

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**University "Frères Mentouri", Constantine 1**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of Letters and English**

**Teaching the English Article System through the Communicative-  
Structural Approach**

**A Case Study of Second Year Students of English at the University "Frères  
Mentouri" of Constantine 1**

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of L.M.D. Doctorate in "Didactique des Langues Etrangères"**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to:

My loving husband Ali and precious son Yanis.

My caring parents Tayeb and Laila,

My grandmother Fatima,

My sisters: Imen (and her son Chahine), Jiji, Hanadi, and Chaima,

My brother Khalil.

My father and mother-in-law Said and Khadidja,

My grandmother-in-law Akila,

My sisters-in-law: Ahlem, Nabila (and her son Abderrahmen), and Bouchra,

My brother-in-law Madjed and his family: Sana and Mouhamed Reda.

My relatives and my friends.

My teachers.

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## Abstract

Teaching Grammar has changed from focusing on the grammatical structures and combinations using a direct and explicit instruction into emphasizing communication and developing the communicative skills. Like all the grammatical aspects, the English article system is taught following the same perspective. Articles are believed to be acquired through exposure to natural and authentic input. However, they are very difficult for non-native speakers to be detected for they are unstressed. Hence, direct explanation of their rules is necessary as they are hard to be heard and cannot be taught following the Communicative Approach solely. This leads us to consider the Structural Approach combined with the Communicative where teachers present the rules, explain them and practice them in a Communicative context. This study sets out to investigate the usefulness of systematic teaching of the English article system using a Communicative-Structural Approach at the Department of Letters and English, University “Frères Mentouri”, Constantine. We hypothesise that if the English article system is taught systematically through the Communicative-Structural Approach, students would improve their understanding and use of articles. We also hypothesize that the teachers at the Department of Letters and English, University “Frères Mentouri”, Constantine believe that the Communicative-Structural Approach is effective in teaching articles and use it in their own teaching. The hypotheses are verified by means of a Pre-test Post-test Control group Experimental Group design as well as a Teachers’ and Students’ Questionnaire. The informants of our study are fifty second year students at “Frères Mentouri” University, Constantine 1. They were divided into two groups, one control and another experimental. According to the data obtained from the test, we can confirm the first hypothesis since the test clearly demonstrates a better performance and thus improvement in the Experimental group’s results. Regarding the Teachers’ and Students’ Questionnaires, the teachers believe that using the Communicative-Structural Approach is effective in teaching Grammar, and the students stated that their teachers use this approach in

teaching them Grammar. One can say, then, that the second hypothesis is confirmed as well. On the basis of what we have found, it is suggested that Grammar syllabus designers and teachers should shift back to teaching the grammatical structures and consider the importance of systematic teaching through the Communicative-Structural Approach.

## **List of Abbreviations**

ART: Article

CBI: Content-Based Instruction

CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELLs: English Language Learners

ESL: English as a Second Language

FLLs: Foreign Language Learners

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

HK: Known to the Hearer

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

N: Noun

NNS: Non-Native Speakers

NP: Noun Phrase

P-P-P: Presentation, Practice, Production

S: Subject

SA: Structural Approach

SDM: Structural Deficit Method

SLLs: Second Language Learners

SR: Specific Referent

TBI: Task-Based Instruction

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

V: Verb

ZIMSEC: the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council

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## **General Introduction**

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## **1. Statement of the Problem**

Throughout the last century, language teaching and learning has been the focus interest of many scholars and researchers. As an effort to facilitate the act of teaching and learning languages, new methods and approaches developed from teaching isolated linguistic units and structures to promote the communicative abilities. The teaching of grammar, like all the other language aspects, has shifted from the direct and explicit instruction (grammatical instruction) to the implicit one where the grammatical structures are no longer focused. Meaningful communication and the development of communicative competence are focused on.

According to Ekiert (2004), learning articles is one of the areas that English as a second language learners find a lot of difficulties with. Master (1994: 229) states that “several researchers consider the article system to be unlearnable and therefore unteachable ...” and “... can only be acquired through natural exposure to the language.” It is believed that language should be presented in a comprehensible and natural input (spoken) where students grasp the different structures and knowledge needed for communication in a low-risk environment, or what is called the natural approach. However, articles, as Ekiert (2004:1) explained “are ... unstressed and consequently are very difficult, if not impossible, for a [non-native speaker] to discern, thus affecting the availability of input in the spoken mode”. Without any direct instruction, explanation and presentation of their rules, articles would rather take a long time to be learned. This leads researchers to shift back to the Structural Approach, yet in a communicative frame i.e., a Communicative-Structural Approach where learners will deal with the different rules underlying articles in natural and native-like contexts.

## **2. Aims of the Study**

This study aims at investigating the usefulness of systematic teaching of the articles that are considered to be one of the most difficult areas for English as a second and foreign



language learners who find themselves confused with whether to put “*a*” or drop “*the*” before a noun. In other words, the purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles. This will be determined by the progress of students after being taught the article system through the Communicative-Structural Approach.

This research work also seeks to shed light on the teachers’ views, perceptions, beliefs as well as attitudes towards the implementation of the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching English, Grammar, and articles. In addition to that, it highlights the students’ opinions and attitudes towards its implementation in learning articles. This will be clearly apparent from the analyzed feedback of the Teachers’ Questionnaire and the Students’ Questionnaire.

### **3. Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Throughout the current study, we intend to answer the following questions:

- Are articles a difficult grammatical feature that hinders the students’ progress in learning English?
- If there is a difficulty, what are the major causes behind such difficulties?
- In the case students find articles challenging, what is the most problematic article for them?
- Is there a necessity of teaching the grammatical rules and structures explicitly and through a direct instruction?
- If there is a necessity of including a direct instruction, is the Communicative-Structural Approach effective in teaching articles?
- What are the teachers’ and students’ views and attitudes towards the Communicative-Structural Approach?

In the light of the above research concerns, we have elaborated two hypotheses. We hypothesize that if the English article system is taught systematically through the Communicative-Structural Approach, students' mastery of articles would improve. In other words, students would improve their understanding and use of articles. We also hypothesize that the teachers at the Department of Letters and English, University "Frères Mentouri", Constantine believe that the Communicative-Structural Approach is effective in teaching articles and use it in their own teaching.

#### **4. Means of Research**

This study's informants are Second Year students at the Department of Letters and English, University "Frères Mentouri", Constantine. Fifty students out of 300 second year students are chosen randomly and divided into:

- An Experimental group of 25 students who are taught articles through the Communicative-Structural Approach.
- A Control group of 25 students who are taught articles through reading and listening to different native like discourse and who try to learn the rules without the teacher's explanations.

Both groups (the experimental and the control) will be taught by the same teacher.

To gather the information needed, we opt for a pre-test and post-test in Grammar dealing with articles (comparing the performance of the learners through the results of the pre-test and post-test). In addition to that, a Teachers' and Students' questionnaire are handed in to collect data about views about the Communicative-Structural Approach.

#### **5. Structure of the Study**

The thesis is divided into six chapters, three theoretical and three practical. The first chapter, "Teaching and Learning Articles", is intended for the teaching and learning of articles, being in turn divided into Grammar teaching and English articles. In this chapter,

grammar is defined and the different theories that underlie it are explained. In addition, grammar is important in language teaching and learning, thus we will mention the role it plays in learning and teaching any given language. Teaching English grammar using both the deductive and inductive approaches will also be covered in this chapter. We will then consider the different relations grammar has with language skills that are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The first part of chapter one will end with analyzing the problems and difficulties that students face in the process of learning grammar. The second part of this chapter is devoted to articles. The three types of articles will be dealt with alongside the meaning of each. In addition to that, we will detail the environments in which they occur and how they are used. Then, some research findings concerning their acquisition will be summarized. Finally, the different difficulties that might hinder English learners to use them correctly will be tackled.

The second chapter is about Communicative Language Teaching, its definition and its relationship to the previous studies about it. Its principles and approaches will be detailed. We will also present the advantages and disadvantages of Communicative Language Teaching as well as how it can be adapted in the classroom.

The third chapter, the core of our research, deals with the Communicative-Structural Approach. We start by defining the Structural Approach, listing its different aspects and pointing at its weaknesses. A comparison between Communicative Language Teaching and the Structural Approach is made. As a result, the combination of both approaches under the headline of Communicative-Structural Approach is introduced and how to adapt it to the classroom is suggested.

In Chapter Four, “Teaching Articles Using the Communicative-Structural Approach”, our sample is described as well as the experiment, and an analysis of the data obtained in both tests: the Pre-test and the Post-test is provided alongside the interpretations of both tests.

Chapter Five “The Teachers’ and the Students’ Opinion about Teaching Articles Using the Communicative-Structural Approach”, is devoted to both questionnaires: the Teachers’ questionnaire and the Students’ questionnaire. We first describe our questionnaires, and then provide an extensive analysis and interpretation of the teachers’ and students’ responses.

Chapter six, “Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations”, deals with the outcomes of the whole study. It highlights the importance of teaching articles, specifically, and grammar, generally, using the Communicative-Structural Approach and tackles the level of its implementation. It summarizes the implications of the present study and provides Grammar syllabus designers, teachers and researchers with suggestions and recommendations for further investigation. In addition, it presents the limitations of the current study in order to be avoided with future research for better results.

## Chapter One

### Teaching and Learning Articles

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## **Introduction**

Grammar is at the heart of the teaching and learning of languages. However, it is considered one of the most difficult and controversial language aspects to teach. It is essential in learning the four-fold skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and identifying its difficulties enhances students' performance in each skill. The English article is one of the grammatical aspects that cause such difficulty. It needs to be taught thoroughly and more emphasized by teachers because of its difficulty and complexity for English language learners.

### **1.1. Teaching Grammar**

“What I know about grammar is its infinite power. To shift the structure of a sentence alters the meaning of that sentence” (Joan Didion American essayist and novelist). Grammar is an essential skill in learning English especially for EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language) learners. Their progress will be limited without an understanding and a good mastery of grammar. Thus, it is crucial to implement grammar teaching in any curriculum.

#### **1.1.1. Definition of Grammar**

Grammar is defined by linguists and writers of English grammar in various ways: “English grammar is a description of the usages of the English language by good speakers and writers of the present day” (Whitney, in Baskervill and Sewell, 1895: 9). “A description of account of the nature, build, constitution, or make of a language is called its grammar” (Meiklejohn, in Baskervill and Sewell, 1895: 9). It, then, demonstrates the way words can take different inflections and structures. The latter are joined to form correct sentences. “Grammar teaches the laws of language, and the right method of using it in speaking and writing” (Patterson, In Baskervill and Sewell, 1895: 9). Meaning that grammar helps speakers

and writers to produce acceptable occurrences of the language i.e. correct written discourse and speaking accuracy. “Grammar is the science of *letters*; hence the science of using words correctly” (Abbott, In Baskervill and Sewell, 1895: 9). Therefore, grammar is that system of rules which governs the language concerning its correctness. “The English word *grammar* relates only to the laws which govern the significant forms of words, and the construction of the sentence” (Richard Grant White, In Baskervill and Sewell, 1895: 9).

The word grammar is derived from Old French *gramaire*, via Latin *grammatica*, from Greek *grammatikē* (thkhnē) ‘(art) of letters’, from *gramma*, *grammat-* ‘letter of the alphabet, thing written’ (English Living Oxford Dictionaries, 2016: Grammar). Grammar is a branch of linguistics which mainly deals with syntax, the study of sentence structures i.e. how words are arranged together in order to construct structures of phrases, clauses, and sentences or what is defined by Wekker and Haegeman as “determining the relevant component parts of a sentence” and “describing [them] grammatically” (1996: 5), and morphology that is the study of words and “how words are formed out of smaller units (called morphemes)” (Radford, 2004: 1). It is a study and description of the rules of the different structures of a given language; demonstrating the way words change; for example, the plural form of woman is women, and are joined to form meaningful correct units like sentences. Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016) defines grammar as “the study of the classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relations in the sentence.” This means that grammar categorizes all possible words in the language and “what is to be preferred and (...) avoided in inflection”. Grammar does not describe the category of a word solely, but decides on its role and function in relation to others in the sentence.

According to the Free Dictionary, grammar is a set of rules “implicit in a language, viewed as a mechanism for generating all sentences possible in that language”. In other words, knowing the grammatical rule of a specific structure allows speakers or writers to

generate an infinite number of admissible sentences. Newson et al. in *Basic English Syntax with Exercises* stated that grammar is “a finite set of rules which tell us how to recognise the infinite number of expressions that constitute the language we speak” (2006: 2).

Hence, grammar is that system of rules which governs the language concerning its correctness by demonstrating the way words can take different structures. The latter are joined to form correct sentences. So grammar helps speakers and writers to produce acceptable occurrences of the language i.e. they will be able to create correct written discourses and achieve speaking accuracy.

Similarly, and in order to make sure one is progressing in learning a language we can ask the number of words they know but we cannot ask them the number of sentences they have learned because sentences are not learned in such a way. “Rather than memorizing a large inventory of sentences, speakers create sentences as needed” (Kroeger, 2005: 4). This is possible due to the speakers’ mastery of the rules underlying the building up of these sentences

Second language learners (SLLs) and foreign language learners (FLLs) learn the grammar of a language so that they sound like native speakers and have a “native-like competence (...) hence, it is clear that grammar is concerned with competence rather than performance”. Grammatical competence does not induce that the speaker knows how to construct rightful sentences all the time, even native speakers may make “performance errors” because of various reasons including tiredness and boredom (Radford, 2004: 2). Speakers also do not necessarily have to know all the rules that do exist in the language. Instead, it is knowing when to use the rules in appropriate genuine contexts (Newby, 1998: 4). Grammar demonstrates how to produce structures and does not refer to each individual word in the dictionary otherwise we will end up with an infinite number of rules. That is why grammar



deals with word categories, it “defines the set of possible positions for word categories, hence allowing the construction of numerous expressions from a small number of grammatical principles” (Newson et.al., 2006: 08). For instance, grammar does not tell us that the word bird comes before X or after Y but it tells us that words that belong to the N category come before a V when they function as the S of a sentence.

Grammar, as previously described by a number of authors, is the art of writing and speaking correctly. Yet, Scaligen limits it as “the science of speaking according to use” excluding writing and adding that “it does not establish rules for those who know the manner of use, but from the settled and frequent usages of these (...)” allowing speakers to speak freely without any grammatical constraints i.e. neglect the set of rules governing the language (Scaligen: 76 in Brown, 1851: 8). In fact, grammar straightens language in all its forms either written or spoken.

### **1.1.2. The Place of Grammar in Language Teaching and Learning**

The implication of grammar in teaching languages has lost its importance and position through time with the appearance of new approaches and methods that shifted away from focusing on forms into emphasizing communication. However, recently, grammar is gaining more attention and is again being considered imperative because of its vital role in language teaching and learning. The role of grammar has been an excessively debatable topic and “recent understanding about the controversy has come to an agreement that the debate is not on whether grammatical competence is important but rather on how to teach grammar” (Furaidah, & Mukminatein, 2008: 80).

#### **1.1.2.1. Importance of Grammar in Language Teaching and Learning**

Furaidah and Mukminatein pointed out in their paper “The Place of Grammar in Language Teaching: An attempt towards a synthesis of its teaching approaches” two extreme

edges in the debate of grammar. Its advocates “reflected in Grammar-Translation Method and Cognitive Code Learning” and the other being its opponents “applied in Natural Approach and (...) Communicative Language Teaching” (2008: 80). Fotos (1994), as stated by Azizifar (2011: 89), believes that teachers who are using the communicative approaches in language teaching face problems with the role that grammar plays as they just provide “a rich variety of comprehensible input” without “teacher-fronted grammar instruction”. Azizifar added that grammatical instruction should be reintegrated in the process of teaching languages.

Grammar is crucial in teaching and learning languages as it enables learners “to generate a potentially enormous number of original sentences”. This means that grammar provides the learners with the appropriate knowledge in order to be creative in producing linguistic structures. Another dimension of the importance of grammar is that “learners with grammatical knowledge will consciously organize and notice the input exposed to them”. It is agreed on that perceiving is one cognitive step towards acquiring. (Furraidah and Mukminatein, 2008: 81)

Learners, especially adults, feel the need of mastering the language proficiently in order to be able to interact openly. Otherwise, they will be afraid of communicating because of the possibility of making mistakes. That is the reason why, grammar plays an undeniable role in building the learners’ confidence (interacting without fear or hesitation), self-esteem (believing in one’s own capacities), intrinsic motivation (learning to attain one’s goals), and the will of risk taking (taking the risk of communicating).

Understanding the nature and rules of grammar is part of correct learning of any given language since it is at the heart of language learning in general and linguistics in particular. Grammar helps writing correctly and meaningfully through providing different grammatical structures, connectors used to link parts of speech and eliciting correct word orders.

According to Greenbaum, grammatical analysis is of a great help in interpreting texts, recognizing the grammatical structures and also seems to straighten one's punctuation (1996: 37). One's own grammar can guide to learning other languages' grammars by drawing the similarities and differences that do exist between one's own grammar and the foreign one.

The grammar teaching practice "has regained its rightful place in the language curriculum". Researchers (e.g., Batstone and Ellis, 2009; Ellis, 2006; Nassaji and Fotos, 2004) assume that "grammar is too important to be ignored, and that without a good knowledge of grammar, learners' language development will be severely constrained" (Akbari, 2014: 125). Debatable issues that are arising are not about integrating grammar in the curriculum, but, as Thornbury (1999) thought are about grammar items that need to be focused on and effective ways to teach grammar (126). That is the reason why interest in grammar teaching directed research to focus on how to teach it in modern classrooms. Grammar is approached using one of the two different ways in processing information that are the Deductive and Inductive Approaches to grammar teaching.

#### **1.1.2.2. The Deductive Approach**

The Deductive approach or what is called rule-driven learning is based on the belief that grammatical rules need to be presented, explained and illustrated by the teacher (Thornbury, 2001; In Furraidah et. al., 2008: 84). Deductive grammar teaching is best seen in the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) in which the teacher initiates the lesson by giving the learners a given rule with the different explanations underlying its use. After that, practice takes place through translation exercises into and out of the students' first language (Furaidah et. al., 2008: 84).

Larsen-Freeman (2014: 268) stated that "if practicing a deductive approach, the teacher would present the generalization [i.e. rules] and then ask students to apply it to the language

sample [which is practice]”. So, the teacher in the deductive approach gives the rule that is going to be illustrated with examples by the learners. The notion of deductive teaching or reasoning is when concepts are approached from the general (rule) to the specific (examples). In grammar, teaching deductively means giving the rule first, followed by illustrations and examples. This approach to grammar teaching has been widely spread and overly throughout the years (Fortune, 1992; In Ranalli, 2001: 02). Larsen-Freeman (2014) found it appropriate to teach grammar explicitly as she previously said that “equating the teaching of grammar with the provision of explicit rules was an unduly limited view of what it means to teach grammar”. She believed that teaching the rules matches our objectives in teaching grammar that is “linguistic behaviour (...) [and] not knowledge of the rules themselves” (268).

For Thornbury (1999: 30), the Deductive Approach simplifies many rules of form and in a short period of time which makes it quick and time-saving. As a result, it provides teachers and students with more time for more practice rather than eliciting the rules from examples. Another point Thornbury highlights in his book “How to Teach Grammar” is that deductive teaching “respects the intelligence and maturity of many (...) students and acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in language acquisition”. Students have different cognitive styles that sometimes are not “well suited for language analysis” and other times the linguistic rule is complex or difficult which requires the use of a deductive approach (Larsen-Freeman, 1999: 264). Thornbury (1999) added that the deductive approach “confirms many students’ expectations about classroom learning, particularly for those learners who have an analytical learning style” (30). It means that analytical or sequential learners go step by step, need clarity and without rules, they might feel lost. Deductive teaching (which prefers presenting rules first) satisfies their needs in learning. In addition to facilitating the learning process, the deductive approach helps teachers in teaching grammar. Teachers will “deal with language

points as they come up, rather than having to anticipate them and prepare for them in advance” (Thornbury, 1999: 30).

However, due to several flaws, the deductive approach has been criticized and abandoned. Furaidah et. al. summarized its limitations in “The Place of Grammar in Language Teaching”. Communication has become the purpose behind learning languages and deductive teaching does not serve that purpose because it emphasizes the written rather than oral language. Another issue presented by Furaidah et. al. is that students feel overwhelmed after “the long written translation exercises, the lengthy vocabulary lists, and the academic forms of language presented in the reading” which are supposed to help them internalize the different rules that will enable them to communicate. “However, as Ellis in Richards (2002) reported, there has not been convincing empirical verification as well as theoretical validation that the acquisition of grammar structures involves the process of learning the rules and practicing them through gradual automatization of production” (84). Thornbury (1999) believed that the deductive approach “may be off-putting for some students, especially younger ones”. He explained that the causes may be insufficient metalanguage and understanding the concepts involved. Besides, the deductive approach is teacher-centred in which the teachers’ “explanation is often at the expense of student involvement and interaction”. As we previously mentioned, it does not serve oral communication that is at the heart of language learning. Thornbury added that explanation, following that approach, is “seldom as memorable as other forms of presentation, such as demonstration” which will not result in long term retention. For Thornbury, the deductive approach “encourages the belief that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rules” (30). Those rules presented deductively, according to Swan (1995), need to be true, show what the limits are on the use of a given form, clear, simple, familiar, and relevant (Thornbury, 1999: 32).

### **1.1.2.3. The Inductive Approach**

Grammar teaching approaches have witnessed a change from deductive towards inductive teaching. An inductive approach or rule-discovery learning is when rules are inferred from a set of examples and illustrations. “An inductive approach comes from inductive reasoning stating that a reasoning progression proceeds from particulars (that is, observations, measurements, or data) to generalities (for example, rules, laws, concepts or theories) (Felder & Henriques, 1995, In Widodo, 2006: 127). Inductive instruction means presenting new grammatical frameworks or rules in authentic language contexts. “‘Noticing’ is a good factor in inductive instruction. Instead of explaining a given concept and providing the learners with examples, the teacher provides students with many examples to show how the concept is used. The aim of the instruction is for students to ‘notice’, by way of the examples, how the concept works” (Şik, 2014: 30). Following that approach, the teacher does not involve any explanation of rules and grammatical forms until learners make their own generalizations of those rules. Learning, then, occurs “without intention to learn and without awareness of what has been learned” (Brown, 2007: 292; In Silvia, 2010: 130).

The inductive approach is best seen in the Direct Method and Natural Approach. Thornbury (2002) stated that “in Direct method, therefore, the rules of the language are supposedly acquired out of the experience of the understanding and repeating examples which have been systematically graded for difficulty and put into a clear context” (In Silvia, 2010: 134). This means that the input (rules and forms) are presented in a specific context in a text or an audio. Zhou (2008: 6) described four steps to be followed when teaching grammar according to the inductive approach principles. First, a set of sentences to be analyzed is given to students who are asked to generate rules. In the third step, they “are asked to check and test the grammatical rule against new sentences about the same area of English grammar”. Finally, revision of those rules takes place to accommodate new sentences.

The inductive approach is seen effective in the way it trains learners “to be familiar with the rule discovery [which] could enhance learning autonomy and self-reliance” (Widodo, 2006: 128). According to him, this approach engages the learners in the learning process to be more active and motivated, developing “their mental set of strategies for dealing with tasks” instead of being passive recipients. In this way, the “learners’ greater degree of cognitive depth is exploited”. Widodo also summarized in Table 2 dealing with “Advantages and disadvantages of the inductive approach to teaching grammar” that the inductive approach involves students in activities that require pattern-recognition and solving abilities which may attract some students and motivate them to be part of the challenge. This in turn can provide an opportunity for learners to collaborate and hence more language practice.

Nevertheless, the inductive approach is criticized for being time and energy consuming. The teacher in the inductive approach spends more time to prepare for the lesson (designing the appropriate games, assigning interactive games and creating interesting ice breakers) which “places emphasis on teachers in planning a lesson”. Furthermore, the inductive approach may mislead learners. They might understand the implicit rules in a wrong way. Another frustration caused by the inductive approach is the learners’ learning styles. It might not suit a wide range of learning styles as there are learners who prefer to be told the rules (Widodo, 2006: 128).

### **1.1.3. Relation of Grammar with the Other Skills**

“Grammar is the art of reading, speaking, and writing a language by rules” (Nugent, 1830: xii). It plays a major role in organizing discourse i.e. setting directions for an accurate language thus governing the use of language towards a correct writing, speaking, reading and understanding. Communication might be hindered if learners fail to use grammatical

structures correctly or misunderstand them. Therefore, it is necessary for ELLs to master grammar in order to be competent in the four language skills” (Elturki, 2014).

Grammar is primarily concerned with writing because the main reason for teaching it is to improve writing. “For decades, however, research has demonstrated that the teaching of grammar rarely accomplishes such practical [goal]. Relatively few students learn grammar well, fewer retain it, and still fewer transfer the grammar they have learned to improving or editing their writing” (Weaver, 1995). Nevertheless, curriculum writers and policy-makers in England believed it appropriate to teach grammar to young learners as it improves their written as well as spoken language (Andrews et. al, 2006: 39). Chin (2000) considers students’ grammatical knowledge is helpful as they write. She stated in her article “The Role of Grammar in Improving Students’ Writing” that studies in the field recommend using students’ writing as the material for teaching grammatical aspects in order to apply them in their writing. Another suggestion is at the revising and editing stages, where “teachers can provide grammar instruction that guides students in their attempts to identify and correct problems in sentence structure and usage”. Students will be able to distinguish the relationship between grammar and their own writing when they apply grammar instruction into the revising and editing stages.

The aim of learning languages is basically communication and negotiating meaning. Rocio (2012) conducted a research exploring ways of integrating teaching listening and speaking in grammar sessions in order to enhance students’ level in English. By the latter it is meant the ability to interact effectively and accurately using the language. He emphasized both listening and speaking without forgetting combining them with grammar, “as a way of helping learners to understand the language system and to develop their ability by using it to communicate successfully inside and outside the classroom” (10).



One of the many problems students encounter when listening is decoding speech mainly because they are not familiar with how words sound being connected. Among them are function words that are very important in combined sentences, yet, they are difficult to be heard as they are unstressed. Function words, as pointed out by Bland, constitute most of the structures taught in grammar courses. Field suggested that one way grammatical instruction can help foster students' listening abilities is providing "listening instruction at the time students are learning a particular structure" (Hagen, 2011). Hagen stated that listening instruction is incorporated in teaching grammatical structures in the Azar-Hagen grammar series. In those grammar series the meaning of different grammatical structures is taught, and a targeted listening practice takes place in order to familiarize students with those structures which they might encounter in everyday, authentic speech.

Second and foreign language learners prefer being fluent when they speak rather than being accurate, neglecting the role of grammar in enhancing the speaking skill. Therefore, teachers focus on accuracy without which "speakers will not be understood and their interlocutors will lose interest if they perform incorrect utterances each time" (Kouicem, 2010: 32). Oral proficiency is not determined by fluency solely, accuracy plays a major role as well. That is why, learners need to consider the different language aspects when they speak, mainly, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (32).

The relationship between grammar and speaking is not always defined as grammar improving or influencing the speaking skill. It can also be the other way around, in which speaking activities might help teachers in improving their students' grammatical knowledge. Makofsky (2016) in her website article "Best Practices for Teaching ESL: Speaking, Reading, and Writing" suggests that integrating advanced or even native speakers in the speaking session gives teachers plenty of language models of correct sentence structures and grammar. Noting repeated errors (grammatical ones) produced by learners during speaking and teaching

them about those errors is another method teachers can use in teaching grammar through speaking.

Reading is one of the language skills that have been gaining much interest throughout the last decades for its numerous advantages. Understanding what is being read is the aim of reading in the first place and grammar can be of a great help in doing so in different aspects. The relationship between grammar and reading comprehension has not been much discussed by researchers for different reasons. One reason might be because of the nature of the reading skill that is a receptive one. This lead to the assumption that understanding structures does not interfere with understanding a text, instead, “vocabulary, background knowledge, and reading strategies” are the components that actually help in comprehending. The other cause of marginalizing grammar knowledge in enhancing reading is the “dominance of Communicative Language Teaching”. The latter emphasizes “macro language skills and communicative functions” (Akbari, 2014: 122) and excludes grammatical instruction.

Meier (2014) agrees that there is a relationship between grammar and reading comprehension based on Shanahan’s suggestion that complex sentences acquired and produced by learners increase the students’ “ability to make sense of what they read”. Reading comprehension is affected by grammar teaching methods, so Meier stated. Understanding how sentences are combined together to form meaningful texts helps learners to understand what they read. Another way Shanahan thinks helpful in teaching students reading is by explaining and analyzing complex sentences. Teachers, in this way, show students how to process with future complex sentences they might encounter when they read on their own (without their teachers’ guidance of how to understand what they read). Shanahan assumes that direct and explicit instruction is necessary to teach, especially children, such complex language aspects. If considering the relationship between grammar and reading the way around, one would figure out that reading contributes to improving

learning grammar. Weaver (1995) stated that researchers (eg, Elley, 1991) believe that “extensive reading may promote the acquisition of grammatical structures better than explicitly studying or practicing such structures”.

#### **1.1.4. Difficulties Encountered by Second/Foreign Language Learners in Learning Grammar**

One of English as a second/foreign language most difficult aspect in learning is grammar. Grammatical difficulty has been approached from different perspectives. Shiu (2011) summarized them in his thesis entitled “EFL Learners’ Perceptions of Grammatical Difficulty in Relation to Second Language Proficiency, Performance, and Knowledge”. For Green and Hetch, easy rules are “those that (1) [refer] to easily recognized categories; (2) [can] be applied mechanically; (3) [are] not dependent on large contexts” (1992: 179, In Shiu, 2011: 2). Difficult rules, however, are hard to “identify or verbalize” (2).

Grammatical difficulty is related to “comprehension” and “production”, as stated by DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996, In Shiu, 2011: 2). On the one hand, learners might find some forms easy to understand, but when it comes to application, they are hard to produce. On the other hand, they might find some structures difficult to understand, yet, they can use them correctly. Another perspective of grammatical difficulty is in relation to “linguistic form, semantic meaning, and pragmatic use”. Larsen-Freeman (2003, In Shiu, 2011: 3) thinks that “a grammar aspect can be easy with respect to one aspect but difficult with respect to another”, like the case of the passive, its form is easy to grasp, but it is difficult to use. Hulstijn (1995, In Shiu, 2011: 2) sees difficulty in relation to grammatical complexity. In other words, the most difficult grammatical aspects are the most complex ones. Being grammatically knowledgeable and aware is difficult for non-native speakers of English because of “the variety in forms and usages” it displays. Learners tend to face difficulties in

applying rules they learn everyday (Elturki, 2014). Second language learners inability to form complex structures hinders their ability of expressing their thoughts, specifically, the complex ones. The inability to construct complex sentences is, as highlighted by Shatz and Willinkson (2010), due to some “common grammar problems (...) such as the misuse of prepositions, articles, past tense, and the third-person singular” (165, In Elturki, 2014). This is the reason why, as Elturki thought, teachers need to spot those problems and “try to adapt their teaching”.

Some researchers (for example, Ammar & Spada, 2006; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Spada, Lightbown, & White, 2005; J. Williams & Evans, 1998) defined grammatical difficulty in accordance with the errors they make. “Grammar features are considered more difficult to learn if many students have difficulty using them correctly” (Shiu, 2011: 4). Elturki in her paper “An Investigation of Grammar Problems Facing English Language Learners” summarized the findings of researchers in identifying English language learners grammar errors which will determine their problems with grammar and provide teachers with a better understanding of their learners’ deficiencies in learning. Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005) found out that prepositions, the past simple tense, and the definite article are the most repeated grammatical errors. Chodorow, Tetreault & Han (2007) also confirmed that “prepositions are one of the most difficult aspects of English grammar to master by NNS and ‘they account for a substantial proportion of all grammatical errors by ESL learners’” (5, In Elturki, 2014). Dolgish’s analysis (1985) of sentences of 350 learners proved that prepositions, again, represented a considerable number of students’ writing errors. In addition, Abushihab, El-Omari & Tobat (2011) carried out a study investigating the most common grammatical errors in paragraph writing that resulted in concluding that “the largest number of errors were related to prepositions (...) followed by morphological errors (...), verbs (...), active and passive (...), and tenses (...)”. The latter, besides aspects and the passive voice, are

regarded by Hinkel (2004: 5) problematic even for advanced students and after several years of learning and use (Elturki, 2014). Harmer (1995) has also identified irregular plurals of certain nouns and prepositions of time as problematic for English language learners in mastering the language (Tuomas, 2015: 6). Elturki's own study resulted in identifying the most difficult grammatical aspects for students that are unreal conditions, reported speech, and passive voice.

Tuomas, like Elturki, based his study on research findings dealing with learners' grammar errors in order to determine difficulties encountered by English language learners in mastering grammar. Harmer tackled another area of difficulty in learning grammar which is "the mismatch between form and function" (6), eliciting with the example of the present continuous tense that can be used to express future actions. Which he assumed causes problems for all English language learners without exceptions.

According to Harmer, the learners' mother tongue interferes with their English language learning as they compare the English grammar with their mother tongue grammar. Such comparison makes the similarities easy to learn whereas the differences cause problems for learners (Tuomas, 2015: 6). Sawir (2005) shared the same belief that the differences between the English grammar and the mother tongue grammar are a problematic factor which hinders learning. So, mother tongue interference is said to contribute to the "wrong use of English grammar rules" (Yunus, et al. 2013; Köhlmyr, 2003) (18). However, such interference might be beneficial for learners whose mother tongue grammar is closer in resemblance to the target language grammar (Tuomas, 2015: 18).

## **1.2. English Articles**

Words like "this", "my", and "which" are called determiners or noun signals. "Determiners are 'small' words used with nouns to relate a noun to a particular context or

situation” (Balim and Istrabadi, 2008: 2). Articles are the most common types of determiners. They are special varieties of adjectives used before nouns to modify them providing information about definiteness and number. The English article system is divided into definite article “the”, indefinite article “a/n”, and zero/null article. Throughout this section, we will tackle the different types of articles that exist, their use, acquisition, as well as the difficulties second and foreign language learners face when learning them.

### **1.2.1. Types of Articles**

There are three types in the English article system: the indefinite article “a/n”, the definite article “the” and the zero article “Ø”. We will deal with each of them exhaustively in the following sections.

#### **1.2.1.1. The Indefinite Article “A(n)”**

With generic (a generic noun represents a whole class of things) singular concrete countable nouns we use the indefinite article “a/n”.

Eg: *A box* has six sides.

It is also used when we define the class or kind to which people or things belong.

Eg: He’s *an accountant*.

The indefinite article a/n is used in a vague, general and indefinite situation to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns.

Eg: I ate *a* banana → banana in this example is indefinite i.e. not referring to any particular banana but one banana the speaker ate that the listener need not know which specific banana was eaten (Azar, 2002: 112).

If that singular noun starts with a consonant sound, it is preceded by “a” and if it is a vowel sound, it is then preceded by “an” “[in] other words, the form of the article depends entirely on the phonological shape of the word which follows it” (Kroeger, 2005: 288). Considering the following example, it is correct to insert an indefinite article before the singular noun place but due to spelling it is wrong to use “a” before the vowel sound /i/ instead we add “an”:

Eg<sub>1</sub>: - The Sahara is *a* interesting place → wrong

- The Sahara is *an* interesting place → correct

The indefinite article *a/n* cannot be used with plural as well as uncountable nouns, adjectives alone (i.e. without a noun), and with another determiner.

Eg<sub>1</sub>: My parents are *doctors*.

Eg<sub>2</sub>: She’s very *good*. She’s *a* very good *teacher*.

Eg<sub>3</sub>: He’s *my friend*. He’s *a friend* of mine.

### 1.2.1.2. The Definite Article “The”

The definite article “the” means “you know which one I mean” (Swan, 1995: 57). It is used with singular and plural, countable and uncountable concrete nouns to refer to a particular person, precise place, specified thing, or referring to something previously mentioned.

Eg<sub>1</sub>: He wrote to *the* Times → it is definite because the speaker is referring to something specific that is familiar or identifiable by the hearer.

Eg<sub>2</sub>: Yesterday I saw some dogs. *The dogs* were chasing a cat → *the* is used for the second mention of the indefinite noun *dogs*. However, *the* is not used for the second mention of a generic noun.

Eg<sub>3</sub>: - What color is *a banana* (generic)? *A banana* is yellow.

- Joe offered me *a banana* (indefinite) or an apple. I chose *the banana* (definite) (Azar, 2002: 115).

According to Bywater in “A Proficiency Course in English with Key” the definite article *the* is also used with the double comparative.

Eg: *The* less an author has to say, *the* more tricks of style he will use to eke out his writing.

In addition, the definite article *the* is used with:

- rivers, seas, oceans, mountain ranges, gulfs, bays and straits: *the Red sea, the Atlantic, the Alps, the Bay of Biscay, the Straits of Dover.*
- ships, hotels, theatres, clubs and newspapers: *the Queen Elizabeth, the Old Vic, the Times, the Hilton, the Victory Club.*
- the points of the compass if preceded by a preposition:  
He lives in *the north* of Sweden.  
He fled to *the west*.
- before adjectives to turn them into class nouns or abstract nouns:  
*The millionaire* lives in a different world from the pauper.  
Greek education enquired into *the good*.
- family names if these are made plural:  
Keeping up with *the Joneses* is absurd.  
I am going to stay with *the Martins* for a few days.

Plural, abstract and uncountable nouns limited in time or place to particular examples of the thing require the definite article *the*.

Eg: *The* women who were agitating for the vote chained themselves to the railings outside



the Houses of Parliament (Bywater, 1990: 178).

The definite article *the* is used before a noun when there is only one thing.

Eg: *the sun, the moon, the sky.*

It can also be used with a singular generic countable noun in the following cases:

- Species of animals: *The blue whale* is the largest mammal on earth.
- Inventions: *The computer* will play an increasingly large role in all our lives.
- Musical instruments, sports, and games preceding a noun and functioning as adjectives:

Eg<sub>1</sub>: She plays *the violin* execrably.

Eg<sub>2</sub>: I went to *the football* game.

### **1.2.1.3. Zero/No Article**

No article is required with the mentioned nouns (plural, abstract and uncountable) used in a general sense.

Eg: *Women* have lost as much as they have gained by achieving equality.

English does not use an article with proper names (names of persons, cities, countries, states).

Zero article is used with:

- The names of countries (unless they are really provinces or plural or are limited in time): *Italy, Persia, India, The Netherlands, The United States. The England* of the 15<sup>th</sup> century was very different from *the England* of today.
- The names of mountains (except those in the Bernese Oberland): *Snowdon, Everest, Mont Blanc, the Jungfrau.*
- Meals (unless they are very formal ones):

Come round to *dinner* one day.

Did you go to *the dinner* by the Lord Mayor in honour of General de Gaulle?

- Titles (except *the reverend*, *the venerable* and aristocratic titles with place names):

*General Cook, Lord Byron, Cardinal Wolsey, King William I, the Reverend Charles Smith, the Duke of Beaufort, Earl Attlee, the Marquis of Bath.*

- Streets and Squares (except for a few foreign ones): *Oxford Street, Park Lane,*

*Berkeley Square, the Gran Via, the Champs Elysées.*

- Islands (unless they are in groups): *Ceylon, Cuba, Australia, the Channel Islands, the Hebrides.*

- Next and last if they are from the time of speaking:

I am going there *next* week.

We spent the second week of our holiday at Avignon and *the last* one at Cannes.

- Names of sports and games:

I like to play *basketball*.

- The words *Bed, school, hospital, church, and prison* preceded by a verb of movement and are used to refer to attending the specific activities which are typical for these locations i.e. the natural purpose for which they are intended. Yet, the definite article *the* is used if we are referring to the building instead.

He was caught and has been sent to *prison*.

The teacher is waiting for us in *the university*.

The rule for proper names is also applicable for the names of languages (except in cases they function as adjectives when preceding the word language).

Eg<sub>1</sub>: *French* is a tricky language.

Eg<sub>2</sub>: *The English language* is a difficult language.

Nevertheless, the definite article *the* is added if the word refers to the people of that country (nationality) rather than the language because there are words that are used to signify both the language and nationality.

Eg<sub>1</sub>: *Spanish* is a musical language. *The Spanish* are hospitable people.

If the word denoting the nationality has a singular and plural form, the definite article *the* can be added or dropped. As for “certain nationality words ending in sibilant sounds (such as French, English, and Spanish)” there exists no plural form. In such case, *the* is dropped with the language while it is compulsory before the nationality.

Eg<sub>1</sub>: *Italian* is a musical language. *(The) Italians* are friendly people.

Eg<sub>2</sub>: *Chinese* is a difficult language. *The Chinese* are also hospitable (American University, 2009: 3).

Zero article can be also used with singular, concrete nouns in some cases:

To live from *hand to mouth* (to live in great poverty).

To make *port* (to reach one’s destination on a ship) (Bywater, 1990: 177, 178).

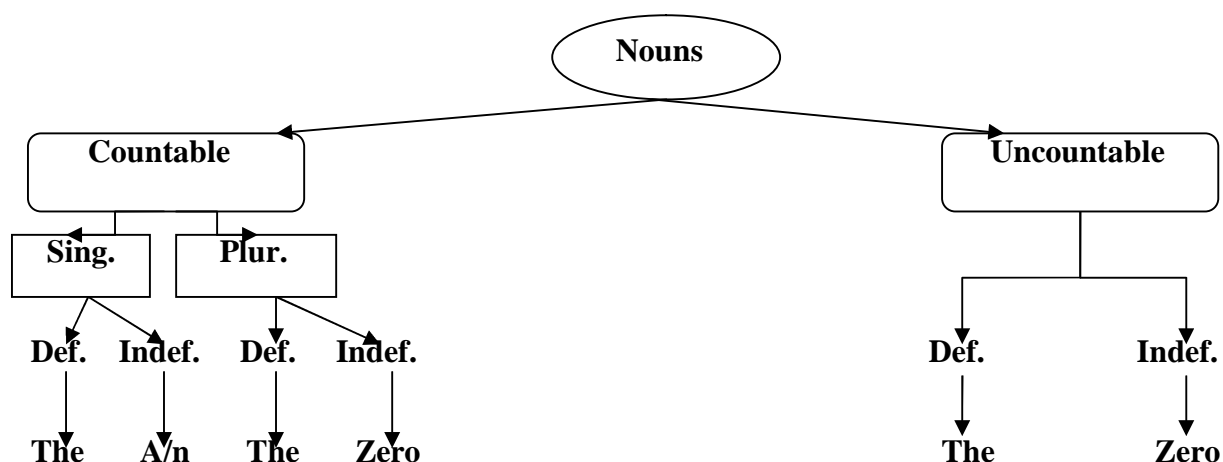
However, “in cases where specificity is indicated, the article may be used even with proper names with which it is not normally used” (American University, 2009: 2).

Eg: The state of Maine has a town called Paris, named after *the Paris* in France.

The following diagram summarizes the above rules:

Figure 1.1

Articles Use with Countable and Uncountable Nouns



1.2.2. Article Use

One of the most difficult points in English grammar is the accurate use of the English articles. For an exhaustive analysis of article use, one needs first to identify the context in which those articles occur. Huebner in his model (1983) classified noun phrase environments where articles appear. In his model, there are two aspects of referentiality: a noun being a specific referent [+/- SR] and known to the hearer [+/- HK]. Article use is determined by four noun phrase contexts that emerge from the two previously mentioned features. Therefore, Huebner's model includes four types of nouns depending on the context: "Nouns classified as Type 1, [- SR, + HK] are generics, and are marked with *a*, *the*, or *zero*. Nouns classified as Type 2, [+ SR, + HK], are referential definites and are marked with *the*. Type 3, [+ SR, - HK], includes [nouns mentioned for the first time and are identifiable only to the speaker], (...). These are marked with *a* or *zero*. Type 4 nouns, classified as [- SR, - HK], are nonreferentials". Type 4 nouns are marked with *a* or *zero* for the nouns that are nonspecific for the speaker and listener. Idiomatic expressions and conventional uses make an added Type 5 (Ekiert, 2004: 2). The five features are detailed in the table below:

Features	Environment	Articles	Examples
Type 1 [- SR, + HK]	Generic nouns	<i>a, the, 0</i>	<i>0 Fruit</i> flourishes in the valley. <i>The Grenomianis</i> an excitable person. <i>A paper clip</i> comes in handy.
Type 2 [+ SR, + HK]	Referential definites previous mention specified by entailment specified by definition unique in all contexts unique in a given context	<i>The</i>	Pass me <i>the pen</i> . <i>The idea</i> of coming to the US was ... I found a book. <i>The book</i> was ... <i>The first to person</i> to walk on <i>the moon</i> ...
Type 3 [+ SR, - HK]	Referential indefinites first mention nouns	<i>a, 0</i>	Chris approached me carrying <i>a dog</i> . I keep sending <i>0 messages</i> to him.
Type 4 [- SR, - HK]	Nonreferential nouns attributive indefinites nonspecific indefinites	<i>a, 0</i>	Alice is <i>an accountant</i> . I guess I should buy <i>a new car</i> . <i>0 Foreigners</i> would come up with a better solution.
Type 5	Idioms Other conventional uses	<i>a, the, 0</i>	<i>All of a sudden</i> , he woke up. <i>In the 1950's</i> , there weren't many cars. His family is now living <i>0 hand to mouth</i> .

(Adapted from Butler, 2002, Huebner, 1985 and Thomas, 1989; in Ekiert, 2004: 3)

**Table 1.1.: Environments for the Appearance of *a, the, and 0***

### 1.2.3. Acquisition of the English Article System by Second/Foreign Language Learners

There has been a lot of research concerning the process of acquiring the English article system. Ekiert in her article “Acquisition of the English Article System by Speakers of Polish

in ESL and EFL Settings” has summarized the major findings by Hakuta (1976); Huebner (1979, 1983); Tarone (1985); Parrish (1987); Tarone and Parrish (1988); Thomas (1989); and Master (1997) in the following table:

Study	Research Questions	Informants	Procedures	Findings
Hakuta (1976)	What is the order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes (including articles) in the interlanguage of an ESL child?	5-year old Japanese girl acquiring English in a natural way.	Longitudinal-60 weeks. Every two weeks spontaneous speech was recorded while the girl was playing with peers.	Articles <i>a</i> and <i>the</i> are acquired as a system. Performance on <i>the</i> was initially better than on <i>a</i> . overuse of <i>a</i> and <i>the</i> involved specific/nonspecific distinctions as well as violations of “ <i>a</i> for singular NP only” rule.
Huebner (1979, 1983)	How does the article system in an adult’s interlanguage develop? What are the differences between different methods for investigating developmental patterns?	23-year old Laotian, a speaker of Hmong acquiring English in a natural setting (at the starting point of the study qualified as a beginner).	Longitudinal-54 weeks. Every three weeks a tape was made of the subject’s narratives. Bickerton’s model was employed. Appearance of morphemes in obligatory contexts as well as nonobligatory contexts was taken into account.	<i>The</i> emerges early, overgeneralization of <i>the</i> results in “ <i>the</i> -flooding.” <i>a</i> appears late in L2 acquisition. Differences in approach to data analysis result in different and sometimes apparently opposing conclusions concerning the nature of interlanguage.
Tarone (1985)	To what extent will ESL learners’ production of grammatical, morphological, and phonological forms (including articles) vary depending on a task?	Twenty 20 ESL learners studying at the University of Minnesota. Ten speakers of Japanese, and ten speakers of Arabic.	Three tasks: - written grammaticality judgment - oral interview with a native speaker of English - oral narration of a sequence of events depicted nonverbally on a video screen.	Utterances of ESL learners show systematic variability in grammar and morphology (including articles) related to each task. To some extent grammatical accuracy was much better in spontaneous oral communication than in a written grammar test.
Parrish (1987)	Can a combination of methods of analysis account for the systematic nature of interlanguage variability? Is there systematicity in the learner’s use of articles?	19-year old Japanese classroom learners. Six years of EFL, four months of ESL (at the starting point of the study qualified as a	Longitudinal-16 weeks. Every ten days a tape was made of two narratives recycling the same topic (one about Japan, and one describing the city and the campus) An analysis based on suppliance of	<i>Zero</i> article was acquired first, followed by <i>the</i> , and finally <i>a</i> . The subject exhibited a gradual rise in the use of <i>the</i> , reaching an 84% accuracy rate in the end, and lesser accuracy with <i>a</i> , reaching a 50% accuracy rate at the end of the study. <i>Zero</i> article was

		beginner).	morphemes in obligatory contexts and Huebner's classification was conducted.	overgeneralized.
Tarone & Parrish (1988)	What kind of NP types, containing different categories of articles, would be elicited by diversified tasks?	Twenty ESL learners studying at the University of Minnesota. Ten speakers of Japanese, and ten speakers of Arabic.	Three tasks: - written grammaticality judgment - oral interview with a native speaker of English - oral narration of a sequence of events depicted nonverbally on a video screen.	Production tasks, such as interviews and essay writing, produced lower error rates than objective tasks, such as cloze test. Lower error rates in production tasks were attributed to learner's avoidance of uncertain uses of article. Accuracy within one type of article would change across different tasks.
Thomas (1989)	What are the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 patterns in article acquisition? Do L2 as well as L1 learners associate the definite article with the [+ SR] contexts, rather than with [+ HK]? If so, do adults overuse <i>the</i> in [+ SR, - HK] (first mention) contexts?	Thirty adult ESL learners aged 24-46 (low, intermediate, and high levels of proficiency). Seven speakers of [+ ART] languages, 23 speakers of [- ART] languages (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Finnish).	Paired story-telling task: one member of a pair composes a story based on the drawings and narrates it to the second subject, who cannot see the pictures.	Unlike L1 learners, ESL students did not exhibit early and accurate control of <i>a</i> in the [- SR, - HK] contexts, and <i>the</i> in [+ SR, + HK] contexts. The source of errors for L2 learners is overgeneralization of the <i>zero</i> article, or failure to use any article. Overproduction of <i>zero</i> was considerably higher for the [- ART] group than for [+ ART] group. L2 learners overgeneralized <i>the</i> in [+ SR, - HK] contexts; however, data did not show signs of <i>the</i> -flooding.
Master (1987, as cited in Master, 1997)	How does the English article system develop in the interlanguage of speakers of [+ ART] and [- ART] language?	Twenty ESL learners, speakers of [- ART] (e.g., Japanese) and [+ ART] (e.g., Spanish) languages enrolled in an ESL program.	Not specified.	Acquisition order of articles differs depending on subjects' L1s. <i>zero</i> dominates – it is the first article to be acquired. <i>The</i> emerges early, flooding all environments. For [- ART] learners, acquisition of <i>a</i> is delayed compared with <i>the</i> .

**Table 1.2.: Summary of Research on Second Language Acquisition of Articles**

Most of the researchers (Master, 1997; Parrish, 1987; Liu and Gleason, 2002; Young, 1996) determined that ESL and EFL learners tend to overuse the *zero* article. Table 1.3. below exposes Ekiert’s findings of overuse of *a*, *the*, and *zero* by twenty EFL and ESL low, intermediate, and high-ability speakers of English:

(N=20)

Means	Low-Ability	Intermediate-Ability	High-Ability
<i>zero</i>	30.1	17.3	17.2
<i>the</i>	2.3	6.3	2.1
<i>a</i>	3.1	3.5	3.0

(Table from Ekiert, 2004: 15).

**Table 1.3.: Mean Proportion Disparity of Unnecessary *zero*, *the* and *a* by Proficiency**

**Level**

The results show that the *zero* article is the most overly used article by the three levels of proficiency. Yet, the low-ability participants marked the highest percentage (30.1%). This overuse of the *zero* article is interpreted to be the result of two reasons. One is that there is no article system in the ESL and EFL learners native language [- ART]. The other reason according to Liu and Gleason (2002) is that *a* and *the* are acquired late and “definiteness was not encoded by *the* at the early stages of acquisition” which remained even at the advanced stages (Young, 1996 in Ekiert, 2004: 4). Ekiert concluded, as for the order of the English article acquisition, that “there is evidence supporting participants’ early and accurate control of *a* in nonreferential contexts (Type 4). (...) [and] the second article acquired by low-ability level participants was *a* in first mention environments (Type 3)”. Referential definites marked with *the* (Type 2) is acquired third which opposes previous findings claiming that *the* is acquired first and *a* later. “Type 1 (generics) and Type 5 (idioms) required the highest levels



of sophistication in article use, as they both called for a skillful placement of *a*, *the*, or *zero*” which seem to be the last to be acquired. Type 1 and Type 5 are most difficult because generics (Type 1) are “generally rare in the input available to learners, and idioms [Type 5] must be learned as a whole, (...) they are acquired as items and not as a system (2004: 16, 17). Another conclusion drawn from Ekiert’s research is after comparing both the ESL and EFL participants’ performance that both showed the same in the 5 settings: what was easy and difficult for the ESL learners was of the same easiness and difficulty for the EFL learners. “This fact alone lends support to the claim that there exists a natural sequence in the acquisition of the English article system” (2004: 18).

The English article system is claimed by some researchers (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982) to be unteachable and are acquired through exposure to the language. Whereas Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) and Master (1994) have an opposite view, believing that there are aspects of the English article system that are teachable and therefore learnable (Ekiert, 2004: 8, 9). In her analysis, Ekiert (2004) has come to conclude that acquiring the English article system by [- ART] native language speakers (specifically Polish learners) depends mainly on the Type of the article itself. As her findings reveal that even low-ability ESL and EFL learners were able to use *a* and *zero* in [- SR, - HK] environment with the highest percentage in comparison to the other four Types. Again, *a* and *zero* were used correctly with the percentage of 76.6% and 80% for high-ability participants in [+ SR, - HK] environment. “In sum, high score on two subcategories, Type 3 and Type 4, demonstrate a relative ease of detection of the [- HK] semantic feature by the Polish participants” (Ekiert, 2004: 11, 12).

#### **1.2.4. Difficulties of Learning Articles**

One of the most complex grammatical aspects to learn is the English article system. It might be problematic even for advanced English language learners who may make errors related to its use. As stated by Master, there are three main elements that make articles challenging. Being function words, articles occur most frequently which makes it difficult to apply the different rules underlying article use in a stretched discourse. Second, articles are unstressed (because they are function words) this is one of the reasons why they are hard to be recognized in spoken discourse, thus figure out their occurrence and proper use. Finally, “the article system stacks multiple functions onto a single morpheme, a considerable burden for the learner, who generally looks for a one-form-one-function correspondence in navigating the language until the advanced stages of acquisition” (Ekiert, 2004: 1).

In addition to the above hindrances, there exists the learning process. Learners tend to focus on content words rather than function words like “[in] the case of articles, the difficulty of meaning is determined by the novelty and abstractness of the concept” (Pienemann, 1998 in Ekiert, 2004: 2). Besides, the mother tongue can be of a great negative influence. Speakers with [- ART] languages find it difficult to grasp the concept of articles. Along with Kaluza (1963), Ekiert has studied the use of the English article by Polish speakers. Kaluza explained that the idea of articles is unusual to Polish speakers who are, therefore, “insensitive to the syntactic aspect of English articles” (Kaluza, 1963 in Ekiert, 2004: 7). Being unable to recognize and understand articles intensifies the hardships in acquiring them. The learner’s acquisition of a second or foreign language can be susceptible to his/her native language especially when he/she does have the tendency to compare between the mother tongue and the second language, borrowing and generalizing rules subconsciously.

## **Conclusion**

Grammar remains an important and central element in language teaching with considerable evidence demonstrating its significance in the learning process. Its role in improving the learners' writing, speaking, listening, and reading skills is undeniable. Teaching the English article system is another area of interest for researchers to improve acquiring such a complex and difficult grammatical aspect.

## **Introduction**

During the last three decades, second language teaching and learning theories and practices have shifted from focusing on grammatical forms to an emphasis on the communicative aspect of language learning (Leung, 2005: 119). One of the innovative methods recently widely recognized is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a reaction to the existing traditional methods (E.g., Audio-Lingual Method). The centre of interest is no longer the teacher but the students whose role is described as interacting, communicating and discovering new structures on their own which results in effective learning. So, CLT is learner-centered requiring more efforts from both the teacher and learner posing challenges for them.

### **2.1. Definition of Communicative Language Teaching**

In the 1970's the purpose of language teaching and learning was shifted from developing "the learners' dialogic competence of the audio lingual and direct methods" towards developing their communicative competence since the aim of language teaching is no longer reading foreign texts and translating them, but communicating successfully. It is therefore no longer necessary to over learn the linguistic structures since the latter should be learnt according to the different situations the learners find themselves in serving a diversity of language functions (Atamna, 2008: 30). At that time, economic and cultural interactions were growing quickly in Europe and people were obliged to encounter new people with different languages and cultural backgrounds different from their own. Language educationists were then faced to the challenge of keeping up with such a situation and find solutions for people to learn new languages quicker. In 1971, a conference was held in Switzerland highlighting the importance of designing a common European syllabus for the teaching and learning of foreign languages focusing on the learners' communicative

competence that is called the Communicative Approach. According to the latter, linguistic competence i.e. “the knowledge about linguistic forms and their meanings” is only one half. The other part being “knowledge of the different functions language is used to fulfill in different social settings”. The Communicative Approach has started based on the theory “Language as Communication, i.e. it is founded on the concept that language is used to achieve communicative and social functions thus serves communication which is given greater importance. Following the same perspective, learners are shown “how to use appropriate functions in appropriate social situations and settings” (Atamna, 2008:31).

One needs first to understand and define the word communication. “Communication is not just an event, something that happens; it is functional, purposeful, and meant to bring about some results and some changes to the hearers’ and speakers’ environment” (Atamna, 2008: 65). The concept of Communicative Language Teaching is based on the above perception considering foreign and second language learners’ needs and interests to achieve meaningful communication and interactions focusing on both linguistic forms and language functions. It is characterized by emphasizing learning to communicate through interaction and introducing authentic discourse.

The central element within CLT and basic concept in developing it is to achieve communicative competence. “With the introduction of this concept, the aim shifted to stress the learners’ ability to interact face to face with people of another culture” (Atamna, 2008: 50). Learners are not only taught the grammatical structures but their application in real life situations as well. The concept of competence was first introduced by Chomsky (1965) in his competence performance dichotomy. But since it only stands for the ideal speaker’s innate knowledge of producing and recognizing grammaticality, it has been severely criticized and the term has been broadened to include the social, cultural as well as communicative aspects of language. According to Hymes (1972), we should teach what a speaker needs to know and

give the socio-linguistic aspect of language much importance. Hymes argues that even if speakers may share the same grammar, phonology ... etc, miscommunication might occur. This might be related to appropriateness that is “when to speak, when not (...) what to talk about, with whom, when, where, in what manner” (Hymes, 1972: 277, In Atamna, 2008: 53). Meaning that “to engage in communication one needs to have both grammatical competence and competence for use” (Atamna, 2008: 54).

## **2.2. Principles of Communicative Language Teaching**

The Communicative Approach to language teaching is grounded on a wide range of theories underlying effective teaching and learning. Those theories that are called methodological principles are drawn from cognitive science, educational psychology, and second language acquisition. In the following section, we will deal with the five principles that underlie the Communicative Approach which are: using tasks, learning by doing, authentic native-like input, meaningful input, and collaboration and cooperative learning.

### **2.2.1. Using Tasks**

With the change of the whole approach (traditional grammar teaching), classroom techniques also alter as well. The trend of emphasizing communication and communicative skills instead of grammar and linguistic structures calls for implementing communicative tasks and activities which will serve in replacing the use of drills, exercises and texts. The theory on which such principle is based comes from “language is communication”. In other words, we develop language in use in order to promote language usage. Since language usage is at the heart of the learning process, teaching strategies and techniques need to go hand in hand with such a purpose. A task, according to the proponents, is a central unit in the lesson plan which directs learners toward a clear goal as they negotiate meaning in an authentic and meaningful context. But first, one needs to go in depth in defining the term.

A task as framed by Long (1985) is:

A piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, making a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination and helping someone across a road. In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between. (89, In Nunan, 2004: 02)

What is in common between the tasks in Long's definition is that they all are real world tasks, i.e. they do not serve to teach linguistic items, but language functions of the things we do every day. That is the reason why, some of them do not necessitate using language in the first place such as painting the fence. These are as labeled by Nunan "target tasks". (2004: 02)

Pedagogical tasks, on the other hand, are defined as:

... an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative ... since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake. (Richards, et.al. 1961: 289, In Nunan, 2004: 02)

The above definition is what actually interests us when it comes to understanding tasks. A task, then, is a classroom technique employed by language teachers when focus is on the functional and communicative aspects of the language rather than its form as they have non-linguistic outcomes.

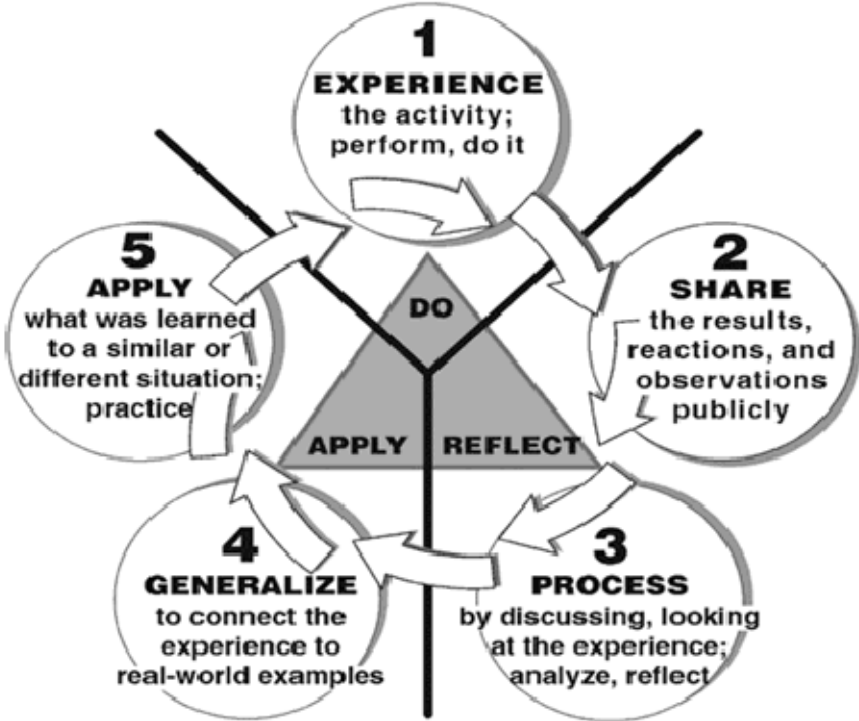
### **2.2.2. Learning by Doing**

Schwendimann (2012) quoted “tell me and I’ll forget [,] show me and I’ll remember [,] involve me and I’ll understand”. Based on the assumption of “knowing will emerge from doing” (Li, 1984, In Guo, 2004), communicative tasks like “lab exercises, inquiry activities, give a demonstration, explanation, generation, model building (physical or digital), drawing, teaching others, or role playing” (Schwendimann, 2012) provide teachers with a wide range of situations in which learners will perform in English: “comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language” (Nunan, 2004: 04). The notion of learning by doing implies that as learners will be engaged in doing a task for functional purposes, learning how to communicate fluently takes place as well as developing their language proficiency.

Many scholars, linguists, and researchers (e.g., see Long and Doughty, 2003) throughout history have encouraged and advocated the notion of learning by doing because they considered it an essential principle in language teaching and learning (Brandl, 2008: 12). Aristotle, for instance, stated that “we must learn by doing the thing because if you think you know, you have no certainty until you have tried” (Bouquety, 2014). Brandl explained that the whole concept is founded on “the theory that a hands-on approach positively enhances a learner’s cognitive engagement”. According to Doughty and Long (2003), tasks and activities that connect learners with real-world events facilitate assimilating new knowledge and retrieving it (58, In Brandl, 2008: 12).



The principle of “learning by doing” is highly supported by Schank, Berman and Mcpherson (1999). They thought it more logical to teach students how to perform tasks. They added that “there is only one effective way to teach someone how to do anything, and that is to let them do it” (164). Schank et. al. believed that promoting “the development of skills and learning factual information in the context of how it will be used” is the main aim of this principle (Bouquety, 2014). So as to summarize the notion of learning by doing, Bouquety (2014) proposed the following Figure:



**Figure 2.1.: Learning by Doing**

The above figure suggests that “this approach takes the learner’s immediate personal experience as the point of departure for the learning experience” by performing or doing an activity. “Intellectual growth occurs when learners engage in and reflect on sequences of tasks” (Nunan, 2004: 12). The results, reactions, and observations are shared and processed. The learners discuss, analyze, reflect and look at the experience in order to generalize and

connect it to real-world examples. Finally, learning takes place when they apply what they have learned to similar or different situations, i.e. practice.

This principle, if incorporated in the teaching practice, requires students to be actively engaged in the learning process. In other words, students, as suggested by Swain (1985, 1995) “need to actively produce language” (Brandl, 2008: 12). This implies that new rules and linguistic aspects are acquired through trying them out and adapting them to different contexts. Omaggio-Hadley (2001), believed that after being introduced to the productive skills, “learners should be encouraged to express their own meaning as early as possible” (Brandl, 2008: 12).

### **2.2.3. Authentic Native-like Input**

Communicative Language Teaching advocates implementing authentic materials in the syllabus. The key word here is authentic which needs to be defined in order to understand the principle underlying it. Authenticity, as defined by Gilmore (2007:98) is “the language produced by a real speaker/writer for a real audience, conveying a real message” (In Pinsonneault, 2008: 31). Taylor (1994) considers authenticity related to materials whose purposes are not for teaching the language (2, In Pinsonneault, 2008: 32). Therefore, authentic input includes incorporating authentic materials in order to present the target culture using the target language, and whose aim is not for language teaching purposes (32).

The principle of authenticity is based on Krashen’s (1982) “Affective Filter Hypothesis”. This theory “links authentic input as a useful tool in the second language classroom because this type of input can lower the ‘Affective Filter’ of the second language learner” (Pinsonneault, 2008: iv). According to Pinsonneault, “authentic input is ‘authentic’ because the input is given entirely in the target language”. Authentic materials such as songs, games, stories, and role-plays can provide such authentic input (7). Richards (2001 as cited in

Brandl, 2008: 13) defined authentic materials as “texts, photographs, video selections, and other teaching resources that were not specially prepared for pedagogical purposes”. Authentic audiovisual materials include, as illustrated by Brandl, “announcements, conversations and discussions taken as extracts or as a whole from radio and television public broadcasting, real-life telephone conversations, messages left on answering machines, or voice mail” (13).

The integration of authentic materials is highly recommended because of the fact that they present genuine language which mirrors real-world language use (Richards, 2001, In Brandl, 2008: 13). Pinsonneault (2008) suggests that authentic materials allow students to “extract the information he or she acquires from the authentic input and apply that information to new concepts” (8). They are assumed to relate the classroom tasks to the students’ actual and real-life needs. Hwang (2005) stated that implementing authentic materials that correspond to learners’ levels and interests enhances their linguistic competence as well as their understanding of the target language (2). Authentic materials, then, besides exciting and motivating second language learners to learn, they provide lessons that are “comprehensible for the age level of the L2 learner” (Pinsonneault, 2008: 8). In addition to that, implementing authentic materials in the classroom satisfies both the teachers’ and students’ teaching and learning styles. To say it differently, they promote “a more creative approach to teaching”. Learning strategies, which refer to the skills that are fundamental in supporting the learning process, are exploited so as to deal with those authentic materials. This suggests that teachers need “to train their students in using [those] learning strategies early on”. Authentic materials are also effective in language teaching and learning in that they promote natural language acquisition. According to Hwang (2005: 2), “current popular materials, such as clips from mass media and best-selling essays/short stories have been found

most appealing because of their realistic, ready-to-use language and relevance to learners' mindsets and experiences”.

Furthermore, research has proved the role authentic materials play in learning the target language, for example, Shrum and Glisa (1994: 116) discussed their positive effect on listeners and readers. Another example is Pinsonneault's (2008) findings in investigating the efficacy of authentic input in developing students' acquisition of lexical chunks, vocabulary, and some aspects of the lexicon. The results showed that “the participants did learn lexical chunks in the target language after being introduced to the L2 via the authentic materials” (v).

Hwang used authentic materials in her classes instead of EFL textbooks. The latter proved to be fruitless with Taiwanese learners. Besides, comparative studies have revealed that the linguistic input (structures and forms) in the textbooks is different than the one in authentic language (Mindt, 1992 and Kennedy, 1998 In Hwagen, 2005: 6). Such difference confirms that there is “a significant mismatch between normal use of English and what is taught to second language learners” (Kennedy, 1998: 284, In Hwagen, 2005: 7). Nevertheless, the integration of authentic materials resulted in generating positive feedback from the students who appreciated “being treated as mature, intellectual individuals”. The latter were encouraged to use the vocabulary and expressions they had grasped from authentic materials in producing the language (4). Hwang's students, after a few years of exposure, have become able to use a varied and sophisticated vocabulary, “communicate in English on a greater variety of topics”, as well as breaking their habit of producing Chinese English.

Authenticity, however, is misunderstood. Piske and Young-Scholten argue that focus is more on “good”, “rich”, and “varied” input, instead of emphasizing the “amount and “nature of the input to which learners are exposed (...) within the classroom” (2009: 16). Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which suggests that language is acquired through comprehensible input,

goes in line with this. Krashen believed that ‘Comprehensible input’ refers to language that suits second language learners’ abilities. This does not imply that authentic input is comprehensible input; it all depends on the learners’ level of proficiency and needs. Authentic materials might bring about several challenges for lower-level classrooms. Brandl argues that they “often contain difficult language”. The complex structures, as cited by Martinez (2002, In Pinsonneault, 2008: 33), might lead beginner learners to struggle in interpreting the texts. The materials that are presumed by the teacher cause difficulty for the learners need to be adapted to suit their level. This means that teachers are required to design classroom tasks that tackle real-world language through suitable (i.e. correlate with the learners’ proficiency level) and adapted authentic materials (Brandl, 2008: 13) appropriate to their needs, interests and proficiency level.

#### **2.2.4. Meaningful Input**

Learning can be said to take place when the input provided is meaningful. Meaningfulness is closely related to presenting new information that is relevant to the learners’ existing knowledge (Ausube, 1968: In Bandl, 2008: 16). According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), “language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process”. This principle requires teachers to select classroom activities that “engage the learner in meaningful and authentic language use (rather than merely mechanical practice of language patterns)” (161). Focus on meaning rather than form, learners’ ability development, and using language for communication have always been supported by Communicative Language Teaching advocates, meaning that the principle of meaningfulness of the input is not new, it “has emerged as (...) a counter-reaction to audiolingual teaching” which laid emphasis on drilling and marginalized “the processing of language so the content made sense or was meaningful to learner”. Meaningful input needs to be useful for the learners, as suggested by

Lee and VanPatten (1995: 38), it “must contain some message to which the learner is supposed to attend”.

In addition to being useful, input is said to be meaningful when it is comprehensible. “This ‘comprehensible input’ must be at a level slightly ahead of that possessed by the learner. If it is at the same level it is not useful in aiding acquisition. Krashen called this input ‘i+1’” (1985, In Burden, 2006: 194). This implies that learners at “level i” need to be exposed to comprehensible input that is at “level i+1”. Krashen (1988) emphasized the role of input as “the most important element of any language teaching program” (55). Comprehensible input is, according to Lee and VanPatten (1995), the ability of understanding most of the speaker’s or writer’s speech as well as connecting sense to what they receive as speech (38, In Brandl, 2008: 16). Krashen and Terrell believed that “with more comprehension, there will be more acquisition” (1995: 55). Krashen suggested that languages are acquired by means of understanding messages through comprehensible input (Abukhattala, 2013: 130) emphasizing “what is being said rather than (...) [how it is said] the form of the message” (Krashen and Terrell, 1995: 55). Wilson (2016) cited a quote that summarizes the above definitions:

What theory implies, quite simply, is that language acquisition, first or second, occurs when comprehension of real messages occurs, (...). The best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. (...) improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981: 6-7).

The importance of meaningful input is further discussed by Lee and VanPatten (1995: 38) in the following quote as cited in Brandl (2008: 16):

Acquisition consists in large part of the building up of form-meaning connections in the learner's head. For example, the learner of French hears the word chien in various contexts and eventually attaches it to a particular meaning: a four-legged canine. As another example, a learner of Italian might hear -ato in various contexts and eventually attach it to a particular meaning: a past-time reference. Features of language, be they grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, or something else, can only make their way into the learner's mental representation of the language system if they have been linked to some kind of real-world meaning. If the input is incomprehensible or if it is not meaning-bearing, then these form-meaning connections just don't happen.

In order to achieve meaningfulness and comprehension of the input, "a wide range of authentic and linguistically rich" materials (which will enable learners to extensively exploit the target language) should be implemented in the classroom. However, this might be pedagogically challenging. "These challenges can be met by means of numerous input strategies [that are referred to by] Doughty and Long (2003) as elaborating input (...). [They] include

- confirmation checks (e.g., "You mean . . . ; What you are saying is . . .")
- comprehension checks, (e.g., "Is this correct? What you are saying is . . .")
- the teacher's accessibility to students' questions
- providing nonlinguistic input through body language (e.g., modeling, gestures, visuals)
- modified language use through

- a. Repetition
- b. slower speech rate
- c. enhanced enunciation
- d. simplifying language (e.g., high-frequency vocabulary, less slang, fewer idioms, shorter sentences)
- e. use of cognates
- f. limited use of English (Brandl, 2008: 17).

The above strategies have been proved effective by numerous researchers. Hatch (1983), for instance, suggested that the comprehension process is facilitated by making such speech modifications. The latter are believed to “make language acoustically more salient and provide a greater chance for the learners to perceive language structures and process form-meaning connections”. Learners, as stated by Lee and VanPatten (1995), will be able to discern the different linguistic forms and structures thanks to the simplified and modified input. Brandl and Bauer’ (2002) study is another research example which proves the efficacy of input strategies. “They report that students in particular find confirmation checks, use of body language, visual representations, repetitions, slower speech rate, and occasional use of English helpful with their comprehension of the input” (Brandl: 2008: 17).

Moreover, the way input is presented, i.e. the tasks designed which consider “task choice and difficulty, learner processing skills, and scaffolding strategies”, can help in improving “elaborating input” (Brandl: 2008: 17). All in all, “focus on comprehension and meaningful communication as well as the provision of the right kinds of comprehensible input provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for successful classroom second and foreign language acquisition” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:190).

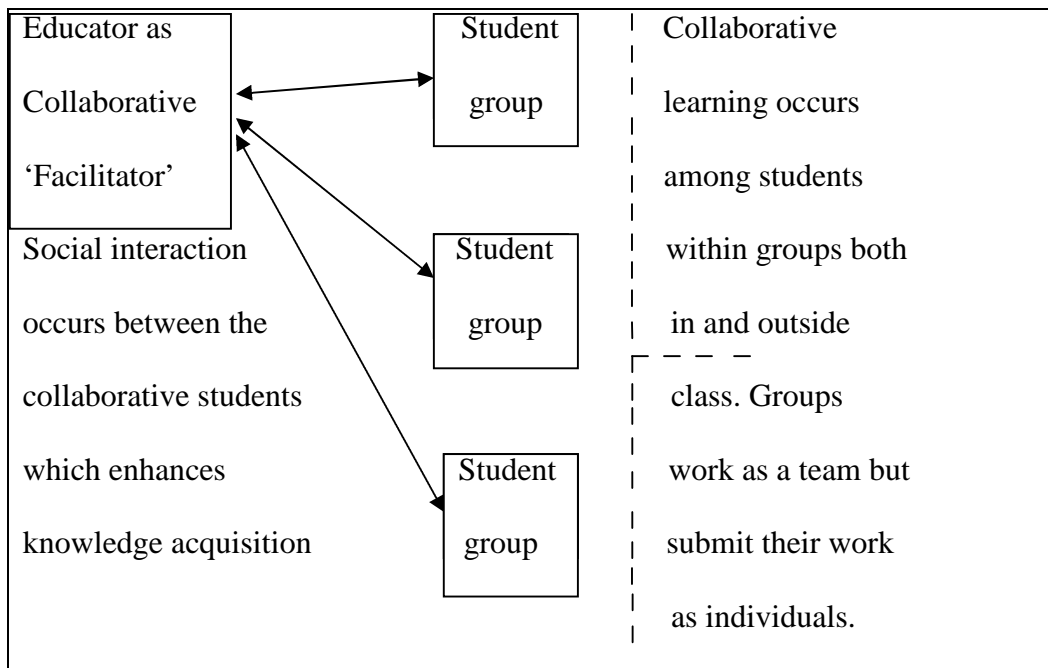
### **2.2.5. Collaboration and Cooperative Learning**



Learning is facilitated when there is collaboration in the classroom. This principle was first promoted by the American educator John Dewey who suggested “the idea of building cooperation in learning into regular classrooms on a regular and systematic basis (Rodgers: 1988, In Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 192). Richards and Rodgers (2001: 192) defined Cooperative Learning as “an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom”. Olsen and Kagan (1992) provided another extensive definition of cooperative learning and that is:

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others (8, In Richards, and Rodgers, 2001: 192).

“The [act of] grouping and pairing of learners for the purpose of achieving a learning goal,” (Srinivas, 2016) is called collaborative learning. Students work together in small groups or pairs in order to complete tasks that need to be worked on cooperatively or collaboratively, and which require students to achieve “the goal through communicative use of the target language” (Brandl, 2008: 18). The teacher-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions are the “key” to learning. In other words, learners need to “interact and negotiate the type of input they receive” with their teacher and among each other. As to avoid “conversational trouble”, learners need to “make changes in their language as they interact or ‘negotiate meaning’ with each other” (Brandl, 2008: 18). The following figure summarizes the above definitions.



(Taken from Roberts, 2004: 206)

**Figure 2.2.: Collaborative Learning**

Cooperative learning has many advantages in teaching and learning languages. First, it helps both advanced and low-ability learners to raise their achievement in language learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 192) because they are all “responsible for one another’s learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one learner helps other students to be successful” (Srinivas, 2016). Low-ability students tend to learn more structures and new vocabulary when they interact with more advanced learners; learning can be subconscious in this situation. As for the advanced learners, they can make use of their teacher-to-learner interaction, or even of the learner-to-learner interaction.

Cooperative learning also creates a relaxed learning environment in which the teacher can build positive relationships with and among the students. In addition to that, interacting with different people who have different backgrounds and ways of thinking increases the students’ “experiences they need for healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 192). Besides, cooperative learning replaces

competitiveness in the classroom “with a team-based, high-performance organizational structure” (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec 1994: 2, In Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 192) in which the learners are supposed to co-work in order to perform tasks. Another point is that students’ critical thinking is promoted when they work collaboratively and exchange ideas because, as stated by Srinivas (2016), “cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than learners who work quietly as individuals”. Therefore, engaging in discussions, taking responsibility for one’s own learning, and eventually, becoming critical thinkers, are the results of collaborative learning.

Cooperative learning, as stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001: 193), is an approach to learning that aims at:

- [Providing] opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities.
- [Providing] teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings (e.g., content-based, foreign language classrooms; mainstreaming).
- [Focusing] attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.
- [Providing] opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies.
- [Enhancing] learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate.

Long’s “Interaction Hypothesis” (1983), which suggests that interactions are the medium to promote language acquisition, has become widely known and supported by a large number of researchers. “Tasks that require communicative exchange of information and the

production of the target language features during learner-to-learner interaction” have been proved to cause positive effect on language acquisition as a result of a recent study investigating the effect of task-based interaction on language acquisition. Brandl (2008) highlighted the importance of teacher-to-learner interaction that he considers equally important to the learner-to-learner interaction which fosters the development of “a new language” (18). Learners who are assisted by their teachers tend to develop their potentials to go beyond their actual level. When students become able to perform language tasks without their teachers’ aid, “the focus shifts from teacher-led to student-centered language application” (Brandl, 2008: 19).

“Concept to Classroom” website (2004) provides three elements that are necessary for cooperative learning that are students’ feeling safe, but challenged, grouping them into small groups, and finally, tasks “must be clearly defined”. Long-Crowell (2016) defined five elements that guarantee the success of cooperative learning. They are:

- Face-to-face interaction which refers to direct interaction.
- Positive interdependence which refers to group members’ dependence on each other to succeed.
- Individual accountability which refers to students’ responsibility for their individual work.
- Collaborative skills which refers to the ability to co-work.
- Group processing “which refers to the fact that the group needs to monitor itself to ensure that [the whole group] is working together effectively”.

### **2.3. Types of Communicative Language Teaching Approaches**

The Communicative approach has laid the foundation for other methodologies and extensions to achieve its same goals of developing the learners' communicative competence. Those methods are divided based on their goals into two types: Process-Based and Product-Based Instructions.

### **2.3.1. Process-based Approaches**

Richards (2006) refers to the methodologies extending from Communicative Language Teaching as “process-based methodologies”. They share as a common starting point a focus on creating classroom processes, including interaction (that is meaningful and purposeful), collaborative creation and negotiation of meaning (that results in understanding), learning through corrective feedback, incorporating new linguistic knowledge into the existent communicative competence, and “trying out and experimenting with different ways of saying things”. These processes are believed to best facilitate language learning, and they include content-based instruction (CBI) and task-based instruction (TBI)” (27).

#### **2.3.1.1. Content-based Instruction**

The field of language teaching and learning in the early 1980's has witnessed a growth in integrating language and content instruction. Instructional changes are seen in the changes occurring in programs, models, and even approaches “where language and content are integrated” (Met, 1999: 1) where language functions as both: an object of study and a means for learning a subject matter (Duenas, 2004: 74). It is assumed that the best way to create classroom processes “is by using content as the driving force of classroom activities and to link all the different dimensions of communicative competence, including grammatical competence, to content” (Richards, 2006: 27). This is referred to as Content-based instruction.

Content-based instruction is defined by Krahnke (1987, 65, In Richards, 2006: 27) as “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teaching the language itself separately from the content being taught”. Similarly, Crandall and Tucker (1990: 187, In Met, 1999: 1) define it as “an approach to language instruction that integrates the presentation of topics or tasks from subject matter classes (e.g., math, social studies) within the context of teaching a second or foreign language”. Because “content” is the key word to understanding this approach, there has been a variety of attempts to define it. According to Richards (2006: 28), it “refers to the information or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it. (...) any language lesson involves content, whether it be a grammar lesson, a reading lesson, or any other kind of lesson”. Crandall and Tucker see it as an “academic subject matter”. However, Genesee (1994: 3) pointed out that it is not necessary for content to be academic; it is “any topic, theme or non-language issue of interest or importance to the learners”. Content is believed by Chaput (1993: 150) to contribute in understanding the target language. Content is a substance that engages students and challenges them, extending “beyond the target language or target culture” (Met, 1999: 150, In Met, 1999: 1).

Traditional approaches to language teaching do not consider content as the first priority in lesson planning while it is “the vehicle which holds the lesson or the exercise together”. Richards exemplified it with a lesson planned around the present perfect in which the decision of the content to be used is taken later. In content-based instruction, it is the way around. “Decisions about content are made first, and other kinds of decisions concerning grammar, skills, functions, etc., are made later” (2006: 27). Met’s figure (1999: 2) summarizes content-driven and language-driven syllabuses.

Content-Driven	Language-Driven
Content is taught in L2.	Content is used to learn L2.
Content learning is priority.	Content learning is incidental.
Language learning is secondary.	Language learning is priority.
Content objectives determined by course goals or curriculum.	Language objectives determined by L2 course goals or curriculum.
Teachers must select language objectives.	Students evaluated on content to be integrated.
Students evaluated on content mastery.	Students evaluated on language skills/proficiency.

**Figure 2.3.: Content-based Language Teaching: A Continuum of Content and Language Integration**

What is deduced from the above Figure is that content-based instruction makes use of the target language in order to teach content which is of primary importance and priority. This implies that learning the target language is not the main focus in Content-based instruction. The content to be taught is selected and sequenced depending on the course goals or the curriculum. In addition to that, students' mastery of content is what is actually evaluated and not language proficiency.

Content-based instruction can be use in a variety of ways. Richards (2006: 28) noted that it is used as the framework for a unit of work, meaning that it does not provide the framework for the whole curriculum, but can suit any type of curriculum. It can also be employed as the guiding principle for an entire course, in that the whole course is "organized around content". Those courses can be used to prepare students for mainstreaming which is another use of Content-based instruction. Moreover, Content-based instruction is exploited as the rationale for the use of English as a medium for teaching some school subjects in an EFL

setting where English is used to teach some school subjects. Finally, Content-based instruction can underlie the creation of commercial EFL/ESL materials series like “Cambridge English for Schools (...) in which content from across the curriculum provides the framework for the course” (30).

Advocates of Content-based instruction see language as a tool that facilitates learning new information instead of regarding it as the final outcome. In this way, language might be better and more successfully acquired. Content-based instruction is assumed to mirror whatever needs students have in learning a second language. Another assumption on which Content-based instruction is built is that it links and develops fourfold language skills through rational contexts (Richards, 2006: 28). Content-based instruction is further supported by “depth-of-processing” research (Anderson, 1990; Barsalou, 1992; Stilling et al., 1987) which suggests that integrating language and content instruction in the teaching curriculum promotes better learning (Grabe and Stoller, 1997: 11, In Duenas, 2004: 79). In addition, studies in “discourse comprehension processes” hold the same position towards Content-based instruction. It is viewed as a useful approach in presenting coherent contents which are assumed to facilitate recalling information, and hence, promote improved learning (Singer, 1990, In Duenas, 2004: 79). Moreover Content-based instruction is believed by “motivation and interest” research to be motivational for learners for the reason that it tackles both their academic needs and interests. Therefore, “students with high levels of motivation make more sophisticated elaborations with learning materials, increase connections among content information, and are able to recall information more easily and better” (Alexander et al, 1994; Tobias, 1994; Krapp et al., 1992, In Duenas, 2004: 79). Grabe and Stoller (1997: 19-20, In Duenas, 2004: 79-80) summarized the above advantages and suggested the following rationales:



- 1- In content-based classrooms, students are exposed to a considerable amount of language while learning content. This incidental language should be comprehensible, linked to their immediate prior learning and relevant to their needs. (...) In content-based classrooms, teachers and students explore interesting content while students are engaged in appropriate language-dependent activities (...). The resultant language learning activities [,] therefore, are not artificial or meaningless exercises.
- 2- CBI supports contextualized learning; students are taught useful language that is embedded within relevant discourse contexts rather than as isolated language fragments. (...) Thus, CBI allows for explicit language instruction, integrated with content instruction, in a relevant and purposeful context.
- 3- (...) The use of coherently developed content sources allows students to call on their own prior [knowledge] to learn additional language and content material.
- 4- (...) [In] content-based classrooms, students are exposed to complex information and are involved in demanding activities which can lead to intrinsic motivation.
- 5- CBI (...) lends [varying themes] to instruction and practice, as theme units [which] require and recycle important strategies across varying content and learning tasks.
- 6- CBI allows greater flexibility (...) to be built into the [curriculum] and activity sequences.
- 7- CBI lends itself to student-centered classroom activities.

Focus on content, however, has raised many doubts concerning its adequacy as well as efficacy in developing language skills. Students who are taught school subjects using English as the medium tend to lean towards learning content at the expense of linguistic accuracy (Richards, 2006: 30). According to the British Council's posted article "Content-based Instruction", learners might feel confused as they may think they are not developing their language skills. Besides, teachers who use content as the basis for their teaching may face several challenges because they have been trained "either as a content specialist or a language specialist" and only few have been trained in both (Met, 1999: 17). Richards agreed that teachers need to be knowledgeable enough "to teach specialized content areas such as marketing, medicine, ecology, etc., and the inevitable "dumbing down" of content in such cases". A final issue is related to assessment in the Content-based instruction, whether it is based on the knowledge of content, using the language, or both (2006: 30). A further burden of Content-based instruction, as proposed by the British Council, which is placed on teachers, is the unavailability and insufficiency of materials that can address lower level learners' understanding.

#### **2.3.1.2. Task-based Instruction**

When long-term lesson plans employ tasks as their central unit, it is referred to as Task-based instruction (Brandl, 2008: 7). Task-based instruction is the result of focusing on classroom processes. Modern theories of language learning suggest that "language use is the driving force for language development" which is achieved through using communicative tasks (Brandl, 2008: 7). According to Richards, Task-based instruction is based on the assumption that "language learning will result from creating the right kinds of interactional processes in the classroom, and the best way to create these is to use specially designed instructional tasks". Advocates of Task-based learning believe that both the linguistic and communicative competences can be developed by means of "engaging learners in interactive

tasks” (2006: 30) because “the best way to learn and teach a language is through social interactions” (Norris et al., 1998: 31, In Brandl, 2008: 7-8). Communicative tasks are strongly argued to be implemented in the syllabus as well as the classroom because, as it is put forward by Brandl (2008: 8), “it is not the text one reads or the grammar one studies” that promote learning, communicative tasks are what actually directs students’ learning towards a meaningful use of grammar. Nunan (2004: 1) summarized the pedagogical principles that are reinforced by the Task-based approach as follows:

- A needs-based approach to content selection.
- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
- An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

Since tasks are considered a basic element in Task-based instruction, they need to be identified for a better understanding of the approach. Nunan (1989) defines a task as “any classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (10, In Brandl, 2008: 8). Skehan (1998) identified a task as an activity that is characterized by focusing on meaning, solving communication problems, being related to real-world situations, emphasizing the completion of the task, and finally, assessing tasks in relation to the outcome (95, In Seyyedi and Ismail, 2012: 243-244). A task, according to Richards (2006: 31), is characterized by being carried out based on the learners’ “existing

language resources”. Even though learners may acquire the language when they perform tasks, their outcome is not only “linked to learning language”. Besides, tasks focus on meaning, and promote the “use of communication strategies and interactional skills” pair or group work.

Based on the definition of tasks presented by Richards, a wide range of the activities implemented in Communicative Language Teaching classes are tasks. Task-based teaching distinguishes two types of tasks that are pedagogical and real-world tasks. The former ones, as outlined by Richards (2006: 31), employ specific interactional strategies as well as the use of fourfold skills, grammar and vocabulary. Such type of tasks makes use of useful input to promote language learning, acting “as a bridge between the classroom and the real world” (Brandl, 2008: 9). As for real-world tasks, they are defined as “tasks that reflect real-world uses of language and which might be considered a rehearsal for real-world tasks” (Richards, 2006: 31). They stress the skills needed for real world interactions and practices with setting the goal of achieving an end product (Brandl, 2008: 9).

There are six other types of tasks that are identified by Willis (1996, In Richards, 2006: 31-32):

1. Listing tasks: For example, students might have to make up a list of things they would pack if they were going on a beach vacation.
2. Sorting and ordering: Students work in pairs and make up a list of the most important characteristics of an ideal vacation.
3. Comparing: Students compare ads for two different supermarkets.
4. Problem-solving: Students read a letter to an advice columnist and suggest a solution to the writer’s problems.

5. Sharing personal experience: Students discuss their reactions to an ethical or moral dilemma.
6. Creative tasks: Students prepare plans for redecorating a house.

Research in second language acquisition has observed that meaningful interaction in the target language is what actually promotes the process of learning languages and not “controlled practice”. It is argued that learners’ fluency and grammatical competence are not improved through the “P-P-P teaching model” (Presentation, Practice, Production). In the “Practice” step, “students practice using the new structure in a controlled context, through drills, or substitution exercises”. “Drills”, “cloze activities”, “controlled writing activities” and other traditional classroom techniques do not conform to the above definition of tasks and are, therefore, excluded from Task-based teaching classrooms. This is why the P-P-P-teaching model is rejected in the Task-based teaching. The focus in Task-based instruction is on using tasks which “create interaction”, build “language awareness” and develop language. (Richards, 2006: 32)

Task-based instruction can be implemented and used “as the sole framework for course planning and delivery” to replace grammar-based curriculum, “as one component of a course” which might be referred to as a “project”, or “as a technique (...) from time to time (...) from [the teachers’] teaching repertoire” (Richards, 2006: 35). Willis (1996) suggested a methodology for implementing tasks and proposed the following pedagogic sequence:

- Pre-task
- introduction to the topic and task,
- exposure to real language (tape recordings of native speakers completing the same task),
- use of texts and activities upon those texts.

- Task Cycle
- task,
- planning,
- drafting and rehearsal
- teacher assistance with language
- report.
- Language Focus
- analysis,
- practice (Skehan, 2003: 10).

Task-based instruction has been criticized for many reasons. First, as Richards points out, “there is little evidence that it works any more effectively than the P-P-P approach it seeks to replace”. In addition to that, like Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based instruction seeks to improve fluency rather than accuracy. Finally, due to the fact that Task-based instruction is concerned with developing communication and communicative competence, it lays less interest to learning outcomes and “specific language needs [that] have to be addressed (2006: 35). Those needs (such as engaging in psycholinguistic and metalinguistic processes that include repeating, noticing forms, hypothesizing and conceptualizing rules), as argued by Brandl (2008: 9), “often necessitate a different approach to teaching”. Skehan (2003) noted that opponents of Task-based instruction (for example, Sheen, 1994) believed that tasks “were still input-dominated, and deriving their credentials from Krashen’s (1985) work”, as well as the fact that learners “do not particularly learn errors from one another during tasks” (11). Furthermore, Seedhouse (1997, 1999) argued that “negotiation of meaning is inadequate as an account of the complexity of classroom interactional patterns” (Skehan, 2003: 11).

To conclude, Task-based instruction focuses on performance, i.e. the successful performance of tasks. Brandl (2008) highlighted the fact that the integration of tasks as a basic element in classroom practices requires careful considerations of the appropriate tasks to be employed (their level of difficulty and the right sequencing). He added that the linguistic structures that can be applied by learners need to be dealt with through tasks that are “carefully” adapted according to the complexity of the target language structures. He concluded emphasizing the fact that “a task-based approach (...) requires careful pedagogical consideration, especially in terms of task implementation. This includes knowledge when and how to integrate pedagogical tasks as lead-up and follow-up to a real-life task” (11-12).

### **2.3.2. Product-based Approaches**

The Product-based approaches generated from Communicative Language Teaching highlight the “outcomes or products of learning as a starting point in course design”. They are not interested in classroom processes. “They start by identifying the kinds of uses of language the learner is expected to be able to master at the end of a given period of instruction”. The teaching goals are, as a result, attained through the teaching strategies selected (Richards, 2006: 36). They include Text-based instruction and Competency-based instruction.

#### **2.3.2.1. Text-based Instruction**

Text-based instruction or genre-based approach is concerned with developing students’ communicative competence through acquiring different kinds of texts. But, what is a text in this context? Richards (2006: 36) defines it as “structured sequences of language that are used in specific contexts in specific ways”. A text is characterised by being “unified as a whole” and including “a beginning, middle, and end”, conforming to organizational and content standards, as well as exploiting the right syntax and lexis. Thornbury stated that “language always happens as text and not isolated sentences” (2005: 8, In Tingting, 2011: 7). Johns and

Davies (1983) described a text as a “linguistic object”, a “vehicle for information”, and a “stimulus for production” (1, In Tingting, 2011: 7). Finally, Halliday (1989: 10) simply defined a text as “language that is functional” which he described as “language that is doing some job in some context, as opposed to isolated words or sentences (...). So, any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation” is referred to as a text.

Text-based instruction, according to Haliday and Hasan, is the act of “producing and understanding text in some content of situation” (1985: 14, In Mickan, 2011: 15). Tingting (2011: 5) believed that the Text-based approach is closely linked to the Reading Method. It is concerned with presenting content to be taught through texts. In Tingting’s words, “the text-based approach is to learn words from certain texts and use them into other contexts”. Communicative competence, according to Richards, (2006: 36), emerges from the ability to employ different types of texts (spoken and written) in the appropriate context and for a specific use.

Feez and Joyce (1998) noted that Text-based instruction involves teaching the grammatical rules and structures found in texts deductively with associating them (spoken and written texts) “to the cultural context of their use”. In addition to that, it emphasizes developing fourfold language skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking) “in relation to whole texts” alongside directing learners towards practising in the course of developing “language skills for meaningful communication” (In Richards, 2006: 36). Mickan (2011: 18) described the teaching process as “characterized by natural language use”. This implies that learners need to acquire text types that are frequently used in specific contexts which could be about “studying in an English-medium university, studying in an English-medium primary or secondary school, working in a restaurant, office, or store, socializing with neighbors in a housing complex” (Richards, 2006: 37).



According to this approach, curriculum is designed and lessons are planned around different kinds of texts with teachers choosing “texts relevant to learners’ purposes”, and fulfilling the program’s purposes (Mickan, 2011: 18). Those texts are selected based on the analysis of language as well as through needs analysis. Text-based instruction is a “mixed syllabus”, as it is referred to by Richards (2006: 37), because it denotes other elements in texts which are mainly “grammar, vocabulary, topics, and functions”. In this way, Text-based instruction is said to integrate “reading, writing, and oral communication”, and teach grammar by means of learning texts rather than in isolation. Here is an example of text types incorporated in the language teaching process in Australia taken from Richards (2006: 37):

Exchanges - Simple exchanges relating to information and goods and services

- Complex or problematic exchanges

- Casual conversation

Forms - Simple formatted texts

- Complex formatted texts

Procedures - Instructions

- Procedures

- Protocols

Information texts - Descriptions

- Explanations

- Reports

- Directives

- Texts which combine one or more of these text types

- Story texts
  - Recounts
  - Narratives
- Persuasive texts
  - Opinion texts
  - Expositions
  - Discussions

Another example provided by Richards (2006: 38) is the case of Singapore's primary and secondary school's syllabus. The latter is framed based on Text-based instruction. The text types that are employed in the curriculum represent what children need as communicative competencies so as to communicate in English, and they include:

- Procedures e.g., procedures used in carrying out a task
- Explanations e.g., explaining how and why things happen
- Expositions e.g., reviews, arguments, debates
- Factual recounts e.g., magazine articles
- Personal recounts e.g., anecdotes, diary/journal entries,  
biographies, autobiographies
- Information reports e.g., fact sheets
- Narratives e.g., stories, fables
- Conversations and short  
functional texts e.g., dialogs, formal/informal letters,  
postcards, e-mail, notices

Text-based instruction is seen by its proponents useful in promoting understanding and negotiating meanings. It provides learners with authentic, purposeful, and authentic contexts (Mickan, 2011: 18). In addition to that, Reading and vocabulary research have positive attitudes towards implementing reading in teaching vocabulary. Contexts are believed to be “highly useful in the aspect of providing useful meaning clues for word learning” (Beck et al., 1983; Konopak, 1988; Schatz & Baldwin, 1986, In Tingting, 2011: 6). These contexts are provided by the Text-based Approach whose benefits have been clearly observed in the mastery of new vocabulary as it focuses on meaning. Tingting (2011) conducted a research investigating the effectiveness of the Text-based Approach in teaching new vocabulary and the duration of their retention as opposed to a Dictionary-based Approach. The research findings revealed that the students who were taught new words following the text-based Approach “showed statistically more significant gains in their vocabulary knowledge (...) and [memorization of] the words”. Such results conclude that the Text-based Approach is effective in teaching and learning new vocabulary.

Bunch et al. (2014) tackled the question of the difficulties in using texts. They stated that “Texts do not exhibit difficulty by themselves: it is a matter of who readers are and what they bring to reading tasks; what the broader environmental factors and sociocultural context entail; what the activity structures are; and, perhaps most importantly, what kinds of classroom supports are available” (552). Text-based instruction has also been criticised for the excessive focus on learning outcomes rather than learning processes. Besides, Text-based instruction is believed to be “repetitive” and “boring” since it overlooks creativity and personal expression and is “based on the study of model texts and the creation of texts based on models” (Richards, 2006: 41).

### **2.3.2.2. Competency-based Instruction**

Competency-based instruction or competency-based language teaching has first appeared in the US in the 1970s. Since then, it has been widely spread and adopted in several countries. It sets light on defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable description of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours students should possess at the end of a course of study (Guskey, 2005, In Wong, 2008: 181). It teaches “students the basic skills they need in order to prepare them for situations they commonly encounter in everyday life” (Richards, 2006: 41). In other words, it aims at bridging the gap between classrooms settings and real life situations (Bader, 2007: 32). It is further defined by Bader as an approach which “seeks to establish competences in learners so as they can put in practice what has been acquired in school, in other extra school settings” (33).

Competence is a key element in defining the approach which needs as well to be identified. It is referred to by the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary as “the ability to do something well (...) the skill that one needs (...) for a particular task”; by Le Bortef (21) as “the mobilization of one’s cognitive resources to face with success a family of complex situations”; by Rolle-Boumelic (20) as “the integration of knowledge and capacities for the sake of a problem resolution”; and by Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne as “a know how-to-act process which integrates a set of capacities, skills, and knowledge mobilized to face problem-situations” (44, In Bader, 2007: 33-34). Based on the above definitions, one can deduce that competence is the ability to manipulate the learnt skills and knowledge as to perform tasks as well as facing problem-situations. Therefore, Competency-based instruction “is defined in relation with the definition of (...) competency (...) [as] a know how to act process which interacts and mobilizes a set of capacities, skills and an amount of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problem- situations or in circumstances that

have never occurred before” (First Year Middle school teachers’ guide, 2003, In Benadla, 2013: 159).

Competency-based instruction meets both the learners’ needs as well as the language skills required for real world situations. Such an approach assumes that “language form can be inferred from language function” (Wong, 2008: 182). It emphasizes language outcomes, more specifically, the communicative skills: to understand and make one’s self understood. Bader (2007: 40) highlighted three competencies established by Competency-based instruction which are the ability to interact and interpret authentic discourse as well as producing comprehensible speech. In addition, it links classroom learning to real life contexts and “aims at the establishment of a know-how-to-do, and a know-how-to-be in students” (41). In other words, it focuses on teaching language skills needed in a specific context (Richards, 2006: 43). When implemented in language teaching programs, Competency-based instruction involves the following features:

1. A focus on successful functioning in society: The goal is to enable students to become autonomous individuals capable of coping with the demands of the world.
2. A focus on life skills: Rather than teaching language in isolation, CBLT teaches language as a function of communication about concrete tasks. Students are taught just those language forms/ skills required by the situations in which they will function. These forms are normally determined by needs analysis.
3. Task- or performance-oriented instruction: What counts is what students can do as a result of instruction. The emphasis is on overt behaviors rather than on knowledge or the ability to talk about language and skills.

4. Modularized instruction: Language learning is broken down into meaningful chunks. Objectives are broken into narrowly focused subobjectives so that both teachers and students can get a clear sense of progress.
5. Outcomes are made explicit: Outcomes are public knowledge, known and agreed upon by both learner and teacher. They are specified in terms of behavioral objectives so that students know what behaviors are expected of them.
6. Continuous and ongoing assessment: Students are pre-tested to determine what skills they lack and post-tested after instruction on that skill. If they do not achieve the desired level of mastery, they continue to work on the objective and are retested.
7. Demonstrated mastery of performance objectives: Rather than the traditional paper-and-pencil tests, assessment is based on the ability to demonstrate prespecified behaviors.
8. Individualized, student-centered instruction: In content, level, and pace, objectives are defined in terms of individual needs; prior learning and achievement are taken into account in developing curricula. Instruction is not time-based; students progress at their own rates and concentrate on just those areas in which they lack competence (Auerbach, 1986, In Richards, 2006: 42-43).

Competency-based language teaching tends to describe course objectives that need to be accomplished, employ tasks “learners will need to carry out within a specific setting” (Richards, 2006: 43) and “plan language lessons around” the competencies to be achieved

(44). This means that it is more concerned with the learning outcomes rather than classroom processes; “it doesn’t matter what methodology is employed as long as it delivers the learning outcomes” (Richards, 2006: 43).

Nunan (2007) considers Competency-based language teaching advantageous since it sees language “as a tool for communication” and not “as an end in itself” (425, In Bataineh and Tasnimi, 2014: 9). It is also credited for promoting liable teaching (Findley & Nathan, 1980, In Bataineh and Tasnimi, 2014: 9). Competency-based instruction is believed to raise students’ self-confidence as they develop competencies useful in real life situations (Norton, 1987, In Bataineh and Tasnimi, 2014: 9). Moreover, it provides teachers with more time allocated for practice in which learners are worked with individually (Bataineh and Tasnimi, 2014: 9). Richards and Rodgers (2001: 146-147) as cited in Bataineh and Tasnimi (2014: 9) identified four merits which are:

1. The competencies are specific and practical and can be seen to relate to the learner’s needs and interests.
2. The learner can judge whether the competencies seem relevant and useful.
3. The competencies that will be taught and tested are specific and public — hence the learner knows exactly what need to be learned.
4. Competencies can be mastered one at a time so the learner can see what has been learned and what still remains to be learned.

Competency-based language teaching has been criticised for being easy and neat looking while it is not. One of the difficulties lays in the transformation of situations into tasks and competencies because it is sometimes impossible to do so. In addition to that, it is argued for reducing language learning “to a set of lists and such things as thinking skills are

ignored” (Richards, 2006: 44). Similarly, Auebach believed that teaching obvious behaviour is “mechanical” which hinders critical thinking. Furthermore, Competency-based language teaching sets “discrete” objectives which are not “equal to the essence of the complexity of the whole language”. Finally, observable outcomes are the main concern of Competency-based instruction; “however, much learning cannot be observed” (1986, In Bataineh and Tasnimi, 2014: 10).

#### **2.4. Adopting Communicative Language Teaching to the Classroom**

Communicative Language Teaching has been widely implemented in ESL and EFL contexts. Many researchers conducted studies to investigate incorporating it in ESL and EFL classrooms. Adopting communicative approaches in EFL classrooms has been proved effective in that those approaches result in “positive learning experiences”. The Chinese educational system sees implementing CLT beneficial in that it allows teachers to be up-to-date with the different English teaching methods emerging outside China and helps “learners to develop greater competence in the use of English for communication” (Liao, 2004: 270, In Hiep, 2005: 3). That is the reason why the Chinese government “requires the teaching of English for Communication” (Hiep, 2005: 3). It has been reported by Wang (1990) successful when implemented in a Chinese school. Communication-based teaching with a special focus on oral competence has helped improving language skills, mainly speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Nunan (1993) noticed that success in language teaching and learning is determined by “the involvement of learners in making meaning with both their teacher and their peers” (Savignon and Wang, 2003: 224). Belchamber (2007) has also defended CLT and its suitability in ESL and EFL contexts as it benefits learners in different ways. CLT has also gained its popularity in Vietnam by urging teachers of English to attend workshops and seminars on CLT” as well as sending them abroad “to study in TESOL or TESOL-related programs (Hiep, 2005: 3).



Nevertheless, it is believed by Karavas-Doukas (1996: 187, In Coskun, 2011: 6) that Communicative Language Teaching is theoretically innovative but not in practice. This implies that “communicative classrooms are rare” because teachers tend to employ traditional approaches instead. CLT, then, has raised many challenges alongside gains and benefits in language teaching. Those difficulties and challenges, as stated by Li (1998), are originated either from the teacher, the students, the educational system, or Communicative Language Teaching (Savignon and Wang, 2003: 224; Ozsevik, 2010: ii).

According to Dam and Gabrielsen (1988), difficulties in implementing task-based approaches are caused by the redefined teachers’ roles. One of the reasons is, as pointed out by Sato and Kleinsasser (1999), “the inconsistency between teachers’ perceptions of communicative language teaching and their actual in-class behaviour”. In addition to that, teachers are assumed by Anderson (1993) to lack communicative competence as they are not adequately prepared, as well as “the multiple and excessive demands placed upon [them]”. Nunan (1993), related difficulties in adopting Communicative Language Teaching to the “mismatch” between teachers’ teaching preferences and learners’ learning preferences (Savignon and Wang, 2003: 224). Karavas-Doukas (1996) found out that teachers kept on using traditional methodologies. He explained that it was either because they “did not understand or were unable to see the practical implications of the CLT principles” (Ozsevik, 2010: 50). Ozsevic’s study (2010) has revealed that “Turkish teachers are not rather optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT” despite being eager and interested to identify with it (ii).

Ellis (1994) “examined the suitability of the communicative approach in the Vietnamese context”. His findings revealed that traditional teaching methodologies are still dominant along with emphasizing “grammar-translation in the Vietnamese examination system”. According to him, the implementation of the communicative approach to language teaching is unsuitable in the Vietnamese classrooms because of the inadequate teacher training, materials

and fitting learning environments (69, In Ozsevik, 2010: 49-50). Coskun's research findings (2011) indicated that "there is a discrepancy between teachers' classroom practices and the attitudes they expressed". He related the difficulties to "large class size, traditional grammar-based examinations and the little time available to prepare communicative materials" (1). Savignon and Wang (2003) conducted a research exploring attitudes and perceptions of Taiwanese students towards classroom practices. Their findings showed "a mismatch between learner needs and preferences and their reported experience of classroom instruction" (223). Applying the communicative approach in Taiwan was also found difficult by Liu (2005) who justified that it was because of the educational system that is exam-oriented and in which students' grammatical knowledge is assessed (Ozsevik, 2010: 51).

The discrepancy between the different perceptions and actual classroom practices are thought by Hui (1997) to be due to some contextual factors which are: economic relating to the inadequate materials; administrative in which teachers are graded while students' participation is neglected; cultural relating to the students assumptions and their behaviour and attitudes in communicative classrooms; the student population because large size classrooms hinder learner-centeredness; and teachers' insufficient communicative as well as linguistic competence (Coskun, 2011: 7).

The above studies' results are concluded in Li's research in which he categorized the difficulties in adopting Communicative Language Teaching into four categories (which are found the same by Vongxay (2013: iv) in Lao contexts) that are outlined as follows:

1. Difficulties caused by teachers:

- ✓ Deficiency in spoken English,
- ✓ Deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence,
- ✓ Lack of training in CLT,

- ✓ Few opportunities for retraining in CLT,
  - ✓ Misconceptions about CLT,
  - ✓ Little time for and expertise in material development
2. Difficulties caused by students:
- ✓ Low English proficiency,
  - ✓ Little motivation for communicative competence,
  - ✓ Resistance to class participation
3. Difficulties caused by the educational system:
- ✓ Large classes,
  - ✓ Grammar-based examinations,
  - ✓ Insufficient funding,
  - ✓ Lack of support
4. Difficulties caused by CLT itself:
- ✓ CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching,
  - ✓ Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments (Li, 1998: 687, In Ozsevik, 2010: 50-51).

Hiep (2005: 2) related the difficulties of implementing CLT in ESL and EFL classrooms to “the transfer of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) from Western English speaking countries to other development contexts”. Another issue in dealing with Communicative Language Teaching has to do with teaching communicative abilities. According to Brandl (2008: 22) those “abilities cannot be simply categorized as speaking, listening, reading, or writing skills, as it was done in a traditional four skills approach”; there are other communicative strategies that are needed to communicate effectively. Integrating the teaching of all the language skills in addition to the communicative strategies is what actually poses challenges for teachers.

Coskun (2011: 8) suggested that “teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about CLT” as well as the contextual factors should be thoughtfully considered while implementing Communicative Language Teaching in ESL and EFL contexts because, as stated by Savignon (1991: 273), understanding the mismatch between theory and practice stems from investigating the teachers’ perceptions. Therefore, Coskun pointed out to the necessity of changing such attitudes (from negative to positive) in order to implement CLT properly. Li (1998) recommended making adjustments so that to motivate EFL teachers to employ the communicative approach as it appears that there is inconsistency between Communicative Language Teaching demands and EFL contexts. Therefore, “this conflict must be resolved before EFL teaching in these countries can benefit from CLT” (695-696, In Ozsevic, 2010: 51). Similarly, Hiep (2005: 2) suggested modifying Communicative Language teaching to fit “the local conditions”.

## **Conclusion**

CLT sets light into developing language skills that are related to real-life situations through incorporating communicative, meaningful, as well as context-based learning tasks. It is an eclectic approach which advocates the teaching of communicative skills through employing effective techniques and methodologies. Those techniques and learning tasks are not randomly chosen; instead they are selected based on the learning principles that have been developed by SLA and educational psychology theories. The need for intensive training and being up-to-date with research findings in second language acquisition is highly emphasized for an effective language teaching and learning. CLT is believed to be flexible and adaptable to different learning needs and teaching purposes, giving more opportunities for further research theories to evolve, redefining and adjusting more elaborated teaching techniques.

## **Introduction**

Language teaching and learning has faced many debates and changes. Researchers and linguists interested in the area have elaborated, discussed and criticized a number of teaching theories, principles and approaches. Among those approaches, two opposite directions appear to have been the most controversial ones: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Structural Approach. The former has gained greater attention and is believed to have been more successful and efficient. In so far as assuming, the teaching trend has shifted away from focusing on grammar and its structures towards communication and its functions. This has resulted in neglecting the so called Structural Approach beside its principles. However, recently, accuracy is acknowledged because of its imperative role in promoting communication itself.

### **3.1. The Structural Approach**

The Structural Approach is a traditional way of teaching and learning languages. In which, it has been grounded on the assumption that grammar should be stressed. In other words, teaching essential grammatical structures and patterns is at the heart of learning the language. Even though research has favored the use of communicative approaches in teaching languages, many teachers “still hold firmly to the belief that grammar is central to language learning and direct grammar teaching is needed by their ESL students” (54, In Abdullah, 2015: 195), and “many studies (...) can be expected to favour grammar teaching” (Ellis, 2006: 86).. In the upcoming sections, we will provide its definition, aspects, as well as its flaws.

#### **3.1.1. Definition of the Structural Approach**

After the Second World War a New Approach has come to existence which is the Structural Approach. The Structural approach is a controversial topic in language teaching, starting with its name. “Some people believe that it is a method. But it is not a method, it is an

approach”. In fact, it includes the Grammar- Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Oral Approach or Situational Language Teaching, and the Audio Lingual Method (Mareva and Nyota, 2012: 104). The Structural approach is made up of two words that are basic to its definition, structural and approach. Mallick and Bhushan (2016) defined the word “structural” as relating “to the structures”, and “approach” as it literally means “coming near”.

The notion of structuralism centers the use of structures. What are structures? When we talk about the structure of something, we are referring to the way it is built. Mallick and Bhushan (2016) identified the word “structures” as “the different arrangement[s] in one accepted style or the other”. The latter are considered language tools that exist in all languages. Learning one structure (through practising drills) enables learners to generate numerous sentences following the same basis. It is assumed that learners who master the different language structures can use “the language more effectively than before”. Thus, the Structural Approach is based on teaching and learning structures (1326). It is mainly concerned with teaching grammatical patterns; their nature (how they are formed) as well as functions (how they are used). Hence, “the starting point of structural materials is HOW utterances are formed” (Yonekma and Sato, 1983: 5). It is defined by Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics an approach that “stresses the importance of language as a system and which investigates the place that linguistic unit such as sounds, words, sentence[s] have within this system” (In Xia, 2014: 560). The Structural Approach is “dividing the whole parts of speech into manageable bite size chunks” which would be introduced to students one at a time, “so that they gradually and systematically accumulate a complete picture of the language” (Abdullah, 2015: 194).

The Structural Approach deals with the presentation and explanation of the different forms through exercises and drills which are supposed to improve the students’ accuracy, understanding and usage of grammatical structures. The Structural Approach, as defined by

Kagan (1989), is creating, analyzing and systematically applying structures (12). It is considered “a useful tool, especially when the teacher wishes to focus attention sharply and unambiguously on an important feature of the structural system” (Littlewood, 1981: 10) because this approach emphasizes grammar and how its different elements are combined (1).

Dushi (2012), in her essay, defined the Structural Approach as being “based on the assumption that language can best be learnt through a scientific selection and grading of structures or patterns of sentences and vocabulary. The stress is on the learning of essential structures of English”. The Structural Approach, as stated by Menon and Patel, advocates learning structures as they are seen more important than the acquisition of vocabulary. The so called approach does not marginalize language skills. In fact, it emphasizes teaching speaking without forgetting the reading and writing skills. Dushi added that the Structural Approach aims at teaching English through drilling about 275 structures and mastering about 3000 root words. It is concerned with developing the four-fold language skills through correlating “the teaching of grammar and composition with the reading lessons” (Menon and Pattel, In Dushi, 2012).

Mallick and Bhushan (2016) examined the effect of the Structural Approach (along with the Audio-Lingual Method) on elementary school students’ academic achievement in learning the English language. After conducting an experimental design, the results revealed that the use of the Structural Approach “contributes significantly on academic achievement of elementary school students in English language”. They found out that there “is no significant difference in the effect of [the] audio-lingual method over [the] structural approach on academic achievement of elementary school students” (1323).

The Structural approach was also proved successful in language teaching. Amnuail and Wannaruk (2007) investigated its effect on writing. It was found useful as it enabled non-

native writers to understand the English language structures better. Another study was conducted by Behol and Kaini (2006). It aimed at determining the efficacy of the Structural Approach in teaching vocabulary to low and average ability students which was concluded beneficial (Mallick and Bhushan, 2016: 1326).

Besides, “pupils have to know and apply the rules of English grammar in order to do well [in their] exams”. The Structural Approach provides opportunities for learners to acquire those rules. Grammar rules acquisition is believed to enhance students’ communicative proficiency. According to Chung (2005: 35) “communicative proficiency will become easier to achieve only when one has grasped the necessary knowledge of language such as grammar”. Thus, grammar has regained its place in language teaching and learning since it has been recognized “as an essential component of language learning” (Pawlak, 2004: 271-272). Moreover, grammatical rules cannot be acquired naturally. Pienemann’s research (1984) revealed that “learners who are given grammar lesson[s] achieved a certain degree of proficiency” quicker than “those without any exposure to grammar classes” (Abdullah, 2015: 195). Pawlak (2004) agreed that learners who are merely exposed to the language without any grammatical explanation “fail to achieve high levels of grammatical competence” (272).

Mareva and Nyota (2012) went in another direction in dealing with the Structural Approach. They wanted to reveal which approach is actually implemented in teaching English in Zimbabwe; whether it is the Structural approach or the Communicative Approach. The latter is the one “recommended by the syllabus” (104). Their findings disclosed that even though the ZIMSEC advocates teaching English using the communicative Approach, “English language teachers in Masvingo urban and peri-urban secondary schools prefer the structural approach to the communicative approach in their teaching”. This, as explained by the teachers, is because the Structural Approach’s activities result in grammatical accuracy which is the aim behind learning languages (109). Emphasizing “grammatical structures” and



“linguistic competence”, employing “repetition, memorization and substitution techniques”, decontextualized language teaching, error correction, focusing on accuracy, and “teacher-dominated lessons” are a clear evidence of the Structural Approach’s dominance (111).

Khan et al. (2015) compared the Communicative Approach and the Structural Approach. They opted for an experimental design for teaching 22 students for a period of 30 days using both approaches. The students were aware of the importance of the Communicative Approach, yet they “showed their likings towards [the] structural approach” (67). The students respondents believed that the latter is more effective than the Communicative Approach which they regarded unsuitable for secondary school students as they are unable “to absorb [its] root factors” (70). Valipour and Aidinlu’s study was another “attempt to explore the effectiveness of the functional approach to foreign language instruction in acquiring grammatical accuracy in comparison to structural approach”. Their findings revealed that the Structural Approach is seen less effective in acquiring grammatical accuracy in comparison to the Functional Approach (2015: 7). Another research work which dealt with the same objective was carried out by Singh (2013). The data collected showed that there was “no significant difference between the achievement of the Students taught by Structural and Functional Approach”. This implies that the Structural approach was “equally effective” for in teaching English (11).

Ahmed and Rao (2013) compared the Communicative Approach and the Grammar-Translation Method. Participants of the study were divided into two groups; one group was taught using the Communicative Approach and the other group was taught by means of the GTM. This study resulted in proving that Communicative Language Teaching is more effective in language teaching than the Grammar-Translation Method (Khan et al., 2015: 67). The same research objective (comparing GTM and CLT) was the motive of Chang’s research. However, his findings “showed that Grammar Translation Method was more effective than

the Communicative Approach because of its [concern] with accuracy” (68). Chang (2011) explained that the Grammar-Translation Method was mostly “liked” and “appreciated” because it was student-centred, and teaching was through the mother tongue which allowed for easy and convenient teaching.

Abdullah and Shah (2015) highlighted students’ beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards the Communicative Approach and the Structural Approach. Their study resulted in showing that the students participants were in favour of both approaches which revealed that they aware of the significance of CLT and SA in learning English. Abdullah and Shah’s findings correlate with Long’s interactive theory which advocates the use of both approaches in the process of teaching English (24).

### **3.1.2. Aspects of the Structural Approach**

The Structural Approach is based on the belief that learning grammatical structures develops to a great extent language proficiency. According to Widdowson, “the goal of the structural syllabus is to build language competence through (...) USAGE” that is “knowledge of linguistic rules” (Yonekura and Sato, 1983: 5). So it is concerned with how structures are formed and organised because they are “more important than the acquisition of vocabulary” (Menon and Patel, In Sharma, 2012).

The Structural Approach considers word order an important factor in learning English because that what “makes true meaning clear”. Among those words, “function words” or “structural words” are equally essential for such clear meaning. Inflections represent another essential characteristic of the language whose use is employed in the Structural Approach (Sharma, 2012).

Another principle lies in emphasizing the spoken discourse (Askes, 1978, Richards and Rodgers, 1995) as it sees the spoken language more important than the other language form in “fixing firmly al ground work”. The Structural Approach emphasizes oral language. That is to say, among the four language skills that are writing, reading, listening, and speaking, the latter is the main concern of Structuralism. Speech is seen more important than reading and writing (Sharma, 2012). In order to enhance the speaking skill, equipped language laboratories and oral native speakers’ recordings are employed.

Using language drills as a means of acquiring how to arrange “words in English standard sentence patterns” or simply forming some kind of language habits is one of the Structural Approach’s principles. To say it differently, the Structural Approach is rooted in behaviourism (Richards and Rodgers, 1995), viewing the act of learning languages as learning a set of habits.

In order to teach the grammatical forms and patterns, the Structural Approach advocates the use of exercises and oral drills for their significant role in language teaching. The latter include repetition drills, substitution drills, question and answer drills, transformational drills, etc. (Examples to Accompany the Teaching Tip ‘Review those Drills’, 2016). Exercises and drills are distinct in that the former “may contain a strong written element” that can take a long time while the latter includes listening materials with immediate responses. Another difference is that prior knowledge of the rules practised is necessary in doing an exercise whereas it is not the case with drills (Narasimharao and Pillai, Drills and Exercises in Language Teaching). The Structural Approach employs those classroom techniques to develop language as well as basic skills for better performance.

Finally, the Structural Approach is more learner-centred because it is interested in learners’ activity i.e. their use because language, as concluded by Dushi, is “learnt through

use” (2012) or as it is termed by Widdowson USAGE (knowledge of linguistic rules) (1978:3, In Yonekma and Sato, 1983: 5).

### **3.1.3. Shortcomings of the Structural Approach**

The Structural Approach has been confirmed to include aspects unfavourable for the teaching and learning process as “it became the whipping boy for all that was wrong with language teaching” (Stern, 1983:465, In Molina, Canado and Agullo, 2005). Krashen believed that “grammar has no significant part in learning a new language”. Knowing grammatical rules (which may not last long) does not imply immediate language use (Abdullah, 2015: 195). So, cons of the SA questioned the structuralist methods’ “ideas about language and [their] learning theories”. The teachers who had employed them “did not fill their expectations” because their students still faced “difficulties to communicate outside the classroom and sometimes found the learning experience boring and discouraging” (Sierra, 1995:118). Its limitations are summarized in the following.

To begin with, the Structural Approach is inappropriate for intermediate and advanced levels. Students, eventually, will develop a desire, will and intrinsic motivation to learn how to communicate effectively, fluently, and develop their communicative skills which are not presented by the Structural Approach. It is suitable solely for beginners who need, first, to learn the basics of language that are grammatical structures and forms. Because of the focus on building accuracy in students’ language use, the Structural Approach marginalizes other elements that are central to the progress of the students’ proficiency, mainly, fluency. To be a fluent speaker means having a high level of language proficiency. Mastery of grammatical structures only does not cover all the language aspects. Communication is why people learn any language in the first place.

Furthermore, the Structural Approach places excessive demands on the teacher as it is a teacher-centred approach. The teacher is the most important participant; s/he is the instructor and the only source of information. In a structural classroom, the teacher does most of the talking part leaving no room for learners to communicate their ideas or express feelings. The learners' role, as a result, is to, exclusively, listen and work alone. Working alone affects the learners' communicative skills negatively as well as their ability to collaborate with the others. Therefore, it presents the grammatical rules in a dull atmosphere. When students are not engaged in the process of their own learning, they feel bored and uninterested. This leads to decrease their motivation to learn, and when there is no motivation, no actual learning can take place. Roulet (1972) outlined the main criticisms of the Structuralist Methods in the following figure:

1. Its description of the grammatical system is rather incomplete. It does not provide the rules needed to construct an infinite range of grammatical sentences.
2. It gives excessive weight to grammatical facts of secondary importance, and thus neglects important generalizations.
- 3 Slight treatment is given to syntactic relations.
4. It does not provide the teacher with criteria to determine grammaticality of utterances, and thus it does not provide appropriate criteria for error treatment.
5. The exclusion of the treatment of meaning by American structuralists prevents the necessary information for the systematic teaching of lexis and of oral and written comprehension.

6. The accent placed on formal criteria at the expense of situational and semantic aspects and on habit-formation teaching leads teachers and students to manipulate structures as an end in themselves while neglecting their application in real life.
7. It leads teachers to consider language as the only variable and to neglect the problems of language teaching and learning.
8. It leaves teachers and learners without a creative approach towards the language study.

(In Sierra, 1995: 119).

### **Figure 3.1.: Criticisms of the Structuralist Methods**

### **3.2. The Communicative-Structural Approach**

There is a considerable number of approaches and methods in teaching English, and more specifically its grammar. However, as stated by Abdullah (2015: 194), “two main, basic and classic approaches (...) [act] as an umbrella to the other approaches or methods. They are the covert and overt approaches which are also known as the structural and communicative methods respectively”. However, the majority of language experts favor the use of the Communicative Approach which is supported for the fact that it employs communicative activities that are believed to “install a sense of cooperation, togetherness and teamwork which indirectly create a sense of language being used naturally” (Brumfit, 1984, In Abdullah, 2015: 195). Yet, both approaches tend to be complementary to each other. Combined together, they form a new approach to grammar teaching that is the Communicative-Structural Approach.

### **3.2.1. Definition of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

The communicative-Structural Approach is a recent adapted approach in the area of language teaching. The concept of the Communicative-Structural Approach is made up of two key words that are communicative and structural. Communication means giving and taking, sending and receiving, i.e. sharing and exchanging ideas with others or passing a given information, fact, idea, concept, etc., through interaction in which three elements are essential: participants, information being communicated and instruments used. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2015) defines communication as “the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else”. Communication is, then, a process through which mutual understanding is reached. It does not enable people to exchange information only, but it is the act of uniting and connecting people (Business Dictionary, Communication: 2016). On the whole, communication is the means of success of any transaction that requires more than one person.

As for the word structure, it is in turn defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary and it is “the way something is built or organized: relating to the structure of something”. According to the Free Dictionary, it is “connected with systematic structure in a particular field of study, such as linguistics or the behavioral sciences”. When we talk about the structure of something, we are referring to the way it is built. The Communicative/Structural approach is based on both concepts (Communication and structure). Therefore, it focuses on building students’ communicative skills as well as the linguistic one. Communicative tasks such as role playing, guessing games, and creating stories are involved in the process of teaching any given grammatical structure. It takes into account integrating those communicative tasks to deliver different grammatical structures or linguistic information in an attempt to boost four-fold communicative and language skills and most importantly is to lay the foundation of grammar.

Howatt (1984) distinguished two versions of Communicative Language Teaching, one “strong version” that “is in support of communicative features” and the second is a “weak version” suggesting “the integration of structural practice into the communicative elements” (Chung, 2014: 35). He believes that “both structural and communicative elements have a role to play in EFL and ESL”. He explained the reason to be related to “the norms and practices of the structural syllabus [that] have been embedded [especially] in the Asian cultures for decades”. Chung provided Maley’s survey (1986: 104) as an example. The survey resulted in revealing the Chinese views concerning the teaching practices. The teacher was regarded a “textbook” or a “guru”, he is supposed to be the source of knowledge. Acquiring grammar to facilitate communicative proficiency is Chung’s second reason for believing in combining both approaches. He stated that “communicative proficiency will become easier to achieve only when one has grasped the necessary knowledge of language (such as grammar)”. A “proportional approach” is suggested by Yalden (1987:94) in which “students learn more form than meaning at an early stage and as time increases (and as students’ language proficiency improves), the intervention of communicative functions increases” (Chung, 2014: 35).

In order to illustrate how a teacher can combine the Communicative and Structural Approaches into one in teaching the passive of perfect tenses, Chung (2014) provided an example exercise taken from Yunus and Spykerman(1996: 211-212).

We form the passive of perfect tenses with have/has been + past participle and had been + past participle.			
Present perfect tense			
Subject	Verb	Object	‘Doer’ or Agent



Active	Professor Kazan	<i>has trained</i>	the dolphins to speak English.
Passive	The dolphins	<i>have been trained</i>	to speak English by Professor Kazan.
Past Perfect Tense			
Active	Professor Kazan	had trained	the dolphins since birth.
Passive	The dolphins	had been trained	since birth by Professor Kazan.
We can leave out the ‘doer’ or agent if it is obvious who the person is.			

**Table 3.1.: The Passive Form of the Perfect Tenses**

The first row in the above table represents the rule of the passive with its explanation while the second and third columns “show the decomposed components of the perfect tenses”.

9. Write the newspaper headlines as sentences using the passive form of the present perfect tense.

- Thousands of books damaged in warehouse fire
- Valuable Koran Stolen from Museum
- Cost of Imported Books Criticised by Public.

The aim of this follow up activity (newspaper headlines) is to “incorporate authentic material (...) into the grammar exercise” (Chung, 2014: 36-37).

Littlewood (1981: 10) suggested relating learning grammatical structures to the communicative functions they fulfill. He provided the following example to illustrate the situation:

P: By the way, has John written that letter yet?

R: Yes, he wrote it yesterday.

P: Has he seen the film yet?

R: Yes, he saw it yesterday.

He explained that this example demonstrates “communicative facts as well as structural facts”. The former is expressed through learning how to ask questions and reply when asked, and the latter is knowing how to form the interrogative and past declarative forms. This enables learners to identify the communicative function and structure of any piece of language. He presented another example in which students are suggested a lot of things by a friend, yet they need to reject because of fatigue:

P: Shall we go to the cinema?

R: Oh no, I don't feel like going to the cinema.

P: Shall we have a swim? (*or* What about a swim, then?)

R: Oh no, I don't feel like having a swim.

In this situation the learners will learn how to form the gerund (the structure) and how to suggest and reject propositions (the function). In this way, as Littlewood assumed, “the teacher can attempt to relate the language practice to communicative functions which learners might need to express”.

Furthermore, Littlewood emphasized the fact that learning linguistic structures is imperative in communicating and negotiating meanings. This is the reason why, he sees it helpful to “match the content more closely with the actual communicative uses that the learners will have to make of the foreign language”. He presented different ways of coping with the learners' needs through providing content that reflects both “the structural demands of the foreign language (...) [and] some of the more specific communicative demands”. According to him, teachers need to choose the linguistic forms (needed for the productive use and comprehension purpose) that widen the learners' “communicative repertoire”. Moreover,

he thought it appropriate to focus on structures in meaningful contexts, and which actually reflect communicative functions. This might be possible if teachers opt for meaningful discussions, problem-solving activities and role-plays (77-78).

### **3.2.2. Features of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

The Communicative-Structural Approach is learning to communicate and learning about the language. It is a combination of two important notions that are the communicative aspect which is adopting creative pedagogical ideas from other approaches that can be accessible to a wide range of learners' levels, needs and learning styles. The structural aspect emphasizes the mastery of grammar by presenting and explaining different grammatical structures and rules which govern the accuracy of any language.

Because communication is the main reason we use language in the first place, the Communicative-Structural Approach lays a great importance to developing and improving the communicative skills of students with an ability to understand, communicate expressively, and convey whichever information effectively and efficiently. Learners are given the opportunity to interact with the teacher and each other while dealing with the different communicative tasks proposed by the teacher.

The Communicative-Structural Approach is interested in enabling learners to express themselves clearly and positively, both verbally and in writing using accurate language. Accuracy is achieved when the grammar of the language is mastered. To guarantee a successful instruction of the grammatical rules, it is suggested to teach the grammatical patterns systematically. Following the Communicative-Structural Approach, the tutor is required to teach grammar deductively. Grammar is the backbone of the language and is responsible for its correctness. That is the reason why learning grammatical rules and patterns is of a high importance in learning any language. The Communicative-Structural Approach

focuses on learning those structures exhaustively and systematically through direct instruction, presentation and explanation.

Authentic and meaningful communication as well as learning the grammatical structures are the goal of classroom activities and tasks. One needs first to identify what a task is. Communicative tasks appeared and developed in the two last decades (Nunan, 1991: 279) being defined as “classroom activit[ies] or exercise[s] that [have] an objective attainable only by the interaction among participants, a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and a focus on meaning exchange”. This means that learners have to collaborate and work together in order to finish an assignment and achieve authentic communication. A task is “a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of work plans” (Lee, 2000: 32). A task is, then, directing students to do something related to what people do in everyday life, for example, asking students to hire someone, apply for a job, make a reservation, etc. it is goal-directed and requires interaction between two or more students. A task is also defined as “any activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e., as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks” (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985: 289, In Nunan, 1991: 280).

Hence, communicative tasks help in developing the communicative skills and introducing different grammatical and linguistic structures. They are also beneficial in the sense that they have real purposes as they deal with real life contexts. This implies that students learn to face everyday life situations besides acquiring the grammatical knowledge required in each. Students are proved to be more motivated and engaged when they are asked to accomplish relevant tasks.

This approach is grounded on the idea that the learner is an important and active participant as well as an undeniable source of information because s/he already has some existent background knowledge and is, therefore, able of sharing with the others. “The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an independent way” (Breen and Candlin, 1980: 110). In the Communicative-Structural Approach students are expected to interact with each other (helping low ability students with the language, develop ideas, correct errors, and share different cultures with each other) as well as with their teacher.

The latter’s role is perceived to be a reliable source of information. The teacher as described by Breen and Candlin (1980: 99) is:

The teacher has two main roles: the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. The latter role is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it. These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher; first, as an organizer of resources and as a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities ... . A third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities.

The teacher in the Communicative-Structural approach plays another role that is his first duty, instructing and teaching. This approach, as previously mentioned, emphasizes learning the grammatical structures in addition to the communicative aspects related to the language.

In that way, the teacher has to explain the rules and grammatical patterns underlying different structures through direct clarification and systematic instruction. This adds another role which is that of teacher and instructor. One can conclude that the Communicative-Structural Approach is partly learner-centered and partly teacher-centered in which both participants are considered equally important and essential for the success of the learning to take place. Marginalization of any of them leads to a failure in the process of teaching and learning any particular structure.

As for the materials used in the classroom, they are considered to be an influential tool in enhancing interaction and for they are highly imperative in raising the students' motivation to use the language. If we use, for example, a slideshow to teach them about phrasal verbs is more interesting to them than writing a list on the board and telling them about their meanings, using role cards to teach the direct and reported speech is less time consuming and boring to the students than simply dictating the roles to them, etc.

The Communicative-Structural Approach advocates the use of authentic and meaningful materials in the classroom. Cathcart argues that "classroom language models must be based on authentic native-speaker/native-speaker discourse". In his article, he quantifies "the topics, utterance functions, and structures (...) to show that simulated excerpts may serve to mislead students about the nature of everyday interactions" (1989: 105). Therefore, the language to be focused in the classroom need not be either unnatural or decontextualized. It is vital to contextualize tasks and activities that are directed towards language practice because the classroom is a training area for the students to face the real world. The role of authentic texts and contexts, according to Nunan, is significant in acquiring the language as they provide opportunities for learners to see "the systematic relationships that exist between form, meaning, and use" (1998, 102, In Akbari, 2014: 126). Classroom activities, as argued by some researchers need to reflect the real world and "use real world or "authentic" sources as the

basis for classroom learning” (Richards, 2006: 20). Meaningful practice of the language, according to Richards, “refers to an activity where language control is still provided but where students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice”. As a case in point, the practice of prepositions is meaningful when students are given maps with places identified on them, prepositions that can be of use, and questions about the locations to be answered. The task is said to be meaningful seeing that “they have to respond according to the location of places on the map” (2006: 16). The Communicative-Structural Approach involves a variety of games, role plays, simulations, and task-based communication activities that help achieve authenticity and meaningfulness.

The tasks employed in the Communicative-Structural Approach facilitate developing students’ fluency as well as accuracy. Fluency and accuracy “have been used both as performance descriptors for the oral and written assessment of language learners as well as indicators of learners’ proficiency underlying their performance; they have also been used for measuring progress in language learning” (Housen and Kuiken, 2009: 461). But first, we need to make a clear distinction between both notions. Richards (2006: 14) defined fluency as:

... natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence. Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns.

If a speaker produces grammatically correct written and spoken English, i.e. with a high level of accuracy, this implies that he speaks correctly. Accuracy is concerned with correctness of the language which is decided by the grammatical rules, structures, and

patterns. It is “the ability to produce target-like and error-free language” (Housen et. al., 2012: 2). Mastery of a good grammar enables speakers to be accurate. According to Cotter (2016) in “How to Strike a Balance between Accuracy and Fluency”:

Accuracy refers to the mechanics of the language. Students address and improve on the following ideas:

1. Clear and articulate speaking or writing.
2. Language free from grammar mistakes.
3. Words spelled and/or pronounced correctly.
4. Language appropriate to the situation and/or context.

The communicative tasks and activities are divided into fluency-oriented activities and accuracy-based activities (Richards, 2006: 15). The Communicative-Structural Approach suggests making a balance between both types of activities. The former ones promote spontaneous spoken discourse while the latter lay stress on learning grammatical rules.

### **3.2.3. Principles of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

“Communication is an activity which gains meaning and significance from consensually, shared rules. What is transmitted in communication is structure or information” (Cushman and Whiting, 1972: 217). In this light, language is used as means of communicating and negotiating meaning in addition to teaching structures and grammatical or linguistic constructions which is the main principle of the Communicative-Structural Approach. Different principles help in shaping the Communicative/Structural approach.

The Communicative-Structural Approach is primarily concerned with the integration of the communicative tasks and activities that present authentic contexts in which language is learnt and results in meaningfulness. This creates an atmosphere for a subconscious



absorption of the language forms. “Automaticity is built more efficiently” through the use of “language in authentic contexts for meaningful purposes” (Brown, 2001: 56).

Brown (2001) stated that “meaningful learning ‘subsumes’ new information into existing structures and memory systems, and the resulting associative links create stronger retention” (56-57). The input provided by the teacher and the way it is presented (communicative tasks and activities) need to be related to real-life situations where learners can draw a direct connection between what they learn inside the classroom and what actually takes place outside it. Brown (2001) went on explaining that “children are good meaningful acquirers of language because they associate sounds, words, structures, and discourse elements with that which is relevant and important in their daily quest for knowledge and survival” (57). In order for the teacher to achieve meaningfulness, s/he needs to tackle his/her students’ needs and interests besides associating all that is new to them with their existing knowledge.

The Communicative-Structural Approach does not neglect the learner because it is the most important component in the learning process. Achieving meaningfulness in the classroom is a way of raising students’ intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation for Cherry (2016) “refers to behavior that is driven by internal rewards. In other words, the motivation to engage in a behavior arises from within the individual because it is intrinsically rewarding”. This implies that intrinsic motivation is not driven by external rewards “we simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn, and actualize our potentials” (Coon and Mitterer, 2010, In Cherry, 2016). Classroom tasks should be designed in accordance with the students’ interests and motives. The task can be said to be successful when learners perceive them as “fun, interesting, useful or challenging” as they will perform them for such reasons and not others (Brown, 2001: 59). Intrinsic motivation remains fundamental and highly

important in fulfilling any task, especially in learning, as “you can drive a horse to the waterfall but you cannot make it drink”.

Another perspective that the Communicative-Structural Approach is emphasizing is the need to vary tasks and activities in the classroom that suit the majority if not the whole students’ learning preferences. Any classroom contains a variety of learning styles specific to each individual student. The teacher is, hence, responsible for attending to all the students’ learning styles and preferences and designing the lesson plan accordingly. As a case in point, there is the dichotomy of visual and auditory learning and that of individual and group work preference. The teacher is required to take into account such differences and multiplicity of learning styles in the class and vary the tasks to be used in the teaching and learning process as an attempt to satisfy all the learners’ preferences.

The Communicative-Structural approach aims primarily at developing the learners’ communicative competence. According to Brown (2001), it is made up of the following elements:

- Organizational competence,
- Pragmatic competence,
- Strategic competence,
- And psychomotor competence.

“Given that communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, instruction needs to point toward all its components: organizational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotor” (69). It is important to equally focus on language in use and usage without overlooking any of them for the sake of the other in addition to fluency and accuracy as they are both essential for the flow of language.

### **3.2.4. Merits of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

The Communicative-Structural Approach has been founded to deal with the shortcomings of both the Structural and Communicative Approaches.

On the one hand, opponents of the Structural Approach argue that it is suitable for lower class students (beginners) only, in which structures are merely learnt overlooking the communicative aspects and functions of the language which cannot be covered by grammar. Therefore, it highlights accuracy rather than fluency. Furthermore, it places too much demand on the teacher and marginalizes the role of the student because it is a teacher-centered approach which does not leave opportunities for learners' innovation or a chance to express their ideas and thoughts.

On the other hand, the Communicative Approach is criticized for ignoring grammar and the different structures underlying a correct use of the language as well as its instruction. It is perceived that there is no need to emphasize the correction of grammatical errors. This leads us to consider another deficiency in the Communicative Approach which is focus on fluency rather than accuracy. This approach is also tested to be unsuitable for beginners. Learners with low abilities find it discouraging to participate in an oral task as it requires fluency. They need first some guided and controlled practice following a grammatical instruction.

The Communicative-Structural Approach takes into account all these deficiencies and solves the problems hanging around them. It is helpful in language teaching in that:

- It focuses on the mastery and understanding of fundamental structures and their functions. Thus, interest is also laid on the functional and communicative value of the language developing fluency as well as accuracy.

- It teaches other language skills, mainly, vocabulary, listening, speaking, writing and reading.
- It develops the students' confidence in interacting with the others.

### **3.2.5. Adapting the Communicative-Structural Approach to the Classroom**

The Communicative-Structural Approach is employed in designing the lesson with regard to students' needs and interests as well as their language background. The activities implemented in the lesson plan emphasize both meaning and form. The communicative activities complement the Structural ones. In doing so, five types of activities are implemented: language games, natural contexts, activities that balance skills, personalization, and adjustment of teacher role (Chung, 2014: 43-44).

#### **3.2.5.1. Language Games**

Language games are effective activities in facilitating the teaching practice for teachers ("enable the teacher to 'problematize' instruction") and the learning process for learners ("allow learners to actively engage in the learning process") (Bourke, 2008: 15). A game is defined by Rixon (1991: 3) as "form of play governed by rules", by Hadfield (1990; Quoted in Deesri, 2002: 1) as "an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun". Haycraft (1978: 94) sees games as "an agreeable way of getting a class to use its initiative in English" (In Yolageldili and Arikan, 2011: 219). ESL and EFL teachers are familiar with the perception that language games are an integral element in any communicative classroom. Brouke (2002) referred to the term "enabling tasks". The reason behind those "enabling tasks" might be, as explained by Estaire and Zanon, "to provide students with the necessary linguistic tools to carry out a communication task" (1994: 15, In Brouke, 2008: 15).

The completion of a communicative activity such as language games results in enabling students to discover the language aspect being dealt with through the game. So, the latter facilitates acquiring language forms unconsciously as learners communicate and negotiate meanings. As Brouke (2008) stated “the idea behind [language acquisition] is that learners themselves construct their own grammar from their own language experience, and thereby either consciously or subconsciously restructure their emerging interlanguage” (16). Brouke suggested that different language aspects can be dealt with by means of the same kind of language game. He gave the example of “an information-gap activity about zoo animals” that could fit teaching the present progressive or focusing on the communicative aspect in which learners are free to talk about animals (19).

Language Games are used in order to attract students’ interest in learning a particular language aspect. They are assumed to enjoy the learning process while fulfilling communicative activities such as games. Rinvoluceri (1984) and Rinvoluceri and Davis (1995) believe that “all language learners enjoy an element of fun and inventiveness, and language games have long been part and parcel of second language teaching and learning”. Alongside enjoyment and relaxation factors, language games promote students’ creativity in using the target language (Yolageldili and Arikan 2011: 219). “Describe and Draw”, “Spot the Difference”, and “Board Rush” are popular games that help young students elicit language forms and structures whereas “word games”, “puzzles”, and “problem-solving scenarios” are mostly enjoyed by older students (Brouke, 2008: 19).

Language games are advantageous because they motivate learners, lower their anxiety, involve them in the learning process, and “bring the classroom to the real world”. As for the linguistic aspect, they are believed by McCallum (1980) to “focus students’ attention on specific structures, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary items”. They can also “function as reinforcement, review and enrichment” (Yolageldili and Arikan, 2011: 220).

Language games, however, are criticized for being “time-fillers” and “time-wasters” (Rixon, 1981: 1, In Chung, 2014: 44) and some teachers consider them as classroom techniques just for fun (Yolageldili and Arikan (2011: 219). In fact, research has proved that games are an effective way in making lessons enjoyable, memorable and relaxing. Molina, Canado and Agullo (2005) see language games essential for language acquisition “and not as a way to fill up students’ lessons”. Cheng (1998) conducted a survey which revealed that the students respondents’ most preferred activities are mainly games and contests. Yolageldili and Arikan have also conducted a study in order to investigate the usefulness of games in teaching grammar to Turkish young learners. The research findings revealed that Turkish EFL teachers are aware of the efficacy of “using games in grammar teaching similar to those reported in the current literature”. However, “they do not use games as frequently as expected in their classrooms” (219).

### **3.2.5.2. Natural Contexts**

According to Chung (2014: 45), “the context used in a (...) task plays a crucial role”. Authentic contexts provide teachers with the tools needed for achieving meaningful learning. Authenticity means “genuineness, realness, truthfulness, validity, reliability, undisputed credibility, and legitimacy” (Tatsuki, 2006: 1). Because contextualization is generally neglected and absent in grammar textbooks (47), it is difficult for students to see how the grammatical structures are employed in the real world, and, thus, reproduce sentence patterns genuinely. This is the reason why, the Communicative-Structural Approach utilizes natural contexts in presenting grammatical forms and patterns.

Teachers in traditional classrooms focus on teaching grammar rules instead of showing how to use them in real life. Hence, language should be presented in natural contexts in order to teach about its form as well as its communicative functions or how it is actually used by

native speakers. In order for teachers to create such authentic and natural contexts, Yang (2010: 340) suggested ways to optimize the classroom setting and instruction.

Reorganizing the seating of students is one way. Instead of sitting in rows facing the teacher, students can sit in small groups or in circles facing each other. This allows them to interact with each other, sharing ideas and negotiating meaning, and promoting collaborative learning. Group activities are another way to authenticate the communication context and accelerate the learning process because classrooms, as described by Yang (2010: 341), “act as a bridge to the outside world”. Implementing scenario activities boosts the authenticity of contexts. Scenario is defined by Yang as “a kind of activity derived from role playing. (...) [It] is a problem-oriented, open-ended task similar to real life situation” (340).

As for classroom instruction, Yang (2010: 341) recommended opting for lower-structure tasks in which learners have more power and control over their learning. In such situations, learners are provided with “numerous options and a great deal of autonomy”. Yang advocates teaching students how to be creative in using the language. In other words, teachers need to provide contexts for learners to practice structures they already know to new and unexpected situations which allows them “to take part in genuine communicative tasks, and (...) respond appropriately in new situations outside the classroom”. By practicing the “key grammar” rules in real life contexts, students will develop authentic language use. Authentic materials such as TV and radio broadcasts and conversations offer students an access to authentic language. According to Yang, reading hotel brochures and airport notices, for instance, fosters students’ successful use and understanding of real life communication outside the classroom. He believed that bringing “authentic data into the classroom can assist learners to see how grammatical forms operate in context (...) [and] experience the language item in interaction with other closely related grammatical and discourse elements” (341).

### 3.2.5.3. Balancing Skills

The Communicative-Structural approach balances between learning grammatical forms and communication skills. Using activities and tasks that require students to interact fosters employing communication skills while they transmit information bearing a given language structure. The Communicative-Structural Approach is concerned with developing the four-fold language skills that are reading, writing, listening and speaking. It employs communicative tasks and activities to incorporate the four language skills simultaneously and enhance their learning. The Information Gap activity, for example, “practices listening and speaking, reading and writing at the same time, i.e., students skim and scan (reading skills) for missing information, exchange information (listening and speaking) and jot down the missing information (writing) and use thinking skills in the process” (Chung, 2014: 47). In the Communicative-Structural Approach, then, students are provided with:

opportunities to develop each skill: students *listen* (to the teacher use the target language, to a song, to one another in a pair activity), *speak* (pronunciation practice, greetings, dialogue creation or recitation, songs, substitution drills, oral speed reading, role play), *read* (instructions, written grammar drills, cards for playing games, flashcards) and *write* (fill-in-the-blank sheets, sentences that describe a feeling, sight or experience, a dialogue script, a journal entry) (Bilash, 2009).

The Communicative-Structural Approach adapts from four approaches that are the Focal Skill Approach, Content-based Instruction, Task-based Instruction, and the Project-based Approach. Like the Focal Approach that “stresses the balanced development of listening, speaking, reading and writing” in order to develop the weakest skill through measurement, the Communicative-Structural Approach tends to measure students’ proficiency and emphasizes



the weakest language skills. The four skills are enhanced in Content-based Instruction by means of teaching through themes. “Theme-based (...) focuses on a theme of high interest to students and develops a wide range of language skills around that theme”. The four skills are exploited in order to learn the content. In Task-based Instruction, the use of tasks and activities is essential in learning. In order to fulfil tasks, especially those “complex (multi step) real-life tasks that take learners into the world outside the classroom”, students need to make use of all the four skills. Finally, the Project-based Approach requires students to produce language in its both forms (spoken and written) as a demonstration of what they have learned (Bilash, 2009).

#### **3.2.5.4. Personalisation**

The notion of students expressing their ideas, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, preferences, and opinions, and associating the target language to their own experiences is referred to as personalisation. Personalisation results in true communication because it involves learners in exchanging real information about themselves. Personalisation is considered an essential criterion in designing classroom tasks and activities due to the fact that “it makes language relevant to learners, makes communication activities meaningful, and also helps memorisation” (Personalisation, 2016) of grammar more efficiently.

English textbooks, as cited by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), are designed based on generalisations and with a “generalised audience” in mind. Cunningsworth (1995) raised the necessity for adapting, adjusting, and personalising those textbooks to suit students’ needs and interests (Chung, 2014: 47). Chung clarified that personalising textbooks does not imply changing them totally, changes, for example, might be of proper names, places, etc. He justified that those small modifications may bring the tasks closer to the students, “add fun to the learning process and reduce fears of learning a language” (48). According to “Teach This”

website, the importance of personalising materials lies in making them relevant to students. Take the example of “studying English in Thailand, (...) [and reading] a text about what John did in New York last week”. Students “will have little to no interest (...) because the context is so far removed from what they know”. This, in fact, might affect their learning acquisition process. However, students will be more engaged in learning a real and meaningful language if the situation is adapted (changing “John” to “I” and “New York” to “Bangkok”).

That is the reason why, the Communicative-Structural Approach devices activities in the classroom in relation to the students’ needs and interests. It advocates personalising materials to “produce excellent results, and provide (...) students with a successful and dynamic learning experience”.

#### **3.2.5.5. Adjustment of the Teacher’s Role**

Communicative Language Teaching suggests minimizing the teacher’s role and leave “space for the learners” (Spaventa, 1980, as cited by Littlewood, 1992:98, In Chung, 2014: 48). The Structural Approach, on the other hand, puts too much emphasis on the teacher and the importance s/he possesses in controlling the classroom. The teacher plays a major role in language classes. According to Chung, introverted learners might be discouraged from participating if the teacher’s control is lessened. However, “too much control may stifle participation or creativity altogether” (48). This is why, the Communicative-Structural Approach proposes adapting the teacher’s role to the situation. If the language element requires more work from the teacher, it is teacher-centered while it is a learner-centered approach if the activity requires more work from students and only the backup of the teacher.

To conclude, the Communicative-Structural Approach suggests the implementation of a number of communicative tasks to complement the structural activities. They are supposed to co-work to guarantee a successful teaching and learning.

## **Conclusion**

The Communicative Approach and Structural approach have long been analysed, discussed, and investigated for their effectiveness in teaching languages, specifically, English. There has been much evidence which has identified their advantages as well as shortcomings. This has led to the integration of both in order to avoid their weaknesses. The Communicative-Structural approach is the combination of the CLT and SA as an attempt to facilitate the teaching and learning practices.

## **Introduction**

The current study is concerned with the English article system and the way of teaching it. It aims at examining and testing the Communicative-Structural Approach as well as providing answers to its effectiveness when it comes to teaching grammar, and more precisely, one grammatical aspect that is the English article system. In order to test our hypothesis “if the English article system is taught systematically through the Communicative-Structural Approach, students’ grammatical competence would improve”, we have carried out a pre-test post-test control group experimental design.

### **4.1. The Sample**

This experiment was carried out at the Department of Letters and English, University “Frères Mentouri”, Constantine. The sample of our study, 50 students, was chosen at random from the whole population of 300 second year English students. The latter was divided into two groups: one experimental group containing 25 students and an equally numbered group that is the control group. The subjects were taught articles using two different approaches; the Communicative-Structural Approach with the Experimental Group and Communicative Language Teaching with the Control Group, for a period of two weeks. They were not aware of the aims of our research so as to guarantee authentic and unbiased answers.

### **4.2. The Test**

The test is divided into two parts. The first part, which is taken and adapted from (Hartle, 2003: 341), is a passage with 24 gaps to be filled with an article: a/n, the, or zero article. In the second activity, the students are asked to write a paragraph explaining the difficulties that they face in the process of learning English. What to be tested is their ability to use articles correctly. The test lasted for an hour.

### **4.3. Instruction**

The teaching part started in the second semester after assessing all the students in using articles so as to make sure of their actual understanding and level (which is the aim behind conducting the pre-test). The control group and the experimental group were taught the same content (the English article system) but differently. As we are comparing the Communicative Approach to the Communicative-Structural one, our control group was taught in a natural context focusing on the communicative skills that could be grasped as opposed to the experimental group. The latter emphasizes a systematic instruction by the teacher.

#### **4.3.1. The Control Group**

After sitting for the pre-test, the students were taught articles following one of the Communicative Approach's main principles that is in a natural context, dealing with authentic discourse both written and oral in order to develop the communicative skills of the learners.

The first step in introducing articles was through songs. The learners listened to the song "Young Hearts Run Free" by Candy Staton first. As a warm up, they had to write down whatever they heard. That was one way to see whether they could notice articles being articulated by native speakers. Then, they were given worksheets with article gaps. The students were instructed to write the article whenever they heard it. After listening to the song twice and filling the gaps, they worked in pairs verifying and correcting their peers' answers and there was a class discussion later, it was not traditional though. The students sang along and whenever they reached a gap they stopped to answer all together. The reasons behind each answer were asked of the students and they had to guess the rules of use themselves as well as explaining them to each other. The second song "It's My Life" by Bon Jovi was also dealt with like the previous one: writing down all the lyrics, filling the article gaps, peer correction and class discussion. The whole activity lasted for 40 minutes.

The motives of using songs to introduce the lesson “Articles” to the students are several, naming few:

- Breaking the ice and motivating the learners to deal with the given grammatical aspect in a fun way,
- Introducing the English article system in an authentic discourse by native speakers,
- Listening to how native speakers pronounce articles and check on the students’ understanding,
- Improving the social skills and communication among the learners and between them and their teacher.

The second step in the lesson was dealing with the written discourse and the students’ ability to grasp the rules after analyzing an authentic discourse again. The students were given an excerpt taken from “Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus” by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. The class was divided into five sub-groups of five. One student from each group volunteered to read to the other four in the same sub-group. The learners were asked to identify all the words that precede every noun in the text and circle all the articles. After that they had to explain each article instance and come up with the rules underlying the article use. After working on the assignment for 40 minutes and because time was up, the students were asked to finish the task together after the class and make further research about the English article system.

In the second session, the same control group students sat in their former groups and a class discussion was held with the groups debating and explaining their answers. At the end a set of rules was agreed on by the five sub-groups and written by the whole class.

The teacher’s role was only to organize the debate, make sure the rules are correct and that everybody was involved in the discussion.

### **4.3.2. The Experimental Group**

With the experimental group focus was not only on the communicative aspect but it included a more structural feature.

The lesson was initiated by a communicative task taken from a book by Mario Rinvolucri entitled “Grammar Games: Cognitive, affective and drama activities for EFL students”. In the activity “Defining Birds and Brothers” the students were first made aware of the idea of indefiniteness. They were paired, given birds worksheets and asked to write sentences defining them. After the time allocated that was 10 minutes, each pair proposed their definition which was written on the board and being discussed (considering its grammatical accuracy) by the whole class. The same procedure took place while defining brothers and sisters. However, the male students started their definitions with either: a sister or sisters and the opposite was true.

After almost an hour of practicing indefiniteness, the students were introduced to definiteness. They were grouped into two equal teams competing against each other. Two students representing each group sat opposite each other. One held a group of pens with different colors and released them in the centre of a table they were both sitting at and asked the opposing student to take one or more pens according to the former’s instructions. They carried on until the table was cleared. If at any time the student failed to follow the instruction, the one giving instructions marks a point for his/her team. The task went on for 30 minutes with a winning group. The losing team were asked to make further research about the notion of definiteness (since they found difficulties to follow the instructions) and report to the others in the following session.

In the second session, the experimental group’s participants dealt with the same text of the control group students. Yet, after that task they were not asked to make research about the

rules. The teacher's role was to explain those rules and make sure to give an exhaustive explanation of the rules of use of the English article system.

At the end, a handout taken from Woodward (1997: 144) was given to the learners on which they wrote their names and had to fill in as many articles as possible during the time allocated which was 3 minutes. When they heard the word "pass", they did pass their paper to another student who in turn tried to fill in the rest of the articles. Later, the teacher announced the last exchange and each student corrected the paper they were left with.

When peer correction ended, there was another whole class correction with the teacher whose role was not only as the monitor of the classroom but the tutor as well.

#### **4.4. Analysis of the Results of the Test**

##### **4.4.1. The Pre-Test**

The aim of conducting the pre-test is to use its results which reflect the students' actual knowledge of the use of articles as a reference for comparison with the post-test's results. The results of the experimental and control group obtained are summarized in the following tables.

##### **4.4.1.1. The Control Group**

###### **– Part One: Filling Gaps**

###### **Gap1: Jane Goodall is ..... famous scientist: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

All the students in the control group answered the first gap, (a + Adj. + CN Sing.), correctly where the indefinite article is required with countable nouns singular preceded by an adjective. This gap seems easy for the students as it is not an exception to the rule. In fact, it follows the rule that necessitates the indefinite article "a" with countable nouns singular used in non specific or indefinite situations.



**Gap 2: She became famous for her studies of ..... chimpanzees in Tanzania: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.1.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 2: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	15	60
Wrong Answer: the	10	40
Total	25	100

We can notice from Table 4.1. that 60% of the students filled the second gap, (Ø + CN Plur.), correctly in which no article is used before a countable noun plural. The rest, 40%, made the mistake of putting the definite article “the” instead, most probably considering the expression “chimpanzees in Tanzania” as specific, consequently requiring the definite article “the”.

**Gap 3: She was born in ..... heart of London: (the + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.2.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 3: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	22	88
Wrong Answer: a	02	08
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

Table 4.2. reveals that the majority of the students (88%) answered this gap correctly in which they had to use the definite article with a countable noun singular followed by the

prepositional phrase “of + noun phrase”. Two students (08%) used the indefinite article “a” and one student (04%) used the zero article “Ø”: these cases find no plausible explanation from the context.

**Gap 4: Her favorite books were the jungle book, by Rudyard Kipling, and ..... books about Tarzan: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.3.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 4: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	09	36
Wrong Answer: a	02	08
Wrong Answer: the	14	56
Total	25	100

In this gap, 64% (08% used “a” and 56% used “the”) of the students are wrong in using the appropriate article: they used the definite or indefinite article with a countable noun plural in an indefinite situation. The students who used the definite article “the” were possibly confused because of the proper noun “Tarzan” and thought the situation definite requiring the use of the definite article “the”.

**Gap 5: Books about Tarzan, ..... fictional character who was raised by apes: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.4.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 5: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	09	36

Wrong Answer: the	16	64
Total	25	100

Similarly, only 36% of the students filled the gap that necessitates the indefinite article “a” correctly. In this gap, they were supposed to use the indefinite article because it precedes a countable noun singular preceded by an adjective and occurring in an indefinite situation. All the students who answered in a wrong way (64%) have used the definite article “the” because they thought the situation was definite by the proper noun “Tarzan”.

**Gap 6: She worked as a secretary and a waitress to earn ..... enough money: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.5.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 6: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	20	80
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Wrong Answer: an	03	12
Total	25	100

It is clear from Table 4.5. that 80% of the students in the control group answered the sixth gap correctly in using no article with the uncountable noun “money” which is used in a non specific situation. Two students used the definite article “the” (08%) thinking the noun “money” was specific, and 12% used the indefinite article “an” because they thought the noun was countable and indefinite.

**Gap 7: She put her wages under ..... carpet in her mother’s living room: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.6.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 7: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	13	52
Wrong Answer: a	12	48
Total	25	100

About half of the students (52%), as shown in the above table, used the correct article which is the definite article “the” with a countable noun singular that is specific. However, 48% of the students have mistakenly used the indefinite article “a” thinking that the situation was indefinite and the writer was talking about any carpet and not a specific one, the one found in her mother’s living room.

**Gap 8: She sailed through ..... red sea: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.7.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 8: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	18	72
Wrong Answer: a	05	20
Wrong Answer: Ø	02	08
Total	25	100

This gap, like the previous one, where the students had to insert the definite article “the” with a countable noun specific, 72% of the students, as shown in Table 4.7., answered

correctly. As for the students who answered in a wrong way, 20% used the indefinite article “a” because they thought that it was any sea even though it was specifically mentioned that it was the “red sea”. Two students (08%) unexpectedly used the zero article “Ø” before a countable noun singular.

**Gap 9: Her uncle had arranged ..... job for her: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 10: in Nairobi with ..... British company: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

All the students in the control group filled gap 9, requiring the indefinite article with a countable noun singular in a non specific situation, correctly because they are familiar with such environment in which the article occurs. Thus, one can presume that they are aware of the indefinite article’s use.

**Table 4.8.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 10: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Total	25	100

Table 4.8. unveils that most of the students (72%) used the appropriate article in gap 10 which is the indefinite article “a” before a countable noun singular in a non specific situation. As for the rest of the students (28%), they mistakenly answered and used the definite article “the”. Their mistake could be related to the adjective “British” as they thought the situation was definite.

**Gap 11: She began her lifelong study of ..... chimpanzees: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 12: On ..... eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika: (the + Adj. + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.9.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 11: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	10	40
Wrong Answer: the	15	60
Total	25	100

It is obvious from Table 4.9. that 40% of the students used the right article, whereas 60% find it problematic to place the right article with countable nouns plural that are non specific. In gap 11, no article is needed; however those students used the definite article “the” instead. It is probable that they thought the writer was talking about specific chimpanzees that are found on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika.

**Table 4.10.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 12: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	19	76
Wrong Answer: an	06	24
Total	25	100

From Table 4.10., one can deduce that the students find the rules underlying the definite article use easy as their results are better in using it. In this gap where there is a countable noun preceded by an adjective and followed by the preposition “of + a noun phrase” that is said to define the situation, 76% of the students answered correctly. The students who answered in a wrong way used the indefinite article “an” because they thought that “Lake

Tanganyika” contains many shores, and the one mentioned in the passage was not a specific one, but they forgot that it was specific because the writer mentioned which one that is the “eastern shore”.

**Gap 13: Jane Goodall lived alone in ..... tent: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 14: Near ..... lake: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.11.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 13: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	23	92
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Total	25	100

Almost all the students (92%) answered gap 13 correctly. Only two students (08%) were mistaken in using the definite article “the” with a countable noun singular that is not specific. The noun tent was mentioned for the first time which called for the use of the indefinite article and not the definite one.

**Table 4.12.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 14: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	17	68
Wrong Answer: a	08	32
Total	25	100

As it is displayed in Table 4.12., only 68% of the students used the definite article “the” correctly. In this situation (gap 14) the countable noun singular “lake” is specific because it is mentioned for the second time in this passage. However, 32% of the students used the indefinite article “a” as they did not pay attention to the previous sentence in which the lake was mentioned for the first time. They believed that the situation was indefinite and the author was talking about any lake.

**Gap 15: Through ..... months and years: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 16: Of ..... patience: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.13.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 15: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	16	64
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Wrong Answer: a	02	08
Total	25	100

In gap 15, no article is used with a countable noun plural in a non specific situation and 64% of the students did so. Table 4.13. demonstrates that 28% of the students used the definite article “the” and 08% of them mistakenly used the indefinite article “a”. The students who used the definite article “the” assumed that the situation was definite by the preposition “of” which is not correct. As for the ones who used the indefinite article, their answer is not plausible for they used it before a plural noun which only accepts the definite article “the” when the situation is specific or the zero article “Ø” when it is general like in this gap.

**Table 4.14.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 16: “Ø”**



Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	10	40
Wrong Answer: the	11	44
Wrong Answer: a	04	16
Total	25	100

Table 4.14. exposes the control group students' deficiencies in using the zero article correctly as 60% (44% used "the" and 16% used "a") of them filled gap 16 incorrectly. They should use no article with an uncountable noun in a non specific situation while they did the opposite; the ones who used the definite article "the" confirmed that they have a problem with overusing it. The students who used the indefinite article "a" seem to have a problem with countable nouns because they thought the noun "patience" is countable, singular and indefinite.

**Gap 17: She won ..... trust of the chimps: (the + UnC N + of ...)**

**Table 4.15.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 17: "the"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	20	80
Wrong Answer: a	05	20
Total	25	100

Table 4.15. proves that the control group students find the definite article's rules easy to handle; 80% of the students filled gap 17 correctly. The latter is used with an uncountable noun followed by the preposition "of" which defines the noun more and gives it more

specifications. The rest, 20%, used the indefinite article “a” because they have a problem with countable and uncountable nouns; they thought the noun singular, and definite and indefinite ones as they used an indefinite article in a specific situation.

**Gap 18: Animals we share ..... world with as well: (the + CN Sing. that is unique)**

**Table 4.16.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 18: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	20	80
Wrong Answer: a	05	20
Total	25	100

As it is demonstrated in Table 4.16., 80% of the students filled gap 18 correctly, whereas 20% were mistaken in using the indefinite article “a” with a countable noun singular that is unique (world). There is only one world which we live in, but they unexpectedly supposed that the writer was talking about any world and not a specific one. That is why, they used the indefinite article.

**Gap 19: As ..... young woman: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.17.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 19: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	22	88
Wrong Answer: the	03	12
Total	25	100

Table 4.17. reveals that most of the students (88%) used the appropriate article which is the indefinite article followed by a countable noun singular in a non specific situation. Only 03 students (12%) used the wrong article that is the definite article “the”. They were wrong in assuming that the situation was specific as the author was describing “Jane Goodall”.

**Gap 20: She never received ..... undergraduate degree: (an + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.18.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 20: “an”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: an	15	60
Wrong Answer: the	04	16
Wrong Answer: Ø	06	24
Total	25	100

Table 4.18. displays that only 60% of the students used the right article, whereas 40% (24% used “Ø” and 16% used “the”) filled the gap requiring the indefinite article “an” followed by an adjective and a countable noun singular in a non specific situation the wrong way. The students who used the definite article “the” thought the noun “degree” was a specific one (undergraduate). As for the students who used the zero article “Ø”, there is no logical explanation for their use.

**Gap 21: She received a Ph. D. from ..... Cambridge University: (Ø + Name of a University)**

**Table 4.19.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap21: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
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Right Answer: Ø	09	36
Wrong Answer: the	16	64
Total	25	100

It is clear from Table 4.19. that only 36% of the students used the correct article in gap 21. The latter necessitates the use of no article because it is followed by a name of a university (Cambridge University). However, 64% of the students used the definite article “the” because they thought the situation was specific by mentioning a specific university.

**Gap 22: And became ..... excellent professor: (an + CN Sing.)**

All the control group students (100%) filled gap 22 correctly. The students were able to recognize that the indefinite article “an” is what actually modifies a countable noun singular in a non specific situation.

**Gap 23: She works tirelessly on behalf of endangered species and in support of ..... human treatment: (the + Adj. + UnC N Specific)**

**Table 4.20.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 23: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	09	36
Wrong Answer: a	12	48
Wrong Answer: Ø	04	16
Total	25	100

According to the results presented in Table 4.20., one can observe that 64% of the students (48% used “a” and 16% used “Ø”) used the wrong article in gap 23. The uncountable

noun “treatment” is specific which means that it is determined by the definite article “the”. The students who used the zero article “Ø” assumed that the noun “treatment” was not specific and those who used the indefinite article “a” thought it was countable singular and occurred in a general situation.

**Gap 24: Of animals in ..... captivity: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.21.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 24: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	07	28
Wrong Answer: the	12	48
Wrong Answer: a	06	24
Total	25	100

Table 4.21. demonstrates that the majority of the students (72%) have difficulties with the zero article. In gap 24, they ought to use no article with the uncountable noun “captivity” in which case, surprisingly, only 28% of the students did so while 48% of them used the definite article “the” and 24% used the indefinite article “a”.

The above results reveal that the learners have achieved better results with the indefinite article “a/n” as they all answered the gaps 1, 9 and 22 correctly (100%).

Concerning the wrong answers, we have calculated the average of all the right and wrong answers of the whole control group participants and obtained the following results:

- The mean of all the students’ right answers is 67% and it is 33% for their wrong answers.

– The mean of all the students’ right answers in using the indefinite article “a/n” is 81% marking the highest percentage while that of their wrong answers is 19% which means that the indefinite article “a/n” was easier for the students.

– The mean of all the students’ right answers in using the definite article “the” is 72% making the average of their wrong answers 28%.

– The mean of all the students’ right answers in using the zero article “Ø” is 48% that is almost the average which makes it the most challenging article as the average of all the students’ wrong answers is 52%.

**– Part Two: Writing a Paragraph**

The results of the students in the second activity which is writing a paragraph will be analyzed in terms of correct and wrong article uses found in all the students’ paragraphs. The right and wrong article uses have been grouped in three tables: one table for one article.

**Table 4.22.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Paragraph Writing: “a/n”**

a/n	N	%
Right use	63	70
Wrong use: the	07	07.77
Wrong use: Ø	20	22.22
Total	90	100

Table 4.22. demonstrates that the students’ percentage of the indefinite article “a/n” right use is 70%. The major problem they have is that they tend to use no article before countable nouns singular that are non specific. This tendency clearly means that the students lean towards avoiding using articles. 07.77% of them used the definite article “the” with

countable nouns singular in situations that are indefinite. This shows that they have a slight problem in determining definiteness and indefiniteness in their own writing.

**Table 4.23.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Paragraph Writing: “the”**

The	N	%
Right use	153	85
Wrong use: a	02	01.11
Wrong use: Ø	25	13.88
Total	180	100

According to the results displayed in the above table, one can notice that the students used the definite article “the” 153 times correctly which is more than their use of the indefinite article “a/n” (63 times). This entails that the students prefer the definite situations rather than the indefinite ones. As for their wrong use, 13.88% of the wrong answers are linked to the zero article “Ø”. The students, like with the indefinite article “a/n”, seem to avoid using the definite article “the” in situations where it is required which means that they avoid using articles. In their paragraphs, there were 25 specific situations that called for the use of the definite article, yet the students thought that they were indefinite and used no article. This also proves that the students have a problem with definiteness and indefiniteness.

**Table 4.24.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Paragraph Writing: “Ø”**

Ø	N	%
Right use	259	92.50
Wrong use: a	08	02.85
Wrong use: the	13	04.64

Total	280	100
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The number of the zero article “Ø” right uses (259) confirms what has been previously found in Table 4.22. and Table 4.23. The students favour the use of no article over the indefinite article “a/n” and the definite article “the”. What is positive about this is that their zero article use is 92.50% correct because this reveals that the students’ mastery of the zero article is quite good and, actually, impressive. Only 02.85% of their wrong article use is related to the indefinite article. The students used the indefinite article “a/n” with uncountable nouns in indefinite situations which unveils another problem they face in using articles that is the ability to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns. 04.64% of the mistakes were associated with the use of the definite article in general situations that necessitate no article. Again, this problem is related to definiteness and indefiniteness.

To summarize the above results, we have calculated the following means:

- The mean of all the students’ right article use is 82.50% which shows that the control students’ level in using articles properly is quite elevated.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the indefinite article “a/n” is 01.98%. This means that the students’ problems are not really related to the indefinite article use.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the definite article “the” is 03.74%. This percentage reveals that the students’ overuse of the definite article is a slight problem that can be easily handled.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the zero article “Ø” is 18.05%. This proportion which is the highest among the three articles confirms that the problems that the students have



in using the English articles properly hang mainly around the zero article. This further proves that there is a problem of avoidance that needs to be tackled.

#### 4.4.1.2. The Experimental Group

##### – Part One: Filling Gaps

##### **Gap1: Jane Goodall is ..... famous scientist: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

Like the control group students, all the experimental group students answered the first gap, (a + Adj. + CN Sing.), correctly where the indefinite article “a” comes before a countable noun singular preceded by an adjective. This gap seems easy for the students in both groups because it follows the rule that necessitates the indefinite article “a” with countable nouns singular used in non specific or indefinite situations. Besides, it is not an exception to any rule which makes its mastery quite possible.

##### **Gap 2: She became famous for her studies of ..... chimpanzees in Tanzania: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.25.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 2: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Total	25	100

We can notice from Table 4.25. that 72% of the students filled the second gap, (Ø + CN Plur.), correctly in which no article is used before a countable noun plural whereas 28% made the mistake of putting the definite article “the” instead. Similar to the control group students,

they probably thought the chimpanzees mentioned in the passage were specific ones, the ones found in Tanzania.

**Gap 3: She was born in ..... heart of London: (the + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.26.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 3: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	19	76
Wrong Answer: a	03	12
Wrong Answer: Ø	03	12
Total	25	100

In the gap where the students had to use the definite article “the” with a countable noun followed by the prepositional phrase “of + noun phrase”, 76% answered correctly while 24% unexpectedly made wrong answers; 12% of the mistaken students used the indefinite article “a” and an equal percentage of the students used the zero article “Ø”.

**Gap 4: Her favorite books were the jungle book, by Rudyard Kipling, and ..... books about Tarzan: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.27.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 4: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	13	52
Wrong Answer: a	02	08
Wrong Answer: the	10	40
Total	25	100

Only 52% of the students answered gap 4 correctly which has been proved challenging for both the experimental group and the control group students. As for the other students, they should have used no article with a countable noun plural in an indefinite situation. However, 40% used the definite article “the” and were probably misled by the proper noun “Tarzan”, and 08% used the indefinite article “a/n”. Surprisingly, one student even made another mistake related to the indefinite article, s/he used “an” before the noun “books” which is a spelling mistake, and “an” is only used before nouns that start with vowel sounds.

**Gap 5: Books about Tarzan, ..... fictional character who was raised by apes: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.28.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 5: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	05	20
Wrong Answer: the	20	80
Total	25	100

The most difficult article for the students seems to be the indefinite article. This can be observed from Table 4.28. in which only 20% filled the gap necessitating the indefinite article “a” correctly. As for the other students (80%), the gap was filled using the definite article “the”. The mistake might be the result of the students thinking that the situation was definite because of the proper noun “Tarzan”.

**Gap 6: She worked as a secretary and a waitress to earn ..... enough money: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.29.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 6: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	04	16
Wrong Answer: an	03	12
Total	25	100

Table 4.29. demonstrates that 72% of the students in the experimental group answered the sixth gap correctly in using no article with the uncountable noun “money” which is used in a non specific situation. The students who made wrong answers used the definite article “the” (16%) and the indefinite article “a”. Like with the control group students, we cannot find logical explanations for their misuse.

**Gap 7: She put her wages under ..... carpet in her mother’s living room: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.30.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 7: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	07	28
Wrong Answer: a	17	68
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

It is clear from Table 4.30. that most of the students (72%) found it problematic to use the appropriate article in this gap which needs to be filled in using the definite article “the”. Only 28% of the students figured it out while the other mistaken students used the zero article

“Ø” (04%) and the indefinite article “a” (68%). The latter thought that the situation was indefinite and the writer was talking about any carpet and not a specific one.

**Gap 8: She sailed through ..... red sea: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.31.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 8: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	21	84
Wrong Answer: a	04	16
Total	25	100

The results displayed in Table 4.31. show that the students (84%) answered gap 8 better in which the same situation of gap 7 occurs (the definite article followed by a countable noun specific). Only 16% wrongly used the indefinite article “a” because they thought that the author was not referring to any specific sea, neglecting that it was a specific one, the “red” one.

**Gap 9: Her uncle had arranged ..... job for her: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 10: In Nairobi with ..... British company: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

All the students in the experimental group, like the control group students, filled gap 9 that requires the use of the indefinite article “a” before a countable noun singular in a non specific situation correctly. This clearly implies that the indefinite article is easier to the students because they are familiar with such environment in which the article occurred. Thus, one can presume that they are aware of the indefinite article’s use.

**Table 4.32.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 10: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	14	56
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Wrong Answer: Ø	04	16
Total	25	100

Given the fact that gaps 9 and 10 are pretty similar (a + CN Sing.), the results presented in Table 4.32. seem to be contradictory with those found in gap 9. More than half of the students (56%) answered correctly while 28% of them answered wrongly using the definite article “the”. We assume the reason behind such a mistake is that the students thought the situation was definite because of the adjective “British” which precedes the noun. We can find no reasonable reason for those who used the zero article “Ø”.

**Gap 11: She began her lifelong study of ..... chimpanzees: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 12: On ..... eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika: (the + Adj. + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.33.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 11: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	17	68
Wrong Answer: the	08	32
Total	25	100

The experimental group students have the same problems as the control group participants. 32% of the students used the definite article “the” in gap 11 where no article is required before a countable noun plural as they thought that Goodall had studied about

specific ones that live on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika. Still, 68% of them answered correctly.

**Table 4.34.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 12: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	12	48
Wrong Answer: an	04	16
Wrong Answer: Ø	09	36
Total	25	100

The results in Table 4.34. are unusual because the students used the definite article “the” in other situations where it is not supposed to be used, yet in this case (gap 12), it must be used with a countable noun singular that is definite and only 48% of the students answered correctly while 16% used the indefinite article “an” as they believed that there were several shores and the author was not specifying the exact one. As for the students who used no article, they thought that the noun was uncountable occurring in a non specific situation.

**Gap 13: Jane Goodall lived alone in ..... tent: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 14: Near ..... lake: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.35.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 13: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	17	68
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Wrong Answer: Ø	06	24

Total	25	100
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Table 4.35 demonstrates the results of the students in using the indefinite article “a” with an indefinite countable noun singular (gap 13) in which 68% answered right while 32% (08% used “the” and 24% used “Ø”) provided wrong answers. The majority of the mistaken students (24%) used no article which cannot be justified as the noun “ten” is countable which accepts either “the” or “a” (which is the case of this gap). The students who used the definite article “the” (08%) thought that the tent was specific as it was the only one by the lake.

**Table 4.36.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 14: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	10	40
Wrong Answer: a	15	60
Total	25	100

Only 40% of the students filled this gap correctly. A considerable number of the students (60%) were erroneous in using the right article in gap 14 in which they had to use the definite article “the” because the noun is countable, singular and specific. The students apparently did not notice that the noun “lake” was mentioned for the second time, or they most probably did not know the rule which says that nouns mentioned for the second time become definite. Thus, they used the indefinite article “a”, thinking that the author was talking about any lake.

**Gap 15: Through ..... months and years: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 16: Of ..... patience: (Ø + UnC N)**



**Table 4.37.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 15: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	13	52
Wrong Answer: the	10	40
Wrong Answer: a	02	08
Total	25	100

Once more, the results of the experimental group are not promising. Table 4.37. demonstrates that 48% (40% used “the” and 08% used “a”) of the students used the definite and indefinite articles in the situations where the zero article is required. In gap 15, no article is used with a countable noun plural in a non specific situation. However, 08% of the students used the indefinite article “a” before a countable noun plural which means that they are completely unaware of the fact that plural nouns can only preceded by the definite article “the” in specific contexts and the zero article “Ø” in indefinite situations like this one. The students who used the definite article “the” (40%) assumed that the noun is definite as it is followed the preposition “of” which is not correct.

**Table 4.38.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 16: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	16	64
Wrong Answer: the	03	12
Wrong Answer: a	06	24
Total	25	100

According to Table 4.38., only 64% of the students used the zero article correctly and 36% (12% used “the” and 24% used “a”) filled gap 16 incorrectly. They should use no article with an uncountable noun in a non specific situation while they used the definite article “the” and the indefinite article “a” instead. This further confirms their weaknesses in using both articles; overuse of the definite article and avoidance of the zero article. In addition, this shows that they have problems with defining countable and uncountable nouns as well as distinguishing definite and indefinite situations.

**Gap 17: She won ..... trust of the chimps: (the + UnC N + of ...)**

**Table 4.39.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 17: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	12	48
Wrong Answer: a	13	52
Total	25	100

Table 4.39. proves that the experimental group students find the definite article’s rules complicated. No more than 48% of the students filled gap 17 correctly. The latter is used with an uncountable noun followed by the preposition “of” which describes which trust, which is the one of the chimps. The students who wrongly answered (52%) used the indefinite article “a” before an uncountable noun specific because they thought that there are different “trusts” and she won only one “trust”.

**Gap 18: Animals we share ..... world with as well: (the + CN Sing. that is unique)**

**Table 4.40.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 18: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	20	80
Wrong Answer: Ø	05	20
Total	25	100

As it is displayed in Table 4.40., and like the control group students, 80% of the students filled gap 18 correctly, whereas only 20% were mistaken in using the zero article “Ø” before a countable noun singular that is unique (world). The students seem to have reversed the rules of the indefinite article “a” and the zero article “Ø”. In the previous gap (gap 17), the mistaken students used the indefinite article before an uncountable noun and in this gap (gap 18), they used the zero article “Ø” before a countable noun singular.

**Gap 19: As ..... young woman: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.41.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 19: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	17	68
Wrong Answer: the	08	32
Total	25	100

It is apparent from Table 4.41. that more than half of the students (68%) used the appropriate article which is the indefinite article “a” followed by a countable noun singular in a non specific situation. 32% used the definite article “the” because they might have thought the situation is definite because the gap is followed by the proper noun “Jane”.

**Gap 20: She never received ..... undergraduate degree: (an + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.42.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 20: “an”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: an	20	80
Wrong Answer: the	03	12
Wrong Answer: Ø	02	08
Total	25	100

Table 4.42. shows that most of the students (80%) filled the gap requiring the indefinite article “an” followed by an adjective and a countable noun singular in a non specific situation correctly. The other 5 students who mistakenly answered used the definite article “the” (12%) as they supposed the degree was a specific one, which is “undergraduate”, and the zero article “Ø” (08%) because they might have associated the article to be used to the word adjacent to it “undergraduate”, which they thought an uncountable noun and not an adjective.

**Gap 21: She received a Ph. D. from ..... Cambridge University: (Ø + Name of a University)**

**Table 4.43.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap21: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	07	28
Wrong Answer: the	18	72
Total	25	100

The results of the students in answering gap 21 are striking. Table 4.43. reveals that only 28% of the students, i. e. just 7 students used the correct article. This gap necessitates the

use of no article because it is followed by a name of a university (Cambridge University). However, most of them (72%) used the definite article “the” because they thought the situation was specific by mentioning a specific university and not any one.

**Gap 22: And became ..... excellent professor: (an + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.44.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 22: “an”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: an	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Total	25	100

Table 4.44. shows that the students’ performance in using the indefinite article “a/n” is better than the other two articles. In gap 22, 72% of them used the right article, they had to insert “an” before a countable noun in an indefinite situation. Yet, 28% answered in a wrong way, they used the definite article “the” most likely because they thought the author describing a specific professor, the excellent one.

**Gap 23: She works tirelessly on behalf of endangered species and in support of ..... human treatment: (the + Adj. + UnC N Specific)**

**Table 4.45.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 23: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	15	60
Wrong Answer: a	07	28
Wrong Answer: Ø	03	12

Total	25	100
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According to the results presented in Table 4.45., one can see that the students (60%), like the control group students, used the right article in gap 23. The uncountable noun “treatment” in this situation is definite which means that it needs to be preceded by the definite article “the”, whereas 12% of the students used no article as they assumed that the noun “treatment” is not specific and used in a general sense. The others (28%), however, used the indefinite article which clearly unveils their inability to decide whether it is countable or uncountable.

**Gap 24: Of animals in ..... captivity: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.46.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 24: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	08	32
Wrong Answer: the	12	48
Wrong Answer: a	05	20
Total	25	100

Table 4.46. confirms that the majority of the students have difficulties with the zero article. In gap 24, they ought to use no article with the uncountable noun “captivity” which was done by only 32% of the students while 20% of them used the indefinite article “a” and 48% used the definite article “the”. The students’ inability of determining whether nouns are countable or uncountable is translated in the misuse of the indefinite article “a” and the zero

article “Ø”, and whether the situation is specific or general through their confusion of using the definite article “the” or the zero article “Ø”.

What one can observe from the above tables is that the proportion of the learners’ correct answers varies between 100% and 20% and the percentage of their wrong answers varies from 80% to 0%. Like the control group, the experimental group has shown a better performance with the indefinite article. The mean of the correct and wrong answers was calculated as well and we got the following numbers:

- The mean of all the students’ right answers is 61.16% and the average of their wrong answers is 38.83%.
- The mean of all the students’ right answers in using the indefinite article “a/n” is 70.50% and the mean of their wrong answers is 29.50%.
- The mean of all the students’ right answers in using the definite article “the” is 58% and the one of their wrong answers is 42%.
- The mean of all the students’ right answers in using the zero article “Ø” is 55% and that of their wrong answers is 45%.

**– Part Two: Writing a Paragraph**

The results of the experimental group students in the second activity which is writing a paragraph will be also analyzed in terms of correct and wrong article uses found in all the students’ paragraphs. The right and wrong article uses have been grouped in three tables: one table for one article.

**Table 4.47.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Paragraph Writing: “a/n”**

a/n	N	%
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Right use	45	64.28
Wrong use: the	02	02.85
Wrong use: Ø	23	32.85
Total	70	100

Table 4.47. demonstrates that the students' percentage of the indefinite article "a/n" right use is 64.28%. Like the control group students, the major problem they have is that they tend to use no article before countable nouns singular, especially when they are preceded by an adjective. This tendency clearly means that the students lean towards avoiding using articles. Only 02.85% of them used the definite article "the" with countable nouns singular in situations that are indefinite. This shows that they have a slight problem in determining definiteness and indefiniteness in their own writing.

**Table 4.48.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Paragraph Writing: "the"**

The	N	%
Right use	100	76.92
Wrong use: a	03	02.30
Wrong use: Ø	27	20.76
Total	130	100

According to the results displayed in the above table, one can notice that the students used the definite article "the" 100 times correctly which is more than their use of the indefinite article "a/n" (only 45 times). This entails that the students prefer the definite situations rather than the indefinite ones. As for their wrong use, 20.76% of the wrong answers are linked to the zero article "Ø". The students, like with the indefinite article "a/n",



seem to avoid using the definite article “the” in situations where it is required, for example, before the expression “English language” and “university” which means that they avoid using articles. In their paragraphs, there were 27 specific situations that called for the use of the definite article, yet the students thought that they were indefinite and used no article. This also proves that the students have a problem with definiteness and indefiniteness.

**Table 4.49.: Pre-Test: Experimental Group: Paragraph Writing: “Ø”**

Ø	N	%
Right use	302	95.56
Wrong use: a	04	01.26
Wrong use: the	10	03.16
Total	316	100

The number of the zero article “Ø” right uses (302) confirms what has been previously found in Table 4.47. and Table 4.48. The students favour the use of no article over the indefinite article “a/n” and the definite article “the”. What is positive about this is that their zero article use is 95.56% correct because this reveals that the students’ mastery of the zero article is quite good and, actually, impressive. Only 01.26% of their wrongly used articles is related to the indefinite article. The students used the indefinite article “a/n” with uncountable nouns in indefinite situations which unveils another problem they face in using articles that is the inability to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns. 03.16% of the mistakes were associated with the use of the definite article in general situations that necessitate no article. Again, this problem is related to definiteness and indefiniteness.

To summarize the above results, we have calculated the following means:

- The mean of all the students’ right article use is 78.92% which shows that the control students’ level in using articles properly is quite good.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the indefinite article “a/n” is 01.78%. This means that the students’ problems are not really related to the indefinite article use.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the definite article “the” is 06.20%. This percentage reveals that the students’ overuse of the definite article is a slight problem that can be easily handled.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the zero article “Ø” is 26.80%. This proportion which is the highest among the three articles confirms that the problems that the students have in using the English articles properly hang mainly around the zero article. This further proves that there is a problem of avoidance that needs to be tackled.

#### **4.4.2. The Post-Test**

The post-test was conducted after the students had been taught articles using the two methods: Communicative Language Teaching and the proposed method which is the Communicative/Structural Approach. The results of the post-test are compared to the pre-test’s so that to measure the progress of each group’s participants in learning articles. In addition to that, the performance of the control group is compared with the one of the experimental group in order to see which group has better enhanced one’s results. The data obtained from the post-test is analyzed in the following tables.

##### **4.4.2.1. The Control Group**

###### **– Part One: Filling Gaps**

**Gap1: Jane Goodall is ..... famous scientist: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

The results of the students in the control group have not changed. All the students answered gap 1, (a + Adj. + CN Sing.), correctly (100%).

**Gap 2: She became famous for her studies of ..... chimpanzees in Tanzania: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.50.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 2: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	15	60
Wrong Answer: the	10	40
Total	25	100

We can notice from Table 4.50. that the results of the students in the post-test in filling gap 2 are consistent with their results in the pre-test. The percentage of the students who answered correctly is the same (60%). The rest of the students (40%) made the mistake of putting the definite article “the” instead. This could be related to their inability of inferring the rules of the definite article “the” and zero article “Ø” and applying them properly.

**Gap 3: She was born in ..... heart of London: (the + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.51.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 3: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	24	96
Wrong Answer: a	01	04
Total	25	100

Table 4.51. reveals that almost all the students (96%) answered this gap correctly in which they had to use the definite article with a countable noun singular followed by the prepositional phrase “of + noun phrase”. Only one student (04%) used the indefinite article “a”, which means that they have improved and the percentage of their progress is 08%.

**Gap 4: Her favorite books were the jungle book, by Rudyard Kipling, and ..... books about Tarzan: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.52.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 4: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	13	52
Wrong Answer: a	12	48
Total	25	100

In the gap where no article is used before a countable noun plural in an indefinite situation, 52% of the students answered correctly, whereas 48% mistakenly used the definite article “the” because they might have thought that the situation was definite. They were possibly confused because of the proper noun “Tarzan”. When compared with their results in the pre-test, we can see that they have improved by the percentage of 16%.

**Gap 5: Books about Tarzan, ..... fictional character who was raised by apes: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.53.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 5: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	08	32

Wrong Answer: the	16	64
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

Table 4.53. shows that the students have not improved their results in filling the gap that necessitates the indefinite article. One student (4%) used no article “Ø” while 64% used the definite article “the”; perhaps they thought the situation was definite by the proper noun “Tarzan”. Therefore, we have measured a decrease of 04% in the percentage of their correct answers.

**Gap 6: She worked as a secretary and a waitress to earn ..... enough money: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.54.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 6: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	23	92
Wrong Answer: an	02	08
Total	25	100

It is clear from Table 4.54. that 92% of the students in the control group answered the sixth gap correctly in using no article with the uncountable noun “money” which is used in a non specific situation. They seem to have grasped the rule of the zero article that needs to be used with uncountable nouns occurring in indefinite situations. Thus, they have increased their results by 12%.

**Gap 7: She put her wages under ..... carpet in her mother’s living room: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.55.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 7: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	16	64
Wrong Answer: a	09	36
Total	25	100

Similarly, 3 students, as shown in the above table, changed their answers and used the right article which is the definite article “the” with a countable noun that is specific. However, 36% of the students mistakenly used the indefinite article “a” thinking that the situation was indefinite and the writer was talking about any carpet and not a specific one. The students’ progress is represented by a percentage of 12%.

**Gap 8: She sailed through ..... red sea: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.56.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 8: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	22	88
Wrong Answer: a	02	08
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

As for gap 8 which is similar to gap 7 in which the students had to insert the definite article “the” with a countable noun specific, 88% of the students, as shown in Table 4.56.,

answered correctly. Two students (08%) used the indefinite article “a” and only one student (04%) used no article “Ø”. The improvement in their performance is impressive and is 16%.

**Gap 9: Her uncle had arranged ..... job for her: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 10: In Nairobi with ..... British company: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.57.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 9: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	24	96
Wrong Answer: the	01	04
Total	25	100

Surprisingly, one student changed his/her answer from right to wrong in gap 9. The percentage of the students’ right answers has, hence, decreased from 100% to 96%. The student used the definite article “the” before a countable noun singular that occurs in an indefinite situation which s/he has thought specific for being a specific job in Nairobi.

**Table 4.58.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 10: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Total	25	100

Table 4.58. displays the results of the students in using the indefinite article “a” before a countable noun singular that is indefinite. The percentage of the students’ right and wrong

answers are 72% and 28% respectively which are the same as the ones found in the pre-test. This implies that no improvement has taken place.

**Gap 11: She began her lifelong study of ..... chimpanzees: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 12: on ..... eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika: (the + Adj. + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.59.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 11: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	13	52
Wrong Answer: the	12	48
Total	25	100

It is obvious from Table 4.59. that there is a progress of 04% in the students’ performance in filling in gap 11 and using no article with countable nouns plural that occur in indefinite situations. Nevertheless, 48% of the students still find it problematic to place the right article with countable nouns plural that are non specific. They used the definite article “the” which implies that the students overuse it

**Table 4.60.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 12: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	18	72
Wrong Answer: an	04	16
Wrong Answer: Ø	03	12
Total	25	100



From Table 4.60., one can notice that the students' percentage of correct answers decreased by 04%. The students are assumed to have tried to minimize their overuse of the definite article "the". The percentages of their right and wrong answers are 72% and 28% (16% used "an" and 12% used "Ø") respectively. This implies that the students still have problems.

**Gap 13: Jane Goodall lived alone in ..... tent: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 14: Near ..... lake: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.61.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 13: "a"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	23	92
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Total	25	100

Almost all the students (92%) answered gap 13 correctly. Only two students (08%) were mistaken in using the definite article "the" with a countable noun singular in a non specific situation. The results are consistent with the findings of the pre-test, so we observe no improvement.

**Table 4.62.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 14: "the"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	11	44
Wrong Answer: a	12	48
Wrong Answer: Ø	02	08

Total	25	100
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The results displayed in Table 4.62. in answering gap 14 are astonishing. The students (08%) changed their answers from correct to wrong. This was an attempt to lessen their overuse of the definite article “the” which has turned out to be wrong and unsuccessful. Given that the percentage of their right answer is 44%, of their wrong answer related to the zero article is 8%, and the highest proportion which is of their wrong answer linked to the indefinite article is 48%., one can infer that the students did not pay attention to the fact that the noun “lake” was mentioned twice. In this sentence it was mentioned for the second time which made the context definite.

**Gap 15: Through ..... months and years: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 16: Of ..... patience: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.63.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 15: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	23	92
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Total	25	100

Unlike the previous gap (gap 14) where the students had to use the definite article “the” correctly, Table 4.63. demonstrates that the students have progressed by 28% in using no article with plural indefinite nouns (gap 15). The proportion of their right answer is 92% while it is only 8% for their wrong answer (they used the definite article “the”). Such

improvement is a positive sign of the students' understanding of the rules of the zero article "Ø".

**Table 4.64.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 16: "Ø"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	23	92
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Total	25	100

There is a dramatic change and improvement in the students' results presented in Table 4.64. Most of the students (92%) answered gap 16 correctly in which no article is used with an uncountable indefinite noun. Like in the previous gap, only 02 students used the definite article "the" instead. The percentage 52% is their calculated progress. This shows that the students have understood the rules of using the zero article "Ø".

**Gap 17: She won ..... trust of the chimps: (the + UnC N + of ...)**

**Table 4.65.: Pre-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 17: "the"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	20	80
Wrong Answer: a	04	16
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

Table 4.65. proves that the control group students have not enhanced their performance in using the definite article "the" because we found the same results. In other words, the

proportion of their right answer is 80% while it is 16% for their wrong use related to the indefinite article “a” as they considered the uncountable noun “trust” countable, singular, and indefinite. One student (04%) used no article “Ø” perhaps for the same reason that is the noun is indefinite.

**Gap 18: Animals we share ..... world with as well: (the + CN Sing. that is unique)**

**Table 4.66.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 18: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	23	92
Wrong Answer: Ø	02	08
Total	25	100

As it is demonstrated in Table 4.66., almost all of the students (92%) filled gap 18 correctly whereas only 2 students (08%) were mistaken in using the zero article “Ø” with a countable noun singular that is unique (world). We can notice a progress of 12%.

**Gap 19: As ..... young woman: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.67.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 19: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	06	24
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

Table 4.67. reveals that the students' results in using the indefinite article "a" before a countable noun singular which is indefinite have decreased by 16%. The percentage of the correct answer is 72% whereas 24% of the students thought the situation was definite as the author was describing a specific person "Jane" and used the definite article "the".

**Gap 20: She never received ..... undergraduate degree: (an + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.68.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 20: "an"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: an	15	60
Wrong Answer: the	03	12
Wrong Answer: Ø	07	28
Total	25	100

Table 4.68. displays that a considerable number of the students (40%) filled the gap requiring the indefinite article "an" followed by an adjective and a countable noun singular in a non specific situation the wrong way; 28% of them used no article "Ø" while 12% used the definite article "the". No improvement is witnessed in their performance.

**Gap 21: She received a Ph. D. from ..... Cambridge University: (Ø + Name of a University)**

**Table 4.69.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 21: "Ø"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	15	60
Wrong Answer: the	09	36

Wrong Answer: a	01	04
Total	25	100

It is clear from Table 4.69. that 24% of the students changed their answers and used the right article. The situation necessitates the use of no article because it is a name of a university (Cambridge University). Still, the mistaken students used the definite article “the” (36%) because they thought the situation was specific by mentioning a specific university.

**Gap 22: And became ..... excellent professor: (an + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.70.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 22: “an”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: an	23	92
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Total	25	100

Two students (08%) incorrectly changed their answers from using the indefinite article “an” before an indefinite countable noun singular to using the definite article “the”. This is why the percentage of the students’ right answers has dropped to 92%. The students seem to have incorrectly induced the rules underlying the use of the indefinite article.

**Gap 23: She works tirelessly on behalf of endangered species and in support of ..... human treatment: (the + Adj. + UnC N Specific)**

**Table 4.71.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 23: “the”**

Answer	N	%
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Right Answer: the	16	64
Wrong Answer: a	03	12
Wrong Answer: Ø	06	24
Total	25	100

According to the results presented in Table 4.71., one can observe a considerable improvement in the students' performance in using the definite article "the". The percentage of their correct answer is 64%. As for the students who used wrong articles, 12% used the indefinite article "a" which shows their inability of determining definiteness and indefiniteness, and 24% used the zero article "Ø" which entails that they have a problem in distinguishing between countable and uncountable nouns.

**Gap 24: Of animals in ..... captivity: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.72.: Post-Test: Control Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 24: "Ø"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	07	28
Wrong Answer: the	13	52
Wrong Answer: a	05	20
Total	25	100

No improvement is noticed in the students' results. The majority of the students still have difficulties with the zero article. In gap 24, they ought to use no article with the uncountable noun "captivity" in which case only 28% of the students did so while 52% of

them used the definite article “the” and 20% used the indefinite article “a”. The same problem exists because they tend to have improperly inferred the rules.

The results of the students in the post-test show that the highest proportion of the learners’ right answers is 100% and the lowest is 28%. Like in the pre-test, their performance was better with the indefinite article “a/n”. In order to determine the students’ progress we have also computed the mean of all the right and wrong students’ responses.

– The average of all the students’ correct answers is 72.66% which is higher than the pre-test’s average. The mean of all their wrong answers is 27.33%.

– The mean of all the students’ correct answers in using the indefinite article “a/n” is 77% and that of their wrong answers is 23% which is lower than the pre-test’s.

– The average of all the learners’ correct responses in using the definite article “the” is 75% which means the mean of their wrong answers is 25%.

– The average of all the learners’ right answers in using the zero article “Ø” is 66% and the one of their wrong answers is 34% which is a considerable improvement in learning the zero article.

**– Part Two: Writing a Paragraph**

**Table 4.73.: Post-Test: Control Group: Paragraph Writing: “a/n”**

a/n	N	%
Right use	58	70.73
Wrong use: the	04	04.87
Wrong use: Ø	20	24.39
Total	82	100



Table 4.73. demonstrates that the students' percentage of the indefinite article "a/n" right use has been slightly enhanced by 0.73% which means that the percentage of the right use of the indefinite article has become 70.73%. The major problem they have is that they tend to use no article "Ø" before countable nouns singular that are non specific (24.39%) and a minor difficulty they face is using the definite article "the" before countable nouns singular in situations that are indefinite (04.87%). This shows that they still lean towards avoiding the use of articles and have a small problem with definiteness and indefiniteness.

**Table 4.74.: Post-Test: Control Group: Paragraph Writing: "the"**

The	N	%
Right use	126	85.13
Wrong use: a	01	0.67
Wrong use: Ø	21	14.18
Total	148	100

According to the results displayed in the above table, one can notice that the students have barely progressed by a percentage of 0.13%. The definite article "the" has been used 126 times correctly (85.13%) which is more than their use of the indefinite article "a/n" (70.73%). This entails that the students prefer the definite situations rather than the indefinite ones (this was also found in Table 4.73. in which four instances of indefiniteness were erroneously replaced by definite ones). As for their wrong use, one student (0.67%) used the indefinite article "a" with a superlative that is a lower percentage than the one found in the pre-test (01.11%), and 14.18% of the wrong answers are linked to the zero article "Ø" which is higher than the one found in the pre-test (13.88%). The students, like with the indefinite article "a/n",

seem to avoid using the definite article “the” in situations where it is required which means that they avoid using articles. In their paragraphs, there were 21 specific situations that called for the use of the definite article, yet the students thought that they were indefinite and used no article. For instance, the students used no article before the expression “English language”, “university”, and countable nouns specific followed by the prepositional phrase “of + noun phrase”. This also proves that the students have a problem with definiteness and indefiniteness.

**Table 4.75.: Post-Test: Control Group: Paragraph Writing: “Ø”**

Ø	N	%
Right use	289	94.13
Wrong use: a	03	0.97
Wrong use: the	15	04.88
Total	307	100

The number of the zero article “Ø” right uses (289) confirms what has been previously found in Table 4.73. and Table 4.74. The students favour the use of no article over the indefinite article “a/n” and the definite article “the”. What is positive about this is that their zero article use is 94.13% correct which is higher than the one found in the pre-test (92.50%). Only 0.97% of their wrong article use is related to the indefinite article “a”. The students used the indefinite article “a/n” before countable nouns plural and with uncountable nouns in indefinite situations which unveils another problem they still face in using articles that is the ability to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns. 04.88% of the mistakes were associated with the use of the definite article “the” before countable nouns plural and

uncountable nouns in indefinite situations that necessitate no article, for example, before the word “pronunciation”. Again, this problem is related to definiteness and indefiniteness.

To summarize the above results, we have calculated the following means:

- The mean of all the students’ right article use is 83.33% which shows that the control group students’ level in using articles properly has been improved by 0.83%.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the indefinite article “a/n” is 0.82%. This means that the students have reduced the problems they have that are related to the indefinite article “a” by 01.16%.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the definite article “the” is 04.87%. This percentage reveals that the students still overuse the definite article “the” as the proportion of their wrong use has increased by 01.13% which is a minor issue that needs to be handled.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the zero article “Ø” is 19.28%. This proportion which is the highest among the three articles and which has increased by 01.23% confirms that the problems that the students have in using the English articles properly hang mainly around the zero article. This further proves that there is a problem of avoidance that needs to be tackled.

#### **4.3.2.2. The Experimental Group**

##### **– Part One: Filling Gaps**

**Gap1: Jane Goodall is ..... famous scientist: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

Like in the pre-test, all the students answered the first gap correctly where the indefinite article “a” comes before a countable noun singular preceded by an adjective in the post-test.

**Gap 2: She became famous for her studies of ..... chimpanzees in Tanzania: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.76.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 2: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Total	25	100

We can notice from Table 4.76. that 72% of the students filled the second gap, (Ø + CN Plur.), correctly in which no article is used before a countable noun plural, whereas 28% made the mistake of putting the definite article “the” instead. Similar to the control group students, the results are consistent with the pre-test and no progress is detected.

**Gap 3: She was born in ..... heart of London: (the + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.77.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 3: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	21	84
Wrong Answer: a	01	04
Wrong Answer: Ø	03	12
Total	25	100

In the gap where the students had to use the definite article “the” with a countable noun followed by the prepositional phrase “of + noun phrase”, 84% answered correctly which means that 08% of the erroneous students changed their answers from wrong to right. A fewer

number of the students (16%) made wrong answers; 04% used the indefinite article “a” and 12% used the zero article “Ø”. The above table, then, suggests that there is an improvement.

**Gap 4: Her favorite books were the jungle book, by Rudyard Kipling, and ..... books about Tarzan: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Table 4.78.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 4: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	17	68
Wrong Answer: the	08	32
Total	25	100

The measured progress of the students in the post-test is 16%. A higher number of them (68%) answered gap 4 correctly, which has been proved challenging for both the experimental group and the control group students. As for the other 32%, they should have used no article with a countable noun plural in an indefinite situation. However, they used the definite article “the” and were probably misled by the proper noun “Tarzan”.

**Gap 5: Books about Tarzan, ..... fictional character who was raised by apes: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.79.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 5: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	04	16
Wrong Answer: the	20	80
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04

Total	25	100
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The most difficult article for the students seems to be the indefinite article “a”. This can be observed from Table 4.79. in which only 16% of the students filled the gap necessitating the indefinite article “a” correctly. As for the other students (84%), the gap was filled using the zero article “Ø” (04%) and the definite article “the” (80%). The mistake might be the result of the students thinking that the situation is definite because of the proper noun “Tarzan”. The percentage of the students’ right answers has dropped by 04%.

**Gap 6: She worked as a secretary and a waitress to earn ..... enough money: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.80.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 6: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	20	80
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Wrong Answer: an	03	12
Total	25	100

Table 4.80. demonstrates that two students (08%) used the definite article “the” and three others (12%) used the indefinite article “an” for the same reasons that were discussed in the pre-test. Still, 80% of them answered the sixth gap correctly in using no article with the uncountable noun “money” which is used in a non specific situation. There is a progress of 08% in the students’ performance which entails that the approach is, so far, successful.

**Gap 7: She put her wages under ..... carpet in her mother’s living room: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.81.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 7: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	17	68
Wrong Answer: a	07	28
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

It is clear from Table 4.81. that 40% of the students changed their answers from wrong into correct. The percentage of their right answer is 68% while it is 04% for their wrong answer related to the zero article “Ø” and is dropped to 28% for the wrong answer associated with the definite article “the”. This dramatic improvement indicates that the students’ understanding of the rules of the definite article “the” has become better.

**Gap 8: She sailed through ..... red sea: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.82.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 8: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	23	92
Wrong Answer: a	01	04
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

The results displayed in Table 4.82. show that the students (92%) answered gap 8 better than the previous gap in which the same situation occurs (the definite article followed by a countable noun specific), and better than in the pre-test (84%). As for the wrong answers, one student used the indefinite article “a” and another used the zero article “Ø”. Therefore, the students have reduced the percentage of their wrong answers to 08% and can be, then, said to have progressed.

**Gap 9: Her uncle had arranged ..... job for her: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 10: In Nairobi with ..... British company: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

All the students in the experimental group, like the control group students, filled gap 9 requiring the indefinite article with a countable noun singular in a non specific situation correctly in both tests, the pre-test and the post-test. This clearly implies that the indefinite article is easier to the students because they are familiar with such environment in which the article occurred. Thus, one can presume that they are aware of the use of the indefinite article “a”.

**Table 4.83.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 10: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	11	44
Wrong Answer: the	09	36
Wrong Answer: Ø	05	20
Total	25	100

The percentage of the students’ right answer has decreased. Only 44% of the students answered correctly while it is 56% for their wrong answers (36% used “the” and 20% used



“Ø”). The mistaken students who used the definite article thought the situation was definite because of the adjective “British” which precedes the noun. Thus, we can say that no progress has taken place.

**Gap 11: She began her lifelong study of ..... chimpanzees: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 12: On ..... eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika: (the + Adj. + CN + of ...)**

**Table 4.84.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 11: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	17	68
Wrong Answer: the	07	28
Wrong Answer: a	01	04
Total	25	100

The experimental group students have the same problems as the control group participants. One student (04%) used the indefinite article “a” and 28% used the definite article “the” in this situation (gap 11) where no article is required before a countable noun plural. Still, 68% of them answered correctly. The percentages are consistent with the ones found in the pre-test, so there is no change and development in the students’ performance.

**Table 4.85.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 12: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	24	96
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

There is a remarkably impressive change in the results displayed in Table 4.85. The percentage of the students' correct answers has increased to 96% as opposed to the 48% found in the pre-test. Only one student provided a wrong answer which is the zero article "Ø". The difference representing the development of the students in using the definite article "the" is 48%. Such a huge progress proves that the approach has been successful.

**Gap 13: Jane Goodall lived alone in ..... tent: (a + CN Sing.)**

**Gap 14: Near ..... lake: (the + CN specific)**

**Table 4.86.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 13: "a"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	21	84
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Wrong Answer: Ø	02	08
Total	25	100

Table 4.86 demonstrates that the results of the students in using the indefinite article "a" with an indefinite countable noun singular have increased by a percentage of 16%. Most of the students (84%) answered right while 16% provided wrong answers: 08% used the definite article "the" and another 08% used the zero article "Ø". One can say that there is a progress.

**Table 4.87.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 14: "the"**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	11	44
Wrong Answer: a	12	48

Wrong Answer: Ø	02	08
Total	25	100

The students were erroneous in using the right article in gap 14 in which they had to use the definite article “the” because the noun is countable, singular and specific. The students apparently did not notice that the noun “lake” was mentioned for the second time. Thus, they used the indefinite article “a” (48%), thinking that the author was talking about any lake. However, 08% thought the noun is uncountable and used the zero article “Ø”. Yet, we can still notice a slight progress in the students’ level which is 04%.

**Gap 15: Through ..... months and years: (Ø + CN Plur.)**

**Gap 16: Of ..... patience: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.88.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 15: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	20	80
Wrong Answer: the	03	12
Wrong Answer: a	02	08
Total	25	100

Once more, the results of the experimental group have been improved. Table 4.88. demonstrates that only 20% of the students used the definite article (12%) and the indefinite article (08%) in this situation where the zero article is required. In gap 15, no article is used with a countable noun plural in a non specific situation. However, 08% of the students used the indefinite article “a” before a countable noun plural which means that they are still

unaware of the rules underlying its use, and 12% of them used the definite article “the”. The percentage of the latter has decreased by 28% which means that those students have enhanced their performance and used the right article.

**Table 4.89.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 16: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	19	76
Wrong Answer: the	02	08
Wrong Answer: a	04	16
Total	25	100

According to Table 4.89., 12% of the students have progressed and used the zero article “Ø” correctly. The percentage of the wrong answers has been reduced to 08% in using the definite article “the” and to 16% in using the indefinite article “a”. This shows that they have worked on their problems; overuse of the definite article and avoidance of the zero article, distinguishing between countable and uncountable nouns, as well as between definite and indefinite situations.

**Gap 17: She won ..... trust of the chimps: (the + UnC N + of ...)**

**Table 4.90.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 17: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	21	84
Wrong Answer: a	01	04
Wrong Answer: Ø	03	12

Total	25	100
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Table 4.90. proves that the experimental group students have well understood the rules of the definite article “the” which used to be complicated (only 48% of the students answered correctly in the pre-test). In gap 17, the definite article is used with an uncountable noun followed by the preposition “of” which defines the noun more and gives it more specifications. The students who wrongly answered used the indefinite article “a” (04%) before an uncountable noun and the zero article “Ø” (12%) before a definite noun which suggests that they are still unaware of the appropriate rules underlying the use of articles. Nevertheless, the percentage of all the students correct answer has increased to 84% with a difference of 36%.

**Gap 18: Animals we share ..... world with as well: (the + CN Sing. that is unique)**

**Table 4.91.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 18: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	23	92
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Wrong Answer: a	01	04
Total	25	100

As it is displayed in Table 4.91., 92% of the students filled gap 18 correctly, whereas only 2 students were mistaken in using the zero article “Ø” and the indefinite article “a” before a countable noun singular that is unique (world). The students seem to have grasped

the rules of the definite article “the” because they have enhanced their results by a percentage of 12%.

**Gap 19: As ..... young woman: (a + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.92.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 19: “a”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: a	21	84
Wrong Answer: the	03	12
Wrong Answer: Ø	01	04
Total	25	100

It is apparent from Table 4.92. that most of the students (84%) used the appropriate article which is the indefinite article “a” followed by a countable noun singular in a non specific situation. The students (12%) used the definite article “the” because they might have thought the situation is definite because the gap is followed by the proper noun “Jane” and 04% used the zero article “Ø”. The students (16%) have ameliorated their understanding of the rules and answered correctly.

**Gap 20: She never received ..... undergraduate degree: (an + Adj. + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.93.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 20: “an”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: an	18	72
Wrong Answer: the	04	16
Wrong Answer: Ø	03	12

Total	25	100
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Table 4.93. shows that there is a decrease in the students’ performance. The students (08%) mistakenly changed their answers and filled the gap requiring the indefinite article “an” followed by an adjective and a countable noun singular in a non specific situation incorrectly. They used the definite article “the” (16%) and the zero article “Ø” (12%). Thus, the percentage of the students’ right answer has been reduced to 72% which is less than the one found in the pre-test by 08%.

**Gap 21: She received a Ph. D. from ..... Cambridge University: (Ø + Name of a University)**

**Table 4.94.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 21: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	13	52
Wrong Answer: the	12	48
Total	25	100

The results of the students in answering gap 21 are better. Table 4.94. reveals that 24% of the students, i. e. 6 students altered their answers and used the right article. This gap necessitates the use of no article because it is followed by a name of a university (Cambridge University). However, 48% of the students used the definite article “the” because they thought the situation was specific by mentioning a specific university. So, we can notice an improvement and a progress in their understanding of the rules.

**Gap 22: And became ..... excellent professor: (an + CN Sing.)**

**Table 4.95.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 22: “an”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: an	24	96
Wrong Answer: the	01	04
Total	25	100

Table 4.95. shows that the students’ performance in using the indefinite article “a/n” is better than the other two articles. The students have increased the proportion of their correct answer by 24%. This means that 96% have filled gap 22 correctly in which they had to insert the indefinite article “an” before a countable noun in an indefinite situation while the percentage of their wrong answers has dropped to only 4%.

**Gap 23: She works tirelessly on behalf of endangered species and in support of ..... human treatment: (the + Adj. + UnC N Specific)**

**Table 4.96.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 23: “the”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: the	15	60
Wrong Answer: a	04	28
Wrong Answer: Ø	06	12
Total	25	100

According to the results presented in Table 4.96., one can see that 60% of the students used the right article in gap 23. The uncountable noun “treatment” in this situation is definite which means that it needs to be preceded by the definite article “the”, whereas 12% of the



students used no article “Ø” and 28% used the indefinite article “a”. The students assumed that the noun “treatment” was not specific and used in a general sense, then, they were unable to specify whether it is countable or uncountable. The results are consistent with the ones found in the pre-test, so there is no improvement.

**Gap 24: Of animals in ..... captivity: (Ø + UnC N)**

**Table 4.97.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Filling Gaps: Gap 24: “Ø”**

Answer	N	%
Right Answer: Ø	09	36
Wrong Answer: the	10	40
Wrong Answer: a	06	24
Total	25	100

Table 4.97. confirms that the majority of the students have difficulties with the zero article “Ø”. In gap 24, they ought to use no article with the uncountable noun “captivity” which was done by only 36% of the students while 24% of them used the indefinite article “a” and 40% used the definite article “the”. The students’ inability of determining whether nouns are countable or uncountable is translated in the misuse of the indefinite article “a” and the zero article “Ø”, and whether the situation is specific or general through their confusion of using the definite article “the” or the zero article “Ø”. However, there is a slight progress of 04%.

The above results indicate that the highest percentage of the students’ correct answers is 100% (gaps 1 and 9) and the lowest is 16%. The proportion of their wrong answers varies between 84% and 0%. It is obvious that the indefinite article “a/n” is confusing for the

learners as they scored the highest and lowest percentage in using the same type of article.

The averages of all the students' correct and wrong answers are as follows:

– The mean of all the students' right answers is 72.83% and of their wrong answers is 27.16%.

– The average of all the learners' correct answers in using the indefinite article “a/n” is 74.50% and the mean of their wrong answers is 25.50%.

– The mean of all the students' right answers in using the definite article “the” is 77.50% while it is 22.50% for their wrong answers.

– The mean of all the students' correct answers in using the zero article “Ø” is 66.50% and that of their wrong answers is 33.50%.

– **Part Two: Writing a Paragraph**

**Table 4.98.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Paragraph Writing: “a/n”**

a/n	N	%
Right use	67	74.44
Wrong use: the	01	01.11
Wrong use: Ø	22	16.92
Total	90	100

Table 4.98. demonstrates that the students' percentage of the indefinite article “a/n” right use is 74.44% which is higher than the proportion found in the pre-test (64.28%). Like the control group students, the major problem they have is that they tend to use no article (16.92%) before countable nouns singular, especially when they are preceded by an adjective.

This tendency clearly means that the students lean towards avoiding using articles. Only 01.11% used the definite article “the” with countable nouns singular in situations that are indefinite. Hence, they have decreased their wrong use of the definite article by 01.74%. This shows that they have started to fix their problems related to definiteness and indefiniteness in their own writing.

**Table 4.99.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Paragraph Writing: “the”**

The	N	%
Right use	108	83.07
Wrong use: Ø	22	16.92
Total	130	100

According to the results displayed in the above table, one can notice that 83.07% of the students have used the definite article “the” correctly as opposed to the one found in the pre-test (76.92%). As for their wrong use, 16.92% of the wrong answers are linked to the zero article “Ø” which has been reduced by 03.84%. The students, like with the indefinite article “a/n”, seem to avoid using the definite article “the” in situations where it is required. In their paragraphs, there were 22 specific situations that called for the use of the definite article, yet the students thought that they were indefinite and used no article. This also proves that the students still have a problem with definiteness and indefiniteness. Nevertheless, their results have been improved and the students seem to have started to understand the rules underlying the use of the definite article “the”.

**Table 4.100.: Post-Test: Experimental Group: Paragraph Writing: “Ø”**

Ø	N	%
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Right use	303	97.11
Wrong use: a	03	0.96
Wrong use: the	06	01.92
Total	312	100

The number of the zero article “Ø” right uses (303) confirms what has been previously found in Table 4.98. and Table 4.99. The students favour the use of no article over the indefinite article “a/n” and the definite article “the”. What is positive about this is that their zero article use has been improved by 01.55% as the percentage of their right use has become 97.11%. This reveals that the students’ knowledge and mastery of the zero article is quite good and, actually, impressive. Only 0.96% of their wrong article use is related to the indefinite article. The students have used the indefinite article “a/n” with uncountable nouns in indefinite situations which unveils another problem they face in using articles that is the ability to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns. 01.92% of the mistakes were associated with the use of the definite article “the” in general situations that necessitate no article. Again, this problem is related to definiteness and indefiniteness. Yet, we cannot deny the fact that the students have improved their level and developed their understanding of articles use.

To summarize the above results, we have calculated the following means:

- The mean of all the students’ right article use is 84.87% which shows that the experimental group students’ level in using articles properly has been elevated by 05.95%.
- The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the indefinite article “a/n” is 0.32% which has been reduced by 01.46%. This means that the students’ problems are not really related to the indefinite article use.

– The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the definite article “the” is 01.51% which has been greatly decreased. This percentage shows that the students’ overuse of the definite article is has been handled.

– The mean of all the students’ wrong use of the zero article “Ø” is 16.92% which has enormously decreased by 09.88% which clearly demonstrates that the students have really progressed in using the zero article “Ø”. This proportion which is the highest among the three articles confirms that the problems that the students have in using the English articles properly hang mainly around the zero article.

#### **4.4.3. Overall Analysis of the Results of the Test**

As we have analyzed the data found in the pre-test and the post-test, we have found out that both the control group and the experimental group have enhanced their understanding of the rules underlying article use.

We have calculated and compared the mean of the three articles right and wrong answers in Part One: filling gaps, in both tests, the pre-test and the post-test.

– The mean of the right answers of the control group participants in using the indefinite article “a” in the pre-test is 81% while it is 77% in the post-test. This clearly shows that there is a decrease of 04% in the students’ level which is in gaps 5, 9, 19, and 22. As for the mean of the right answers of the experimental group students, it is 70.50% in the pre-test and 74.50% in the post-test. This indicates that the experimental group students have better answered because they have better assimilated the rules of the indefinite article “a” thoroughly explained by means of the Communicative/Structural Approach.

– The mean of the right answers of the control group students in using the definite article “the” in the pre-test is 72% whereas it is 75% in the post-test. There is a clear improvement in the students’ understanding of the definite article “the” rules of 03%. Concerning the mean of

the experimental group, it is 58% in the pre-test and 77.50% in the post-test which means that the students have improved by a percentage of 19.50%. Even though the students of the control group have improved, the results of the experimental group participants are better.

– The mean of the control group students' right answers in using the zero article "Ø" in the pre-test is only 48% as opposed to 66% in the post-test. It is obvious that there is a major progress in the students' understanding of the zero article "Ø" use of 18%. The experimental group students have also improved by a percentage of 11.50% as the ones found in the pre-test and post-test are 55% and 66.50% respectively. We can notice a better progress in the control group students' understanding of the zero article rules.

Concerning Part Two, writing a paragraph, we have also calculated the mean of the obtained results of both groups, the control group and experimental group.

– The mean of all the control group students' right article use in the pre-test is 82.50% and it is 83.33% in the post-test. This shows that the control group students' level in using articles properly has been improved by 0.83% while the percentages of the experimental group in the pre-test and post/test are 87.92% and 84.87% respectively. This demonstrates the progress of the experimental group (05.95%) which is higher than the one of the control group participants.

– The mean of all the control group students' wrong use of the indefinite article "a/n" in the pre-test is 01.98% whereas it is 0.82% in the post-test. This means that the students have reduced the problems they have that are related to the indefinite article "a" by 01.16%. However, their progress is not enough when compared with the one of the experimental group students (01.46%). The percentages of the wrong use of the indefinite article "a" of the experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test are 01.78% and 0.32%.

– The mean of all the control group students’ wrong use of the definite article “the” in the pre-test is 03.74% while it is 06.20% for the experimental group. As for the post-test, the mean of the control group students’ wrong use has increased to 04.87% whereas it has dropped to 01.51% for the experimental group. This entails that the results of the experimental group are better than the ones of the control group.

– The mean of all the control students’ wrong use of the zero article “Ø” in the pre-test is 18.05% and it is 19.28% in the post-test. This proportion which is the highest among the three articles and which has increased by 01.23% confirms that the problems that the control students have in using the English articles properly hang mainly around the zero article. On the other hand, the results of the experimental group are promising. The percentage of their wrong use of the zero article “Ø” has been reduced in the post-test which implies that there is a progress. The mean of their wrong use in the pre-test is 26.08% and in the post-test is 16.92%.

Given that the students in the experimental group have better enhanced their understanding of the use of articles and improved their results in the post-test in both activities, filling the gaps and writing a paragraph, one can conclude that this was due to the Communicative-Structural Approach.

## **Conclusion**

After conducting our experiment and analyzing the results obtained in the pre-test and post-test, the data obtained can help us draw the following conclusions. On the one hand, the results of the experimental group in Part One obtained in the post-test have increased more than the ones of the control group students. This entails that the experimental group students have better improved their performance and developed their understanding of the rules of applying articles than the control group students. On the other hand, in Part Two, the

achievement of the experimental group students in the post-test is more remarkable as they have improved their results and enhanced their use of articles better than the control group students. So, our hypothesis, if the English article system is taught systematically through the Communicative-Structural Approach, students' grammatical competence will improve is confirmed.



## **Introduction**

The deficiencies of the students in using articles properly which have been unveiled by the pre-test call for administering a Teachers' Questionnaire and a Students' Questionnaire. The former is opted for in order to inspect whether the teachers at the Department of Letters and English, University "Frères Mentouri", Constantine provide any instruction when they teach articles. If they do, we attempt to highlight the method they use in teaching grammar in general and articles in particular. We also aim at finding out whether the teachers are familiar with the Communicative-Structural Approach, their views, perceptions and attitudes about implementing it, and whether they actually adopt it in teaching grammar and, more specifically, articles. The Students' opinions, views, perceptions as well as attitudes towards implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles are also explored by means of a Students' Questionnaire. The findings of both questionnaires will significantly serve in testing our hypotheses and hence, confirming or rejecting them.

### **5.1. The Teachers' Questionnaire**

In addition to the test, a Teacher's Questionnaire was also necessary to obtain more data about the teachers' views and opinions based on which we might draw some important conclusions.

#### **5.1.1. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

The Teachers' Questionnaire was distributed to 20 teachers of English at the Department of Letters and English, University "Frères Mentouri", Constantine. The questionnaire consists of twenty four questions divided into five sections. **Section One, General Information** (Q 1 – Q4) answers questions about the teachers' degree (Q1), the length of their teaching experience (Q2), experience in teaching Grammar (Q3), and teaching levels (Q4). **Section Two, Teaching Grammar** (Q5 – Q9), deals with the teachers' views about how Grammar

should be taught (Q5) and why (Q6), the basis on which they choose the method in teaching Grammar (Q7), and whether the nature of grammatical aspects to be taught is what decides on the method to be used and how (Q8 – Q9). In **Section Three, the Communicative-Structural Approach** (Q10 – Q14), the teachers were asked whether they had been familiar with this approach (Q10), whether they use it in teaching grammar (Q11). If they had replied “No”, they justified their position (Q12), and if they had answered “Yes”, they stated for which grammatical aspect, why, and how often (Q13 – Q14). **Section Four, Teaching Articles and the Communicative-Structural Approach** (Q15 – Q23) intends to reveal the teachers’ opinions concerning the difficulty of teaching articles and the reasons behind it (Q15 – Q16), the way they teach articles and the justification of their choice (Q17 – Q18), as well as their students’ attitudes towards learning articles (Q19). The teachers’ views about implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles (Q20), the way of adopting it (Q21), whether they have actually used it before (Q22), and why not if their answer was “No” (Q23). In **Section Five, Further Suggestions** (Q24), the teachers added their own comments and suggestions about the topic.

### 5.1.2. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

#### Section One: General Information

##### Q1. What is your Degree?

- a. License
- b. Master
- c. Magister
- d. Doctorate

Degree	N	%
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Licence	0	0
Master	10	50
Magister	07	35
Doctorat	03	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.1.: Degree Held by the Teachers**

Half of the teachers hold a Master degree. As for the percentage of the teachers who have a “Magister” degree, it is lower (35%), and only 15% of the teachers have a Doctorate degree. Those numbers suggest that the teachers are well qualified to teach English and more specifically Grammar.

**Q2. How long have you been teaching?**

..... years.

<b>Years</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1 – 5	08	40
6 – 10	06	30
11 – 15	03	15
16 – 20	01	05
21 – 25	01	05
26 – 30	01	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.2.: Teachers’ Experience of Teaching**

40% of the teachers who have answered the questionnaire have an experience in teaching English that ranges between 1 and 5 years. 6 teachers have taught for a period between 6 and 10 years. 15% of the teachers have taught English between 11 to 15 years and the rest have an experience that ranges between 16 to 30 years. The results displayed in Table 5.2. prove that the teachers' experience qualifies them to take part in the study.

**Q3. How long have you been teaching Grammar?**

..... years.

<b>Years</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1 – 5	13	65
6 – 10	07	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.3.: Teachers' Experience of Teaching Grammar**

65% of the teachers have an experience in teaching Grammar that ranges between 1 and 5 years while the experience of 35% of them is between 6 and 10 years. The findings presented in Table 5.3. entail that the teachers' collaboration is valuable and important for this study as their contribution can be relied on to a great extent.

**Q4. Which year(s)?**

- a. First**
- b. Second**
- c. Third**
- d. Master**

<b>Level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
a	05	25
b	07	35
c	0	0
d	0	0
ab	08	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.4. : Level of Teaching Grammar**

The greatest part of the teachers (40%) has taught both levels, first and second year students. 35% of the teachers have taught second year solely and 25% (which is the lowest percentage) have taught first year students. Since the majority of the teachers have taught second year students, they were more apt in contributing in our research given that articles are basically taught thoroughly at this level.

## **Section Two: Teaching Grammar**

### **Q5. Grammar should be taught:**

- a. Deductively**
- b. Inductively**
- c. Eclectically**

<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
a	03	15
b	02	10

c	15	75
Total	20	100

**Table 5.5.: Teachers’ Opinion about How Grammar Should Be Taught**

The majority of the teachers opted for “eclectically” (75%). Only 15% have chosen deductively and even a less percentage of the teachers (10%) thought that Grammar ought to be taught inductively.

**Q6. Please, explain why.**

The teachers who believed in Grammar being taught eclectically explained that teaching grammar requires flexibility to adapt to the particular teaching situation (2 teachers) and the Eclectic Approach suits any teaching/learning situation (1 teacher). Besides, it serves almost any objective or aim (1 teacher). 5 teachers believe that one method is not enough to cope with the level, experience and needs of students. 3 teachers stated that the difficulty of the task/rules or grammatical structures also influences the method to choose as well as the students’ background knowledge of the nature of the grammatical rules. The teachers who believed that Grammar should be taught deductively or inductively did not justify their choice.

**Q7. You choose the method to follow while teaching Grammar according to:**

- a. The material to be taught**
- b. The students’ proficiency level**
- c. The place and time allocated**
- d. Other: Please, specify.**

Options	N	%
a	05	25
b	04	20
c	02	10
ab	09	45
Total	20	100

**Table 5.6.: Basis for the Method Followed to Teach Grammar**

Table 5.6. demonstrates that the way the teachers present their grammar lessons depends on the grammatical aspect to be taught and the proficiency level of the students (45%). 25% of them teach Grammar according to the material and 20% based on the abilities of the students. Only 2 teachers take into consideration the place and time allocated for each lesson. However, there was one teacher who stated that s/he uses the same method whenever and wherever. This entails that the difficulty of the grammatical features (in our case it is the English article system) and the level of understanding of the students play a major role in choosing an appropriate method for teaching.

**Q8. The method you use in teaching Grammar depends on the nature of the grammatical aspect:**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
Yes	13	65
No	07	35
Total	20	100

**Table 5.7.: Relationship between the Method of Teaching Grammar and the Nature of the Grammatical Aspect**

65% of the teachers stated that they chose the method they used in the classroom in accordance with what they taught i. e. the grammatical aspect being dealt with. The rest (35%), however, did not rely on what they taught, but on other factors.

**Q9. If “Yes”, please explain why.**

The teachers who use the method depending on the nature of the grammatical aspect believe that it is ineffective to teach all the grammatical points by means of one method. Since each content is different from another one (difficulty), different materials and methods might be needed. In such case, we suggest that articles need to be taught systematically given that their nature (they have weak forms) does not allow, especially for low-ability students, learners to identify them in a stretch of speech. So they need to be pointed out and explained by teachers.

**Section Three: The Communicative-Structural Approach**

**Q10. Are you familiar with the definition of the Communicative-Structural Approach?**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
Yes	09	45
No	11	55
Total	20	100

**Table 5.8.: Teachers’ Familiarity with the Communicative-Structural Approach**



More than half of the teachers (55%) stated that they do not actually know the Communicative-Structural Approach as they are not familiar with its definition. This might be one of the reasons it is not implemented in teaching English and Grammar particularly. Yet, 45% of the teachers recognize the definition of this approach to teaching.

**Q11. If “Yes”, do you use it in teaching Grammar?**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
Yes	06	66.66
No	03	33.33
Total	09	100

**Table 5.9.: Rate of the Teachers’ Use of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

Six teachers out of 09 said that they are familiar with the definition of the Communicative-Structural Approach, and they actually use it when they teach Grammar. This is a clear sign that the Communicative-Structural Approach is believed appropriate to be adopted in teaching Grammar.

**Q12. If “No”, is it because:**

- a. It is not as effective as the Communicative Approach**
- b. It is unsuitable for the grammar lessons**
- c. It is not well understood**
- d. Other: Please, specify.**

Options	N	%
a	0	0
b	01	33.33
c	01	33.33
d	01	33.33
Total	03	100

**Table 5.10.: Reason for the Teachers' Lack of Use of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

One teacher believes that the Communicative-Structural Approach is unsuitable to be adopted in teaching Grammar. Another teacher stated that s/he is not really familiar with the Approach. Other reasons mentioned by the teachers are time allocated for grammar lessons which is not enough (3 hours per week only) and the number of students per groups that is large and sometimes reaches 63 students in one group. The means and materials in the classroom are other factors preventing teachers to be creative. The majority of the students are passive that is the reason why they do not respond to the innovative tasks presented by their teachers.

**Q13. If “Yes”, for which grammatical aspect do you use it and why?**

The 06 teachers who stated that they use the Communicative-Structural Approach explained that they use it for aspects of little interest (student-perceived), namely, aspects they think students already know about (02 teachers). It also helps speak students' interest in what they teach (03 teachers) which is why they use it when they teach modals, articles, gerunds, prepositions, tenses (mainly perfective), and phrasal verbs as they are dependent on context (01 teacher).

**Q14. If “Yes”, how often do you use it?**

- a. Always**
- b. Usually**
- c. Sometimes**
- d. Rarely**

Options	N	%
a	0	0
b	0	0
c	05	83.33
d	01	16.66
Total	06	100

**Table 5.11.: Frequency of the Teachers’ Use of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

Table 5.11. shows that almost all the teachers (83.33%) who said that they use the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching Grammar employ it sometimes whenever the situation allows for it. One teacher said s/he uses it rarely in teaching some grammatical features.

#### **Section Four: Teaching Articles and the Communicative-Structural Approach**

**Q15. Teaching articles is a difficult task.**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
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Yes	15	75
No	05	25
Total	20	100

**Table 5.12.: Teachers' Opinion about the Difficulty of Teaching Articles**

Table 5.12. indicates that 25% of the teachers believe that articles are easy to be taught. Nevertheless, 75% of the teachers think that teaching articles is not an easy task. Therefore, we assume that the Communicative-Structural Approach can help in facilitating the process of teaching them.

**Q16. If “Yes”, it is difficult because:**

- a. The English article system is complex**
- b. Articles are taught in isolation**
- c. The rules are not clear and sometimes contradictory**
- d. First language influences their acquisition**
- e. They are unstressed and hard to be heard by students**
- f. Other: Please, specify.**

Options	N	%
a	03	20
b	02	13.33
c	01	13.33
d	02	13.33
e	01	06.66
ab	02	13.33

ad	01	06.66
abd	03	20
Total	15	100

**Table 5.13.: Teachers' Reasons for the Difficulty of Teaching Articles**

Table 5.13. shows that the teachers found it difficult to teach articles, mainly because they are complex. Other teachers (20%) believed that the way they are taught (they are decontextualized) is another reason which makes their teaching more difficult. In addition to that, students' first language can contribute in the success or failure of learning articles, meaning that languages that contain articles in their grammar make understanding them easier and vice versa.

**Q17. Do you teach articles:**

- a. Deductively**
- b. Inductively**
- c. Eclectically**

Options	N	%
a	05	25
b	08	40
c	07	35
Total	20	100

**Table 5.14.: Teachers' Method of Teaching Articles**

25% of the teachers stated that they teach articles deductively, 35% of them opted for eclectically, and 40% chose inductively. This means that articles are not taught by means of the same method by all the teachers who tend to vary their ways of teaching.

**Q18. Please, explain why.**

The teachers who teach articles deductively (25%) prefer introducing the rules of use and meaning of the article system in order to prevent their students from negatively transferring the rules (04 teachers) and teach them the difference between the mother tongue and the English rules in understanding and learning them (01 teacher). Given the complex nature of articles, 40% of the teachers prefer teaching them inductively making sure that they are well understood. In order to suit the multiplicity of levels in the classroom and cover all the possible contexts difficult for the students, 35% of the teachers use an eclectic Approach in teaching articles.

**Q19. How do the students respond when introduced to articles?**

- a. Show they are afraid of learning them**
- b. Discuss their difficulty**
- c. Other: Please, specify**

Options	N	%
a	09	45
b	11	55
Total	20	100

**Table 5.15.: Teachers’ Opinion about How the Students Respond when they Introduce Articles**

55% of the teachers stated that their students find articles difficult and express their difficulty when they are introduced to the lesson while 45% feel afraid of learning them for they find it confusing to use the right article with the appropriate noun. They also feel afraid as they do not want to get bad grades because of the mistakes related to them that they make. The teachers added other reactions like boredom and indifference as they think they already know everything about them. They claim to be aware of the use of articles, but they fail to use them correctly when it comes to practice.

**Q20. The Communicative-Structural Approach can help in teaching articles:**

**Yes**

**No**

All the teachers agreed that the Communicative-Structural Approach makes it easier for students to understand the use of articles. This entails that the Communicative/Structural Approach is really helpful in teaching articles.

**Q21. If “Yes”, please explain how.**

One teacher explained that this Approach combines two major principles, it guarantees that students will see instances in different authentic contexts and settings proposed to highlight the use of articles (02 teachers). 05 teachers believed that mixing the fun factor with the grammatical rules sparks interest in articles that could be addressed through challenging tasks and real-life situations. Therefore, focus is on form, meaningful use and communication (10 teachers).

**Q22. Have you ever used the Communicative-Structural Approach to teach articles?**

**Yes**

**No**

Answer	N	%
Yes	10	50
No	10	50
Total	20	100

**Table 5.16.: Rate of the Teachers Use of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

50% of the teachers declared that they have never used the Communicative-Structural Approach to teach articles although they believe it effective in teaching them. However, the other half (50%) have already used it. This is a good sign which is the possibility of implementing it to teach articles effectively.

**Q23. If “No”, please explain why.**

The teachers (10 teachers) who have never used the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles have various reasons. Two teachers have never used or heard of such an Approach while 02 others have other constraints such as time allocated and the materials to use. However, the main factor is the students themselves (03 teachers). They are numerous in the classrooms (01 teacher), lazy, passive, introvert and they had rather prefer written activities (02 teachers). Therefore, the above listed issues need to be fixed for a better implementation of the Communicative-Structural Approach.

**Section Five: Further Suggestions**

**Q24. Please, add any further comment or suggestion.**

Seven teachers have completed this section, they have stated that they would use the Communicative-Structural Approach to teach the other subjects and not only Grammar (02 teachers). Their attitude towards its implementation has been encouraging (05 teachers). One



of these seven teachers added that more research about the topic had to be carried in order to tackle more of its aspects.

## **5.2. The Students' Questionnaire**

We needed to conduct a students' questionnaire as well because the students' opinions, beliefs and views are essential to our study as it is mainly related to them.

### **5.2.1. Description of the Students' Questionnaire**

The Students' Questionnaire was distributed to 100 students of English at the Department of Letters and English, University "Frères Mentouri", Constantine. The questionnaire consists of nineteen questions divided into five sections. **Section One, Learning English** (Q 1 – Q3) answers questions about the difficulties the students find in learning English (Q1), the causes and reasons behind having such difficulties (Q2 – Q3). **Section Two, Learning Grammar** (Q4 – Q8), deals with the students' views about how Grammar should be taught (Q4), the way they best learn Grammar (Q5), whether it is difficult to learn Grammar (Q6) and why (Q7), and the grammatical aspects they find most problematic in learning Grammar (Q8). In **Section Three, the Communicative-Structural Approach** (Q9 – Q10), the students were asked whether their teachers had used the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching Grammar (Q9) and how often (Q10). **Section Four, Teaching Articles and the Communicative-Structural Approach** (Q11 – Q18) intends to reveal the students' difficulties in learning articles (Q11), the most difficult article to learn (Q12) and the reasons why (Q13). In addition to that, the students were enquired about the way their teachers teach them articles (Q14) and the feelings they express when introduced to the lesson (Q15). Besides, we asked the students whether they think that the Communicative-Structural Approach could actually help in learning articles (Q16), an explanation of their answer (Q17), and whether their teachers had already used it to teach

them articles (Q18). The last section, **Section Five, Further Suggestions** (Q19), provides the students with the opportunity to add their own comments and suggestions about the topic.

### 5.2.2. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

#### Section One: Learning English

##### Q1. Do you have difficulties in learning English?

Yes

No

Options	N	%
Yes	51	51
No	49	49
Total	100	100

**Table 5.17.: Students' Difficulties in Learning English**

More than half of the students (51%) have learning problems which means that they need to be further investigated and solved.

##### Q2. If "Yes", is it because of:

- a. Grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Listening
- d. Speaking
- e. Writing

Options	N	%
a	13	25.49
b	04	07.84
c	03	05.88
d	06	11.76
e	04	07.84
ad	07	13.72
ae	04	07.84
bd	06	11.76
de	04	07.84
Total	51	100

**Table 5.18.: Students' Reasons for Having Language Difficulties**

Table 5.18. shows that 25.49% of the students have difficulties in learning English because of Grammar, 13.72% find Grammar and speaking problematic. Vocabulary and speaking are also challenging for them (11.76%) and listening and writing seem to be less difficult to them (05.88% and 07.84% respectively). This implies that Grammar which is the core of any language is also a problem for many students. Research needs to be conducted in attempt to solve those problems and enhance learning.

**Q3. Please, explain why.**

The students (04 students) explained that the causes behind their grammatical deficiencies are related to the grammatical rules. They find it complicated and difficult to apply those rules even if they already know them (03 students). They have also explained that Grammar has a lot of rules and exceptions like with the case of articles (01 student). The

students are also insecure when it comes to learning the English tenses, infinitives, adjectives, and adverbs (05 students). They believe that it is mainly the way of teaching which hinders them to learn those rules appropriately (01 student). So, articles include a lot of exceptions that might confuse learners as well as the multiplicity of uses of each article.

## Section Two: Learning Grammar

### Q4. Grammar should be taught:

- a. **Deductively: with explanations of the rules**
- b. **Inductively: without a direct reference to the rules**
- c. **Eclectically: using both**

Options	N	%
a	47	47
b	03	03
c	50	50
Total	100	100

**Table 5.19.: Students' Opinion about How Grammar Should Be Taught**

We can see from table 5.19. that half of the students (50%) think that an eclectic Approach is best suited for teaching grammar. 47% of them believe that explicit teaching and instruction promotes a better understanding of any grammatical aspect which is one of the most important principles of the Communicative-Structural Approach. Only 03% prefer to learn Grammar implicitly.

### Q5. You best learn Grammar through:

- a. **Discovering the rules on your own**
- b. **An exhaustive explanation from the teacher**
- c. **Discovering the rules first and then explanations from the teacher**
- d. **An exhaustive explanation from the teacher then looking for more details on your own**

Options	N	%
a	10	10
b	24	24
c	59	59
d	07	07
Total	100	100

**Table 5.20.: Students’ Opinion about the Way they Learn Best**

Only 07% of the students prefer receiving extensive explanations of the rules, and they can find more details by themselves as opposed to 10 students who like to discover the rule instead of being told how the structure is formed or function. More students (24%) favor their teachers direct explanations of the rules. However, 59% stated that they learn grammar best when they are exposed to an authentic context containing a given rule which they are supposed to deduce and then the teacher provides more explanations with examples. This further confirms the effectiveness of the Communicative-Structural Approach that is tailored to achieve this goal.

**Q6. It is difficult to learn Grammar.**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
Yes	50	50
No	50	50
Total	100	100

**Table 5.21.: Students' Opinion about Grammar Difficulty**

50% of the students find Grammar easy to learn while half of the population, as it appears in table 5.21., finds learning grammar difficult. This is why, those difficulties need to be inspected and solved.

**Q7. If "Yes", is it because:**

- a. The content is difficult**
- b. The teacher's method is unsuitable for you**
- c. You do not understand the explanations**
- d. Other: Please, specify.**

Options	N	%
a	35	70
b	13	26
c	02	04
Total	50	100

**Table 5.22.: Students' Reasons for Grammatical Difficulty**

02 students stated that they do not understand their teacher's explanations while the majority (35%) find learning grammar a challenging task because of the difficulty of the rules. They added that all the rules seem to be alike but when it comes to using them, they do not apply to all the situations (a lot of exceptions). Beside the complexity and hardship of learning the grammatical rules, practice is not enough since they only use the language in the classroom and it takes time to internalize all the possible rules. Still, 26% of the students find the teacher's method unsuitable for their learning style. This is why we suggest the Communicative-Structural Approach which combines both form through direct instruction and meaning through communicative tasks, thus suits a multiplicity of learning styles.

**Q8. Which grammatical aspect do you find most problematic?**

- a. Tenses**
- b. Prepositions**
- c. Articles**
- d. Other: Please, specify.**

Options	N	%
a	64	64
b	19	19
c	17	17
Total	100	100

**Table 5.23.: Students' Most Difficult Grammatical Aspect**

As it is obvious from Table 5.23., 64% of the students find the English tenses difficult and rather complicated to learn, especially the perfect tenses. 19% have problems with

prepositions because there are numerous prepositions in the English grammar with specific uses. Yet, only 17% find articles problematic because they have complicated rules. In addition to that, the students find other aspects problematic, mainly, phrasal verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

### **Section Three: The Communicative-Structural Approach**

**Q9. Does your teacher use the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching Grammar?**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
Yes	58	58
No	42	42
Total	100	100

**Table 5.24.: Students’ Opinion about their Teachers’ Rate of Use of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

Table 5.24. reveals that 42% of the students stated that their teachers do not use the Communicative-Structural Approach when they teach them Grammar. However, 58% think that their teachers use it. Their answers collocate with what their teachers have stated in the Teachers’ Questionnaire as 66.66% of them said they had used the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching Grammar. This entails that this approach seems to be innately used by teachers even without being aware of its existence.

**Q10. If “Yes”, how often does s/he use it?**



- a. Always
- b. Usually
- c. Sometimes
- d. Rarely

Answer	N	%
a	24	41.37
b	15	25.86
c	15	25.86
d	04	06.89
Total	58	100

**Table 5.25.: Students’ Opinion about their Teachers’ Frequency of Use of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

The results displayed in Table 5.25. show that 06.89% of the students have been rarely taught Grammar by means of the Communicative-Structural Approach while 25.86% stated that their teachers use it sometimes and another 25.86% believed that their teachers usually use it. The highest percentage (41.37%) answered that their teachers always teach them Grammar using the Communicative-Structural Approach which further confirms that it is an approach that is innately used.

**Section Four: Teaching Articles and the Communicative-Structural Approach**

**Q11. If you find articles difficult, is it because:**

- a. They occur most frequently in the same discourse
- b. They are hard to be heard in the spoken discourse

**c. There are multiple uses for the same article**

**d. The rules are not clear and sometimes contradictory**

Options	N	%
a	24	24
b	16	16
c	42	42
d	18	18
Total	100	100

**Table 5.26.: Students' Difficulty in Learning Articles**

Articles are one of the grammatical aspects that cause problems for learners. Among the reasons underlying their difficulty is, as stated by 42% of the respondents of the Students' Questionnaire, the multiplicity of each article's use which seems to confuse the students. Another problem related to learning them is the frequency of their occurrence in the same discourse (24%) which makes it hard for the learners to catch up with all of them, especially in the spoken discourse. Clarity of the rules is another issue that causes problems for 18% of the students who find those rules contradictory in some situations. Finally, 16% are hindered to learn articles because they can barely hear them when uttered in the spoken discourse.

**Q12. What is the article you find the most complicated to learn?**

**a. The definite article**

**b. The indefinite article**

**c. Zero article**

Options	N	%
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a	17	17
b	29	29
c	46	46
Total	100	100

**Table 5.27.: Students’ opinion about the Most Complicated Article**

Most of the students (46%) find the zero article difficult, whereas 29% of them think that the indefinite article “a/n” more complicated. The lowest percentage of the students (17%) finds the definite article the most difficult article to learn.

**Q13. Please, explain why.**

The definite article is complicated to learn for 17% of the students because they are all the time confused when to use it (05 students), especially with plural and specific nouns (02 students). They stated that it has numerous uses which make it hard to know them all (03 students). In addition to that, it is used with a lot of proper nouns and must be learnt all (02 students). Like the definite article, the indefinite article is hard for some learners (29%) to grasp due to the multiplicity of contexts it might occur in (06 students). The other reason is that they cannot figure it out when a noun is countable or uncountable, definite or indefinite (08 students). As for the zero article, the students (46%) find it confusing and its rules are not clear. They cannot really know when to use it or not especially because of countable and uncountable nouns (15 students).

**Q14. Does your teacher teach articles:**

- a. Deductively**
- b. Inductively**

**c. Eclectically**

Options	N	%
a	40	40
b	06	06
c	54	54
Total	100	100

**Table 5.28.: Students' Opinion about the Way their Teachers Teach Articles**

The majority of the students (54%) stated that their teachers teach articles eclectically, i.e. taking from the principles of the Structural and Communicative Approaches and moving from focus on communication to learning structures. However, 40% of the students are taught deductively using a systematic and direct instruction and only 6 students opted for inductively. The above results mean that the Communicative-Structural Approach is highly appreciated and employed by teachers to teach Grammar.

**Q15. How do you respond when introduced to articles?**

- a. Show you are afraid of learning them**
- b. Discuss their difficulty**
- c. Other: Please, specify.**

Options	N	%
a	25	25
b	75	70
Total	100	100

**Table 5.29.: Students’ Attitude towards Learning Articles**

75% of the students find articles difficult and discuss such difficulties with their teachers when they are introduced to the lesson “articles”. Only 25% feel anxious because they think that even after being familiar with this word category, they are unable to assimilate its correct use. That is the reason why they stated that try to show more interest, pay more attention and follow every word their teachers say during class.

**Q16. The Communicative-Structural Approach can help in learning articles.**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
Yes	75	75
No	25	25
Total	100	100

**Table 5.30.: Students’ Opinion about the Effectiveness of the Communicative-Structural Approach in Teaching Articles**

As it appears in Table 5.30., 75% of the students believe that the Communicative-Structural Approach can help them to learn articles while 25% find it unsuitable for this task. This belief in the effectiveness of the Communicative-Structural Approach by both the teachers and students opens more doors for its implementation in the teaching process of Grammar in general, and articles in particular.

**Q17. If “Yes”, please explain how.**

The Communicative-Structural Approach, according to the students (05 students), makes a perfect combination as it serves both aims: learning and entertaining. It includes the fun factor followed by serious instruction (03 students). According to what they said, games are a good way to simplify rules and facilitate understanding them in a good sense of humor rather than other methods that make grammar learning quite dull and rigid (16 students). It is also an effective way to strengthen the teacher-student relationship (01 student) and enables them to communicate weaknesses that might hinder the students to learn (01 student).

**Q18. Has your teacher used the Communicative-Structural Approach to teach articles?**

**Yes**

**No**

Options	N	%
Yes	48	48
No	52	52
Total	100	100

**Table 5.31.: Students’ Opinion about their Teachers’ Rate of Use of the Communicative-Structural Approach**

Table 5.31. unveils the fact that 52% of the teachers have not taught their students articles through the communicative-Structural Approach while 48% of them claim that their teachers have already used it in teaching articles. The students’ percentage also goes hand in hand with their teachers’ (50%) who have answered the Teachers’ Questionnaire and confirmed that they had actually employed the Communicative-Structural Approach to teach articles.

## **Section Five: Further Suggestions**

### **Q19. Please, add any further comment or suggestion**

The students did not bother to add other comments related to their own learning of grammar or articles.

### **5.3. Overall Analysis**

Most of the teachers (75%) believed that Grammar should be taught eclectically, which combines, according to them, two different approaches: the Communicative Approach and the Structural Approach. That is why, as they stated (65%), they are flexible in choosing the method they use according to the grammatical aspect they teach as they explained that it is ineffective to teach all the grammatical aspects by means of the same method. Basically, flexibility is one of the Communicative-Structural Approach's main principles.

Concerning the teachers' familiarity with the Communicative-Structural Approach, the ones who said were familiar with its definition (45%) did not all use it, only 06 teachers have sometimes used it in their classrooms to teach modals, articles, gerunds, prepositions, tenses, and phrasal verbs. The largest percentage (55%) appears to have been unfamiliar with this approach, hence, they do not use it in their own teaching. This means that the Communicative-Structural Approach is not well-known.

With regard to using the Communicative-Structural Approach in the teaching of articles, all of the teachers said that they thought it effective to teach articles. They justified that it combines two major principles which guarantees that the students will see instances in different authentic contexts proposed to highlight the use of articles. In addition to that, it is considered beneficial in attracting students' interest through challenging tasks and real-life settings. Therefore, 50% of them have already used it to teach articles and focus on form,

meaning, as well as communication. Two teachers have, unexpectedly, suggested teaching other subjects by means of the Communicative-structural Approach, and not only Grammar. Besides, they believed that more research must be conducted about it.

The analysis of the results obtained from the Students' Questionnaire has revealed that the students (51%) have learning difficulties that are mainly related to Grammar (47%) because of the rules, like with the case of articles (they include a lot of exceptions that might confuse learners as well as the multiplicity of functions of each article), and the method of teaching of their teachers. They (50%), then, thought that Grammar should be taught eclectically. When they were asked about the way they best learn Grammar, more than half of them (59%) preferred being exposed to an authentic discourse that will help them develop more communicative skills, then they receive explanations from their teachers. This is why we suggest the Communicative-Structural Approach that will help ease their difficulties as it suits a variety of learning styles.

The students' were asked whether their teachers used the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching Grammar, and 58% confirmed that they did. Their answer is consistent with the percentage of the teachers who stated that they did. Most of the students (75%) believed that this approach can help them in learning Grammar, more specifically, articles.

## **Conclusion**

The teachers who have answered the questionnaire insisted that grammar should be taught using an eclectic approach; more specifically, articles are better assimilated and understood if taught by means of the Communicative-Structural Approach. Some of them already follow its principles in teaching grammar and articles. The students who have answered the Students' Questionnaire have also confirmed that their teachers use the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching them articles and it is an effective way in



teaching grammar, in general, and articles more specifically. From the analysis of both questionnaires we have come out to conclude that our hypothesis, the teachers at the Department of Letters and English, University “Frères Mentouri”, Constantine believe that the Communicative-Structural Approach is effective in teaching articles and use it in their own teaching, is confirmed.

## **Introduction**

The overriding concern of the present study is to show the significance of implementing a Communicative-Structural Approach into the teaching of the English article system. The Communicative-Structural Approach has been proved effective in teaching articles by means of our experimental design's results as well as the teachers' and students' questionnaires. We end our study on its main implications, grouped in two main dimensions – importance of implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach and the level of implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach, suggestions for further research and limitations of this study.

### **6.1. Importance of Implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach**

The present study investigates the effectiveness of the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching the English article system. The findings of the Experimental design reveal a positive and significant improvement in the students' performance. Besides, the teachers showed a positive attitude towards integrating this approach in teaching articles in particular, grammar more specifically, and English in general. They have also stated that they followed the Communicative-Structural Approach when they taught grammar. In addition to that, the Students' Questionnaire showed that even the students found it appropriate for their learning styles and fulfilling their needs.

The importance of the Communicative-Structural Approach is not only translated in the results of the current research. The label "Communicative-Structural" itself demonstrates the importance of such an approach. The latter focuses on teaching the linguistic structures alongside the way they operate in real life in a communicative environment.

The Communicative-Structural Approach can be adapted to all the learners' proficiency levels because it teaches low ability students the forms they need explicitly and provides more

advanced learners with opportunities to be more creative through the wide range of innovative activities such as role-plays, information gap activities and language games it employs. In this way, the lesson will not be dull for those advanced learners and less challenging for lower ability ones. Take the example of our instruction in which the lesson was initiated by language games and songs dealing with the English article system. The learners of all levels were highly interested, motivated, and excited to take part in the process. In addition to that, they were extremely attentive when they were explained the different rules underlying article use, and inquired whenever they felt it necessary or ambiguous to them. By the end of the lesson, they were ready to practice those rules in a structured gap filling exercise.

The Communicative-Structural Approach is also extremely significant in developing the learners' accuracy as well as fluency. The former is enhanced due to the fact that teachers expose and explain the right rules deductively, leaving no room for learners to try and predict how structures might be formed. Those forms are exploited by the students through communicative tasks and activities which play a major role in improving their fluency as they interact together. This was also observed in our experiment. The students when took the post-test showed a significant improvement in their use of articles which can be said to develop their language accuracy in articles use. It was also clear during the singing phase that they were building more fluent English as they sang along without hesitations or stopping to think or making pauses. A repetitive activity as such is useful in perfecting their fluency and pronunciation as well.

Furthermore, learners when taught using the Communicative-Structural Approach will expand more than the linguistic knowledge; they will decrease the affective filter. They are believed to be more autonomous learners, active in the learning process, more engaged in their own learning, intrinsically motivated, and self-confident in interacting with the others. Our participants in the experimental group showed such attitudes when they were exposed to

articles through the Communicative-Structural Approach. The whole learners were trying to help their sub-groups win in the language game they were introduced to which demonstrated the degree to which they were autonomous, actively participating and engaged in finishing and winning the game. Besides, they were motivated as the tasks were interesting and meaningful to them, useful and purposeful for learning articles. The activities which were exploited seemed to tackle the learners' needs, interests, and goals. As for their self-confidence, it was increasingly being developed while they were interacting with each other, cooperating and working together to finish the task. Knowing the right rules for appropriate article use has also raised their confidence as they felt secure and assured not to be inaccurate.

The Communicative-Structural Approach is really important for the reason that it sets the goal of promoting learning the linguistic structures, mastering vocabulary, and developing communicative skills as well as strategies needed for successful interactions beyond the classroom setting. This would be achieved when the linguistic content is taught deductively but framed and practiced communicatively.

Given the previously mentioned merits of the Communicative-structural Approach, it would be appropriate to conclude that it would be helpful to a great extent if implemented in teaching English, in general, and, grammar in particular.

## **6.2. Level of Implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach**

As previously mentioned, the Communicative-Structural Approach suits the multiplicity of learners' proficiency levels. Considering university students, it best fits first-year and second-year students. The latter are taught grammar in those first two years of the English language teaching curriculum at the Department of Letters and English in the University of "Frères Mentouri" of Constantine 1. The other reason might be that they would be more involved and engaged in dealing with authentic input at an early stage of their process of mastering the language. Meaning that, the dull and boring grammar lessons will

seem more interesting and motivating at their early stages of learning English which guarantees a better learning. In addition, our study showed significant results with second year students. As for more advanced levels, the Communicative-Structural Approach might be implemented in the teaching of other subjects and language skills, for instance, teaching them writing, pronunciation (speaking and phonetics), and vocabulary. At this level, students “are being trained to be future teachers and/or carry out postgraduate studies” (Semakdji, 2015: 265) in which situation they are required to have a good command of English.

Teachers need to take into consideration the learners’ learning level when developing the content and designing the activities to be used in the lesson which are supposed to develop accuracy and fluency of the learners. This implies that they need to be varied between structure-based activities and function-based tasks, each of which difficulty depends on the level of proficiency of the students. This could be attained by direct instruction of the rules framed in a communicative classroom setting.

Although it has not been pointed out much before, the issue of integrating the Communicative Approach and the Structural Approach to form one mixed approach to teaching grammar, in particular, is really important because it helps teachers to cover all the language aspects (form and function). This is the point behind undertaking this research which is to test and prove the effectiveness and usefulness of incorporating the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles to second year students at the Department of Letters and English, “Frères Mentouri” University, Constantine 1.

### **6.3. Suggestions for Further Research**

This study’s findings have implications for second/foreign language pedagogy in a variety of ways. It researched into and investigated the effectiveness of using the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching the English article system, dealing with the following questions:

- Is the teacher's instruction and explicit teaching of the structures and rules of articles necessary?
- If there is a necessity of including a direct instruction, is the Structural-Communicative Approach appropriate in teaching articles?

It was clearly apparent that the students who have been taught articles by means of the Communicative-Structural Approach have increased their awareness of the rules underlying their use. Yet, not all the results were appealing because there was a better improvement measured from the Control group's results when they were asked to write paragraphs. This is the reason why, we suggest that further research might be concentrated on investigating why the Experimental group learners' results were lower than the control group's in that part; was it because of the approach, the grammatical feature, or their deficiency in the process of writing?

Hence, the current research can be replicated in the following ways:

This study's main focus was on teaching articles solely which can be widened to cope with other grammatical structures, including the English tenses, especially the perfect ones (which seem to cause a lot of problems for ESL and EFL learners), prepositions (which are also assumed problematic for learners due to the wide range of uses for each preposition), the Condition and conditional sentences, and so on.

The period of the instruction using the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles was limited to two sessions. This might be another variable influencing the present research results. It is, then, implemented that further research dealing with the Communicative-Structural Approach to teaching other features of grammar can be allocated more time for instructional treatments in order to get a better insight of the efficacy of this approach.

In addition to that, other researchers might examine the Communicative-Structural

Approach's efficiency by selecting a larger sample size from a different proficiency level (say first-year students) who are taught another language aspect (teaching them writing, reading, speaking, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.). The tasks and activities' types would also be different, as well as means of collecting data.

#### **6.4. Limitations of the Study**

The current research has its own limitations like every other study. To begin with, it was difficult to decide on the appropriate proficiency level to work with. After deciding on second-year students who are intermediate students, the number of the sample was small in relation to the whole population. This was due to the fact that the students are, administratively, divided into small groups. Because I was assigned to teach only two groups which consisted of 12 and 17 students per group. I had to work with what I had available as the Experimental group, besides another colleague's group that was our Control group. This could be one of the factors affecting the results of the study.

Another challenge of this study was the limited time devoted to the instruction. It would be better if the students were instructed for a period of one month; three hours per week, making the total of twelve hours. However, the treatment lasted only for two sessions, i.e. three hours which is not enough for better results. The restricted time of the instruction decreased more opportunities for explicit teaching, feedback, and practice as there were some students who needed that more than others. The reason behind such problem was because of the nature of the curriculum. The teacher had a certain program to finish by the end of the year. If more time (one month) was allocated for one grammatical aspect (articles in this case), there would not be enough time to teach them the rest of the grammatical content.

Another limitation of this study was the selection of the most appropriate tasks and activities to fit the teaching of articles. There were very few resources to adapt from. Most of the grammar games for teaching articles were for children and not adult learners. So, it is

really challenging for teachers to select appropriate and meaningful tasks to teach a given grammatical aspect, addressing the right level of students, and dealing with what actually interests and motivates them.

As for the means of research, it was problematic when it came to the Teachers' Questionnaire. Few teachers at the Department of Letters and English "Frères Mentouri" University, Constantine 1 taught grammar. Even if there were who said they had taught it before, it was for years ago. That is the reason why the number of the teachers' respondents was only twenty teachers. Otherwise, more opinions, attitudes, and teachers' perceptions would be collected for analysis.

Finally, the hypothesis of the research was partially confirmed as the Experimental group results were lower than the Control group's in the second part of the test when they were asked to write a paragraph. The instances of correct article use of the Control group students and their improvement was measured higher than the Experimental group's. This might be related to the approach itself.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of what has been said in theory and found in the experimental design of the present study, it is highly suggested that teachers should implement the Communicative-Structural Approach, which is believed to bring important and considerable changes to the language learning practice, in teaching grammar. Its effectiveness in developing the students' linguistic knowledge as well as communicative competence has been proved throughout this research. Teaching the English article system explicitly and in a communicative frame has helped the students participating in this study improve their understanding of the rules underlying article use and actually use articles correctly. An exhaustive and comprehensive investigation of its principles and efficacy need to be further explored. Given the fact that the Communicative-Structural Approach emphasizes the presentation of forms explicitly in



communicative environments, opens many doors of inquiry for other teachers researchers to look into it and add more to it as an attempt to enhance the English language teaching process.

## General Conclusion

Through this study, we have attempted to uncover the effectiveness and importance of implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles to second year students at the Department of Letters and English, University “Frères Mentouri”, Constantine

1. Grammatical knowledge has proved to be an important language aspect without which language acquisition cannot take place. This is the reason why it needs to be stressed in the process of teaching and learning any language. Nevertheless, a variety of grammatical features tend to create problems for English as a second and foreign language students, including the English article system. The latter is seen unteachable and must be naturally acquired through exposure to authentic discourse (spoken and written by native speakers) (Master, 1994: 229). Ekiert (2004: 1), however, argued that articles need to be explicitly taught due to the fact that they are unstressed and can be barely heard so that to be learned.

Throughout this study, we aim at investigating and examining the usefulness and effectiveness of direct instruction through the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching the English articles. We also seek to set light on the teachers’ views, perceptions, beliefs as well as attitudes towards the implementation of the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching English, Grammar, and articles. In addition to that, this research work highlights the students’ opinions and attitudes towards its implementation in learning articles. In the light of the above listed aims, we have elaborated two hypotheses. We hypothesize that if the English article system is taught systematically through the Communicative-Structural Approach, students’ grammatical competence would improve. We also hypothesize that the teachers at the Department of Letters and English, University “Frères Mentouri”, Constantine 1 believe that the Communicative-Structural Approach is effective in teaching articles and use it in their own teaching.

In the light of this situation, the role of systematic and direct explanation of the rules underlying the use of articles is examined by means of implementing the Communicative-Structural Approach into their teaching. This has been tested through a Pre-test/Post-test Control group/Experimental group design as well as a Teachers' Questionnaire and Students' Questionnaire. We have carried out a Pre-test in an attempt to evaluate the students' prior knowledge in using the English article system, and a Post-test that shed light on their measured improvement after the instruction. Indeed, the Communicative-Structural Approach has been successful in improving the students' use of articles. It is clearly noticed from their performance in the first part of the test (filling the gaps using the right article) that there was a considerable and dramatic increase in the level of their performance. The second part has also vividly revealed a development in the students' performance in using articles correctly in their own productions (writing a paragraph). Their progress was measured by calculating the difference between the right and wrong article uses in two paragraphs written in the Pre-test and the Post-test. These promising results obtained in the Pre-test and the Post-test highlight the fact that the Communicative-Structural Approach can actually contribute in enhancing the learners' use of articles. The Teachers' Questionnaire and the Students' Questionnaire were opted for in order to verify all that has been said in theory. The teachers believed that grammar is best taught by way of using an eclectic approach being the Communicative-Structural Approach. The latter is assumed to significantly increase their understanding, comprehension, and use of articles which is the reason why some of them already teach grammar using its basic principles. This has also been confirmed by the students respondents of the Students' Questionnaire who stated that their teachers opted for this eclectic approach in teaching them articles, and grammar in general. According to them the Communicative-

Structural Approach has helped them better understand and assimilate the most challenging and problematic grammatical aspects including the English article system.

It may be concluded that the nature of articles necessitates an explicit instruction that is provided in a communicative frame, and which has been verified effective through the implementation of the Communicative-Structural Approach. As a result the questions of our thesis are answered; therefore, both our hypotheses can be said to be positively confirmed. In other words, the Communicative-Structural Approach is suitably fitting in teaching articles, and its implementation in the teaching practice enhances the students' grammatical competence. In addition to that, the teachers' and the students' beliefs and opinions are positive about its implementation. It is extremely believed that further research would contribute in the betterment of this study by thoroughly investigating this matter and adding other valuable findings that would be significantly helpful in developing the learners' knowledge and facilitating the teachers' task.

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## Appendix I

### The Test

#### Activity One: filling gaps

*Fill in the gaps with the appropriate article.*

Jane Goodall is ..... famous scientist. She became famous for her studies of ..... chimpanzees in Tanzania. Even though she was born in ..... heart of London, England, as a child she was always fascinated by animals of all sorts. Her favourite books were the jungle book, by Rudyard Kipling, and ..... books about Tarzan, ..... fictional character who was raised by apes. Her dream from childhood was to go to Africa. After high school, she worked as a secretary and a waitress to earn ..... enough money to go there. During that time, she took evening courses in journalism and English literature. One of her favorite poets was T. S. Eliot. She saved every penny. She put her wages under ..... carpet in her mother's living room until she had enough money for passage to Africa. In the spring of 1957, she sailed through ..... red sea and southward down the African coast to Mombasa in Kenya. Her uncle had arranged ..... job for her in Nairobi with ..... British company. When she was there, she met Louis Leakey, a famous anthropologist. Under his guidance she began her lifelong study of ..... chimpanzees on ..... eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika. Jane Goodall lived alone in ..... tent near ..... lake. Through ..... months and years of ..... patience, she won ..... trust of the chipms and was able to observe them at close hand. Her observations changed forever how we view chimpanzees – and all other animals we share ..... world with as well. As ..... young woman, Jane couldn't afford to go to a university. She never received ..... undergraduate degree, but later in her life she received a Ph.D. from ..... Cambridge University and became ..... excellent professor at Stanford



## **Appendix II**

### **The Teachers' Questionnaire**

**Dear teacher,**

**This questionnaire is part of a research work.**

**It aims at examining the effectiveness of the Communicative-Structural Approach in teaching articles as well as investigating the teachers' views about incorporating it in teaching grammar.**

**I would be grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire.**

**Please tick (✓) the appropriate box(es), or make full statements when necessary.**

**Your answers will be valuable for this study.**

**May I thank you for your collaboration.**

**Mrs. SAADI Dounia**

**Department of Letters and English**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**University "Frères Mentouri", Constantine**

**Section one: General Information**

1. What is your degree?

- a. License
- b. Master
- c. Magister
- d. Doctorate

2. How long have you been teaching?

..... years.

3. How long have you been teaching Grammar?

..... years.

4. Which year(s)?

- a. First
- b. Second
- c. Third
- d. Master

**Section Two: Teaching Grammar**

5. Grammar should be taught:

- a. Deductively
- b. Inductively
- c. Eclectically

6. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....

7. You choose the method to follow while teaching Grammar according to:

a. The material to be taught

b. The students' proficiency level

c. The place and time allocated

d. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

8. The method you use in teaching grammar depends on the nature of the grammatical aspect.

Yes

No

9. If "Yes", please explain how.

.....  
.....

### Section Three: The Communicative-Structural Approach

Definition of the Communicative-Structural Approach:

The Communicative-Structural Approach is based on the principle of combining explicit explanations of grammatical rules and use of communicative tasks such as games and role-plays.

10. Are you familiar with the definition of the Communicative-Structural Approach?

Yes

No

11. If "Yes", do you use it in teaching Grammar?

Yes

No

12. If “No”, is it because:

- a. It is not as effective as the Communicative Approach
- b. It is unsuitable for the grammar lessons
- c. It is not well understood
- d. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

13. If “Yes”, for which grammatical aspect do you use it and why?

.....  
.....

14. If “Yes”, how often do you use it?

- a. Always
- b. Usually
- c. Sometimes
- d. Rarely

#### Section Four: Teaching Articles and the Communicative-Structural Approach

15. Teaching articles is a difficult task

- Yes
- No

16. If “Yes”, it is difficult because:

- a. The English article system is complex
- b. Articles are taught in isolation
- c. The rules are not clear and sometimes contradictory
- d. First language influences their acquisition
- e. They are unstressed and hard to be heard by students

f. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

**17.** Do you teach articles:

a. Deductively

b. Inductively

c. Eclectically

**18.** Please, explain why.

.....  
.....

**19.** How do the students respond when introduced to articles?

a. Show they are afraid of learning them

b. Discuss their difficulty

c. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

**20.** The Communicative-Structural Approach can help in teaching articles.

Yes

No

**21.** If “Yes”, please explain how.

.....  
.....

**22.** Have you ever used the Communicative-Structural Approach to teach articles?

Yes

No



23. If “No”, please explain why.

.....  
.....

**Section Five: Further Suggestions**

24. Please, add any further comment or suggestion.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Appendix III**  
**The Students' Questionnaire**

**Dear students,**

**This questionnaire is part of a research work.**

**It aims at examining the effectiveness of the Structural-Communicative Approach in teaching articles as well as investigating the teachers' views about incorporating it in teaching grammar.**

**I would be grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire.**

**Please tick (✓) the appropriate box(es), or make full statements when necessary.**

**Your answers will be valuable for this study.**

**May I thank you for your collaboration.**

**Mrs. SAADI Dounia**

**Department of Letters and English**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**University "Des Frères Mentouri", Constantine**

## Section One: Learning English

1. Do you have difficulty in learning English?

Yes

No

2. If "Yes", is it because of :

a. Grammar

b. Vocabulary

c. Listening

d. Speaking

e. Writing

3. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....

## Section Two: Learning Grammar

4. Grammar should be taught:

a. Deductively: with explanations of the rules

b. Inductively: without a direct reference to the rules

c. Eclectically: using both

5. You best learn Grammar through:

a. Discovering the rules on your own

b. An exhaustive explanation from the teacher

c. Discovering the rule first and then explanations from the teacher

d. An exhaustive explanation from the teacher then looking for more details on your own

6. It is difficult to learn Grammar.

Yes

No

7. If "Yes", is it because:

a. The content is difficult

b. The teacher's method is unsuitable for you

c. You do not understand the explanations

d. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

8. Which grammatical aspect you find most problematic?

a. Tenses

b. Prepositions

c. Articles

d. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

### Section Three: The Communicative-Structural Approach

Definition of the Communicative/Structural Approach:

The Communicative/Structural Approach is based on the principle of combining explicit explanations of grammatical rules and use of communicative tasks such as games and role-plays.

9. Does your teacher use the Communicative/Structural Approach in teaching Grammar?

Yes

No

10. If “Yes”, how often does s/he use it?

- a. Always
- b. Usually
- c. Sometimes
- d. Rarely

**Section Four: Teaching Articles and the Communicative-Structural Approach**

11. If you find articles difficult, is it because:

- a. They occur most frequently in the same discourse
- b. They are hard to be heard in the spoken discourse
- c. There are multiple uses for the same article
- d. The rules are not clear and sometimes contradictory
- e. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

12. What is the article you find the most complicated to learn?

- a. The definite article
- b. The indefinite article
- c. Zero article

13. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....

14. Does your teacher teach articles:

- a. Deductively
- b. Inductively

c. Eclectically

15. How do you respond when introduced to articles?

a. Show you are afraid of learning them

b. Discuss their difficulty

c. Other: Please, specify:

.....  
.....

16. The Communicative-Structural Approach can help in learning articles.

Yes

No

17. If "Yes", please explain how.

.....  
.....

18. Has your teacher used the Communicative-Structural Approach to teach articles?

Yes

No

**Section Five: Further Suggestions**

19. Please, add any further comment or suggestion.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix IV

### Song 1: “Young Heart Run Free”

(Crawford, Sung by Candi Staton)

#### Verse – 1

What’s ..... sense in sharing, this one and only life,  
ending up, just another lost and lonely wife.

You’ll count up ..... years and they will be filled with ..... tears.

#### Verse – 2

..... love only breaks up – to start over again.

You’ll get ..... baby, but you won’t have your man,  
while he is busy loving every woman that he can, uh-huh

#### Verse – 3

(You) Say “I’m going to leave” ..... hundred times ..... day;  
it’s easier said than done,

when you just can’t break away. (when you just can’t break away)

#### Chorus

Oh ..... young heart run free,

never be hung up, hung up like my man and me, my man and me.

Ooh, ..... young hearts, to yourself be true

don’t be no fool, when ..... love really don’t love you, don’t love you.

#### Verse – 4

It’s high time now – just one crack at life.

Who wants to live in, in ..... trouble and ..... strife?

My mind must be free, to learn all I can about me. Uh-hmm

#### Verse – 5

I'm going to love me, for the rest of my days,  
encourage ..... babies every time they say;  
“..... self-preservation is what's really going on today”

Verse – 6

(I'll) Say “I'm going to turn loose” ..... thousands times ..... day,  
but how can I turn loose,  
when I just can't break away. (when I just can't break away)

Chorus

Oh .....young hearts run free,  
they'll never be hung up, hung up like my man and me, you and me  
ooh, ..... young hearts, to yourself be true.  
Don't be no fool, when ..... love really don't love you, don't love you.



## Appendix V

### Song 2: "It's My Life"

(Sung by *Bon Jovi*)

#### Verse – 1

This ain't ..... song for ..... broken-hearted

No ..... silent prayer for ..... faith-departed

I ain't gonna be just ..... face in ..... crowd

You're gonna hear my voice

When I shout ..... it out loud

#### Chorus

It's my ..... life

It's now or ..... never

I ain't gonna live forever

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my ..... life)

#### Verse – 2

My heart is like ..... open highway

Like ..... Frankie said

I did it my way

I just wanna live while I'm alive

It's my ..... life

#### Verse – 3

This is for ..... ones who stood their ground

For ..... Tommy and ..... Gina who never backed down

Tomorrow's getting ..... harder make no mistake

..... luck ain't even lucky

Got to make your own breaks

Chorus

It's my ..... life

It's now or ..... never

I ain't gonna live forever

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my ..... life)

Verse – 4

My heart is like ..... open highway

Like ..... Frankie said

I did it my way

I just wanna live while I'm alive

Cause it's my ..... life

[Solo]

Verse – 5

Better syand tall

When they're calling you out

Don't bend, don't break,

baby, don't back down

Chorus

It's my ..... life

It's now or ..... Never

I ain't gonna live forever

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my ..... life)

Verse – 6

My heart is like ..... open highway

Like ..... Frankie said

I did it my way

I just wanna live while I'm alive

Cause it's my ..... life

Chorus

It's my ..... life

It's now or ..... Never

I ain't gonna live forever

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my ..... life)

Verse – 7

My heart is like ..... open highway

Like ..... Frankie said

I did it my way

I just wanna live while I'm alive

Cause it's my ..... life

## Appendix VI

### Letter 1

TO Mrs. Saville, England

St. Petersburg, Dec. 11th, 17-

You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday, and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

I am already far north of London, and as I walk in the streets of Petersburg, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid. I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is forever visible, its broad disk just skirting the horizon and diffusing a perpetual splendour. There—for with your leave, my sister, I will put some trust in preceding navigators—there snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle and may regulate a thousand celestial observations that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent forever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man. These are my enticements, and they

are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death and to induce me to commence this laborious voyage with the joy a child feels when he embarks in a little boat, with his holiday mates, on an expedition of discovery up his native river. But supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind, to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

These reflections have dispelled the agitation with which I began my letter, and I feel my heart glow with an enthusiasm which elevates me to heaven, for nothing contributes so much to tranquillize the mind as a steady purpose—a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. This expedition has been the favourite dream of my early years. I have read with ardour the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the prospect of arriving at the North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the pole. You may remember that a history of all the voyages made for purposes of discovery composed the whole of our good Uncle Thomas' library. My education was neglected, yet I was passionately fond of reading. These volumes were my study day and night, and my familiarity with them increased that regret which I had felt, as a child, on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life.

These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet and for one year lived in a paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprise. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than the common sailors during the day and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage. Twice I actually hired myself as an under-mate in a Greenland whaler, and acquitted myself to admiration. I must own I felt a little proud when my captain offered me the second dignity in the vessel and entreated me to remain with the greatest earnestness, so valuable did he consider my services.

And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury, but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative! My courage and my resolution is firm; but my hopes fluctuate, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to proceed on a long and difficult voyage, the emergencies of which will demand all my fortitude: I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to sustain my own, when theirs are failing.

This is the most favourable period for travelling in Russia. They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges; the motion is pleasant, and, in my opinion, far more agreeable than that of an English stagecoach. The cold is not excessive, if you are wrapped in furs—a dress which I have already adopted, for there is a great difference between walking the deck and remaining seated motionless for hours, when no exercise prevents the blood from actually freezing in your veins. I have no ambition to lose my life on the post-road between St. Petersburg and Archangel.

I shall depart for the latter town in a fortnight or three weeks; and my intention is to hire a ship there, which can easily be done by paying the insurance for the owner, and to engage as many sailors as I think necessary among those who are accustomed to the whale-fishing. I do not intend to sail until the month of June; and when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never. Farewell, my dear, excellent Margaret. Heaven shower down blessings on you, and save me, that I may again and again testify my gratitude for all your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother,

R. Walton

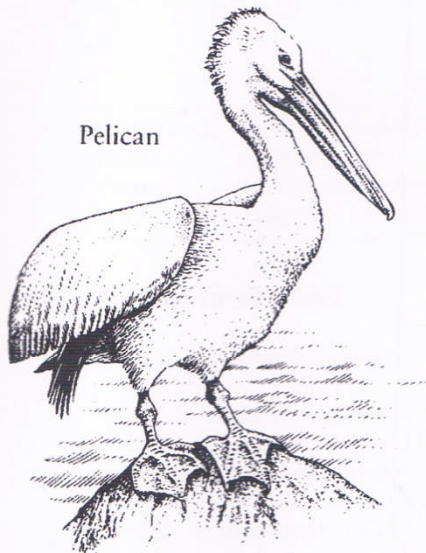
(Shelley, 2002: 5-7).

## Appendix VII

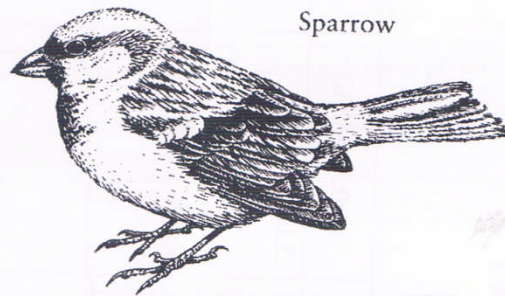
### The Bird Page

*Defining birds and brothers*

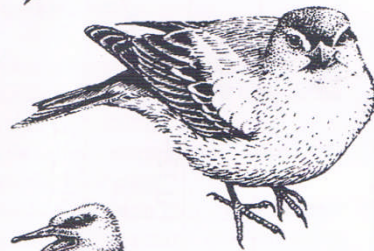
**The bird page** (You will need 1 per two students.)



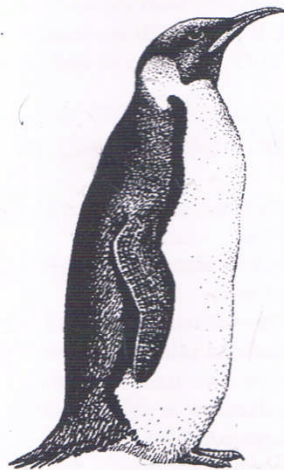
Pelican



Sparrow



Chaffinch



Penguin



Ostrich



## Appendix VIII

### Article Pass – Along



#### Worksheet 43: ARTICLE PASS-ALONG

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate article: a, an, the, or 0.

- \_\_\_\_\_ yellow dog that belongs to my brother is \_\_\_\_\_ old dog.
- Does Yasuyuki drive \_\_\_\_\_ truck or \_\_\_\_\_ car?
- My sister's boyfriend works at \_\_\_\_\_ restaurant across from \_\_\_\_\_ school he attends.
- My new watch is made of \_\_\_\_\_ gold.
- When Martha heard \_\_\_\_\_ terrible news, she was filled with \_\_\_\_\_ sadness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ women generally live longer than \_\_\_\_\_ men.
- Many people return to \_\_\_\_\_ college after working for several years.
- The teacher said, "You may take \_\_\_\_\_ break if you have finished \_\_\_\_\_ rest of \_\_\_\_\_ test."
- I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ market on Hill Street. Can I get you anything?
- After Thanksgiving weekend, you would probably agree that \_\_\_\_\_ football is \_\_\_\_\_ most popular sport in North America.
- I hope to get \_\_\_\_\_ degree in \_\_\_\_\_ computer science by \_\_\_\_\_ end of this year.
- What is more important to you— \_\_\_\_\_ good health or \_\_\_\_\_ money?
- If \_\_\_\_\_ telephone in the kitchen rings, will you pick it up?
- \_\_\_\_\_ radio had \_\_\_\_\_ biggest influence on \_\_\_\_\_ people until \_\_\_\_\_ invention of \_\_\_\_\_ television.
- One reason Rafael bought his house is that \_\_\_\_\_ backyard is a good place for his kids to play.
- What is \_\_\_\_\_ quickest way to get to \_\_\_\_\_ mall?

## Résumé

L'enseignement\apprentissage des règles grammaticales voit une émergence vers la création des compétences communicatives. Delors on les enseignait de façon structurale, directe et explicite en enseignant des structures et des combinaisons grammaticales. Comme tous les aspects grammaticaux, les articles en Anglais sont enseignés selon la même perspective. On croyait que l'enseignement\apprentissage des articles se fait d'une façon spontanée et dans un bain linguistique naturel et authentique. Cependant, ils sont très difficiles à être détectés par les locuteurs non natifs car ils ne sont pas accentués. Par conséquent, l'explication directe de leurs règles est nécessaire car ils sont difficiles à entendre et ne peuvent pas être enseignés en suivant uniquement l'approche communicative. Cela nous amène à considérer l'Approche Structurale combinée à la Communicative où les enseignants présentent les règles, les expliquent et les pratiquent dans un contexte communicatif. Cette étude vise à étudier l'utilité de l'enseignement systématique des articles en Anglais en utilisant une approche communicative-structurale au sein du Département des lettres et langue Anglaise, Université "Frères Mentouri", Constantine. Nous émettons l'hypothèse suivante : si les articles en Anglais sont enseignés systématiquement par l'approche communicative-structurale, les étudiants sont appelés à améliorer leur compréhension et l'utilisation des articles. Nous émettons également l'hypothèse suivante: les enseignants du Département des lettres et langue Anglaise, Université "Frères Mentouri", Constantine croient que l'approche communicative-structurale soit efficace dans l'enseignement des articles et qu'ils la pratiquent dans leur enseignement. Les hypothèses sont vérifiées à travers une conception Pré-test/Post-test, Group de control/ Group expérimental ainsi que deux questionnaires destinés aux enseignants et aux étudiants. Les sujets en question de notre étude sont une cinquantaine d'étudiants de deuxième année à l'université "Frères Mentouri", Constantine 1. Ils ont été divisés en deux groupes, un groupe de contrôle et un autre expérimental. Selon les données obtenues à partir

du test, nous pouvons confirmer la première hypothèse puisque le test démontre clairement une meilleure performance et donc une amélioration des résultats du groupe expérimental. En ce qui concerne les Questionnaires des enseignants et des étudiants, les enseignants pensent que l'utilisation de l'approche communicative- structurelle est efficace dans l'enseignement de la grammaire, et les étudiants ont déclaré que leurs enseignants utilisent cette approche pour leur enseigner la grammaire. On peut donc dire que la seconde hypothèse est également confirmée. En terme de résultats à la fin de cette recherche, il est suggéré que les concepteurs des programmes de la grammaire et les enseignants reviennent à l'enseignement des structures grammaticales et considèrent qu'il est important d'enseigner systématiquement les règles grammaticales à l'aide de l'approche communicative-structurelle.

## المخلص

لقد عرف تعليم التراكيب النحوية و البني اللغوية تغيرا منشودا إذ لم يعد استخدام التعليمات المباشرة و الصريحة كوسيلة تعليمية بل اعتمدت الطرق التواصلية كبديل لتدريس النحو. ككل الجوانب النحوية، تدرس أدوات المعرفة بنفس المنظور. ويعتقد أن تدريس أدوات المعرفة يكون بطريقة عفوية ومن خلال التعرض الطبيعي للغة. ومع ذلك، فمن الصعب جدا بالنسبة للناطقين بغيرها تمييزها لأنها غير مشدودة. التفسير المباشر لقواعدها ضروري لأنها من الصعب أن تسمع، ولا يمكن أن تدرس بالمنهج التواصلية فقط. وهذا يقودنا إلى النظر في النهج الهيكلية جنبا إلى جنب مع التواصلية حيث يقدم المعلمين القواعد وشرح لهم في سياق متواصل. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى النظر في فعالية فائدة المنهج التواصلية/الهيكلية في تدريس أدوات المعرفة في قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية، في جامعة "الإخوة منتوري". نفترض أنه إذا تم تدريس أدوات المعرفة بشكل منهجي واستخدام المنهج التواصلية- الهيكلية من شأنه أن يحسن فهم واستخدام أدوات المعرفة. كما أننا نفترض أيضا أن المعلمين في قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة "الإخوة منتوري"، قسنطينة يعتقدون أن النهج التواصلية - الهيكلية فعال في تدريس أدوات المعرفة ويستخدمونه في تعليمهم. يتم التحقق من الفرضيتين عن طريق تصميم اختبار ما قبل وما بعد الاختبار، مجموعة مراقبة/مجموعة تجريبية فضلا عن استبيان المعلمين والطلاب. إن المشاركين في دراستنا هم خمسون طالبا في السنة الثانية في جامعة "الإخوة منتوري"، قسنطينة 1. تم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين، مجموعة مراقبة و أخرى تجريبية. وفقا للبيانات التي تم التحصل عليها في الاختبار، يمكننا أن نؤكد الفرضية الأولى لأنه يدل بوضوح على أداء أفضل وبالتالي تحسن في نتائج المجموعة التجريبية. وفيما يتعلق باستبيانات المعلمين والطلاب، يعتقد المعلمون أن استخدام المنهج التواصلية - الهيكلية فعال في تدريس القواعد، وذكر الطلاب أن معلمهم يستخدمون هذا المنهج في تدريسهم القواعد. يمكن للمرء أن يقول أنه تم تأكيد الفرضية الثانية كذلك. على أساس ما وجدنا، يقترح أن مصممي منهج النحو والمعلمين يجب أن يعودوا إلى تعليم الهياكل النحوية والنظر في أهمية التدريس المنهجية من خلال المنهج التواصلية / الهيكلية.