

## **INTRODUCTION**

This diploma thesis deals with teaching the articles to pupils at basic schools. Even though this field is said to be one of the most confusing aspects of English, I am convinced that teaching the articles can be successful, by using the appropriate strategies. Thus, the main aim of this diploma paper is to introduce the most important rules for using the articles and suggest ways for successful teaching the articles.

This diploma thesis has two basic parts. A theoretical part is based on a discussion of the terms “determiners” and “the articles,” their functions and classification. Next, “generic” and “specific function, classification” and “identification” or “shared knowledge” and other terms connected with the use of articles are introduced here. More, this part deals with features related to teaching the articles, for example, teaching the articles in context, teaching the articles inductively or deductively. Readers will also be familiarised with various linguists' opinions on the discussed issues.

The other part of the paper is based on the outcomes of the research. Here, two means were used for the purpose of the whole paper and they were questionnaires for English teachers at basic schools and exercises for pupils aimed at practising the use of articles. The gained data has been analysed and compared with the linguists' views presented in the theoretical part. The outcomes help to depict how teachers teach the articles at basic schools, mainly in sixth and seventh grades. The major part of the research are exercises completed by sixth and seventh graders as already stated. This means shows what rules of using the articles are most difficult for pupils and concrete mistakes are examined. On the basis of the outcomes of both parts of the research, causes of pupils' difficulties are determined and successful ways for teaching the articles are suggested.

## **THEORETICAL PART**

### **1. DETERMINERS**

Determiners are words that precede nouns, but are not adjectives (Swan 1996). They are words, such as, *the, this, every* and as a part of the nominal, they have their own specialised meaning; they can identify or quantify the nouns they modify. All determiners are closed-class words so we cannot add any other words to this category. According to the said functions, they can be divided and the next chapter will introduce three categorizations which were formed by Collins ed., Swan and by Pullum and Huddleston.

#### **1.1. Classification of Determiners**

Group A determiners called, “identifiers,” are words identifying objects that are known or unknown, or signal if the speaker is talking about them in a general or particular way. These are *the articles (the definite article - the, and the indefinite article - a/an), possessives (my, their,...)* and *demonstratives (these, those,...)* (Swan 1996). According to another categorization, *the definite article, possessive determiners* and *demonstratives* can be classified as “specific determiners” (Collins ed., 1990). As the name suggests, the specific way of introducing a nouns is when a listener understands which thing or person the speaker is talking about.

Group B determiners, “quantifiers,” (Swan 1996) ask about quality (*what, which,...*), for example, *Jill has a good knowledge of Greek*, which is non-quantitative (Huddleston, Pullum 2002, 372) or signify how much or how many we are talking about (*more, much,...*), for instance, *She has just bought a new car*, which is quantitative so it can be replaced by *one* (Huddleston, Pullum 2002, 372). According to Libuše Dušková, we can divide quantifiers into three groups and they are “universal, existential” and “negative.” Universal quantifiers include all members of the applicative group, for example, *every, all*. Existential quantifiers indicate that the applicative group has at least some representatives thus the group exists, for example, *some, any*. Negative quantifiers contribute to a negative tone, for example, *no, neither* (1994). Some of these determiners are used with plural nouns, for example, *many books*; some with singular nouns, for example, *each person*; some with uncountable nouns, for example, *much money*; and still others with more than

one kind of noun, such as, the case of *which* (Close 1992). *The indefinite article, another, other, few, enough, many, more, most, several, or some* can also belong to the group of “general determiners” because they refer to something or someone of a particular type, without specifically saying which person or thing they are talking about (Collins ed. 1990). Identifiers and quantifiers can also be labelled “basic determiners” (Huddleston, Pullum 2002).

There are also other types of determiners that do not fit into either group A or group B or have two ways of application and meaning, for instance, *what* can be a quantifier, as in, *What purpose does it serve?*, implying the pattern: determiner - noun; and the other way of application is realised in exclamations, such as, *What a discovery he has made!* In this case, *what* is employed in the following pattern: what – the indefinite article (restricted only to *a/an*) – noun. The meaning of *what* in exclamations is a positive or negative evaluation or intensification (Dušková 1994).

Following the categorization by Huddleston and Pullum, which has been mentioned previously, we can find two other kinds of determiners besides basic determiners; they are “subject” and “minor determiners.” Subject determiners combine the function of determiner with subject and specify a noun phrase as definite, for example, *Ally's new cars*. Minor determiners can be demonstrated in two kinds of noun phrases. Firstly, they are headed by nouns describing size, shape, and colour, such as, *What size hat do you take?*, and the other type of plain noun phrase which functions as a determiner, is a weekday name or one of the temporal pronouns *yesterday* and *tomorrow*, such as, *Sunday morning, tomorrow evening* (Huddleston, Pullum 2002). In this thesis, the terms by Michael Swan will be used. Next to the functions of determiners, we also need to be aware of the correct placement of them in a sentence and this will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **1.2. Position of Determiners**

As it has been said, the number of determiners are limited within one phrase but we can form more complex expressions, for example, *how much, a few, my uncle's*. They can contain up to three determiners, for example, *all her many ideas*, and their order is fixed. Linguists distinguish three determiner positions and only a few combinations from the three

positions are permitted. Position I is represented by *multipliers* – *double, twice,...*; *fractions* – *one-third,...*; and other determiners, such as, *all, both, such,...* (Huddleston 1984); and these determiners are termed “predeterminers” by some linguists (Leech, Svartvik 1975). The determiners from position II have three sub-groups: a) *the definite article and demonstratives* - *the, this, that,...*; b) *possessive pronouns* - *my, your, personal pronouns in subjective and objective case* - *we, us, you,...*; c) *the indefinite article* – *a/an, which, another, some,...* (Huddleston 1984), and they are called “central (Leech, Svartvik 1975).” Position III is represented by *cardinal numerals* - *one, two,...*; *ordinal numerals* – *third, sixth,...* and *other determiners*, such as, *every, several, dozen,...* (Huddleston 1984) and these determiners are labelled “postdeterminers (Leech, Svartvik 1975).”

Central determiners cannot be placed together in front of one noun, for instance, *the my house* is wrong. If we want to use two determiners from group A, we need to use the following structure, *a/this...of mine/yours* (Swan 1996). So apart from this structure, they may be preceded by predeterminers and followed by postdeterminers, such as, *all his three uncles*. *All* is a predeterminer, *his* is a central determiner and *three* is a postdeterminer.

However, some differences from the said rules occur, for example, with *other* and *only* that are positioned after identifiers, as in the following phrases, *my other sister, the only possibility* (Swan 1996). Next, when we use *what* in exclamations the pattern changes, which has been presented in the previous chapter. See chapter 2.1.1. for more information about the position of the articles in a noun phrase.

## 2. THE ARTICLES

The English articles are *a*, *the* and *the zero article* and they are members of identifiers according to their function. The difference between the articles and determiners is that the articles identify - definitely or indefinitely, and determiners answer the questions starting by *Which?* or quantify - answering *How much?* or *How many?* (Swan 1996).

Michael Swan declares that four articles exist in English: *a/an* - the indefinite article, *the* - the definite article, *some/any* used as plural of *a/an*, and *no article* (1996). On the other hand, Libuše Dušková in addition to the definite and indefinite article and the zero article, introduces the omission of the articles and *some* and *any*, regarding only words having a similar function like the articles in some cases (1994). As many grammarians (Murphy, Evans, O'Sullivan, Hutchinson) talk only about three forms of the articles - the definite and indefinite article and the zero article, the following part of the thesis is going to depict these and, furthermore, it is going to deal with the differences between the zero article and the omission of the articles, for Libuše Dušková considers the differences quite important.

### 2.1. The System of Articles in English

The use of the articles is considered to be one of the most difficult areas of English grammar and the following facts prove this statement. The position of the articles is not always the same as we will see in chapters 2.1.1. and then, the use of articles is complicated because it depends on many different conditions. First of all, it depends on what kind of noun it precedes - singular countable, plural countable or uncountable nouns. It also makes a difference in using the articles if we use common or proper nouns. Moreover, we need to make sure if we want to identify, classify or use a noun in a general or specific way. Other important areas that we need to be aware of are a rule called first and second mention and modification of nouns. Next to these, a great amount of exceptions exist, which makes the use of articles even more complicated. All these areas will be discussed in the following chapters. Of course, many other areas that influence the use of articles exist but those would be beyond the scope of this thesis as it is aimed at teaching at basic schools.

### **2.1.1. The position of Articles in English**

The articles are central determiners according to their position as it has already been stated. Next, when a noun is premodified, the article precedes the modifier, for example, *The early bird catches the early worm* (Dušková 1994, 60). However, some exceptions exist and the article is placed between the modifying adjective and the modified noun. These are cases of the intensification of a premodifying adjective by *so, as, too, such, however*, as in, *I hesitated to make so damaging a statement or such a damaging statement* (Dušková 1994, 60). The postposition of the articles is also realised after *any/no, worse, no less*, for example, *He is no worse a doctor for being occasionally rude to his patients* (Dušková 1994, 60). Moreover, it is facultative to realize the postposition of the articles with *rather* and *quite*, for instance, *a rather unexpected result* or *rather an unexpected result*, both are acceptable (Dušková 1994, 60). Furthermore, the indefinite article is placed after *what* in exclamations, which has already been discussed in chapter 1.1. Additionally, the indefinite article is postponed by *many*, meaning one in a literary style, as in, *many a time* (Dušková 1994, 60).

### **2.2. The Use of Articles with Countable and Uncountable Nouns**

In relation to the countability of nouns, first, learners need to distinguish three groups of nouns. Two groups are basic, “countable” and “uncountable nouns,” and the third group is also necessary, “dual,” sometimes called “double-duty” or “two way nouns,” which can be either countable or uncountable. Countable nouns are the names of separate objects, people, or ideas which we may count, for example, *a cat, two cats*. Uncountable nouns, often called “abstracts,” are the names of materials, liquids and other things which we do not usually see as separate objects and cannot count them, for example, *water, energy*.

The following table demonstrates the use of articles with singular countable, plural countable and uncountable nouns:

<i>a kind of noun</i>	<i>a/an</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>no article</i>
singular countable	<i>a cat</i>	<i>the cat</i>	—
plural countable	—	<i>the cats</i>	<i>cats</i>
uncountable	—	<i>the water</i>	<i>water</i>

(Swan 1996, 66)

From the table above, it is clear that the word *cat* represents a countable noun and *water* uncountable. We can also see that the indefinite article can be used only with singular countable nouns and on the contrary, plural countable and uncountable nouns can be used either with the definite article or with no article at all. So the definite article can be used with all three kinds of nouns. Additionally, students of English need to remember that singular countable nouns have to be preceded by an article or another determiner, however, some exceptions exist, see detailed information in 2.6. (*man, woman*).

“Countable” and “uncountable” are terms often used instead of “mass” and “unit.” It is recommended to avoid terms “countable” and “uncountable” as it can confuse students of English. R. A. Close (1992) shows his reasons for it with the following examples: *egg*, as a thing is countable, but it can also be a substance so uncountable; *money* is uncountable but can be counted. These are terms that can confuse students and these two examples clearly demonstrate how easily students can use the terminology wrongly and consequently, use the articles incorrectly. However, some grammarians combine the terms and use “mass” and “countable” (Eastwood) and others use only the terms “countable” and “uncountable” (Murphy, Evans, O’Sullivan, Swan, Master), that is why I use this terminology too.

Now, an example of a dual noun will be shown: “*An iron is used for pressing clothes* (countable); *Iron is used in making steel* (uncountable) (Master 1989, 209).” As it is visible from the given examples, the word *iron* can be both countable and uncountable so it is a dual noun. Moreover, the meaning of the word changes completely. Some other dual nouns can be used as countable nouns, in order to indicate a particular type of noun, for

instance, *Many people drink wine* (uncountable); *A connoisseur carefully selects appropriate wines* (countable) (Master 1989, 209). More, it is necessary to know that many uncountable nouns have countable equivalents, for example, *poetry – a poem; travel – a journey, trip; work – a job*.

In addition, students learning English as a foreign language also need to be aware that some nouns countable in other languages are uncountable in English, for example, *information*, or *advice* are uncountable in English and countable in Czech (Master 1989, 209). Next, the rules of the use of articles change in some cases when we modify nouns, see 2.5.

### 2.3. Identification versus Classification

As it has already been said, one of the functions of articles is identifying, so we can call it “identification,” which usually has a descriptive role and is realised by copular verbs<sup>1</sup>(Eastwood 1992), for example, *The house is small*, is a definite identification because the listener knows exactly which house the speaker is talking about. This can also be called a definite reference<sup>2</sup>. Conversely, *Pass me a piece of bread*, is an indefinite identification, which can be termed an indefinite reference<sup>3</sup> as well and the reason is that it is not a definite piece of bread. The speaker is asking for any one of several pieces of bread (Swan 1996). So identification can be either definite produced by the definite article or indefinite produced by the indefinite article.

On the contrary, classification is a function that categorizes a noun in a certain group, saying what class, or type somebody or something belongs to, what job, role or position somebody or something performs. In this case, a noun is usually preceded by the indefinite article and used with *a copular verb* or *as*, for example, *She is an architect; Don't use your plate as an ashtray; I am looking forward to being a grandmother; I used my shoe as a hammer* (Swan 1996). The nouns in these sentences do not suggest anything indefinite but *an architect* and *a grandmother* refer to a type of job or role and *an ashtray* and *a*

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<sup>1</sup> A copular verb is a verb that connects a subject with its complement, for example, *be, become* (Kubrychtová 2001).

<sup>2</sup>A definite reference is any reference created by the definite article (Dušková 1994).

<sup>3</sup>An indefinite reference is any reference created by the indefinite article (Dušková 1994).



*hammer* to a type of thing.

So both identification and classification have a copular relationship, but identification is to describe and classification to rank into classes or groups. Consequently, these two functions have a completely different meaning. The difference is more significant when we use one noun in both the mentioned functions, for example, *She is a teacher*, referring to a type of job – classification, and on the other hand, *That is a teacher who teaches my daughter* – meaning one of several teachers who teach my child – an indefinite identification, but *That is the teacher who teaches my daughter*, is a definite identification of the teacher who is the only one that teaches the girl or both speaker and listener know the person. So in this case, the use of the definite or indefinite article depends on the number of teachers. However, the use of articles in classification also sometimes depends on a number of people, in this case, members of class, see 2.8.

## **2.4. First and Second Mention**

“First and second mention (Master 1989)” represents an easy rule for students that can be characterised as follows. The first time we mention a singular countable noun, we use the indefinite article. When we mention a plural countable or uncountable noun, we use the zero article. In the case, it appears in the context for the second time, we use the definite article before the noun, which can be countable or uncountable, singular or plural. For instance, *A man is walking down a road with a boy. The man is tired, the road is long, and the boy is thirsty* (Master 1989, 210). *A man, a road* and *a boy* are mentioned for the first time in the first sentence and that is why we use the indefinite article. In the second sentence, the listener already knows who the speaker is talking about so the speaker uses the definite article with the nouns, *the man, the road, the boy*. Thus, the use of the indefinite article signals something new and the definite article something already known. These can also be means of Functional Sentence Perspective when the new information with the indefinite article, called *reme*, is usually at the beginning of the English sentence and *theme*; the known information with the definite article is placed towards the end. FSP is beyond the scope of this thesis; see detailed information in Dušková 1994, 391 – 394.

The rule first and second mention is also known as “anaphoric reference,” labelled by some grammarians “direct anaphoric reference” (Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum,

and 1972). Moreover, we talk about “indirect anaphoric reference,” called “anaphoric reference associational” by Dušková (1994) when a referent<sup>4</sup> is not identical with the expression from the previous context and a description or synonym<sup>5</sup> is used instead, for example, *She was wearing a ring with a diamond in it. Everybody admired the precious stone* (Dušková 1994, 66), where *the precious stone* is an expression for *a diamond*. Additionally, anaphoric reference can eventuate from a related lexical content within different word classes, for example, *We had to travel overnight. The journey was very tiring* (Dušková 1994, 67). Here, we can see that the connection between *travel* and *journey* makes it anaphoric reference. The opposite of anaphoric reference is “cataphoric reference,” see chapter 2.5.2 for more information.

“Second mention without first mention (Master 1989)” is the case when we use the definite article even though the noun phrase has not been mentioned yet. This is realised with noun phrases including adjectives called “ranking adjectives,” which are of three possible types: a) “superlatives” - *the best, the most beautiful, the largest,...*; b) “sequence adjectives” - *the first, the next, the following,...*; c) “unique adjectives” - *the same, the only, the chief, the main, the principal, the one,...* (Master 1989). Quirk, Leech, Svartvik and Greenbaum (1972) label this rule “the logical use of *the*.” The next case when we can use the definite article without the first mention is a grammatical area called “shared knowledge,” which is introduced in the following part.

### **2.4.1. Shared Knowledge**

“Shared knowledge” is another case when we can use the definite article without the first mention and this proves not only a speaker's linguistic but also non-linguistic knowledge. As it depends mainly on the speaker's decision whether he uses the definite article or not, it is supposed to be one of the most difficult areas of the use of articles (Master 1989). This area can be divided into four classes: “world, cultural, regional/local, special.”

The class “world” is probably the easiest of the four classes for students. Teachers can present it by its typical representatives, for example, *the sun, the sky, the universe*.

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<sup>4</sup> A referent is a noun which we refer to.

These are examples of items which are unique and that is the reason why we use them with the definite article; however, this rule is not always valid. Pupils can have difficulties with some other words, such as, *the ocean*, as they know several of them but *the ocean* also means any representative portion of the whole water. Quirk, Leech, Svartvik and Greenbaum (1972) consider this issue “larger situation” or “general knowledge.”

“The cultural class” is also understandable for students if they are of the same cultural background, or social class like their classmates and teachers, and so they can easily recognise the cultural class during lessons. These include sentences like, *Use the telephone; Take the bus; I heard it on the radio; We went to the movies* (Master 1989, 211). *The telephone* and *the radio* represent common means of communication and *the movies* is a place to see films, and these all are examples of ordinary terms that pupils encounter in everyday life. However, another term, “sporadic reference” (Quirk Leech, Svartvik and Greenbaum 1972) can be used too, for example, *My sister goes to the theatre every month*, may mean a particular theatre by the local classification (see below), but it rather means an institution which may be seen at various places.

“The regional/local classification” is easier for students that have been in one place for a while. So it is obvious for them to talk about *the post office, the book store, the station* and they know which particular place is discussed. Another aspect of this classification is when people talk about items around them, for example, *Shut the door; Open the window; Put it on the board*. Another use of the definite article, which is tightly associated with the regional/local classification is giving instructions, for instance, *Open the box carefully; Lift out the machine; Plug in the black power cord*. Quirk, Leech, Svartvik and Greenbaum (1972) label this classification “situational reference – immediate situation (266).”

The world, cultural class and local/regional classification can be identified with the term “situational determination,” according to Dušková (1994, 64 – 66), which is determination by the definite article when a subject is clearly defined like in the previous paragraph, for example, *Put it on the table* (Dušková 1994, 65). However, visibility in the situation of speaking is not necessary for the use of the definite article, for example: A visitor reads a notice on a gate: *Beware of the dog* (Dušková 1994, 65). The definite article suggests that the dog is round the house where the notice was placed and it is not based on

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<sup>5</sup> Synonyms are words that have different form but the same meaning.

any previous knowledge. The reason is the situation of speaking, which gives us necessary information. On the other hand, in many cases, the use of the definite article is based on knowledge which speaker and listener share, for example, members of family (knowledge about the location of furniture) - *Where is my bag? It is on the sofa*; people living in the same village – *the Townhall*; people living in the same country – *the Queen, the President*. These examples agree with local/regional classification and cultural class, discussed above.

Next, concerning the situational determination, we can use the definite article on the basis of general knowledge about our planet, as in *the sun* that can be identified with the world class, which has also been mentioned before. However, knowledge in common does not necessarily need to be the consequence of education. It can be specific for both speaker and listener, for example: Speaker A says that he has lost his cigarette-lighter. After a while speaker B asks him: *Have you found the cigarette-lighter?* (Dušková 1994, 66). From the previous conversation, it is clear which cigarette-lighter they are talking about. This type of reference becomes anaphoric reference mentioned in chapter 2.4. The similarity between anaphoric reference and situational determination is that both are based on specific knowledge. The difference is that in the case of anaphoric reference the information is explicitly expressed in the previous context but in the case of situational determination it is not always expressed so the speaker and listener need to deduce the information from the situation (Dušková 1994).

Other area where we need to use deduction is “the special classification,” which is the most difficult area, from Peter Master's point of view. It depends much on the information on the part of the listener. For example, *I was driving home yesterday when the radiator burst*. Here, the speaker and listener need to know that cars usually have radiators and that the information is about that particular radiator in that car the speaker was driving (Master 1989, 211). The specific classification also agrees with the terms “anaphoric reference associational” and “indirect anaphoric reference” discussed in 2.4.

## **2.5. Modification**

Modification provides more information about the modified word or changes its meaning. This process also sometimes influences the use of articles as we will see below. Modification can be divided into premodification and postmodification introduced in the

two following chapters.

### 2.5.1. Premodification

Premodification includes any words that precede nouns in noun phrases; they are predeterminers, central determiners or postdeterminers discussed in chapter 1.1. and, moreover, nouns can be premodified by adjectives, for example, *a nice picture*, or by other nouns, for example, *a kitchen table*. “Ranking adjectives” mentioned in chapter 2.4. are also a part of this issue as they function as premodifiers preceded by the definite article because they express uniqueness, as in, *He is the cleverest boy in our class*. Next, other adjectives and also nouns used as premodifiers and mentioned for the first time are preceded by the indefinite article, see 2.4. These were examples of modifying countable nouns, see 2.8. for modifying uncountable nouns.

### 2.5.2. Postmodification

Postmodification includes any words or phrases that follow a noun and its determination often eventuates from the content of the modifiers. These are:

1) Restrictive relative clauses – they define the modified noun so the listener knows exactly what the speaker is talking about, for example, *I appreciate the initiative that you have all shown*, so we all know what initiative is meant (Dušková 1994, 67). Similarly, *Paul left with the girl who had come with George*. The defined antecedent<sup>6</sup> and the restricted clause represent condensation of a clause mentioned for the first time with the indefinite article followed by an anaphoric clause with the definite article: *Paul left with a girl. The girl had come with George* (Dušková 1994, 67). A relative restrictive clause does not always signify the use of the definite article. It is only in cases when it refers to one referent, for example, *Who is the girl Paul is talking to?* but *We took a train that stops at every station* (Dušková 1994, 68). In the first example, *the girl* is the only girl Paul is talking to, and on the other hand, *a train* is one of many trains that stop at every station, so it is preceded by the indefinite article and represents a qualifying function. Both these

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<sup>6</sup> An antecedent is a noun that a pronoun or a relative clause refers to (Kubrychtová 2001).

sentences are examples of restrictive relative postmodification with “cataphoric reference,” which can be both definite and indefinite as it is visible from the examples.

2) Postmodifying prepositional clause with *of* determines a referent by the definite article if there is a connection between both nouns and if it is unique, for example, *the bottom of the sea* (Dušková 1994, 68). If there is more than one kind of main noun, as in the example, *a page of the book*, we use the indefinite article with the first one. If we use the definite article with plural, it functions as a universal quantifier, see chapter 1.1., for example, *The pages of the book were not cut*, meaning that it includes all the pages (Dušková 1994, 68).

3) A noun can also be postmodified by a content attributive clause<sup>7</sup> which specifies the noun, for example, *The idea that Hebrew was mankind's original language was widespread in medieval times* (Christophersen in Dušková 1994, 69). It is again cataphoric reference mentioned with a restrictive relative clause like in 1). Similarly, in the case of restrictive relative clauses, the postmodification can have a quantifying function, so the main noun is preceded by the indefinite article, for example, *Her father died at a time when she was too young to fully feel his loss* (Dušková 1994, 69).

4) Restrictive apposition<sup>8</sup> can be the next reason for the use of the definite article, for example, *the number seven*, but if the first member of apposition has the function of title, the apposition is without the article, for example, *Queen Elizabeth, Lord Byron, Mrs Dawson*. On the other hand, when we make a phrase with a proper noun preceded by a more general noun, we use the definite article, for example, *the English printer William Caxton, the common children's disease measles* (Dušková 1994, 69).

## 2.6. Generic versus Specific Function

We have three possibilities how to express a generic meaning – by the definite, indefinite article, and zero article, for example, *The/A child learns from his parents*, or *Children learn from their parents*. However, the interchangeability is not always possible

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<sup>7</sup> A content clause is a clause that expresses content itself of the term mentioned in the main clause (Dušková 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Restrictive apposition is a type of relation between two or more noun phrases which occur near to each other and refer to the same person or thing (Kubrychtová 2001).

(Dušková 1994, 63). When a speaker uses a noun preceded by the indefinite article in a generic meaning, it is more a spoken form of language (Dušková 1994, 63) and next, he expresses characteristic features of any representative member of the class. Thus, *any* can be substituted for *a/an*, for example, *The best way to learn a/any language is to live among its speakers* (Huddleston, Pullum 2002, 281). By using the indefinite article in this way, we cannot ascribe properties that belong to the class or species as a whole. Thus, if we want to express something belonging to a class as a whole or to depict a typical member of a class, we need to use the definite article with singular countable or the zero article with plural countable nouns, for example, *The tiger is/Tigers are becoming almost extinct* (Huddleston, Pullum 2002, 281). Additionally, the definite article in a generic meaning is more formal (Dušková 1994, 63).

Similarly, when using the zero article with both plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns to express a generic meaning, we identify a class of nouns considered to be an undifferentiated whole, for example, *Hunger is a terrible thing*, or *He likes long walks* (Kubrychtová 2001, 31). We can see that uncountable nouns behave like countable plural nouns in a generic function. Libuše Dušková considers the use of the zero article with uncountable and countable nouns in plural in a generic function most frequent (1994, 63).

Next, we use the definite article with singular noun phrases to refer to musical instruments and dances in general, for example, *the samba*, *play the violin*. More, we can use the definite article with a plural noun phrase to express generic reference to national names, nationalities and ethnic groups, for example, *the Chinese*. Additionally, the definite article can be used with an adjective head when referring to a group of people, for example, *the blind*, *the rich* (Huddleston, Pullum 2002, 283).

When we want to express human being like a biological type, we use the word *man* without any article, as in, *In history, man has adapted his environment to his nature* (Smith 312 in Dušková 1994, 63). Similarly, we can sometimes use *woman* in a generic function, for example, *Woman is supposed to stay at home* (Dušková 1994, 63). On the other hand, both *man* and *woman* are mostly used like other countable nouns in a generic function, for example, *Women do not get equal pay for equal work*, or *A hysterical woman is bad enough, but a hysterical man is insufferable* (Dušková 1994, 63).

A specific function is to refer to something particular, which either has not been mentioned yet, so it is indefinite or has already been mentioned and it is definite, for example, *Ed bought a house in Honour Avenue*, is specific indefinite as he bought a particular house, which he has in mind but the listener does not know which one yet, that is the reason why it is indefinite. The following example is specific definite, because the listener already knows what house the speaker is talking about: *The house is fantastic* (Huddleston 1984, 254). On the other hand, we can also form non-specific definite reference – *John is still looking for the right house to buy*, and non-specific indefinite reference – *Ed would like to buy a house in Honour Avenue*. *The right house* makes it definite as it is the only one but was not chosen yet and that is why it is non-specific. The second sentence is only an intention to buy a house but not a concrete decision, so it is indefinite non-specific (Huddleston 1984, 254).

The difference between a generic and specific reference is visible in the following examples: *The/a leopard has a dark-spotted yellowish-fawn coat*; *The/a leopard was growling menacingly in its cage* (Huddleston 1984, 255). In the first example, the speaker refers to a typical member of animals belonging to the leopard species, so it is generic. Here, we can use *the, a/an* or plural form with countable nouns and the meaning remains the same. On the contrary, the second example is specific, and it is used to talk about one individual leopard and, in this case, if we use the definite article – *The leopard was growling menacingly in its cage*, the listener is expected to know which particular leopard we are referring to, which is a specific definite reference and if we use the indefinite article, it becomes specific indefinite (Huddleston 1984).

We can summarise the use of articles in a specific and generic reference in the following tables:

**Specific reference**

**- definite**

the tiger	the
the tigers	ink

**Specific reference**

**- indefinite**



a tiger	(some)
(some) tigers	ink

### Generic reference

the tiger	ink
a tiger	
tigers	

(Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum 1972, 149 - 150)

As it has already been mentioned and as it is visible from the tables, specific reference can be definite and indefinite. The noun *a tiger* represents a singular countable noun, *tigers* represents a plural countable noun and *ink* uncountable noun. Specific definite reference can be realised by all three types preceded by the definite article. On the other hand, specific indefinite reference can be created by singular countable nouns preceded by *a/an* or plural countable and uncountable nouns preceded by *some* or no article.

In the case of generic reference, singular countable nouns can be used with both the definite article and indefinite article or plural countable and uncountable nouns can be used with the zero article to have a generic meaning as we can see in the last table.

## 2.7. The Use of Articles with Common and Proper Nouns

Common nouns are names given to all objects of the same kind, for example, *a student*, *a lion*. They consist of countable and uncountable nouns and next, they can be divided into the following groups: mass/material (*bread*, *blood*...), collective (*crowd*, *army*,...), part nouns (*a half*, *a part*, *the rest*,...), partitives (*a piece*, *a portion*, *a slice*,...), measure (*an inch*, *a foot*, *a pint*,...) and species nouns (*a brand*, *a class*, *a kind*,...) (Kubrychtová 2001). Students need to know that singular countable nouns have to be preceded by an article as it has already been said in the previous chapter, however, some exceptions exist, see chapter 2.8. Next, the use of the articles with common nouns in complement<sup>9</sup> depends mainly on the fact of how many members that class has in that

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<sup>9</sup> A complement is a part of a sentence that gives more information about the subject or object (Kubrychtová

particular situation. Most often a referent is assigned into a class with more members and then we use the indefinite article with the class, for example, *I shall always be a socialist* (Dušková 1994, 74). This is called classification, see 2.3., and 2.8. for exceptions. The use of articles with countable nouns was discussed in 2.2. – 2.6.

Proper nouns are names of specific people, places, months, days, festivals, magazines, and so on. They differ from common nouns in the following facts: they have a lack of article contrast; they have unique denotation; and are usually written with initial capital letters. Proper nouns often combine with descriptive words and they also begin with capital letters called “proper names,” for example, *King's College*. However, common nouns with unique denotation are close to proper nouns, sometimes with a capital letter, for example, *Hell, Heaven*, or also family members concerning one family are written with initial capital letters, such as, *Aunt, Mother*, though, we say *The family next door are having a party. The father is celebrating his fiftieth birthday*, here; we use the definite article to express definite reference (Dušková 1994, 77).

Proper nouns are not usually preceded by articles and this is called the omission of the articles, for example, *June* (months), *Easter Monday* (holidays), *English* (names of languages). The omission of the articles with proper nouns is different to the zero article. The zero article is a means of determination for indefinite reference and generic reference, which are types of reference that do not exist with proper nouns (Dušková 1994, 75). However, not only the omission of the articles is realised with proper nouns. A number of groups of proper nouns are preceded by the definite article, see the following chapters and, finally, there are some exceptional uses of proper nouns preceded by the indefinite article, see 2.8. and Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum 1972, 288 – 296 for detailed information.

### **2.7.1. Personal Names**

Personal and proper names with titles are most often used without the article, for example, *Agatha Christie, Abraham Lincoln, Dr. Johnson, Prof. Montague, Captain Smith* and additionally, proper nouns with modifiers, for example, *little Emily, poor Charles*. However, when we say *the young Shakespeare, the older Shakespeare*, we talk about one person at a different age, which is why we use the definite article and conversely, when we

say *young Jolyon* and *old Jolyon* without the articles; we talk about two people with the same name and different modifiers. Another case of using the definite article with personal names is when talking about a concrete aspect of a person, for example, *He wrapped the trembling Emily in his coat*. Similarly, we use the definite article with a restrictive modifier<sup>10</sup>, for example, *Is he the Newman who went to school with Tom?* (Dušková 1994, 76). In other cases, modification concerning personal names influences the use of articles in the same way as uncountable nouns, see 2.8.

Proper names in plural have the definite article, for example, *the Elliots*, to express a group of people, usually a family with the same surname. However, the indefinite article can also be used with surnames; for example, *He does not look like a Burton* – meaning a member of that family. Another meaning of the use of the indefinite article with a personal name is discussed in 2.8 as it is rather an exception.

### 2.7.2. Geographical Names

Some geographical names are used without the articles, such as, names of continents – *Europe*, but *the Antarctic*, *the Arctic*; next, names of countries, regions, towns, such as, *Norway*, *Hungary*, *Rome*. The determination is not influenced by modifiers, for example, *Ancient Greece*, *Soviet Russia*. Names of countries referring to unions, countries in plural and countries including “republic” in their names are used with the definite article, for example, *the Soviet Union*, *the United States*, *the Netherlands*. However, some exceptions exist, for instance, *the Argentine*, *the Ukraine* (Dušková 1994, 75).

Names of hills, lakes and islands are also used without the articles, such as, *Lake Ontario*, *Mont Blanc*, *Cuba*, but mountain ranges and groups of islands in plural are preceded by the definite article, such as, *the Giant Mountains*, *the Philippines*. Next, names of streets, squares, parks and buildings are without the articles, such as, *Wall Street*, *Trafalgar Square*, *Hyde Park*. On the other hand, names of oceans, seas, rivers and channels are usually used with the definite article, for example, *the Pacific*, *the Thames*, *the English Channel* (Dušková 1994, 75).

However, the use of the definite article or the omission of articles sometimes

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<sup>10</sup>A restrictive modifier is a modifier realised by a restrictive relative clause, which gives us necessary information about the modified noun and thus, makes it definite (Dušková 1994).

depends on semantic and etymological factors or traditions as well, for example, *the Hague* is an example of a name of town with the use of the definite article due to its original language (Dušková 1994, 75).

Public institutions and facilities are used with *the* but it is different with names of universities that are used without the article having form: name + university, for example, *London University*, though we use them with the definite article with form: the University + of + proper noun, for example, *the University of London*. Proper nouns having the form of common noun + of + proper noun are generally used with the definite article, as in, *the City of London*, *the Lake of Geneva* (Dušková 1994, 77 – 78).

## 2.8. Exceptional Uses of the Use of Articles

The English system of the articles is very difficult to learn for students as they familiarise themselves with a number of rules of the use of articles during their studies of English and also encounter many exceptions to these rules. Some of these exceptions will be introduced in this chapter. The first part of this chapter will deal with exceptional uses of the zero article with singular countable nouns, including exceptional cases of classification; the next part will depict exceptional uses of the indefinite article with uncountable nouns and the last issues will be exceptions concerning proper nouns.

There are a number of countable nouns that take the zero article in abstract or rather specialized uses, chiefly in certain idiomatic<sup>11</sup> expressions with verbs like *be* and *go* followed by prepositions. For example, the words *school*, *college*, *university* and others are used with the zero article when they express the purpose which they refer to, for example, *pupils go to school*, *patients are cured in hospitals*, or *travel by boat* (means of transport preceded with *by*) (Quirk, Greenbaum 1990, 73 - 75). Next, we do not use the articles in the following expressions, *husband and wife*, *from head to foot*, *from father to son*, *in comparison with*, *on top of*, *in regard to*, and so on. However, some other phrases are used with the indefinite article, for example, *to be in a hurry*, *in a bustle*, *at a loss* (Dušková 1994, 80). These are idioms or fixed expressions and pupils need to learn them like items of vocabulary and have to know the whole phrases, ignoring general rules (Parrott 2000). On

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<sup>11</sup> An idiom is an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words (Mayor 2002).

the other hand, in other cases we can choose to use the zero article or the indefinite article and the decision depends on the degree of countability, for example, *There was a short silence. There was absolute silence* (Dušková 1994, 81).

*Town* is without the article when we express the centre of a town or the nearest town from the country, it is the same case with *home* but we say *the equipment of the homes with electrical appliances*. Expressing parts of day, we also frequently use them without the articles, mainly after prepositions *at, by, after, before*, for example, *by day, at night* (Dušková 1994, 79).

We know that singular countable nouns should be preceded by the definite or indefinite article. However, singular countable nouns can also be used with the zero article, being restricted on syntactic positions, fixed expressions or idioms discussed above, for example, *piece by piece, in person*, and the next reason can be that the use of articles does not fit semantically to the context, for example, *It was morning* but *It was a sunny morning*. Moreover, phrases with *all* and *enough* + singular countable nouns, can also be classified as cases of the use of articles identical to the uncountable nouns, as in, *She is all woman, There is not enough table for everyone to sit at*. Another case when we use singular countable nouns without the article is genitive attribute<sup>12</sup> with *of*, as in, *the type of sentence*, in spite of this the use of the articles is not excluded in these cases, for example, *this kind of a tree* (Dušková 1994, 52-53). Sometimes, the articles can be omitted with action nouns and abstracts and also concrete nouns mainly in a plural form, for example, *Heads turned and conversation stopped momentarily as I came in* (Dušková 1994, 70).

More, when classifying the indefinite article usually precedes a singular countable noun, see chapter 2.3. Exceptionally, the indefinite article is omitted after the verbs *turn*, or *take*, as in, *He turned traitor; They took him prisoner*. Next, the indefinite article can also be omitted when we talk about a class which has an only member, for example, *He became general director*. In some cases, we can use *the*, for example, *He became (the) Chief Editor of the Journal*. Similarly, we use the definite article or *a/an* according to a number of members with verbs of viewing and rating, for example, *He is considered a good student* but *He is considered the best student in his class*. The first example demonstrates that there

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<sup>12</sup> Genitive is the form of a noun made with 's – used to show possession, and attributive is an adjective placed before a noun that is an attributive position

are a number of good students, so we use the indefinite article and, on the other hand, the second example expresses a situation when the student is the only one who is the best in the class (Dušková 1994, 74 - 75).

As some singular countable nouns can be used with the zero article, similarly, some uncountable nouns usually used with the zero article can be used with the indefinite article, in most cases, when they are dual, see 2.2., or when they are premodified, for example, *We got up in darkness* but *An oppressive darkness hung all round us*; *Language is a means of communication* but *I learn a foreign language* (Dušková 1994, 54), or *Mavis had a good education*; *She played the oboe with a remarkable sensitivity* (Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum 1972, 287). These are examples of uncountable nouns which can be used as countable when they denote their individual expression, and this is sometimes called “partitive effect (Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum, 287).” The conditions for the use of the indefinite article with normally uncountable nouns are unclear, but they appear to include the following; the nouns refer to a quality or other abstractions which are attributed to a person or they are premodified and/or postmodified; and, generally speaking the greater amount of modification, the greater the acceptability of *a/an* (Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum 1972, 287). However, other uncountable nouns cannot be used with the indefinite article even though they are premodified and denote something particular because they are exclusively uncountable, such as, *accuracy, anger, courage, despair, dust, fun*, and so on; for instance, *You've made very good progress*; *We're having terrible weather*; *You gave me good advice* (Dušková 1994, 56).

As it has already been mentioned in 2.7., a number of rules for the use of articles concerning proper nouns exist and they are followed by many exceptions. One exception concerning modified proper nouns will be introduced in this paragraph. Proper nouns that are normally used without the articles, are preceded by the definite or indefinite article when they are modified by a restrictive modifier, expressing a particular feature of the applicative name, for example, *the London I am talking about, the vision of a new Canada, a rainy Sunday* (Dušková 1994, 79).

Similarly, personal names can be used with the indefinite article to express an unknown person having a certain name, for example, *A Mr. March to see you, Is there a Miranda in your class?*, or a person having a special character like somebody famous, for

instance, *He is not a Mozart* (Dušková 1994, 76).

## **2.9. Summary of the Rules for the Use of Articles**

In conclusion, we can summarize the most important points which should not be forgotten when deciding on the right article. First of all, the speaker needs to think carefully about the kind of noun - a common or proper noun or proper name, plural or singular, countable or uncountable; and know the necessary rules concerning this issue. The basic rule for common nouns is that we use the indefinite or definite article with countable singular nouns and the zero or definite article with uncountable nouns. Next, special rules for the use of articles are valid for proper nouns and names, see 2.7.

More, the use of articles depends mainly on context, discussing topics for the first time, we use the indefinite or zero article and for the second or following times, we use the definite article, see 2.4. In other cases, the speaker has to deduce which reference is the purpose of his speech, for example, talking about objects or people in generic sense, we can use the zero article with uncountable nouns to talk about a class of nouns as an undifferentiated whole but the uses of the definite or indefinite articles are also possible. We can say that the contrary reference to generic reference is specific reference. We use this reference with the definite article to talk about something already known or mentioned before – specific definite; but we can also use the indefinite article to express something particular in mind mentioned for the first time – specific indefinite, for detailed information see 2.6. where both generic and specific references are discussed.

In addition, the speakers have to be aware if they identify or describe for the first or second time so identification can be definite and indefinite; or if they classify, in other words this means that they place a noun to a certain category, so they can use only the indefinite article, see 2.3. What is more, modification sometimes breaks the stated rules, for example, restrictive relative clauses – even though, mentioning something for the first time, we use *the* as the second part of the sentence says the needed information which makes it definite, see 2.5.2.

Many other rules that have been discussed in this part of the thesis are necessary for the right choice but also others which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Apart from rules,

students should be aware of a large number of exceptions that are connected with the use of articles; some of them have been discussed in 2.8.

### **3. TEACHING THE ARTICLES**

In this chapter aspects important for teaching the articles are discussed. The initial part deals with the importance of articles in the English grammar because I think that many people underestimate their significance. The following parts involve advantages and disadvantages of teaching the articles in context and the deductive and inductive methods and next, individual phases of a lesson aimed at teaching the articles.

#### **3.1. The Importance of Articles in English**

To the surprise of speakers of those languages that do not have an article system, the failure to keep this view in mind in English can lead to confusion and sometimes even anger on the part of the listener or reader. (Master 1989, 208)

As Peter Master explains, the articles are a necessary part of the English language. Thus, teachers should make pupils aware of the importance of articles since leaving out the articles would cause the English to be incomplete and would lead to misunderstanding in some cases. An example of possible misunderstanding is the wrong use of the definite and indefinite article concerning the rule called first and second mention discussed in chapter 2.4., for instance, *A man and a woman were sitting opposite me. The man was American but I think the woman was British* (Murphy 1997, 142). It is correct as we talk about *a man* and *a woman* in the first sentence for the first time and that is why we use *a*. On the other hand, we signal that we are talking about the people from the previous sentence by using *the man* and *the woman* in the second sentence. If we said, *A man was American but I think*



*a woman was British*, the listener would be confused and he could think that we were talking about other people not mentioned yet.

The next example is the incorrect countable/uncountable distinction of dual nouns and consequential wrong usage of the articles, which can also cause misunderstanding as these nouns have different meanings when used as countable and uncountable, already mentioned in chapter 2.2., such nouns are: *a wood* (countable) – a small forest, *wood* (uncountable) - the substance that forms the main part of a tree and is used for making things such as furniture; *a glass* (countable) – a small container made of glass used for a drink, *glass* (uncountable) – a hard clear substance used for making objects, such as, windows or bottles (Mayor 2002). So the use of the indefinite article or no article at all can cause problems in understanding the meaning.

### **3.2. Teaching the Articles in Context**

Before teachers decide on concrete activities for teaching the articles they should be aware that many linguists find the teaching of articles in context to be most effective (Hedge, Parrott, Celce-Murcia, Olshtain, Thornbury). Since the majority of the rules concerning the articles can only be deduced from context, it is the best way to present new rules and practise the use of them in context. It concerns mainly the rule called shared knowledge, discussed in 2.4.1., for instance, *The door was open*, when we read this sentence in context, we assume that the door refers to a house previously mentioned in the dialogue or a house where the conversation takes place (Carter, Hughes, McCarthy 2000).

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) declare:

...there is growing agreement that teaching grammar exclusively at the sentence level with decontextualized and unrelated sentences, which has long been the traditional way to teach grammar, is not likely to produce any real learning (61).

So teaching the articles in context gives pupils an opportunity to work with real language. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain also say that teaching the articles belongs among the grammatical areas that are clearly not context-free. It means that the grammar mostly depends on context and the articles belong among this type of grammar. So this is another statement which supports the idea to teach the articles in context.

Similarly, Scott Thornbury adds to this:

Although language has traditionally been analysed and taught at the level of the sentence, real language use seldom consists of sentences in isolation, but of groups of sentences (or, in the case of spoken language, groups of utterance) that form coherent texts. (Thornbury 2000, 71)

As Scott Thornbury recommends, teachers should teach the articles from pieces of real language, not only separate sentences to make pupils see that the rules of the use of articles are useful in everyday usage, for the choice of context see below.

The choice of context depends on individual teachers. Teachers can gain sources for teaching the articles from four possible areas: course books, authentic sources, and the teacher and students themselves. Additionally, teachers can choose from various forms of texts, such as, postcards, novels, football commentaries, jokes, street signs (Thornbury 2000). Using various sources, teachers create enjoyable lessons for their learners. When teachers select stories with the interests of the students in mind, pupils can easily absorb the use of articles in context with enthusiasm. Furthermore, students can help create stories and role plays, which will involve them in the lesson. They will memorise it and also enjoy it (Celce-Murcia, Hilles 1988). As the articles belong among the most frequent elements of English grammar, teachers can choose any of the sources previously mentioned to present or practice the use of articles.

### **3.3. Approaches to Teaching the Articles**

Teachers also need to know which approaches to teaching exist to decide on the most suitable one for individual classes. First, teachers can choose from covert and overt teaching. Covert teaching means that rules of the use of articles are hidden from students even though they are learning the language. As a result, students draw their attention mainly to the activity or to the text they are working with. In this way, students subconsciously absorb the particular rule of the use of articles without knowing it (Harmer 1991). This method is mostly employed only with small children starting to learn a language in nurseries or in the first grades of basic schools in the Czech Republic and that is why this issue will not be discussed further in this thesis.

On the other hand, overt grammar teaching is when teachers provide their students with the rules of articles and explanations or let pupils discover the rules and openly present

the grammatical information or discuss the rules with students as soon as students discover them. Teachers are explicit and open about the rules of articles in English and that is why this approach is based on conscious language learning (Harmer 1991). Having decided for the overt way, teachers can choose from two approaches introduced in the following part.

### **3.3.1. The Inductive Approach**

In the inductive approach, students are engaged in finding out how English works. Some grammarians consider it the “natural route to learning.” One of the advantages of the inductive approach is specified by the fact that when students discover the rules for themselves, the rules become more meaningful, and serviceable. It creates a cognitive depth, which makes the rules more memorable. Moreover, when students are involved in the process, they are more attentive and motivated. Thus, induction is learning through experience. By all these advantages, students gain greater self-reliance and autonomy (Thornbury 2000).

Nevertheless, induction also has some disadvantages. Some linguists criticise that it can be time-consuming for students to discover the rules of articles on their own. They can think that rules are the objective of language learning, rather than a means. Next, they may hypothesise the wrong use of the rule, so students themselves may create rules of articles, which are either too broad or too narrow in their application. Additionally, it can be demanding for teachers to plan a lesson. They have to select items and organise the lesson in detail. For those reasons, teachers need to predict if their students are able to work with English in the inductive way. If teachers think that it would be demanding and time-consuming for their students, they should probably decide for the deductive method, in order not to waste valuable lesson time only on ambiguous guessing (Thornbury 2000). However, Tricia Hedge declares that:

Learners are able to learn inductively, drawing on the knowledge of English they have already acquired along with knowledge of their first and any other languages, to formulate hypotheses, test these out, and gradually restructure and refine their grammatical knowledge (2000, 158).

Thus, it is up to each teacher's decision in respect to class or particular rule of articles they want to teach but from Hedge's statement it is clear that all students are able to

work inductively if they are given a chance to try it.

### **3.3.2. The Deductive Approach**

By employing the deductive approach, teachers provide pupils with explicit grammatical information, so that the rules of articles presented are depicted in detail and afterwards, pupils work with them (Ur 1988).

The deductive approach has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are the following facts. It can be time-saving to get straight to the point, as many rules of articles can be explained simply and quickly. Moreover, it is an appropriate method for students with an analytical learning style, students also have the possibility to work with the rules of articles immediately, and concerning teachers' preparation, teachers do not need to prepare much in advance, but merely explain the grammar points about the articles, as they come up (Thornbury 2000).

On the other hand, the disadvantages of the deductive lessons are as follows. Starting a lesson with a presentation of rules of articles may be repulsive for some students because this method is usually realised by a front teaching, which is not always positively accepted by students. Furthermore, when grammar points about the articles are presented by teachers, it is hardly memorable for students. Another disadvantage is that it encourages a belief that language is only a case of knowing the rules (Thornbury 2000).

### **3.4. Organizing Teaching the Articles in a Lesson**

Teachers have several possibilities how to organize their lesson when teaching the articles, they are *presentation - practice model*, *presentation – practice - production model* and *presentation - focused practice - communicative practice - teacher feedback and correction*. While preparing for teaching the articles, it is important to choose the right type of lesson suitable for individual classes and for the particular rule of articles.

By realising P-P Model, teachers can achieve pupils' accuracy. So teachers present a new rule of articles and afterwards, they enable their students to practise it in controlled activities, for example, fill-in exercises (Thornbury 2000). Similarly, P-P-P Model enables pupils to hear their teacher presenting a new rule of articles and then practise it in controlled activities. In this model, production follows, which enables pupils to practise the

use of articles in freer activities, in which they produce the target form, for example, questions and answers (Hedge 2000).

In the last model of a lesson, the first two stages are the same as in the previous types. However, the following stage is communicative practice and as the name suggests, students are engaged in communicative activities, such as, practising short dialogues to practise the rules of articles which they have learned up to then. The last part of this model, teacher feedback and correction, should be realised throughout the whole lesson according to pupils' needs (Celce-Murcia, Hilles 1988). Similarly, Harmer (1992) introduces another possible concept of a lesson: *introducing new language - practice - communicative activities*.

The model by Celce-Murcia and Hilles seems the most appropriate as it includes not only presentation and practice but also a communicative practice and more, teacher feedback and correction and all these phases of a lesson are very important for pupils' clear understanding to the use of articles. On the other hand, models introduced by Hedge and Thornbury miss the phase teacher feedback and correction but it is possible that these grammarians consider this phase a teacher's role that is employed in every lesson so it probably does not belong to this field according to these grammarians.

Of course, teachers need to conform the structure and methods with particular classes, for example, pupils' age, level of English and other important conditions of individual classes that influence teaching. So teachers can create their own model of a lesson suitable for their class and particular rule of articles presented. We will discover some responding teachers' models in the research part in 5.1.2. Individual stages of a lesson will be discussed in the following chapter.

### **3.5. Presentation of the Articles**

Having decided on a suitable type of lesson according to its stages, teachers need to think about the way of presenting a new rule of articles and only presentation is the stage when pupils have the opportunity to get to know information about the new rule. Teachers teach their students the form, meaning and use of the rule of articles and the students get to know how the new rule works in context (Harmer 1991). Teachers should also link the new rule to rules of articles that students already know to make it clear or more understandable

for students how the system of articles works in English (Hedge 2000). At this stage, students learn how to apply the new rule too and this experience is called *personalisation* and students have the possibility to talk about themselves, using topics connected with them and their classmates and employ the new rule of articles at the same time. It is also efficient and sometimes necessary to use personalisation during other stages of a lesson to make it enjoyable and pupils more active (Harmer 1991).

### **3.5.1. Characteristics of a Good Presentation**

It is important to know what a good presentation should be like to teach the articles in a successful way. A good presentation should have five features:

- 1) It should be clear. Students need to understand what the teacher is talking about.
- 2) Next, a presentation should be efficient with the help of personalisation that has already been mentioned in the previous part.
- 3) A good presentation should also be lively and interesting as we want to involve students as much as possible and want them to remember the rule of articles presented.
- 4) Additionally, a good presentation should be appropriate to work as a good vehicle for the presentation of meaning and use.
- 5) The last feature that is necessary for a good presentation is to be productive. It means that teachers should allow their students to work with the new item actively. (Harmer 1991)

Furthermore, presentation and explanation of a new rule of articles should include oral and written forms, and both form and meaning as already mentioned. Next, teachers should provide students with plenty of contextual examples of the structure. The advantages of the use of context have been mentioned in chapter 3.2. More, visual materials can also contribute to understanding the use of articles (Ur 1988).

A very important element of a presentation is the form of a rule presented and there are six criteria stated to help teachers create appropriate rules for their students. Rules should be *true, simple, relevant, and clear* and should also agree with terms *demarcation* and *conceptual parsimony*, for more information see *Appendix 1*.

### **3.6. Practice and Production of the Use of Articles**

Practice is the stage when pupils try to practise a new rule of articles. Ideally, students practise the language while at the same time are involved in an enjoyable activity. At this stage, pupils make sure that they understand the right use of the new rule.

Production is the stage that should follow. Here, students use the new rule of articles in sentences of their own to be able to create a short text or speech consisting of the new rule applied in the right way (Harmer 2004).

#### **3.6.1. Characteristics of a Good Practice and Production**

Practice activities should follow some conditions. First, a teacher should demonstrate meaning and use of the rule of articles clearly and then allow an opportunity for its practice. Next, a teacher should think carefully about following questions while deciding about the right activity for practising the use of articles: *Is it do-able economically? Does it work? Is it suitable for the particular group of students at their level, for that time of day, and for those classroom conditions? How easy is it for the teacher?* (Harmer 2004)

Many types of activities can be employed for practising the use of articles. Introductory practice activities should be under controlled conditions when learners concentrate on accurate reproduction (Hedge 2000). As this stage follows presentation, students have the first possibility to use the new rule of articles so this is also a very important stage of a lesson when teaching the articles that should not be omitted. At this stage, interaction activities, which are freer than controlled activities can also be employed.

Then much freer activities should follow in which students produce language with the target rule of articles (Hedge 2000). At this stage, called production, teachers cannot concentrate only on the right use of articles but they need to teach pupils to use all the grammatical items they have learned up to then correctly.

Thus, teachers need to think carefully when choosing a production activity. They should keep the following conditions, which give them a chance to choose or create a successful activity. The activity should agree with students' language level, the teacher should also state a purpose to the task, have an outcome. Next, teachers need to be aware

that students learn during the production, so they should be patient and helpful and more, teachers should plan carefully – first, students should meet a new rule of the use of articles and needed vocabulary. Then they need time to absorb it (practice), and only afterwards, they should be given an opportunity to produce the language fluently.

Teachers also need to choose a topic carefully as pupils need to know what they are going to talk about. Teachers should also create interest for doing the activity and employ a varied range of topics and activities and additionally, provide necessary information. Finally, teachers should give students time to think and discuss the production activity with classmates or provide them with examples (Harmer 2004). Some of these features are applicable for all stages of a lesson when teaching the articles or other grammatical items. Types of exercises used for practising the articles will be examined in connection with the results of the questionnaires and exercises in the research part.

### **3.7. Teacher's Feedback and Correction**

Feedback and correction help students to clarify their understanding of the meaning of the use of articles. Correction provides pupils with the right version of the rule of articles used. Giving pupils feedback, teachers provide pupils with helpful instructions how to avoid their mistakes or how to improve (Harmer 1998).

The teacher's decision about the way of correcting and giving feedback while teaching the articles depends on the stage of a lesson and also the type of class and also on the activities done (Harmer 1998). Teacher correction is most important during presentation and practice, but self-correction and peer correction should also be encouraged. During production teachers should not intervene but give feedback afterwards (Hedge 2000). Concerning the connection between types of activities and correction, we can divide tasks into communicative and non-communicative.

By employing a communicative activity, teachers focus mainly on pupils' fluency and as the main aim is to get pupils' meaning across; teachers should not interrupt them, only when it is really necessary. Teachers need to be tolerant of errors in this case and help students just in cases when communication breaks down. Another possibility is to record pupils' mistakes and give a report about them afterwards. Then, teachers can also ask pupils



what was difficult for them and explain difficult rules of articles or let one pupil of the class explain the difficult areas of the use of articles to the classmates. Teachers should not forget to give positive as well as negative feedback after communicative activities (Harmer 1998).

When a teacher employs a non-communicative activity, they focus on pupils' accuracy and thus, they correct all the mistakes the students are making. It is called "teacher intervention," so the teacher stops the activity to make the correction (Harmer 2004). The teacher can decide on showing incorrectness or getting the mistake right.

Showing incorrectness while teaching the articles can be done in many ways:

- 1) repeating – a teacher can only ask the student to repeat the wrong sentence and lets him react
- 2) echoing – a teacher repeats the wrong sentence with a questioning intonation
- 3) statement and question – a teacher says: "That is not right," or asks: "Do people think that is correct?"
- 4) expression – a teacher uses facial expressions or gestures to signal that the student made a mistake
- 5) hinting – a teacher gives advice in which area the student made a mistake
- 6) reformulation – a teacher repeats the mistaken sentence correctly (Harmer 2004).

When teachers decide on getting the mistake right, they can encourage students to correct each other as it has already been stated. Student-to-student correction works well in classes where a cooperative atmosphere exists. Next, teachers themselves can tell the students the correct form and explain it in more detail. It is a vital teacher's role to correct pupils' mistakes but teachers should think carefully about the way they correct their students as it can happen that teachers discourage their students from learning the use of articles when using an insensitive way of correcting (Harmer 2004). From my point of view teachers' interest should be their pupils' involvement in all activities done during a lesson including correcting. All the themes that have been discussed in this chapter will be examined in the following research part of the thesis.

## **RESEARCH PART**

### **4. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH**

This research consists of two parts and they are a questionnaire for teachers and exercises for pupils. The purpose of the questionnaire is to outline how teachers teach the articles at basic schools. This research is descriptive because it focuses on finding out the frequency of the aimed aspects, for example, how many teachers use the inductive approach while they are teaching the articles and other topics discussed in the previous chapter.

The crucial part of the research are the exercises mentioned above. The main purpose of the exercises is to discover what most frequent difficulties sixth and seventh graders have when using the articles. Here, most rules argued in chapter 2 in this thesis will be examined in relation to teaching and learning them. Next explored areas will be: the effectiveness of practising the articles in context and the use of the inductive method and applicability of the used types of exercises for practising the articles. These will be compared with the responding teachers' beliefs as well. On the basis of both the questionnaire and exercises, possible causes of the pupils' problems with the articles will be stated and then ways for successful teaching the articles will be suggested. This part of the research is also descriptive because it depicts mistakes that the pupils make most frequently.

In both parts of the research, presentation phase of the articles will be discussed only partly and practice will fill the major part. As the research shows, a large part of a lesson is devoted to this phase and thus, I dare to consider it the most important and that is why I dedicated the exercises to practising the articles.

#### **4.1. Questionnaire for Teachers**

First, I talked about teaching the articles with my colleagues at the basic school where I teach. As I wanted to have a broader view of this issue, I intended to interview more English teachers in other schools. However, it would have been time-consuming, so I decided to create questionnaires and distributed them to English teachers at various basic schools.

I distributed the questionnaires (see *App 2*) to 34 English teachers at basic schools and received 31 of them back. In order to avoid teachers' confusion, the whole questionnaire was written in Czech.

The questionnaire consists of nine questions concerning teaching the articles in the sixth and seventh grade. The following areas will be explored: *teaching the articles either in context or separately within individual sentences or phrases; teaching inductively or deductively; phases of a lesson devoted to teaching the articles; factors important for choosing a suitable activity for practice and production of the articles; types of activities used for teaching the articles; reasons for pupils' difficulties with the articles; ways of correcting pupils during teaching the articles; and the amount of lessons teachers devote to teaching the articles.* Most of these themes have been discussed in the theoretical part.

## **4.2. Exercises for Pupils**

The exercises (see *App 3*) were chosen from textbooks used for teaching English at the basic school where I teach – *Click on* (Evans, O'Sullivan), *Project 3* (Hutchinson) and also other sources – *Grammar Express* (Fuchs, Bonner, Bourke), *English Grammar in Use* (Murphy), *English Grammar in Use – Supplementary Exercises* (Murphy, Hashemi), *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching, A Guide for Language Teachers* (Celce-Murcia, Olshtain). As it is recommended in the theoretical part, see chapter 3.2., the most appropriate way of teaching the articles is presenting and practising them in context and that is why all the exercises chosen for this research are in context – a short text, a part of a story or short dialogues. The types of exercises are as follows, fill-in exercises, drills, correcting mistakes and matching exercises. In a number of exercises, pupils also completed given rules employed in that particular exercise so they worked inductively.

During the first term of this school year, I distributed the exercises in four classes of the sixth and seventh graders where I teach, 29 pupils from the sixth grade and 32 pupils from the seventh grade participated in the research. The exercises were chosen and adapted according to the pupils' level of English and I aimed at the rules of articles taught in these grades. The assignments and rules were written in Czech with respect to the pupils' level of English and also because I wanted to survey only their ability to use the articles in English, not pupils' understanding English instructions. I distributed each exercise separately in the

practice phase during my lessons. I did not present the rules of articles before giving the tasks to the pupils as the aim was to find out what the pupils remembered about the use of articles without reminding this issue.

## **5. OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH**

## **5.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire**

As it has already been said, the questionnaire has nine questions and now, they are divided into broader subheads according to their themes. There, they are analysed in detail and the division is as follows: (1) Ways for teaching the articles; (2) English lessons aimed at the articles; (3) Activities used for practising the articles; (4) Reasons for pupils' difficulties with the articles.

### **5.1.1. Ways for teaching the articles**

Readers will familiarise themselves with the outcomes of questions dealing with teaching in context and using the inductive and deductive methods to teach the articles in this chapter.

#### ***In which form do you most often teach the articles in English and why?***

This question deals with ways of teaching the articles, either using context or teaching the articles separately within one sentence or phrase and those were the variants the teachers were to choose from. 24 out of 31 responding teachers teach the articles to their pupils in context. The majority of the teachers agree on one advantage and that is the fact that it is more memorable for pupils to learn individual rules of articles in context. Similarly, Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988) say that it facilitates teaching the articles in context to be memorable and enjoyable as well. The next reason which makes teaching the articles in context beneficial for pupils is the fact that context mirrors the real use of language with the articles within a language best, which three teachers state. This agrees with Scott Thornbury's opinion (2000). Another three teachers say that teaching the articles in this way is helpful because context influences the use of articles a lot like Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) declare, see chapter 3.2.

Only two respondents say that they teach the articles in separate sentences, to make it easier for pupils. Even though pupils can remember example sentences of the use of

articles, they are not able to use the individual rules concerning the articles in real language, which is the main aim of teaching a language, from my point of view. However, a few other responding teachers combine both teaching in context and in separate sentences, which can be helpful for some types of students. Five responding teachers declare that they only present particular rules of the articles in context and afterwards, they pick out the needed sentences or phrases and let pupils work with them, either practising or producing the aimed rule of the use of articles. Next, one of the teachers responds that it is memorable for pupils to work with the separate sentences consisting of the aimed rule and consequently, put them back to the given context or make a suitable context themselves, for example, a short dialogue or a few sentences related one to another.

To sum up the results of this question, we can say that most teachers teach the articles in context which is also recommended by many grammarians, such as, Hedge, Parrott, Celce-Murcia, and Thornbury. Teaching the articles in context has many advantages that have partly been discussed here and also in chapter 3.2.

#### ***Which methods do you use while teaching the articles?***

The teachers again had to choose from two given variants: the inductive and deductive methods. 11 respondents use the inductive method and only five respondents employ the deductive method. On the other hand, other 15 responding teachers declare that they combine both methods. So we can conclude that teachers prefer a combination of the inductive and deductive methods. In the following part we will explore the reasons for the teachers' opinions.

#### ***Which advantages or disadvantages do you find in the inductive and deductive methods?***

Each of the responding teachers states quite a lot of facts about the use of the inductive and deductive methods as you can see in the following tables:

<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Arguments for the inductive method</i>
19	time-consuming
12	memorable
8	suitable for older students
7	effective
3	students often simplify rules of the articles
2	only brighter students respond
2	students learn to work with texts
2	creative
2	interesting
1	natural
1	catchy
1	less bright students are bored, not able to respond

<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Arguments for the deductive method</i>
13	not time-consuming
9	suitable for younger students
7	less effective
6	uninteresting for students
6	less memorable
5	easier preparation for teachers
2	students are passive
2	students only learn rules by heart but are not able to use them practically
2	suitable for less bright students
2	suitable for all age groups

2	boring for students
1	students sometimes do not understand the rules

As it is visible from the tables, the responding teachers have many opinions identical with the linguists' opinions said in chapters 3.3.1. and 3.3.2. Most respondents agree that the inductive method is time-consuming and also 12 respondents consider this method memorable for students. Next, eight teachers consider this method suitable only for older students and seven teachers also agree that this method is effective, which is a necessary factor for deciding if to use this method or not.

On the other hand, most respondents agree that the deductive method is not time-consuming and is suitable for younger students. Another seven teachers declare that teaching the articles deductively is less effective and the next six teachers also point out that the deductive method is regarded as uninteresting. Similarly, Harmer (1998) says that it is usually repulsive for pupils to learn deductively, because teachers usually realise it by front-teaching, see chapter 3.3.2.

To sum up the results of this question, we can say that the teachers find more advantages than disadvantages in using the inductive method to teach the articles and, conversely, in the case of the deductive method, the teachers find more disadvantages than advantages in using it.

As we can see in the tables above, even though the teachers consider the inductive method more appropriate for teaching the articles, some of them employ the deductive method itself as we know from the results of the previous question, for it is good to introduce a particular rule straight and thus, they offer pupils a system they can follow which is beneficial for certain types of students like Thornbury (2000) and one of the responding teachers say.

On the basis of the results of this and the previous question, the teachers find a number of disadvantages in both methods and that is why the majority of them choose their combination. Some of the teachers give the following reasons for their decision. Six



respondents say that they employ the combination of both methods with older students or according to their pupils' level of English. Thus, they employ the inductive method to teach pupils with higher level of English. Next, the highest number of teachers use the combination of both methods because they say that each method is suitable for a different group of pupils. However, Hedge (2000) declares that all pupils are able to learn inductively, as it has already been said in chapter 3.3.1. Thus, when teachers practise learning inductively with pupils regularly, the use of the inductive method will be a successful way for teaching the use of articles in my opinion.

### **5.1.2. Lessons Aimed at Teaching the Articles**

Here, questions dealing with phases of lessons, correcting pupils' mistakes and the amount of English lessons devoted to the articles are analysed.

*Which phases of a lesson do you employ for teaching the articles? Please, write how much time (in %) you spend on each phase within one lesson.*

Most frequent phases of a lesson aimed at the articles are *presentation* and *practice* according to the results. This model is also recommended by Thornbury (2000) in chapter 3.5. Apart from the fact that these phases are most frequent, there is another fact which makes them the most important and that is the percentage they take in a lesson. From the results of the questionnaires, the percentage range for presentation is 15 – 25% and for practice is 40 – 70%, thus, practice is the most significant phase of a lesson for teaching the articles so teachers should think really carefully about the strategies they intent to employ in the practice phase.

Eight respondents describe their own lesson models more concretely. Five teachers agree on the following phase of a lesson suitable for teaching the articles: *presentation with examples* 15 – 20%, *revision and giving reasons in a short text* 20 – 25%, *practice* 50 – 60%. Next, another three respondents agree on the following model: *presentation – looking for rules in a given text* 15 – 20%, *explanation and formulation of the rules of articles* 5 – 15%, *practice* 70 – 75%. More, a number of teachers also identify other phases which are

to be employed in each lesson generally and they are *introduction, conclusion* and *revision*.

The next five respondents state that each of their lessons aimed at the articles differs as many factors influence it, such as, a particular rule of articles – its simplicity or complexity, pupils' age and level of English, topics in their textbook – for example, geographical names are in a particular text, so a teacher presents rules concerning the use of articles with geographical names.

However, next to the already mentioned model P-P, models P-P-P and *presentation – focused practice - communicative practice - teacher feedback and correction*, which were recommended by Thornbury, Celce-Murcia, Hilles and Hedge in chapter 3.5., are not used by any responding teachers according to the questionnaire. Although, I believe that the teachers include phases production and communicative practice into practice phase as well as teacher feedback and correction throughout all lessons, they only use different terminology or did not include it in the questionnaire.

In my opinion, each suggested pattern of a lesson aimed at teaching the articles has some good points and can be suitable for teaching the articles and thus, teachers need to be aware of all possible patterns of a lesson and need to choose the right one according to a particular rule and other conditions connected with teaching the articles as some of the respondents say. However, Celce-Murcia and Hilles' pattern seems to me most complete and all necessary components are included there for making teaching the articles successful as I have already stated in 3.5.

### ***How do you correct your pupils when they make a mistake in using the articles?***

The given ways of correcting mistakes are as follows: a) *I myself correct my pupils*, b) *I signalize to the class that a pupil has made a mistake and his classmates correct him and explain the correct form*, c) *I signalize to the pupil who has made a mistake that it is wrong and ask him to correct himself*. The teachers who choose the last possibility are asked to choose from other variants and they are the following: *I ask a pupil to repeat the incorrect sentence; I repeat the incorrect sentence; I ask the pupil if he is sure that the*

*sentence is correct; I use gestures to signalize that the sentence is wrong; I help the pupil to correct the sentence; I repeat the sentence correctly and ask the pupil to give a reason for it.*

13 teachers agree that they correct pupils' mistakes in using the articles by asking the class to correct a pupil's mistake. As Harmer (2004) says, teachers support a cooperative atmosphere by asking classmates to correct mistakes which can be beneficial for all pupils. Another positive aspect about involving pupils even in this activity is that they can learn by their classmates' mistakes too. The responding teachers are probably aware of it as the outcomes show. Next highest number of teachers state that they ask the pupil who has made a mistake to correct it by asking him to repeat the incorrect sentence or by using gestures to signalize that the sentence is wrong.

I think that it is impossible to determine which way of correcting is the right one as it depends on the type of activity, class and other factors and that is why teachers should adopt the ways of correcting according to these factors. However, it is necessary to know all possible ways of correcting and it is also important to avoid using only one way of correcting. Thus, the most important things are pupils' involvement and also Harmer's opinion (2004) that correcting the use of articles should be done in a sensitive way in order to encourage pupils to continue learning the use of articles, see chapter 3.7.

***How many lessons do you approximately devote to teaching the articles in one class during one school year?***

I inserted this question into the questionnaire to explore how much time teachers devote to teaching the articles because I had presumed that teachers generally did not find teaching the articles necessary so they did not present it as a separate issue and taught it only when they came across some wrong usage of the articles. My expectations came true. The research suggests that teachers teach the rules of articles in range of 2 to 15 lessons in one class during one school year and only one third of the teachers dedicate more than ten lessons to teaching the rules of articles which is really a paucity. Three of the respondents state that they do not dedicate whole lessons to teaching the rules of articles but solve

problems or particular rules of articles with their pupils at least once a week which is more positive than the previous results. However, I agree with Parrott (2000) who says: “In helping learners to understand and use articles (...), we need to focus their attention constantly on how articles are used in texts they read,... (45).” I even think that teachers should dedicate whole lessons to teaching the articles in order to help their pupils understand how the English articles work because it is impossible to learn it during a few lessons.

### **5.1.3. Activities used for practising the Articles**

As the title suggests, readers will get to know what activities teachers use for practising the articles and also what factors teachers consider when choosing an activity for practising the articles.

*Which of the following factors are most important for you when deciding on an activity for practising the use of articles? Order them from the point of importance, 1 – the most important, 5 – the least important factor.*

The given factors are: *time factor; effectiveness; appropriateness with respect to pupils' ages; interesting topics; and the level of English.* Appropriateness is considered to be the most important factor for choosing the right activity for practising the articles and next most important factor is effectiveness. The teachers obviously choose appropriateness as they always need to think carefully if the prepared activities are suitable for their pupils. Concerning effectiveness, the teachers probably reflect their pupils' abilities for working deductively or inductively to create an effective activity. Interesting topics and pupils' level of English are in the third position. Next, the level of English is closely associated with pupils' ages so if we choose an appropriate activity with the respect to pupils' ages, it is probably appropriate with the respect to pupils' level of English too. Time factor is considered the least important and this has already been proved in question 3, where we found out that the teachers consider the inductive method time-consuming and despite this

fact, they use it more frequently than the deductive method or combine both methods.

I believe that the most important factor for choosing the right activity for practising the articles is effectiveness because this is the main reason why we do any activity during a lesson to teach the articles successfully. Next, an interesting topic is also a very important factor because a topic found interesting by pupils, can help to make teaching the articles enjoyable from my point of view. In the next part, readers will find out which activities for practising the articles the responding teachers consider the most appropriate.

***Choose three types of activities which you employ for practising the use of articles most often. Number 1 use for the most frequent and number 2 and 3 for less frequent activities. Then, write to the chosen activities in which form you practise them – oral, written or listening.***

The given possible activities are: *drills, fill-in exercises, correcting mistakes, matching exercises* and the teachers could also write other activities. The results show that the teachers most often use fill-in exercises to practise the use of articles in written form. The next most popular activity is correcting mistakes and most teachers again let pupils practise the use of articles in written form. Then matching exercises are used to practice the articles in written form too and the least frequent type of exercises are drills practised in written and oral form.

The research shows that fill-in exercises are used most frequently and the reason probably is that they are quite easy to write for pupils and are useful for quick practice of specific language points. It can be adopted for all students from beginners to advanced learners (Harmer 1991). However, when it is created in context, it becomes more difficult because pupils need to understand not only the rules of articles needed to be completed but also what the whole exercise is about.

As we already know, correcting mistakes is other frequently used activity for practising the articles. It seems to me and the research concerning the exercises in the following part of this thesis also suggests that this is the type of activity which is most

difficult of all types examined in this thesis. The reason is that pupils can have problems identifying the mistakes and correcting them and thus, it makes the activity unsuccessful.

In the case of matching exercise, it can happen that if pupils do not know the right answer, they are inclined to guessing, which is not beneficial for them and consequently, when more possibilities are offered, the more mistakes the pupils can make.

Even though drills seem boring to many pupils and probably their teachers too according to the outcomes of the questionnaire, they have some advantages, for example, the fact that teachers can correct all the mistakes pupils make immediately, so teachers encourage pupils to concentrate on the difficulties they have and then pupils are aware of their problematic rules of articles, which they can improve afterwards (Harmer 1991).

From the results, we can see that the teachers practise the use of articles with their pupils mostly in written form, which is useful because "...we often pronounce articles in a very weak form, and learners may fail to recognise or distinguish them,..." So pupils would probably not learn much by listening exercises aimed at practising the articles. However, when we want our pupils to practise the use of articles orally, we can provide them with materials which will guide them to distinguish the articles in spoken form of English (Parrott 2000, 50). From my point of view, this skill should be taught at secondary schools as I believe that it would be difficult for pupils at basic school to do these activities.

I am convinced that drills are effective when used just after presentation of a new rule of articles because it is the easiest way for working with a new rule for the first time, termed introductory practice activities (Hedge 2000), see chapter 3.6.1. Next, I would use fill-in exercises for practising the articles, which most teachers do as the research suggests and only afterwards, I would employ matching exercises and lastly, correcting mistakes. We will examine how successful these exercises are for practising the use of articles with the pupils who cooperated in the second part of the research analysed in chapter 5.2.

#### **5.1.4. Reasons for pupils' difficulties with the articles**

*What is the most probable reason for pupils' difficulties with the use of articles in*

### ***English?***

The suggested reasons were: *frequent exceptions; simplified rules; weak forms in speaking; contradictory rules; influence of mother tongue* and the teachers could also express their own ideas. Here are the outcomes:

<b><i>Number of respondents</i></b>	<b><i>Reasons for pupils' difficulties with the articles</i></b>
12	mother tongue
8	frequent exceptions
4	contradictory rules
3	simplified rules
2	large rules
2	rules presented too early
0	weak forms of the articles in speaking

Most of the respondents agree that the influence of mother tongue is the reason for pupils' difficulties with the articles and next, a large number of the teachers state that frequent exceptions are the reason. Another four of the responding teachers think that contradictory rules make it difficult for pupils to choose the right articles and the next three respondents agree on simplified rules. More, the research shows that two teachers state that large rules are the reason.

On the other hand, none of the responding teachers thinks that weak forms of the

articles can be the reason for making mistakes in using the articles in English. The next two teachers agree that some rules of the articles are presented too early and without a clear context and teachers often strictly insist on pupils' speaking and writing grammatically correct which can discourage some pupils from further learning the rules of articles. Parrott (2000) says about this issue: "There is little point in correcting mistakes and giving learners practice exercises and activities until they have developed a good awareness of how we use them (45)." So teachers should find out not only appropriate strategies for teaching the articles but also the right time for presenting and practising this grammatical issue.

From my point of view, teachers should discover the reasons for pupils' difficulties with the articles and here some arguments are that support my opinion. Having found out the reasons, teachers are able to predict what possible mistakes their pupils can make, so on the basis of this, they can adapt the forms of rules to their pupils' needs and teachers are also able to adapt the way of presenting and practising in a suitable way for their pupils. Consequently, as Parrott (2000) says and the research shows that the mother tongue is the main reason, teachers should prepare presentation and practice activities of rules of articles that will compare the English article system and Czech language to give pupils possibilities to avoid mistakes caused by this reason. The responding teachers' opinions will be compared with the results of the following part of the research where the pupils' exercises will be examined and, on the basis of their mistakes, reasons for the mistakes of the use of articles will be determined.

## **5.2. Analysis of the Exercises**

This chapter is divided into five subheadings according to the types of exercises analysed in order to make it easier for readers to absorb the information available. They are: (1) fill-in exercises; (2) combined exercises; (3) drills; (4) dichotomous matching; (5) correcting mistakes.

### **5.2.1. Fill-in Exercises**

In exercise 1, the pupils were given a fill-in exercise so they had to fill *the*, *a/an* or



*the zero article* in the received text. As Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) recommend, I chose a short story, a well-known moral and that is why the pupils enjoyed reading it and also doing the task. The focused rules were the following: first and second mention discussed in chapter 2.4., the use of articles with common nouns – countable and uncountable, singular and plural discussed in chapter 2.2.

The majority of the pupils, 44 out of 61 made mistakes in these sentences (the false usage is underlined):

***There was once a crow who stole a piece of cheese from a kitchen window. She flew off with cheese to a nearby tree. A fox saw what the crow did, and he walked over to a tree.***

As we can see from the sentences, the pupils did not follow the rule first and second mention. The reason can be that the pupils did not understand this rule properly. The majority of them probably thought that for following the second mention rule, the word or phrase needs to be exactly the same form in both the first and second mention which is not in these most frequent mistakes: *a piece of cheese - the cheese; a nearby tree - the tree*. This is called indirect anaphoric reference (Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum 1972). This belief proves the fact that only nine of all the pupils used the articles incorrectly in the last three sentences, where the second mention rule is employed too because there are the same words or phrases for second mention and this is called direct anaphoric reference (Quirk, Leech, Svartvik, Greenbaum 1972).

On the whole, we can say that this exercise was quite successful. Except the mistakes already stated, the pupils did not make many other mistakes in using the articles and understood what the text was about, which is also very important. The results prove that this type of exercise is suitable for sixth and seventh graders to practise the use of articles. From the outcomes of the questionnaire, we know that fill-in exercises are the most frequently used types of exercises from the given choice in this thesis and due to the results stated above I agree with the teachers. However, a more suitable type of exercise will be introduced in the following part.

### **5.2.2. Combined Exercises**

In exercise 2, the pupils got a short text with the articles already applied but nouns

missing and next, the pupils were provided with a list of nouns needed and their task was to put them in the correct places. We can say that this part of the exercise was matching. Below the text, rules were stated and the pupils' next task was to complete them, where the inductive method was employed. The whole exercise was aimed at the use of articles with countable and uncountable nouns, discussed in chapter 2.2.

I decided to record the sixth graders' and seventh graders' results separately because I noticed quite a lot of differences in their mistakes. 22 out of 29 the sixth graders had errors in these nouns: *banana, soup, cheese*; even though 9 of them completed the rules correctly. Despite the fact that 15 of all the sixth graders completed the rules correctly and did not have difficulties with working inductively, all the pupils used only one noun properly and that was *coffee*. Next, 16 out of 32 the seventh graders failed to use the articles correctly with these nouns: *cheese hamburger, soup*. On the other hand, nobody made mistakes in using *orange juice, banana* and *milk*. Both results show that a number of the pupils who used the articles incorrectly, completed the rules appropriately. Concerning the seventh graders, there were 12 of them and 24 of all them completed the rules successfully.

In my opinion, the main problem is a misunderstanding of the rules. Despite the fact that about two thirds of the seventh graders and about a half of the sixth graders completed the rules correctly, we can see that they made mistakes in applying the articles. So these rules are only abstract formulations for the pupils and they cannot follow them accurately. To avoid this, teachers should formulate rules more carefully and next, it would probably be helpful to add example sentences to the rules to break the boundary between the abstract and real ideas as it was done in exercise 5.

Exercise 3 consisted of three parts. In the first part, the pupils had to read the given sentences and determine each sentence either specific or generic according to the use of articles. This issue was discussed in chapter 2.6. In the next part, the pupils completed the rules about the use of articles employed in the previous part, so the inductive method was employed again and we can consider these two parts of the exercise dichotomous matching (Alderson 2001) because the pupils had to choose from two possibilities. Similar

dichotomous matching exercise is examined in 5.2.4. In the last part, the pupils had to complete short dialogues with given nouns either with the definite or the zero article, which is a matching exercise because the pupils matched the given nouns into the dialogues.

In the first part of the exercise, only seven of all the pupils made mistakes and in the second part only three pupils completed the rules incorrectly. However, in the last part, a lot of the pupils made mistakes. The most problematic dialogues were the following:

4) *Did you go for a swim?*

*No, because \_\_\_\_\_ was not clean.*

3) *Was the test difficult?*

*No, it was not. I answered all \_\_\_\_\_ without difficulty.*

5) *Do you know \_\_\_\_\_ who live next door?*

*Yes, I do. They are the Gibbons and they come from Australia. They are really nice people.*

In dialogue 4, 46 and in dialogue 3, 37 pupils made mistakes and 35 pupils were unsuccessful in dialogue 5.

On the other hand, none of the pupils made mistakes in this dialogue:

1) *Are you afraid of \_\_\_\_\_?*

*Yes, I am. Why?*

*There is a big one in that corner.*

The majority of the pupils completed the rule correctly in the first two parts, so without difficulties worked inductively. Though, they had difficulties in using these practically as in the previous exercise. In this exercise, I think that it would be extremely helpful to discuss the rules after finishing the first two parts with the pupils to make sure they understand the use of articles in the generic and specific way properly. I did not realise this with my pupils at the time but I did it with them while correcting this whole exercise, and now I am convinced that they understand the rules and are able to use them successfully because they had the possibility to check if they understood the rules in determining the example sentences either generic or specific. Thus, the means for understanding the system of article use is the combination of rules and example sentences, which has already been suggested in

the previous exercise.

Exercise 5 had three parts. In the first part, the students had to underline all the articles in the given text. In the next part, the pupils completed the given rules and example sentences where the rules were applied and finally, the pupils were provided with a text and had to fill it with the articles – *a/an, the* or *the zero article*. This whole exercise deals with the rule first and second mention in chapter 2.4., the use of articles in phrases starting with *There is/are...*, which can be regarded as the rule first and second mention too, shared knowledge in chapter 2.4.1., the use of *the* with superlatives and ordinals, see chapter 2.4. and it also deals with geographical names of streets and museums discussed in chapter 2.7.

On the basis of the outcomes of the exercises, we can say that the pupils did not have difficulties in recognising the articles in the text in the first part of the exercise. Only five students omitted some articles, mainly the indefinite article. Concerning the rules, four pupils completed them incorrectly. Even though, the majority of the pupils completed the rules correctly, they made mistakes in completing the example sentences. We can see again as in exercise 2 and 3 that although the majority of pupils completed the rules concerning this issue rightly, they used the incorrect article in practise. In the example sentences the most frequent mistakes were (the wrong usage is underlined):

***Then go along that road till you come to the roundabout.***

***It is on the corner next to a police station.***

12 pupils made these mistakes:

***There is the supermarket.***

***Go round a roundabout.***

In the last part, which was a fill-in exercise, the pupils often made the following mistakes:

***There is the hairdresser's on the corner.***

***Go along that street until you see the chemist's shop on the right.***

Furthermore, other problematic area was a rule dealing with the use of articles with geographical names – streets, museums. The pupils used the articles in the following way:

*the Canal Street*

*Museum of Transport*

Another students made different mistakes with these geographical names. The reason for them is supposedly the fact that the pupils considered these geographical names common nouns or thought that the same rules are valid for both common and proper nouns and consequently, they used the indefinite article according to the first mention rule:

*a Museum of Transport*

*a Canal Street*

The next problematic phrases were those consisting of words *left/right*. The pupils wrote:

*turn the left*

*turn the right*

*on right*

On the other hand, none of the pupils made mistakes in these sentences:

*The nearest station...*

*Then take the first turning...*

So the research shows that the rules dealing with the use of articles with superlatives and ordinals are the easiest of all the rules done in this exercise.

Having observed the pupils while doing this exercise, I could notice that they learned a great deal. Here are the facts that convinced me of this. First, they encountered sentences where the articles were applied according to the aimed rules. This can be called *a location phase*, as their task was to find the articles and underline them; Harmer (1991) calls this *text study*. The next phase might be called *reminding* because the pupils were reminded of the aimed rules which were accompanied by example sentences. The pupils employed the inductive method to complete the rules and they did it successfully since they could look back at the short text at the beginning of the exercise and find the use of articles there. In the last *practice phase* the pupils practised the use of articles in a fill-in exercise. Thus, these three phases of the exercise proved that even though the pupils made mistakes,

they learned the rules and also practised them. When we were correcting the exercise together, the majority of pupils could easily give a reason for the right article with the help of the rules and example sentences in the second part of the exercise.

### **5.2.3. Drills**

Exercise 4 had two parts. First, the pupils' task was to write what they bought according to given clues and then, they made questions and answers about where the shopping mentioned in the first part of the exercise was placed, again according to given clues. The pupils were provided with example sentences and nouns they should have used. This exercise can be considered a drill exercise as pupils followed given examples and it was aimed at the first and second mention rule and also situational determination discussed in chapters 2.4. and 2.4.1.

In the first part, where the given nouns were mentioned for the first time, the most frequent mistakes were these:

*Yesterday I bought a posters.*

*Yesterday I bought the posters.*

*Yesterday I bought an armchairs.*

*Yesterday I bought the armchairs.*

In the second part, the pupils mentioned the nouns for the second time and also wrote about rooms in their house. They made the following mistakes:

*Where are armchairs?*

*Where is dishwasher?*

*It is in a kitchen.*

According to the results of all the exercises, the pupils made the second lowest number of mistakes<sup>13</sup> in this exercise. The lowest number of mistakes was achieved in

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<sup>13</sup> Mistakes other than in the use of articles were ignored here as it would be beyond the scope of this paper. Quite a lot of pupils made mistakes in using the right form of verb *to be*.

exercise 6, see the following chapter. I believe that even though this type of exercise is considered easy for pupils, it is beneficial for them to do it because it makes them aware if they understand a particular rule of articles and if yes, they feel success which is good for their further learning of the articles, for more information about drills see chapter 5.1.3.

#### **5.2.4. Dichotomous Matching**

According to the results of this research, we can say that exercise 6 was the easiest of all the exercises. The task was to read six short dialogues and choose the correct description written in Czech out of two variants and that is why it can be called dichotomous matching, similar to true/false matching. The exercise dealt with the use of articles aimed at the following rules: first and second mention, discussed in 2.4., shared knowledge in 2.4.1., generic, specific and non-specific function, see chapter 2.6.

Most pupils had difficulties in choosing the right variant in the following dialogue:

**4. Fred: Was I right?**

**Liz: You were not. It was on a chair in the hall.**

They chose variant a), thus, they did not know that *a/an* signifies that there can be more items round.

The next problematic rule was in this dialogue:

**2. Liz: Mum, where's the new video game?**

**Mum: Sorry, I haven't seen it.**

The pupils chose variant b), so they broke the rule first and second mention where *the* is for items already mentioned.

Another frequent mistake was made in the case when the pupils again chose wrongly the rule concerning first and second mention, *a video game* mentioned for the first time, was considered a known game, they chose variant a):

**1. Liz: I'm bored. Let's rent a video game.**

**Fred: OK.**

Not many pupils chose wrong answers in the other dialogues, so the research suggests that rules dealing with generic and specific reference are not problematic for the pupils in this type of exercise. In exercise 3 where these functions were practised too, the pupils did not have problems to complete the rules correctly but they had difficulties in applying the articles in the following part, see chapter 5.2.3. Next, the research shows that, the rule first and second mention is difficult for the pupils only in some cases. As it has already been stated, in dialogues 1 and 2, many pupils made mistakes but in dialogue 6 only a few pupils chose the wrong answer even though the same rule was valid for all three dialogues. It is the same case with the meaning of *the* in dialogues 3 and 4 because the results illustrate that a high number of pupils had an error in dialogue 4 but only a few pupils chose a wrong variant in dialogue 3.

Comparing the outcomes of this exercise with the others, we can regard this exercise the easiest, followed by exercise 4 which is a drill exercise, see the previous chapter. The reason is that the pupils had to choose from two possibilities and so there was a good chance to guess the right answer if they were not sure. However, the pupils tried not to guess but to think carefully about the answers as I proved this while checking the answers with them afterwards. Even though this exercise belongs to the easiest, I think that it is beneficial for pupils to do this type of exercise because pupils have an opportunity to think about the meaning and function of the articles in English with the help of Czech.

### **5.2.5. Correcting Mistakes**

In exercise 7, the pupils got short dialogues and had to correct mistakes in the use of articles in the exercise. This exercise deals with the following rules of articles: first and second mention, see chapter 2.4., identification and classification, see 2.3., fixed expressions, see 2.8., and modification, see 2.5.

Two thirds of the pupils made the following mistakes:

*the driver of a car* (in dialogue 2)

In this example the pupils did not recognise rule called situational determination (Dušková 1994).



The next sentence also caused trouble to the pupils. Here, they broke the rule first and second mention.

***A car crashed into the tree*** (in dialogue 2)

In dialogues 3 and 4, the pupils broke the same rule as in the dialogue mentioned above. The pupils made these mistakes:

***the old house***

***old house***

***the small village***

Many pupils did not correct the following sentence:

***Has it got the garden?***

Next, in dialogue 6 some pupils did not correct the sentence where classification was employed at all or corrected it wrongly:

***I want to be doctor.***

***I want to be the doctor.***

One third of the pupils did not follow the rule identification. They did not correct a mistake in the following sentence:

***It is the beautiful day.*** (dialogue 5)

And one third of the pupils also made mistakes in the following sentence where they probably followed the rule first and second mention instead of the regional/local classification (Master 1989):

***Let's sit in a garden.*** (dialogue 5)

A number of the pupils also had problems with some fixed expressions, here are the incorrect phrases:

***in an afternoon***

***in the front of...***

***at a home***

***at the home***

As the results show, the least problematic was dialogue 1. So the pupils could easily recognise the rule first and second mention. On the other hand, they had difficulties with the same rule in dialogues 2, 3 and 4 as it has already been stated above.

The research suggests that this type of exercise is the most difficult because the pupils made the highest number of mistakes in it. The problem was that a number of the pupils corrected only some mistakes in the use of articles and then, corrected the right use of articles wrongly or added the articles where they should not have been. Despite the fact that the pupils can become discouraged by making many mistakes in this type of exercise, I think that it can show if pupils understand particular rules of articles or not, and also signalize other problematic areas. This exercise shows that the pupils still have difficulties with placing the articles in a noun phrase, for example, *It is beautiful a day* (dialogue 5) and with other rules which they should already know, such as, first and second mention, which is considered the easiest rule of articles. I would employ this type of exercise after practising the aimed rule of articles in depth to avoid pupils' frequent mistakes.

### **5.2.6. Causes of the Pupils' Difficulties**

This chapter deals with possible causes of the difficulties with the use of articles stated in the previous chapters and also compares them with the teachers' opinions from chapter 5.1.4. The causes are determined on the basis of the outcomes of both the questionnaires and exercises discussed in the previous chapters. Here are the three causes:

1) Supposedly, the reason which causes a lot of trouble for the pupils is the mother tongue because the articles are not used in Czech. It is sometimes obvious that the pupils tend to use a straightforward translation from Czech to English language and consequently, use the zero article frequently, like it is realised in Czech, for example,

*I want to be doctor.* (exercise 7)

*I bought vase yesterday.* (exercise 4)

So we can say that the mother tongue has a big influence on pupils' decision about the use of articles in English like in the following examples, which illustrate that the learners used the zero article when they were to express a specific meaning because it is realised in this way

in Czech language:

***I answered all questions without difficulty.*** (exercise 3)

Next, on the basis of the results of the exercises, we can say that the pupils still have difficulties in distinguishing the basic difference between *a/an* and *the*, in the rule first and second mention, which is also due to the fact that this is not realised in Czech, for example,

***I bought the vase yesterday. Where is a vase?*** (exercise 4)

Another frequent mistake was the use of articles with possessive pronouns because in some languages it is acceptable to use the articles together with possessive pronouns like in Czech. A frequent mistake was made in the following sentence,

***The my blue bag is there on the table.*** (exercise 7)

Thus, in the example above, the pupils transferred rules for using the articles in Czech inappropriately like Parrott (2000) says that this happens frequently. More, as all the pupils knew that the exercises were done to practise the use of articles; some of them remembered that the articles are frequently used in English and consequently, they applied them mechanically to each noun. This was visible in exercise 7 most where the pupils' task was to correct mistakes.

The belief that the pupils' mother tongue is a probable reason for their mistakes with the articles is supported by the fact that the highest number of the responding teachers agreed with it, which is discussed in chapter 5.1.

2) Other reasons for making mistakes in using the articles are contradictory rules and fixed expressions. Contradictory rules are additional rules to basic rules of the use of articles that may contradict these (Parrott 2000) and they are, for example, expressions of time, institutions, meals, idioms. Fixed expressions are settled phrases which can also contradict basic rules. From the exercises in the research, we can choose these mistakes:

***on right*** (exercise 5)

***turn the right*** (exercise 5).

3) A number of responding teachers agree that the reason can be large or simplified rules or rules presented too early. As the research suggests, even when the learners know the rules,

they often use the articles incorrectly or miss them out. So there can be two reasons for the mistakes connected with rules themselves and they are: (a) the pupils have not practised enough the use of articles practically and learned only the rules or (b) they misunderstand the use of articles from the rule descriptions. From the research, we can insist that the indefinite article is most frequently omitted. Typical mistakes which pupils made and knew the rules were:

*Then go along that road till you come to roundabout.* (exercise 5)

*I only had banana for breakfast* (exercise 2).

In these examples, the reason can also be that the pupils recognise countable and uncountable nouns incorrectly. So the learners treat singular countable nouns as though they are uncountable and therefore do not use the indefinite article and vice versa.

Finally, we can say that one more reason is possible and that is the fact that teachers do not practise the articles as much as they should with their pupils according to the outcomes of the questionnaires. I myself must admit that I do not practise the articles with my pupils as frequently as I should. Though, in many cases we cannot identify the right cause for pupils' mistakes because there are many possibilities to choose from.

### **5.3. Summary of the Outcomes**

#### **5.3.1. Suggestions for Successful Ways for Teaching the Articles**

According to the research, teachers should teach the articles in context because this grammatical area is not context-free (Celce-Murcia, Olshtain 2001), so pupils can learn how context influences the use of articles. The next good point about teaching the articles in context is that pupils are provided with real language which is more useful for their learning than separate pieces of language. Additionally, as it has been suggested by some responding teachers and also Parrott (2000) first, teachers should provide their pupils with a reading phase where pupils read short texts in English to find out how the articles work in context and only afterwards, teachers should teach them particular rules. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2001) also recommended using morals or short stories for practising the articles to make the activities engaging, which has been proved in the research.

Next, the research suggests that the combination of the inductive and deductive approaches is effective as both approaches have some advantages and disadvantages and are suited to different pupils. It seems that teachers are worried about their pupils' ability to work only inductively but the research consisting of the exercises, concretely exercises 2, 3 and 5, where the inductive method was employed in one part of each exercise, shows that the pupils did not have difficulties working with this method and learned a lot. So it proved Hedge's belief (2000) that all pupils are able to work inductively. Concerning phases of a lesson devoted to the articles, we can recommend using the phase *presentation-practice* during grammar lessons aimed at teaching the articles because the responding teachers employ it most frequently and thus, they hopefully find it effective. However, a number of teachers suggest their own lesson models that can also be successful: *presentation with examples – revision and giving reasons in a short text – practice*; *presentation – looking for rules in a given text – explanation and formulation of the rules of articles – practice*.

The highest number of the teachers agree that they correct pupils' mistakes in using the articles by asking the class to correct a pupil's mistake. Although, we cannot recommend the most appropriate way of correcting because it depends on the type of exercise and also a particular class and rule practised. As pupils make mistakes in the use of articles quite frequently, we can conclude that teachers should find a sensitive way for correcting pupils' mistakes in using the articles to encourage pupils to continue learning the use of them in English (Harmer 1992) and we should also try to involve them in correcting as much as possible.

Next to the aspects stated above, teachers need to think carefully about activities used for practising the articles. The research shows that the teachers look for suitable activities with respect to the appropriateness of pupils' ages and also effectiveness and fill-in exercises and exercises where pupils correct mistakes meet these factors according to the teachers' convictions.

However, on the basis of the second part of the research, we can recommend a type of exercise identical to exercise 5, which was a combined exercise with *location - reminding - practising phases*. The last phase was realised by a fill-in exercise, so it partly agrees with the teachers' opinion that this is probably the most appropriate way for

practising the articles. This combined exercise is recommended because it was considered the most successful due to the three phases already stated. Having done this activity, the majority of the pupils understood the practised rules of articles.

More, according to the pupils' mistakes, we can sum-up that they found dichotomous matching and drills the easiest from the exercises done in the research. On the other hand, the most difficult exercise was the exercise where the pupils had to correct mistakes. Consequently, we can say that the exercises which were considered the easiest can be employed just after presenting a new rule of articles and the activity when pupils correct mistakes should be used when teachers are sure that they practised the aimed rules with their pupils in depth.

Surprisingly, the research suggests that the most problematic rule is first and second mention and conversely, the least problematic is the rule related to the use of *the* with superlatives and cardinals. Next to the most problematic rules, teachers should also try to discover the causes of their pupils' difficulties with the use of articles. The majority of the responding teachers suggest that the most probable reason for pupils' difficulties is the mother tongue, which has been proved in the exercises as well. On the basis of the results of the exercises, another two possible causes were determined and they are contradictory rules together with fixed expressions and misunderstood rules. Consequently, having found out all the possible causes of pupils' difficulties in using the articles, teachers should be able to predict possible mistakes that their pupils can make and then, they should be able to adapt the versions of the rules, as it has been suggested in 5.1.4.

As we can see in chapter 5.2., where the pupils' mistakes in using the articles are introduced to readers, the pupils and not only the pupils who cooperated in the research, frequently make mistakes in using the articles. Despite this fact, the outcomes of the questionnaires suggest that the responding teachers do not devote many lessons to teaching the articles during a school year. Thus, this can be another reason for pupils' mistakes. Finally, the last suggestion for teaching the articles successfully is that teachers should regularly involve this grammatical issue in their English lessons as their pupils cannot learn the rules of articles at once or during a few lessons.

## CONCLUSION

This diploma thesis consists of two parts – theoretical and research part. The main aim of the theoretical part of this paper was to explore the English article system and various linguists' opinions on strategies of teaching the articles. First, I started with giving information about determiners as the articles belong to this category. Consecutively, the basic characteristics of the articles were stated and a number of rules of articles were introduced, for example, the use of articles with countable and uncountable nouns, identification and classification, first and second mention and so on. The rules were explained, analysed and different terminology used by various linguists compared. Next, some aspects and ways of teaching the articles were introduced and readers familiarised themselves with some linguists' recommendations concerning this issue, such as, teaching the articles in context, using the inductive and deductive methods and their advantages and disadvantages.

The research had two parts, questionnaires for teachers and exercises for pupils. Both the aspects of teaching used in the questionnaire and the rules of articles applied in the exercises have been introduced in the theoretical part. The purpose of the first part was to depict ways of teaching the articles at basic schools and the second – major - research, was done to identify pupils' mistakes in using the articles and analyse them in detail. By these two means, the reasons for pupils' mistakes were determined and ways for successful teaching suggested.

The research recommends that it is helpful to teach the articles in context because it influences the use of articles in most cases, and it gives an opportunity to work with real language, besides, the respondents suggested other advantages discussed in the research. Nevertheless, the research shows that the combination of the inductive and deductive methods facilitates to effective teaching of the articles as most teachers chose this possibility. They agreed that each method has its advantages and disadvantages and different pupils consider different methods suitable. However, the results of the exercises show that pupils are able to work inductively without problems. Concerning exercises for practising the articles, fill-in exercises were considered appropriate by the respondents but the results of the exercises agree with this outcome only partly. It suggests that the most effective type of exercise is the exercise with three phases: *location; reminding the rules;*

*and practising*, for the pupils who cooperated in the research learned the aimed rules as much as possible. In the location phase, the pupils had the possibility to recognise the use of articles in a given text so they worked with context and its advantages have been stated previously. In the next phase, the inductive method was employed and its main advantage is that the pupils themselves can discover rules of articles, and also the fact that pupils remember a lot and understand the rules practised. The pupils' final task was to do a fill-in exercise where the rules involved in the two previous parts were applied.

More, readers got to know that most teachers use P-P model of a lesson to teach the articles, however, a number of the teachers suggested other patterns that can be suited for teaching the articles and they are: *presentation with examples – revision and giving reasons in a short text – practice; presentation – looking for rules in a given text – explanation and formulation of the rules of articles – practice*. Thus, teachers should choose a lesson pattern according to the purpose of particular lessons. Next, the research says that the teachers correct pupils' mistakes in using the articles by involving the whole class which is beneficial because learners have the opportunity to learn from their classmates' mistakes. Next, the responding teachers agreed that the main reason for their pupils' difficulties is their mother tongue, which was proved by the results of the exercises too. The next reasons that were determined on the basis of the analysed exercises were: contradictory rules and fixed expressions and misunderstood rules. Having known these facts, teachers should create rules of articles formulated in an easily understandable way and provide their pupils with example sentences to give them an opportunity to see how the rules are applied practically and besides, teachers should concentrate on the differences between using the articles in English and avoiding them in Czech in most cases.

Lastly, the research shows one negative aspect about teaching the articles at basic schools. Despite the fact that the pupils made mistakes in using the articles quite frequently and not only the pupils who cooperated in the research, the responding teachers do not devote many lessons to teaching the articles. As it takes time to understand the English article system, teachers should regularly practise the use of articles with their pupils.



## RESUMÉ

Tato diplomová práce pojednává o používání členů v anglickém jazyce. Zaměřuje se zejména na analýzu základních pravidel užívání členů a následně jejich možné výuky během hodin anglického jazyka na základních školách. Prozkoumány zde budou také problematické oblasti při užívání členů u žáků základních škol. Cílem je navrhnout úspěšné způsoby vyučování členů. Předkládaná práce má dvě hlavní části: Teoretická část zahrnuje informace o determinantech, členech, základních pravidlech užívání členů v anglickém jazyce a názory různých jazykovědců na způsoby učení gramatiky, konkrétně členů v anglickém jazyce. Výzkumná část této práce seznamuje čtenáře s výzkumem, který proběhl na základních školách a díky němuž budou navrženy vhodné způsoby výuky členů.

Teoretická část je věnována determinantům a zejména členům. První kapitola pojednává o základních funkcích determinantů a další kapitola seznamuje čtenáře s funkcemi členu určitého, neurčitého a nulového, které patří do skupiny determinantů. V souvislosti se členy se čtenář dozví o pojmech a pravidlech, které je nutné znát k tomu, aby členy v anglickém jazyce byly používány správným způsobem.

1) Čtenář se dovídá o správném umístění členů ve větě. Členy patří do skupiny „centrálních determinantů,“ tudíž mohou být používány mezi „predeterminanty,“ například *all*, a „postdeterminaty,“ například *three*, ve frázi *all the three boys*. Dále se členy umísťují před rozvíjející slova dané jmenné části. Samozřejmě existují i případy, kdy členy mohou být přesunuty na jiné místo ve jmenné části, a to například, když chceme zesílit význam dané části pomocí slov *so*, *as*, *too* a dalších.

2) „Počítatelná“ podstatná jména jsou většinou charakterizována tak, že se dají počítat, i když toto tvrzení není vždy pravdivé. Tato podstatná jména se v jednotném čísle používají s neurčitým členem, pokud se o nich zmiňujeme poprvé. „Nepočítatelná“ podstatná jména jsou ta, která se počítat nedají; jsou to například tekutiny, materiály, a pokud se o nich zmiňujeme poprvé, používáme je bez členu. Duální podstatná jména jsou taková, která se mohou použít jako počítatelná i nepočítatelná a hlavní je, že se jejich význam mnohdy radikálně mění.

3) „Identifikace“ popisuje danou věc a uskutečňuje se nejčastěji pomocí tzv. sponových sloves. Může být neurčitá, tvořená neurčitým členem i určitá, tvořená určitým členem.

Naopak „klasifikace“ je funkce, která zařazuje dané podstatné jméno do určité kategorie, tedy říká, do jaké třídy či skupiny patří, nebo jakou práci či pozici někdo zastává. Tato funkce je opět uskutečněna pomocí sponových sloves a nejčastěji vyjádřena neurčitým členem.

4) „Druhá zmínka s první zmínkou“ vyjadřuje něco, co již bylo zmíněno, a tudíž je nutné použít určitý člen. „Druhá zmínka bez první zmínky“ se týká jmenných skupin, které se předtím v rozhovoru či textu nevyskytly, přesto je používáme s určitým členem, například přídavná jména ve třetím stupni. V pravidle zvaném „sdílená znalost“ (shared knowledge) mluvíme o obecně známých skutečnostech, proto používáme určitý člen. Posledně zmíněný pojem vyjadřuje spíše mimojazykové znalosti mluvčího, proto je toto pravidlo považováno za velmi obtížné.

5) V podkapitole o rozvíjení podstatných jmen větnými členy nebo vedlejšími větami (modification) se mimo jiné pojednává o „kataforické referenci“, kdy používáme určitý člen s podstatným jménem zmíněným poprvé, jelikož ho v druhé části dané věty - tzv. vymežující vztahné věty - rozvíjíme, tedy přidáváme takovou informaci, která určí o jaké podstatné jméno konkrétně jde.

6) „Generickou funkcí“ je možno vyjádřit všemi třemi členy. Užitím určitého či neurčitého členu mluvčí hovoří o charakteristických znacích typického příslušníka dané skupiny. Pokud použije nulový člen, hovoří o celé skupině jako o celku s příslušníky, kteří se neliší jeden od druhého. „Specifická“ funkce vyjadřuje určitou jmennou skupinu užitou s určitým členem, pokud již byla zmíněna nebo s neurčitým členem, pokud se o ní zmiňujeme poprvé. Lze také vytvořit nespecifickou, ale určitou jmennou skupinu tvořenou určitým členem. Například: *John is looking for the right house to buy.* (Jan hledá ten pravý dům ke koupi.)

7) Všechna doposud zmíněná pravidla se týkají používání členů s obecnými podstatnými jmény. Naopak vlastní podstatná jména mají odlišná pravidla, která jsou zčásti představena v této podkapitole obsahující dvě části. V první nazvané – Vlastní jména osob - se čtenář dozví, že u těchto jmen je nejčastěji uskutečněno vynechání členu. Druhá část nazvaná – Zeměpisné názvy - pojednává o užívání členů se zeměpisnými názvy. Názvy kontinentů, zemí, regionů a měst se používají bez členu, ale existují i výjimky, například názvy zemí, které obsahují ve svém názvu slovo „republika“ nebo „spojené“, kde užíváme člen určitý.

Názvy oceánů, moří, řek a kanálů se obvykle používají s určitým členem, ale i zde se vyskytují výjimky.

8) Tato podkapitola představuje několik případů použití členů, které si protirečí s pravidly, se kterými se čtenář doposud seznámil. Jde tudíž o výjimky, kterých je v užívání členů mnoho, proto není možné zmínit v této práci všechny.

9) Závěrečná podkapitola shrnuje základní pravidla použití členů v anglickém jazyce.

Poslední kapitola teoretické části je věnována vyučování členů z teoretického hlediska. Rozebírají se zde důležité skutečnosti spolu s názory některých jazykovědců. Jde o poznatky, jež by měl učitel brát na vědomí při přípravě na výuku členů v hodinách anglického jazyka. Nejprve se zaměřuji na roli, kterou členy zastávají v anglickém gramatice, jelikož si myslím, že je tato oblast gramatiky ve výuce na základních školách podceňována. Následující část je věnována učení členů v kontextu. Uvádí se zde důvody, proč by učitelé měli členy tímto způsobem vyučovat. Další diskutovaná témata jsou: *výhody či nevýhody užívání deduktivní a induktivní metody při výuce členů; části hodiny, která je věnována výuce členů – prezentace, procvičování; aktivity používané pro procvičování členů; a možné důvody pro výskyt častých chyb v užívání členů u žáků základních škol*. Tato témata, spolu s pravidly užívání členů v anglickém jazyce, jsou předmětem zkoumání ve výzkumné části.

Podstatnou část této diplomové práce tvoří výzkum. Potřebné informace byly získány dvěma způsoby: dotazníky pro učitele anglického jazyka na základních školách a práce žáků šestých a sedmých tříd. Výsledky výzkumu, které analyzuji a hodnotím, mi pomáhají k vytvoření návrhů pro efektivní výuku členů v anglickém jazyce.

V úvodní kapitole výzkumné části seznamuji čtenáře s cílem výzkumu, popisuji dotazník pro učitele, který obsahuje převážně otázky na témata rozebíraná v teoretické části a týkající se způsobu výuky členů. Čtenáři jsou také seznámeni s typy cvičení, která byla použita u testovaných žáků, za účelem zjištění problematických oblastí užívání členů.

V následující kapitole seznamuji čtenáře s výsledky výzkumu. Z vyplněných dotazníků a žakovských prací vyplývají následující závěry, které mohou být zároveň považovány za návrhy pro uskutečnění úspěšných hodin zaměřených na výuku členů.

Dotazovaní učitelé upřednostňují výuku členů v kontextu, a tím se shodují s názory lingvistů, zmíněnými v teoretické části, kteří tvrdí, že členy aplikované do kontextu odpovídají skutečnému užívání členů v praxi. Neméně důležitý fakt je, že kontext do velké míry ovlivňuje užívání členů, a proto je pro žáky nutné, aby s ním pracovali. Všechna cvičení, použitá pro účely tohoto výzkumu, byla vytvořena v kontextu, což se ukázalo být efektivní, jelikož se žáci neučili jen konkrétní pravidla užívání členů, ale také jak tato pravidla fungují v praxi, tudíž v rozhovorech nebo v krátkých příbězích. A navíc měli možnost rozvíjet další dovednost ve výuce jazyka, porozumění textu. Také zde zjišťujeme, že učitelé většinou používají kombinaci induktivní a deduktivní metody, jelikož tvrdí, že obě tyto metody mají své výhody i nevýhody. Tři cvičení v tomto výzkumu byla kombinací více typů cvičení a v každém z nich, byla jedna část cvičení věnovaná induktivní metodě. Výsledky ukázaly, že žáci nemají problémy pracovat induktivně a je zřejmé, že jen my učitelé se této metody obáváme.

Co se týče jednotlivých fází hodin věnovaných výuce členů, z výzkumu vyplývá, že nejčastěji používané jsou *prezentace – procvičování* a poslední zmíněná fáze zabírá největší část hodiny, tudíž ji můžeme považovat za nejdůležitější. Nepostradatelný význam má v hodinách oprava chyb, a proto měli učitelé zodpovědět, jakým způsobem opravují své žáky při procvičování užívání členů v anglickém jazyce. Z výzkumu vyplývá, že učitelé do této činnosti zapojují celou třídu, tudíž ostatní žáci mají příležitost učit se z chyb druhých a za těchto podmínek je velká pravděpodobnost, že si zapamatují správné používání členů.

Dále měli učitelé zodpovědět jaká cvičení používají pro procvičování členů. Z výsledků vyplynulo, že doplňovací cvičení jsou používána nejčastěji, tudíž shledána za nejvhodnější. Cvičení souvisí s dalším předmětem zkoumání. Žáci vyplňovali tyto typy cvičení: *doplňovací, přiřazovací cvičení, drily a opravy chyb v textu*. Podle výsledků výzkumu byly pro žáky nejjednodušší přiřazovací cvičení a drily, proto předkládané typy cvičení můžeme doporučit zadávat po prezentaci nového pravidla užívání členů, kdy se žáci teprve seznamují s užíváním prezentovaného pravidla. Je důležité, aby žáci zažívali úspěch při procesu učení. Tyto dva typy cvičení jim jistě umožní tento pocit zažít a neodradí je od dalšího učení v této gramatické oblasti. Naopak nejsložitější bylo shledáno cvičení, kde žáci měli opravovat chyby v textu, tudíž tento typ cvičení by bylo vhodné zařazovat, když jsme si jistí, že žáci už umí s procvičovanými pravidly správně zacházet.

Výsledky žákovských prací se shodují s názory učitelů jen zčásti. Učitelé nejčastěji používají doplňovací cvičení, ale výzkum ukázal, že nejvhodnější pro žáky je kombinovaný typ cvičení s těmito částmi: identifikace členů v textu – připomenutí pravidel s příklady – procvičování formou doplňovacího cvičení. Ukázalo se, že žákům pomohlo k pochopení zadaných pravidel používání kontextu a induktivní metody, kdy měli sami doplňovat pravidla. V posledním cvičení tudíž nedělali mnoho chyb a při kontrole všech částí tohoto cvičení bylo zřejmé, že většina žáků pochopila danou problematiku.

Překvapivě dělalo pravidlo „první a druhé zmínky“ žákům nejčastěji problémy, přestože je obecně považované za nejjednodušší. Podle chyb, které jsou ve výzkumné části detailně rozebírány, a na základě názorů dotazovaných učitelů a lingvistů, můžeme stanovit mateřský jazyk jako nejpravděpodobnější příčinu chyb žáků. Podle některých chyb žáků bylo zřejmé, že se řídí gramatickými pravidly českého jazyka a jelikož v českém jazyce se členy vyskytují velmi zřídka, dělali spousty chyb. Dalším stanoveným důvodem jsou ustálené fráze, které si protirečí s pravidly, která se žáci učí. Samotná pravidla mohou být také příčinou problémů se členy, jelikož jsou mnohdy příliš komplikovaná či naopak neúplná nebo srozumitelná, ale žáci se naučí pouze jejich znění a neumí je aplikovat v praxi. Na základě těchto poznatků by učitel měl přizpůsobit výklad a způsob procvičování členů tak, aby tyto příčiny byly odstraněny a žáci uměli bez problémů užívat členy v anglickém jazyce.

Závěrečný fakt, který vyplynul z dotazníků je, že učitelé nevěnují výuce členů takový čas, který žáci potřebují pro zažití užívání členů v anglickém jazyce, což může být další důvod, proč žáci tak často dělají chyby v užívání členů v anglickém jazyce. Tudíž poslední doporučení je, vyučovat členy tak často, jak jen je to možné, jelikož žáci nejsou schopni porozumět, jak pracují členy v anglickém jazyce během několika hodin.

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## **Appendix 1**

## Criteria for Grammar Rules

One of the factors that helps pupils understand the use of articles is how teachers create the rules. Teachers do not usually speculate about how to formulate the rules, but once having introduced a new rule, they expect that the pupils understand it. However, a wrongly formulated rule can lead to misunderstanding and misuse of the articles.

Firstly, teachers should be aware of the meaning of term „rule.“ This term can be identified in two ways: „a prescriptive rule,“ defining a principle or order which guides behaviour and says how things are to be done, and „a descriptive rule,“ dealing with the usual way that something happens (the Longman Active Study Dictionary). Some linguists define a third category of rules, „pedagogic rules.“ Rules are created to make sense to learners, while at the same time, provide them with the means and confidence to generate language with a reasonable chance of success (Thornbury 2000). In creating these rules, teachers have to accept the learners' needs rather than those of the grammarians.

Six criteria are stated to help teachers create appropriate rules for their students. Rules should be *true*, but this criterion can cause problems in combination with others. Teachers need to compromise, in order to satisfy all the criteria, and they cannot forget that the rules must agree with the linguistic facts. *Demarcation* means that learners should be aware of the limits that a rule should clearly state. Rules should also be *clear*. Teachers need to use examples constructively, to place emphasis on what is most important. Teachers should avoid using misleading terminology, such as, metaphors. *Simplicity* is the next most important criteria. Simplicity is the way rules are constructed, and in contrast, clarity is the way they are worded. Simplifying is, for example, reducing the number of categories or leaving out non-essential details. *Conceptual parsimony* is another factor needed for creating valid rules. Teachers have to be sure that the audience is familiar with the concepts and terminology used. Additionally, rules should be *relevant*. They should answer the questions to further the interaction between language and language learners (Bygate, Tonkyn, Williams 1994: Swan, 45).

The six criteria created by Michael Swan should be fulfilled to further student's development in English. Sometimes, it may be difficult for teachers to realise each of the six criteria all at once for particular rules, especially rules aimed at beginners, which need mainly to be clear. Thus, it is necessary to realise simplicity to some extent. Unfortunately,



teachers frequently simplify the rules of articles too much. Many times, teachers do not think carefully about the fact that students can misuse the articles when they are given so called over-simplified rules. Consequently, students remain confused when applying particular rules that do not work in the way teachers presented them. That is why the decision of simplifying the rules or not, should be made according to the audience. A teacher should first think about how much the students know, and if they will be able to understand the rules in the way they will be presented.

Although, a successful rule can be created even though simplicity is employed:

The best simplification is that the form of the article is determined by the interplay of the features 'definite' and 'known to the listener', thus giving four possible realisations:

1. Both definite and known to the listener = the  
Look at the sun.
2. Definite but not known to the listener = a/an  
I passed through a village.
3. Indefinite but known to the listener = the/a/0+s  
The lion is dangerous.  
A lion is dangerous.  
Lions are dangerous.
4. Neither definite nor known to the listener = a/an  
If a person wants something ...

(Todd and Hancock, 1986) (Bygate, Tonkyn, Williams 1994: Swan, 49)

## **Appendix 2**

## **DOTAZNÍK PRO UČITELE ANGLIČTINY**

Tento dotazník se týká výuky členů (členu určitého, neurčitého a nulového) v anglickém jazyce v 6. a 7. třídách základních škol.

### **1) V jaké formě učíte užití členů v angličtině nejčastěji a proč?**

- a) v kontextu např. v rozhovoru, krátkém textu, příběhu
- b) samostatně např. v části věty či v jedné větě

### **2) Jakou metodu používáte při výuce členů? Zakroužkujte Vámi zvolenou odpověď.**

- a) indukativní metoda – žáci sami si snaží odvodit pravidlo
- b) deduktivní metoda – učitel žákům pravidlo vysvětlí

### **3) Jaké výhody/nevýhody spatřujete v indukativní metodě a jaké v deduktivní metodě? (například: věk žáků, časová náročnost, efektivnost,...)**

<b>Induktivní přístup</b>	<b>Deduktivní přístup</b>

### **4) Jaké fáze hodiny uplatňujete při výuce členů? Dále procenty vyjádřete kolik času věnujete každé fázi v jedné vyučovací hodině. (např. prezentace 10%, opakování 25%, procvičování 65%,...)**

### **5) Které z následujících faktorů jsou pro Vás nejdůležitější při výběru aktivity na**

**procvičení a použití („production“) pravidel užití členů v angličtině? Seřad'te je podle důležitosti, 1 – nejdůležitější, 5 – nejméně důležitý faktor.**

- a)časová nenáročnost
- b)efektivní
- c)vhodné (dle věku žáků)
- d)zajímavé téma
- e)úroveň angličtiny

**6)Z následujících aktivit vyberte tři, které nejčastěji zařazujete při procvičování a používání členů. Číslem 1 označte nejčastěji Vámi používanou aktivitu, čísla 2 a 3 méně často používané. Poté u těchto aktivit uveďte, zda je používáte k procvičení užití členů v ústní nebo písemné formě, či poslechu:**

- a)drily
- b)doplňovací cvičení
- c)oprava chyb v textu
- d)přiřazovací cvičení
- e)jiné typy cvičení, prosím, uveďte:

**7)Jaká je podle Vás nejpravděpodobnější příčina toho, že žáci dělají chyby v používání členů v angličtině?**

- a)časté výjimky
- b)zjednodušená pravidla
- c)nepřízvučné členy v ústní formě
- d)různá pravidla, která si protiřečí
- e)vliv mateřského jazyka
- f)jiné důvody, prosím, uveďte:

**8)Jakým způsobem nejčastěji opravujete žáky, pokud dělají chyby v užívání členů:**

- a) já sama/sám opravuji své žáky
- b) upozorním třídu, že žák udělal chybu a spolužáci chybu opraví a vysvětlí správnost
- c) upozorním žáka, že udělal chybu a vyzvu ho, aby ji sám opravil\*

\*Pokud jste zvolili tuto odpověď, zodpovězte následující otázku: Jakým způsobem upozorníte žáka na chybu?

- a) požádám žáka, aby větu ve které udělal chybu zopakoval
- b) zopakují chybnou větu po žákovi
- c) zeptám se, jestli si je jistý použitím správného členu ve větě
- d) snažím se naznačit gesty, že věta nebyla řečena správně
- e) napovím žákovi, v čem udělal chybu
- f) zopakují větu po žákovi, ale správně a vyzvu ho, aby chybu odůvodnil

**9) Kolik hodin věnujete výuce členů v jedné třídě (6. nebo 7. třída) během jednoho školního roku (přibližně)?**

## Appendix 3

### EXERCISE 1

**U podstatných jmen, která jsou označena čísly, doplňte člen neurčitý – a/an, člen určitý – the nebo nulový člen.**

There was once (1) crow who stole (2) piece of cheese from (3) kitchen window. She flew off with (4) cheese to (5) nearby tree. (6) fox saw what (7) crow did, and he walked over to (8) tree.

„Oh, Mistress Crow, you have such lovely black feathers, such nice feet, such (9) beautiful beak, and such fine black eyes! You must have (10) beautiful voice. Would you sing for me? “

(11) crow felt very proud. She opened her beak and sang „CAW-CAW-CAW.“ Of course (12) cheese fell down and (13) fox took it and ate it.

(Celce-Murcia, Olshtain)

### EXERCISE 2

**Do následujícího textu, v kterém jsou již doplněné členy (-, a/an), doplňte podstatná jména v souladu se členy. Poté vhodně doplňte pravidla pod textem.**

CHEESE HAMBURGER, ORANGE JUICE, MILK, CHEESE, COFFEE, SOUP, BANANA

Today was quite good, at least to start with. I only had - ..... for breakfast. At lunchtime I ate a ..... . For dinner I had a ..... and - ....., followed by - ..... . Then I had - .....with - .....in it.

(Hashemi, Murphy)

#### DOPLŇTE PRAVIDLA:

Používáme ..... s počítatelnými podstatnými jmény v jednotném čísle, když o nich mluvíme poprvé.

Používáme ..... s nepočítatelnými podstatnými jmény, když o nich mluvíme poprvé.

### EXERCISE 3

**A) Pracujte ve dvojicích. Zkuste přijít na to, v kterých větách mají podtržená slova specifický a v kterých všeobecný význam a své rozhodnutí napište vždy nakonec dané věty:**

- Children learn a lot from playing so teachers should let them play a lot of games in lessons. ....
- Mum: Where did you go with Jane and Jack?

Dad: I took the children to the zoo. ....

- Did you like the film we saw last week? – The film wasn't very good but I liked the music. .....
- What do you do in your free time? – I often listen to music. .....
- Doctor to his patient: Sugar isn't very good for you. ....
- A family sitting at the table having dinner: Can you pass me the sugar, please? .....

(Murphy)

**B) Nyní doplňte pravidla:**

**Když mluvíme o něčem specifickém (máme na mysli něco konkrétního), používáme .....**

**Když mluvíme o něčem obecně, tak používáme .....**

**C) Doplňte věty vždy jedním vhodným slovem z následujícího seznamu a použijte *the* nebo *nulový člen*:**

(the) spiders	(the) water	(the) people
(the) stamps	(the) meat	(the) questions

1) Are you afraid of \_\_\_\_\_?

Yes, I am. Why?

There is a big one in that corner.

2) Who is a vegetarian?

It is somebody who does not eat \_\_\_\_\_ .

3) Was the test difficult?

No, it was not. I answered all \_\_\_\_\_ without difficulty.

4) Did you go for a swim?

No, because \_\_\_\_\_ was not clean.

5) Do you know \_\_\_\_\_ who live next door?

Yes, I do. They are the Gibbons and they come from Australia. They are really nice people.

6) Do you collect \_\_\_\_\_ ?

No, I do not. Why?

I wanted to exchange some of mine with you.

(Murphy)

**EXERCISE 4**

**A) Představte si, že jste si koupili něco nového do domu a pochlubíte se kamarádovi.**

Příklady: lamps

coffee table

I bought lamps yesterday.

I bought a coffee table yesterday.

a) posters

b) vase

c) armchairs

d) dishwasher

**B) Ten kamarád brzy přijde na návštěvu a ptá se, kde jsou ty nakoupené věci. Tvořte otázky a odpovědi jako v příkladu.**

Příklady: lamps/study

coffee table/ living room

Where are the lamps?

Where is the coffee table?

They are in the study.

It is in the living room.

a) posters/bedroom

b) vase/table

c) armchairs/living room

d) dishwasher/kitchen

(Click on)

**EXERCISE 5**

**A) Počítatelná podstatná jména v jednotném čísle mají obvykle určitý člen *the* nebo neurčitý člen *a/an*. Najděte a podtrhněte všechny příklady v následujícím rozhovoru:**

WOMAN: Excuse me. How do I get to the nearest post office, please?

MAN: It is on the other side of the canal. Turn right at the traffic lights, then go along that road till you come to a roundabout. Go round the roundabout and over a bridge over the canal. The post office is on the left.

WOMAN: So that is turn right at the traffic lights, then round the roundabout and over the canal?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: Thanks a lot.

**B) Nyní se podívejte na následující pravidla. Nejdříve doplňte členy do vět a poté**

**doplňte pravidla s *the* nebo *a/an*.**

1 Používáme .....

- po *There is .../ Is there?*

Is there .....bank near here?

There is .....supermarket on the right.

- když zmiňujeme něco poprvé.

Then go along that road till you come to .....roundabout.

2 Používáme .....

- když zmiňujeme něco znovu.

Then go along that road till you come to .....roundabout. Go round .....roundabout.

- s přídavnými jmény ve 3. stupni a řadovými číslovkami.

How do I get to .....nearest post office, please?

Take ....first turning on the left.

- když existuje jen jedna možnost.

It is on the corner next to .....police station.

(Většina měst má jen jednu policejní stanici.)

**C) Nyní doplňte *a/an*, *the* nebo nulový člen do rozhovoru.**

WOMAN: Excuse me. Is there ..... Underground station near here?

MAN: Yes. ....nearest station is in ..... Canal Street opposite .... Museum of Transport. Go under this railway bridge and turn ... left. Then take .... First turning on ... right. There is .... Hairdresser's on ... corner. Go along that street until you see .... Chemist's shop on ... right. Go past ... chemist's shop and turn .... right. ....underground station is on ... right.

(Project 3)

**EXERCISE 6**

**Přečtěte si následující rozhovory. Zakroužkujte vždy variantu, která správně popisuje danou situaci.**

1. Liz: I'm bored. Let's rent a video game.

Fred: OK.

a) Fred ví, kterou videohru chce Liz půjčit.

b) Fred a Liz nemluví o konkrétní videohře.

2. Liz: Mum, where's the new video game?

Mum: Sorry, I haven't seen it.

a) Maminka ví, že si Liz půjčila novou hru.

b) Maminka neví, že si Liz půjčila novou hru.

3. Fred: I'll bet it's in the kitchen. You always leave your things there.

Liz: I'll go and look.

a) V domě Freda a Liz je více kuchyní.

b) V domě Freda a Liz je jen jedna kuchyň.

4. Fred: Was I right?

Liz: You were not. It was on a chair in the hall.



- a) V hale je jen jedna židle.  
b) V hale je více židlí.
5. Fred: Wow! Look at that! The graphics are brilliant.  
Liz: And the music too.  
a) Všechny videohry mají dobrou grafiku a muziku.  
b) Hra, kterou si Fred a Liz půjčili má dobrou grafiku a muziku.
6. Liz: That was fun. But why don't we rent a sports game next time?  
Fred: Good idea. I love sports games.  
a) Fred si chce půjčit nějakou sportovní hru.  
b) Fred ví, jakou sportovní hru si chce půjčit.  
(M. Fuchs, M. Bonner, K. Bourke, Grammar Express)

## EXERCISE 7

### Opravte chyby v užívání členů:

- What did you buy this morning?  
I bought the newspaper and a magazine.  
Where are they?  
The newspaper is in my bag but I do not know where I put a magazine.
- Are you OK?  
I do not feel well. I saw accident this morning.  
What happened?  
The car crashed into the tree. The driver of the car was not hurt but a car was badly damaged.
- Who are the people?  
They are my friends.  
Where do they live?  
They live in an old house in the small village.
- This house is very nice. Has it got the garden?  
Yes, it has a large garden.
- It is the beautiful day. Let's sit in the garden.  
OK, I will make coffee.
- What do you want to do when you grow up?  
I want to be doctor.
- Can we meet in afternoon?  
Yes, it is OK for me. I will wait for you at 3 p.m. in front of the cinema.

8. What are you going to do tonight?

I am going to stay at the home because I need to study a lot.

9. The my blue bag is there on the table. Where is yours?

I do not know.

(Murphy)

**ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI**

<b>Název práce</b>	How to avoid problems with understanding the use of articles
<b>Autor práce</b>	Cecílie Rejhová
<b>Obor</b>	<b>Učitelství anglického jazyka</b>
<b>Rok obhajoby</b>	2006
<b>Vedoucí práce</b>	Mgr. Petra Huschová
<b>Anotace</b>	Tato práce pojednává o výuce členů na základních školách. Nejprve jsou formulovány funkce determinantů, funkce členů obecně a jednotlivá pravidla pro užívání členů v anglickém jazyce. Následně jsou čtenáři seznámeni s aspekty, které pedagogové musí zvážit při výuce tohoto gramatického jevu, například výuka členů v kontextu nebo využití indukční a deduktivní metody. Pomocí výzkumu jsou určeny nejproblematictější oblasti užívání členů v šestých a sedmých třídách základních škol a také nejpoužívanější způsoby výuky členů. Cílem je navrhnout efektivní a úspěšné způsoby vyučování členů.
<b>Klíčová slova</b>	induktivní a deduktivní přístup k výuce členů, gramatika, určitý člen, neurčitý člen, nulový člen, pravidla užívání členů v anglickém jazyce, identifikace, klasifikace, generická funkce, specifická funkce, výuka členů na základní škole