit his friend Roseanne in her studio: Roseanne is a painter. But Roseanne didn't know that Ben was coming, and she was busy. When Ben came in…

   a) Roseanne had painted a self-portrait.   1   2   3   4
   b) Roseanne painted a self-portrait.   1   2   3   4
   c) Roseanne was painting a self-portrait.   1   2   3   4
   d) Roseanne paints a self-portrait.   1   2   3   4
   e) Roseanne has painted a self-portrait.   1   2   3   4

31) I just moved into the neighbourhood, and Molly is my next-door neighbour. I'm very lucky to have such a friendly neighbour! Molly shows me around and introduces me to everyone else: Molly knows everybody, because…

a)	Molly lives here for six years.	1	2	3	4
b)	Molly lived here for six years.	1	2	3	4
c)	Molly is living here for six years.	1	2	3	4
d)	Molly has lived here for six years.	1	2	3	4
e)	Molly had lived here for six years.	1	2	3	4

32) My husband and I are looking for a new car. My husband would like to get a white one, because white is such a beautiful colour. But I'm worried about vandalism. I'm worried because…

a)	White car attracts attention.	1	2	3	4
b)	A white car attracts attention.	1	2	3	4
c)	White cars attract attention.	1	2	3	4
d)	The white car attracts attention.	1	2	3	4
e)	The white cars attract attention.	1	2	3	4

33) Angela lives on a farm. She owns one pig and two cows. Angela says that her animals are unusually beautiful. For example…

a)	A cow is very tall.	1	2	3	4
b)	The cows are very tall.	1	2	3	4
c)	Cow is very tall.	1	2	3	4
d)	The cow is very tall.	1	2	3	4
e)	Cows are very tall.	1	2	3	4

34) Gabriel is a painter. He is especially good at portraits. Yesterday, Cynthia had an appointment with Gabriel in Gabriel's studio. After Cynthia came in…

a)	Gabriel was painting Cynthia's portrait.	1	2	3	4
b)	Gabriel painted Cynthia's portrait.	1	2	3	4
c)	Gabriel has painted Cynthia's portrait.	1	2	3	4
d)	Gabriel paints Cynthia's portrait.	1	2	3	4
e)	Gabriel had painted Cynthia's portrait.	1	2	3	4

35) My friend Betsy says she feels tired all the time. She doesn't know how to get more energy. Well, I have the solution for her. She should know that…

a)	The tea gives one a lot of energy.	1	2	3	4
b)	A tea gives one a lot of energy.	1	2	3	4
c)	Tea gives one a lot of energy.	1	2	3	4
d)	Teas give one a lot of energy.	1	2	3	4
e)	The teas give one a lot of energy.	1	2	3	4

36) I was taking a walk near the lake. Suddenly, I heard a lot of screaming up in the air. I looked up, and I saw that...

a) A flock of geese were flying in the sky.   1   2   3   4
b) A flock of geese is flying in the sky.   1   2   3   4
c) A flock of geese are flying in the sky.   1   2   3   4
d) A flock of geese flew in the sky.   1   2   3   4
e) A flock of geese was flying in the sky.   1   2   3   4

37) I really like going to the zoo. Unfortunately, there are many animals that can't be found in a zoo, or anywhere else. It's very sad. For example...

a) Dodo birds are extinct.   1   2   3   4
b) A dodo bird is extinct.   1   2   3   4
c) The dodo bird is extinct.   1   2   3   4
d) The dodo birds are extinct.   1   2   3   4
e) Dodo bird is extinct.   1   2   3   4

38) Yesterday was Cameron's birthday. He turned seven years old! All day at school, Cameron thought about his birthday. He came home, and heard his mother in the kitchen. When Cameron walked in the kitchen door...

a) His mother bakes a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
b) His mother was baking a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
c) His mother has baked a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
d) His mother baked a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4
e) His mother had baked a birthday cake.   1   2   3   4

39) My friend Rita bought some furniture for her back yard: two chairs and one big table. Rita likes really colorful furniture: for example...

a) The table is yellow.   1   2   3   4
b) Table is yellow.   1   2   3   4
c) The tables are yellow.   1   2   3   4
d) Tables are yellow.   1   2   3   4
e) A table is yellow.   1   2   3   4

40) My neighbor Bernice retired from her job at the hospital three years ago. She still misses her job, but she says she needs some rest, because...

a) Bernice had worked as a doctor for thirty years.   1   2   3   4
b) Bernice works as a doctor for thirty years.   1   2   3   4
c) Bernice has worked as a doctor for thirty years.   1   2   3   4
d) Bernice worked as a doctor for thirty years.   1   2   3   4
e) Bernice was working as a doctor for thirty years.   1   2   3   4

Thank you
☺

Appendix B3: The Elicited Written Production Task

- The purpose of this task is to see how much you can write in the time given (30 minutes), so do not worry about grammar and spelling.
- Write complete sentences
- You are allowed to use dictionaries if you wish
- You can use words from the box given under each question

1- Tell us about the day you first went to a birthday party. What did you wear, what kind of food was there, what kind of people did you meet etc

shirt	dress	cake	sandwiches	friend

2- Below are pictures of 3 endangered species. Write two or three sentences about each one mentioning the environment you think the animal lives in and the animal's type of diet etc…. Make sure you use a complete sentence.
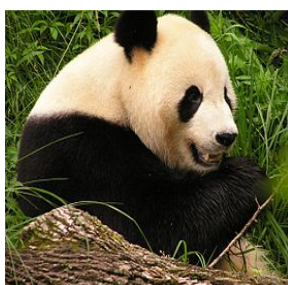
Panda   Koala   Mandarin Duck

lakes	forest	insects	grains	leaves	seeds	under bushes

3- Imagine you bought a book online. When it was delivered, you found some torn pages. How would you complain about this? How will you reach back to the website? What will you say and to whom?
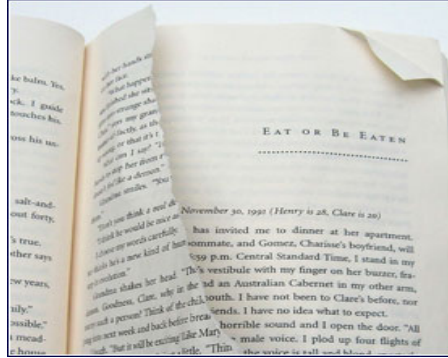
| website | contact email | purchasing department | refund |

4- In general, describe what each of the following person (s) does/do (engineer(s), nurse(s), and journalist(s).
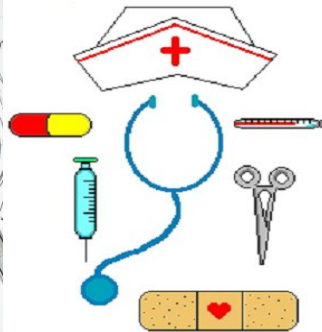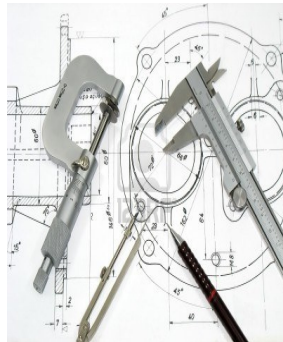
| design | houses | patients | injections | write | articles |

5- Imagine you moved to a new school. The new teacher asked you to go buy a stationary, but did not tell you what to buy exactly. You went to the bookstore to get the things needed. What will you buy? What do you think you would use in a classroom.

pen	pencil case	scissors	notebook	ruler

6- Describe the picture mentioning the name of the place, its location etc---

pyramid	Sphinx	desert	Egypt	in front of

Appendix B4: The Article Elicitation Task

INSTRUCTIONS

This task consists of 48 short English dialogues. One of the last sentences in each dialogue contains a blank (_____). Your job is to fill in the blank with the word that you feel is appropriate for the context. Examples of appropriate words are *a, the, she, he, not, to, her, my, from,* etc. You may also put a dash in the blank, to indicate that no word is needed. You may sometimes feel that there is more than one possible answer; in that case, choose the answer that sounds best in the given context.

There is a time limit of thirty (30) minutes for this task. Complete the items in the order given. Do not go back to or change your earlier answers. Read each dialogue carefully, and then fill in each blank with the answer that you feel is appropriate for that item; do not spend too long on any given item.

PRACTICE

1) Alex:　　Your neighbor Robert is very nice. What does he do?
   Charles:　Robert is _____ musician. He plays in our town orchestra.

2) Sam:　　Where is Julie?
   Andy:　　I don't know. But _____ was here a minute ago!

3) *In a grocery store*
   Clerk:　　May I help you?
   Customer: Yes. I'd like to buy some _____ potatoes.

1. Jason: How is your cousin doing?
   Rachel: She is doing great. In fact, she is going _____ a trip to Brazil
   in the summer.

2. Mother: What are you reading in the newspaper?
   Daughter: I'm reading a poem about baby lions – I really like it. I would like
   to write a letter to _____ author of that poem – unfortunately, I have no
   idea who it is… The poem isn't signed!

3. *In a school*
   Child: It's my birthday next week!
   Teacher: That's great. Are you going to have a party?
   Child: Yes! A big party! I am hoping to get _____ new dog! I love
   animals!

4. *At the supermarket*
   Salesperson: Hello! What can I help you with today?
   Customer: I am looking for tomatoes. I want to make spaghetti sauce
   _____ dinner.

5. *At the bus stop*
   Mike: Hello, this is my first time seeing you here. When did you start taking
   the city bus?
   Chris: I started taking the bus when I started school _____ last week.

6. *At the bus station*
   Mildred: Where is the bus? It was supposed to come five minutes
   ago!
   Station Attendant: I'm sorry. The schedule has changed. The bus will
   _____ come today.

7. *In an airport, in a crowd of people*
   Man: Excuse me, do you work here?
   Security guard: Yes. Can I help you?
   Man: Yes, please. I am trying to find _____ red-haired girl; I
   think that she flew in on Flight 239.

8. *Buying groceries*
   Salesclerk: Welcome to our store. May I help you?
   Customer: Where is the dairy section? I would like to buy my daughter
   some cheese. _____ is hungry.

9. Mom: Did you eat breakfast this morning, dear?
   Daughter: Yes, mother. I ate cereal and milk before I went _____ to school.

10. Carrie: Did your funny uncle Reuben visit you for Thanksgiving?
    Older sister: No, he and his wife went to visit her family instead. They
    went to _____ capital of North Dakota – I can't remember what its name is.
    It's probably a very cold place!

11. Maria: Mother, have you seen my blue scarf? I would like to wear it to
    school today.
    Mother: No, I haven't dear. Ask your sister. Maybe she knows where it
    _____.

12. Marcus: Can you and your friend Rick come over this week-end?
    Jim: I'll come over, but Rick isn't here. He went to _____ house of his
    uncle George… I have no idea where that is. But Rick was very excited about
    going!

13. *Grandfather comes for a visit*
    Grandfather: Where is my little granddaughter Beth? Is she home?
    Father: No… She is not going to be back till late. She is having
    dinner with _____ girl from class – her name is Angie, and Beth really likes
    her.

14. Jules: Sarah, have you seen my car keys? I think I've lost them again.
    Sarah: Again? That's too bad, Jules. No, I have _____ seen them. Check
    your room, instead.

15. *At the cafeteria*
    Miriam: Thank you for bringing me lunch today. This sandwich is very
    delicious!
    Hannah: Yes, it is. My mother made it. She bought the ingredients _____
    the whole foods store.

16. *Mother comes home*
    Mother: How did Peter spend the day at his grandmother's?
    Father: He had a good time. He did his homework for tomorrow.
    Then he went outside and played with _____ little girl – I don't know who
    it was. Then he came back inside; and then I came and took him home.

17. *At a bookstore*
    Chris: Well, I've bought everything that I wanted. Are you ready to go?
    Mike: Almost. Can you please wait a few minutes? I want to talk to _____
    owner of this bookstore – she is a very nice lady, and I always say hi to her.

18. Jeremy: My head is hurting. I need to take a rest.
    Harold: You're right. You _____ working too hard. You deserve a break.

19. Leon: I think I need to relax for a little bit. My life has been so busy!
    Patrick: Really?
    Leon: Yeah, I've been so busy that I forgot ___ own birthday!

20. Louise: Where's your mother?
    Julie: She is meeting _____ principal of my brother's elementary school. He is a very nice man. He is talking to my mother about my brother's grades.

21. Jessie: I baby-sat yesterday for the first time ever.
    Lesley: How was it?
    Jessie: Fine. I baby-sat a little boy named Niles. I played a monopoly game with him. Then I did my homework, and Niles read _____ short story – I don't know what it was about. And then I put him to bed.

22. Cynthia: Jill, does Amy like meatloaf?
    Jill: No, I don't think so.
    Cynthia: Really? How come?
    Jill: She does _____ like to eat meat.

23. *Father comes home*
    Father: Thank you for taking care of Karen. How did you spend the day?
    Baby-sitter: Well, we went to a park. Karen played in the sandbox for a while. And then she met _____ beautiful friendly dog – he was very well-behaved, and Karen played with him for almost an hour.

24. Tamara: Hi, Genie. How is your brother George doing?
    Genie: Great! Last week-end, he went to visit his friend Ben. He stayed at _____ house of Ben's parents – it's a very beautiful house near a lake!

25. *First day of school*
    Girl: Hi there! My name is Kathy. What's your name?
    Boy: Hello, I'm Eric. It's a pleasure to meet _____ you.

26. *At a pre-school*
    Teacher: Hello, everyone! Good Morning! Today, we'll be reading a story.
    Student: Great! I love to read! Are _____ reading a story about pirates?

27. *During recess*
    Mickey: I was on a family holiday last month to Singapore. I went to the zoo with my parents and sisters.
    Lesley: How exciting!
    Mickey: Yes! I _____ fun!

28. *At a toy store*
    Sales clerk: May I help you?
    Client: Yes! I am very angry. I bought a toy for my child at this store, but it's broken! I want to talk to _____ owner of this store – I don't care who that is! I am going to complain!

29. *At the library*
    Lita: How many books did you borrow from the bookstore?
    Patrick: I borrowed nine. I'll have to return them all next _____ Thursday.

30. *Phone conversation*
    Grandma: Hi, Billie! This is your grandma.
    Billy: Hi, grandma, How are you?

Grandma: I'm fine, but I miss you and your brother Jim. I haven't seen you for almost a year! Is Jim home?
Billy: No, he's still at school. He is tutoring _____ little boy – I don't remember who it is. Jim will be home by seven.

31. *Phone conversation*
Aunt: Hi, Jessie. This is your aunt Trudy from New York. I know it's your birthday next week. So tell me, what would you like for your birthday?
Jessie: Um… I'd like some money, please.
Aunt: Money?! But you are only eight years old! What do you need money for?
Jessie: For my stamp collection. I'd like to buy _____ beautiful stamp – I just saw it at the stamp store. It's really rare, and I really want to have it!

32. Anita: Oliver, please hand me the cookbook from the kitchen cabinet. I am planning on cooking dinner tonight.
Oliver: I'm sorry dear. I'm afraid the book isn't here. I think Chris still _____ it.

33. Dominique: I heard that your sister went on vacation. Where did she go?
Raquel: Latin America. She spent two weeks in _____ capital of Mexico: Mexico City. It's a beautiful city, and she really enjoyed her trip.

34. *After school*
Father: Do you have any homework?
Child: Yes, I need to write a book report.
Father: So what will you read?
Child: Hmm… I don't know yet. But I like to read about things that move – cars, trains… I know! I would like to read _____ book about airplanes! I'll go to the library tomorrow!

35. *At the end of a running race*
Laura: Are you ready to leave?
Betsy: No, not yet. First, I need to talk to _____ winner of this race – he is my good friend, and I want to congratulate him!

36. Father: How did little Billy spend the evening yesterday, when I wasn't here?
Mother: He did all his homework! And he read _____ very interesting story: it's about a small fishing village in Portugal, and the lives of the people who live there. He told me all about it.

37. Lee: Where have you been? I've been looking for you.
Jenny: I went to the record store, and I bought some CDs.
Lee: Really? My friend and I _____ planning to go there later today.
Jenny: What a coincidence!

38. *After a girls' soccer game at school*
Child: Excuse me! Can you please let me in?
Coach: What do you need?
Child: I am a reporter for my school newspaper! I need to talk to _____ winner of this game – I don't know who she is, so can you please help me?

39. *At an ice cream parlor*
    Younger Sister: What ice cream flavor would you like?
    Older Sister: Chocolate ice cream would be nice.
    Younger Sister: I don't like chocolate very much. I prefer __ vanilla.

40. Ruby: It's already 4pm. Why isn't your little brother home from school?
    Angela: He just called and told me that he got in trouble! He is talking to
    _____ principal of his school! I don't know who that is. I hope my brother
    comes home soon.

41. Eric: I really liked that book you gave me for my birthday. It was very
    interesting!
    Laura: Thanks! I like it too. I would like to meet _____ author of that book
    some day – I saw an interview with her on TV, and I really liked her!

42. Rose: Will you come shopping with me this week-end?
    Jen: Sure. Where do you want to go?
    Rose: Oh, anywhere. I am looking for _____ warm hat. It's getting rather
    cold outside!

43. Kevin: Your sister's name is Katherine, right?
    Larry: No, you've got it all wrong.
    Kevin: I'm sorry. Is her name Cameron?
    Larry: Wrong again! That is _____ her name! It's Candice!

44. Son: I can't believe how hot it is this evening!
    Father: Here, have some water. It should help you cool down.
    Son: Thank you. I will turn on the fan to keep the room from
    _____ getting too warm.

45. *Phone conversation*
    Angela: Hello! May I speak to Alicia, please?
    Feliz: Oh, I'm sorry. She's not in right now. She went _____ a store at
    the mall.

46. *In a "Lost and Found"*
    Clerk: Can I help you? Are you looking for something you lost?
    Customer: Yes… I realize you have a lot of things here, but maybe you have
    what I need. You see, I am looking for _____ green scarf. My little
    granddaughter lost it here yesterday, and she is very upset!

47. *In the classroom*
    Noah: Would you like to play soccer with me at the park after school?
    Oliver: Yes, I would love to! Can William play, too? _____ is very good at
    this game.

48. *At a police station*
    Susie: Can you please tell me where the library is? I am new here in
    the city, and I am lost.
    Police officer: Of course I can help! The library _____ on the corner of
    Maple street and 4th Avenue.

Appendices C: Classroom materials

Appendix C1: PowerPoint Handouts

6/25/15

THE MEANING OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

BY MONA SABIR

Lesson 1

ARTICLE MEANING

• To understand the meaning of articles and how to choose the correct article (the, a/an, null) in a certain context, 3 elements of article meaning must be considered

• 1. Definiteness
• 2. Specificity
• 3.Genericity

DEFINITENESS

• Definite noun: then both the speaker and the hearer can identify the noun and answer the question 'Which one?'

• They are BOTH familiar with object/noun referred to by the article

• The article for **a definite** noun is: _The_

• Ex. Let's go to **the restaurant** I told you about.

DEFINITENESS

• Indefinite noun: when a noun cannot be identified by both the speaker and the hearer

• Both are NOT familiar with object/noun referred to by the article

• The article for **an indefinite** noun is: _a/an_

• Ex. I had **an amazing time** yesterday.

EXAMPLES

• I bought the car this morning**. (Definite)**
(the speaker and the hearer (both) know which car)

• I met a colleague from work in the post office. **(Indefinite)**
(the hearer cannot identify which colleague)

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THE MEANING OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

Lesson 2

BY MONA SABIR

RECAP

- To understand the meaning of articles and how to choose the correct article (the, a/an, null) in a certain context, 3 elements of article meaning must be considered

1. Definiteness: The referent is clear to BOTH the **hearer** as well as the **speaker;** use **THE** with Definite nouns and **A/AN** with indefinite nouns.

- 2. Specificity
- 3.Genericity

SPECIFICITY

- Specific nouns: if **the speaker** intends to refer to one particular individual/object

- EX. I am wearing **a black dress** for tomorrow's party.

    (= a particular dress)

SPECIFICITY

- Non-specific nouns: if the speaker refers to ANY individual/object within a group

- EX. I want to buy **a house** if I won the lottery.

    (= any house)

- The hearer's knowledge does not matter in making a noun specific or non-specific

- Whether a noun is specific or non-specific is all about the **speaker's** intention to refer

---

DEFINITENESS & SPECIFICITY IN ENGLISH

- English has articles for definite nouns (the), indefinite nouns (a/an)

- English Does **NOT** have articles for specific nouns, non-specific nouns

- Exs:
❖I visited **the capital** of Spain.
(the speaker and hearer know what is the capital of Spain)

❖I saw **a bird.**
❖(The hearer cannot identify which bird)

1

THE MEANING OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

BY MONA SABIR

Lesson 3

RECAP

- Definite nouns: The referent is clear to the **hearer** as well as the **speaker**

- Specific nouns: The referent is clear to the **speaker.**

- English have articles to differentiate between definite and indefinite nouns (the vs. a/an), but no articles to differentiate between specific and non-specific nouns.

COMBINING ARTICLE MEANING ELEMENTS

- A definite noun can be specific or non-specific

- [definite, specific]
- [definite, non-specific]

- An indefinite noun can be specific or non-specific

- [indefinite, specific]
- [indefinite, non-specific]

COMBINING ARTICLE MEANING ELEMENTS

- **[Definite, Specific]**

Conversation between a mother and a daughter:

Mother: who are you going to invite for your graduation party?
Daughter: I am gong to invite (a, the, -) girl you met yesterday. Her name is Emily

---

COMBINING ARTICLE MEANING ELEMENTS

- **[Definite, Non-specific]**

Conversation between a head teacher and a student
- *Head teacher*: Several days ago, I found the walls painted in a horrible way.
- *Student*: What did you do?
- *Head teacher*: I am trying to find (a, the, -) person who did this, *but we still don't know who he or she is.*

COMBINING ARTICLE MEANING ELEMENTS

- **[Indefinite, Specific]**

In a Café

Waiter: Are you ready to order, miss? Or are you waiting for someone?
Client: Can you come back in 10 minutes. You see I am waiting. I am planning to eat with (**a**, the,_) colleague from work. She will be here soon.

THE MEANING OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

BY MONA SABIR

Lesson 4

RECAP

- To understand the meaning of articles and how to choose the correct article (the, a/an, null) in a certain context, 3 elements of article meaning must be considered

1. Definiteness: The referent is clear to the **hearer** as well as the **speaker;** use **'the'** with Definite nouns and **'a/an'** with Indefinite nouns.

- 2. Specificity: if the **speaker** intends to refers to one particular individual/object; **NO article** for specific and non-specific nouns.

- 3.Genericity

GENERICITY

- Generic nouns: reference is made to an entire class/ used to express **generalizations** about a class as a **WHOLE**.

- The class: consists of all the individuals/objects which meet the description in the noun.

- No reference to particular individual objects, but to something in general

❖EX. Dogs have four legs

GENERIC NOUNS IN ENGLISH

- There are are 3 generic nouns in English

1. **Bare plural**: Pandas live in Australia.
2. **Definite singular**: The panda lives in Australia.
3. **Indefinite singular**: A dog has four legs.

HOW TO KNOW THAT A NOUN IS GENERIC?

- If the verb is in the present tense, then it is possible that the noun is generic

❖The sunflower blooms in spring
❖The tiger eats small animals

❖(sunflower as a kind, tiger as a kind)

- If the verb is in a different tense, then the noun is usually not generic
-
❖ The sunflower bloomed in spring
❖The tiger has eaten small animals

❖(a particular sunflower, a particular tiger)

TYPES OF GENERICITY IN ENGLISH

- There are TWO types of genericity in English:

1. Noun-phrase Generics
- Ex. The panda lives in Australia
- (Talks about KIND/ TYPE)

2. Sentence-level Generics
Ex. A dog has four legs
(Talks about characterization)

1

THE MEANING OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

BY MONA SABIR

Lesson 5

RECAP

• Generic nouns: reference is made to an entire class/ used to express generalizations about a class as a WHOLE

• English use 3 types of generic noun
• 1. Bare plurals
✧Books are informative

2. Definite singulars
✧The book is informative

3. Indefinite singulars
✧A book is informative

RECAP

• Generic nouns are of TWO types:

• 1. Noun-phrase Generics

• 2. Sentence- Level Generics

NOUN PHRASE GENERICS

• A Generic Noun-phrase refers to a well-established kind

• They refer to a kind, not to certain individuals

• The sentence contains a verb which can only be used with generic Noun phrase

• Examples of verbs that are used with noun-phrase generics are:
be extinct, be widespread, be common

• With these verbs; the noun must indicate a kind: an individual or a group of individuals cannot be extinct or widespread, but a kind can be

---

NOUN-PHRASE GENERICS

• Noun-phrase generics can only be:

1. Definite singulars.
2. Bare plurals.

• Indefinite singulars are ungrammatical with Noun-phrase generics

✧The dinosaur is extinct.
✧Dinosaurs are extinct.
✧* A dinosaur is extinct.

• * (A dinosaur) is ungrammatical as a generic noun because it is not possible for a single dinosaur to become extinct.

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THE MEANING OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

BY MONA SABIR

Lesson 6

RECAP

• Generic nouns are of TWO types:

• 1. Noun-phrase Generics
• 2. Sentence- Level Generics

• Noun types that indicate Noun-phrase generics are:

1. Definite singulars
2. Bare plurals

SENTENCE-LEVEL GENERICS

• Sentence-level Generics: Indicate generalizations based on characteristics of individual objects

• Reports regularity which summarizes groups of particular episodes or facts

• Also known as charactering sentences; opposed to particular sentences which express statements about particular events

• A dog has four legs (characterizing sentence)
• A dog was barking loudly (particular sentence)

SENTENCE-LEVEL GENERICS

• Types of nouns that indicate sentence-level generics are:

1. Indefinite singulars
2. Bare plurals

• Definite singulars are ungrammatical with sentence-level generics

❖ A Coke bottle has a narrow neck.
❖ Coke bottles have narrow necks.
❖* The coke bottle has a narrow neck.

• * (The coke bottle) is ungrammatical (a general statement cannot be established based on one particular bottle).

MORE ABOUT GENERICS

• Definite plurals do NOT indicate generic nouns in English

• An exception is sometimes made with nationalities
❖Ex. **The Italians** are elegant

• Definite plurals can be generic in Arabic
• Ex. **Alkutubu** mofeedatun

Appendix C2: Conversation Script

Better@English

Real English Conversations: Weird food combinations

Conversation Transcript

Lori:	When I was over in the States recently, I was reading one of my mom's magazines. And in that magazine I read about a new hamburger.
Michael:	OK.
Lori:	That...it really **takes the cake**, this new hamburger. You know, we've talked about junk food before, but this is amazing. It's a big beef burger, and they put **sharp** cheddar cheese and two slices of bacon...
Michael:	What... Can I just stop you there? What is sharp cheddar cheese?
Lori:	Sharp cheddar cheese? A sharp cheese is a cheese that has a strong flavor.
Michael:	Ooh, OK.
Lori:	So cheese can be mild or sharp.
Michael:	Right.
Lori:	You'd think that the opposite would be "dull," but you don't talk about a dull cheese.
Michael:	Or "blunt" cheese.
Lori:	Yeah, a blunt cheese, right, exactly. Exactly. So sharp cheddar cheese. But anyway, back to the burger, it's got...yeah, a big beef patty, sharp cheddar cheese and two slices of bacon. And now here is the **key**.
Michael:	Mmm, the bacon sounds good.
Lori:	Yeah, but the key ingredient...the bun is actually a KrispyKreme **glazed donut**.
Michael:	Uh huh.
Lori:	Can you believe that? And it's actually a baseball team, I think, the Gateway Grizzlies, it's what they're calling "Baseball's Best Burger," and they're serving it at their baseball games.
Michael:	Baseball's weirdest burger, maybe!
Lori:	Baseball's most artery-clogging burger.
Michael:	So you said that it was, the burger bun is a donut,
Lori:	Mmm hmm. A donut, yes.
Michael:	Is that, um, I mean, donuts are sweet though, aren't they?
Lori:	Yeah, it's a glazed donut so it would be sweet. And apparently they cut it in half and toast it and use that as the bun on this burger.
Michael:	That sounds **horrendous**.
Lori:	It..I couldn't...I thought it was a joke when I first read about it. I thought it must be a joke but apparently it's true.
Michael:	It really makes me wonder, you know, they have this, um this kind of, stereotype of American people being fat.
Lori:	Right.

Glazed donuts

Michael: And I guess if, you know, they're eating things like that whilst sitting down at the baseball game.

Lori: Yeah, sitting down watching other people do sports.

Michael: Exactly...that's what I'm thinking, yeah!

Lori: Right. I just wonder, how would someone even **come up with** that, the idea of using a donut as a hamburger bun.

Michael: Well, there is something that you can, I mean, being an American you can tell me if this is true or not, I remember hearing about sandwiches that Americans like, and it's peanut butter and jelly.

Lori: Well, that's, yeah, that's a classic kid's sandwich. Peanut butter and jelly or even peanut butter and honey, you can have...

Michael: Well, what you call jelly, isn't that what we [British English speakers] would call jam?

Lori: Yeah, jam.

Michael: So peanut butter and jam. So it's the **savory** peanut butter, salty, peanutty tasting butter and something like sweet strawberry jam.

Lori: Yeah, but I guess it's kind of like putting pineapple on your pizza. You know, some people think that's just an **aberration**. But there's something about the sweet, tart pineapple combined with the salty, savory ingredients of a pizza that is actually...I like it.

Michael: Well, I guess it's like having **gammon** and pineapple, you know, the thick cut of ham which is also salty.

Lori: Yeah, or pork chops and applesauce.

Michael: Ah, right. OK.

Michael: I'm thinking, if you can combine something like peanut butter and jam, then combining a hamburger with a donut doesn't seem so strange.

Lori: I'm sorry! I know what you're trying to say, but just, even hearing you say that, just sounds so funny, "combining a hamburger with a donut."

Michael: Well, yeah, it's pretty **loony**.

Lori: Yeah, loony. I couldn't believe that when I read that story in my mom's magazine. But I went on the Internet and had a look, and there were people saying that it sounds disgusting and looks disgusting, but actually they were quite tasty, so what do I know?

Michael: I can't even begin to imagine what it would taste like. You know, I have no frame of reference. My taste buds cannot picture it, you know, I have an image of a donut in my head and an image of a nice juicy hamburger with a couple strips of bacon on. And forget the cheese because I hate cheese as you know, but the hamburger with bacon, that's something that...in fact we should cut this podcast short right now because I want to go to the store and get some bacon and some bacon and some hamburger because I'm getting hungry now.

Lori: Sounds like a plan, but let's **ix-nay** on the donuts.

Michael: Right, yeah, Hold the donuts!

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Vocabulary list

takes the cake	(Informal American English) you can say that something *takes the cake* if it is something that you think is very surprising or annoying.
sharp	*Sharp* is a word to describe the strong taste of certain foods, such as cheese. Cheeses range from *sharp* (strong) to *mild* (not strong).
key	*key* (adjective) means very important
glazed donut	A glazed donut is a type of fried pastry covered with a thin coat (glaze) of sugary icing.
horrendous	terrible, horrible, extremely unpleasant
come up with	To *come up with* something means to invent it or think of it.
savory	Food that is *savory* is salty, meaty, or spicy, not sweet. In British English it's spelled *savoury*.
aberration	An *aberration* is something that differs from the normal state, particularly the normal moral standards.
gammon	*Gammon* is also called *ham*. It is meat from the back leg of a pig, usually preserved with smoke or salt or both.
loony	*loony* is an informal word for crazy, stupid, or foolish
ix-nay	Lori is using Pig Latin to play with the word *nix*, which means *no, nothing,* or *not*. (See Wikipedia for an explanation of Pig Latin.)

Appendix C3: Translation Activities

1. Corrected Close Translation Activity

[+definite, +specific]

1. إن الخسائر الناتجة عن الحروب فادحة إلى الدرجة التي تحتم معها أن نعمل كل ما في وسعنا لحل مشاكلنا سلميا

_____

_____

2. زرت معرض الكتاب الدولي و بعد أن أشتريت الكتب التي أريدها حضرت فيلما وثائقيا

_____

_____

3. تلعب الصحافة دورا حيويا في تكوين رأي عام مستنير

_____

4. شاركت القوات المسلحة السعودية في حفظ السلام في المملكة

_____

[+definite, -specific]

1. كان هناك حادثة سرقة بالأمس. هدد الص اللصراف بمسدسه و أخذ كل النقود التي كانت بالخزينة. لم يتعرف أحد عليه بعد

_____

_____

2. أخبرتني أمي عن الرجل الذي حاول انقاذ الطفل الغريق. لكني لم أكن معها حين شاهدت الخبر في التلفاز و لا أعرف من يكون

_____

_____

3. يجب علي الذهاب الى المسئولة عن الأنشطة اللامنهجية. أريد أن أختار شيئا لأشارك فيه و لا أعرف ما المتاح

_____

_____

4. قالت أختي انها نجحت في جميع الإختبارات التي قامت بها مع أني لأعرف ماهي المواد التي سجلتها في هذا الفصل الدراسي

_____

_____   _____

2. The Article

[+definite, + specific]

1. قرأت معلومات مفيدة في جريدة الصباح. اريد ان احتفظ بهذه الجريدة لا سترجع المعلومات عند الحاجة.

    _____

2. بجوار بيتنا توجد حديقة جميلة. اقترحت على اختي ان نذهب الى الحديقة معا لنقضي وقتا ممتعا.

    _____

3. دعوت صديقي محمد لتناول العشاء معي و لكنه قال أنه سيذهب إلى السينيما

    _____

4. أعلن رئيس الوزارة أن ما جاء في الجريدة غير حقيقي

    _____

[+ definite, - specific]

1. احاول ايجاد المطعم الذي تحدث عنه اصدقائي و لكني لا اعرفه.

    _____

2. سوف لذهب الى البقالة لشراء الاغراض اللازمة لطبخ وجبة و لكني لا اعرف مااذا سوف اطبخ و ماذا ساحتاج

    _____

3. سوف أكتب النقاط التي تحدث عنها الأستاذ في المحاضرة التي لم أحضرها يوم الأربعاء و لكني لا أعرف عن ماذا كانت

    _____

4. ذهب جميع افراد أسرتي الى المكان الذي اتفقوا على التجمع فيه و لكني لا اعرف أين لأني لم أكن معهم حين تم ا الإتفاق

    _____
    _____

3. Gapped Translation

Text 1: Arabic

في العام الماضي, حصلت حادثة حزينة. اختفت فتاة في السادسة اسمها سارة في مجمع تجاري. حاول اهل الفتاة ايجادها و لكنهم لم ينجحوا في ذلك. استنتجت الشرطة انها خطفت و لكنهم لم يتعرفوا على هوية الخاطف الى الان و لم يعثر على الفتاة. قام رجل لم يعرف اسمه بالتبليغ عن مكان يعتقد ان سارة محبوسة فيه و لكن البلاغ لم يكن صحيح. من هذه الحادثة نستنتج ان ترك الاطفال في الاماكن العامة من دون رقابة امر خطير. فالطفل يمكن ان يخدع من قبل اشخاص قد يعتقد انهم طيبون. وفي اي مكان يمكن ان يوجد متحرش بالاطفال .

Text 2: English

Last year, ___ unfortunate incident happened. ___ six- year old girl named Sarah disappeared in ___shopping centre. ___ girl's family tried to find her, but they could not. ___ police concluded that the girl had been kidnapped, but they have not discovered the identity of ___ kidnapper until now and ___ girl has never been found. ___ unknown man called ____ police saying he knows where Sarah is kept, but this turned out to be ___ false alarm. From this story, we learn that leaving kids unwatched in public places is very dangerous. ___ child can be easily deceived by people who might seem kind and ___ child molester can be found anywhere.

Text 2: Arabic

قامت امي في الصباح الباكر بتجهيز الفطور. جلسنا و ابي على مائدة الطعام و دارت المحادثة بيننا على العديد من الامور. تحدث ابي عن رجل في العمل. لا يعرف ابي من هو و لكن الناس قالوا انه يسبب العديد من المشاكل. اما اختي فقالت انها تود شراء وشاح من الصوف لفصل الشتاء. انا و اخي اتفقنا على الذهاب الى الحقل المجاور لمنزلنا لمساعدة المزارع الجديد و لكننا لانعرف من هو. و اخيراامي تحدثت عن رغبتها بزيارة الجارة التي دائما ما تاتي لزيارتنا.

Text 2: English

In ___ morning, my mother prepared breakfast. We sat with my father around ____dining table and we talked about many different things. My father talked about __ man at work. My father doesn't know him, but people said he is causing so much trouble. My sister said she wants to buy ___woolen scarf for winter. My brother and I planned to visit ___field nearby to help__new farmer though we don't know who he is yet. Finally, my mother talked about her wish to visit ___neighbor who always visits us.

Appendix C4: Gap Fill Activities

Complete the sentences with the correct article.

1. What's _____ name of _____ restaurant we went to last night?
2. What time does your airplane arrive? I will come to _____ airport to meet you.
3. I want to find _____ right answer for the question. The teachers are going to correct it.
4. Mary is visiting _____ sick friend she told us about. She is really in a bad condition
5. I am taking the kids to _____ zoo. They need to have some fun
6. John is making a grocery list. He is going to _____ supermarket near his house to buy what he needs
7. On Weekends, I like to watch _____ shows that I could not watch during the week.
8. Everybody in my family finds _____ new mall interesting. It has lots of stores and restaurants
9. Michael is visiting _____ neighbor of his sister in law, but I do not know who that person is.
10. I am going to write about _____ story of last week's movie, but I have to find out what happened in that movie first because I did not watch it.
11. I want to help you find _____ necklace you lost. Can you tell me what it looks like?
12. The animal control man found _____ dog he was asked to find. I have no idea what kind of dog it was.
13. My friend is planning a trip to _____ capital of Finland. I do not know anything about the place.
14. Our teachers asked us to do many things. I do not remember _____ first assignment she asked us to do.

Appendix C5: Standard Teaching Material

(New Headway Plus series)

1. We use *an* before words that begin with *a, e, i, o,* and *u.*

    an engineer

    an English dictionary

    an ice-cream

    an orange

    an umbrella

    but

    a car

    a burger

    a television

(Taken from New Headway Plus (Beginner), Grammar Reference 5.2, p. 125)

2. *a/an*

It's a	ticket
	newspaper
	magazine

we use *an* before a vowel

It's an	apple
	envelope
	English dictionary

I'm a doctor NOT I'm doctor

I'm a student NOT I'm student

(Taken from New Headway Plus (Elementary), Grammar Reference 1.4, p. 124)

3. **Articles – *a* and *the***

1. The indefinite article *a* or *an* is used with singular, countable nouns to refer to a thing or an idea for the first time.

We have **a Toyota** and **a BMW**.

There's **a supermarket** in Adam Street

2. The definite article *the* is used with singular and plural, countable and uncountable nouns when both the speaker and the listener know the idea already

 We have a Toyota and a BMW. I drive **the Toyota** and my wife drives **the BMW**.

I'm going to **the supermarket**. Do you want anything? (We both know which supermarket)

Indefinite article

The indefinite article is used:

1) with professions.

I'm **a teacher.**

She's **an architect.**

2) with some expressions of quantity.

a pair of   a little   a couple of   a few

3) in exclamations with *what*+ a count noun

What a lovely **day!**

What a pity!

Definite article

 The definite article is used:

1) before seas, rivers, hotels, museums, and newspapers.

the Atlantic   the British museum

the Times   the Ritz

2) if there is only one of something.

the sun   the queen   the government

3) with superlative adjectives.

He's **the richest man** in the world.

Jane's **the oldest** in class.

No article

There is no article:

1) before plural and uncountable nouns when talking about things in general.

I like potatoes.
Milk is good for you.

2) before countries, towns, streets, languages, magazines, meals, airports, stations, and mountains.

I had lunch with John.
I bought a newspaper at Heathrow Airport.

3) before some places and some forms of transport

at home	in/to bed	at/to work	at/to school/university
by bus	by plane	by car	by train on foot

She goes to work by bus.

I was at home yesterday evening.

4) in exclamations with *what*+ an uncount noun.

What beautiful **weather!**

Note

In the phrase *go home*, there is no article and no preposition.

I **went home** early. NOT I went to home.