

**The acquisition of (in)definiteness in English as a foreign language by
Tanzanian L1 Swahili secondary school learners**

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Declaration

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Abstract

The study reported in this dissertation examined the acquisition of (in)definiteness in English as a foreign language (EFL) by secondary school learners with Swahili as their first language (L1) in Tanzania. It focused on (i) the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts (for definiteness), (ii) the first mention, opaque and transparent contexts (for indefiniteness), and (iii) the use of articles in specific and non-specific contexts, in writing and in speaking.

Although English is the medium of instruction from secondary school onwards in Tanzania, it is still a foreign language. Consequently, most learners only receive exposure to English in the EFL classroom, and most EFL teachers struggle with English themselves (Qorro, 2006). It is thus unsurprising that these learners manifest non-target-like performance in their EFL use of articles (among other aspects of English). This study aimed at determining which contexts of the English article system manifest as non-target-like in Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use and, based on the findings, providing EFL teachers in Tanzania with suggestions regarding the contexts that require special pedagogical attention.

Whereas English realises grammatical definiteness via its article system, Swahili realises semantic-pragmatic definiteness via the context of interaction. For this reason, data from Swahili-speaking EFL learners could be used in the present study to address the Article Choice Parameter (Ionin, Ko & Wexler, 2004), the Fluctuation Hypothesis (*ibid.*), the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (Trenkic, 2007) and the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Prévost & White, 2000).

Based on a cross-linguistic analysis of English and Swahili, the specific predictions were that Swahili-speaking EFL learners would omit articles at the elementary level of proficiency, and that they would fluctuate between definiteness and specificity at the intermediate level of proficiency. The mixed methods study reported in this dissertation involved collecting (i) quantitative data from 163 Swahili-speaking EFL learners by means of an acceptability judgement task, a forced choice elicitation task and a picture-description task, and (ii) qualitative data from 10 EFL teachers via semi-structured interviews.

An analysis of the quantitative data indicated that the learners transferred the bare noun phrase structure of their L1 Swahili and used 'noun+pronoun' pairings to realise definiteness in English, mostly at the elementary level of proficiency. They also fluctuated between definiteness and specificity. Concerning the contexts referred to above, the use of the

indefinite article, the anaphoric use of the definite article and the opaque use of the indefinite article manifested as non-target-like more often than the other contexts.

The interview data revealed that most of the teachers did not have a sufficient level of proficiency in English, training in implementing the current curriculum or expertise in teaching the article system communicatively. The findings of the present study suggest the need to revise the current language in education policy and to ensure that teachers receive training in implementing the curriculum and making use of the Focus on Form approach.

The study concludes with some specific suggestions for EFL teachers in Tanzania regarding teaching the English article system to their Swahili-speaking learners.

Opsomming

Die studie waaroor in hierdie proefskrif gerapporteer word, het ondersoek ingestel na die verwerwing van (on)bepaaldheid in Engels as Vreemde Taal (EVT) deur hoërskoolleerders met Swahili as eerstetaal (T1) in Tanzanië. Dit het gefokus op (i) die anaforiese, assosiatiewe en ensiklopediese kontekste (vir bepaaldheid), (ii) die eerste-verwysing, ondeursigtige en deursigtige kontekste (vir onbepaaldheid), en (iii) die gebruik van lidwoorde in spesifieke en nie-spesifieke kontekste, in geskrewe sowel as gesproke taal.

Alhoewel Engels in Tanzanië die onderrigmedium is vanaf hoërskoolvlak, is dit steeds ‘n vreemde taal. Gevolglik ontvang meeste leerders slegs blootstelling aan Engels in die EVT-klaskamer, en sukkel meeste EVT-onderwysers self met Engels (Qorro, 2006). Dit is dus nie verbasend dat hierdie leerders (onder andere) Engelse lidwoorde op nie-teikenagtige wyses gebruik nie. Die studie het ten doel gehad om vas te stel watter kontekste van die Engelse lidwoordstelsel op nie-teikenagtige wyses gebruik word deur Swahili-sprekende EVT-leerders en om, gebaseer op die bevindings, voorstelle te maak aan EVT-onderwysers in Tanzanië aangaande watter kontekste spesiale pedagogiese aandag benodig.

Terwyl Engels grammatikale bepaaldheid aandui deur sy lidwoordstelsel, dui Swahili semanties-pragmatiese bepaaldheid aan deur die konteks van interaksie. Om hierdie rede kon data van Swahili-sprekende EVT-leerders gebruik word om in die huidige studie die Lidwoordkeuse Parameter (Ionin, Ko & Wexler, 2004), die Fluktuasie Hipotese (ibid.), die Sintaktiese Misanalise Verklaring (Trenkic, 2007) en die Ontbrekende Oppervlaksinfleksie Hipotese (Prévost & White, 2000) aan te spreek.

Gebaseer op ‘n kruislinguistiese analise van Engels en Swahili, was die spesifieke voorspellings dat Swahili-sprekende EVT-leerders lidwoorde sou weglaat op die elementêre vaardigheidsvlak, en dat hulle sou fluktrueer tussen bepaaldheid en spesifiekheid op die intermediêre vaardigheidsvlak. Die gemengde-metodes studie waaroor gerapporteer word in hierdie proefskrif het die insameling behels van (i) kwantitatiewe data van 163 Swahili-sprekende EVT-leerders deur middel van ‘n aanvaarbaarheidsoordeletaak, ‘n geforseerde-keuse-ontlokkingsstaak en ‘n prentjie-beskrywingstaak, en (ii) kwalitatiewe data van 10 EVT-onderwysers deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude.

‘n Analise van die kwantitatiewe data het aangedui dat die leerders die blote-naamwoordfrase-struktuur van hul T1 Swahili oorgedra het en ‘naamwoord+voornaamwoord’-afparings gebruik het om bepaaldheid aan te dui in Engels,

meestal op die elementêre vaardigheidsvlak. Hulle het ook gefluktueer tussen bepaaldheid en spesifiekheid. Wat die bogenoemde kontekste betref, het nie-teikenagtige taalgebruik meer voorgekom by die gebruik van die onbepaalde lidwoord, die anaforiese gebruik van die bepaalde lidwoord en die nie-deursigtige gebruik van die onbepaalde lidwoord, as by ander kontekste.

Die onderhoud-data het gewys dat meeste van die onderwysers nie 'n voldoende vlak van vaardigheid gehad het in Engels nie, en ook nie voldoende opleiding in die implementering van die huidige kurrikulum of kundigheid in die onderrig van die lidwoordstelsel op 'n kommunikatiewe wyse nie. Die bevindings van die huidige studie dui op die noodsaaklikheid daarvan om die taal-in-onderrig beleid te hersien en om te verseker dat onderwysers opleiding ontvang in die implementering van die kurrikulum en in die gebruik van die Fokus-op-Vorm benadering.

Die studie sluit af met 'n paar spesifieke voorstelle vir EVT-onderwysers in Tanzanië aangaande die onderrig van die Engelse lidwoordstelsel aan hulle Swahili-sprekende leerders.

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List of abbreviations

[+ART]	Presence of articles
[+def]	Definite
[+HK]	Hearer's Knowledge (or Definite)
[+spec]	Specific
[+SR]	Specific Reference (or Specific)
[-ART]	Absence of articles
[-def]	Indefinite
[-spec]	Non specific
ACP	Article Choice Parameter
ADJ/Adj.	Adjective
AgrO	Agreement Object
AgrS	Agreement Subject
AJT	Acceptability Judgement Task
A-level	Advanced level
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
appl.	Applicative
ART	Article
C	Consonant
CANCODE	Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English
caus	Causative
CBE	Competency-Based Education
CBLT	Competency-Based Language Teaching
CHAT	Codes for Human Analysis of Transcripts
CHILDES	Child Language Data Exchange System
CLAN	Computerised Language Analysis
COND	Condition
COP	Copula
D/DET	Determiner
DEM/Dem	Demonstrative
dist	distal
DP	Determiner Phrase
E	Elementary
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ENNI	Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument
F1	Form One
F2	Form Two
F3	Form Three
F4	Form Four
FCET	Forced Choice Elicitation Task
FH	Fluctuation Hypothesis
fnc	Functional element
FT/FA	Full Transfer/Full Access
fut/fut.	Future

FV/fv	Final vowel
GoURT	Government of the United Republic of Tanzania
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IL	Inter-language
JMT	Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania [The United Republic of Tanzania]
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LBQ	Language Background Questionnaire
LCT	Learner Centred Teaching
LF	Logical Form
LI	Low Intermediate
LOT	Languages of Tanzania
Lrn	Learner
MoI	Medium of Instruction
MSIH	Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis
N	Noun
<i>n</i>	number of participants
N _{AF}	Noun performing an adjectival function
NC	Native Control
NECTA	National Examination Council of Tanzania
NEG/Neg	Negation marker
NP	Noun Phrase
NS	Native Speaker
Num	Number
NumP	Number Phrase
∅	Article omission
‘∅’	Zero article
-∅-	Absence of an object marker
o-	o- of reference/a relative marker
O-level	Ordinary level
OM	Object Marker
OQPT	Oxford Quick Placement Test
OUP	Oxford University Press
O	Object
O _{NP}	Object noun phrase
pass/pass.	Passive marker
PAST/pst	Past tense marker
PDT	Picture Description Task
Perf/prf	Perfective
PF	Phonetic Form
poss.	Possessive marker
PPF/PrPr	Pre prefix
PRES/pres	Present tense marker
PRO	Pronoun
prox	proximal
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination

PTH	Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis
RDH	Representational Deficit Hypothesis
RM	Relative Marker
SG	Singular
SM	Subject Marker
SMA	Syntactic Misanalysis Account
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
Subj/S	Subject
TAHOSSA	Tanzania Heads of Secondary Schools Association
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TM	Tense Marker
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
UG	Universal Grammar
UI	Upper Intermediate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
V	Verb
WW1	First World War
>	Followed by

Transcription symbols

B	School B
J	School J
M	School M
T	Teacher
...	Text removed
/	or
[]	a more appropriate word
(())	Inaudible
‘ ’	Translated text

Statistical Abbreviations

LSD	Least Significant Difference
std. dev.	Standard deviation
p-value	Probability value
=	Equals to
>	Greater than
<	Less than

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The present study sets out to examine the acquisition of (in)definiteness in English as a foreign language¹ (EFL) by secondary school learners in Tanzania² who have Swahili as their first language (L1) to determine the contexts of article usage that manifest as non-target-like in their interlanguage (IL)³ use. In particular, it examines the acquisition of the following contexts of (in)definiteness as realised via articles in English: anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic definite contexts and simple, opaque and transparent indefinite contexts. In addition, it looks at the use of articles in relation to (non-)specific contexts. To my knowledge, no study has yet been conducted to explore which contexts of (in)definiteness in English manifest as non-target-like in the IL of Swahili-speaking learners of EFL. From the onset of the current study, the aim was not simply to identify non-target aspects of the learners' EFL use but also to use the findings of the study to offer relevant suggestions for the teaching and learning of the English article system by Swahili-speaking EFL learners in Tanzania. Although I will of course deal with the English article system and literature on its acquisition by second language (L2) learners in detail in subsequent chapters, a brief overview is necessary before turning to the problem statement, aim and research questions of the current study.

The English article system lies at the interface between morpho-syntactic and semantic-pragmatic domains. Thus for a hearer to understand the entity being described, they have to rely on both the article system and the context of interaction, which includes the discourse context and the relations existing between them (Irmer, 2011). The article system helps to establish and maintain coherence in the discourse. The speaker⁴ therefore has to use it in

¹ A foreign language is a language that is mainly learned in the classroom situation but is not spoken in the naturalistic environment of the community where teaching occurs. The term 'foreign language' is among the key terms listed and defined at the end of this chapter.

² The name 'Tanzania' resulted from the unification of Mainland Tanganyika and the islands of Zanzibar in 1964. The unification followed the Zanzibar revolution that took place on 12 January 1964 (Mwakikagile, 2008:7).

³ Interlanguage is a linguistic system constructed by a second language learner. This linguistic system is at the intermediate state between the learner's L1 and the target L2 (Selinker, 1972).

⁴ Note that throughout this dissertation, the term *speaker* can refer to a speaker or writer, while the term *hearer* can refer to a hearer, listener, or reader.

accordance with the acceptable morpho-syntactic and semantic-pragmatic structures of English. Consideration of the following example is useful.

- (1) a. Today, John has visited *a new flat*.
 b. *The balcony* is very nice,
 c. but *the bath* is too small. (Irmer, 2011:1, *emphasis added*)

In the example above, the speaker introduces *a new flat* into the discourse. Relying on the preceding discourse, he/she refers to *the balcony* and *the bath* as definite in the subsequent discourse. Langacker (1991:230) observes that articles cognitively indicate some “mental contact” that speakers establish with noun phrase (NP) referents. Whereas *a(n)* shows that the entity is still indefinite (as in Example (1a)), *the* shows that the entity is unique and clearly delimited in the discourse context (as in Examples (1b&1c)) (cf. Harb, 2014). In addition, by using *the*, the speaker presupposes that the hearer can identify the referent, based on their general understanding of the world. At this point, it is important to note that contrary to what one might assume, the grammatical rules and concepts that underlie the correct use of the English article system are actually quite complex and abstract. This will become clear in the detailed discussion of this system in Chapter 2.

The inaccurate and/or inappropriate use of English articles can lead to messages being conveyed inaccurately and/or inappropriately. Consider the following simple example: A teacher says “Look at the picture on page 12. See how the author describes it. Now look at a picture and describe it in the same way but in your own words.” Here, because of the properties of the English article system, the phrase “a picture” in the teacher’s last utterance necessarily refers to a different picture than the one referred to by “the picture” in the teacher’s first utterance. If a learner does not understand this, they might believe that they have to describe the picture on page 12, that is, they might misunderstand the instruction and therefore fail to complete the set task successfully. Similarly, if the teacher’s intention was for the learners to describe the picture on page 12 and he/she mistakenly used “a picture” instead of “the picture”, the teacher would have given the learners the wrong instructions. Because almost all English utterances contain at least one article, and usually many more, the potential for miscommunication is increased significantly when speakers do not have sufficient knowledge of the article system of English, or when they cannot correctly and consistently apply such knowledge (consciously or unconsciously) in listening, speaking, reading and/or writing.

A cross-linguistic analysis of the realisation of definiteness and specificity in English and Swahili indicates that whereas English, like several other Indo-European languages, uses its article system to realise (in)definiteness, Swahili and other Bantu languages rely on different morpho-syntactic processes (such as using demonstratives, object markers and pre-prefixes) and/or the context of interaction to realise definiteness and specificity (cf. Gambarage, 2013; Visser, 2008).⁵ Note that although the focus of the study is on the morpho-syntactic realisation of definiteness and specificity, it is of course not possible to examine these notions without referring to discourse pragmatics, as definiteness and specificity lie at the interface between morpho-syntax and discourse pragmatics (Valenzuela & McCormack 2013). The latter thus received the necessary attention in the present study. I explore these elements and other relevant syntactic processes in more detail in Sections 2.4 and 2.5.

Because of linguistic differences such as those mentioned above, acquiring the ability to use the English article system appropriately is challenging to learners of English as a second or foreign language whose L1s do not have an article system. Such learners usually achieve target-like performance on articles very late, at an advanced level of proficiency (Butler, 2002; Young, 1996). The difficulty noted in the acquisition of the English article system has compelled researchers to examine sources of difficulty in acquiring the English article system. Consequently, they investigated a number of variables.

Some studies compared learners of English who spoke L1s with articles [+ART] with learners who spoke L1s without articles [-ART]. Results indicate that, generally, learners with [+ART] L1s master the English article system more easily than learners with [-ART] L1s do (Ionin, Zubizarreta and Maldonado, 2008; Master, 1987; Thomas, 1989). This finding led to the view that learners with [+ART] L1s transfer the semantics of article use from their respective L1s to English (Morales-Reyes & Soler, 2016), whereas learners with [-ART] L1s are constrained by the bare noun phrase structures of their L1s. That is, since their L1s do not have specific overt morphological elements for realising (in)definiteness, they cannot correctly map (in)definiteness on the surface morphological structure of English (White, 2003a; Lardière, 2005). Consequently, while learners with [+ART] L1s use articles appropriately from quite early on in the acquisition process, learners with [-ART] L1s incorrectly omit and substitute articles at different stages of their IL development and, as

⁵ See also Deen (2006), Givón (1976), Krifka (2003), Lyons (1999), Mohammed (2001), Ngonjani (1998), Petzell (2003), Progovic (1993), Riedel (2009) and Seidl and Dimitriadis (1997).

mentioned earlier, only master the article system at an advanced stage of development, if at all.

Other studies compared learners' accuracy on individual articles to determine the order of article acquisition, among many other aspects (García-Mayo, 2009; Lu, 2001; Master, 1987; Świątek, 2014). While some of these studies employed learners with [–ART] L1s, others employed learners with [+ART] L1s. Results generally indicate that, for learners with [–ART] L1s, article omission is prevalent especially at the initial stages of acquisition. The omission of articles is followed by a period where *the* is overgeneralised to indefinite specific contexts; this phenomenon is what Huebner (1983) and Master (1987) call '*the-flooding*'. Finally, *a(n)* is acquired (Master, 1987). For learners with [+ART] L1s, the acquisition order follows the pattern *the* > *a(n)*⁶ (see for instance García-Mayo (2009) among her low-proficiency L1 Spanish-speaking learners of English). I review such studies in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

An on-going debate in the literature on the L2 acquisition of articles involves the question of what exactly is the underlying cause of L2 learners' errors in article use. This question is, in turn, related to the parameters of Universal Grammar (UG). Within the generative framework of linguistics (cf. Section 1.7 below), Chomsky (1981, 1986) created the term "UG" when he proposed the existence of a module in the brain that is specifically designed for language acquisition and processing. He claimed that UG underlies all human languages, and that it consists of a set of invariant principles, which all human languages obey and a set of parameters, each of which has two settings. He claimed that the differences between languages were a consequence of the fact that parameters were set to different settings in different languages. In the debate about the underlying cause of L2 learners' errors in article use, some researchers claim that these errors are due to learners accessing more than one parameter setting simultaneously during the initial stages of their IL development, while others claim that they are due to misanalysing English articles as adjectives. Those who argue for the errors being due to learners accessing more than one parameter setting claim that learners of English fluctuate between the two settings of the so-called Article Choice Parameter (ACP) (Ionin, Ko & Wexler, 2004; Tryzna, 2009). I describe this Fluctuation

⁶ However, the *the* > *a(n)* (> \emptyset) pattern has also been noted among L2 learners of English with [–ART] L1s; for instance, the Chinese-speaking EFL learners in Xia and Yan-xia (2015) and the Bangla-speaking EFL learners in Kamal (2013) exhibited this pattern as well even though they have [–ART] L1s.

Hypothesis (FH) in Section 3.3 with reference to the ACP. Those who argue against learners accessing the two settings of the ACP simultaneously draw on the so-called Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA) (Trenkic 2007, 2008) to claim that errors in article use stem from learners incorrectly analysing determiners (including articles) as adjectives. Consequently, such learners are said to omit articles more in adjectivally modified nouns than in non-adjectivally modified nouns (Pongpaibroj, 2007; Trenkic, 2007, 2008). I describe the SMA in Section 3.5.

The debate described in the preceding paragraph led some researchers to examine more closely the role of L1 transfer, on the one hand, and L2 input, on the other hand, in the L2 acquisition of articles (Dikilitas & Altay, 2011; Ionin, Zubizarreta & Maldonado, 2008). Concerning the structure of the L1, as noted above, learners with a [+ART] L1 seem to be able to acquire the article system of a target L2 more easily than learners with a [-ART] L1. This indicates that learners with [+ART] L1s transfer the structure of their L1 article system to the target L2 (Chrabaszcz and Jiang, 2014; García Mayo, 2008, 2009; Ionin et al., 2008; Isabelli-García and Slough, 2012; Morales-Reyes and Soler, 2016).⁷ However, such transfer is not possible in the case of the Swahili-speaking EFL learners in the present study, as their L1 does not have articles. Consequently, the learners have to rely solely on L2 input to acquire the ability to use the English article system efficiently. For this reason, the present study also examines the general quantity and quality of the L2 input that the learners receive and the approaches that their EFL teachers use in teaching the article system.

1.2 Problem statement and focus

Many Swahili-speaking learners of English do not use English articles correctly, most likely because Swahili does not have articles and the two languages thus map definiteness and indefiniteness differently in their morpho-syntactic structures. However, little is known about the acquisition of the English article system by Swahili-speaking EFL learners, since the majority of previous studies in this field focused on L1 speakers of Asian and European languages. This means that EFL teachers in Tanzania lack data gathered from their local environment (or from any African environment, for that matter) and are thus unsure which contexts of the article system they should place more emphasis on during teaching.

⁷ Nevertheless, the expected L1 transfer might not always occur. Momenzade, Youhanaee and Kassaian (2014:39), for instance, present data from [+ART] L1 Persian learners of EFL showing that the learners did not transfer the knowledge of their L1 Persian indefinite article to English.

1.3 Aim of the study

The primary aim of the present study is to establish which contexts of the English article system manifest as non-target-like in Swahili-speaking learners' IL grammars. The secondary aim of the study is to, based on the research findings, provide Tanzanian EFL teachers with information and suggestions regarding those contexts of the English article system that should receive special emphasis during teaching.

1.4 Research questions and objectives

To achieve the primary aim of the study, the overarching research question is how Swahili-speaking learners of English acquire the English article system. To address this broad question, the following specific research questions were formulated:

- i. What are the differences and similarities between English and Swahili in expressing (in)definiteness?
- ii. Which contexts of the article system of English manifest as non-target-like in the Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use?
- iii. Do Swahili-speaking EFL learners perform differently, in terms of the article system, on different tasks, in particular writing, speaking, comprehension and acceptability judgements?
- iv. Are there differences in the performance of the learners at different form levels (corresponding to South African grade levels) which might indicate the development of their IL knowledge of the English article system?
- v. How does the realisation of definiteness and specificity in Swahili influence the learners' acquisition of the English article system?

Based on the findings for questions (i) to (v), attention is given, to a more limited extent, to the following two questions in order to address the secondary aim of the present study:

- vi. How do Tanzanian EFL teachers address the non-target-like properties of the IL grammars of Swahili-speaking learners of English with regard to the article system of the language?
- vii. Which suggestions can be made to Tanzanian EFL teachers regarding the teaching of the relevant contexts of (in)definiteness as realised via articles in English (cf. Section 1.1) to Swahili speakers in Tanzania?

1.5 Background to the study

This section describes the linguistic situation of Tanzania. It focuses on three key areas, namely: (i) the status of Swahili and English in the country, (ii) their respective positions as the media of instruction in relation to Tanzania's educational and language in education policies, and (iii) the EFL-teaching curriculum. This description clarifies the roles of the two languages in social, political/administrative and educational settings in Tanzania. In addition, it provides background information about language teaching and learning⁸ in the country, which are the main themes in the present study.

1.5.1 Linguistic situation in Tanzania

A triglossic situation exists within almost every ethnic group in Tanzania. Three languages have both varied and overlapping roles within almost each ethnic group (Mkilifi, 1972). First, there is an ethnic language. Second, there is L1/L2 Swahili, and third, there is EFL⁹ (Mkilifi, 1972; Petzell, 2012). The ethnic languages are spoken mostly in rural areas¹⁰. Their actual number in Tanzania is still unknown, since every new study reports a larger number (Petzell, 2012): there are 120 ethnic languages in Tanzania according to Rubagumya (1991), 126 according to Maho and Sands (2003), 130 according to Mafu (2004), 150 according to Tibategeza (2010), and 164 according to the most recent study by the Languages of Tanzania Project (LOT) (Petzell, 2012). Concerning Swahili, it is the most widely spoken language in the country. Shartieli (2013) notes that Swahili is the lingua franca in Tanzania, spoken by almost 95 percent of more than 35 million people. Since 1967, Swahili has been Tanzania's national and official language, while English has been its second official language. I explain the positions of Swahili and English in Tanzania in more detail below.

1.5.1.1 Swahili in Tanzania

The history of Swahili in Tanzania dates back to the 10th century (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1995). According to Kassim (1995), Swahili was first spoken along the eastern coast of Africa and the islands of Zanzibar¹¹. The language helped to facilitate communication between the

⁸ The distinction between learning and acquisition is not crucial to the present study. Therefore, I will use these words more or less interchangeably.

⁹ Even in Tanzania's rural areas, English is a subject in primary schools and MoI in secondary schools.

¹⁰ This does not mean that a diglossic situation exists in more urban areas. It means that although in such areas some people can speak their ethnic languages, they do not use them to communicate with people with different ethnic languages. Thus, they speak Swahili, which is their lingua franca in Tanzania.

¹¹ Zanzibar has two main islands: Pemba and Unguja.

coastal people and the Arab merchants as they engaged in trade activities. Swahili did not spread in-land until the 19th century. The expansion of trade, in particular, of slaves, gold, ivory and ebony influenced the spread of Swahili to the interior of Tanzania.

In 1880, when German colonial interests started, Swahili had already spread widely (Petzell, 2012). The Germans contributed further to the spread of this language because they relied on it for their administrative purposes. Rubagumya (1990) observes that during this time, while the Germans taught their language (German) as a subject in schools, Swahili was the MoI for the local populations.

Subsequent to the end of the First World War (WW1), Germany lost all her colonies in Africa (McKenna, 2011; Weinberg, 1995). Eventually, Tanganyika became a British colony. The coming of the British to Tanganyika inevitably meant the spread of English, which eventually became one of the official languages of the country (alongside Swahili). In relation to education, the British colonial government introduced a tripartite educational system. In this system, there were schools for Europeans, Asians and Africans. Concerning the MoI, Swahili was used for the African schools and English for the European and Asian schools (Mafu, 2003, 2004). Swahili also facilitated communication between the rulers and the ruled, which implies that it started being used as a lingua franca in the early 20th century. Mafu (2004) also notes that Swahili unified Tanganyikans during the struggle for independence under the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) party. Despite English being a subject in secondary schools, African learners had no opportunity to use it for communication with English native speakers because of the policy of racial segregation and discrimination embodied by, amongst other things, the three school categories mentioned above (Mkilifi, 1972). Hence, the African learners found themselves using Swahili in all settings while the European and Asian learners used English.

After Independence in 1961 and the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964, three social practices, as described in Mafu (2004), led to Swahili continuing to function as the lingua franca in Tanzania. Firstly, the government transferred people (mostly youth) from towns to villages for collective agricultural production and for easy provision of health and educational services. Secondly, there was a massive influx of people to towns from rural areas looking for employment due to urbanisation. Lastly, the government discouraged the wide use of ethnic languages in its educational and administrative sectors in an attempt to discourage tribalism (Cameron & Dodd, 1970). Eventually, many Tanzanians found themselves using Swahili in

the education and administrative spheres whilst abandoning their ethnic languages. Recent estimations are that 10 percent of the 35 million people in Tanzania speak Swahili as their L1, and almost 95 percent have native speaker proficiency in Swahili in addition to their various ethnic languages (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004:69; Marwa, 2014:1263). Not only does Swahili play a significant role in unifying Tanzanians, it also serves as a symbol for national identity.

1.5.1.2 English in Tanzania

The existence of English in Tanzania dates back to the end of WW1. Before Independence, English had more economic, political and social privilege than Swahili (Harries, 1969). For instance, it was the MoI throughout the education system introduced by the British in the country, excluding the first five years of primary education (Dougherty, Fewer & McDonald, 2012:9). Cameron and Dodd (1970:110) report that there were also plans by the British to try and halt the use of Swahili, as it seemed to be hindering the powerful expansion of English. In 1982, the government of Tanzania rejected a proposal of the Presidential Commission on Education¹² to extend the use of Swahili as the MoI up to secondary level (Rubagumya, 1991; Shartieli, 2013). The reason given was that Tanzanians had to learn from the foreign nations, and they could do so by acquiring proficiency in English. Therefore, the government of Tanzania endorsed English as a second official language in 1967. In addition, it was supposed to be a compulsory subject at primary school level. As regards Swahili, the government announced that it was an official language of Tanzania as well as the country's national language (Swilla, 2009). Since then, English has been the MoI in secondary schools, universities and colleges. In the following section, I discuss the positions the two languages occupy in the educational and the language in education policies in Tanzania.

1.5.2 Educational policy and language in education in Tanzania

Since 1961, when Tanzania gained political independence, the country has experienced many reforms in its educational policy, particularly in connection with the MoI and the curriculum, with the type of education and the MoI being consonant with the political ideology of the country at each point in time (Swilla, 2009). Swilla identified three (political) ideologies and

¹² The first president of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, set up this commission to review the educational system of Tanzania and to recommend improvements. Although the MoI issue was not their primary goal, it arose as its major concern (Roy-Campbel, 2005:90).

their influence on the education system of Tanzania. From 1961 to 1966, Tanzania inherited capitalism from the British colonialists. From 1967 to the mid-1980s, it adopted socialism. In the 1980s, the country returned to capitalism, which is still its current ideology. I explain each of these phases in detail in the following paragraphs.

During the early post-independence period (1961-1966), Tanzania inherited capitalism from the British (Swilla, 2009:3) but the government continued to use the previous curriculum and languages of instruction. This means that Swahili was used for the first five years of primary school while English was used from the sixth school year onwards, throughout secondary school and at tertiary level (Swilla, 2009).

The second period was from 1967 to the mid-1980s. This period was characterised by significant social, economic and political reforms, which led to the adoption of socialism. During this time Swahili was approved as the MoI for the entire eight years of primary education, not just for the first five years as mentioned in the preceding paragraph (Swilla, 2009). A few English medium primary schools were still operating (under the government), but it was impermissible for Tanzanians to enrol in them. Such schools were for children of expatriates who were working and staying in Tanzania. In secondary schools, English was the MoI.

Moreover, during this time, educators noted that Tanzanian learners could not effectively express themselves in English. This led to debates as to whether Swahili or English should be used as the MoI. Consequently, the government formed a presidential commission in the late 1980s to look into the matter. The commission decided that Swahili should be the MoI at all educational levels. However, this plan did not come to fruition. Swahili remained the MoI in public primary schools while English remained the MoI in private primary schools. Furthermore, English continued to be the MoI in secondary schools and at universities.

The third period ranges from the late 1980s to the present day. In the late 1980s, the country abandoned socialism and embraced capitalism. This marked a change from the state-owned economy to a free market economy. Privatisation had a remarkable impact on the education sector in the 1990s. Private schools were legalised via the Education Amendment Act No.10 of 1995 (Swilla, 2009:4). Consequently, the government allowed Tanzanians to own private primary schools and Tanzanian children were free to enrol in them and in the international schools that were previously reserved for the children of expatriates.

Currently, most primary school learners pass the national Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) and enrol in various secondary schools in Tanzania (cf. NECTA, 2013). Yet, most learners from Swahili-medium primary schools fail secondary school examinations because of their insufficient proficiency in English whereas their peers from English-medium primary schools succeed due to their sufficient proficiency in English.

This situation eventually sparked scholarly debates on the MoI in Tanzania. On one side, there are proponents of Swahili as the MoI from primary school to university, such as Qorro (2006) and Rubagumya (2003). They hold that using English to teach learners in Tanzania affects them negatively. Such learners have a limited English vocabulary since they learned in Swahili at primary school. Hence, they fail to grasp large parts of the content presented in English in most lessons at secondary school. On the other side, there are scholars who support the continued use of English at secondary school and university. Kadege (2003), for instance, maintains that English should continue to serve as the MoI at these levels of education, given that teachers and lecturers in Tanzania normally employ code-switching¹³ in teaching and lecturing and can therefore use Swahili to introduce, discuss and clarify any points that they make in English. In line with Kadege's (2003) position, more recent studies have also reported that even teachers, parents and learners in Tanzania opine that English should be used as the MoI from primary school to university because of the perceived socio-economic mobility believed to be available only to people with a high level of proficiency in English (see, for instance, Hilliard (2015), Mwalimu (2015) and Telli (2014)).

Between the two opposing sides of this debate are those who propagate the implementation of bilingual education (Clegg, 2007; Tibategeza, 2010). Tibategeza (2010), in particular, remarks that the education practice in Tanzania is predominantly monolingual. He proposes that the system should consider a 50-50 model in which both Swahili and English are used as languages of teaching and learning right from primary school.

In the midst of this diversity of viewpoints, the ministry of education and vocational training (MoEVT) was compelled to launch a new educational policy on 13 February 2015. However, this did not resolve the MoI issue as the government policy is evasive about this issue, and contains two statements that contradict each other. Section 3.2.19 of the policy proclaims that

¹³ Code-switching involves switching between two languages within the same conversation (Kamwangamalu, 1992; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Nilep, 2006).

“Lugha ya Taifa ya Kiswahili itatumika kufundishia na kujifunzia katika ngazi zote za elimu na mafunzo”, which translates to ‘The Swahili national language shall be used in teaching and learning at all levels of education and training’. Conversely, Section 3.2.20 states that “Serikali itaendelea na utaratibu wa kuimarisha matumizi ya lugha ya Kiingereza katika kufundishia na kujifunzia, katika ngazi zote za elimu na mafunzo” which translates to ‘The government shall continue with its efforts to strengthen the use of English in teaching and learning at all levels of education and training’ (JMT, 2014:38; Mkumbo, 2015). This recognition and promotion of both languages at all levels of education seems to simply be a way of pleasing proponents on both sides of the debate. It does not state clearly how educational stakeholders should use the two languages in teaching and learning in the country. Accordingly, there is popular dissatisfaction with the policy.

The dissatisfaction with the new policy mainly comes from those who support Swahili as the MoI. They draw on the research finding that learners learn better when instructed in their mother tongue (Heugh, Benson, Bogale and Yohannes, 2007). However, recall that Swahili is a mother tongue to only 10 per cent of the entire population (Laitin, 1992:140). The remaining 90 per cent¹⁴ speak one or more of the other 163 ethnic languages as their mother tongues in their respective ethnic communities. It would thus not be practically possible to ensure that each learner is taught in his or her mother tongue, and the relevant fact might thus rather simply be that learners learn better in a language they understand well. In this sense, Swahili is included. In addition, English can indeed be included if practical measures to improve its teaching and usage are appropriately devised and effectively implemented in Tanzania. Indeed, Tanzanians need to achieve a sufficient level of proficiency in English for socio-economic mobility.

Currently, EFL learners in Tanzania go through four phases in learning: pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary (Mkilifi, 1972:197). Despite being exposed to English at all these levels, the majority of Swahili-speaking EFL learners demonstrate non-target-like performance both in speaking and in writing. Qorro (2006) remarked that their utterances are characterised by countless ungrammatical constructions. It is against this backdrop of non-target-like performance that the present study selects secondary school level learners to examine the acquisition of the English article system because, at this level, these

¹⁴ The 90 per cent referred to here does not include foreigners who are working and staying in Tanzania.

learners get their significant exposure to English as the MoI and have to communicate in English. Since they rely mainly on classroom input for acquisition, some background information on the language-teaching curriculum in Tanzania is necessary.

1.5.3 Curriculum reform to Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) in Tanzania

Since Independence, the government has been reforming its curriculum to try and improve the quality of teaching and learning at all educational levels. These reforms are intended to ensure well-equipped classrooms, libraries, laboratories, up-to-date Information and Communications Technology (ICT) facilities, well qualified teachers and eventually the successful implementation of the newly introduced Competency-Based Education (CBE) curriculum (Mtitu, 2014:29). Prior to these reforms, the education system used the Content-Based curriculum, whereby English was taught using the traditional Grammar Translation approach, which focuses only on teaching linguistic rules and structures (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011:2). The curricular reforms required EFL teachers in Tanzania to apply the principles of CBE in their teaching. The application of these principles is known as Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT). Thus, these teachers had to shift from the exclusive teaching of grammatical rules and structures to the communicative teaching of English.

The CBE curriculum originated in the USA in the 1970s (Klein-Collins, 2012:10). Ten years later, other countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the UK also started implementing the CBE curriculum in vocational training (Deißinger & Hellwig, 2011:6; Griffith & Lim, 2014:1). Currently, many countries adopt the CBE/CBLT approach in their education system. In the case of Tanzania, the country introduced CBLT for secondary schools in 2005 (UNESCO, 2011:362; Woods, 2007:16). In the following sections, I describe CBLT in terms of its component parts, characteristic features and advantages. I also point out how teachers incorporate the teaching of grammatical rules and structures in CBLT. Finally, I look at the implementation of this curriculum in Tanzania.

1.5.3.1 Components of the CBLT curriculum

According to Weddel (2006:3), the CBLT curriculum has four main components as shown in Figure 1.1.

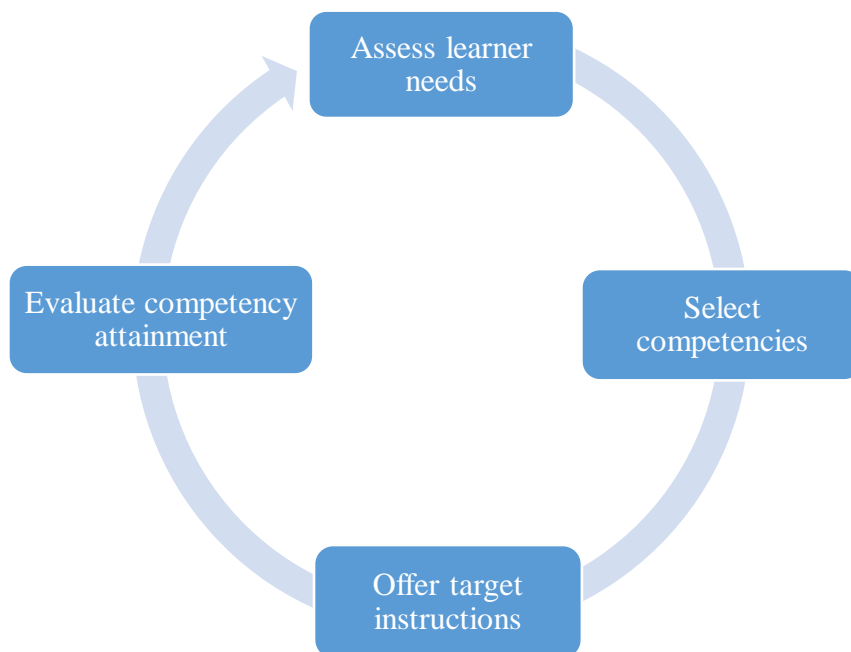


Figure 1.1: Key components of the CBLT curriculum

These components seem isolated, but they are interrelated. The needs assessed in the first component determine the selection of competencies that subsequently determine the target instructions to be given to the learners. Finally, evaluating the level of attainment of the target competencies helps to determine the competencies that need further development (Armstrong, 2006; Griffith & Lim, 2014). The process is repeated in this fashion until the learners have mastered the selected competencies.

1.5.3.2 Characteristics of the CBLT approach

Auerbach (1986:414-415) and Kouwenhoven (2010:127ff.) identify several characteristics of the CBLT approach. I concentrate on those characteristics that are relevant in understanding the nature of the non-target-like performance of the learners in the present study. Such performance, in part, stems from the teaching and learning methods employed in the EFL classroom (cf. Chapter 7). I discuss these characteristics in relation to assessing learner needs, developing competencies, evaluating competencies and developing the curriculum.

i) Assessing learner needs

The CBLT approach is oriented to the needs of the learner (Schenck, 1978). The teacher first has to understand the group of learners he/she has, since different groups have different

pedagogical needs. In addition, this approach is learner-centred and the learning process is thus central. Each learner should actively participate in the learning process via, for example, classroom discussions (as in jigsaw activities) and role-play (cf. Section 8.6.2). Considering the aspects of the target L2 that the learners have already acquired, the teacher (or facilitator) defines which aspects of the target L2 the learners still have to acquire.

ii) Developing competencies

In the CBLT approach, learners have to master grammatical rules and structures as they acquire listening, speaking, reading and writing skills through their active exploration of meaning. Learners construct knowledge since the knowledge acquired through active construction is normally retained better than that gained passively through mere listening to the teacher in, for instance, the Grammar Translation approach. In this way, learning also equips the learners with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes as outcomes of their active participation in learning (Kouwenhoven, 2013:1050; Nkwetisama, 2012:519; Mtitu, 2014). Consequently, learning develops them both linguistically, communicatively and socio-linguistically. Competencies, such as asking for directions, expressing wishes and apologising, guide the lesson (cf. the English Language Syllabus for Secondary Schools (MoEVT, 2005)), while, at the same time, the teacher guides the learners towards the mastery of *form*.

iii) Evaluating competencies

Assessment is both formative and summative. Assessment is crucial in the process of selecting, developing and improving competencies. While the formative evaluation serves to discern the needs of the learner, the summative evaluation helps to determine how effectively the learner has learned the selected competencies. Moreover, the summative evaluation helps to identify those aspects that were not adequately acquired and are therefore to be repeated by the learner (Laitinen, 2012:5; Wolf, 1995:1).

iv) Developing the curriculum

The CBLT approach is recursive (GoURT, 1995). As pointed out above, the summative evaluation serves to discern linguistic areas that the learner has to repeat learning. Barman and Konwar (2011:11) opine that the competency-based curriculum facilitates the learner to acquire additional competencies and develop the ones already acquired (see also Klein-Collins (2013:4) and Wong (2008:181)). At this point, based on these characteristics, the question arises as to how one can practically incorporate the teaching of aspects of the target

L2 grammar in the EFL classroom within the CBLT approach. Addressing this question is the focus of the next section.

1.5.3.3 Teaching grammar in the CBLT curriculum

Drawing on the description above, one can identify how teachers can incorporate the teaching of aspects of the target L2 grammar while adhering to the requirements of the CBLT curriculum. Teachers can incorporate them in creating scenarios for use in tasks and other assessments, evaluating competencies and using English in real life situations, as follows:

Richards and Rodgers (2001:143) and Wong (2008:181) note that grammatical knowledge can be arrived at through language function. Therefore, in creating learning situations, teachers should decide the vocabulary and structures that their learners are required to master. They should select and organise such vocabularies and structures into teaching and learning units by engaging their learners to communicate while employing them.

Regarding evaluating competencies, Klein-Collins (2013:12) states that there are two main levels of competency on which assessments should be based in the CBLT approach. At lower levels of competence, objective questions are suitable, whereas at higher levels of competence, tasks that require complex analytical thinking are appropriate. Such tasks are like simulations, learner narratives, demonstrations, or performance-based assignments. Note that this consideration guided the decision for appropriate tasks for collecting data in the present study (cf. Section 4.3.6).

Considering the outcomes of learning, Nkwetisama (2012) recommends that, in the CBLT approach, learners have to be able to use all parts of speech, organise them into acceptable grammatical and semantic patterns, punctuate and pronounce them appropriately in real-time listening, speaking, reading and writing contexts. In line with this, MoEVT (2005:102) anticipates that by the end of four years of secondary education, learners should be able to describe a phenomenon in English using *suitable phrases* both in writing and in speaking. The question arises as to how one can enable an EFL learner to master all these aspects. In line with this question, two more questions emerge. Do teaching and learning EFL in Tanzanian secondary schools really follow the CBLT approach? Are EFL teachers in the country well versed in the implementation of this curriculum? Answering these questions simply with a “yes/no” at this point may conceal relevant information that could otherwise have helped the reader understand the source of non-target-like performance on articles

among Swahili-speaking EFL learners in Tanzania. Therefore, the next section provides a brief general overview of the implementation of the curriculum in the country.

1.5.3.4 The implementation of the CBE curriculum in Tanzania

As reported by UNESCO (2011:362), the government introduced the CBE curriculum in Tanzanian primary and secondary schools in 2006 and 2005 respectively. Subsequent to its introduction, several research studies (Kafyulilo, Rugambuka and Moses, 2012; Paulo, 2014; UNESCO, 2011) were conducted to assess its implementation in Tanzania. These studies focused on different aspects of education/teaching. Whereas Kafyulilo et al. (2012) and Paulo (2014) focused on the effectiveness of teacher preparation, teaching and learning activities and evaluation procedures, the report by UNESCO (2011) focused on the potential challenges facing the educational sector in implementing the curriculum.

To begin with, Kafyulilo et al. (2012) conducted a study among 78 pre-service teachers¹⁵ at Morogoro Teachers Training College in Tanzania. The study was aimed at understanding teachers' perceptions of implementing the curriculum. The study indicated that although the teachers perceived themselves as well acquainted with the curriculum, they could not describe it in terms of assessment, instructional activities and evaluation. These scholars say that the teachers had mere theoretical knowledge of the curriculum. Thus, they could not practically demonstrate such knowledge, and would therefore potentially have trouble implementing it.

In another study, Paulo (2014) investigated 16 pre-service teachers' readiness to implement the curriculum for secondary schools in Tanzania. In line with Kafyulilo et al. (2012), Paulo's (2014) interview and field observation data revealed that the participants had theoretical knowledge of the curriculum but could not practically employ it in teaching. Paulo adds that these teachers assessed their learners mostly in writing.

In line with Kafyulilo et al. (2012) and Paulo (2014), the report by UNESCO (2011) shows that Tanzania faces a shortage of qualified teachers. The report indicates further that excessive numbers of learners in class and a shortage of books pose challenges to implementing the CBE curriculum successfully.

¹⁵ Pre-service teachers are student teachers who are undergoing training in teaching before being posted to schools.

While the studies outlined above offer useful insights into the implementation of the curriculum in Tanzania, there is still a dearth of reliable literature on the matter. Note that the few studies available looked at the implementation of the CBE curriculum generally and recruited mostly pre-service teachers. Apparently, nothing discusses the implementation of the CBLT curriculum in teaching, specifically, EFL in Tanzania. Due to these reasons, the present study involves interviews with secondary school teachers who have actually been teaching EFL to understand how they address non-target-like performance on articles under the current CBLT curriculum. I present and discuss the data related to this in Chapter 7.

1.6 Rationale of the study

Since 1967, English has been the MoI in Tanzanian public secondary schools. This means that to succeed academically (and increase academic and career options after school, and hence opportunities for socio-economic mobility) one has to master the language (Richards, 2006). However, English is a foreign language in Tanzania. This means learners only learn it in the classroom context. In addition, Tanzanian EFL teachers are non-native speakers of English. Therefore, the quantity and quality of English input that learners receive is probably not sufficient. Consequently, Tanzanians struggle to acquire high level of proficiency in English. One of the aspects of the language that remains problematic for Tanzanians, even after completing secondary school, is the article system.¹⁶

Since, mastery of the article system is not just important for academic work but also for successful communication as illustrated in Section 1.1, I searched for literature on this topic. Later, I noted four facts –which I consequently deal with in the present study. First, little has been said about the cross-linguistic differences between English and Swahili in realising (in)definiteness (cf. Chapter 2). Second, there is an ongoing debate in the literature about the source of EFL/ESL learners’ non-target-like performance with respect to English articles and the processes involved in acquiring the English article system (cf. Chapter 3). Third, no traceable research presents EFL data from Swahili-speaking learners (cf. Chapters 5 and 6). Fourth, Tanzanian EFL teachers are not aware of the contexts of article use that are more non-target-like in their learners’ EFL use and how to teach the English article system, and no

¹⁶ As an EFL learner, I noted teachers’ difficulty with teaching the article system and, later as an assistant lecturer, I noted university students’ continuing problems with article use. These problems stem from the fact that the grammatical rules for the use of the English article system are quite complex and abstract (cf. Chapter 2).

traceable research exists that can assist teachers in this regard (cf. Chapters 7 and 8). These gaps in the current body of knowledge are what compelled me to undertake the present study.

1.7 Theoretical framework of the study

The present study is mainly set in the framework of generative syntax and, more specifically, the Minimalist Program, as initially proposed by Chomsky (1995) and more recently summarised in Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann (2005). As mentioned in Section 1.1, in the generative framework, including the Minimalist Program, linguists consider UG to consist of universal principles, as general conditions on the grammars of all human languages, as well as parameters, each of which has two (and sometimes more) particular settings, reflecting the different grammars of different languages (Hornstein et al., 2005:3). For languages with article systems, the Article Choice Parameter (ACP) (initially proposed by Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004) and later modified by Tryzna (2009)) specifies two settings: definiteness and specificity. Among other things, the present study analyses differences and similarities in the realisations of definiteness and specificity in English and Swahili. It draws on Lyons' (1999) notions of 'familiarity, identifiability, uniqueness' and 'inclusiveness' (for definiteness); in addition, it looks at the realisation of specificity and non-specificity, in both languages. This analysis was motivated by the assumption that non-target-like performance by L2 learners can be traced back to their L1s. The noted differences helped to predict and identify non-target-like aspects in the Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use (cf. Elwerfalli, 2013). I present this cross-linguistic analysis in Chapter 2.

At this point, it should be noted that researchers who subscribe to the view that UG underlies L1 acquisition are divided regarding whether it also underlies (adult) L2 acquisition. This is linked to the question of what happens to UG after the end of the so-called critical period, the period during which a child has to receive sufficient input in a language to be able to acquire the language completely (Meisel, 2007, 2009). On the one hand, some researchers claim that UG becomes inaccessible after the end of the critical period and that adult L2 learners are unable to reset parameters in cases where their L1 and the target L2 differ in terms of parameter settings. On the other hand, other researchers claim that UG is accessible to the adult L2 learner in much the same way as it is to the child learning his/her L1 – see White (2003b) for a comprehensive overview of these different views and their proponents. This debate falls outside the scope of the current study. Recall that the focus of this study is not on investigating the possibility of parameter resetting or the question of whether or not L2

learners have access to UG, but rather on identifying non-target-like aspects of the L2 learners' article use in order to be able to offer suggestions to EFL teachers in Tanzania regarding how to help their learners improve this aspect of their English proficiency. Consequently, I will simply assume, for the sake of this study, that there is a parameter such as the ACP and that the L2 learners in this study have access to UG in some form or another (whether directly or indirectly, via their L1 grammar).

Drawing on the assumption that the English article system is based on the definiteness setting of the ACP (Ionin et al., 2004; Tryzna, 2009), Swahili-speaking EFL learners require sufficient English input to enable them use the article system in line with the definiteness setting. Moreover, the present study discusses the production of articles in relation to the organisation of the language faculty¹⁷ and in relation to the processing constraints L2 learners encounter. Some linguists assume that such constraints, in part, lead learners to manifest non-target-like performance on articles more in some contexts than in others. In proposing the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA), for instance, Trenkic (2007) draws heavily on minimalist assumptions about the cognitive functioning of the language faculty. I describe these assumptions in the review of literature in Chapter 3 and assess them in relation to learner data in Chapters 5 and 6.

The present study is also grounded in the functional and interactional perspectives on the nature of language learning (Gass, 2010; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The interactionist approach is by and large neutral as to the role of UG (cf. Ionin et al., 2008:555), because the relationship of interaction to acquisition does not solely rely on the existence or absence of an innate mechanism that will guide learning another language (Gass, 2010:218). The focus of the interactionist approach is thus rather on the role of L2 input (via exposure, production and feedback). Note that although innateness (i.e. UG-) perspectives on language acquisition focus on the role that (something like) UG might play in L2 acquisition, they do not deny the role that the quantity and quality of L2 input play in the language learning process (Mackey, Abbuhl & Gass, 2012; Richards, 2006). The present study thus also assumes that the quantity and quality of L2 input is a key determinant in the acquisition of EFL by Swahili-speaking

¹⁷ The language faculty is a domain in the human brain. This domain is specialised for cognitive processes relating to language (Hornstein et al., 2005). The question of the precise relationship between UG and the language faculty falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

learners. I discuss these notions of ‘input, output’ and ‘interaction’ in more detail in Chapter 7.

1.8 Research design

The present study employed a Mixed Methods Embedded Design. It embedded qualitative research within quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this design, I first explored qualitative data. Then, I collected quantitative data in the experimental phase based on the information gathered in the qualitative phase. Lastly, the collection of supplemental qualitative data via interviews followed to explain the quantitative results. The interview data later helped in providing suggestions for teaching the English article system. The quantitative data and their supplemental qualitative data provided a more complete picture of the research problem than would either of these two types of data on their own (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

1.9 Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation has eight chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the study. Chapter 2 compares and contrasts the realisation of definiteness and specificity in English and Swahili to address the first research question.

Chapter 3 reviews literature on the L2 acquisition of articles. It traces different developments in the field by starting with earlier studies. It also reviews literature grounded in recent competing hypotheses about the acquisition of articles. The aim is to determine how the present study fits into the larger field of L2 acquisition and what contribution it can potentially offer to the available body of knowledge.

Drawing on the information gathered in the review of literature, Chapter 4 presents the research methodology employed to address the specific research questions (ii) to (v) (listed in Section 1.4).

Chapter 5 presents learner written data. These data were collected by means of four instruments: a language background questionnaire (LBQ), a quick placement test (QPT), an acceptability judgement task (AJT) and a forced choice elicitation task (FCET). It also discusses the results in relation to the specific research questions (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Chapter 6 presents learner spoken data, collected using a picture description task (PDT). The chapter also presents a discussion of these data to address the specific research questions (ii), (iii) and (v).

Based on the results presented in the preceding two chapters, Chapter 7 presents the collection, analysis and interpretation of data collected through semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers, as well as a discussion of the findings. The interview data address the specific research questions (vi) and (vii).

Drawing on the issues presented and discussed in the seven preceding chapters, Chapter 8 presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.10 Defining key terms

In this sub section, I define the key terms of the present study. The definitions show how these terms are understood in the study. Rather than providing an alphabetical list, I define the terms in an order that allows me to indicate the relationship between them. Note that this section only includes the key terms that are primary in this study. Other terms, of which the importance only becomes clear as the dissertation progresses, are introduced as they appear in the following chapters.

Language acquisition refers to a subconscious way of developing ability in a language (Krashen, 2013:1). Acquisition usually occurs naturalistically, when a person converses with somebody, watches a movie, or reads a book. **Language learning** refers to a conscious process of developing ability in a language, such as what would occur in a language-learning classroom. The process involves deliberate efforts on the part of the teacher and the learner to teach and master a given language or an aspect of the language (Krashen, 2013:1). Both of these processes – unconscious acquisition and conscious learning – can be argued to be occurring in the case of the Swahili-speaking EFL learners in the present study: The learners receive instruction in all their subjects with English as the MoI and thus read books and engage in conversations about topics other than language in the target L2 English, which can be said to trigger unconscious acquisition of the article system of the language. However, they also consciously learn about English articles in their EFL classroom, where the teacher normally talks about syntactic rules and corrects instances of non-target-like performance in their learners' EFL use. In Krashen's proposals, there is a clear-cut distinction between the two processes and any specific learner is said to be either acquiring or learning a language, depending on the language-learning environment. I would like to argue that the distinction is not this clear cut, as demonstrated by the case of the participants in the current study (cf. Rast, 2008). However, the question as to what happens when a learner seems to be simultaneously acquiring and learning a specific aspect of the target L2 grammar, falls

outside the scope of the current study. As pointed out previously, for the purposes of the current study, the two terms will thus be used more or less interchangeably, unless otherwise specified.

A **first language** is the first (or primary) language a child acquires in the naturalistic environment (Gass & Selinker, 2008:7). The learners in the present study acquired Swahili as their L1, and they were using it for communication in their daily lives.

A **foreign language** is a language that is not spoken in the native country of the speaker (Gass & Selinker, 2008:7). In Tanzania, for instance, English is a foreign language since, even though it is a subject in primary schools and the MoI in secondary schools, colleges and universities, there is no community of Tanzanian-born native speakers of English.

The **target language** is the variety of the L2 that learners are attempting to learn and/or teachers are attempting to teach. Although there is ‘East African English’, which is mainly spoken as a second language in the neighbouring countries of Kenya and Uganda, the standard variety of British English is the target foreign language that Swahili-speaking learners of EFL in Tanzania attempt to acquire and that their teachers attempt to teach them in the public education system. I assume that the reason why there is no such thing as “Tanzanian English” is that English really is a foreign language – rather than a second language – in this country.

Drawing on Lyons (1999) semantic model, I define **(in)definiteness** by considering the notions of ‘familiarity, identifiability, uniqueness’ and ‘inclusiveness’, as follows:

- i. Considering **familiarity**, a noun is definite when both the speaker and the hearer are familiar with it, while a noun is indefinite when the hearer is not familiar with it (Lyons, 1999:3).
- ii. Concerning **identifiability**, an entity is definite if the hearer can identify it in the context of interaction (it does not necessarily need to be familiar to the hearer), whereas an entity is indefinite if the hearer cannot identify it (Lyons, 1999:5ff).
- iii. Regarding **uniqueness and inclusiveness**, a noun is definite when the hearer can uniquely associate it with the description given, while it is indefinite if the hearer cannot associate it with the description given. Additionally, for plural and mass nouns, definiteness does not involve uniqueness but rather

inclusiveness (Lyons, 1999:7ff). Thus, definite referents should be familiar, identifiable, unique and/or inclusive, whereas indefinite ones should not.

Regarding **(non-)specificity**, a noun phrase (NP) is **specific** if *the speaker* has a particular referent in mind, whereas an NP is **non-specific** if the speaker has no particular referent in mind (Lyons, 1999:173). Note the difference between definiteness and specificity; that is, whereas definiteness considers shared knowledge by both the speaker and the hearer, specificity considers a particular referent that is in the mind of only the speaker.

Having defined the terms that are central to the study presented in this dissertation, I now turn to a description of the realisation of definiteness and specificity in the two languages involved in the study, namely English and Swahili.

CHAPTER 2

CROSS-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF DEFINITENESS AND SPECIFICITY IN ENGLISH AND SWAHILI

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the cross-linguistic analysis of definiteness and specificity in English and in Swahili to address the first research question (cf. Section 1.4) on determining key differences and similarities between the two languages in realising these notions and later to predict possible aspects that will manifest as non-target-like in the acquisition of the English article system. I begin with English. I explore the morpho-syntactic structure of the English nominal complex in Section 2.2. Then, I look at its semantic structure in Section 2.3; in this section, I discuss in detail the realisation of the parametric variations of definiteness and specificity in English. Thereafter, in Section 2.4, I explore the realisation of definiteness and specificity in a number of Bantu languages in general to determine how Bantu languages realise these notions; and then, I focus specifically on Swahili. I explore its morpho-syntactic and semantic structures in Sections 2.5 and 2.6 respectively. Morpho-syntactically, I examine its morphological elements and syntactic processes which are relevant to the realisation of (in)definiteness. Semantically, I show how such elements and processes help to realise definiteness and specificity in Swahili. Moreover, I revisit the role of Swahili object marking in relation to the realisation of definiteness and specificity. Finally, in Section 2.7, I summarise the findings and formulate some predictions about non-target-like performance among Swahili-speaking EFL learners. To begin with, I survey the morpho-syntactic structure of the English nominal complex in the following section.

2.2 The morpho-syntactic structure of the English nominal complex

This section presents the morphological and syntactic elements that constitute the English nominal complex. Note that the article system lies at the interface between morpho-syntactic and semantic-pragmatic domains (Díez-Bedmar & Papp, 2008:149). One can therefore describe it based on formal and functional perspectives. In the functional perspective, articles are viewed as discourse-pragmatic devices for realising the parametric variations of definiteness and specificity (Hawkins, 1978; Lyons, 1999). I return to the functional perspective in Section 2.3. Generally, formal perspectives involve the traditional grammar and the generative grammar tradition. In the traditional grammar perspective, the article

system is considered as one of the morpho-syntactic elements preceding the head noun (N) within a noun phrase (NP) (for instance in Biber, Conrad and Leech (2002), Biber, Grieve and Iberri-Shea (2009), Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) and Stockwell, Schachter and Partee (1973)). In the generative tradition, the article system is described within the Determiner Phrase (DP), whereby D is regarded as the head of a maximal projection with abstract features such as [\pm count], [\pm definite] and [\pm specific] (for instance in Abney (1987), Brame (1982) and Leung (2005)). These formal perspectives are the focus of the current section (Section 2.2). To begin with, let us consider the following constructions showing different elements in the English nominal complex.

- (2) *a family **business***
- (3) *a hidden **agenda***
- (4) *the young **boy** in the classroom*
- (5) *the **chair** that I want to use*
- (6) *the **person** sitting on the chair*
- (7) *the wooden **chair** to sit on¹⁸*

The examples above show that the head nouns (in bold text) receive more particularised meanings via the elements added before and/or after them. The combination of these elements in these NPs is systematic. It adheres to the grammatical rules of English. For instance, the elements in (2) *a family business* cannot be re-ordered as **business family a*; this renders the phrase ungrammatical in English. Modifiers and determiners have to follow a particular order within the English nominal complex. I describe these elements and their order below.

2.2.1 Modifiers

There are two types of noun modifiers in English: pre-modifiers and post-modifiers. Pre-modifiers are phrasal elements that appear before the head noun in the nominal complex. Biber et al. (2009) present three major structural types of pre-modifiers: (i) attributive adjectives as in *a **cloudless** sky* and *a **family** business*, (ii) participial adjectives as in *a **hidden** agenda* and *a **walking** stick*, and (iii) nouns as in ***police** inspection* and *the **bus** stop*.

Post-modifiers are elements that follow the head noun in the nominal complex. Unlike pre-modifiers, post-modifiers can be clausal (finite and non-finite relative clauses) and/or phrasal

¹⁸ This example's context will become clear below.

(prepositional phrases and appositive NPs) (see Greenbaum (1996:219ff.), for a detailed analysis of English post-modifiers). To begin with, clausal modifiers are finite or non-finite clauses added after the noun within the NP to offer more particularised meanings. Clausal modifiers are grouped into four major categories: the first category comprises relative clauses. These are subordinate clauses qualifying nouns (Mpiranya, 2015:70). They are clauses introduced by relative markers (RMs) such as *that* and *which*, e.g. *the chair that they want to use* and *the book which I want to read*. The second category is the *-ing* clause as in *the person sitting on the chair* and *the audience hooting with laughter*. The third is the *to*-clause. Consider a shop context where there are two chairs for sale, and a customer tells the salesperson “I want to buy *the chair to sit on*, not *the chair to lie on*”. Likewise, in a context where there are two books, one can say “Please hand me *the book to read*, not *the book to write in*”. The fourth clausal modifier is the *-ed* clause as in *the room prepared for you* and *the book bought yesterday*. Note that the referents that are modified in these examples become *unique* because they are distinguished from all other possible referents via their respective modifiers.

Besides clausal modifiers, there are also phrasal post-modifiers, including prepositional phrases as in *the book on the shelf* and *the young boy in the classroom*. In these examples, the prepositional phrases offer unique information about the location of the objects. For instance, by specifying *the book on the shelf*, the speaker directs the hearer to disregard any other book that might be, for example, on the sofa, on the floor, or in a bag. Besides using modifiers, English also uses determiners – a class of words that precede adjectives in adjectivally modified nouns. I describe these below.

2.2.2 Determiners

English determiners occupy the leftmost position in the nominal complex. Example phrases with determiners are *that bag* and *a bag*. In these phrases, *that* refers to the bag. In contrast to *that*, *a*¹⁹ does not refer to the bag but introduces it in the context of interaction. Determiners and adjectives precede nouns in English, as in *the bag* and *brown bags*. Since both occur pre-nominally, one might think of treating determiners as belonging to the class of adjectives.

¹⁹ This indefinite article is assumed to have originated from the numeral *one* via grammaticalisation (Hawkins, 2004; Heine & Kuteva, 2002; Stockwell et al., 1973; Trenkic, 2008). Lyons (1999:49) regards it as a quasi-indefinite signal in the sense that it is more of a cardinal marker than an indefinite marker; according to Lyons, it does not directly realise but signals indefiniteness in English.

Empirically, learners with L1s without articles [–ART] are reported to misanalyse English articles as adjectives (Trenkic, 2007, 2008; Jian, 2013). In line with this, some linguists regard determiners as belonging to the adjectival category. However, Radford (1997:46) argues that analysing English determiners as adjectives is untenable since the two categories are syntactically different. Radford bases his argument on the following facts. Firstly, there can be an unlimited number of adjectives stacked in the pre-noun context, but this freedom is not available to determiners. Secondly, whenever both a determiner and an adjective pre-modify a noun, the determiner has to precede the adjective. Finally, determiners are obligatory elements for count singular nouns in English, and this is of course not true for adjectives. This shows that determiners and adjectives do not form a completely homogeneous category in English.

Determiners in English can be classified as multipliers, fractions, intensifiers, distributive determiners, articles, demonstratives, possessive pronouns, cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers and quantifiers (Carnie, 2013; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1976). Considering their syntactic positions within the English nominal complex, these determiners can be grouped into three major types, viz. pre-determiners, central determiners and post-determiners, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Determiners in English

Pre-determiners	Examples of determiners	Examples in phrases
multipliers	<i>once, twice</i>	<i>twice a day</i>
fractions	<i>half, three-quarter</i>	<i>half a glass</i>
intensifiers	<i>such, quiet</i>	<i>such a car</i>
distributive	<i>both, all</i>	<i>all the people</i>
Central determiners	Examples of determiners	Examples in phrases
demonstratives	<i>this, these, that, those</i>	<i>both these tomatoes</i>
articles	<i>a/an, the</i>	<i>all the children</i>
possessives	<i>my, your, her, his, its, our,</i>	<i>all your students</i>
Post-determiners	Examples of determiners	Examples in phrases
quantifiers	<i>few, several, many</i>	<i>a few replies</i>
ordinal determiners	<i>first, third, sixth</i>	<i>the third step</i>
cardinal determiners	<i>one, three, six</i>	<i>the three cars</i>

The determiners within each of the three types above are mutually exclusive. Two central determiners in adjacent positions within an NP lead to an ungrammatical phrase, as in **the this car*. This phenomenon has been explained in a number of ways. Drawing on the Minimalist Generative Syntax framework, Carnie (2013:208) remarks that there can only be

one of each type of determiner in an English NP; likewise, Radford (1997:46) says that only one determiner of a given type (for instance, one referential determiner and one quantificational determiner) can pre-modify a noun. Alexiadou, Haegeman and Stavrou (2007:93) hold that both the definite article and the demonstrative are situated at D in the DP; thus, they compete for the same position²⁰. Lyons (1999:18) avers that such items are in complementary distribution because they are both deictic. Likewise, Hawkins (2004:82ff.) and Stockwell et al. (1973:67ff.) hold that *the* developed from the English demonstrative; therefore the article and the demonstrative both perform referential functions (see also Heine and Kuteva (2002), Greenberg (1978) and Jovunen (2002)). Referentiality is translated via the head D in the DP (Alexiadou et al., 2007). Considering the Minimalist Generative Syntax framework, both the definite article and the demonstrative in English are thus heads of D (cf. Footnote 20).

Besides the co-occurrence restrictions in English, Breban, Davidse and Ghesquière (2011:2689) noted that determiners can be divided into two major groups: simple determiners and complex determiners. Simple determiners are central determiners such as *the* and *this*, and complex determiners are combinations of central determiners and other determiners as in *all the boys* and *these two women*²¹. Each of these examples combines a central determiner and a pre-/post- determiner. Such a combination normally gives rise to a complex determiner.

Determiners perform several functions in English. For example, determiners such as *first*, *third* and *sixth* can show ordinal numbers as in *the sixth factor* (Quirk et al., 1985); while others can show quantity via cardinal numbers as in *six factors*. Moreover, some determiners can demonstrate relative quantifiers such as *half* and *all* as in *half the class* (Breban et al., 2011).²² Having outlined the functions of determiners, it is important to look at their co-occurrence with modifiers in the English nominal complex. Consider the following example.

²⁰ However, the noted competition between the definite article and the demonstrative is not universal, since in Greek, Hungarian and Romanian, definite articles and demonstratives can co-occur within nominal complexes (Alexiadou, et al., 2007; Lyons, 1999).

²¹ In this example, the central determiner and the post-determiner both precede the head noun. This occurrence necessitates the post-determiner *two* to function more as an adjective since it appears between the determiner and the head noun. Carnie (2013) recognises the difficulty of determining the category of the numeral in such an example. Therefore, he remarks that either analysis is acceptable.

²² In addition, the English temporal adverb *then* can be used as an attributive adjective, as in *the then chairperson*. In this example, *then* offers the definite past interpretation (Brinton, 2002; Fishman, 1978).

- (8) The three auctioned **cars** that she bought
 Determiners pre-modifier N clausal post-modifier

Determiners precede pre-modifiers in the English nominal complex (Mowarin, 2013; Radford, 1997). In (8), *the* is a deictic item locating the referents by directing the hearer’s attention to the shared set of knowledge about the cars; *three* is a cardinal determiner quantifying the referents; *auctioned* is a participial adjective pre-modifier limiting the reference to only the cars that were auctioned; and the post-modifier *that she bought* limits the reference to only the cars that the woman bought (Radden & Dirven, 2007). As can be noted in this example, the speaker packs a lot of information into one nominal complex by employing this limited set of words (Rodríguez-Navarro, 1984). The following table summarises the morpho-syntactic structure of the English nominal complex.

Table 2.2: The structure of the English nominal complex

Determiners			Pre-modifiers	Head	Post-modifiers
Pre.det	Centr.det	Post.det	Phrasal Adj.	N	Clausal/phrasal elements
<i>all</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>three</i>	<i>auctioned</i>	<i>cars</i>	<i>that she bought</i>

2.2.3 The DP hypothesis

In the traditional grammar perspective (1960s-1970s), N was referred to as the head in the nominal complex. However, drawing on the generative grammar tradition, Brame (1982) noted later that the definite article (DET) was the head-selector of DET(N); he thus proposed that “it would be better to abbreviate DET(N) as DP, not as NP, and to speak of determiner phrases, rather than of noun phrases” (Brame, 1982:325). Later on, Abney (1987) evidenced further that determiners were really the heads of DPs. In this view, the DP is considered the projection of D, and the nominal component is its complement (Alexiadou et al., 2007; Carnie, 2013). As can be noted in Figure 2.1, the Number Phrase (NumP) is an additional phrase appearing within the DP (cf. Leung, 2005).

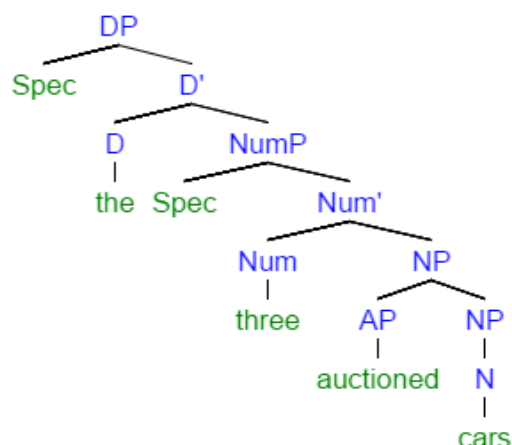


Figure 2.1: The internal structure of the English DP

In the recent generative grammar framework, it has been observed that the grammaticalisation of definiteness involves D. Alexiadou et al. (2007) say that D helps to syntactically interpret referentiality. In this way, identifiability and uniqueness are not directly linked to D since these notions are pragmatically inferred (see also, Díez-Bedmar and Papp (2008)). The definite article grammaticalises the semantic-pragmatic conditions of definiteness, which are situated at D. In this view, it is evident that the definite article has particular syntactic and semantic roles in the construal of the definiteness properties of nouns (Alexiadou et al., 2007).

Two important questions emerge at this point. (i) Where is the definiteness property situated in languages such as Swahili, Polish and Serbian, which lack articles? (ii) Assuming that D projects its own functional DP category and the NP is simply a complement in the DP structure (as in English), can we claim that DP is universal? While we might remain sceptical about the universality of DP, linguists have attempted to examine it from the perspective of a wide range of languages and have come up with a number of conflicting viewpoints. On one hand, Giusti (1997, 2002) and Longobardi (1994) hold that D is universal since it is crucial for the semantic interpretation of an NP as definite or generic. To these scholars, whenever a noun is interpreted as definite, it has projected D, regardless of whether the language has a definite article or not. On the other hand, Avery and Radišić (2007), Leung (2005), Lyons (1999), Snape (2006) and Trenkic (2004) hold that languages that do not have definite articles do not have the syntactic category D. Lyons (1999), in particular, argues that D is only projected in languages that encode grammatical definiteness. According to these scholars, if a language does not have a definite article it simply has an NP. I subscribe to the latter viewpoint because it is more appropriate for my study.

2.2.4 Head movement within the nominal projection

A widely accepted assumption is that the head N in some languages moves from its canonical low lexical position to a functional head position which is higher in the extended projection of N (Alexiadou et al., 2007). This assumption stems from the tendency of some languages to have nouns occurring before items that usually precede nouns in other languages. Good examples are Norwegian and Romanian.²³ Their nouns precede articles, as in (9).

- (9) a. gutt-en, hus-et
 boy-the, house-the Norwegian
 b. portret-ul
 portait-the Romanian (Alexiadou et al., 2007:85)

Normally articles occupy the leftmost position, as in the English DP. However, the Norwegian and Romanian nouns in (9) precede the enclitic articles. Since articles cannot occur freely in these languages, it is assumed that the head Ns have moved to the higher head D positions due to the enclitic nature of their articles. Thus, the Ns are assumed to occupy the head D positions.²⁴

Concerning English, there is no N-movement within the nominal complex (Snape, 2006b). Leung (2005:42) says that the English N remains in its basic position within the nominal complex since the number feature in the DP is weak. In this regard, it cannot trigger N-movement to a higher head position. This is why articles and adjectives remain in the pre-nominal position in English.²⁵ Having described the English article system (and the other nominal domain elements) from the formal perspective, in Section 2.3, I describe it from the functional perspective.

²³ Note that since some linguists regard DP as universal, I will draw examples from other languages as well to contextualise what is being described.

²⁴ The examples above offer morphological evidence for N-to-D movement. For syntactic evidence from Italian, see Alexiadou et al. (2007:86ff.).

²⁵ Drawing on the explanation above, it is reasonable to argue that there is N-movement in Swahili since adjectives and possessive pronouns appear in the post-nominal position within the Swahili NP. However, some notes are in order. I assume that N moves to the head position of the NumP because of two reasons. (i) Number features are assumed to be strong to attract the movement of N, as in French (cf. Leung, 2005:42), and (ii) the enclitic nature of Swahili noun class markers (which are the locus of number features) necessitates the movement of N to Num and “lands” there (cf. Alexiadou et al., 2007:86ff.).

2.3 The semantic structure of English

In this section, I present the notions of ‘definiteness’ and ‘indefiniteness’. I explore literature on the realisation of (in)definiteness in English to understand how this language realises these notions. I also discuss the notions of ‘specificity’ and ‘non-specificity’ in English as viewed by different scholars. This discussion will later help to compare and contrast English and Swahili in relation to the realisation of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity.

2.3.1 Definiteness in English

Lyons (1999) defines ‘definiteness’ and ‘indefiniteness’ based on data from a wide range of languages, and identifies several challenges in defining definiteness. Consequently, he proposes that it is important to consider familiarity, identifiability, uniqueness and inclusiveness in defining definiteness. In the following subsections, I show how each of these notions applies to the realisation of definiteness in English.

2.3.1.1 Familiarity

‘Familiarity’ refers to the shared knowledge of the referent by both the speaker and the hearer. For instance, *the house* and *a house* differ in the sense that *the house* sounds more definite, familiar and individualised than *a house*, which seems more unfamiliar to the hearer. If the speaker does not want to signal this shared familiarity with the hearer, he/she can use *a* (Lyons, 1999:3). Considering Hawkins’ (1978) influential work on the Familiarity Hypothesis, familiarity can be arrived at by analysing meaning based on the following function groupings for articles: anaphoric reference, associative inference and encyclopaedic knowledge (which combines situational knowledge and general knowledge, in the present study). I discuss each of these below.

In the anaphoric context, definiteness is arrived at via the previous mention of an entity in the discourse. When the speaker wants to refer to the same entity, he/she uses the definite article in the subsequent mention of the entity since it is already familiar to the hearer, as exemplified below.

- (10) I came across a boy and a girl in the street. *The boy* seemed to be very happy.
- (11) An elegant, dark-haired woman, a well-dressed man with dark glasses, and two children entered the compartment. I immediately recognized **the woman**. **The children** also looked vaguely familiar. (Lyons, 1999:3)

In the associative context, definiteness is arrived at via the amalgam of anaphoric reference and general knowledge (Lyons, 1999). A mention of a particular entity conjures up all the things that are associated with it, as in the examples below.

(12) She bought *a new cell phone*; however, *the battery* needs to be replaced.

(13) I went to *hospital*. *The doctor* prescribed me some pills for fever.

In (12) and (13), no previous mention of *the battery* and *the doctor*, respectively, had been made at the time of the utterance. However, the definite readings are possible since the speaker assumes that – from the general understanding of the world – the hearer will associate *the battery* with the *new cell phone* as well as *the doctor* with the *hospital*.

In encyclopaedic contexts, definite readings are possible because the hearer relies on the knowledge of the immediate situation or on the general understanding of the world to understand what is being described. The encyclopaedic context in the present study comprises the situational and the general uses of the definite article.

To begin with the *situational use*, using *the* considers the shared knowledge of the immediate situation by both the speaker and the hearer. The entity is understood as definite by virtue of the shared knowledge about the physical situation in which the conversation takes place. The following examples are illustrative.

(14) *The prime minister* will give a speech today.

(15) Clean *the bathroom* please.

(16) Can you put this fish into *the aquarium*? (Lyons, 1999:3ff.)

These examples illustrate the situational use of *the*. In (14), the hearer is aware that the prime minister being talked about is the leader of their country. The prime minister might not be personally identifiable to the hearer (i.e. the hearer might not know who the current prime minister is); still, he/she is considered definite since the hearer is aware that their country has a prime minister. In (15), the situation is immediate. Although the bathroom may not be visible where the interlocutors are, the hearer knows that the bathroom being referred to is their house's bathroom. Likewise, the hearer can see *the aquarium* in (16) as it is assumed to be in their immediate environment. In such situations, Hawkins (1978) says that NPs receive definite interpretations because the hearer is familiar with the context of interaction.

Regarding *the general uses*, the definite article is used when reference is made to a *unique* entity according to the hearer's general understanding of the world. The following examples illustrate this point.

- (17) *The earth* is a sphere.
 (18) *The sun* is the largest star.

In the two examples above, *the earth* and *the sun* are unique entities. The speaker assumes that the hearer is familiar with them by virtue of being unique in their speech community (Jovunen, 2002:192). They are the only ones existing. As mentioned previously, the situational and the general use of the definite article are amalgamated into the encyclopaedic context in the present study (cf. Example 108).

2.3.1.2 Identifiability

Considering identifiability, an entity is definite if the hearer can identify it in the context of interaction (Greenbaum, 1996:164). The entity does not necessarily need to be familiar to him/her. If the hearer cannot identify it in the context of interaction, it is considered indefinite (Lyons, 1999:5ff). For example, let us say that Paul wants to change a flat tyre in his garage and asks Janet, who has just entered, without turning to her

- (19) “Pass me *the jack*, will you?”

Janet then looks around the garage and identifies the jack. In this situation, Paul uses *the* to imply that, although Janet is not familiar with the jack, she should be able to identify it in the garage context. In line with this explanation, Jovunen (2002:191) insists that, when the speaker uses *the*, he/she implies that the hearer can identify the intended referent.

2.3.1.3 Uniqueness and inclusiveness

Concerning uniqueness, let us consider the following two examples:

- (20) She has put on *a* blouse that she just bought.
 (21) She has put on *the* blouse that she just bought.

In (20), *a* is neutral with regard to uniqueness. In fact, it signals non-uniqueness, while in (21), *the* signals uniqueness as it implies that there is only one entity that fits the description (Langacker, 1991; Langlotz, 2006; Lyons, 1999). Whereas Example (20) implies that she has bought many blouses but put on only one of them; Example (21) tells us that she bought only one blouse, the one she put on.²⁶ According to Lyons (1999), uniqueness can only apply to

²⁶ Relative clauses also help in realising definiteness via uniqueness in languages such as Greek (Probert, 2015) and the Vorarlberg dialect of German (Hofherr, 2012).

definite singular countable nouns. For definite plural and mass nouns, inclusiveness applies, as in the following examples.

- (22) a. We've just been to see John race. The queen gave out *the prizes*.
 b. We are offering several prizes, and *the winners* will be invited to London.

(Lyons, 1999:10)

In (22), the speaker refers to the entirety of the object nouns (via inclusiveness) in their respective contexts. Therefore, in (22a), the speaker is talking about all the prizes that were given. Likewise, in (22b), the speaker is talking about all the winners of the race. Apart from using the definite article, English can realise definiteness via inherently definite NPs. I describe these below.

2.3.1.4 Inherently definite noun phrases in English

All languages have unique ways of realising definiteness. This semantic notion is not restricted only to the grammaticalisation of definiteness via articles, as described above. Apart from using the article system, English also uses inherently definite categories to realise definiteness. These categories are demonstratives, proper nouns, possessives, personal pronouns and universal quantifiers (Rezai & Jabbari, 2010; Lyons, 1999). Lyons terms them complex definites. Since demonstratives exist in all languages (Lyons, 1977), and the majority of languages have possessives (Trenkic, 2009), all languages can realise definiteness. The rest of this subsection explores how these categories are used for definiteness in English.

i) Demonstratives

Fillmore (1966) noted that English has only two demonstratives: *this*, which refers to a referent which is close to the speaker and *that*, which refers to something which is away from the speaker. Generally, demonstratives realise definite referents.²⁷ They always point to the referent that is assumed familiar or identifiable to the hearer. Consider the following sentences.

²⁷ However, '*this*' can also be used to refer to a specific referent in colloquial English (Ionin, 2006). Consider the following example in the first mention of *person*.

- (i) I met *this* person a few weeks ago, and ... [+spec, -def]

In this example, the speaker has a specific person in mind, but the hearer is not familiar with the person. Thus the person was specific indefinite at the time of utterance.

- (23) Pass him *this* book.
 (24) Pass *that* book over
 (25) Pass me *that* spoon.

Expressions such as those in (23), (24) and (25) are mostly used where there are several books or spoons from which one can choose. Pragmatically, the discourse may be accompanied by a specific gesture pointing to the item to which the speaker refers.

Hawkins (1978) noted that using demonstratives distinguishes the target referent from other possible referents. Demonstratives facilitate *identifiability* akin to what the English definite article does (cf. Section 2.3.1.2). When the speaker says, *pass him this book* or *pass me that spoon*, the hearer can easily identify the intended referent. Demonstratives perform deictic functions due to their ability to differentiate a proximal from a distal referent. This ability is the fundamental difference between demonstratives and the definite article. Thus, they do not belong to a completely homogeneous class (Alexiadou et al., 2007; Lyons, 1999). Moreover, whereas the definite article is capable of referring to generic nouns, the demonstrative is not capable of fulfilling this function (Alexiadou et al., 2007), as illustrated in (26) and (27) below.

- (26) a. *The* lion is dangerous. [Generic]
 b. *This* lion is dangerous. [Specific]
 (27) a. He discovered *the* telephone. [Generic]
 b. He discovered *this* telephone. [Specific]

On the readings of (a) above, the definite article denotes generic nouns, whereas on the readings of (b), the demonstrative denotes non-generic (or specific) nouns.

ii) *Proper nouns*

Proper nouns normally refer to *unique* entities in the context of interaction (Greenbaum, 1996). Denoting *uniqueness* is the universal characteristic of proper nouns. Such nouns do not normally take articles in English; but in cases where reference is made to a family, it is possible to have a construction like *the Smiths* (Carnie, 2013:56; Snape, 2006:26).

iii) *Possessives*

English possessives include items such as *my*, *their*, *mine* and *theirs*. They also include genitives as in *Ann's* and *the girl's*. Consider the following examples.

- (28) [[their] sister]
 (29) [[Paul's] only friend]
 (30) [[That woman next door's] husband]

The English possessives in the examples above offer the definite interpretation for these NPs (cf. Haspelmath, 1999). In part, this function explains why possessives are generally incompatible with the definite article in adjacent positions within an NP; they both denote definiteness. Examples (31) and (32) illustrate this incompatibility.

(31) **the their* sister

(32) *Paul's *the* only friend/ the only friend of Paul.

Nevertheless, possessives can occur with indefinite objects in English. The following example from Lyons (1999) is slightly adapted to show that '-s genitive NPs can realise indefinite interpretations in English.

(33) She is Ann's friend.

(34) He was once Mary's student.

One can give the following interpretations to the sentences above. In (33), Ann does not necessarily have only one friend, and in (34), Mary did not have only one student. In cases where the DP is in the predicate position, the genitive generally realises indefiniteness (Radford, 2006); however, when the genitive is in the subject position, it realises definiteness as in *Ann's friend has travelled* and *Mary's student is intelligent*. In these examples, the referents are *unique*. Note that the definite interpretations in the subject positions seem to be caused by the interaction between the genitive and the topic positions. Generally, the topic position pragmatically favours definiteness. Conversely, Examples (33) and (34) show that the predicate position favours indefiniteness.

iv) *Personal pronouns*

Personal pronouns are inherently definite. They are also known as definite pronouns. Examples of personal pronouns in English are *I, you, she, he, it, we, they, me, her, him, us* and *them*. They are used to refer to nouns that are already familiar to the hearer in the discourse context.

v) *Universal quantifiers*

English quantifiers include determiners such as *all, every* and *each*. They seem to denote definiteness via *inclusiveness*. They denote entirety either within a given situation or unconditionally (Lyons, 1999). Lyons noted that some determiners which do not denote totality demonstrate behaviour akin to *all*. For instance:

(35) Strong as *most* contestants are, they can't lift it.

(36) *Most* hats are yours. (Lyons, 1999:30)

(37) *Most* people I invited turned up.

In the examples above, *most* expresses a proportion of an entirety (similar to the function fulfilled by *all*). Showing entirety is similar to using *the* for *inclusiveness*. Thus, *inclusiveness* is viewed as a facet of a broader notion of ‘quantification’. These determiners signify a proportion of something that is in existence (Alexiadou et al., 2007:54).

2.3.2 Indefiniteness in English

The English article *a* is said to show indefiniteness. It precedes an entity which is not familiar to the hearer. The indefinite article occurs only in singular count NPs in English. For plural and mass nouns, its place is assumed to be taken by the zero article (Rezai & Jabbari, 2010). Apart from showing indefiniteness, *a* can be used to realise singularity, akin to *one* in English, as the following examples show.

(38) I would like *a* photocopy of this article.

(39) I would like *one* photocopy of this article.

(Quirk et al., 1985:261, *emphasis added*)

In the sentences above, *a*, similar to *one*, indicates that the speaker is talking about a single entity. Since they both show singularity, *a* cannot co-occur with *one* in the same NP. However, *one* can co-occur with *the*, because the latter is neutral with regard to distinguishing number. The following examples illustrate this point.

(40) **a one* pen I bought

(41) *the one* person I can trust

In addition, the examples above suggest that the cardinal determiner *one* does not mark indefiniteness in English. It can indeed be left out without any effect to the indefiniteness condition of an object in English. This argument is supported further by the following examples, adapted from Lyons (1999:33).

(42) I bought *two* books this morning.

(43) I wonder whether Paul has seen *many* books.

In (42) and (43), *two* and *many* are cardinal determiners. According to Lyons, these determiners do not offer the indefinite readings of the books. These determiners can be left out, and the books will retain their indefinite readings. Lyons (1999) adds that plural count

and mass nouns can appear without determiners and are therefore indefinite in English, unless interpreted generically.²⁸

However, other determiners such as *any* and *each* can mark indefiniteness in English (Foley & Van Valin, 1985). An important question is whether *any* and *each* can mark (non-)specificity in English. Given that an entity is specific if the speaker has a particular referent in mind, clearly, *any* expresses a kind of non-specificity, while *each* expresses specificity. Yet, this distinction offers only a partial picture of the realisation of (non-)specificity in English. In this regard, I explore the notion of ‘specificity’ in English in more detail in the following section.

2.3.3 Specificity in English

Specificity partially overlaps with definiteness. Drawing on Ludlow and Neale (1991), Larson and Segal (1995) and Kripke (1977), Lyons distinguishes between referential and specific uses of both definite and indefinite entities. In the referential use of an entity, the speaker intends to communicate something worthy of note about it with the intent that the hearer can realise it. Note that intending *the hearer* to realise the referent is how referentiality interacts to a certain extent with definiteness. In the specificity use, the speaker has a particular individual in mind but does not expect the hearer to pick out any individual. In line with Ludlow and Neale (1991:171), Lyons (1999:172) notes that “both referentiality and specificity are common with definites, but that the former is somewhat marginal with indefinites” (see also Givón (1978:295)). In the present study, I subscribe to the unified account of specificity given by Lyons (1999:173) in which an NP is specific if the speaker has a particular referent in mind, and it is non-specific if the speaker has no particular referent in mind (see also Fodor and Sag (1982) for an account that has some similarities).

To understand how NPs are interpreted as either specific or non-specific, it is useful to consider the following examples from Lyons (1999:167-172).

²⁸ Master (1997:225), Momenzade, Youhanaee and Kassaian (2013:269) and Whitman (1974:258) also argue that generic plural nouns never receive *the* in English.

- (44) Indefinite NPs
- a. Peter intends to marry **a merchant banker** – even though he doesn't get on at all with her. [+spec]
 - b. Peter intends to marry **a merchant banker** – though he hasn't met one yet. [-spec]
- (Lyons, 1999:167)
- (45) Definite NPs
- a. Joan wants to present the prize to **the winner** – but he doesn't want to receive it from her. [+spec]
 - b. Joan wants to present the prize to **the winner** – but she'll have to wait around till the race finishes. [-spec]
- (Lyons, 1999:167)

In the examples above, using verbs of propositional attitude such as *intend* and *want* shows that the referent can have specific or non-specific readings (Givón, 1978:294). The examples above are in the opaque context since they represent counterfactual situations. Apart from opaque contexts, there are also non-opaque (or transparent) contexts, which represent factual situations, as in (46) and (47).

- (46) Indefinite NPs
- a. **A dog** was in here last night – it's called Lulu and Fred always lets it sit by the fire on wet nights. [+spec]
 - b. **A dog** was in here last night – there's no other explanation for all these hairs and scratch marks. [-spec]
- (Lyons, 1999:171)
- (47) Definite NPs
- a. We can't start the seminar, because **the student who's giving the presentation** is absent – typical of Bill, he is so unreliable. [+spec]
 - b. We can't start the seminar because **the student who's giving the presentation** is absent – I'd go and find whoever it is, but no one can remember, and half the class is absent. [-spec]
- (Lyons, 1999:172)

On the readings of the (a) examples above, the speakers have specific referents in mind. This means the object nouns are specific. Conversely, on the readings of the (b) examples, the speakers do not have specific referents in mind. This means the entities are non-specific. Note that, in all these examples, no special morphological markers of specificity are used. Generally, entities are understood as specific or non-specific in English based on discourse context. In the following section, I survey how the semantic notions of 'definiteness' and 'specificity' are realised in Bantu languages.

2.4 Definiteness and specificity in Bantu

Since Swahili is a Bantu language²⁹, exploring the realisation of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity in Bantu is crucial. This exploration will later help to understand how the realisation of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity in Swahili concurs with or differs from that of other Bantu languages. The realisation of these notions in Bantu generally involves the interplay of morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic processes. Literature on Bantu reveals that definiteness and specificity are realised mainly through pre-prefixes, subject markers, object markers, demonstratives and the context of interaction (Alnet, 2009; Mojapelo, 2013; Petzell, 2003; Progovac, 1993; Riedel, 2009a; Visser, 2008). The following subsections explore what each of these elements realises in selected Bantu languages.

2.4.1 Pre-prefixes

Pre-prefixes are word-initial elements that precede noun class markers in the nominal domains of most Bantu languages (Petzell, 2003). The use of pre-prefixes is somewhat complex. Pre-prefixes do not seem to fulfil one common function across all Bantu languages, rather they interact with other elements to realise definiteness and/or specificity. For instance, in Kinande [D42] (Maho)³⁰, Progovac (1993) reports that pre-prefixes realise specificity. The following Kinande examples are illustrative.

- (48) a. Yohánisí ánzire *o*-mú-kalì. [+def, +spec]
 John NEG like PPF-CL1-woman
 ‘John doesn’t like the woman.’
- b. Yoháni sí ánziré mú-kalì. [–def, –spec]
 ‘John doesn’t like any woman.’
- c. Yohání ánzire *o*-mú-kalì. [+/-def, +spec]
 ‘John likes the woman.’
- d. *Yohání ánziré mú-kalì. [–def, –spec]
- (Progovac, 1993:258)

²⁹ Bantu languages are a large group of about 500 languages belonging to the Benue-Congo sub-branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Grimes, 2000). These languages spread over the large part of sub-Saharan Africa. Bemba, isiXhosa, Lingala, Shona and Swahili are examples of Bantu languages.

³⁰ In referring to these Bantu languages, I use Maho’s (2009) updated list of Guthrie’s (1967/71) classification of Bantu languages.

Examples (48a) and (48c) show that the nouns preceded by the pre-prefix *o-* are interpreted as specific. Example (48b) shows that the noun is interpreted as non-specific because it lacks a pre-prefix. These examples show that in Kinande the presence or absence of pre-prefixes distinguishes specific from non-specific readings but does not distinguish definite from indefinite readings. Likewise, Gambarage (2013), Petzell (2003) and Visser (2008) report that pre-prefixes realise specificity in Nata [E45], Kerewe [E24] and isiXhosa [S41] respectively.

In Kagulu [G12], Petzell (2003) shows that pre-prefixes interact with syntax and semantics as well as with the context of interaction to realise definiteness, specificity and topicality, as in the following examples.

- (49) *Nikutandika masasi ga wana.*
 ni- ku- tandika masasi ga wana
 SM.1SG PRES spread 6-bed of 2-child
 ‘I make the children’s beds.’
- (50) *Awana wang’hakonga kulila...*
 a- wana wa- ng’ha- kongga kulila
 PrPr2- child SM2 COND start 15-cry
 ‘If the children start to cry...’ (Petzell, 2003:7)

According to Petzell, in (49), *wana* ‘the children’ are introduced in the discourse context. In (50), *awana* ‘the children’ are mentioned for the second time. Petzell says that the pre-prefix *a* shows topicality, and *awana* ‘the children’ “anaphorically” refers to *wana* ‘the children’, who were previously mentioned in (49). In my view, the anaphoric reference depicted in (50) leads to definiteness via familiarity (cf. Lyons, 1999). Considering Lyons’ semantic framework, therefore, not only does the pre-prefix in (50) denote topic in Kagulu (according to Petzell) but also definiteness.

Regarding specificity, Petzell reports that a pre-prefix is used when the noun in question is specified. Consider the following Kagulu examples:

- (51) *Basi kowa munhu.*
 basi ka-21 wa munhu
 once SM17 COP 1-person
 ‘Once there was a man.’
- (52) *imunhu yuya yeja yowa na*
 i- munhu yuya ya-22 ija ya-23 wa na
 PrPr1- person DEM SM1 come SM1 have
 ‘This man had...’ (Petzell, 2003:9)

In Example (51), *munhu* ‘a man’ is introduced, and then the pre-prefix *i-* is employed in the subsequent mention of *imunhu* ‘the man’ in (52). According to Petzell, the pre-prefix in this context denotes specificity.

Petzell (2003) concludes that definiteness and specificity are realised by pre-prefixes in Kagulu because such elements are used for things that are familiar to both the speaker and the hearer or for things that are specific in the context of interaction. A similar observation was made by Hyman and Katamba (1993) for Luganda. According to these scholars, pre-prefixes in Luganda are associated with definiteness, specificity and focus.

Contrary to the Bantu languages reviewed in this subsection, Swahili [G42] does not have pre-prefixes. Thus, definiteness and specificity are realised through other means. In the following sections, I therefore continue exploring other mechanisms for realising definiteness and specificity in Bantu.

2.4.2 Subject marking and the subject position

A subject marker is a morphological element that marks the subject in a clause. Mojapelo (2013) reports that the subject marker (SM) is related to definiteness in Northern Sotho [S31c]. According to Mojapelo, this element is never used for indefinite entities in the language.³¹ In addition, indefinite nouns are not allowed in the subject position in Northern Sotho. In Mojapelo’s data, when a simple definite subject was moved to the initial position of a clause, it co-occurred with a definite determiner, as instanced in (53).

- (53) Title: Apartheid Museum
 [paragraph 1]: The Apartheid Museum is the story of the triumph of the human spirit.
 [paragraph 2]: Beginning in 1948 ...
 [paragraph 3]: The Apartheid Museum, the first of its kind, illustrates the rise and the fall ...
 [paragraph 4]: The museum has been assembled and organised ...
 Translator 1: [*Museamo [wo] o...*] [Back translation: This museum is ...]
 Translator 2: [*Museamo [wa apartheid] o ...*] [Back translation: Museum of apartheid (apartheid museum) is ...]
 (Mojapelo, 2013:5-6)

In the translations above, the referent in the subject position receives the definite interpretation. Definiteness is associated with the use of the demonstrative *wo* ‘this’

³¹ As will be explained in Section 2.6.1.1(i), SMs also realise definiteness in Swahili.

(Translator 1) and with the possessive marker *wa* ‘of’ (Translator 2) in Northern Sotho. Both the demonstrative and possessive in the example above indicate uniqueness. This observation concurs with that made in Section (2.3.1.4(iii)) that English possessives realise uniquely definite referents, especially, of course, when they occur in the subject/topic position. The following section looks at object marking in Bantu.

2.4.3 Object marking

An object marker is a pronominal element that agrees with an object noun in a clause. The role and status of object markers (OMs) have attracted the attention of many scholars in the field of Bantu linguistics. This interest is due to OMs’ complex nature and varying functions which range from realising definiteness and/or specificity, animacy, topic and focus and emphasis in Bantu. Different scholars have made the following observations with regard to OMs in a number of languages: OMs generally show semantic case relations, person-animacy and determinedness in Bantu (Hyman & Duranti, 1982); they realise previously mentioned referents in Chichewa [N31b] (Bresnan & Mchombo, 1987); they occur with definite animate referents in Kirimi [F32] (Hualde, 1989); they realise definiteness/specificity in Ikalanga [K18] (Letsholo, 2013); they are obligatory for definite objects in Shona [S10] (Mugari, 2013); they occur with definite objects in Samba [G23] (Riedel, 2009a); they realise specificity in isiXhosa [S41] (Visser, 2008); and they offer a definite interpretation when they occur with an object noun in isiZulu [S42] (Zeller, 2012). In the following paragraphs, I explore the role of object marking in Bantu with selected data from isiXhosa, Samba and Swahili.

To begin with isiXhosa, Visser (2008) demonstrates that the presence and absence of an Object Agreement (OA) marker denotes specificity and non-specificity respectively. This means (in)definiteness distinctions are not arrived at via object marking in isiXhosa. The different interpretations determined by the presence or absence of OA markers and bare object nouns are illustrated in the following isiXhosa examples.³²

³² In each of these examples, the second line parses the morphemes in the first line, and then the last line provides glosses.

- (54) a. *Umama ucela ukuba iintombi zi(yi)hlabbe ingubo.*
umama(1) u-cel-a ukuba iintombi(10) zi-(yi)- hlabbe-e ingubo(9)
 mother AgrS-request-FV that girls AgrS-(AgrO)-wash-Subj blanket³³
 ‘Mother requests (the) girls to wash the/a blanket.’
- b. *Utitshala unqwenela ukuba abafundi ba(lu)phumelele uviwo.*
utitshala(1) u-nqwenel-a ukuba abafundi(2) ba-(lu)-phumelele-e
uviwo(11)
 teacher AgrS-wish- FV that learners AgrS-(AgrO)-pass- Subj exam
 ‘The/a teacher wishes that (the) learners pass the/an examination.’
- c. *Abazali bathanda ukuba umntwana a(yi)funde incwadi.*
abazali(2) ba-thand-a ukuba umntwana(1) a-(yi)-fund-e incwadi(9)
 parents AgrS-like-FV that child AgrS-(AgrO)-read-Subj book
 ‘The parents like (it) that the child reads the/a book.’
- d. *Abafana bafuna ukuba utata a(yi)thenge imoto.*
abafana(2) ba-fun-a ukuba utata(1) a-(yi)-thenge-e imoto(9)
 young men AgrS-want-Pres that father AgrS-(AgrO)-buy-Subj car
 ‘(The) young men want (it) that father buys the/a car.’
- (Visser, 2008: 14ff.)

Examples (54a-d) show that when OMs (indicated in bold) occur with object nouns as complements of subjunctive verbs, the object nouns become specific (see also Deen (2006) for a similar observation about Nairobi Swahili). Visser adds that, in these sentences, (in)definiteness distinctions are arrived at via the context of interaction.

As regards Smbaa, Riedel (2009a) reports that, when the object in question is a proper name in a simple clause, it must be object marked, as shown in (55) below.

- (55) a. *Nzamwona Stella.*
 N- za- **mw-** ona Stella
 SM1 Perf **OM** see Stella
 ‘I saw Stella.’
- b. **Nzaona Stella* (Riedel, 2009a:44)

Likewise, kinship terms such as *father* and unique titles when used as proper names must be object marked in Smbaa. Moreover, Riedel notes that terms referring to those with high

³³ Note that *AgrS* stands for “subject agreement”, *AgrO* stands for “object agreement”, *SM* stands for “subject marker”, *prs-* for “present tense marker”, *FV* for “final vowel” and the numeral (here *1*) indicates the relevant noun class.

status (such as *askofu* ‘bishop’) are often object marked in Smbaa. Otherwise, the construction becomes ungrammatical, as illustrated in (56).

- (56) a. *Nzamwona tate.*
 N- za- **mw-** ona tate
 SM1 Perf **OM** see father
 ‘I saw father.’ [Kinship term]
- b. *Nzamwona askofu.*
 N- za- **mw-** ona askofu
 SM1 Perf **OM** see bishop
 ‘I saw the bishop.’
- c. **Nzaona askofu*
 (Riedel, 2009a:45)

In my opinion, objects such as those in (55) and (56) receive OMs in Smbaa because they are *unique* in their respective contexts. In (55a), for instance, ‘Stella’ is a uniquely identifiable person in the context of interaction (cf. Givón, 1978; Lyons, 1999). In line with Visser (2008), proper nouns and pronouns are generally considered definite since both the speaker and the hearer assume their *identifiability*. Moreover, drawing on encyclopaedic knowledge, ‘father’ and ‘bishop’ in (56a) and (56b) respectively are understood as unique individuals in the immediate context of interaction. Thus, they receive object marking in Smbaa. Riedel concludes that definiteness necessitates object marking for animate objects in Smbaa. Similarly, studies on object marking in Chichewa (Bresnan & Mchombo, 1987), isiZulu (Zeller, 2012), Nata (Gambarage, 2013), Nyaturu [F32] (Hualde, 1989), Kiluguru [G35] (Marten & Ramadhani, 2001), Kirimi (Hualde, 1989), Kivunjo [E62b] (Bresnan & Moshi, 1990) and Shona (Mugari, 2013) indicate that object marking interacts with definiteness in these languages.

Concerning Swahili, Riedel (2009a) says that object marked and non-object marked entities can be (in)definite or (non-)specific. Riedel presents the following data from Tanzanian Standard Swahili to justify her observation.

- (57) a. Ni- li- ona mtoto.
 SM1S- PAST- see 1child
 ‘I saw a child.’ (Riedel, 2009a:49)
- b. Ni- li- **mw-** ona mtoto.
 SM1S- PAST- **OM-** see 1child
 ‘I saw the child.’

Riedel claims that *mtoto* ‘a child’ in example 57a is non-specific, because it is not object marked. According to Riedel, if the speaker wanted to talk about a specific *mtoto* ‘child’, they had to use an object marker as in (57b).

Riedel (2009a:51) claims further that in Tanzanian Standard Swahili, specificity always requires object marking. According to Riedel, if an object is specific, it is obligatorily object marked. If it is non-specific, it is not object marked. Such a conclusion was also reached by Cann, Kempson and Marten (2005) and Woolford (1999). However, to Hinnebusch and Kirsner (1980) and Seidl and Dimitriadis (1997), object marking in Swahili is associated with definiteness. What is more, midway between this diversity of viewpoints, Keach (1995) holds that object marking realises both definiteness and specificity for inanimate objects in Swahili. Due to this difference in opinions on the role of the Swahili OM, its relation to definiteness and specificity needs to be revisited. Since the participants’ knowledge of L1 Swahili (and its effect on their EFL acquisition) is one of the focus points of the present study, I will further pursue the role of Swahili object marking in Section 2.6.3. For the aim of describing how Bantu languages generally realise (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity, I continue to the use of demonstratives, in the following section.

2.4.4 Demonstratives

Demonstratives have in common the property of pointing to a particular referent. Their canonical positions within NPs differ from one language to another. Whereas in some languages they occur pre-nominally, in other languages they occur post-nominally or both pre-nominally and post-nominally (Dryer, 2005). The difference between pre-nominal and post-nominal demonstratives is that, whereas the former function akin to the English definite article, the latter function as demonstratives-proper (Dryer, 2005; Van de Velde, 2005) as in the following data from Maore [G40] and Bembe [D54].

In Maore, Alnet (2009) says that demonstratives can distinguish between near, medial and distal referents, which are definite. The following examples illustrate this observation.

- (58) a. *mwana u-nu* ‘this child’
 b. *mwana u-le* ‘that child (over there)’
 c. *mwana uwo* ‘that child (we were discussing)’ (Alnet, 2009:70)

As exemplified in (58), demonstratives in Maore occur post-nominally. According to Alnet (2009), *uwo* ‘that’ is used for anaphoric reference in Maore. It refers to something that has already been mentioned in the discourse. It therefore realises definiteness.

Similarly, in Bembe, Iorio (2011) presents data showing that demonstratives in this language realise definiteness. According to Iorio, Bembe uses the demonstratives *-nu* and *-lya* to refer to proximal and distal referents, respectively, as shown in (59a) and (59b).

- (59) a. *u-nu* *m-tu*
 1-DEM.prox 1-man
 ‘this man’
- b. *u-lya* *m-tu*
 1-DEM.dist 1-man
 ‘that man’
- (Iorio, 2011:56-57)

Likewise, Gambarage (2013), Iribemwangi and Kihara (2011) and Nurse and Philippson (1977), respectively, report that demonstratives are used for definite referents in Nata [E45], Gikũyũ [E51] and Kimochi [E62a].³⁴

In summary, this section (Section 2.4) has looked at the realisation of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity drawing on data from different Bantu languages. These languages realise definiteness and specificity via the interplay of linguistic and extra-linguistic mechanisms. Linguistically, pre-prefixes, subject markers, object markers and demonstratives play key roles in (in)definiteness and/or (non-)specificity distinctions in Bantu. When these elements are used in a clause, the noun becomes definite and/or specific. Yet, these elements do not fulfil similar roles in all of the Bantu languages; for instance, while pre-prefixes realise specificity in isiXhosa, such elements interact with definiteness in Luganda. Moreover, while OMs realise specificity in isiXhosa and in Nairobi Swahili, such morphemes interact with definiteness in isiZulu and in Sambia. Extra-linguistically, the context of interaction plays a significant role in (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity distinctions in Bantu. In the following section, I look at the morpho-syntactic elements that are relevant to the realisation of (in)definiteness, specifically, in Swahili.

2.5 The morpho-syntactic structure of Swahili

In the preceding section, I explored the realisation of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity more broadly drawing on data from various Bantu languages. I did not explore the realisation of these notions based on a detailed analysis of any particular language. Accordingly, in this section, I look at the morpho-syntactic elements that are relevant to the realisation of

³⁴ It will be noted in Section 2.6.1.5 that Swahili also uses demonstratives to realise definite referents.

(in)definiteness in Swahili. Swahili is a Bantu language predominantly spoken in East Africa. It belongs to the Niger Congo branch (Guthrie, 1967). It is spoken as a mother tongue or second language on the coast of East Africa, extending from Kenya to the Southern part of Tanzania. There are three main dialects of Swahili: kiAmu, kiMvita and kiUnguja. kiAmu is spoken on the island of Lamu; kiMvita is spoken in Mombasa and other areas of Kenya, whereas kiUnguja, a standard dialect of Swahili, is spoken on the island of Zanzibar and the mainland of Tanzania. Typical of Bantu languages, Swahili has a rich system of agglutinating morphology, with the verbal complex containing several affixes (or markers) associated with, amongst many others, subject agreement, object agreement, tense-aspect and negation. It furthermore has an SVO canonical word order as shown in (60).

(60)	<i>Anna</i>	<i>anampenda</i>	<i>mtoto.</i>			
	Anna	a- na-	m- pend-	a		m-toto
	Ann	SM- prs-	OM- love-	FV		1- child
	S		V			O
		‘Ann loves the child.’				

In the following section, I begin with Swahili’s nominal morphology and then continue to its verbal morphology.

2.5.1 Nominal morphology

The Swahili NP is made up of determiners (such as demonstratives, possessives, numerals, ordinals and quantifiers) and modifiers (such as adjectives and relative clauses). Like many Bantu languages, Swahili maps all these elements in the post-nominal position of the head noun, except for the distributive determiner *kila* ‘each/every’ and deictic demonstratives such as *h-*, *h_o* and *-le* (Krifka, 1995; Rugemalira, 2007). These exceptional elements are mutually exclusive in the pre-nominal context within the Swahili NP. I start with a description of determiners and then continue to that of modifiers. Prior to these descriptions, it is useful to consider the following table showing the NP structure of Swahili.

Table 2.3: The Swahili NP structure

01	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 ³⁵	7
Dem.	Nouns	Poss.	Num.	Ord.	Adj.	Quant	Assoc. <i>phrase</i>	Rel. clause
<i>hawa</i>	<i>rafiki</i>	<i>zangu</i>	<i>watatu</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>wazur</i>	<i>wote</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ambao</i>
these	friends	my	three	<i>kwanza</i> first	<i>i</i> good	all	<i>Tanzania</i> of Tanzania	<i>wanasoma</i> who are studying
‘All these first three good Tanzanian friends of mine who are studying’								

2.5.1.1 Pre-nominal determiners

The table above shows that the demonstrative is the first element in the nominal domain. Swahili has three types of demonstratives, viz. proximal (*h-*), medial (*h_o*) and distal (*-le*) demonstratives (Leonard, 1995; Lyons, 1999). The table shows that the demonstrative *h-* ‘this/these’ occupies the leftmost position in the Swahili NP structure. Yet, this is not its canonical position. It normally follows the head noun. Such a movement to the leftmost position is associated with performing deictic functions (Dryer, 2005; Leonard, 1995; Lyons, 1999) or avoiding potential competition with other determiners in the post-nominal position (Rugemalira, 2007). The second pre-nominal determiner is the distributive determiner *kila* ‘each/every’, as in *kila mtu* ‘every person’. In contrast to demonstratives, the distributive determiner is limited to the initial position of the Swahili NP.

2.5.1.2 Post-nominal determiners

Table 2.3 shows that the possessive determiner immediately follows the head noun. No other element can come between the head noun and the possessive determiner in Swahili. The following example shows the positions occupied by the possessive and the post-nominal demonstrative within the Swahili NP structure.

- (61) a. Viatu vyangu vile
 N Poss. Dem.
 ‘Those shoes of mine’
- b. Bustani yangu ile
 N Poss. Dem.
 ‘That garden of mine’

³⁵ The elements that are italicised from Slots (2) to (6) do not occupy fixed positions; they are mobile within the four slots in the presence of all other elements. When the other elements are absent, each can co-occur with the head noun as in *rafiki wote* ‘all friends’, which combines the noun and the quantifier (Rugemalira, 2007).

As exemplified in (61), possessives normally come immediately after head nouns in Swahili. Other post-nominal determiners are numerals, ordinals and quantifiers. Rugemalira (2007) noted that all these elements are mobile in the post-nominal position. They do not have a fixed order of occurrence.

2.5.1.3 Adjectival modifiers

Adjectives follow head nouns in Swahili. Likewise, they do not have a fixed position in the presence of determiners such as numerals, ordinals and quantifiers. All these are mobile in the post-nominal position. In addition, more than one adjective can post-modify the head noun in Swahili, as shown in the following example.

- (62) a. Viatu vyangu *vizuri* *vyeusi*
 N Poss. Adj. Adj.
 Shoes mine nice black
 ‘My *nice black* shoes’
- b. Gari lako *zuri* *jeupe*
 N Poss. Adj. Adj.
 Car yours beautiful white
 ‘Your *beautiful white* car’

Additionally, when adjectives co-occur with a possessive determiner in Swahili, they generally follow the possessive determiner within the post-nominal position. The position of adjectives in Swahili stands in contrast to the position of adjectives in English. As described in Section 2.2.1, English adjectives canonically pre-modify head nouns.

2.5.1.4 Relative clause modifiers

Another modifier of the head noun in Swahili is the relative clause. Before showing how relative clauses post-modify head nouns, it is vital to explain what is normally referred to as the *-o-* of reference in Swahili. The term reflects the referential function of the Swahili morpheme *-o-*. The morpheme is normally used to refer to an entity which has already been mentioned or is about to be mentioned in the discourse. This referential marker is also known as the relative marker (RM). According to Mpiranya (2015), Schadeberg (1989) and Vitale (1981), the Swahili RM occurs in three distinctive distributional patterns: (i) at the end of the verbal complex (as a suffix), (ii) within the verbal complex and (iii) at the end of the relative pronoun *amba-* (as a suffix).

When the RM is attached to the final position of the verbal complex, the verbal complex will have an [SM + verb stem + RM] pattern. The RM in the suffix position is usually non-tensed. The following example shows the RM suffixed in the verbal complex.

- (63) (watu) watembeo
 (watu) wa- tembe- a- o
 (people) SM₂- walk- FV- RM₂
 ‘(the people) who walk’

In the second distributional pattern of the RM in Swahili, i.e. when the RM occurs within the verbal complex, it usually occurs after the tense marker (TM). The following example is illustrative.

- (64) Nyumba iliyojengwa
 Nyumba i- li- yo- jeng -w- a
 House SM₁- pst- RM₁- build- pass- FV
 ‘The house which was built’

In contrast to the suffixed RM in (63), the RM situated within the verbal complex as in (64) is tensed.

In this type of distribution, the RM is attached at the end of the relative pronoun *amba-* to form a relative clause, as in the following example.

- (65) (gari) ambalo linaenda
 (gari) amba -lo li- na- enda
 (the car)Rel.PR –RM1 SM- prs- move
 ‘(the car) that is moving’

In this particular example, the relative pronoun *amba-lo* ‘that/which’ refers to the car. Mpiranya (2015:70) refers to the RM as a “reference pronoun”. Normally, it is used when the speaker wants to direct the hearer’s attention to a *unique* entity. In (65), for example, the use of *-o* directs the *hearer* to attend to the moving car only. Therefore the car is uniquely definite (cf. Lyons, 1999). Having introduced Swahili relative clauses, let us see the positions they occupy in post-modifying Swahili head nouns.

Relative clauses in Swahili normally post-modify their respective head nouns from the rightmost position of the nominal complex. They follow all other post-nominal elements as illustrated in (66).

- (66) a. Wale watoto *ambao wanasoma*
 Wale watoto *ambao wanasoma*
 Dem N Relative clause
 ‘Those children who are studying’
- b. Hao ndugu zangu *wanaoishi mjini*
 Hao ndugu zangu *wanaoishi mjini*
 Dem N Poss Relative clause
 ‘Those relatives of mine who are living in town’

The final position of the relative clauses italicised in (66) concurs with Rugemalira (2007). The majority of the participants in his study rejected Swahili sentences with relative clauses in non-final position. One should note the similarity between Swahili and English relative clause modifiers –they both *post-modify* nouns in their respective nominal complexes.

In summary, the survey of the Swahili NP structure shows that distributive determiners, deictic demonstratives, possessives and relative clauses occupy fixed positions in relation to the head noun. Moreover, except for distributive determiners and deictic demonstratives, all other types of determiners follow the head noun. The survey also shows that Swahili numerals, ordinals, adjectives, quantifiers and associative phrases are mobile within the post-nominal position of an NP (see Rugemalira (2007:144), for additional relevant data). The following description focuses on the Swahili verbal complex.

2.5.2 Verbal morphology

The Swahili VP contains several morphemes fulfilling different roles. These morphemes are SMs, TMs, RMs, OMs, negation markers, verb inflectional suffixes and the final vowel. In the following discussion, I focus mainly on the SMs and OMs of Swahili because they are relevant to the realisation of definiteness. For descriptions of the other elements of the Swahili verbal morphology, the interested reader can consult Ahrenberg (1982) and Ashton (1944).

2.5.2.1 Subject marker

The Subject Marker (SM) is the first obligatory element in the verbal morphology. The SM varies morphologically according to the class of nouns to which its subject belongs (Ashton, 1944; Deen, 2006; Krifka, 1995; Vitale, 1981). For personal pronouns, the SM only occurs in relation to person and number, as shown in the following table:

Table 2.4: Swahili subject markers

	Personal Pronouns (Optional)	SM	T	Verb	FV	Gloss
1 st Person Singular	(mimi)	<i>ni-</i>	li-	kul-	a	I ate
2 nd Person Singular	(wewe)	<i>u-</i>	li-	kul-	a	You ate
3 rd Person Singular	(yeye)	<i>a-</i>	li-	kul-	a	he/she ate
1 st Person Plural	(sisi)	<i>tu-</i>	li-	kul-	a	We ate
2 nd Person Plural	(nanyi)	<i>mu-</i>	li-	kul-	a	You (all) ate
3 rd Person Plural	(wao)	<i>wa-</i>	li-	kul-	a	They ate

The SMs in the table above contain information pertaining to the subjects' person and number properties. In addition, one can employ personal pronouns simply for emphasis, as in *Nanyi mulikula* 'You all ate'. According to Deen (2006), the SM is the true subject, whereas the noun is the topic in Swahili. It will be noted later (cf. Section 2.6.1.1) that SMs are used in Swahili to refer to definite referents. In the following section, I describe the Swahili OM.

2.5.2.2 Object marker

The object marker can agree with either a direct or indirect object in Swahili (Vitale, 1981). It is generally assumed that all animate object nouns receive object marking whereas inanimate nouns optionally receive object marking in Swahili. To understand the position of the Swahili OM in relation to the morphological structure of the verbal complex, it is important to consider the following examples.

- (67) a. Alex ametupikia chakula.
 Alex a- me- *tu-* pik- i- a- chakula
 Alex SM₁- prf- OM₂- cook-appl-FV food
 'Alex has cooked for *us*.'
- b. Kesho, nitakuletea zawadi.
 Kesho, ni- ta- *ku-* let- e- a zawadi
 Tomorrow, SM₁- fut- OM₁- bring- appl- FV gift
 'Tomorrow, I will bring *you* a gift.'

The two examples above show that, in Swahili, OMs follow tense morphemes and precede verb roots. Any Swahili OM has to agree with the object it marks in terms of number, person and animacy. In the following section, I look at the next element in the verbal complex – the verb root.

2.5.2.3 Verb root

Bantu verb roots are generally monosyllabic. However, some borrowed words seem to behave differently (Deen, 2006). Swahili has borrowed many words from Arabic due to the historical trade relations between Arabs and the people along the eastern coast of Africa (cf.

Chapter 1). Swahili verbs are typically CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant). However, other patterns are also possible as exemplified in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Swahili verb root patterns

CV-structure	Verb root+FV	Gloss
C	<i>l-a</i>	eat
VC	<i>ju-a</i>	know
CVC	<i>lim-a</i>	cultivate
CVCC	<i>chimb-a</i>	dig
VCVC	<i>agiz-a</i>	order
CVCV	<i>nunu-a</i>	buy
VCC	<i>omb-a</i>	pray/beg
VCCVC	<i>andik-a</i>	write

This section focused on the morphological structure of the Swahili verbal complex. It was mentioned that the Swahili verb contains agglutinating morphemes performing several functions. These functions span subject marking, tense marking, relative marking, object marking and indicating mood, among many others. Only the SM and the OM of Swahili were briefly described in this subsection because they are relevant to the discussion of the realisation of definiteness (and specificity) in Swahili, which is the focus of the following section.

2.6 The semantic structure of Swahili

This section describes the realisation of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity in Swahili at greater length. The description which follows draws heavily on the roles of the morpho-syntactic elements of the nominal and verbal complexes described in Section 2.5. Following Lyons (1999), I show how these elements interact with the context of interaction to realise (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity in Swahili.

2.6.1 Definiteness in Swahili

Lyons distinguishes between grammatical definiteness and semantic/pragmatic definiteness. Grammatical definiteness is realised via special overt morphological markers of definiteness such as articles in English and French, whereas semantic/pragmatic definiteness is realised via the context of interaction, as in Swahili and Northern Sotho since they do not have articles. Note that some of the examples in this section are adopted from Section 2.3.1 (*Definiteness in English*) for ease of comparison. In the light of Lyons (1999), the following subsections show how definiteness is arrived at in Swahili in terms of familiarity, identifiability, uniqueness and inclusiveness.

2.6.1.1 Familiarity

Recall that a referent is definite if both the speaker and the hearer are familiar with it (Irmer, 2011; Lyons, 1999). Familiarity is established in Swahili via linguistic and/or extra-linguistic means. Linguistically, this happens through anaphoric reference, and extra-linguistically, it happens through associative inference and encyclopaedic knowledge.

i) Anaphoric reference

Anaphoric reference involves co-referring to a particular referent in the discourse by using linguistic elements (Fishman, 1978; Mojapelo, 2013). Since Swahili does not have articles, it uses demonstratives, pronouns, full NPs, SMs and OMs to fulfil this purpose. To begin with, three types of demonstratives are used in Swahili to refer to a particular referent that has already been mentioned in the preceding discourse: *h-* (for a proximal referent), *h_o* (for a medial referent) and *-le* (for a distal referent). English Example 11 translated into Swahili in (68) is illustrative.

(68) *Mwanamke mrembo na mwenye nywele nyeusi, mwanamume mtanashati mwenye miwani nyeusi waliingia ndani. Muda si mrefu nikamtambua mwanamke yule. Wale watoto ni kama nilishawahi kuwaona pia.*

‘An elegant, dark-haired woman, a well-dressed man with dark glasses, and two children entered the compartment. I immediately recognized **the woman**. **The children** also looked vaguely familiar.’ (Lyons 1999:3).

In the example above, two important observations can be made. First, Swahili uses post-nominal demonstratives such as *yule* ‘that’ for anaphoric reference, as in *mwanamke yule* ‘the woman’. Second, it uses deictic demonstratives such as *wale* ‘those’ to denote topicality, as in *wale watoto* ‘the children’. Ashton (1944), Dryer (2005), Lyons (1999) and Perrot (1951) argue that deictic demonstratives in Swahili are similar to *the* in English, and they usually occur in the subject position. Their argument concurs with Mojapelo (2013) and Zeller’s (2008) observation that the subject position is the locus of topicality in Bantu. The subject position thus favours definiteness in Swahili. The anaphoric and deictic uses of the demonstratives depicted in the Swahili example above co-refer to *mwanamke* ‘the woman’ and *watoto* ‘the children’ who are familiar to the hearer by virtue of being previously mentioned in the preceding discourse. Semantically, therefore, both pre-nominal and post-nominal demonstratives denote definiteness in Swahili.

Another element used for making anaphoric reference is the Subject Marker (SM). In Swahili, the SM co-refers to a uniquely definite individual in the discourse. It never occurs before the subject is familiar to the hearer. Consider the following example.

(69) *Paulo_i alisafiri. Aliporudi nyumbani, alimkuta mke_j wake a_jmejifungua mtoto.*³⁶

‘Paul travelled. When *he* returned home, *he* found his wife had borne a child.’

In this example, the subject markers *a_i*- ‘he’ and *a_j*- ‘she’ refer to the full nouns ‘Paul’ and ‘his wife’ respectively since these nouns have been previously mentioned in the discourse. This anaphoric function of the Swahili SMs in (69) is identical to the function of pronouns in English. If familiarity has already been established, the SM can be used for the subject, as in the second sentence in (69). Besides using SMs, Swahili of course also uses proper nouns such as *Paul* to refer to a person who is unique in the discourse context. In such a situation, the proper noun is immediately followed by the SM as in *Paulo alisafiri* ‘Paul travelled’ in (69).

Personal pronouns are also used for anaphoric functions in Swahili. They denote grammatical person (Lyons, 1999). They always refer to uniquely definite entities in the discourse. For instance,

(70) *Rozi alifurahia mpira. Yeye ni mwanamichezo.*

‘Rose loved the ball. *She* is a sportswoman.’

In (70), the use of the personal pronoun *yeye* ‘she’ points to the unique individual, *Rozi* ‘Rose’. The personal pronoun does not point to any other person. Besides performing this function, pronouns such as *sisi* ‘we’, *nyinyi* ‘you/plural’ and *wao* ‘they’ can occur before nouns to function as deictic demonstratives, as in the following examples.

(71) a. *Sisi walimu tutajitahidi kwa kadiri ya uwezo wetu.*

‘We teachers will try the best we can.’

b. *Nyinyi wanafunzi msome kwa bidii.*

‘You learners should study hard.’

c. *Wao Watanzania watasherehekea mwakani.*

‘They/them Tanzanians will celebrate next year.’

³⁶ In this example, I use the subscripts *i* and *j* to indicate the SMs’ anaphoric references to the antecedents *Paulo* ‘Paulo’ and *mke* ‘(his) wife’ respectively.

In (71), *sisi* ‘we’, *nyinyi* ‘you (plural)’ and *wao* ‘they/them’ point to the teachers, learners and Tanzanians respectively. Such functions are similar to that of deictic demonstratives in Swahili. Besides functioning as independent pronouns, personal pronouns in Swahili can denote topicality as deictic demonstratives, as in (71). This argument strongly supports the widely accepted notion that personal pronouns point to particular definite referents.

ii) *Associative inference*

Definiteness in Swahili can also be realised through *associating* a given object with something that has been mentioned in the discourse. In this situation, Lyons (1999) says that anaphoric reference in combination with general knowledge enable the hearer to understand the object being referred to. The following Swahili examples translated from Lyons (1999) show this situation.

- (72) a. *Ilinibidi nikodi **teksii** kutoka kituoni. Tukiwa njiani, **dereva** aliniambia kulikuwa na mgomo wa mabasi.*
 ‘I had to get *a taxi* from the station. On the way, *the driver* told me there was a bus strike.’
- b. ***Wamewasili** sasa hivi **kutoka New York**. **Ndege** ilichelewa masaa matano.*
 ‘They have just *got in from New York*. *The plane* was five hours late.’
 (Lyons, 1999:3)

In (72), *dereva* ‘the driver’ and *ndege* ‘the plane’ are definite because the hearer can associate them with *teksii* ‘taxi’ and *-wasili kutoka New York* ‘got in from New York’ respectively. In these contexts, the speaker assumes that the hearer is aware that normally a taxi has a driver, as well as a long distance journey – say from New York to Johannesburg – involves a plane. Hence, *dereva* ‘the driver’ and *ndege* ‘the plane’ are definite in these contexts. Note that there are no morphemes marking definiteness in the Swahili examples above. The hearer relies on both the previous mentions of the associated entities and the general knowledge of the contexts to construe what is being referred to in the discourse. The contexts of interaction provide the definite readings of the nouns above.

iii) *Encyclopaedic knowledge*

Recall that encyclopaedic knowledge (as used in the present study) involves the situational and the general knowledge types. The following examples show that definiteness is understood in relation to knowledge of the immediate situation.

- (73) a. *Tafadhali fungua **dirisha**, nahitaji hewa safi.*
‘Please open *the window*. I need fresh air.’
- b. *Weka haya mataulo masafi **bafuni** tafadhali.*
‘Put these clean towels in *the bathroom* please.’
- c. *Nasikia **waziri mkuu** amefanya tena mambo ya hovyoo leo.*
‘I hear *the prime minister* behaved outrageously again today.’

(Lyons, 1999:3)

All the examples in (73a-c) show that definiteness can be realised through shared knowledge of the immediate situation in which the interlocutors are. In (73a), *dirisha* ‘the window’ is in the immediate environment that the speaker and the hearer can both see. *Bafu* ‘the bathroom’ in (73b) is definite due to the assumption that normally a house has a bathroom. In this situation, the visibility of *bafu* ‘the bathroom’ is not germane to the understanding of what is being talked about since the situation is still immediate. In (73c), *waziri mkuu* ‘the prime minister’ is definite because it is assumed that the hearer knows that the person being talked about is the leader of their country. It should also be noted that previous mention is not mandatory for the hearer to understand the definiteness readings of such entities. Instead, he/she relies on his/her knowledge of the situation to understand what is being talked about. As for general knowledge, Examples 73d and 73e are illustrative.

- d. ***Simba** ni wanyama hatari.*
‘*Lions* in general are dangerous animals.’
- e. ***Dunia** ni duara.*
‘*The earth* is round.’

These examples show that whereas Swahili uses bare nouns in the encyclopaedic context, English uses the definite article in the same context.

2.6.1.2 Identifiability

The speaker can use a particular form of expression to direct the hearer towards a definite object. It is not necessary that the hearer should be familiar with the entity being described. The object should simply be identifiable in the context of interaction. For instance, in the classroom context where the teacher is writing on the board and wants to clean a section on it, without turning around, he/she asks Paul – a student who has just entered – *Nipe dasta* ‘Pass me the duster’. Paul looks around and finds *dasta* ‘the duster’ (cf. Lyons, 1999). In this setting, Paul did not know that there was a duster during the time of the teacher’s utterance,

but with the help of the words *nipe dasta* ‘pass me *the duster*’ and of the classroom context (encyclopaedic knowledge), he could identify it in their immediate context. The teacher assumed that Paul could identify *dasta* ‘the duster’ in the classroom context by matching it with his mental image of *dasta* ‘the duster’.

2.6.1.3 Uniqueness and inclusiveness

Lyons (1999) noted that definiteness does not necessarily consider identifiability. Sometimes an object is definite but the hearer cannot identify it if asked to do so. In this case, we need to consider uniqueness. Uniquely definite entities can be realised in Swahili through linguistic elements and extra-linguistic information.

Linguistically, Swahili can use RMs – especially when they modify head nouns. I illustrate this in the following examples.

- (74) a. Paulo alivaa jaketi *ambalo alilinunua muda huohuo*.
 ‘Paul had worn the jacket *that he just bought*.’
- b. Gari *nitakalolinunua* litakua la familia nzima.
 ‘The car *that I will buy* will be for the whole family.’

In (74a), the relative clause *ambalo alilinunua muda huohuo* ‘that he just bought’ offers the context for the definite interpretation. The relative clause helps the hearer to exclude any other jacket that Paul has. Accordingly, *jaketi* ‘the jacket’ is unique in the discourse context; it is the only one Paul had just bought. Likewise, in the second example, *nitakalolinunua* ‘that I will buy’ is a post-modifying relative clause that specifies only the car that will be bought by the speaker (cf. Radden & Dirven, 2007). Likewise, the car is unique in this discourse context.

The *-o-* of reference in (74a) and (74b) uniquely refers to *jaketi* ‘the jacket’ and *gari* ‘the car’, respectively, by virtue of being previously mentioned and modified by the relative clauses. The Swahili *-o-* of reference is also referred to as *kihusiano* (Loogman, 1965:105) or *o-form PRO* (Barrett-Keach, 1985:46). Semantically, this referential element denotes definiteness in Swahili (cf. Haddon, 1955; Perrot, 1969; Polomé, 1967). In addition, Lipps (2011) says that the *-o-* of reference indicates the topic in Swahili. Recall that the Bantu data described in this chapter indicate that the topic position favours definiteness (see also the next section for additional data from Swahili).

Extra-linguistically, native Swahili speakers can utilise available contextual information (via encyclopaedic knowledge) to refer to a unique entity in the context of interaction, as in the following example.

(75) *Nilikuwa harusini muda sio mrefu. **Bibi-harusi** alivaa nguo zenye rangi ya bluu.*

‘I’ve just been to a wedding. *The bride* wore blue.’

(Lyons, 1999:7 *emphasis added*)

In this example, the speaker has used *bibi-harusi* ‘the bride’ in the initial position of the second sentence because he/she assumes that the hearer understands that normally a wedding has a bride. Thus *bibi-harusi* ‘the bride’ is definite not because the bride is familiar or identifiable to the hearer, but because she is *unique* in the wedding context. This means although the hearer is not familiar with *bibi harusisi* ‘the bride’ and would not be able to identify her if he/she comes across her a day later, *bibi-harusi* ‘the bride’ is uniquely definite in the wedding context. Lyons also notes that for plural and mass nouns, definiteness is realised via *inclusiveness*. The following examples are adopted from Lyons (1999:10) and translated for illustration.

(76) a. *Tumetoka kumwangukia Yohana akishindana. **Malkia** aligawa **zawadi**.*
‘We have just been to see John race. The queen gave out *the prizes*.’

b. *Tunatoa zawadi mbalimbali, na **washindi** watakaribishwa London.*
‘We are offering several prizes, and *the winners* will be invited to London.’

In the examples above, *zawadi* ‘the prizes’ and *washindi* ‘the winners’ are not unique in the descriptions given. The reference is to all the prizes and all the winners (Lyons, 1999). Since the uniqueness criterion does not apply to plural and mass nouns, each group of objects (in bold text) is definite via inclusiveness. Note also that the definiteness readings of the Swahili objects above are not overtly marked by any morpheme. Their definite readings are understood based on the knowledge of their immediate contexts of interaction.

2.6.1.4 Word order

Word order can also be used to realise definiteness in Swahili.³⁷ Syntactically, Swahili has an SVO canonical order. This order can be altered due to several reasons, one of which is to realise definiteness, as in the following examples.

- (77) a. *Wanakijiji wa-me-jeng-a shule.* (SVO)
 Villagers they-prf-build- school
 ‘The villagers have built *a school*.’
- b. *Shule, wa-me-i-jeng-a wanakijiji.* (OVS)
 school they-prf-it-build villagers
 ‘The villagers have built *the school*.’

Example (77a) shows the Swahili canonical SVO order, whereas (77b) shows the derived OVS order. Vitale (1981) says that topicalisation can trigger the movement of an object from its canonical final position (cf. 77a) to the derived initial position (cf. 77b). Note that topicalisation lies “at the interface between syntax, semantics and discourse-pragmatics” (Valenzuela & McCormack, 2013:103). In Example (77b), the topicalised *shule* ‘the school’ is associated with given information, definiteness and emphasis. This observation concurs with that of Allen (1983), Lowrens (1981) and Zerbian (2007) that the topic position favours definiteness.³⁸

2.6.1.5 Inherently definite noun phrases in Swahili

Drawing on Croft’s (1990:112, 2003:130) proposed hierarchy that shows reference to person and definiteness in (78) below, personal pronouns and proper names are inherently definite (cf. Lyons, 1999; Rezai & Jabbari, 2010; Riedel, 2009a and Seidl & Dimitriadis, 1997) and are used in Swahili for definite entities, as instanced in (79).

- (78) First/second person pronouns > third person pronoun > proper names > human common noun > non-human animate common noun > inanimate common noun

³⁷ Word order is also reported to distinguish definite from indefinite entities in Polish (Ekiert, 2007; Świątek, 2014) and Turkish (Dikilitas & Altay, 2011). Whereas a referent in the clause final position is indefinite in these languages, the same referent in the clause initial position is definite.

³⁸ Duarte (2011:83) also reports that in Changana – a Bantu language spoken in Mozambique – when an object is moved to the beginning of a sentence, it receives the Changana definite particle ‘a’ and therefore becomes definite. Accordingly, Duarte remarks that the initial position realises definiteness in Changana.

- (79) *Petro alimuona Paulo.*
 Petro SM1-pst-OM1-see-fv Paul
 ‘Peter saw Paul.’

The proper names in the example above are definite since they refer to *unique* individuals in the discourse context. By mentioning Peter and Paul, the speaker refers to only the two people satisfying the description given since the hearer is familiar with them. Swahili personal pronouns also perform this function.

In addition, Swahili uses demonstratives to realise definiteness. As noted in Section 2.5.1.1, Swahili demonstratives can appear pre-nominally or post-nominally. Lyons (1999) notes that pre-nominal and post-nominal demonstratives in Swahili perform distinct pragmatic functions. Whereas post-nominal demonstratives distinguish distance and make anaphoric reference, pre-nominal (or deictic) demonstratives (such as *h-*, *h_o* and *-le*) show that the referent is the current topic (cf. Example 68 in Section 2.6.1.1). Pre-nominal demonstratives function akin to the definite article in English (Ashton, 1944; Dryer, 2005; Perrot, 1951).

In summary, this section has looked at the realisation of definiteness in Swahili based on Lyons’ criteria of familiarity, identifiability, uniqueness and inclusiveness. Regarding familiarity, definiteness can be established in anaphoric contexts by using demonstratives, SMs, personal pronouns and RMs. Concerning identifiability, the context of interaction can be used extra-linguistically to realise definiteness. Likewise, RMs, proper names and personal pronouns can be used for uniqueness and inclusiveness, in addition to the context of interaction. Furthermore, word order can be used to realise definiteness, in particular by moving the object noun to the beginning of the clause. In the following section, I describe the realisation of indefiniteness in Swahili.

2.6.2 Indefiniteness in Swahili

An indefinite object is neither familiar nor identifiable to the hearer. In addition, it is neither unique nor inclusive in the description given. It occurs in the first mention environment, especially when the speaker introduces it for the first time in the discourse. Such an entity can be either specific or non-specific. An NP is specific when the speaker has a particular referent in mind, while it is non-specific when the speaker does not have a particular referent in mind (Lyons, 1999). The following example shows how indefiniteness is indicated in Swahili.

- (80) [First mention context]
- a. *Lucy ameokota kitu.*
‘Lucy has picked up *something*.’
- b. *Paul amenunua shati.*
‘Paul has bought a shirt.’

In the examples above, the first mentions of *kitu* ‘something’ in (80a) and *shati* ‘a shirt’ in (80b) realise indefiniteness. Note that there are no special markers of indefiniteness in Swahili. The language does not grammaticalise indefiniteness. According to Krifka (1995), Swahili uses the post-nominal numeral *-moja* ‘one’ to introduce an indefinite entity into the discourse context, and then more information about the entity follows. Considering the realisation of specificity, note that the objects in (80) above are ambiguous between specific and non-specific readings. It is not clear whether the speaker has a particular *kitu* ‘thing’ or *shati* ‘shirt’ in mind. The ambiguity between specificity and non-specificity can be resolved by adding subsequent sentences, as in the following examples.

- (81) a. *Lucy ameokota kitu. Nilikitupa jana.* [+spec]
‘Lucy has picked up *something*. I threw it away yesterday.’
- b. *Paul amenunua shati. Utashangazwa na rangi yake.* [+spec]
‘Paul has bought *a shirt*. You will be surprised by its colour.’
- (82) a. *Lucy ameokota kitu. Nitakwenda kujiridhisha ni nini.* [-spec]
‘Lucy has picked up *something*. I will go to find out what it is.’
- b. *Paul amenunua shati. Natamani kufahamu rangi yake.* [-spec]
‘Paul has bought *a shirt*. I would like to know its colour.’

In (81), the speaker has specific referents in mind. The specificity readings in these examples are clearly understood when considering the subsequent sentences. Thus the object NPs *kitu* ‘something’ and *shati* ‘a shirt’ are specific because the speaker can describe them if asked to do so. On the contrary, in (82) the speaker does not have particular referents in mind and cannot describe them if asked to do so. Likewise, the non-specificity readings in (82) are understood via considering the subsequent sentences. Such sentences provide the context for (non-)specificity distinctions in Swahili.

It should also be noted that, contrary to the claims that specific objects are always object marked in Swahili, the verbal complexes in (81) do not have OMs. Still, the absence of OMs in these examples does not provide sufficient evidence to reject such claims. In this regard, it

is important to revisit the role of object marking in Swahili in relation to the realisation of definiteness and specificity. This is the focus of the following section.

2.6.3 Revisiting the role of object marking in Swahili

As noted in Section 2.4.3, the role of the OM in relation to definiteness and specificity in Swahili is a subject of considerable dispute in the literature. On the one hand, there are those scholars who regard it as a marker of definiteness as, for example, do Hinnebusch and Kirsner (1980) and Seidl and Dimitriadis (1997). On the other hand, there are those who regard it as a marker of specificity (among other functions). Proponents of this position include Cann et al. (2005), Riedel (2009a) and Woolford (1999). Midway between the diversity of viewpoints are the views of those, such as Keach (1995), who assume that the OM offers definite or specific interpretations for inanimate objects.

Such differences in opinion demonstrate that the role of object marking in relation to the realisation of definiteness and specificity in Swahili might not yet have been fully defined. In particular, specificity seems to have been considered as a condition limited to definite objects only. In fact, it also applies to indefinite objects (Gambarage, 2013; Lyons, 1999; Mojapelo, 2013). Despite considerable research in this realm, Poeta (2014) notes that well-defined conditions under which the Swahili OM occurs have yet to be properly identified. Additionally, nothing has been said on the role of object marking in Standard Swahili based on Lyons' (1999) semantic model. This model is considered appropriate for this study because it comprises all the contexts which are relevant to (in)definite and (non-)specific interpretations. Moreover, it considers definiteness beyond the familiarity of an object as presented in Section 2.3.1.

To explore the role of the OM in Swahili, I review two principal studies on Swahili object marking: one holds that the OM is an agreement marker, and it denotes specificity, among other things (specifically Riedel, 2009a), and the other holds that it is an incorporated pronoun, and it can 'optionally' denote a hearer-old (or familiar) referent (specifically Seidl & Dimitriadis, 1997). I examine the bases for the scholars' arguments to determine what exactly (between definiteness and specificity) the OM is associated with in Standard Swahili.

Two sources of these different opinions are identified in the literature: first, specificity is narrowly defined relative to its breadth in semantic literature (for example, in Riedel, 2009a); second, there was some misinterpretation of Swahili data (for example, in Seidl and

Dimitriadis (1997)). To begin with, I revisit the definitions of definiteness and specificity that were used in Riedel's study.

- (83) i. **Definiteness:** being uniquely identifiable or familiar to the hearer
(Ward & Birner, 1995, in Riedel, 2009a:48)
- ii. **Specificity:** having a particular referent (Sio, 2006, in Riedel, 2009a:48)

The definition of definiteness in (83i) mirrors Lyons' (1999) semantic framework as it includes familiarity, identifiability and uniqueness (and, of course, inclusiveness). The definition of specificity in (83ii) could however be improved by considering some crucial defining features of specificity (cf. Fodor & Sag, 1982; Lyons, 1999): One has to consider that, unlike definiteness (which involves the hearer's knowledge), specificity involves *only the speaker* having a particular referent *in mind* (cf. Examples 44, 45, 46 and 47 in Section 2.3.3. In this way, specificity clearly spans both definite and indefinite contexts.

The rest of this section is organised into three subsections: The first describes two conditions for the Swahili OM to satisfy to be regarded as marking specificity. The second examines the role of the OM in distinguishing (non-)specificity in definite contexts, drawing on Lyons' (1999) criteria of familiarity, identifiability and inclusiveness. The third examines its role in distinguishing (non-)specificity in indefinite contexts.

2.6.3.1 Conditions for a specificity marker

In (84) below, I formulate two conditions that the Swahili OM has to meet in this study to qualify as marking specificity (cf. Lyons, 1999):

- (84) i. It must not occur with non-specific definite objects.
- ii. It must be able to occur with inanimate specific objects in indefinite contexts; this means it should occur when only the speaker has a particular referent in mind.

To examine the occurrence of OMs in these conditions, I will use only inanimate objects to avoid any potential overlap of features between specificity and animacy. This is because the Swahili OM may carry a set of disjoint features (Allen, 1983; Woolford, 1999). According to Allen (1983), such features are animacy, specificity and focus. This is evident in Swahili where a non-specific human object may trigger an OM. The following example is illustrative.

- (85) *Nitam saidia mtu yeyote.*
Ni- ta- m- saidi-a mtu yeyote
 SM₁-fut-OM₁-help-fv person any
 ‘I will help any person.’ [non-specific person]

In this example, the speaker does not have a specific *mtu* ‘person’ in mind. Thus, the object is non-specific; still, it has received the OM, which has indeed been triggered by the animacy feature of the object. The inclusion of such animate objects in this examination would therefore confuse the analysis. For a more detailed discussion of the interaction between the OM and animacy in Swahili, I encourage the interested reader to consult Allen (1983), Wald (1979) and Woolford (1999). The following table depicts the two conditions for the Swahili OM to qualify as marking specificity, as formulated in (83i) and (83ii).

Table 2.6: Contexts for a specificity marker³⁹

Contexts	Specific	Non-Specific
Definite		No
Indefinite	Yes	

Table 2.6 indicates that the Swahili OM must not occur in the definite non-specific context but in the indefinite specific context for inanimate objects for it to qualify as marking specificity. If it meets these two conditions, then it marks specificity in Swahili.

2.6.3.2 Definite contexts

i) Familiarity

The Swahili OM can perform *an anaphoric function* by pointing to something that has already been mentioned in the previous discourse, as in the following examples.

- (86) a. *Jana nilinunua rula, ila Rose ameivunja.*
Jana ni-li-nunua rula, ila Rose a-me-i-vunj-a
 Yesterday SM₁-pst-buy ruler, but Rose SM-prf-OM₉-break-fv
 ‘Yesterday I bought a ruler, but Rose has broken it.’

³⁹ Note that only the two highlighted contexts in the table above are relevant to this examination because each shows either definiteness or specificity. The other two contexts are not relevant because (i) the “definite specific” context contains both features. Thus, one can hardly identify what (between definiteness and specificity) the Swahili OM realises; and (ii) the “indefinite non-specific” context does not contain such features. This absence does not offer relevant contexts to examine the role of the OM in relation to definiteness and specificity.

- b. *Nitanunua **shati**, halafu nitalifua.*
*Ni-ta-nunu-a **shati**, halafu ni-ta-li-fu-a*
 SM₁-fut-buy-fv **shirt**, then SM₁-fut-**OM**₅-wash-fv
 ‘I will buy *a shirt*, then I will wash *it*.’

The OMs bolded in (86a) and (86b) refer to *rula* ‘ruler’ and *shati* ‘shirt’ respectively. Such markers perform the anaphoric function of referring back to what has been mentioned in the preceding discourse. Hence, the NPs are definite in the second-mention context. The absence of object marking would render the objects in the subsequent mentions ambiguous between definite and indefinite readings, as illustrated in (87).

- (87) a. *Jana nilinunua **rula**, ila Rose amevunja.*
*Jana ni-li-nunua **rula**, ila Rose a-me-vunj-a*
 ‘Yesterday I bought a ruler, but Rose has broken that ruler/another thing.’
- b. *Nitanunua **shati**, halafu nitafua.*
*Ni-ta-nunu-a **shati**, halafu ni-ta-fu-a*
 ‘I will buy a shirt, then I will wash that shirt/another shirt.’

ii) *Identifiability*

The definiteness interpretation is also possible when the object being talked about is identifiable in the context of interaction. This means that the hearer does not necessarily have to be familiar with the object being talked about, but it is assumed that, based on encyclopaedic knowledge, he/she can identify the object in the context of interaction via matching it with some real world entity with which he/she is familiar (Lyons, 1999:6). The following example is slightly adapted from Lyons (1999:3) and translated for illustration.

- (88) *Ndio wamefika kutoka **New York**. Mamlaka iliichelewesha ndege.*
*Ndio wamefika kutoka **New York**. Mamlaka i-li-(i)-chelew-esh-a ndege*
 Just arrive from New York. Authority SM-pst-**OM**₄-delay-caus-fv *plane*
 ‘They just got in from *New York*. The authority delayed *the plane*.’

In Example (88), the object marker co-occurs with the definite *ndege* ‘plane’ although the speaker might not have a specific plane in mind. It is generally assumed that a long distance journey involves a plane. Accordingly, despite being definite in this discourse context, the plane is non-specific, since the speaker has no particular plane in mind at the time of the utterance and cannot describe it, if asked to do so. Yet the sentence above is also acceptable without the OM in Standard Swahili. The point with including the example here is to show that the OM is compatible with non-specific objects in Swahili.

iii) *Inclusiveness*

There are cases where definiteness does not involve uniqueness but does involve inclusiveness. This means some referents are understood as definite because they are included in the totality of things satisfying a given description. In such instances, such referents may or may not be specific. In the following example, the Swahili OM occurs with wh-questions for inanimate definite objects which are non-specific. In part, the definiteness readings in these examples are also due to the preterite which offers definite time reference (cf. Lyons, 1999:45). The following questions are appropriate in a context where the inquirer is definitely aware that many things were inclusively lost and some of them were found.

- (89) a. *Uliiona mikufu ipi?*
U-li-i-ona mikufu ipi?
 SM₁-pst-OM₄-see necklace which?
 ‘Which necklaces did you see?’
- b. *Ulivipata vitabu vipi?*
U-li-vi-pata vitabu vipi?
 SA₁-pst-OM₈-get book which?
 ‘Which books did you find?’ (Adapted from Riedel, 2009b:70)
- c. **Ulikipata nini?*
U-li-ki-pata nini?
 SA-pst-OM₇-get what?
 ‘What did you get?’ (Riedel, 2009b:70)

Note that the definite referents *mikufu* ‘necklaces’ and *vitabu* ‘books’, in (89a) and (89b) respectively, are non-specific. In (89a), for instance, both the speaker and the hearer are aware of the many necklaces that went missing. Hence, the necklaces are definite via inclusiveness. The speaker is also aware that some of the missing necklaces were found. Accordingly, he/she is asking which specific necklaces were found. The necklaces are non-specific in this definite context. The speaker does not have the specific necklaces that were found in mind at the time of utterance. This explanation applies to *vitabu* ‘books’ in (89b) as well. Both examples provide evidence that the OM can occur with inanimate non-specific objects in Swahili.

In contrast to the above, the OM in (89c) is unacceptable on morphological and semantic grounds. Morphologically, the Class 7 OM *ki* should agree with a Class 7 object noun. However, the wh-question marker *nini* ‘what’ does not belong to any particular noun class in Swahili. Since the two do not agree in (89c), the question is morphologically ill-formed. Semantically, *nini* ‘what’ is used to ask about indefinite entities. Recall that the data show

that the OM interacts with definite referents in Swahili. Accordingly, it can be said that the Swahili object marker in (89c) is incompatible with indefinite inanimate objects; this observation is supported further by the discussion in the next section.

The occurrence of the OMs with the inanimate non-specific objects in (88) and (89) offers evidence that the Swahili OM does not meet the first condition set out in (83i) that it must not occur with non-specific objects in definite contexts to be the marker of specificity.

I conclude this subsection with Cann et al.'s (2005) observation about object marking in Swahili. These scholars regard the OM as an anaphoric element, for both animate and inanimate referents. It should be noted that the anaphoric reference type offers definiteness via familiarity. Cann et al. (2005:300-301) observe that, when a referent is object marked, it carries "a background topic effect" by maintaining a full anaphoric status. Similarly, based on Prince's (1992) information structure, Seidl and Dimitriadis (1997) report that anaphoric and encyclopaedic referents are most likely to receive object markers than are indefinite objects in Swahili. I agree with this observation because it concurs with the data presented in this section (cf. Examples (88) and (89)). Having examined the role of the OM in relation to distinguishing specific from non-specific entities in definite contexts, in the following section, I examine its role in distinguishing specific from non-specific entities in indefinite contexts.

2.6.3.3 Indefinite contexts

As pointed out previously, specificity applies to both definite and indefinite contexts. It is therefore important to explore the position of the OM in specific and non-specific indefinite contexts. The primary aim of this examination is to attest, further, that object marking is not determined by specificity in Standard Swahili. In other words, specific objects are not always object marked in Swahili, unless they are definite (or animate). Consequently, (in)definite and (non-)specific interpretations are mainly provided by discourse-pragmatic context. The following sentences with objects in the first mention context are instructive.

i) *Specific objects*

- (90) *Ninakwenda kununua suti kesho. Utashangazwa na rangi yake.*
Ni-na-kwenda ku-ϕ-nunu-a suti kesho. U-ta-shanga-z-w-a na rangi yake.
 SM₁-prs-go to-buy-fv suit tomorrow. SM₁-fut-astonish-caus-pass-fv with colour its
 ‘I am going to buy a suit tomorrow. You will be astonished by its colour.’
- (91) *Nimenunua simu. Nitakuonesha kesho.*
Ni-me-ϕ-nunua simu. Ni-ta-ku-on-esh-a kesho
 SM₁-prf. buy phone. SM₁-fut-OM₁-show-caus-fv tomorrow
 ‘I have bought a phone. I will show it to you tomorrow.’
- (92) *Nimepokea barua. Kesho ninahitajika kwenye kikao.*
Ni-me-ϕ-poke-a barua. Kesho ni-na-hitaji-k-a kwenye kikao
 SM₁-prf receive-fv letter. Tomorrow SM₁-prs –need-appl-fv in meeting
 ‘I have received a letter. I should attend a/the meeting tomorrow.’

The examples in (90) to (92) contain specific objects in their respective first clauses. The speaker has a particular *suti* ‘suit’, *simu* ‘phone’ and *barua* ‘letter’ in mind, and he/she has mentioned them for the first time in the discourse context; hence, the objects are specific in their indefinite contexts. These examples show clearly that there is no object marker needed for the specific objects. In fact, adding an OM renders the sentences unacceptable in such indefinite contexts.

The above observation concurs with Seidl and Dimitriadis (1997) in so far as they argue that the Swahili OM can never occur in the first mention of inanimate objects because, at this particular time, the objects are still indefinite. Indeed, the OM has apparently failed to meet the second condition highlighted in (83ii) that it must be able to occur with inanimate specific objects in indefinite contexts to be marking specificity in Swahili. This is evidence that the Swahili OM does not realise specificity but co-refers to definite referents. In this sense, the OM is limited to definite objects in Swahili, unless such objects are animate.

To summarise this section, the analysis of Swahili data in this section shows that, when the OM occurs with common inanimate nouns, it offers definite readings. The data also show that the OM occurs with non-specific definite objects. This occurrence is evident in the examples of definiteness via identifiability and inclusiveness, in particular, where the speaker does not have a particular referent in mind. As for identifiability, the objects are understood as definite if they can be identified in the context of interaction. Concerning inclusiveness, the objects are understood as definite when included in the totality of things. In instances of both identifiability and inclusiveness, object marking is possible because the speaker assumes that

the hearer can rely on situational knowledge to understand the object being described. Moreover, the data discussed reveal that the Swahili OM cannot occur with inanimate specific objects in indefinite contexts. This observation provides more evidence that this agreement marker does not mark specificity but interacts with definite objects in the language. Accordingly, specific readings in Swahili are provided by the context of interaction.

2.7 General summary and predictions

2.7.1 Summary

This chapter has shown that while English realises grammatical definiteness via its article system, Swahili realises pragmatic definiteness at the interface between morphology, syntax and the context of interaction. Morphologically, Swahili uses subject markers, object markers, deictic demonstratives, anaphoric demonstratives, possessives, personal pronouns and proper nouns. Syntactically, it uses relative clause post-modifications for uniqueness and word order permutations (for definiteness in general). With respect to realising indefiniteness, first mention contexts have been noted to fulfil this function. As for specificity, Swahili simply relies on the context of interaction. In contrast to the claims in some literature that specific referents are obligatorily object marked in Swahili, the re-examination of the Swahili OM has shown that it cannot occur with indefinite inanimate objects. This provides additional evidence that the OM does not mark specificity but interacts with definite objects in Swahili. The argument advanced here is that, whereas definiteness is realised at the interface between morpho-syntactic and semantic-pragmatic domains, specificity is pragmatically inferred in Swahili. The following table summarises the differences and similarities noted between Swahili and English in realising (in)definiteness.

Table 2.7: Differences and similarities between English and Swahili in realising (in)definiteness

	FEATURE	ENGLISH	SWAHILI
A	Morpho-syntactic differences and similarities		
i)	Bare count nouns	No	Yes
ii)	Position of adjectives	Pre-nominal	Post-nominal
iii)	Presence of articles	Yes	No
iv)	Position of determiners	They occur pre-nominally.	They normally occur post-nominally, except for the distributive determiner <i>kila</i> ‘every/each’ and deictic demonstratives.
v)	Presence of DP	Yes	No

vi)	Position of genitive pronouns	They occur pre-nominally, as in <i>his car</i> but not <i>car his</i>	They occur post-nominally, as in <i>gari lake</i> ‘his car’ [<i>gari</i> ‘car’, <i>lake</i> ‘his’]
vii)	Number of deictic demonstratives	There are only two deictic demonstratives: <i>this</i> (for a referent which is close to the speaker) and <i>that</i> (for a referent which is further away from the speaker) (Fillmore, 1966:221)	There are three deictic demonstratives: <i>h-</i> (for a proximal referent), <i>h_o</i> (for a medial referent) and <i>-le</i> (for a distal referent) (Leonard, 1995:273)
viii)	Generic nouns	Can be preceded by <i>the</i> , <i>a(n)</i> , or the zero article	Are always bare
ix)	Relative clauses as post-modifiers of nouns	Yes	Yes
x)	Presence of SMs	No	Yes, they realise definite subjects.
xi)	Presence of OMs	No	Yes, they occur with definite objects.
B Semantic-pragmatic differences and similarities			
xii)	Can realise definiteness via:		
	-Demonstratives	Yes	Yes
	-Personal pronouns	Yes	Yes
	-Possessives	Yes	Yes
	-Proper nouns	Yes	Yes
	-Universal quantifiers	Yes	Yes
xiii)	Making anaphoric reference	It normally uses the definite article after the first mention of a referent.	It normally uses anaphoric demonstratives, SMs, OMs.
xiv)	Type of definiteness	Grammatical definiteness	Semantic/Pragmatic definiteness
xv)	Discourse markers of specificity	No, except for <i>this</i> in colloquial English.	No

2.7.2 Predictions

Drawing on the differences and similarities presented in Table 2.7, one is in a good position to identify what Swahili-speaking EFL learners have to learn to be able to use the English article system appropriately. One can also predict what some of the non-target properties of their EFL use might be. Swahili-speaking EFL learners have to learn a number of things in relation to (in)definiteness distinctions in English, as described below.

First, due to the absence of articles in Swahili, the learners must acquire the syntactic DP category of English. At the same time, they have to learn that articles do not precede all

English nouns. They also have to learn the appropriate distribution of articles and the grammaticalisation of definiteness in English. This means they have to distinguish the grammatical realisation of definiteness in English from the semantic-pragmatic realisation of definiteness in Swahili. Accordingly, the prediction is that: (i) one of the features of the EFL use of Swahili-speaking learners will be incorrect article omission and (because learners' L2 use develops with exposure to the target L2), it is also predicted that elementary level learners will incorrectly omit articles more frequently than intermediate level learners will. In addition, based on the assumption that EFL learners with a [-ART] L1 associate *the* with specificity (cf. Section 3.2) at least at the beginning of EFL acquisition, the elementary level learners are predicted to overuse *the* more than *a(n)* in indefinite specific contexts. (ii) Drawing on the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) (cf. Section 3.3), intermediate level learners are predicted to fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in their use of articles. They are assumed to have a basic knowledge of the English article system at that stage but might fail to use it for (in)definiteness distinctions. This means they will use the article system for both definiteness and specificity.

Second, the learners also have to learn that, unlike in Swahili where adjectives follow nouns, in English, adjectives precede nouns. According to the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA) (cf. Section 3.5), EFL learners with [-ART] L1s misanalyse English articles as adjectives (Trenkic, 2007,2008). Consequently, they omit articles more often before adjectivally modified nouns than before non-modified nouns. However, the SMA was proposed based on data collected among L1 Serbian learners of English, and Serbian adjectives precede nouns. Conversely, Swahili adjectives follow nouns. In this regard, the Swahili-speaking EFL learners are predicted not to conflate English articles with adjectives. Consequently, they are predicted not to omit articles more often in adjectivally modified nouns than in non-modified nouns in their EFL use.

Third, considering the position of demonstratives, the learners have to learn that English demonstratives only occur pre-nominally, although Swahili demonstratives can occur both pre-nominally and post-nominally (Alexiadou et al., 2007:109ff.; Givón, 1976:157ff.). Since the prenominal (or deictic) demonstratives of Swahili occupy the same position as that occupied by the definite article in English, the learners are predicted to prefer using the English distal demonstrative *that* to using *the*, particularly in the picture description task.

Fourth, given that the Swahili SM is identical to the English pronoun, it is likely that the Swahili-speaking EFL learners in the present study will produce the ‘NP+PRON+Verb’ pattern in their oral production data due to L1 transfer since the ‘NP+SM+Verb’ pattern is widely used for definiteness in Swahili. Having highlighted these predictions, the next chapter presents a review of literature on the L2 acquisition of English articles.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review literature on the second and foreign language (L2) acquisition of articles to provide the background and context of the present study for the reader to understand the different theoretical perspectives on the L2 acquisition of articles and to understand the potential contribution the present study can make to the field. I review competing perspectives on the L2 acquisition of articles. For instance, some earlier studies were grounded in Bickerton's (1981) semantic model (Huebner, 1983; Master, 1987; Thomas, 1989). It was reported that both L1 and L2 learners of English overuse *the* in indefinite specific contexts, and that their production is characterised by the omission of articles at the initial stages of acquisition. I describe the model in Section 3.2. Later on, new perspectives emerged upon closer inspection of the data and findings of earlier studies (Ionin, Ko and Wexler, 2003, 2004; Trenkic, 2007; Tryzna, 2009) and led to debates on what exactly the source of L2 learners' non-target-like performance with respect to articles is and on what processes characterise L2 learners' use of articles.

There are those who argue that non-target-like performance in article usage by L2 learners is due to accessing more than one parameter setting simultaneously during the initial stages of interlanguage (IL) development. Specifically, learners with L1s which do not have articles learning L2 English are assumed to fluctuate between the two settings of the Article Choice Parameter (ACP) by associating the definite article with specificity and the indefinite article with non-specificity (Ionin, Ko & Wexler, 2004; Sarko, 2009; Tryzna, 2009). I describe the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) in Section 3.3 with reference to the ACP. There are also those who claim that the omission of L2 inflectional morphemes does not imply that L2 learners have not acquired the correct abstract syntactic representation for the L2, but rather that the learners cannot map them to the correct overt morpho-syntactic representation (Lardière, 2005; Robertson, 2000; White, 2003a). This phenomenon is referred to as the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH). I discuss this hypothesis in Section 3.4.

Other researchers argue that incorrect article usage results from a grammatical deficit. Some of these scholars claim that only features and categories that are in the learner's L1 will be accessible to them in L2 acquisition beyond the critical period (cf. Section 1.7). If the L1 and L2 are different, then, the learner will not be able to reset the parameter to its target L2 setting

beyond the critical period (Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Hawkins, 2001). Another claim associated with the so-called Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA) is that L2 learners whose L1s do not have articles omit articles in the L2 because of incorrectly analysing them as adjectives (Trenkic, 2007, 2008). I review this account in Section 3.5. I start this chapter by reviewing some early studies.

3.2 Early Studies on the acquisition of articles

3.2.1 Huebner (1983)

The seminal study by Huebner (1983) employed Bickerton's (1981) semantic classification of noun phrases (NPs) and categorised them into four semantic types so as to examine the acquisition of articles in relation to Specific Referent [\pm SR] and Hearer's Knowledge [\pm HK]. The following table indicates the categorisation of NPs according to Huebner (1983).

Table 3.1 Semantic classification of noun phrases

Category	Article	Environment	Examples
TYPE 1 [-SR, +HK]	<i>the</i> , <i>a(n)</i> , \emptyset	Generics	- <i>The preferred food of the panther is the gazelle</i> - <i>\emptyset lions move in packs of 5-10.</i>
TYPE 2 [+SR, +HK]	<i>the</i>	Unique, previously mentioned, or physically present referent	- <i>What is the circumference of the earth?</i> - <i>I met a girl. The girl was tall.</i> - <i>The air in this town is not very clean.</i>
TYPE 3 [+SR, -HK]	<i>a(n)</i> , \emptyset	First-mention, referents or those after existential <i>have</i> or <i>there is/are</i>	- <i>Kindly give me a cup of tea.</i> - <i>I often take \emptyset juice with my supper.</i> - <i>There was an onion in the pot.</i>
TYPE 4 [-SR, -HK]	<i>a(n)</i> , \emptyset	Equative NPs or those in negation, question or irrealis mode	- <i>I don't have a car.</i> - <i>Millidon was a man of pride.</i>

Adapted from Lu (2001)

Using the categorisation above, Huebner examined how a 23-year old participant, namely "Ge", used articles for each semantic type; in particular, he examined how the adult learner distinguished the use of *the* in relation to Specific Referent [\pm SR] and Hearer's Knowledge [\pm HK].

The study had two objectives: first, to investigate how the article system develops in the IL grammar of an adult learner of English, and second, to determine the differences between different methods of investigating developmental orders. The participant was speaking L1

Hmong and was acquiring English as an L2. At the start of data collection, he was a beginner in terms of his proficiency in English.

It was a longitudinal study whereby Huebner collected data over 54 weeks, at a three-week interval. Huebner tape-recorded the participant's narratives. Employing Bickerton's model, Huebner recorded the appearance of the definite article *the*⁴⁰ in the participant's production in both obligatory and non-obligatory contexts.

During the one year of observation, Huebner (1983) noted that Ge went through six stages in the use of articles. First, the participant employed *the* in [+SR, +HK] (i.e. specific definite) contexts. Second, the participant overgeneralised *the* to all referents (*the*-flooding). Third, there was an exclusion of *the* from [-SR, -HK] (i.e. non-specific indefinite) contexts. Fourth, the participant limited the use of *the* to [+HK] (i.e. definite) referents. At this stage, the participant became aware that *the* primarily denotes definiteness but not specificity. Fifth, there was hypothesis testing whereby the participant used *the* for [+SR, -HK] (i.e. specific indefinite) referents. Finally, the participant rejected the hypothesis in stage five and returned to the correct use of *the* for [+HK] (i.e. definite) referents. Huebner (1983) did not claim this path to be universal, but these results reflect the systematic nature of language acquisition.

3.2.2 Master (1987)

Master's (1987) work is among the influential classical studies in the acquisition of the article system of English. The main objective of the study was to investigate how articles are acquired by speakers of L1s with articles (henceforth "[+ART] languages") and by speakers of L1s without articles (henceforth "[-ART] languages").

Twenty (20) learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) were involved in a longitudinal study. Among them, there were speakers of [-ART] L1s (Russian, Chinese and Japanese) and speakers of [+ART] L1s (German and Spanish). All of them were immigrants into the USA. Their ages ranged from 13 to 93 years. These participants were involved in informal interviews with each other to elicit data of their spontaneous production.

The study yielded several important findings. The first is that the acquisition order of articles differed from one learner to another, depending on a learner's L1. The second observation

⁴⁰ Although Huebner used the word *da* throughout his publication to refer to the way in which the participant pronounced *the*, I will simply use *the* here as the participant's pronunciation is irrelevant to my study.

was that \emptyset was prominent at the onset of language learning. Third, *the* emerged early as *the*-flooding occurred in all environments. Fourth, the acquisition of *a/an* was delayed compared to that of *the*, for L2 learners (of English) with [-ART] L1s. Master concludes that, at the elementary levels of English proficiency, the L1 has a remarkable influence on how learners use articles in L2 English.

3.2.3 Thomas (1989)

Thomas (1989) investigated differences and similarities in the order of article acquisition among adults learning L2 English. Some of these learners' L1s have articles while some do not. Thomas wanted to see whether both types of learners associated *the* with [+SR] (i.e. specific referents) but not with [+HK] (i.e. definite referents). Thomas wanted to determine, specifically, if these learners would overuse *the* in the first mention [+SR,-HK] contexts.

This cross-sectional study employed 30 adult learners aged between 24 and 46 years. They were from nine different L1 groups. The learners with [+ART] L1s were one Greek, one German, two Spanish, two Italians and one French, and those with [-ART] L1s were three Koreans, 13 Japanese, and six Chinese. The researcher divided the participants into three groups based on their English proficiency. There were 11 low proficiency level learners, nine intermediate proficiency level learners and 10 high proficiency level learners.

The respondents were later paired within each of the two groups: [+ART] L1 learners and [-ART] L1 learners. Then, they were engaged in a paired story-telling task. They received eight pairs of pictures and then later received another set of pictures, as follows: Each pair of respondents was presented with the eight pairs of pictures. One respondent was required to tell a story to the other regarding what the pictures show. The narration made the speaker apply articles unconsciously when referring to the objects in the pictures. The listener was told to listen very carefully in order to understand the narrations. Later, Thomas presented test and distracter pictures and required the listeners to judge which picture the speaker was describing.

Thomas' (1989) findings indicated that the participants with [-ART] L1s omitted articles in their production. This finding concurs with that of Master (1987), and it can be attributed to the transfer of their L1s' bare NP structures. Additionally, regardless of the nature of their L1s, both groups overused *the* in indefinite specific contexts. The learners seemed to associate *the* with specificity. This finding also concurs with Huebner's (1983) findings. The findings by early studies provided some evidence for EFL/ESL learners' access to Universal

Grammar (UG). In line with the development of the assumption that there are universal principles and parameters with binary settings (Chomsky, 1981; 1986), and drawing on the early studies' finding that L2 learners seem to associate *the* with specificity, more recently, Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2003, 2004) proposed the Article Choice Parameter (ACP), which offers two settings: definiteness and specificity. According to these scholars, the ACP governs overall article use. I describe the ACP in the following section.

3.3 The Article Choice Parameter and the Fluctuation Hypothesis

It is widely documented in the literature that article systems in the world's languages denote either definiteness or specificity. For instance, the English article system is used to distinguish what is definite from what is indefinite, whereas the Samoan article system distinguishes what is specific from what is non-specific (Hawkins, 2004; Lyons, 1999). From these observations, Ionin et al. (2004) proposed the ACP to account for errors of substitution among learners of L2s with articles. The ACP offers two settings:

The Article Choice Parameter

A language that has two articles distinguishes between them in one of the following ways:

The definiteness setting: Articles are distinguished on the basis of definiteness

The specificity setting: Articles are distinguished on the basis of specificity (Ionin et al., 2004:12).

The following tables show article groupings cross-linguistically as postulated by the ACP.

Table 3.2 Article groupings cross-linguistically

(a) By definiteness (e.g. English)			(b) By specificity (e.g. Samoan)		
	+Definite	-Definite		+Definite	-Definite
+Specific	<i>the</i>	<i>a/an</i>	+Specific	<i>le</i>	
-Specific			-Specific	<i>se</i>	

(Ionin et al., 2004:13)

As presented in the tables above, on the one hand, Table (3.2a) shows that the English article system distinguishes between what is definite and what is indefinite. This means such articles do not make (non-)specificity distinctions in English. On the other hand, Table (3.2b) shows that the Samoan article system distinguishes between what is specific and what is non-specific. Likewise, such articles cannot make (in)definiteness distinctions in Samoan.

If one assumes that L2 learners access both settings of the ACP, as Ionin et al. (2004) do, then L2 learners are expected to fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP while acquiring articles. Due to this, the FH was proposed.

The Fluctuation Hypothesis

- a) L2 learners have full access to UG principles and parameters.
- b) L2 learners fluctuate between different parameter settings until the input leads them to set the parameter to its appropriate value. (Ionin et al., 2004:16)

This hypothesis stems from the assumption that learners have full access to the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP. Learners with L1s without articles are expected to produce substitution errors in using articles. For example in English, when the learners access the specificity setting, they would use *the* in indefinite specific [-def, +spec] contexts and *a(n)* in [+def, -spec] contexts; this means the FH was proposed under the assumption that L2 learners associate *the* with specificity and *a(n)* with non-specificity.⁴¹ Additionally, if they access the right setting, they would not fluctuate. They would therefore use *the* for definite referents and *a/an* for indefinite referents. The FH predicts that L2 learners' errors are systematic, and that they reflect possible UG parameter settings. Therefore, the learners would fluctuate between definiteness and specificity during their initial stages of IL development until they get sufficient L2 input for them to switch the parameter to the required setting. In the following section, I review relevant studies grounded in the ACP.

3.3.1 Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004)

Ionin et al. (2004) conducted a study examining article semantics in L2 acquisition of English among L1 Russian and L1 Korean speakers. The study was guided by the assumption “that there is parametric variation in the lexical specifications of articles” (Ionin et al., 2004:3). This means that articles can realise either definiteness or specificity depending on the language, for instance, as explained above, English articles can realise definite and indefinite referents, whereas Samoan articles can realise specific and non-specific referents.

The primary aim of the study was to test the FH by using L1 speakers of Russian and Korean. Both languages do not have articles. According to Ionin et al.'s (2004) FH, *the* would be

⁴¹ However, it will be noted later in this section that Tryzna (2009) re-examined the basic constructs of this original ACP and presented evidence that it is problematic. The scholar then proposed a reduced ACP whereby the FH should be examined when L2 learners use *the* interchangeably with *an* only in [-def, +spec] contexts.

overused in indefinite specific but not in indefinite non-specific contexts. Likewise, *a/an* would be overused in definite non-specific but not in definite specific contexts. These scholars predicted that, at the initial stages of acquisition, such learners would fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP because they have full access to UG, and they have limited input to enable them to set the definiteness setting of English as required.

The participants in the study were 70 adult L2 learners of English: 30 L1 Russian and 40 L1 Korean speakers, and both groups had access to formal instruction in English before arriving in the USA as late adolescents or adults. The study also included 14 English native speaker controls.

The tasks used in the study included: a forced choice elicitation task (FCET), a written production task and the written portion of the Michigan test for L2 proficiency. The 14 control participants responded to the FCET only. Structurally, the elicitation task had 76 short English dialogues. Each target sentence in the dialogue had an article missing. Thus the learner was forced to choose between *a*, *the* and – ‘zero’. There were four items per context type. The number of indefinite contexts equalled the number of definite contexts. The following is an example of the dialogues used in the study:

- (93) [-definite, +specific]: No scope interactions, explicit speaker knowledge
Meeting on a street
Roberta: Hi, William! It’s nice to see you again. I didn’t know that you were
in Boston.
William: I am here for a week. *I am visiting (a, the, —) friend from college—
his name is Sam Brown, and he lives in Cambridge now.*
(Ionin et al., 2004:23)

The dialogue above instantiates an indefinite specific context because the speaker has a specific referent in mind, but the hearer does not know the referent. I have included only one example here, but the FCET contained both specific and non-specific contexts in transparent and opaque contexts (for definite contexts). In addition, simple definite contexts were included. Likewise, it included specific and non-specific contexts in transparent and opaque contexts (for indefinite contexts). There were also simple indefinite contexts (see Ionin et al. (2004:22-24), for relevant examples).

Results indicated that the difference in the use of *the* between specific and non-specific definite contexts was highly significant. The researchers noted that both L1 Korean and L1 Russian respondents overused *the* in [-def, +spec] contexts and *a(n)* in [+def, -spec] contexts. Ionin et al. (2004) concluded that learners with L1s without articles go through a fluctuation stage at the initial stages of L2 acquisition. The same conclusion was arrived at by Ionin and Wexler (2003), Ionin, Zubizarreta and Philippov (2009), Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) and Schwartz and Rovner (2014). This conclusion supports their claim that L2 learners have full access to UG principles and parameter settings. In explaining the fluctuation noted, the researchers claim that it cannot be ascribed to L1 transfer.

While Ionin et al. (2004) opened up more avenues for research by proposing the ACP, Pongpaioj (2007) and Trenkic (2008), however, noted that the material for testing the FH was routinely operationalised for specificity. Speakers in the test items revealed acquaintance with the referent (e.g. name: *Sam Brown*; where he lives: *Cambridge*) rather than ‘the intent to refer’ (Trenkic, 2008:3). Trenkic noted that Ionin et al. (2004) incorrectly conflated the intent to refer with information explicitly stated by the speakers. Consequently, Trenkic (2008) remarks that the findings of all the previous studies were highly affected by the way specificity was operationalised in their study (see also Jian (2013), for some findings supporting Trenkic (2008)). In addition, Trenkic suggested that Ionin et al. (2004) could use an oral production task to test their hypothesis for oral production, as well. In this case, the study would offer a more comprehensive picture of learners’ early L2 use and the validity of the FH.

3.3.2 García-Mayo (2009)

A study by García-Mayo (2009) aimed at testing the FH. It also focused on testing learners’ tendency to produce *the* more accurately than *a* as reported in many studies (for example in Master (1987), reviewed above). Data were collected from native speakers of Spanish. The study was guided by the hypothesis that the Spanish learners of English would not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity because Spanish has articles. Therefore, it was assumed that the learners could easily distinguish the two settings, definiteness and specificity, in their use of English articles.

The study employed 60 adult speakers of Spanish and 15 English native speaker controls. Using the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT), the scholar grouped the respondents into a low intermediate group (17 female and 13 male students, 18-24 years) and an advanced group

(14 male and 16 female students, 21-30 years). The native speaker group was comprised of six females and nine males aged between 20 and 31 years.

The data for the study were again collected using Ionin et al.'s (2004) FCET. The test was conducted in a classroom setting for all the participants. The learners were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire, which prompted them to give their background information. The placement test was administered last. The participants were given 90 minutes for the task, but it took them less than 60 minutes to complete it.

Results showed that the low intermediate group used *the* in the indefinite context considerably more when a given NP was specific than when it was non-specific. The results concurred with those reported in Ionin et al. (2004).

As regards the advanced group, only one learner allowed *the* in indefinite contexts when the NP was specific. Unlike the low intermediate learners who never allowed *a* to have a definite interpretation, two advanced learners allowed *a* to have a definite interpretation, particularly when the NP was non-specific.

García-Mayo reports that there were no differences in the accuracy between *the* and *a/an* among the advanced proficiency L1 Spanish learners of English. (However, 'directionality' was clearly noted among the low proficiency learners in her study.) Generally, the learners demonstrated high accuracy in the usage of articles. Fluctuation was not evident in the data. This observation supports Ionin, Zubizarreta and Maldonado's (2008) findings that L1 transfer has a significant role in L2 learning. The participants in García-Mayo (2009) transferred their knowledge of their L1 Spanish article system to L2 English.

3.3.3 Zdorenko and Paradis (2008)

Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) is a longitudinal study. It used a corpus of narratives from 17 English L2 children who, at the outset, were 5.4 years with L1s without articles (Chinese, Japanese and Korean) and L1s with articles (Arabic, Romanian and Spanish).

These scholars aimed at examining L1 transfer as well as testing the FH. They also wanted to compare their findings with the findings obtained from adult L2 learners by previous studies. These scholars used a picture book (from the Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument (ENNI) project) to elicit narratives (cf. Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008:237). The book had a set of cohesive series of stories. The stories differed in complexity. The children were required to

describe the pictures. The experimenter made sure that (s)he could not see the book; thus, only the children could see the book. Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) did this deliberately to guarantee that the children could not point to the referents and could not assume that there was shared knowledge of the referent between the speaker and the hearer.

The narratives were analysed based on the instances where *a*, *the* and *zero-article* were used with nouns denoting new referents and with nouns denoting referents already mentioned in the story. In their study, Zdorenko and Paradis considered the use of articles only with singular common nouns. This means personal pronouns, deictic pronouns and proper names were not considered in the analysis. In contrast to Ionin (2003) and Ionin et al.'s (2004) use of the FCET⁴², these scholars used a story telling task. Considering the definition of specificity by Ionin (2003:56) as a “speaker’s intent to refer to an individual possessing a noteworthy property”, all the nouns included in the story were specific. Therefore, fluctuation was judged based on the misuse of *the* in the first mention of referents in the pictures.

Coding was done reflecting contextual appropriateness of articles as shown in the following responses taken from Zdorenko and Paradis (2008:238ff.):

- (94) incorrect *the* in indefinite context
 *EXP: how do you start?
 *CHI: # mm # **the** elephant throw **the** ball. (should be *an elephant* and *a ball*)
 (JHHN 5;11)
- correct *a* in indefinite context
 *CHI: and then uh the other rabbit called **a** ambulance. (meaning *a doctor*)
 *EXP: an ambulance?
 *CHI: yeah. and then um um grabbed his hand. (SBST 7;01)
- incorrect \emptyset and correct *the* in definite context
 *CHI: so \emptyset giraffe saw and called **the** lifeguard. (*the* is appropriate because the swimming pool and the diving board have been mentioned)
 (CNDX 8;09)
- correct *the* in definite context
 *CHI: first there are two cross-eyed animals at the pool.
 *CHI: one was elephant ... who had a very fat body.
 *CHI: and the elephant, the female elephant was bouncing up and down her
 ball (CNDX 8;09)

⁴² Typically the FCET has pre-set contexts for, say, (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity.

In their analyses, Zdorenko and Paradis considered null articles incorrect because proper names were not part of the analysis. Results indicated that the learners fluctuated in using the article system. There were also few instances of L1 influence. Thus, Zdorenko and Paradis concluded that, for their [+ART] L1 learners, fluctuation overrode L1 transfer, instead of the other way around. Their findings concurred with Paradis (2007) that L1 transfer appears less evident in child L2 acquisition than in adult L2 acquisition. Additionally, the learners demonstrated a higher accuracy rate in *the* than in *a/an*. There were also errors of omission at the initial stages of data collection but they seemed to decrease as the study continued.

3.3.4 Ionin, Zubizarreta and Maldonado (2008)

Ionin, Zubizarreta and Maldonado (2008) examined three sources of linguistic knowledge in the acquisition of articles by L2 learners of English. They examined the roles of L1 transfer, L2 input and UG. In particular, they examined patterns of article usage among speakers of an L1 with articles (i.e. Spanish) and an L1 without articles (i.e. Russian).

The study had two competing hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that fluctuation overrides transfer. This means both the [+ART] L1 Spanish and [-ART] L1 Russian learners would fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in their choice of English articles, that is, they would overuse *the* and *a* interchangeably in [-def, +spec] and [+def, -spec] contexts respectively. The second hypothesis was that transfer overrides fluctuation. This means while the [+ART] L1 Spanish learners of L2 English would transfer article semantics from Spanish to English (hence, no fluctuation), the [-ART] L1 Russian learners of L2 English would demonstrate fluctuation.

The participants for the study consisted of 23 adult speakers of Russian, aged between 22-72 years (mean age 43) and 24 adult Spanish speakers, aged between 19-60 years (mean age 35). The study also included six English native speaker control participants, aged between 19-25 years (mean age 22).

The study used both a cloze test and an elicitation test. The cloze test comprised four passages, each with 30 blanks, which made 120 blanks in total. The elicitation task comprised 60 short dialogues, each of which targeted a certain term. The task did not give the learners a list of items to choose from; it only included blanks where the learners had to supply words they thought were appropriate. The target items specifically aimed at eliciting articles with singular NPs. Three categories of six items aimed to elicit *the* while the other three categories

of six items aimed at eliciting *a*. The learners were grouped into three levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced, according to their scores on the cloze test.

Group results indicated that the English native speakers performed as expected. They supplied *the* in all definite contexts and *a* in almost all indefinite ones. The Spanish and Russian groups' results were quite different. L1 Russian speakers overused *the* in [-def, +spec] contexts and overused *a* in [+def, -spec] contexts, exactly as the scholars predicted in the second hypothesis (i.e. where transfer is claimed to override fluctuation). The L1 Russian (but not Spanish) speakers fluctuated between the semantic universals of definiteness and specificity in English because their L1 does not have articles. The scholars predicted that, according to the FH, the learners would fluctuate until they receive sufficient input to recognise that English articles do not distinguish a specific referent from a non-specific one. The L1 Spanish speakers were more accurate on the non-specific definite contexts than on the specific definite contexts set in the tests.

To examine the effect of proficiency level on fluctuation, only the Russian group was used because they demonstrated significant fluctuation. The effect was remarkable in [+def, -spec] and [-def, +spec] contexts – the contexts where fluctuation between definiteness and specificity always manifests (according to the original ACP). In these contexts, it was noted that the rate of fluctuation changes according to proficiency levels as shown in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 for *the* and *a* respectively:

Table 3.3: L1 Russian speakers: % the use by proficiency level

	[+def, +spec]	[+def, -spec]	[-def, +spec]	[-def, -spec]
Beginners	88%	79%	29%	8%
Intermediate	93%	87%	27%	3%
Advanced	97%	90%	13%	0%

Table 3.4: L1 Russian speakers: % a use by proficiency level

	[+def, +spec]	[+def, -spec]	[-def, +spec]	[-def, -spec]
Beginners	8%	21%	67%	92%
Intermediate	5%	13%	72%	95%
Advanced	3%	10%	87%	100%

(Ionin, Zubizarreta & Maldonado, 2008:566, **emphasis added**)

The percentage scores above show that the participants' performance improved with the increase in proficiency. This means that the rate of fluctuation decreased with the increase in

proficiency. Still, a caveat is in order: the data did not show significant difference in the performance between the three proficiency groups. In my opinion, the lack of significant difference might have been due to the small sample size of only 23 L1 Russian speakers.

It was evident in the data that the Spanish speakers used English articles for definiteness, whereas the Russian speakers fluctuated between definiteness and specificity. Due to the noted differences in performance, the scholars argued that the L1 plays a role in learning an L2. Likewise, the scholars argue that L2 input and UG play crucial roles in the acquisition of an L2. To justify their argument, Ionin et al. (2008) say that on the one hand, the Spanish speakers outperformed the Russian speakers because Spanish has articles whereas Russian does not. Hence, the learners' learning of articles proceeds via a combination of access to UG and input processing. Therefore, UG generally offers possible patterns for languages, in the form of parameter settings, and then learners with L1s without articles fluctuate between the two settings, until the input allows them to switch the relevant parameter to the appropriate setting for the language they are learning.

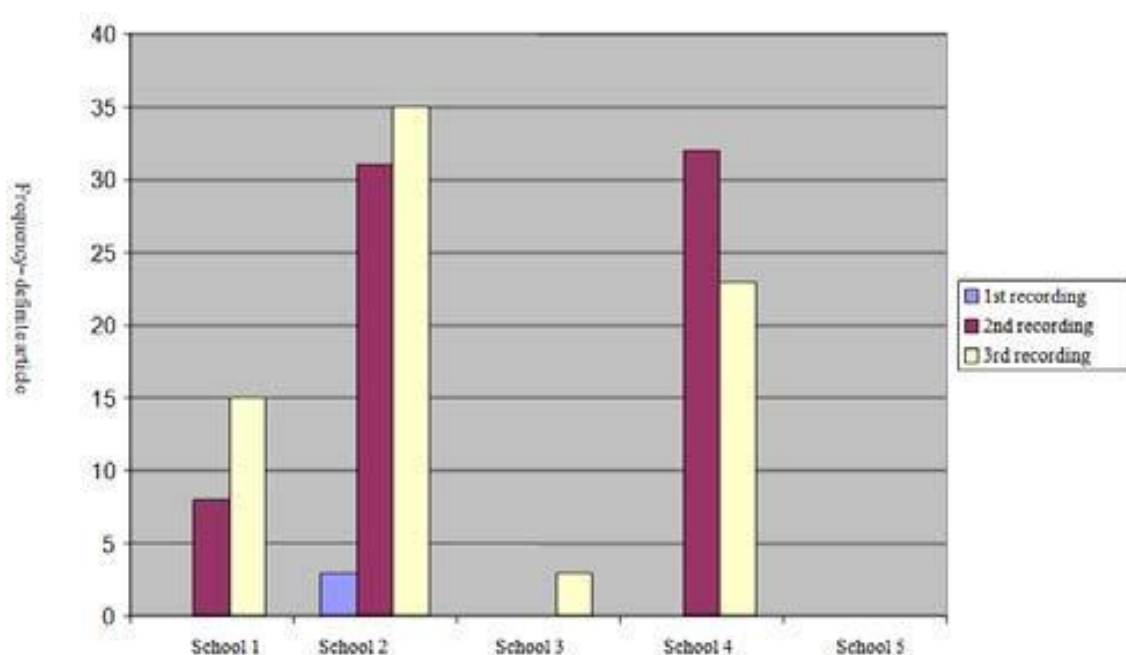
3.3.5 Balenovic (2014)

Balenovic (2014) presents longitudinal data from Croatian primary school learners, in the initial stages of learning EFL. Three predictions guided the study. The first was that the learners would use the indefinite article more than the definite article. Second, the learners would show a positive trend of acquisition with the gradual increase of years of learning. Third, the data would show a strong interdependence between lexis and grammar at the initial stages of EFL learning; this means that when a word starts with a vowel, the article will be omitted, especially at the initial stages of L2 learning.⁴³

The study involved 93 L1 Croatian learners of EFL from five primary schools. Spontaneous classroom interactions were recorded for three years. In analysing the data, the scholar used Codes for Human Analysis of Transcripts (CHAT), Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES) and Computerised Language Analysis (CLAN).

⁴³ However, Balenovic (2014) does not make explicit why such learners were predicted to omit the indefinite article before words beginning with vowels. The question as to whether one can trace such omission back to L1 Croatian remains unaddressed.

Results indicated that the number of morphemes and the length of utterance increased with time. There was thus systematic improvement in language proficiency. The results also showed that the learners' utterances were characterised by remarkable omissions of the indefinite article especially when a word began with a vowel or when a noun was not familiar to the learners. The researcher claimed that this pattern indicated the predicted correlation between lexis and grammar. As for the definite article, the data showed that learners from some classes and schools did not use the definite article at all, for instance in School 5 as



shown in the following figure.

Figure 3.1: The frequency of definite article use in classroom interaction (Balenovic, 2014:439)

Figure 3.1 shows that, during the first time of recording, the pupils from Schools 1, 3, 4 and 5 did not use the definite article at all. This was contrary to the use of the indefinite article: only one school did not use it, and it was only during the first time of recording. A comparative analysis of the overall use of the two articles indicated that the learners used *a(n)* more than *the*. The findings supported all three hypotheses.

The scholar also concluded that the data indicated evidence of fluctuation between definiteness and indefiniteness. Although the study offers useful comparative analyses of results among the learners' different schools, it has several shortcomings: the first relates to the data on the use of the definite article as shown in Figure 3.1. The data show that the learners from School 5 did not use the definite article at all despite being exposed to EFL for

three years. In my opinion, Balenovic had to examine the nature of their curriculum (and/or the syllabus) in order to determine why the learners in the other schools used the article while those in School 5 did not. I think more information was needed on the medium of instruction, on whether School 5 is a boarding or a day school, a private or a public school, on the nature of communication outside classes and on the EFL teacher in terms of his/her L1 and proficiency in English. Such information would help readers to understand the results better.

The second problem relates to the conclusion regarding the FH. The scholar professes that the learners fluctuated between definiteness and indefiniteness. This observation may be too general to consider it as evidence for fluctuation. Recall that the ACP does not specify a definite and an indefinite setting but a definiteness and a specificity setting. In this regard, learners with L1s without articles are predicted to fluctuate between definiteness and specificity by using *the* in indefinite specific contexts and *a/an* in definite non-specific contexts (Ionin et al., 2004; Kim & Lakshmanan, 2009; Sarko, 2009; and Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008). One may therefore conclude that the data reported here merely exhibit substitution. Consequently, Balenovic's (2014) claim that the FH was supported by the data remains untenable.

Lastly, considering the general complexity of naturalistic spontaneous data, it is uncertain how the scholar coded the data while ensuring reliability in deciding on the semantic status of referents in terms of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity distinctions. Coding spontaneous speech data involves making more subjective judgements which is contrary to coding semi-controlled speech data (e.g. data from picture description tasks) which is relatively simple and less subjective, hence coding is more straightforward (as in Trenkic and Pongpaioj (2013), Zdorenko and Paradis (2011) and the present study (cf. Section 6.2)).

3.3.6 Morales-Reyes and Soler (2016)

Drawing on the assumption that child L2 learners rely on access to the semantic universals of definiteness and specificity (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008), whereas adult L2 learners rely on L1 transfer (Ionin, et al., 2008), Morales-Reyes and Soler (2016) tested the two assumptions with data collected from 30 children learning L2 English. These children spoke L1 Spanish, a language with an article system. These scholars selected only 16 test items from the 76 items in Ionin et al.'s (2004) FCET. In the 16 items, there were four contexts: [+def, +spec], [+def, -spec], [-def, -spec] and [-def, +spec] –each was comprised of four test items. These scholars say that they decided to use only 16 items because of children's limited attention

span. They administered the task in small groups, and the children completed it in approximately 30 minutes.

The quantitative analysis of the data indicated that the majority of the children demonstrated target-like performance. They were accurate in their use of both *the* and *a(n)*. Fluctuation was not evident in the data. Therefore, like the adult L1 Spanish learners of L2 English in Ionin, et al. (2008), the L1 Spanish child learners of English transferred the knowledge of their L1 Spanish article system in learning English articles. Their use of articles in English seemed to be based only on the definiteness setting of the ACP. Note that this finding is contrary to Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) who noted that L1 transfer was less evident in the data since their child learners exhibited fluctuation. According to Zdorenko and Paradis (2008), their child participants' article use was based on both definiteness and specificity.

While Morales-Reyes and Soler (2016) provide interesting results showing the similarities between child and adult L1 Spanish learners of L2 English, that is that both groups transfer the semantics of the Spanish article system to their L2 English, these scholars rightly noted that their study neither tested the learners' level of English proficiency nor elicited oral production data. These two additions would have offered a clearer picture of the similarities and differences between the two age groups in terms of their English article use.

3.3.7 Tryzna (2009)

Tryzna (2009) conducted a study questioning the validity of Ionin et al.'s (2004) ACP and FH. The scholar re-examined the evidence used to propose the ACP, specifically that the *le* and *se* articles in Samoan encode specificity and non-specificity respectively. This means both can occur in both definite and indefinite contexts in Samoan. Tryzna's (2009) field study on Samoan articles revealed that, while the specific article *le* can occur in both definite and indefinite contexts, the non-specific article *se* is limited to indefinite contexts (cf. Table 3.5). Eventually, Tryzna (2009) proposed "a reduced ACP" because Ionin et al.'s (2004) ACP overgeneralises the scope of *se* while empirical data showed that it cannot occur in non-specific definite contexts. Table 3.5 shows the reduced ACP as presented in Tryzna (2009:72).

Table 3.5: The Reduced Article Choice Parameter

DP type	Specificity setting (e.g. Samoan)	Definiteness setting (e.g. English)
Non-specific indefinite	<i>se</i>	<i>a</i>
Specific indefinite	<i>le</i>	
Definite		<i>the</i>

Tryzna (2009) noted that reducing the ACP has further implications for the FH. Table 3.6 shows how the FH should be examined under the reduced ACP.

Table 3.6: The Fluctuation Hypothesis for learners with [-ART]L1s (Ionin et al., 2004; Tryzna, 2009)

DP type	Specificity setting (e.g. Samoan)	Definiteness setting (e.g. English)	L2-English FH	
Non-specific indefinite	<i>se</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	
Specific indefinite	<i>le</i>		<i>a</i>	<i>the</i>
Definite		<i>the</i>	<i>the</i>	

The table above shows that [-ART] L1 learners of a [+ART] L2 (e.g. English) are predicted to fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP by using *the* interchangeably with *a* in specific indefinite contexts.

Tryzna (2009) examined the effect of specificity and definiteness on the choice of English articles for L1 Polish and L1 Mandarin Chinese speakers. Since both Polish and Chinese do not have articles, Tryzna (2009) assumed that the participants could not rely on L1 transfer with respect to article use.

The scholar expected that the participants would demonstrate similar patterns to the ones noted by Ionin et al. (2004). Recall that the patterns were as follows: (i) the L1 Russian and L1 Korean participants used *the* correctly in [+def, +spec] contexts but overused it in [-def, +spec] contexts; likewise, (ii) they used *a/an* correctly in [-def, -spec] contexts but overused it in [+def, -spec] contexts. Based on the FH, Tryzna (2009) hypothesised that, firstly, the participants in her study would fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP. Secondly, the effects of fluctuation would decrease towards the advanced level of proficiency because these learners had more exposure to English in naturalistic environments as compared to their intermediate level counterparts. Finally, there would be no differences

between L1 Polish and L1 Chinese learners of L2 English with a similar proficiency level and length of exposure.

The instrument used for the study resembled Ionin's (2003) FCET. It consisted of 40 short dialogues. It was pilot tested with seven adult native speakers of English, who supplied articles as expected. Regarding the L2 participants, there were 36 advanced learners of English (19 Polish and 17 Chinese) and 19 intermediate L1 Polish learners. The advanced learners had been exposed to English for 12 months in a naturalistic environment, whereas the intermediate group had no exposure to English in a naturalistic environment. Their levels of proficiency were determined with the aid of the OQPT, whereby those who scored 50-60 points were grouped as advanced learners, 39-49 points as intermediate learners and 0-38 points as beginner learners.

The results of the advanced group were analysed by considering accuracy in addition to the overuse of *the* in indefinite contexts and omission across all contexts. The L1 Chinese speakers were more accurate than the advanced proficiency L1 Polish speakers were. Tryzna (2009) also reports that when the participants manifested non-target-like performance, they fluctuated. On the contrary, the Polish participants manifested non-target-like performance but did not fluctuate. Drawing on the Polish group's performance, Tryzna (2009) proposes that their use of articles characterises variability but not fluctuation. To explain the source of such variability, the scholar says that the Polish learners had no access to English in naturalistic contexts. They were using the explicit knowledge of English that they had acquired based on explicit classroom instruction rather than implicit knowledge of the language. Most likely, the L2 input they received was distorted via such classroom instruction (cf. García-Mayo & Hawkins, 2009). This is why their article use did not seem to be affected by their English proficiency.

3.3.8 Kim and Lakshmanan (2009)

Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) conducted a study to examine the processing role of the ACP (Tryzna, 2009). They set out to determine whether learners would use *the* with both definite NPs and indefinite specific NPs in an online reading experiment and an offline semantic acceptability task. This study is described in detail below because the acceptability judgement task used in the research reported in this dissertation is based on that used by Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) (see Section 4.3.6.4).

The study involved an experimental group of 19 adult native speakers of Korean who were studying at a Midwestern university in the USA. Two of the participants were attending an English as an L2 (ESL) programme at the University. They were all divided into two groups: nine advanced level and 10 intermediate level participants. The study also involved a control group of 14 adult native speakers of English.

The experimental items contained two distinctive semantic conditions for indefinite contexts: specific and non-specific. Each condition had 20 experimental items. Each experimental item consisted of a pair of sentences. The first sentence in each pair had a singular NP with either *a/an* or *the*. Each condition had 10 definite and 10 indefinite contexts. The sentences in the two sets within each condition were identical, but differed in terms of the article used for the first mention. The second sentence in each pair offered the target semantic condition: specific or non-specific. The following are sample items used.

- (95) For indefinite non-specific items:
 ‘I’m looking for a hotel. Any cheap hotel is fine.’
 ‘I’m looking for the hotel. Any cheap hotel is fine.’

- (96) For indefinite specific items:
 ‘I met an actor. You’ll never guess which actor I met.’
 ‘I met the actor. You’ll never guess which actor I met.’

(Kim & Lakshmanan, 2009:98ff.)

The aim of the task was to examine the extent to which the learners would accept or reject the stimulus items. They were supposed to rate on a four point Likert scale the semantic acceptability of the initial sentence (which has an article) in the stimulus items. The researchers included distracter items and randomised the order of occurrence of the items.

Each stimulus item was followed by a question, which asked the participants to indicate whether the underlined sentence and the non-underlined sentence together make sense. The Likert scale ranged from 0-3: 0= doesn’t make sense at all, 1= somewhat doesn’t make sense, 2= somewhat makes sense and 3= absolutely makes sense.

For this task, it was hypothesised that native controls would accept the sentences with *a/an* in the indefinite context and reject *the* in the indefinite context, both for specific and non-specific contexts. Concerning the L1 Korean learners of English, the hypothesis was that both proficiency levels would accept *a/an* and reject *the* in non-specific contexts. Concerning specific contexts, the hypothesis was that the intermediate level group would accept *the* in indefinite specific contexts because of associating it with specificity. This means they would

reject *a/an* in the indefinite specific contexts although it is grammatical. Concerning the advanced L1 Korean group, Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) expected them to fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. This means they would not show significant differences in their acceptability rating for specific *a/an* (which is grammatical) and specific *the* (which is ungrammatical) in indefinite contexts.

Data were analysed using SPSS 15.0 (2006) and two one-way independent ANOVA and Tukey's follow-up post hoc tests to determine whether the judgment scores across the three groups of participants indicated significant differences. The researchers randomly excluded five native controls in order to balance the size of the control group in relation to the two experimental groups. Table 3.7 shows results for the non-specific context:

Table 3.7: Mean off-line ratings and standard deviations of each item in the [–definite, –specific] condition

Group	N	Sub-condition	Mean Rating	Std. Deviation	p-value
Native	14	[–specific <i>a</i>]	2.92	.222	.000*
		[–specific <i>the</i>]	1.08	.716	
Advanced	9	[–specific <i>a</i>]	2.86	.217	.000*
		[–specific <i>the</i>]	.76	1.04	
Intermediate	9	[–specific <i>a</i>]	2.41	.906	.060
		[–specific <i>the</i>]	1.63	1.16	

(Kim & Lakshmanan, 2009:107)

The results above indicate that the native and the advanced groups' mean rating of *a/an* (which is grammatical) was significantly higher than that of *the* (which is ungrammatical) in the non-specific contexts. The two groups showed more acceptability of *a/an* than of *the*. As for the specific contexts, let us consider the following table of results.

Table 3.8: Mean off-line ratings and standard deviations of each item in the [–definite, +specific] condition

Group	N	Sub-condition	Mean Rating	Std. Deviation	p-value
Native	14	[+specific <i>a</i>]	2.93	.139	.000*
		[+specific <i>the</i>]	1.44	.527	
Advanced	9	[+specific <i>a</i>]	2.82	.319	.004*
		[+specific <i>the</i>]	1.01	1.165	
Intermediate	9	[+specific <i>a</i>]	2.17	1.098	.470
		[+specific <i>the</i>]	1.95	1.200	

(Kim & Lakshmanan, 2009:107)

For the indefinite specific context, articles were noted to play a significant role. The native speaker group and the advanced learner group rated *a/an* (which is grammatical) higher than *the* (which is ungrammatical). As for the intermediate group, the rating difference between *a/an* and *the* was not statistically significant. Considering group differences, there was only a marginal difference noted: the control group's rating of *a/an* was slightly higher than the intermediate L2 group's.

It was noted that the native speakers distinguished the two articles based on definiteness only. This supported the researchers' first hypothesis because the native speakers of English used *a/an* for indefiniteness and *the* for definiteness. The intermediate group gave higher ratings to *a/an* than to *the* in the indefinite non-specific context. In the indefinite specific contexts, there was no statistically significant difference between the ratings of *the* and of *a/an*. Therefore, the researchers' second hypothesis, that this group would rate *the* higher than *a/an* items in this context, was not supported. The intermediate group demonstrated fluctuation between definiteness and specificity. Regarding the advanced group, it was noted that they accepted *a/an* in indefinite specific contexts and rejected *the* in these contexts. They did not fluctuate as hypothesised. This implies that they distinguished articles based on definiteness. Although the study offers a vivid picture of the way different proficiency levels perceive the article system of English, the sample size of 32 participants might have been too small to offer a credible picture of the differences between different proficiency levels. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) remark that small sample sizes might generally limit the representation of statistical results and eventually affect external validity.

3.3.9 Lee (2013)

Lee (2013) examined how oral and written discourse types affect the use of the English article system by L1 Korean speakers. Lee (2013) based her study on the assumption that, in spontaneous speech, L2 learners are under pressure to achieve accuracy and fluency at the same time, whereas in written work, they have time to make use of their conscious knowledge for grammatical accuracy. Hence, she predicted that there would be noticeable differences between spoken and written discourse. More specifically, Lee (2013) predicted that learners' overall article use in writing would be better than in speaking because in oral production the learners would not have enough time to utilise their conscious knowledge of English.

The participants in the study were 10 beginners, 10 intermediate and 10 advanced Korean learners of English. Lee obtained these groupings via the results of a cloze test, a sociolinguistic interview and a writing task.

The study used narrative tasks to assess the way the participants used articles in speaking and writing. Lee argued that the oral production task forces the participants to use articles while focusing on meaning. Each participant had to tell a memorable personal story. Subsequent to this task, the learners immediately performed a writing task using computers. The computers had no dictionary software; in addition, grammar and spelling checks were disabled.

In categorising the use of articles, Lee used Hawkins' (1978) taxonomy for the uses of the definite article, namely anaphoric use, immediate situation and visible situation uses, larger situation use based on shared knowledge, and associative use. However, Lee re-categorised them into two broad contexts: the anaphoric definite context (which realises any subsequent mention of the referent) and the associative definite context (which involves definiteness via contextual knowledge and post-adjectival modifications). As for indefiniteness, Lee categorised the uses of *a/an* as referential (or specific) and non-referential (or non-specific).

Results indicated that the learners generally used articles more accurately in writing than in speaking (see also Sarko (2009), for a similar finding). In discussing this finding, the scholar remarked that written narrative tasks normally offer more opportunity for fluency and accuracy of output than oral production tasks.

When comparing the use of *the* and *a*, the learners demonstrated better mastery of *the* than of *a*, which means that they found the indefinite article difficult to use. Generally, the results supported the researcher's hypothesis that the learners would demonstrate better mastery of articles in the written than in the spoken discourse.

Although the study offers interesting results in terms of the two discourse types and the two articles (cf. Ekiert, 2010), Lee seems to overlook the learners' use of *a(n)* in relation to referential (or specific) and non-referential (or non-specific) entities, something which she initially planned to look at (see Lee, 2013:36). On closer examination, her results indicate that whereas *a(n)* was more non-target-like in the non-specific than in the specific contexts among the beginner learners, the article was more target-like in the non-specific than in the specific context among the intermediate learners, both in speaking and writing. The indefinite article *a(n)* was also more target-like in writing in the non-specific context among the

advanced learners. Since Lee did not explain this phenomenon, it is reasonable to explain it (at least for the intermediate and advanced learner results) in line with the assumption that L2 learners acquire the use of *a(n)* in the non-referential (or non-specific) context earlier than in the referential (specific) context (cf. Tryzna, 2009:82). Such learners normally associate *a(n)* with non-specificity in English.

In sum, the studies conducted under the ACP offer useful findings for understanding non-target-like performance among learners of EFL/ESL. L2 learners with L1s without articles go through a fluctuation stage, but their article use improves as their level of proficiency increases. Moreover, the learner's L1, the target L2 and UG play significant roles in L2 acquisition. Furthermore, learners who acquire an L2 in a naturalistic environment perform better than those who acquire it through formal instruction only. On comparing performance between written and spoken discourse, L2 learners are more accurate in writing than in speaking. Note that the studies discussed in this section did not investigate the omission of articles in English. In some instances, however, learners omit articles in their L2 English production.

Following the development of the Minimalist Program in the 1990s (Chomsky, 1995), it is assumed that UG is comprised of the lexicon, two interpretive linguistic levels – phonological form (PF) and logical form (LF) – and the computational level (select, merge and move) (Liang, 2009). In a more recent version of the Minimalist Program, Chomsky (2001) refined the computational processes as agree and move. The assumption is that such processes are similar cross-linguistically, and that the differences between languages are due only to the overt morphological and lexical realisations of features in such languages. Drawing on the Minimalist Program, Prévost & White (2000) developed the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) to address the omission of functional items by L2 learners. In the following section, I briefly describe the MSIH and review studies conducted under it.

3.4 The Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis

The MSIH addresses, amongst other things, the omission of articles by learners of L2 English. Prévost and White (2000) observed that an L2 learner might not show native-like performance in inflectional morphology, but this does not mean that the learner has not acquired the abstract syntactic representations associated with the properties realised by such inflectional morphemes. Instead, it is taken to imply that the learner cannot map the fully specified features onto their corresponding surface realisations. These scholars argued that a

break in connection between the underlying structure in LF and the surface morphological realisation might be the cause of the omission of articles. Akin to the ACP, this hypothesis holds that L2 learners have full access to UG; however, they find it problematic to use article systems correctly in relation to definiteness and specificity. Alternatively, such learners use default forms by omitting articles in their L2 production. Lardière (2005), Robertson (2000) and Sarko (2009) are among the researchers who conducted studies to explore whether the use of the English article system by L2 learners reflects the MSIH.

3.4.1 Sarko (2009)

Sarko (2009) conducted a study among L1 Syrian Arabic and L1 French learners of English. She focused on testing the FH and the MSIH for the representation of English articles in IL grammars. The scholar clearly distinguished between Arabic, French and English in terms of how they realise definiteness. Whereas English denotes definiteness by *the* in all NP types (count, mass, singular and plural) and indefiniteness by *a* and \emptyset , Arabic has a definite article *al* which occurs in all NP types, just like *the* but the language denotes indefiniteness by means of bare NPs in spoken form (see also, Thyab (2016)). As for French, it does not allow bare NPs and requires an overt article in all contexts – *le* (masculine), *la* (feminine) or *les* (plural) for definite NPs, *un* (masculine) or *une* (feminine) for indefinite NPs, and *des* for NPs which would be bare in English. Moreover, besides functioning as (in)definiteness markers, singular articles mark number and gender in French. Indefinite plural and mass nouns also require an overt determiner, realised as *de* (singular) and *des* (plural) in cases where NPs would be bare in English.

Besides focusing on the FH and MSIH, Sarko (2009) also drew on the Full Transfer/Full Access (FT/FA) hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994, 1996). This hypothesis holds that while L2 learners transfer the abstract features and functional categories of their L1 at the beginning of L2 acquisition (“full transfer”), they have full access to even those properties of UG which are absent in their L1 grammar (“full access”) (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994, 1996). Assuming the FT/FA, Sarko (2009) predicted that native speakers of French learning English would not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity for English because both languages have overt definite and indefinite articles. However, because French does not allow bare nouns, Sarko (2009) predicted that these learners would overuse articles in English.

It was also hypothesised that, if the MSIH is correct, there would be evidence from oral production that learners omit articles. However, such article omission would be found to a

much lesser extent in the case of the FCET results, since in this task there is no “communication pressure” affecting speakers’ ability to access morphological exponents, and thus there is more time to access their explicit knowledge (Sarko, 2009:49).

The study involved 84 participants: 57 L1 Syrian Arabic-speaking learners of English and 18 L1 French-speaking learners of English. There were also nine English native speaker controls. All three groups were university students. Using the OQPT (2001), the scholar divided the participants into two groups: the intermediate group and the advanced group.

The data for the study were collected using two types of instruments: a written FCET and an oral story recall task. The FCET resembled that of Ionin et al. (2004). The test had 88 short dialogues; only 68 tokens in the test were relevant for the study. The test observed contrasts between count singular, plural and mass NPs.

In the story recall task, the participants had to listen to five short stories. Each story was presented to the participants aurally using a computer. They listened twice to each story. In addition, they were supplied with key items as written prompts to use when telling the stories. The prompts were nouns and were given in the order in which they appeared in the story. The learners were asked to recall as much content as they could.

The FCET’s results indicated that the Syrian Arabic and French speakers performed very well in definite singular contexts as shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Choice of articles in [+def, ±spec] count singular contexts

	[+def, +spec]			[+def, -spec]		
	<i>the</i>	<i>a/an</i>	\emptyset	<i>the</i>	<i>a/an</i>	\emptyset
SA Intermed. (n = 36)	272/288 (94%)	12/288 (4%)	4/288 (2%)	266/288 (92%)	18/288 (6%)	4/288 (2%)
Fre Intermed. (n = 10)	75/80 (94%)	5/80 (6%)	0/80 (0%)	78/80 (98%)	2/80 (2%)	0/80 (0%)
SA Adv. (n = 21)	166/168 (99%)	2/168 (1%)	0/168 (0%)	166/168 (99%)	2/168 (1%)	0/168 (0%)
Fre Adv. (n = 7)	63/64 (98%)	1/64 (2%)	0/64 (0%)	63/64 (98%)	1/64 (2%)	0/64 (0%)
NS controls (n = 9)	67/72 (93%)	5/72 (7%)	0/72 (0%)	72/72 (100%)	0/72 (0%)	0/72 (0%)

(Sarko, 2009:53)

No significant differences were found between the experimental (Syrian Arabic and French) groups and the native speaker control group in count singular contexts in the use of the definite article. However, in count plural contexts, there was a significant difference between both intermediate groups and the native controls on the use of *the*. Moreover, there were significant differences between the Syrian Arabic learners and the control group, between the Syrian Arabic and the French learners, and between the French learners and the control group.

The comparison between the advanced group and the native controls shows no significant difference in the use of *the*. The results of all L2 groups for the definite article concurred with the Full Transfer hypothesis. Since both L1s had definite articles, the participants transferred their L1s' structures to their English IL grammars. As for the indefinite specific contexts, the results showed significant differences between the Syrian Arabic group and the French group, but there was no significant difference between the French group and the control group. This finding concurs with FT because the Syrian Arabic group transferred the bare form of NPs for indefiniteness while the French group transferred their overt realisation of indefiniteness from L1 French.

With regard to the story-retelling task, both groups produced *the* in definite contexts in a target-like manner. Sarko (2009) attributed their accuracy to L1 transfer because their L1s grammaticalise definiteness.

Table 3.10: Choice of articles in [-definite, ±specific] count singular contexts

	[-def, -spec]			[-def, +spec]		
	<i>the</i>	<i>a/an</i>	\emptyset	<i>the</i>	<i>a/an</i>	\emptyset
SA Intermed. (n = 36)	3/288 (1%)	282/288 (98%)	3/288 (1%)	44/144 (31%)	98/144 (68%)	2/144 (1%)
Fre Intermed. (n = 10)	2/80 (3%)	79/80 (97%)	0/80 (0%)	2/40 (5%)	38/40 (95%)	0/40 (0%)
SA Adv. (n = 21)	2/168 (1%)	166/168 (99%)	0/168 (0%)	19/84 (23%)	65/84 (77%)	0/84 (0%)
Fre Adv. (n = 8)	0/64 (0%)	64/64 (100%)	0/64 (0%)	1/32 (3%)	31/32 (97%)	0/32 (0%)
NS controls (n = 9)	0/72 (0%)	72/72 (100%)	0/72 (0%)	0/36 (0%)	36/36 (100%)	0/36 (0%)

(Sarko, 2009:55)

In indefinite contexts, plural and mass nouns were all non-specific. Count singular NPs, however, were either specific or non-specific. All learners used *a/an* accurately in indefinite non-specific contexts. However, for indefinite specific contexts, the Syrian Arabic learners demonstrated non-target-like performance, while the L1 French speakers demonstrated target-like performance. This finding underscores the MSIH in that the learners did not omit articles in the FCET but omitted them in the story recall task. Such omission could have been caused by communicative pressure. It was noted that, generally, the participants' choice of English articles was not determined by specificity because there was limited evidence of fluctuation among the intermediate L1 Syrian Arabic learners of English.

3.4.2 Robertson (2000)

Robertson's (2000) study is based on the assumption that the omission of articles does not imply that learners have not acquired a language's article system. Robertson's work draws heavily on Hawkins' (1978) taxonomy (see Section 2.3.1.1) and Bickerton's (1981) taxonomy (see Section 3.2.1).

In collecting the data for the study, Robertson (2000) used nine pairs of participants, i.e. a total of 18 participants. They were Chinese postgraduate students at Leicester University. Robertson assumed that the participants had achieved the necessary proficiency in English to be admitted into the British University. Four diagrams with different levels of complexity were used. Each participant was involved in all tasks and alternated between playing the role of the speaker and that of the hearer. The speaker was given an A4 sheet of paper with a diagram on it painted in blue and red. The hearer was given a blank A4 sheet of paper, a red pen, a blue pen and a ruler and was required to collaborate with the speaker to produce a diagram akin to that of the speaker.

Results indicated that the indefinite article was rarely used. Also in echo contexts (contexts where two similar NPs marked a tonal boundary), articles were omitted. Robertson (2000) argued that the L2 learners omitted the definite article where it was considered redundant. In my opinion, the omission of articles could have been pragmatically attributed to the joint attention to the referent as well as the salience of the referents (cf. Trenkic & Pongpairaj, 2013). Alternatively, Robertson had to ensure that the participants did not share the knowledge of the referent and that the task was not repetitive. The scholar also reported the use of a repair mechanism in the data, where the hearer repairs an omission by the first speaker in the subsequent sentence. For instance,

- (97) 66 A . . . in a, left hand side.
 67 B: The left hand side.
 68 A: Yeah, left hand side. And, er, the distance between blue square to red square is about five cm. And, er . . .
 (Robertson, 2000:159, Example 36)

It was also noted that the learners used alternative mechanisms for expressing (in)definiteness. For instance, they used demonstratives (e.g. *this*) and the cardinal *one* to denote definiteness and indefiniteness respectively. This mechanism underscores the MSIH. The learners had acquired definiteness and indefiniteness in English, but they encountered difficulties in mapping them distinctively using the article system.

3.4.3 White (2003a)

Based on the observation that non-target-like suppliance of inflectional morphology can be noted even among advanced L2 learners, White (2003a) supports the claim that adult IL grammars may fossilise. This occurs when the learner's IL grammar ceases to develop further, despite continued exposure to the target L2. White conducted a case study in order to assess how language development progresses over time. The participant of the study was SD, an adult bilingual speaker of L1 Turkish and L2 English. SD moved to Canada from Turkey when she was 40 years old. She acquired little knowledge of English while in high school in Turkey. She then began her college education in Canada, where the language of instruction was English.

Data were collected through a series of four interviews over a two-month period when the participant was 50 years old (and had thus been living in Canada for 10 years). In addition, SD completed several written tasks. After 18 months, a fifth interview was conducted to determine whether there were significant developments over time, or whether her grammar had reached the end state. She also took an English proficiency test, which showed that she was at the advanced level of proficiency.

In analysing the data, White excluded single word utterances, repetitions of the interviewer's words and formulaic expressions. Table 3.11 presents SD's performance on functional morphology in the DP in obligatory contexts.

Table 3.11: Functional morphology in the DP in obligatory contexts.

	Definite article		Indefinite article	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Obligatory Contexts	433	170	507	243
Omissions	114	48	204	94
Suppliances in %	73.5	71.75	59.75	61.2

(White, 2003a:136)

The table above indicates that the participant omitted the indefinite article more frequently than the definite article. There was a significant difference between omission in the definite and the indefinite contexts. Contrary to the findings in other literature, SD did not use *the* and *a* interchangeably, but omitted articles in some contexts.

Moreover, evidence from the written elicitation task supported the observation that SD had a good command of definite and indefinite distinctions. The participant was very accurate in using definite articles, but faced challenges in using indefinite ones. The participant also completed a grammaticality judgement task, and the results were similar to those of the previous two tasks. When comparing the data from the three tasks, the participant demonstrated more frequent omission in the spoken than the written discourse. White (2003a) concluded that the MSIH gives a better explanation of omissions in L2 acquisition than accounts (such as the Impairment Hypothesis (Bley-Vroman 1990; Meisel 1997))⁴⁴ which claim that underlying structures are not in place.

3.4.4 Lardière (2005)

Lardière (2005) argues against the claim that parameter resetting is possible in the L2 acquisition of morphological inflection. She set out to identify the types of learning problems that adult L2 learners face, and to provide support for the notion that L2 learning involves notable L1 influence (see also, Cho (2016)).

⁴⁴ This hypothesis holds that L1 overt morphological realisations (e.g. articles) are key elements in the acquisition of particular syntactic features (e.g. definiteness) in the L1, and the relationship between them affects adult L2 acquisition. This means that if the L1 does not have articles, the adult learner will not be able to acquire definiteness in an L2 with articles.

Lardière (2005) supports the Representational Deficit Hypothesis (RDH) (Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Tsimpli & Dimitrakopoulou, 2007), which states that if the target L2 selects features which are different from those of the learner's L1, such features are uninterpretable to the learner because they are not available in his/her L1 and the learner does not have full access to UG. This implies that parameterised features are not acquirable by an adult learner beyond the critical period. In this way, the RDH stands in opposition to the FT/FA hypothesis.

Lardière's (2005) focus was on the surface realisation of definiteness in the acquisition of English. She presents data collected naturalistically from an end state Mandarin Chinese learner of English, Patty. Patty was born and raised in China. She then immigrated to the USA, where she was immersed in English (studying and then working in the USA), and she married a native speaker of English. The collection of data commenced 10 years after Patty had arrived in the USA. The data were collected in the form of audio-recorded and written samples.

Lardière noted that Patty produced more omission errors than substitution errors in the oral production data. Moreover, Patty performed better in definite than in indefinite contexts, in both discourse types. Patty's correct suppliance of articles was 84% and 75.5% in definite and indefinite contexts respectively. It was noted that Patty was very accurate in using the indefinite article to introduce a referent and then the definite article to refer to the referent. The following extract is from the discourse that was produced by Patty.

- (98) I remember my dance company have *a* party ... so I invite A. to # to *the* party
 I know D.'s gonna have *a* show ... well she's so busy on *the* show we have *a* maid ... *the* maid uh, pick up a lot of Hokkien from us.
 (Lardière, 2005:181)

The scholar opined that Patty had acquired definiteness because she was very accurate in using possessive pronouns and demonstratives, although she failed to distinguish *his* from *her* in some instances. Patty also demonstrated mastery of existential *there* (which is relevant because *the* is prohibited in existential *there* constructions). However, one can argue that the participant's avoidance of *the* in existential *there* constructions does not necessarily reflect the ability to distinguish between *the* and *a/an* in existential *there* constructions. Learners often simply learn such expressions as whole chunks, like formulaic expressions. Assuming that the learner had acquired definiteness, Lardière's (2005) findings support the MSIH, because the learner only had a problem with mapping the elements onto the surface structure.

To summarise, the studies reviewed under the MSIH report that L2 learners with L1s without articles were more accurate in using the definite article than in using the indefinite article. They also omitted articles more in speaking than in writing. Sometimes, the learners employed alternative mechanisms such as using demonstratives and possessive pronouns to realise definite referents. In contrast to the studies conducted within the framework of the FH, these scholars report limited evidence of fluctuation. Still, the MSIH has been criticised for only being able to explain omission post-hoc and not being able to predict which elements would be omitted in which contexts (cf. White, 2003a). In attempting to rectify this fault, Goad and White (2004, 2006, 2009) supplemented the MSIH with the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH) in which they argue that native-like performance is limited by L1 prosodic structure and that L1 prosodic configurations have an overt impact on the (oral) production of L2 inflectional morphology, which leads to article omission. However, in her study, Trenkic (2007) noted article omission both in speaking and in writing (cf. Zec, 2005). Consequently, Trenkic argues that writing, by its definition, lies beyond the realm of a prosodic account. She thus proposes the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA) in studying the acquisition of articles by L2 learners. I describe this account below.

3.5 The Syntactic Misanalysis Account

The SMA account stems from evidence that, in languages without articles, (the semantic class of) determiners (e.g. articles) are treated as adjectives (Trenkic, 2007). Consequently, learners with such L1s approach a [+ART] L2 without the category ‘determiners’ but with the category ‘adjectives’ in mind. Assuming that there is no access to UG in adult L2 acquisition, the SMA account holds that such learners will not be able to acquire the new syntactic category ‘determiner’ (including articles). Consequently, they are expected to misanalyse articles as adjectives. Moreover, this account holds that L2 learners with article-less L1s perceive articles as pragmatically redundant in many situations because they can rely on the context of interaction. In an immediate situation context, for example, while the definite article is crucial for denoting existence and uniqueness in English, the context of interaction can signal such lexico-semantic information in [-ART] languages. Hence, the learners are expected to omit articles in such contexts. Trenkic (2007, 2008), Avery and Radišić (2007) and Jian (2013) are among the studies conducted in relation to the SMA.

3.5.1 Trenkic (2007)

Trenkic (2007) reports the results of a study investigating L1 Serbian speakers learning English as an L2. Unlike English, Serbian does not grammaticalise definiteness in its morpho-syntactic structure. Trenkic (2007) tested the claim that L2 learners whose L1s do not have articles tend to omit articles more in adjectivally modified NPs (ART+ADJ+N) than in non-modified NPs (ART+N).

A group of 12 Serbian-speaking learners participated in a map description task. This task required the learners to communicate by exchanging information that they partially shared. All participants were secondary school learners of English aged 17 years. The dialogues were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Besides using the map description task, the study also used a written translation task. The primary aim of including the written translation task was to assess whether or not the omission of articles in adjectivally modified nouns was restricted to oral production.

In the oral production task, results indicated that the learners omitted more articles in adjectivally modified nouns (45.5% of the time) than in non-modified nouns (26.5% of the time). These results concurred with those of Goad and White (2004) using SD, since SD was also omitting more articles in adjectivally modified nouns than in non-modified nouns. The following example is taken from Trenkic (2007:306):

- (99) A: there are a lot of trees
 B: ok
 A: *dark forest*_and you go through *the forest* . . .
 B: yes
 A: and you go round it_and you come_to *wooden bridge*
 B: mhm
 A: and you go over *the bridge* . . .

In the written translation task, results indicated a clear difference between omissions in adjectivally modified nouns and in non-modified nouns. In terms of group comparisons, there was a higher rate of omission for the two lower proficiency groups, whilst the rate of omission decreased towards the higher proficiency groups, and in some contexts, no omissions were noted. Although examining accuracy on the two articles was not the primary aim of the study, Trenkic (2007) noted that there were differences in the use of definite and indefinite articles. Specifically, the learners used the definite article more accurately than the indefinite article. This observation concurs with those of Lardi re (2005), Lee (2013), Sarko (2009) and Zdorenko and Paradis (2011), reviewed earlier.

In addressing the overall asymmetry noted, Trenkic (2007) argues that it might be because the learners' performance is affected by IL syntactic representations based on those of their L1 due to the unavailability of UG in L2 acquisition. Trenkic argues that Serbian semantic class determiners occur in the same position as English articles –before nouns. Therefore, English articles behave like prenominal modifiers/adjectives in Serbian. Thus, when using articles, the learners omitted them in the adjectivally modified Ns because of misanalysing them as adjectives. However, Avery and Radišić (2007) reject this explanation. They argue that there is no good reason why the learners could not use two adjectives before a noun, because Serbian does not restrict the occurrence of more than one adjective as pre-modifiers of a noun.

It should also be noted that the SMA does not offer explanations as to why learners sometimes produce regular patterns of substitution errors as noted in some literature (for instance, in Ionin et al. (2004), Sarko (2009) and Zdorenko and Paradis (2008)). Moreover, it has not offered convincing reasons why learners sometimes produce articles very accurately and sometimes inaccurately.

3.5.2 Avery and Radišić (2007)

Avery and Radišić (2007) examined the acquisition of articles by focusing on individual learners of L2 English. These scholars wanted to nullify the uniformity assumption, which generalises results to a group of L2 learners with a particular L1. They hold that learners with a particular L1 do not necessarily display the same acquisition patterns. In their study, Avery and Radišić predicted that their respondents would display different patterns despite having the same L1, Serbian. They argue that generalising results across a group of learners with a particular L1 hides a significant number of differences that should be investigated in their own right.

Serbian has no articles and the assumption is that it does not have a DP category. This means it does not grammaticalise definiteness. It is a topic prominent language, and an NP in the topic position is inherently definite. Moreover, its adjectives can be used as definite or indefinite but when they occur in the predicate position, they become indefinite. These scholars demonstrated this observation by using the following example from Zlatić (1997:39).

- (100) Grad je jako lep/*lepi.
 town AUX very beautiful-INDEF/*DEF
 'The town is very beautiful.'

According to Avery and Radišić (2007), in the example above, the adjective in the predicate position renders an indefinite interpretation.

There were five participants in the study. They were high intermediate and advanced speakers of English. As can be seen in Table 3.12, four of them had lived in Canada for four years and longer, whereas the fifth participant had never been to an English-speaking country. Their ages ranged from 43 to 53 at the time of data collection.

Table 3.12: Participant information

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Age	43	46	53	43	53
Proficiency	high intermediate	advanced	advanced	advanced	advanced
LOR ⁴⁵	5	10	0	14	4
AOR	38	36	--	29	49
Formal English Study in Serbia	8 yrs		12 yrs	8 yrs	10 years
Additional ESL training in Canada	none	7 months	none	6 months	4 months

(Avery & Radišić, 2007:5)

The researchers used a series of pictures selected from an ESL textbook. Each set expressed a related story. There were 12 possible stories from which the participants had to choose four and retell them. The researchers transcribed the participants' stories and coded them while considering omissions, substitutions and the overuse of definite and indefinite articles.

These researchers reported cases of substitution of articles with other determiners such as *one*, *this*, *some* and *that*. There was a general tendency of supplying the definite article more frequently than the indefinite article. The overall results indicated that individual participants demonstrated remarkable differences in their patterns of article use. This underscored the researchers' prediction that individual learners with the same L1 manifest variability in their use of the L2 article system.

Concerning individual results, Participant 1 showed much more remarkable omissions of the definite article in topic positions than in non-topic positions. Participant 2 omitted articles where subsequent DPs occurred: She supplied articles in the first, second and third mentions of a DP and then omitted them in the subsequent mentions. Moreover, the respondent omitted

⁴⁵ Avery and Radišić (2007) do not say explicitly what "LOR" and "AOR" mean.

articles in co-referencing NPs and in an echo context. This observation is similar to that of Robertson (2000) (cf. Section 3.4.2). The following is an example sentence produced by Participant 2: *there is a mechanic or neighbour*. Likewise, in an echo-context, the participant did not produce articles in the second mention of an NP; for instance in “*It also has a star, Communist star*” (Avery & Radišić, 2007:7). Participant 3 exhibited near native-like performance, but there were fewer cases of substitutions of *a* for *the*. There were also cases of omissions but these did not reflect any consistent pattern. As for Participant 4, there was almost consistent omission of the indefinite article as well as the use of other determiners, such as *some* and *one*, for articles. Lastly, Participant 5 did not show any predictable pattern. The participant randomly supplied and omitted articles in production.

According to Avery and Radišić (2007), overall, their data demonstrated variability in the production of articles among the five participants. Some patterns were caused by the influence of the L1, while others were not. They argued that their findings were not consistent with the RDH. These scholars did not find any evidence for a syntactic deficit despite the fact that the participants had not yet fully acquired the article system. Additionally, each participant demonstrated a unique use of articles. According to these scholars, this shows that researchers should ideally not generalise findings to a group of participants.

However, these results are not surprising if one considers the sample used (cf. Table 3.12). Besides sharing L1 Serbian, the respondents had quite a number of linguistic differences that Avery and Radišić (2007) should have considered before rejecting the uniformity assumption: The respondents differed in terms of their length of exposure to English; they had not all learned English in Serbia; only some of them had additional ESL training; not all of them had lived in Canada; and they differed in terms of their level of English proficiency. These important differences between the participants render them unsuitable for testing the uniformity assumption. The assumption should rather be empirically tested with data collected from learners with common linguistic backgrounds.

3.6 Chapter conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter contributes to our understanding of why and how L2 learners exhibit non-target-like performance in their use of the English article system. Among the reasons suggested is learners’ failure to use English articles according to the definiteness setting (cf. the ACP and the FH, Section 3.3). Consequently, they substitute the definite article for the indefinite article and vice versa. Another proposed reason is learners’ failure to

map articles onto the overt morpho-syntactic structure of English when their L1s do not grammaticalise definiteness (cf. the MSIH, Section 3.4). Accordingly, such learners omit articles in English production, rely on the context of interaction and/or use alternative mechanisms (such as demonstratives) to express (in)definiteness. Some literature also shows that L2 learners misanalyse articles as adjectives (cf. the SMA, Section 3.5). Consequently, they omit articles more in adjectivally modified nouns than in non-modified nouns. While the studies reviewed in this chapter contribute to our understanding of the acquisition of articles in English, they also suffer from a number of methodological and theoretical shortcomings that I kept in mind in designing and conducting the present study (cf. Chapter 4).

Methodologically, the shortcomings span linguistic background information, sampling procedures, data collection tools, coding procedures and the scope of the studies. For instance, some studies did not offer sufficient background information about the participants, and such information is crucial for interpreting and understanding the results better. Some studies employed small sample sizes, which often limit statistical procedures. Other studies sampled participants with heterogeneous linguistic experiences to nullify the uniformity assumption in L2 learning. Furthermore, some studies operationalised the notion of ‘specificity’. Regarding coding, some studies did not offer comprehensive accounts of how the scholars reliably coded naturalistic data. Regarding scope, no traceable research was conducted in connection with teaching and acquiring the English article system in the African context. Examining linguistic challenges teachers face and how they practically address them would be useful to understand non-target-like performance on articles among Tanzanian Swahili-speaking EFL learners better. Accordingly, the present study attempts to fill this lacuna (cf. Chapter 7).

Theoretically, there is no single hypothesis that can sufficiently account for L2 learners’ non-target-like performance in terms of articles (cf. Geranpayeh, 2000). Each of the hypotheses discussed in this chapter has shortcomings. The ACP cannot account for the omission of articles. The MSIH can only describe omissions post hoc but cannot predict in which contexts omission is likely to occur (White, 2003a). The PTH cannot account for the omission of articles in writing. Finally, the SMA cannot explain sufficiently why L2 learners use articles interchangeably and sometimes more accurately than other times.⁴⁶ Drawing on these

⁴⁶ It should be emphasised here that the SMA’s assumption that L2 learners misanalyse articles as adjectives stems from Serbian –a language with adjectives pre-modifying head nouns. In contrast, in

weaknesses, the “question of L2 article acquisition remains as important and relevant as ever” (Chrabaszc & Jiang, 2014:354). In order to understand the non-target-like performance of Swahili-speaking EFL learners better, it is therefore important to employ a number of different tasks designed and/or selected based on more than one viewpoint. This is exactly what the current study sets out to do (cf. Chapters 5 and 6). The next chapter presents the study’s methodology.

Swahili (the L1 of the participants in this study), adjectives post-modify head nouns. I return to this issue in Section 6.2.2.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I first present the design that I used in the present study – the mixed methods research design– in Section 4.2. I highlight its advantages and some reasons for using it. I also introduce, specifically, an embedded mixed methods design. Additionally, I present strengths of the embedded design and philosophical assumptions behind it. Thereafter, I describe the present study’s data collection procedures in Section 4.3. The description covers the following: the area of study, sample and sampling procedures, schedule, ethical considerations and the sets of data needed; in this section, I also describe how I administered the tasks and analysed the data. Finally, I present the challenges I encountered during data collection in Section 4.4 and summarise the chapter in Section 4.5.

4.2 Research design of the present study

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) define research designs as systematic procedures for collecting, analysing and interpreting data and reporting results/findings in research. The decision regarding which procedures one should employ in research spans not only broad philosophical assumptions, but also specific methods of conducting that research. As mentioned previously, the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research designs are the major designs available in research. The present study selected the mixed methods research design.

4.2.1 Selecting the mixed methods design

Understanding the nature of this design was a crucial initial consideration before I could effectively employ it in the present study (cf. King & Horrocks, 2010). To understand this design, I explored its meaning as explained by various scholars.

According to Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989 in Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), a mixed methods design incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and none of the approaches is connected to a specific paradigm of enquiry. However, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) opine that this definition does not seem to show connection between mixed methods and any philosophical assumptions. The lack of connection led Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) to emphasise that the mixed methods design has a distinct methodological approach, grounded in a specific view of the world.

Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) defined the mixed methods design more comprehensively by considering what is being mixed (e.g. methods), the stage of mixing (e.g. before, during, or after collecting data), the purpose of mixing (e.g. improving) and the elements of mixing. Considering all these dimensions, Johnson et al. (2007:123) defined the mixed methods design as follows:

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.

In the present study, I subscribe to Johnson et al.'s (2007) definition of the mixed methods design as it spans broader than merely "methods". It is a methodology and has a wide scope ranging from viewpoints to techniques drawing on both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

4.2.2 Rationale for choosing the mixed methods design

The question arises as to why I chose the mixed methods research design for the present study. Two key reasons motivated my choice of this design. First, I needed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to address the entire set of this study's research questions (cf. Section 1.4). And second, the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews (reported in Chapter 7) were crucial to explain the quantitative results (reported in Chapters 5 and 6) (cf. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011:61ff.). I explicate the rationale of the mixed methods design as I describe its advantages in the following section.

4.2.3 Advantages of the mixed methods design

The mixed methods design offers several advantages over quantitative and qualitative paradigms in isolation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Hall, 2008; Mayring, 2001; Schwandt, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). First, it reduces the inherent shortcomings of individual quantitative and qualitative studies (Mayring, 2001). The downside of one approach can consequently be compensated for by another approach. For instance, while readers cannot directly "hear" the voices of participants in quantitative studies, they can "hear" such voices in qualitative studies. Another example is that, while qualitative studies allow more possibilities for bias via the accommodation of personal interpretations, quantitative studies eschew researchers' individual biases and interpretations of reality because the researchers position themselves in the background of the study. Therefore, their biases are rarely made explicit and explained (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Moreover, whereas qualitative studies

do not allow the generalisation of findings because they typically have limited sample sizes, quantitative studies do allow the generalisation of findings because they comprise (more) representative samples of the population. Accordingly, the present study benefited from the strengths of both approaches to offer a more vivid picture of the acquisition of (in)definiteness in English by Swahili-speaking learners.

Second, the mixed methods approach offers more insights for studying a research problem than any of the two approaches separately. In the mixed methods approach, researchers can use multiple data collection tools, rather than being confined to the tools available for only one type of approach (Hall, 2008). For instance, the present study benefited from this advantage through: (i) reviewing the descriptive data reported in Chapter 2, (ii) using written and oral production tasks to collect the quantitative data reported in Chapters 5 and 6, and (iii) using a semi-structured interview plan to collect the qualitative data reported in Chapter 7. The data collected through all these tools ensure a wider understanding of the research problem.

Third, the design is capable of addressing research questions that may not have been sufficiently addressed by only one approach (Schwandt, 2000). For instance, the specific research question (vi) in this study on “how Tanzanian EFL teachers address the non-target-like properties of the IL grammars of Swahili-speaking learners of English with regard to the article system of the language” (cf. Section 1.4) required data collected by means of interviews to contextualise the results from the written and oral production tasks. In this regard, the present study needed a design that would offer a high degree of flexibility that neither qualitative nor quantitative designs could sufficiently offer in isolation.

Fourth, making use of the mixed methods approach removes the division between qualitative and quantitative researchers. In line with this viewpoint, Schwandt (2000:210) questions the rationale behind maintaining the dichotomy between the two paradigms while the impetus for any research is to understand nature. Therefore, the scholar urges researchers to employ both methods of inquiry in order to understand better the object under investigation. Fifth, it offers the opportunity for presenting a greater diversity of views (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). In the present study, for instance, one can “hear” EFL teachers’ voices and understand their perspectives on the quantitative results obtained from their Swahili-speaking EFL learners.

4.2.3.1 Selecting the mixed methods embedded design

Several designs are available under the mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Such designs differ depending on the nature of the study. Considering the advantages highlighted above, I chose the embedded design for two specific reasons. First, one source of data was not sufficient to offer a full picture of the non-target-like performance that Swahili-speaking EFL learners manifest while acquiring (in)definiteness in English. Second, this embedded experimental study required qualitative data (in Chapter 2) to predict areas that would manifest as non-target-like (in Chapters 5 and 6) and another set of qualitative data (in Chapter 7) to address such non-target-like performance. Therefore, this study included these qualitative aspects before and after the experimental phase to discern areas that needed to be tested and to obtain teachers' views on intervening in the situation.

In many studies, researchers have been concerned about bringing together quantitative and qualitative results when mixing methods (Bryman, 2008). However, in the embedded design of the present study, the purpose of embedding the qualitative components is not to address the primary aim of the experimental study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) but to predict areas that would manifest as non-target-like in the learners' L2 performance and to identify such areas for appropriate pedagogical attention. Therefore, I follow Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) viewpoint that the embedded design (as used in the present study) is distinct from a convergent design, which combines both quantitative and qualitative components to address a single overarching question.

4.2.3.2 Advantages of the embedded design

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) noted several advantages of the embedded design. Two advantages are relevant to the present study. First, the addition of supplemental data helps to improve the larger design; and second, by focusing on different research questions, the study offers the possibility of having two types of results published differently. In the following section, I explain the timing of collecting and analysing data.

4.2.3.3 The timing of the collection and analysis of data

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:193) advise researchers to consider the timing of collecting and analysing supplemental data to minimise the risk of their bias via qualitative data. To achieve this, I used a sequential approach to data collection. At the outset, I explored the differences and similarities between English and Swahili in realising definiteness and

specificity. I did this through descriptive analyses of literature on English, on Bantu languages in general and on Swahili in particular. The aim was to determine differences and similarities between English and Swahili in the morpho-syntactic mapping of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity. The results enabled me to make predictions regarding the possible non-target-like aspects of Swahili-speaking learners' L2 English performance (see Table 2.7 as well as Section 2.7.2). This process was followed by the primary (quantitative) strand. After the quantitative strand, I collected more qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with teachers. These interviews primarily aimed at examining how the teachers address the situation noted among their learners. Eventually, the interview data helped to explain the quantitative outcomes. In summary, I collected and analysed supplemental (qualitative) data before and after the primary (quantitative) strand of the present study.

4.2.3.4 Philosophical viewpoint of the mixed methods embedded design

Since the embedded design employs both quantitative and qualitative strands, it should be understood that its philosophical viewpoint has to come from one of the two, in particular from the primary strand (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011:92). The present study's philosophical view comes from the quantitative strand. Therefore, the overarching paradigm in this study is the post-positivist worldview.

Post-positivism disputes the traditional assumption that there is absolute truth (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Post-positivists reject the claim that researchers can be certain of the claims they make when studying human nature. According to post-positivists, absolute truths can hardly be pinned down (Davidson, 2005). Post-positivists believe "that truth and universal laws exist, but discovery of these truths is near impossible" (Levers, 2013:3). What post-positivists do is thus to progress closely towards the truth while acknowledging that findings are merely partial fragments of truth. Creswell (2009, 2014) highlighted the following features characterising post-positivism.

First, post-positivism operates under determinism. The results we are looking for are determined by a particular cause. For example, in the present study, the cause(s) of non-target-like performance among Swahili-speaking learners in the acquisition of English (in)definiteness needed to be identified and assessed through experiments. The non-target-like performance is, in part, assumed to be determined by the cross-linguistic differences between the two languages in mapping (in)definiteness as described in Chapter 2.

Second, post-positivism is reductionist in the sense that post-positivists reduce ideas to small, discrete components to test them through meticulous examinations and experimentations of objective reality. Additionally, research questions and/or research hypotheses guide the study. For instance, the present study is an examination of non-target-like performance by Swahili-speaking EFL learners. More specifically, it aimed at examining the acquisition of grammatical (in)definiteness as realised via articles in English (cf. Chapters 5 and 6).

Third, post-positivism focuses on testing, verifying and redefining theories that govern the world. This means that a post-positivist has to start with a particular theory; then they collect data, test theories, draw conclusions and make the necessary revisions.

4.3 Data collection procedure

Having explained the motivation behind the decisions I made regarding the methodology of my study in the previous sections, I will now describe how I collected the data for my study. I explain the sets of data that I needed in order to address the specific research questions of the present study. Then, I describe the geographical area in which the study was conducted. I also explain the ethical procedures I followed, my schedule, sample and sampling procedures as well as the actual data collection process.

4.3.1 Deciding on the sets of data needed

As pointed out previously, I needed three major sets of data to address the specific research questions. The first set was the qualitative data from the descriptive analysis of literature on the realisation of (in)definiteness. In line with Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:177), I decided to use the qualitative data before collecting quantitative data so as to point out differences and similarities that exist between English and Swahili in realising (in)definiteness (cf. Chapter 2).

The second set was the quantitative data from the learners containing their use of articles in realising (in)definiteness in English. This set of data was collected by means of five instruments: a language background questionnaire (LBQ), a quick placement test (QPT), a picture description task (PDT), an acceptability judgement task (AJT) and a forced choice elicitation task (FCET). Note that except for the LBQ, the other tasks typically contain pre-determined responses and provide factual information in terms of numbers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011:177). The tasks were used to examine areas that manifest as non-target-like in Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use, to compare learner performance on different tasks, to compare performance among different (form and proficiency) levels, and to assess the role of

the learners' L1 Swahili in the acquisition of (in)definiteness in English. I describe the data collection instruments in Section 4.3.6, and report and discuss the results in Chapters 5 and 6.

The third set comprises the qualitative data collected via semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers in Tanzania. I present and analyse this set of data in Chapter 7.

4.3.2 The area of study

I conducted this study in Tanzania, particularly in the Dar es Salaam region. The region has five districts (Ilala, Kigamboni, Kinondoni, Temeke and Ubungo). According to MoEVT (2010), the region has a total of 784 secondary schools. Among them, 304 are private schools and 480 are public schools. The study purposively involved only three public secondary schools in the Ilala district. The populations of the present study consist of secondary school learners, who speak Swahili⁴⁷ as their L1, and their respective teachers of English in public secondary schools in Dar es Salaam.

As pointed out previously, English is the medium of instruction, whereas Swahili is taught as a subject in Tanzanian public secondary schools. This means that secondary school teachers and learners are required to communicate in English while in the school environment.

4.3.3 Gaining permission

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:175) remind us that we require permission from authorities and individuals in order to collect data. Before starting the actual data collection process, I obtained research clearance from the University of Dar es Salaam, a research permit from the Ilala municipal council, institutional permissions from the heads of schools and ethical clearance from Stellenbosch University. These enabled me to collect data in the respective schools.

After completing these steps, I went into 12 classes (see Section 4.3.5 below) and explained the aim of my study to the learners. Then I asked who would be willing to participate in it. I selected 18 learners who were willing to participate from each class from each school, as explained in Section 4.3.5 below. I assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity of results. In addition, I informed them that they were free to withdraw their participation at any stage of the study. After that, because they were minors, I provided each one of them with an

⁴⁷ As described in Chapter 2 (cf. Section 2.5), the kiUnguja dialect, spoken on the island of Zanzibar and the mainland of Tanzania is the standard dialect of Swahili (Karanja, 2012). The participants of the present study were thus L1 speakers of this dialect.

English assent form (with Swahili translations in it) (See Appendix B). Each learner had to read it carefully; and I responded to all of their questions before they signed the forms. Quené (2010:269) reminds us that, for minors, parents' informed consent is also mandatory. Therefore, I gave all the selected learners English consent forms (with Swahili translations in them) (see Appendix C) to be read and signed by their parents/guardians to confirm that they would allow their children to take part in the study. I included my phone number for any questions that the parents/guardians might have. For those parents/guardians who had any questions, I clarified everything before they signed the forms.

Thereafter, I contacted the EFL teachers of the 12 classes that I had visited and explained my study to them. I also asked for their voluntary participation in the semi-structured interviews. I assured them of confidentiality and anonymity in reporting the results. I gave them freedom to refuse to participate in the study. I also informed them that they were free to withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any time without any problems (See Appendix D for the consent form given to the teachers.). This freedom ensured that the teachers recruited would answer my questions with honesty (cf. Shenton, 2004:66).

4.3.4 Schedule

During September to October 2014, I sought research clearance from the University of Dar es Salaam and from the Ilala municipal council. Thereafter I contacted the heads of public secondary schools in the Ilala district and applied for institutional permission to collect data for my study. I used this opportunity to develop early familiarity with the culture of the participating schools. It was also during this time that I visited the classes, explained my study to the learners and selected the participants for my study. Actual data collection started in October 2014. I first collected the learner data. In November 2014, I previewed the data and identified issues that I would discuss with the teachers in the semi-structured interviews. Between the end of November 2014 and the beginning of January 2015, I conducted the interviews with the teachers.

4.3.5 Sample and sampling procedures

The study used a multilevel purposeful sampling procedure. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) proposed this procedure for a study like the current one because this study aims to maximise our understanding of the non-target-like performance demonstrated by the Swahili-speaking EFL learners. The study involved the choice of setting (Dar es Salaam), groups (Form One

(F1) to Form Four (F4)) and individuals (learners and their teachers) at different stages of data collection (cf. Savaya, Monnickendam & Waysman, 2000).

I recruited the respondents for this study from three public secondary schools (B, J and M) in the Ilala district. A number of considerations led me to select these schools. First, because the schools are public, they admit most of their learners from public primary schools in Tanzania, which means that they have many learners with a monolingual Swahili background. Second, because all learners were in public schools, I assumed that they were receiving almost the same quantity and quality of input because they would be following the same syllabus. However, these schools had one major difference; most of the learners in School J indicated in their respective LBQs that their parents/guardians could speak English in addition to their indigenous L1s and Swahili. Some of these learners mentioned that they occasionally spoke English in their homes with their parents/guardians. The third consideration was that the schools are located in an urban area (Dar es Salaam) where there are many monolingual speakers of Swahili as opposed to more rural areas where people often grow up with one or more of the ethnic languages. Fourth, using the three schools (instead of using only one) allowed for site triangulation to get a more credible picture of non-target-like performance on articles. Using Schools B, J and M allowed me to crosscheck similar information obtained from these different schools. My decision followed Shenton's (2004:66) recommendation to employ participants from more than one organisation in order to achieve greater credibility of results. As for sampling, the multilevel purposive sampling in this study was conducted as follows:

The learner data were planned to be collected from 14 learners per form, from F1 to F4 (corresponding to Grades 9 to 12 in the South African school system), i.e. 56 learners per school. (I excluded five learners from School J from the study because I later realised that they had French as a third language. Therefore, I recruited only 51 eligible learners from School J) I recruited the participants through a non-probabilistic sampling strategy. I visited one class per form per school and asked each learner to complete the LBQ. Only the learners who spoke L1 Swahili and who had no other language apart from English were eligible for the study.

Moreover, the study involved nine English native speakers (who served as a control group). Note that because English really is a foreign language in Tanzania, it was not possible to recruit native speakers of English who grew up in Tanzania. For this reason, I recruited two

native speakers of English who were staying and working in Dar es Salaam; additionally, I recruited five English native speakers who, during the time of data collection, were studying in the United States of America. Among them, two females were studying at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, two males were studying at the University of Massachusetts and one female was studying at Smith College in Massachusetts. Furthermore, I recruited one native speaker of English who was working in the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University and another native speaker who was registered for postgraduate studies in the same department.

For the teacher data, I purposively recruited 10 teachers of English for semi-structured interviews because they had been actively involved in teaching English in Tanzania.⁴⁸ The interviews aimed at eliciting their opinions regarding the non-target-like performance of their EFL learners with respect to (in)definiteness in English and discussions of how they, as teachers, helped the learners in their learning process, specifically of course how they teach (in)definiteness and how they address learners' difficulties in acquiring this property of English.

4.3.6 Collecting data

In this section, my presentation focuses on the tools that I used to collect mainly the second and the third sets of data mentioned previously. Note that the tasks designed for data collection in this study were carefully selected to ensure that they could evaluate both the lower and higher levels of competencies as mentioned in Section 1.5.3.3 (cf. Klein-Collins, 2013:12). For instance, while the OQPT and the FCET mainly evaluate lower-level competencies via their objective questions, the AJT and the PDT ensure conformance to higher-level competencies through their requirements of complex analytical thinking (via the AJT and the PDT) and descriptions and demonstrations (via the PDT) (Frías, 2014:8; Richards, 2006:25). In addition, whereas the AJT and the FCET tapped the learners' explicit knowledge, the PDT tapped their implicit knowledge. Hence, there was no risk of task bias via eliciting only one type of knowledge. Overall, the tasks were indeed suitable for the Swahili-speaking secondary school EFL learners who participated in this study (see Andringa & Rebuschat, 2015:190-191). As mentioned in Section 4.3.4, I visited the schools several

⁴⁸ I initially planned to recruit 12 teachers of English (i.e. one teacher per form per school) for the interviews. However, I managed to recruit only 10 teachers because one of the teachers in School M was teaching two classes: F1 and F4. In addition, I could not interview an F2 teacher in School J because she was away marking national examinations during the time of data collection.

times between September and November 2014 to administer the learner tasks. I also visited the teachers several times at their convenience between November 2014 and January 2015 to conduct the interviews. In the following sections, I describe the data collection instruments in the order in which I employed them during the data collection process.

4.3.6.1 Language Background Questionnaire

To collect data, first, I asked each of the 18 learners selected from each class to complete a short LBQ (see Appendix E). This enabled me to obtain information about their mother's/father's/primary caregivers' L1(s), the language(s) spoken at home while they were growing up, where they attended primary school, when they started learning English and which language(s) they normally use in their daily lives (at school, on the playground, with friends and with family members). The data collected using this instrument helped to identify potential respondents for the study. I asked only the learners who grew up with Swahili as their only L1 and who were using the language in their daily lives to take part in the remainder of the study. I selected 14 learners, who met these criteria, who had signed the assent form and whose parents had signed the consent form, from each form from each school. The total number of eligible learners recruited for the study from the three schools was 163 (54 males and 109 females), given that I later excluded five learners from the study due to them having French as additional language (cf. Section 4.3.5). At the time of data collection, the participants were aged between 14 and 18 years old. As for the English native speaker controls, I sourced them from private schools in the vicinity of the participating public schools and from outside Tanzania, as I explained in Section 4.3.5.

4.3.6.2 Quick Placement Test

After completing the LBQ, the learners completed the OQPT (Syndicate U.C.L.E, 2001) in order to gain insights into their proficiency levels. The average time for completing the test is 30 minutes. The learners in this study completed it in an average of 38 minutes. The test had 60 questions ranging from vocabulary and grammar to cloze test items. The placement test groups learners into six levels in relation to their test scores: 0-17 (beginner), 18-29 (elementary), 30-39 (lower intermediate), 40-47 (upper intermediate), 48-54 (advanced) and 54-60 (very advanced). Results indicated that there were 57 learners with an elementary (E) level of English proficiency, 87 learners with a lower-intermediate (LI) level and 19 learners with an upper-intermediate (UI) level.

4.3.6.3 Picture Description Task

Thereafter, I administered the PDT. The task required the learners to communicate information depicted in a series of pictures (COST Action IS0804)⁴⁹ to a person who does not have access to them. I administered this task immediately after gaining useful insights into their levels of English proficiency and just before administering the AJT and the FCET so that the learners would not realise that the focus was on articles.

i) Preparing the task

In preparing the task, I followed the guidelines recommended in COST Action IS0804 (n.d.:59ff.). I made three print outs of each set of pictures in colour on A3 pages. Each story consists of six linearly ordered pictures depicting their respective events in the correct order. I folded each set of the six pictures into three parts so that the speaker could see only two pictures at a time. After that, I inserted each set into three envelopes of different colours (hence the need for three print outs of each story). Then, I put the envelopes on a table. Each envelope had the same four stories. I used the different envelopes so that the learner would assume that the experimenter does not know which story he/she has selected. This procedure follows from Trenkic (2007) and Zdorenko and Paradis's (2008) observation that hiding a picture from an experimenter is useful because this means the speaker (i.e. the participant) cannot assume that the referents are identifiable to the hearer (i.e. the experimenter). Allowing both the participants and the experimenter to look at the same referents would have partly contributed to the use of *the* by the participants in their first mention of referents. For instance, the participants would start with "The mouse" from the beginning because they know that the experimenter has also seen it.

ii) Administering the task

To conduct the experiment, I formed a nested sample of 35 learners (aged between 14 and 18 years) from the pool of 163 participating learners. In each school, I selected three learners from each of the four classes (F1 through F4) but I also considered their QPT scores, as shown in Table 4.1.

⁴⁹ I am grateful to Dr Frenette Southwood (in the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University) for allowing me to use these pictures.

Table 4.1: QPT scores of the learners who participated in the PDT

	School B			School J			School M		
	Lrnr	Lrnr	Lrnr	Lrnr	Lrnr	Lrnr	Lrnr	Lrnr	Lrnr
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
F4	36	28	22		38	31	39	30	23
F3	39	38	34	39	33	30	30	27	23
F2	40	33	29	43	35	32	29	26	22
F1	36	30	22	41	34	30	33	27	24

My initial plan was to collect PDT data from three learners (i.e. one learner per proficiency level) per class per school. However, after administering the QPT, it was not possible to obtain one learner from each proficiency level. In School M, for example, no learner had an UI level of proficiency. Thus, I had to be careful that the nested sample did not include only learners belonging to one level of proficiency. To achieve this, I selected one learner with comparatively higher QPT scores, one with average scores and one with lower scores than the others had in their respective form classes (cf. Table 4.1). I conducted the experiment during school hours in classrooms in each school.

Before asking the learners to describe the pictures, I instructed them in Swahili –their L1. I told them that there were three envelopes. Each envelope contained four different stories. I told each learner to pick any three stories that they liked. Each story had distinctive characters. The characters differed according to type, colour, shape and size. I told them to use such distinguishing features for clear descriptions, since the whole point was to examine their use of articles in relation to adjectives.

To describe the pictures, I asked them, first, to look at all the pictures constituting one story. I then required them to focus on the first two pictures and to start describing them to me. In the situations where a learner did not speak for about 10 seconds, I used prompts such as “alright..., ok..., well..., anything else? Tell me more...” I avoided questions like “what is he doing here? who is flying? who is jumping?” in order not to disrupt the learner’s description, unless the learner stopped speaking completely.

Moreover, I reminded them that I could not see the pictures. Therefore, the speakers could not assume that I was familiar with the referents. I also avoided mentioning the characters because the learners would have started with *the* in their first mention of the referents by assuming that I was familiar with the referents and therefore I could identify them.

I used the PDT because it offered several advantages in eliciting data: first, it ensured more spontaneous linguistic data than that obtained through the FCET (cf. Section 4.3.6.5 below); and second, it engaged the speakers to attend to meaning rather than to form, which means it offered more realistic linguistic situations for using grammatical forms while expressing meaning (Lee, 2013). Third, unlike naturalistic data collection procedures, it increased my control of what was to be referred to while keeping the communicative context as natural as possible (Eisenbeiss, 2009). Moreover, it helped me to distinguish definite/indefinite and specific/non-specific contexts easily (cf. Section 6.2). Hence coding was straightforward and more objective, in contrast to coding naturalistic data where the coder may resort to subjective judgements about the semantic status of some referents. Fourth, it was ideal for exploring cross-linguistic similarities and differences in morpho-syntactic and semantic-pragmatic realisations of (in)definiteness; and finally, it helped me to obtain rich and comparable sets of data (Eisenbeiss, 2010; Zdorenko & Paradis, 2011).

iii) Data processing

I recorded the learners' descriptions using an audio-recorder, transcribed and coded the first two of each learner's three descriptions. There were 70 transcripts (two stories for each of the 35 participants). The transcripts were categorised according to the learners' levels of proficiency. Thereafter, I removed articles from the transcripts and left only blank spaces before nouns.

In selecting the experimental items, I excluded a number of constructions from the analysis. Such constructions are "*there is/was a*"... and "*a little*..." since they are formulaic. In addition, I excluded "*a kind of*...", "*for the time being*" and "*once upon a time*" from the analysis since they are idiomatic. Such constructions are normally understood as whole chunks of English (cf. Butler, 2002; Snape, 2006; Thomas, 1989). Moreover, I excluded cases in which learners used both a definite and an indefinite determiner together (for example, "*the another child*...") from the experimental items because their respective nouns were ambiguous in relation to definite and indefinite readings.

I also carefully inserted some appropriate items into some constructions; in particular, in cases where a learner employed direct translation in their descriptions. For instance, one

learner (B4FAY)⁵⁰ translated directly from the L1 Swahili expression *paka amepanda mti* to “*the cat plant the tree*” to mean ‘the cat climbed the tree’. In such cases, since editing could have affected the contexts in the transcripts, I simply inserted appropriate English words within italicised double-brackets immediately after the wrong words, as in “___*cat plant((climbed)) tree*”. I did this before sending the transcripts to two English native speaker controls. The whole idea was to help the controls understand what the learner meant.

Where a learner omitted an article in the second NP in coordinated NPs by a conjunction as in “*the sausage and ø balloon...*”, it was not considered non-target-like since such constructions are acceptable to English native speakers. Moreover, where a learner repeated a particular phrase in adjacent positions, I selected the latter one, as in “... *the dog started to... (the) ___ dog started to take...*” (J3SNJ). I assumed that such a learner was trying to correct his/her utterance’s grammar. Finally, I had 1,969 experimental items from the PDT.

After identifying the experimental items, I took the transcripts to the two English native speaker control participants (as “editors”) and asked them to add the required articles in each blank space where this was appropriate (given that in some instances no article was required). Marginally adapting Snape’s (2006) procedure, I also did not disclose the learners’ levels of English proficiency to the editors. I gave each editor the 70 transcripts and provided them with the pictures for reference. I made it clear to the editors that the participants were under the impression that I did not know which pictures they were describing since I could not see the pictures. To guarantee inter-editor reliability, I compared their responses on the 70 transcripts in order to identify ambiguous/unambiguous referents and definite/indefinite referents. An unambiguous referent is one in which the two editors had the same response, whereas an ambiguous referent is one in which the editors had different responses, as instanced below.

- | | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| (101) | J2RZM: You know (ø) cat love fish. | |
| | You know ___the___ cat love fish | NS1 |
| | You know ___a___ cat love fish | NS2 |
| | J4JMS: As we know, (ø) dog always like meat | |
| | As we know, ___the___ dog always like meat | NS1 |
| | As we know, ___a___ dog always like meat | NS2 |

⁵⁰ In these codes, the first letter refers to the school, the number represents their form level and the last three letters stand for the participants’ initials in random order. When a participant had two-letter initials, I added a third, random initial to make them three.

M4TMR: (\emptyset) cat can survive by eating (\emptyset) rat	
The cat can survive by eating <u>the</u> rat	NS1
The cat can survive by eating <u>a</u> rat	NS2

The referents in the three examples above are all acceptable in English since they are generic. In the generic context, both *the* and *a* are acceptable for singular entities. In addition, the zero article ' \emptyset ' is acceptable for plural/mass entities. Such ambiguous referents were excluded in identifying cases of the substitution of articles by the learners because the independent variables for testing the FH were the parametric variations of definiteness and specificity (cf. Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:134). In contrast, the referents were included in identifying cases of the omission of articles since the independent variable was adjectival modification, but not definiteness and specificity.

iv) *Inter-editor reliability*

Inter-editor reliability serves to indicate the extent to which the data collected effectively represent the variables of the study (McHugh, 2012). As mentioned above, the total number of experimental items in the PDT data was 1,969, and the editors agreed in terms of their response on 1,931 of these items. The editors thus only differed on 38 items, making the inter-editor reliability 98.1%.

v) *Coding procedure*

In coding the data, the analysis focused on referring expressions. I examined the use of *the*, *a/an* and \emptyset 'the omission of articles' in the first-mention and previously-mentioned contexts. The analysis considered all and only singular common nouns because of two reasons. The first was to be able to compare the learners' performance on the PDT with their performance on the FCET and the AJT (these tasks contain only singular common nouns). The second was to have clear contexts where the learners might omit articles, because in the first mention of plural and mass nouns, one could not be certain whether the learners incorrectly omitted articles or correctly used the *zero* article (Master, 1997). Such entities are typically bare in the indefinite context in English.

In the PDT, there were two major contexts: definite and indefinite. Considering that specificity involves having a particular referent in mind (Fodor & Sag, 1982; Lyons, 1999), all the referents in the task were specific. Consequently, the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) was examined in this task by looking at the use of *the* interchangeably with *a* only in the first mention/[–def, +spec] context. I looked at the following determiner contexts (i) *the* where *the* should be, (ii) *the* where *a* should be, (iii) *a* where *a* should be, (iv) and *a* where *the* should be

(see Zdorenko and Paradis (2008), for a similar analysis). Then I compared their overall percentage scores on the correct use, incorrect substitution and incorrect omission of articles. In the case of their omission of articles, I compared their percentage of omission in adjectivally modified noun [ART+ADJ+N] contexts with their percentage of omission in non-adjectivally modified noun [ART+N] contexts (cf. Trenkic, 2007). I present the learners' PDT data and discuss the results of their analysis in Chapter 6.

4.3.6.4 Acceptability Judgement Task

After administering the PDT, I administered a modified version of Kim and Lakshmanan's (2009) AJT (see Appendix F). The aim of this task was to examine how Swahili-speaking EFL learners judge (accept or reject) experimental items in relation to (non-)specificity conditions. The experimental items were prepared based on the prediction of the FH that L2 learners with L1s which do not have articles fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP (cf. Section 3.3). According to the reduced ACP (Tryzna, 2009), L2 learners fluctuate between the two settings by using *the* interchangeably with *a* in [-def, +spec] contexts (cf. Section 3.3.7). This task also aimed at testing the association of *the* with specificity. Based on the findings of earlier studies such as Huebner (1983) and Master (1987) (cf. Section 3.2), L2 learners might be expected to associate *the* with specific nouns during the early stages of acquisition. This would mean that they would use *the* more than *a* in the [-def, +spec] context.

i) Preparing the task

In constructing the test items, I addressed extra-grammatical factors in order to avoid spurious judgements. Sorace (1996:391ff.) identified such factors as parsing strategies, context and mode of presentation, pragmatic considerations and linguistic training. I briefly describe how I addressed each of these factors below.

First, besides ensuring that each referent (noun) expresses only one meaning, I also carefully punctuated each item to ensure that the meaning it expresses is unambiguous.

Second, I used contextually familiar referents in the test. This ensured a low risk of obtaining data based on learners' guesswork. Regarding the mode of presentation, I added 20 new sets of distractors (10 in which the relevant sentence made sense and 10 in which the relevant sentence did not make sense) to 40 experimental sets, and I randomised all 60 items so that the learners would not be aware of the grammatical focus of the test.

Third, regarding pragmatic considerations, I considered Altmann and Steedman's (1988) observation that participants are inclined to accept more frequently the interpretation that needs fewer assumptions about the previous discourse than interpretations which need more assumptions about the previous discourse. In this task, I carefully included only the referents that do not require previous mention. The experimental items therefore carried roughly the same weight in terms of cognitive processing.

Finally, it is said that participants who have received previous linguistic training vary in their judgments from those who have not been linguistically trained (cf. Gleitman & Gleitman, 1979; Snow & Meijer, 1977). In the present study, however, there was no such distinction since all learners had been receiving formal English instruction.

I adapted the structure of the task from Kim and Lakshmanan (2009). There were 40 experimental items for both specific and non-specific indefinite contexts.⁵¹ This means each context ([–def, –spec] and [–def, +spec]) had 20 items. In each context, 10 items contained *the*, and the other 10 items contained *a* in pre-noun contexts. Each of the items consisted of two sentences: the first sentence had a singular common noun preceded by either *a* or *the*, and the second sentence then offered a specific or non-specific condition, making it clear whether the noun in the first sentence was to be understood as specific or as non-specific. Each set of two sentences appeared twice as an item on the task: once with *the* preceding the relevant noun in the first sentence and once with *a* preceding the relevant noun in the first sentence. The following examples are illustrative.

[–def, –spec]

- (102) a. I am trying to find a gardener. I will hire any good gardener.
 b. I am trying to find the gardener. I will hire any good gardener.

- (103) a. Peter always carries a book in his bag. Let me ask him which one he has today.
 b. Peter always carries the book in his bag. Let me ask him which one he has today.

[–def, +spec]

- (104) a. I plan to close a bank account. There is one I don't use.
 b. I plan to close the bank account. There is one I don't use.

⁵¹ I did not include definite contexts in this task because the primary aim of this task was to assess whether the learners would use *the* and *a* interchangeably in indefinite specific contexts or whether they would associate *the* with specific entities. Following the reduced ACP (Tryzna, 2009), definite contexts were therefore not relevant to this inquiry.

- (105) a. I am going to buy a suit tomorrow. You will be horrified by the colour.
 b. I am going to buy the suit tomorrow. You will be horrified by the colour.

Before judging any item, the learners were required to read both the underlined sentence and the non-underlined sentence in each item; then they had to judge whether the underlined sentence “makes sense” or not. I asked the learners not to assume any previous knowledge in judging the items. In the examples above, the underlined sentence “makes sense” in (102a) and (103a) (*a* in a [-def, -spec] context) as well as in (104a) and (105a) (*a* in a [-def, +spec] context) but not in (102b) or (103b) (*the* in a [-def, -spec] context) and also not in (104b) or (105b) (*the* in a [-def, +spec] context).

I piloted the task among 28 Swahili-speaking learners of EFL in Tanzania in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the time set, instructions given and vocabularies used in each item. The participants indicated their responses on a Likert scale. The scale ranged from 0-3 points: 0=doesn't make sense at all, 1=somewhat doesn't make sense, 2=somewhat makes sense and 3=absolutely makes sense (the response options also offered in Kim and Lakshmanan's (2009) version of the task). The pilot results revealed that the learners understood the instructions and the vocabulary items. There were no ambiguous items in the task. The learners completed it in less than 25 minutes.

ii) *Administering the task*

In the actual data collection process, a hundred and sixty two (162) Swahili-speaking EFL learners from the data pool of 163 learners (aged between 14 and 18 years) completed the task.⁵² They spent an average of 25 minutes on the task. Seven (7) English native-speaker controls also completed the task.

iii) *Coding procedure*

In coding the data, I categorised the learner rating scores in the task into four groups: (i) [-spec *a*], [+spec *a*], [-spec *the*] and [+spec *the*]. I did not convert the scores into percentages since the aim was not to determine the percentage of accurate judgements but instead the learners' acceptability judgements. I captured the raw data in an Excel spreadsheet based on these four categories. Thereafter, the data were analysed statistically using STATISTICA. I present the statistical results in Chapter 5.

⁵² One learner was absent the day I administered this task in School J. Therefore, she did not complete it.

While judgement tasks clearly offer relevant contexts to test a phenomenon under study (for instance, the FH and the association of *the* with specificity in the present study), such tasks have generally been criticised for not offering definitive answers (Trenkic, 2007:292); it was thus important to also use a task such as the FCET to obtain definitive answers.

4.3.6.5 Forced Choice Elicitation Task

The FCET was adapted from that used by Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004). It had 60 short dialogues in English. Only 40 dialogues were relevant for the present study, and the other 20 dialogues were distractors (Appendix G).

i) Preparing the task

I made a number of modifications to Ionin et al.'s (2004) task. First, I changed some items to ensure that they were about issues referring to school instead of work or university, and to restaurants or cinemas instead of galleries or parks. I assumed that such situations were more relevant to the secondary school learners; and therefore, the test was suitable even for the F1 learners.

Second, I substituted local place names (such as Ilala, Arusha and Zanzibar) for the foreign names (such as Chicago, Boston and New York) because I considered the foreign names to be unfamiliar to the secondary school learners who participated in the present study. In addition, I substituted *the mayor* for *the governor* because in Tanzania there are no governors. I assumed that using locally relevant and well-known terms would help the learners to understand the dialogues better. The whole idea was to make the task more suitable for the target population.

Third, I excluded any explicit statements about familiarity with the referents or denial of knowledge of the referents from the dialogues. Ionin et al.'s (2004) items contain instances in which speakers explicitly declare or deny familiarity with the referents about which the speaker is talking. However, Pongpairoj (2007:214) and Trenkic (2008:8) remark that specificity was routinely operationalised via these statements in Ionin et al.'s (2004) task, which then skewed the learners' choice of articles. Consequently, the exclusion of such statements in the current study aimed at ensuring that such declarations or denials of familiarity with the referents would not influence the learners' choice of articles.

Fourth, I introduced some items with adjectivally modified nouns in the task. In contrast to Ionin et al.'s (2004) task, the modified task in the present study aimed further to compare the

omission of articles in adjectivally modified nouns with the omission of articles in non-modified nouns. Consequently, 21 items with adjectivally modified nouns were deliberately included in the task.

Finally, I included 20 distractor items in the task. This allowed me to hide the grammatical focus of the task in the following way. In each of the 60 items, there was a target sentence which had a blank space which the learners were told might indicate a missing word. After each blank space in the target sentence of each item, I inserted a list of words from which the participants had to choose, which included words that were appropriate for the 40 experimental items (i.e. the articles *the*, *a* and the ‘ \emptyset ’ symbol) as well as the words that were appropriate for the 20 distractors (*in* and *who*). It was hoped that this seemingly random list of words (presented in the order *the*, *who*, *a*, *in* and \emptyset) would hide the grammatical focus of the task from the learners.

The 40 experimental items on the task consisted of 19 items involving definite contexts and 21 items involving indefinite contexts.⁵³ With respect to the definite contexts, there were four anaphoric, seven associative and eight encyclopaedic items. These item types are exemplified in (106), (107) and (108) respectively:⁵⁴

- (106) Anaphoric context
 [+def, +spec]
 (*At school*)
 A: Why didn't you come to school yesterday?
 B: We were moving into a new house.
 A: How do you like _____ (**the**, who, a, in, \emptyset) new house?⁵⁵

The definite article is the correct word in the example above because Speaker B introduced the referent (the house) in the preceding discourse. The house is thus familiar to both the speaker and the hearer in the discourse context.

⁵³ The reason for the different numbers of items per type will become clear below.

⁵⁴ In each example in this section, I have printed the correct word in brackets in bold.

⁵⁵ To avoid priming effects, Sarko (2008) avoided using articles in the sentences preceding the target sentence. However, I noted in designing my instrument that this often leads to unnatural sounding statements. What I did instead was to include the words that were relevant to the distractors (*who* and *in*) in the list in brackets from which the learners had to choose the right word. Hence, they did not know that the focus of the task was on articles.

(107) Associative contexts

- a. [+def, -spec]
(*At a shop*)
A: Do you see that laptop on the shelf?
B: Yes, it's beautiful.
A: I want to know _____ (**the**, who, a, in, \emptyset) manufacturer of that laptop.
- b. [+def, +spec]
(*At school*)
A: I really liked that book you gave me for my birthday. It was very interesting!
B: Thanks! I like it too. I would like to meet _____ (**the**, who, a, in, \emptyset) writer of that book. On a TV show, she promised to release another book later this year.

The referents in the two examples in (107) are definite by virtue of association, i.e. any laptop has a manufacturer, and any book has a writer or writers. Nevertheless, the two examples differ in terms of specificity. In (107a), the speaker does not have a specific manufacturer in mind, whereas in (107b) the speaker has a specific writer in mind: the one she saw on the TV show.

(108) Encyclopaedic contexts

- a. [+def, -spec]
(*At school*)
A: Where is Janet?
B: She has gone to _____ (**the**, who, a, in, \emptyset) state house. She said she would tell us where it is when she gets back.
- b. [+def, +spec]
(*Conversation between two pupils*)
A: We had physics in school today.
B: What did you learn?
A: We learned that Neil Armstrong was the first human to walk on _____ (**the**, who, a, in, \emptyset) moon.

In each of the two examples in (108) above, the use of *the* is felicitous because it is assumed that the speaker and the hearer know the referents, given the situations in which the conversations take place. However, the two examples differ because the speaker in (108a) does not have a specific referent in mind, since she does not seem to know anything about the state house. On the contrary, the speaker in (108b) has a specific referent, namely the moon, in mind.

The difference between associative and encyclopaedic contexts is that, in the associative context, a mention of a particular referent evokes for the hearer all the things associated with it (as in (107)), whereas in the encyclopaedic context, a referent is understood as definite via relying on situational knowledge (as in (108a)) or general knowledge (as in (108b)) (Lyons, 1999). Each of the five definite contexts illustrated by Examples (106) to (108) was represented by four experimental items in the task, except for the [+def, -spec] associative context, which was only represented by three experimental items. This is because the item in (109) below was meant to elicit *the* for the associative context, but the majority of the English native speaker controls chose *a*.

(109) [-def, -spec] context

(*Along the street*)

A: Every Sunday we have one couple who wed at our church.

B: Oh, I love weddings! That means on Sunday, I will see _____ (the, who, **a**, in, \emptyset) bride, if there happens to be a couple that wants to get married.

Lyons (1999:166) opines that verbs showing future time normally create what he calls “hypothetical/opaque” contexts. Therefore, I moved the item to the opaque indefinite context because the referent was indefinite non-specific. For this reason only 19 definite-context items remained.

The next category of the test items involves indefinite contexts and includes first mention contexts (four items), opaque contexts (nine items) and transparent contexts (eight items). These are exemplified in (110), (111) and (112) respectively.

(110) First mention context

[-def, +spec]

(*Conversation between two friends*)

A: Last Saturday, I didn't have anywhere to go, and it was raining.

B: So what did you do?

A: First, I cleaned my room. Then I ate lunch. Then I read _____ (the, who, **a**, in, \emptyset) short book.

In example (110) above, Speaker A mentions the referent, “a short book” for the first time in the discourse. Therefore, it receives the indefinite article.

(111) Opaque contexts

a. [-def, -spec]

(At a school)

A: I am new in school. This is my first day.

B: Welcome! Are you going to be at the school party tonight?

A: Yes. I'd like to get to know my classmates. I am hoping to find _____(the, who, **a**, in, \emptyset) new friend! I don't like being alone.

b. [-def, +spec]

(At the playground)

A: What are you looking for?

B: I am looking for _____ (the, who, **a**, in, \emptyset) golden watch. I must have left it here yesterday.

The two examples in (111) above contain indefinite referents (a friend and a watch respectively). The contexts are categorised as opaque because they contain verbs (*looking for* and *hoping* respectively) denoting counter-factual (as opposed to factual) situations. Such verbs are responsible for creating ambiguity between specific and non-specific contexts (Lyons, 1999). Apart from sharing opacity, the two examples differ in the sense that in (111a) the speaker does not have a particular referent in mind, whereas in (111b) the speaker has a particular referent in mind.

(112) Transparent contexts

a. [-def, -spec]

(At a school)

A: John's backpack seems very heavy.

B: Yes, he always carries _____ (the, who, **a**, in, \emptyset) book. Let me ask him which one he has today.

b. [-def, +spec]

(Two pupils on their way back home)

A: Have you gone to the library today?

B: Yes, what about you?

A: I have been there. I read _____ (the, who, **a**, in, \emptyset) good book. It is about animals.

The referents in (112a) and (112b) are in transparent contexts. This means there is no question of scope ambiguity as was the case with the examples in (111). The difference between the two items in (112) is that example (112a) shows that the referent is non-specific whereas example (112b) shows that the referent is specific. The first-mention context (illustrated in (110) above), the [-def, -spec] transparent context (illustrated in (112a)), the [-def, +spec] transparent context (illustrated in (112b)) and the [-def, -spec] opaque context ((illustrated in (109) above)) were each represented by four experimental items in the task.

The [-def, +spec] opaque context was represented by five experimental items because the item presented in example (113) below was initially designed for a [-spec] referent; however, I noted that the referent was [+spec] because the speaker had a [+spec] ‘yellow hat’ in mind. This was a classification error (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:144). To eliminate the error, I therefore moved the item to the category for [-def, +spec] items.

(113) [-def, +spec] context

Searching for something in a bedroom

Child: May I help you, Mother?

Mother: Yes, please! I have been looking for _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) warm hat everywhere without success. It’s yellow.

It should be noted that all the items representing [-def, +spec] contexts were used to test the FH (Ionin et al., 2004), specifically its prediction that *the* would be used interchangeably with *a* in [-def +spec] contexts (cf. Tryzna, 2009) and the prediction that low proficiency level learners would use *the* more than *a* in [-def, +spec] contexts. This prediction draws on previous research, which showed that low proficiency learners with L1s without articles who learn L2 English seem to associate the definite article with specific entities (cf. Section 3.2). Consequently, they overuse *the* in [-def, +spec] contexts.

Among the 40 experimental items for both definite and indefinite contexts in the task, 21 items contained adjectivally modified nouns [ART+ADJ+N] as in (110) and (111) above, while 19 items contained non-adjectivally-modified nouns [ART+N] as in (112a) above.⁵⁶ These items were used to test the claims made following Trenkic’s (2008) Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA) that L2 learners with [-ART] L1s omit articles more in adjectivally modified nouns than in non-modified nouns.

The FCET was appropriate for this particular kind of study due to the following reasons. First, it was primarily designed for EFL/ESL learners (cf. Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008). Second, it has items that are relevant to testing the SMA. Third, it was adapted for the type of learners who participated in the present study. In addition, unlike most cloze tests, it allowed the

⁵⁶ Item 58 in the task contained the word *train-station*. For an item like this, Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2014:57) remark that the rightmost word determines the category of the compound. Given that ‘train-station’ is a compound, containing a noun modified by another noun, the first noun semantically functions as an adjective. Therefore I refer to the compound as [N_{AF}+N], where N_{AF} stands for a noun that functions as an adjective in this item. Hence, the item is in the same category with the other 20 items containing adjectivally modified nouns in the task.

respondents to understand the context and to select an appropriate article in relation to the meaning expressed in the dialogues.

Prior to the actual data collection process, I piloted the instrument with the 28 L1 Swahili speakers who also completed the AJT. Likewise, I wanted to see whether the time allocated was sufficient and whether the learners understood the instructions and test items. All participants clearly understood the instructions and the items. The majority of them completed the task in less than 50 minutes.

ii) Administering the task

In administering the task, the settings varied depending on the school and on the group of learners concerned. In some schools, I administered the task inside classes, while in others I administered it outside. In total, 160 learners completed the task.⁵⁷ Before starting, I gave the instructions to the learners in their L1 Swahili. I also included three (English) examples in the task: one with an article, one with a preposition and one with no word omitted, for which the correct response was thus the ‘ \emptyset ’ symbol. This was to show the learners that \emptyset was also a valid response in some contexts. These examples helped them to understand easily what they were required to do. I gave them 90 minutes to complete the task. It took most of them less than 50 minutes to complete it. The seven English native speaker control participants also completed the task, and they performed as expected. After having completed all of the tasks, the L2 learner participants each received a small chocolate to thank them for their participation.

iii) Coding procedure

I coded the data by considering the contexts specified in the FCET. As exemplified above, the definite context had three sub-contexts: the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts. Likewise, the indefinite contexts had three immediate sub-contexts: the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts.

I converted the learners’ responses into 1s (correct) and 0s (incorrect). Since the aim of the task was to examine the learners’ accuracy in the contexts specified above, I captured their raw scores in an Excel spreadsheet and converted them into percentages for statistical analyses. The data were analysed using STATISTICA. I present the results in Chapter 5.

⁵⁷ Three learners did not complete the task in School J, because they were absent during the time I administered it.

4.3.6.6 Semi-structured interview plan

As explained in Section 4.3.4, the collection of interview data started in November 2014 and ended in January 2015. The interviews involved eliciting opinions from 10 EFL teachers about non-target-like performance on articles that they have noted in their learners' EFL use, as well as how they address aspects related to the English article system in EFL lessons. Brinkmann (2013:49) recommends qualitative interviews for an aim like this. Moreover, the use of 10 teachers as my source of data allowed me to identify similarities in their narratives (cf. Van Maanen, 1979:548). This is what Shenton (2004:66) refers to as "triangulation via data sources". According to Edwards and Holland (2013), researchers can select from (but are not limited to) structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews to collect qualitative data. In the present study, I selected semi-structured interviews. I present the rationale for selecting this method of data collection in the following section.

4.3.6.6.1 Rationale for using semi-structured interviews

I preferred semi-structured interviews to structured and unstructured interviews because of three key reasons. First, in contrast to structured interviews, the semi-structured interviews were suitable for discussing the acquisition of articles in more detail via open ended and probe questions while maintaining control over what was being discussed (cf. McKay, 2006), but there was also some opportunity for discussion, particularly when teachers clarified some of the points that they were making. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) opine that the opportunity for more clarification is the strength of semi-structured interviews over structured interviews. Mtitu (2014), for instance, used semi-structured interviews to obtain valuable information about teachers' perceptions and experiences in the implementation of Learner Centred Teaching (LCT) of Geography in Tanzania. Likewise, Paulo (2014) used semi-structured interviews to gain insights into pre-service teachers' preparedness to teach and evaluate learners via the competency-based curriculum in Tanzania. Second, semi-structured interviews are suitable for collecting data from a small number of respondents. For example, Barriball and While (1994:330) employed 14 nurses and Pathtak and Intratat (2012:4) recruited 10 teachers of English in their studies. Third, in contrast to focus group discussions, which look for some shared understanding among respondents (Harding, 2013:174), the semi-structured interviews allowed me to get each individual teacher's perspective on the challenge. The data from the 10 teachers later enabled data source triangulation (via the teachers) and site triangulation (via the schools) to determine experiences that are common to all teachers, especially, of course, when considering the

small sample of only 10 teachers from the three schools (cf. Shenton, 2004:66). Such similar and different experiences, in part, helped me to identify the themes presented in Section 7.4. Accordingly, this method was suitable for understanding which non-target-like features they note in their learners' use of the English article system and how they address these features.

4.3.6.6.2 Developing the interview guide

I used various sources of information to prepare the interview guide (cf. Appendix H). I drew on my own experience at secondary school as an EFL learner as well as at university as a lecturer in linguistics (cf. Section 1.6). I also drew on existing literature on the topic (cf. Chapters 2, 3 & 4) as well as on the quantitative results of this study (cf. Chapters 5 & 6). All of these informed my interview guide. Structurally, the guide consisted of four main sections: Introduction by Interviewer, Language Background, Education and Language Use, and Semi-Structured Interview Questions. The interview questions focused on five key areas: (i) the source of non-target-like performance on articles, (ii) how such performance is manifested, (iii) how Swahili contributes to this, (iv) how the teachers teach the article system, and (v) what the teachers recommend to other Tanzanian EFL teachers with regard to the teaching and learning of articles. In addition, I employed probe questions such as “Can you expand a little on this? Can you tell me anything else? Can you give me some examples?” to give the teachers more opportunity for elaboration and exemplification of issues pertinent to the teaching of the article system.

4.3.6.6.3 Setting for the interviews

The settings for the interviews differed depending on the school in question. To begin with, I conducted four interviews at School B. Two interviews (with TB1 and TB2)⁵⁸ took place in the school's physics laboratory. The place was convenient for the interviews during the time because other teachers were marking examination papers in the staff room or invigilating annual examinations in examination rooms. One interview (with TB3) took place in the staff room. The fourth interview (with TB4) took place in one of the reading spaces on the campus of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). During the time of data collection, TB4 had been a postgraduate student at the university. She therefore asked that I meet her there. The reading space was ideal for the interview, because there were no other students around.

⁵⁸ To preserve anonymity, I identify the teachers using letters and numbers. In this context, the first letter (T) stands for Teacher, the second letter stands for the school (i.e. B, J or M), and the number (e.g. 1) shows their position in the order in which I conducted the interviews in their respective school.

At School J, I conducted three interviews. With TJ1, the interview took place in an office shared by four teachers. Before the interview, TJ1 and I requested the other three teachers to allow us to use the office and they agreed. With TJ2, I conducted the interview in a classroom because the learners had started their December holidays and the teachers' office was being prepared for their annual staff meeting. With TJ3, I conducted the interview in one of the reading spaces in the school.

I also conducted three interviews at School M. One interview (with TM1) took place in the staff room of a private school in Dar es Salaam where the interviewee was teaching remedial English. The room was quiet because all other staff members were still on holiday. Two interviews (with TM2 and TM3) took place in the staff room of School M. I conducted these interviews one week before the start of the first term (in January 2015). Therefore, the environment was ideal as all learners and other teachers were absent.

The interviews started with the questions in the language background section to contextualise the teachers' narratives. During the interviews, I audio-recorded the dialogues and/or took some notes to help me in analysing the data. All the interviews taken together lasted a total of 380 minutes, which is approximately 6 hours. On average, each interview thus lasted 38 minutes. I immediately transcribed the data after each interview. If a teacher responded to the interview questions in Swahili, I transcribed the recording in Swahili and then created an accurate grammatical English translation rather than a word-for-word translation. However, if a teacher responded in English, I transcribed their respective data verbatim. I only removed gap fillers, repetitions and false starts, since they were not germane to the analysis.

4.3.6.6.4 Member checks

At the end of each interview, I immediately performed a member check with the respective teacher. I did this by reading them the notes I had taken during the interview. Before starting the actual data analysis, I sent each of them their respective transcript and asked them to check whether the recorded words reflected what they had actually wanted to communicate (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This process ensured that the information gathered was accurate. I also asked the teachers about some issues that emerged during the interviews; for instance, the implementation of the competency-based language-teaching curriculum in teaching and learning the English article system. I asked them about this because, during the interviews, I noted that almost all teachers were uncomfortable with this approach to teaching English. Therefore, I enquired about its implementation, in particular, when they wanted their learners to acquire the ability to use the article system appropriately.

4.3.6.6.5 Rationale for employing thematic analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006:79) defined thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. I selected this method of analysis because of its flexibility – it is not strictly tied to any particular theory or epistemology (Bryman, 2012). It is appropriate for understanding what has happened and why it has happened the way it has happened (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013:400). In the present study, thematic analysis helps to address research questions (vi) and (vii), stated in Section 1.4, and repeated later in Section 7.1. Another reason for selecting this method of analysis is that it is not in conflict with the primary quantitative strand of the present study (cf. Clarke & Braun, 2013).

4.4 Challenges during data collection

The main challenges that I faced in conducting the study relate to the schools’ schedule and environmental constraints. To begin with, the actual data collection process started in October 2014 –when the learners were preparing themselves for examinations. More specifically, the F4 learners were preparing for the national examinations, which were due to start on the 3rd of November 2014 and end on the 20th of November 2014. During this time, the F2 and F3 learners were also preparing for the national examinations and Tanzania Heads of Secondary Schools Association (TAHOSSA) examinations respectively. These examinations were due to start on the 24th of November 2014 and end on the 5th of December 2014. Therefore, the learners were too busy to participate in the study. Despite the schools’ tight schedule, the teachers managed to find a suitable time for me to collect data from their learners before the examinations. During the F4 national examinations, all other form class learners in School M had a seven-day break. Therefore, they were not available for data collection. In Schools B and J, the other form class learners were available. However, except for their teachers, outsiders were not allowed to communicate with them. Therefore, I postponed the data collection process until the F4 learners had completed all their examinations, that is, on the 20th of November 2014.

Regarding the environmental limitations, at School J, most of the time there were no vacant rooms to accommodate the experimental groups; therefore, I administered the tasks outside the classrooms. Sometimes, the bell’s ringing and other learners who were playing outside in groups inconvenienced the experimental groups. At School B, I administered the AJT and the FCET in the school’s physics laboratory. Geographically, the school is located adjacent to a railway line. Therefore, sometimes there was noise caused by hooting trains. In addition,

when I was administering the AJT among the F2 learners (at School B), a group of F4 learners needed the laboratory for testing. Accordingly, the experimental group for this study had to vacate the room and complete the task outside the laboratory. The circumstances were thus not ideal for data collection because it is highly likely that the learners' concentration was affected by the above-mentioned factors. However, I believe that these factors did not influence the learners to such an extent that the overall results of the study were affected.

4.5 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the research paradigm, design and methodology of the present study. I compared the different paradigms and explained why I had chosen the mixed methods paradigm, and, more specifically, an embedded mixed methods design. I also explained how I had gone about deciding on suitable data collection instruments and adapting these where necessary. Finally, I described the sets of data required, the final versions of each of the data collection instruments, the area of study, ethical procedures, schedule, sample and sampling procedures and the actual data collection process. In the following chapter, I present and discuss the quantitative results collected by means of the AJT and the FCET.

CHAPTER 5

WRITTEN DATA

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of two of the three tasks completed by Swahili-speaking secondary school learners of EFL in Tanzania. The first task (the acceptability judgement task (AJT)) was designed to test the learners' acceptability judgements of articles in relation to specific and non-specific conditions. The second task (the forced choice elicitation task (FCET)) was designed to test their knowledge of different contexts for article use in English. These tasks aimed at addressing (parts of) the following research questions (repeated here from Section 1.4):

- ii. Which contexts of the article system of English manifest as non-target-like in the Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use?
- iii. Do Swahili-speaking EFL learners perform differently, in terms of the article system, on different tasks, in particular writing, speaking, comprehension and acceptability judgements?
- iv. Are there differences in the performance of the learners at different form levels (corresponding to South African grade levels) which might indicate the development of their IL knowledge of the English article system?

5.2 Preliminary analysis

This chapter describes and discusses the learners' mean rating scores on the AJT and their mean percentage scores on the FCET. The learners' demographic and linguistic information was discussed in Section 4.3.5 and is summarised here briefly for the reader's convenience. The population for this quantitative component of the study was secondary school learners of EFL who speak Swahili as their only L1 in Tanzania. One hundred and sixty-three (163) learners from three secondary schools participated in this study. Their ages ranged from 14 to 18 years. All these learners attended public primary schools in Tanzania where the medium of instruction (MoI) had been Swahili, which is also spoken in their homes. They were exposed to English as the MoI at secondary school level only. The table below presents their demographic information.

Table 5.1: Participants' demographic information

Variable	Group	n/163	Percentage (%) of cohort
School	B	56	34.4
	J	51	31.3
	M	56	34.4
Form Level	F1	39	23.9
	F2	40	24.5
	F3	42	25.8
	F4	42	25.8
Proficiency levels	UI	19	11.7
	LI	87	53.4
	E	57	35
Entire cohort		163	100

5.3 Task 1: Acceptability Judgement Task

The AJT was described in detail in Section 4.3.6.4. Recall that this task tested the learners' acceptability judgements of articles in relation to specific and non-specific conditions. More specifically, it tested two predictions: the prediction of the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) and the association of *the* with specificity (cf. Section 3.3).

As was explained in Section 4.3.6.4, the task consisted of 60 pairs of sentences – 20 distracters and 40 experimental items. For each pair, learners had to read both sentences and judge the acceptability of the first sentence in the context provided by the second sentence. They indicated their judgement on a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3 points: 0=doesn't make sense at all, 1=somewhat doesn't make sense, 2=somewhat makes sense and 3=absolutely makes sense. The 40 experimental items consisted of 10 items in each of the following four conditions: [-spec *a*], [+spec *a*], [-spec *the*] and [+spec *the*].

In order to run statistical tests, the mean rating scores were categorised based on the four conditions. The results presented here are grouped into two subsections. Section 5.3.1 compares the acceptability judgement ratings within the three schools only. (It excludes the control groups' data because their inclusion would mean that they are considered as an additional school and this leads to an inaccurate picture of the comparison of the three schools' data.) The primary focus of this comparison is to see whether the three schools are different from or similar to one another in terms of their performance on the AJT. Subsequent to this comparison, Section 5.3.2 considers the schools' data taken together and compares the

learners' scores based on their levels of English proficiency (as indicated by the results of the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) – cf. Section 4.3.6.2). At this juncture, the English natives were included as controls (NCs) because their inclusion does not affect the interpretation of results based on the levels of proficiency – they are simply treated as an additional (native speaker) proficiency level.

5.3.1 Per-school comparison of mean ratings for *a* and *the* in [–def, ±spec] conditions

The null hypothesis in this task was that the mean rating scores of the three schools in all four of the conditions listed above were equal. Its alternative hypotheses were as follows:

Based on the FH, L2 learners with L1s which do not have articles fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the Article Choice Parameter (ACP) in the initial stages of L2 acquisition (Ionin, Ko & Wexler, 2004). Following the reduced ACP (Tryzna, 2009), it was therefore expected that the learners would *fluctuate* between definiteness and specificity by rating both *the* and *a* equally in the [–def, +spec] context. This means there would be no significant difference in their mean rating scores for the two articles in this context.

Concerning associating *the* with specificity, it was expected that the learners' mean rating scores for *the* would be higher than for *a* in the [–def, +spec] context. This prediction was based on the findings of earlier studies, such as Huebner (1983) and Thomas (1989), that L2 learners with L1s which do not have an article system seem to associate *the* with specificity via overusing *the* in the [–def, +spec] context in the initial stages of L2 acquisition. If there is no effect for specificity, then *a* should be rated as more acceptable more frequently than *the* in the [–def, +spec] context.

A mixed model repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were differences between the mean rating scores on the four categories when the three schools are taken together. The results were highly significant, $F_{(3, 477)} = 32.73$, $p < 0.01$.⁵⁹ Two-way repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to determine the precise locus of the significant difference. The results indicated a significant school-category interaction effect, $F_{(6, 477)} = 2.37$, $p < 0.05$. This means that the differences between the categories in the task are not the

⁵⁹ Note that throughout a p-value lower than 0.05 is taken to indicate significance.

same for the three schools and that the learners' performance on the categories needs to be considered for the three schools separately.

Table 5.2: Per-school comparison of mean ratings for *a* and *the* in the [–def, –spec] conditions (AJT)⁶⁰

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean rating	Std. dev.	p-value
School B	56	[–spec <i>a</i>]	2.3	0.50	0.0000**
		[–spec <i>the</i>]	2.0	0.49	
School J	50	[–spec <i>a</i>]	2.4	0.42	0.0001**
		[–spec <i>the</i>]	2.2	0.46	
School M	56	[–spec <i>a</i>]	2.2	0.48	0.5159
		[–spec <i>the</i>]	2.2	0.46	

As shown in Table 5.2, the pairwise comparisons (making use of an LSD follow-up test) showed that in both Schools B and J, the learners' mean rating scores for *a* were significantly higher ($p < 0.01$ in both cases) than for *the* in the indefinite non-specific condition. In contrast to this, in School M there was no significant difference between the learners' mean rating scores for *a* and *the* in the indefinite non-specific condition. The following table compares *a* and *the* in the indefinite specific condition.

Table 5.3: Per-school comparison of mean ratings for *a* and *the* in the [–def, +spec] conditions (AJT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean rating	Std. dev.	p-value
School B	56	[+spec <i>a</i>]	2.1	0.55	0.0633
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	2.0	0.52	
School J	50	[+spec <i>a</i>]	2.2	0.45	0.0127*
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	2.0	0.41	
School M	56	[+spec <i>a</i>]	2.0	0.49	0.6578
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	2.0	0.47	

Table 5.3 shows that the mean rating score of the learners in School B was numerically higher for *a* than for *the* in the indefinite specific condition. However, the LSD follow-up test indicated that, for the learners in both Schools B and M, the difference between the two

⁶⁰ One asterisk means $p < 0.05$ whereas two asterisks mean $p < 0.01$.

articles was not significant. Conversely, the learners in School J correctly rated *a* significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) than *the* in this condition.

Since the comparison of the [-spec *a*], [+spec *a*], [-spec *the*] and [+spec *the*] conditions within the schools shows that the mean rating scores are different, it is safe to reject the null hypothesis. The following two paragraphs discuss the school results in relation to the effects of non-specificity and specificity respectively.

Concerning the effect of non-specificity, Table 5.2 shows that Schools B and J associate the indefinite article more with the non-specific condition than they do the definite article. The learners in School M, however, use the two articles interchangeably in this condition. This means that, while the learners in Schools B and J largely use the indefinite article for indefinite entities, those in School M use both the definite article and the indefinite article for indefinite entities. The results of the learners in Schools B and J, in part, concur with the assumption that L2 learners associate *a(n)* with non-specificity. For instance, Huebner (1983) reports that at Stage 3 his respondent (*Ge*) excluded *the* from non-specific conditions. Likewise, Ionin et al. (2003, 2004) noted that their respondents associated *a(n)* with non-specificity. Similarly, Ionin, Zubizarreta and Maldonado (2008) report that their L1 Russian learners of English associated *a(n)* with non-specificity. Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) also noted that their intermediate level Korean group rated *a(n)* numerically higher than *the* in the non-specific condition. Also, Sarko (2009) reports that her L1 French and L1 Syrian Arabic participants associated *a(n)* with non-specificity. In contrast, the learners in School M do not seem to associate *a(n)* with non-specificity since they use the two articles interchangeably in the non-specific condition. These learners do not yet realise that *the* is unacceptable in [-def, -spec] conditions.

As for the effect of specificity, Table 5.3 shows that the learners in School J use the indefinite article more than they use the definite article in the [-def, +spec] contexts. Their results imply that these learners use the English article system in line with the definiteness setting rather than with the specificity setting of the ACP. Thus, when the mean rating scores of all the learners in School J are combined, the learners do not seem to fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. On the other hand, the learners in Schools B and M use the definite and indefinite articles interchangeably in the [-def, +spec] contexts. Their use of both articles signals that they fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. Their performance therefore seems to support Ionin et al.'s (2004) FH. Considering all three schools, School J performs

comparatively better than Schools B and M. For instance, School J's learners are able to distinguish the use of *a(n)* from the use of *the* in the [-def, +spec] condition ($p < 0.05$). For School B learners, the distinction between the two articles in this condition approaches significance. Conversely, the difference between *a(n)* and *the* in the [-def, +spec] condition among School M's learners is far from significance ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, whereas the learners in School J use the article system in line with the definiteness setting, those in Schools B and M fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP. The reason for the noted difference in performance within each of the schools will become clear later (cf. Section 5.5.2). In the following section, I compare the learners' rating scores in relation to their levels of English proficiency.

5.3.2 Per-proficiency comparison of mean ratings for *a* and *the* in [-def, ±spec] conditions

The preceding section examined the learners' performance on articles based on their individual schools. In this section, their results are presented based on their proficiency levels to determine how their performance was reflected in their respective levels of proficiency. In this analysis, the null hypothesis was that the mean rating scores of all proficiency levels for all four categories were equal. The alternative hypotheses were as follows:

Because the English article system realises definiteness but not specificity, the English NCs were predicted to accept the items with *a/an* (which are well-formed) in both contexts, irrespective of whether the entity was specific or non-specific. This means they would reject the items with *the* (which are ill-formed) in the task.

The upper intermediate (UI) and low intermediate (LI) level learners were predicted to fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. This means there would be no significant differences between their mean rating scores on the *the-items* and *a-items* in the indefinite specific conditions. This prediction is based on the assumption that intermediate level learners access both the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP (Ionin et al., 2004), and contrary to the English NCs, they have not yet acquired the ability to use the English article system appropriately –that is, for the definiteness setting.

Drawing on earlier studies such as Huebner (1983) and Thomas (1989), which found that beginner level learners overused *the* in the [-def, +spec] context, the elementary (E) level learners in this study were predicted to accept the items with *the* (which are ill-formed) and

reject the items with *a* (which are well-formed) in the [-def, +spec] context. This means they would rate *the* significantly higher than *a* in this context.

Two-way repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted. The results showed that there was a significant level-category interaction effect, $F_{(9, 495)} = 16.49$, $p < 0.01$. This means that the learners' performance on the different categories should be compared within each proficiency level rather than considering all proficiency levels taken together. The following table presents the results for the indefinite non-specific conditions per proficiency group.

Table 5.4: Per-proficiency comparison of mean ratings for *a* and *the* in the [-def, -spec] conditions (AJT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean rating	Std. dev.	p-value
NC	7	[-spec <i>a</i>]	2.9	0.13	0.0000**
		[-spec <i>the</i>]	1.1	0.64	
UI	19	[-spec <i>a</i>]	2.6	0.40	0.0000**
		[-spec <i>the</i>]	2.1	0.53	
LI	86	[-spec <i>a</i>]	2.3	0.48	0.0001**
		[-spec <i>the</i>]	2.1	0.48	
E	57	[-spec <i>a</i>]	2.2	0.47	0.3033
		[-spec <i>the</i>]	2.2	0.46	

Table 5.4 shows that the mean rating for *a* in the indefinite non-specific condition was significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) than for *the* for the English NCs, UI level learners and LI level learners. However, for the E level learners, the difference between their mean rating scores for the two articles in this context was not significant. The table below presents the participants' mean rating scores in the indefinite specific condition.

Table 5.5: Per-proficiency comparison of mean ratings for *a* and *the* in the [-def, +spec] conditions (AJT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean rating	Std. dev.	p-value
NC	7	[+spec <i>a</i>]	2.6	0.30	0.0000**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	1.4	0.57	
UI	19	[+spec <i>a</i>]	2.3	0.44	0.0061**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	2.1	0.36	
LI	86	[+spec <i>a</i>]	2.1	0.49	0.0018**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	1.9	0.46	
E	57	[+spec <i>a</i>]	2.0	0.51	0.4270
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	2.0	0.52	

Table 5.5 shows that the English NCs, the UI and LI level learners rated the indefinite article significantly higher than the definite article in the indefinite specific condition. As regards the E level learners, their mean rating scores did not indicate significant differences.

Because the mean rating scores for the [-spec *a*], [+spec *a*], [-spec *the*] and [+spec *the*] conditions among the four proficiency levels were not equal, the null hypothesis is rejected. The following paragraphs discuss the results of the different proficiency levels in relation to (non-)specificity distinctions.

The results indicate that the English NCs correctly use the article system in relation to the definiteness setting. There is a stark difference in their mean rating scores between the indefinite article and the definite article in the [-def, +spec] context. The pattern of their use of articles strongly supports the hypothesis stated above regarding the English NCs' performance. This pattern concurs with that found for the English NCs in Kim and Lakshmanan (2009).

Considering the effect of non-specificity, Table 5.4 shows that, except for the E level learners, all proficiency levels rightly associated the indefinite article with non-specificity. These results concur with the school results reported and discussed in the preceding section. The UI and LI level learners in the present study seem to have acquired the non-specific use of the indefinite article. In comparing the use of *a(n)* between the non-specific and specific contexts (Tables 5.4 and 5.5 respectively), one can see that the three experimental groups demonstrate earlier mastery of *a(n)* in the non-specific condition (Table 5.4) than in the specific condition

(Table 5.5). These results concur with those reported and discussed in Tryzna (2009) as well as those reported in Lee (2013, among her intermediate and advanced L1 Korean learners of L2 English). Their participants performed better for *a(n)* in the non-specific context than in the specific context.

Regarding the effect of specificity, Table 5.5 shows that the UI and LI level learners select articles based mainly on the definiteness setting of the ACP –akin to the control group. Although they also accept the definite article in the indefinite condition, their mean rating score for the indefinite article is significantly higher than for the definite article in this condition. The learners do not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in their use of the English article system. Conversely, the E level learners do fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. These results are in line with the AJT results reported in Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) among the intermediate level L1 Korean learners of L2 English. The Korean learners fluctuated between definiteness and specificity. The use of *the* and *a* interchangeably in the indefinite specific context reflects learners' access to both the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP. A crucial question to be addressed at this point is why the intermediate level L1 Koreans in Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) fluctuated between the two settings whereas the intermediate level Swahili-speaking learners in the present study did not. A possible explanation for this difference draws on the different placement tests used for the two studies. Whereas Kim and Lakshmanan (2009) adopted a cloze test from Ranalli (2002), the present study adopted the OQPT (Syndicate U.C.L.E, 2001). Most likely, these instruments differ from one another based on their target experimental groups.

As for the second aim of this task, the AJT results provide no evidence that the learners associate *the* with specificity since their mean rating for *a* is significantly higher than for *the* in the [–def, +spec] context. The results of the AJT in Table 5.5 show that, in general, when the level of proficiency improves, the rate of fluctuation decreases. This leads to the prediction that once the learners receive sufficient exposure to the target L2, they will eventually be able to acquire the ability to use the English article system appropriately. In the following section, I present the results of the second task—the FCET.

5.4 Task 2: Forced Choice Elicitation Task

Recall from Section 4.3.6.5 that the FCET consists of 60 items, of which 20 are distractors and 40 are experimental items. Each item consists of a short dialogue, with a blank space in

one of the lines of the dialogue, followed by a list of words (*the*, *who*, *a*, *in* and \emptyset) that the participant has to choose from. There were 19 items involving definite contexts (four anaphoric, seven associative and eight encyclopaedic) and 21 items involving indefinite contexts (four first mention contexts, nine opaque contexts, and eight transparent contexts). In addition, the test items included adjectivally modified nouns as well as non-adjectivally modified nouns.

In this task, mean percentage scores for the following categories are compared: (i) overall correct and incorrect article use, (ii) correct definite and indefinite contexts, (iii) anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts, (iv) simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts, (v) accurate *a* and inaccurate *the* in the [-def, +spec] context and (vi) article omissions between [ART+ADJ+N] and [ART+N] contexts. These comparisons consider the performance of the entire cohort, individual schools and different proficiency levels.

5.4.1 Comparing the overall correct and incorrect use of articles

In this subsection, I present the learners' percentage scores on the FCET as a whole. More specifically, I compare the following three aspects: correct use, incorrect substitution and incorrect omission. The aim is to identify the locus of learners' non-target-like performance – in particular by comparing their incorrect substitution to their incorrect omission of articles. Note that the differences between the categories presented in this subsection were not tested statistically. The idea of simply presenting the percentage scores at this point is to offer a general overview of the correct and incorrect use of articles by the learners. I present and discuss the statistical analyses and follow-up test results associated with these categories later, in my discussion of the oral production data (cf. Chapter 6). For the aim of this subsection, Table 5.6 presents the overall use of articles by the entire cohort.

Table 5.6: Comparing the overall correct and incorrect use of articles (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub-category	Percentage
Entire cohort	160	Correct use	65.94
		Incorrect substitution	25.17
		Incorrect omission	6.41

The table above shows that, overall, the learners incorrectly substituted articles much more frequently than incorrectly omitting them –the frequency of substitution is almost four times as high as the frequency of omission. The following table shows that this pattern is also found when the schools are considered separately.

Table 5.7: Per-school comparison of the overall correct and incorrect use of articles (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub category	Percentage
School B	56	Correct use	67.7
		Incorrect substitution	22.9
		Incorrect omission	7.6
School J	48	Correct use	74.1
		Incorrect substitution	20.8
		Incorrect omission	3.8
School M	56	Correct use	57.1
		Incorrect substitution	31.1
		Incorrect omission	7.5

By comparing the three sub-categories, the table shows that the learners' percentage scores were also higher for the incorrect substitution of articles than for the incorrect omission of articles for each of the three schools separately. In addition, School J performed comparatively better than Schools B and M, and School M incorrectly substituted articles more frequently than Schools B and J. It is also important to view the results in terms of the learners' levels of English proficiency.

Table 5.8: Per-proficiency comparison of the overall correct and incorrect use of articles (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub category	Percentage
UI	19	Correct use	87.4
		Incorrect substitution	10.3
		Incorrect omission	1.8
LI	84	Correct use	68.7
		Incorrect substitution	23.8
		Incorrect omission	5.8
E	57	Correct	54.7
		Incorrect substitution	32.2
		Incorrect omission	8.7

In line with the per-school results, Table 5.8 shows that the frequency of the incorrect substitution of articles was higher than that of the incorrect omission of articles for each of the three proficiency levels. What is more, the learners' frequency of incorrect substitution and omission decreased steadily with an increase in proficiency: more incorrect omissions

and substitutions were noted among the E level learners than among the LI level learners and among the LI level learners than among the UI level learners. The following bar graph illustrates this observation. Note that this pattern of performance concurs with the pattern of incorrect substitution of articles noted in the AJT's results (cf. Tables 5.4 and 5.5).

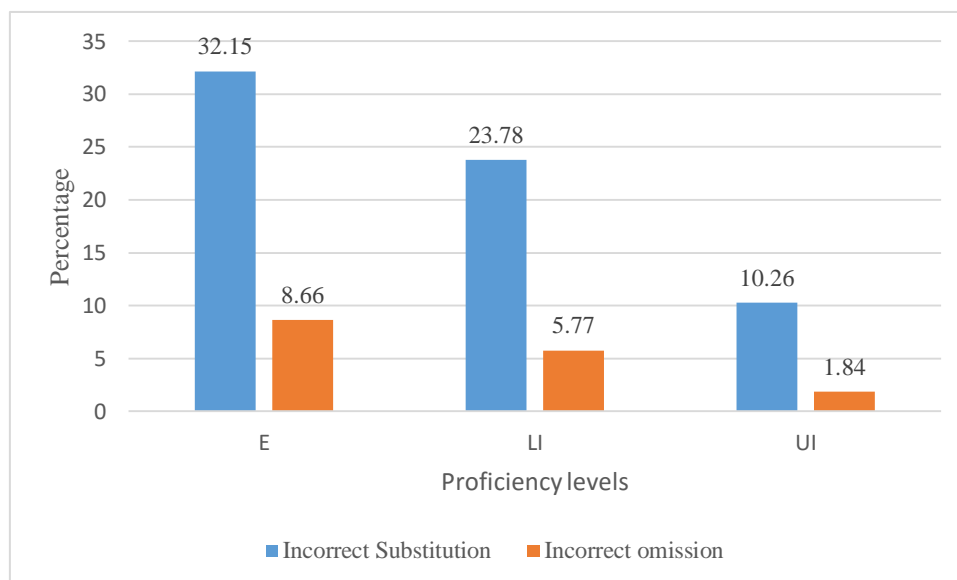


Figure 5.1: Comparing the frequency of incorrect substitution to incorrect omission of articles between proficiency levels

The results in this subsection indicate that the frequency of article substitution was comparatively higher than the frequency of article omission. I discuss these results in more detail in Chapter 6, subsequent to presenting the learners' overall use of articles in speaking. In the following sections, I continue to between-category comparisons of the FCET data.

5.4.2 Comparing mean percentage scores between the definite and indefinite contexts

5.4.2.1 Comparison by the entire cohort

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to see whether the differences between the mean percentage scores for the definite and indefinite categories were significant, and they were found to be highly significant, $F_{(20, 3140)} = 163.81$, $p < 0.01$. The following table compares accurate performance in the definite and indefinite contexts by the entire cohort.

Table 5.9: Comparing the overall accuracy in the definite and indefinite contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
Entire cohort	160	definite	70	17	0.0017**
		indefinite	62	20	

Table 5.9 presents the results of all schools taken together (that is, the entire cohort). The learners' mean percentage scores were significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) in the definite context than in the indefinite context. This pattern was also found in comparisons conducted within the schools, as shown in the following section.

5.4.2.2 Comparison within each of the three schools

The three secondary schools involved in this study are public. The learners recruited for this study had also attended public primary schools in Tanzania. As pointed out in Section 5.2, these learners were taught in Swahili at primary school level and were being taught in English at secondary school level. Furthermore, they all spoke L1 Swahili and learned EFL in their respective schools. Due to these reasons, the assumption was the null hypothesis, i.e. that there would be no significant differences between the schools in their FCET scores for the definite or indefinite contexts.

Two-way repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted. The school-category interaction effect was significant, $F_{(40, 3140)} = 3.95$, $p < 0.01$, which means that the schools did not, contrary to the null hypothesis, perform similarly in terms of the different categories. For this reason, the learners' performance needs to be considered separately for the three schools. The following table compares the mean percentage scores for the definite and indefinite articles for the three schools.

Table 5.10: Per-school comparison of accuracy in the definite and indefinite contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
School B	56	definite	73	16	0.0052**
		indefinite	63	23	
School J	48	definite	76	15	0.3073
		indefinite	72	17	
School M	56	definite	60	18	0.0923
		indefinite	54	17	

Table 5.10 shows that the learners in School B scored significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) in the definite contexts than in the indefinite contexts. The mean percentage scores of the learners in Schools J and M showed that they performed numerically higher in the definite contexts than in the indefinite contexts. However, the LSD follow-up tests indicated that the differences were not significant. The following paragraphs discuss these results.

The results presented in this section show that the three schools perform differently in their use of the English article system. As was noted in Table 5.10, the learners of all three schools perform better in the definite context than in the indefinite context. However, this difference between the contexts is only significant in the case of School B, and one might wonder why this is the case, i.e. why it is not significant in case of the other two schools.

To start with School J, its learners seem to have progressed further than the other two schools in their acquisition of the article system. Their overall mean score is 74%, which is numerically higher than the overall score of the learners in School B (68%) and significantly higher than that of the learners in School M (57%), $p < 0.01$. Besides School J's higher scores for the definite article (76%), their accuracy on the indefinite article is likewise high (72%). This means that they have achieved a high level of stability in choosing between *the* and *a(n)* and they are progressing steadily towards more target-like performance. This is partly why there is no significant difference in their use of articles between the definite context and the

indefinite context. Still, none of these schools can be said to have mastered the English article system, since none of them has reached a level of 90% target-like performance.⁶¹

Concerning School B, the percentage scores clearly indicate that its learners also perform better in the definite context than in the indefinite context. Regarding School M, although they score numerically higher in the definite context than in the indefinite context, the difference in percentage scores is not significant. In line with their overall low performance, their percentage scores in the two contexts support the findings based on the AJT data (discussed in Section 5.3.1), namely that the learners in School M have not yet mastered the appropriate use of the English article system. Their performance stands in contrast to that of the learners in School B who do not use *a/an* and *the* interchangeably.

5.4.2.3 Comparison within each of the proficiency levels

Recall that the null hypothesis was that there were equal means for the definite and indefinite contexts within each of the proficiency levels. The alternative hypothesis was that the mean percentage scores for the definite context and the indefinite context were different for the different proficiency levels. Two-way measures ANOVAs were conducted. The level-category interaction effect was highly significant, $F_{(40, 3140)} = 6.36$, $p < 0.01$. This means that the category effect can be considered separately per proficiency level. The following table compares the mean percentage scores for *the* and *a* for each proficiency level.

Table 5.11: Per-proficiency comparison of accuracy in the definite and indefinite contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
UI	19	definite	91	9	0.3628
		indefinite	85	9	
LI	84	definite	71	16	0.1037
		indefinite	66	19	
E	57	definite	61	16	0.0032**
		indefinite	50	17	

⁶¹ See Nel (2015), Southwood and Van Dulm (2012) and Zdorenko and Paradis (2007) for argumentation for setting 90% as the level at which one can regard learners' performance as (near-)native-like.

The table above shows that the learners' performance differs according to their levels of proficiency. The UI group scored numerically higher in the definite contexts than in the indefinite contexts. The same pattern was noted for the LI group. However, the LSD follow-up test run indicated that these differences were not significant. The results of the UI and the LI proficiency level learners suggest that, as proficiency level increases, learners generally develop some stability in using *the* and *a(n)*. In contrast, the E group's mean scores were significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) for the definite article than for the indefinite article. Overall, all three levels score higher for the definite article than for the indefinite article. These results concur with those of Lardière (2005) and Zdorenko and Paradis (2007), who report that their participants showed earlier mastery of the definite article than of the indefinite article. These results (and others) will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.5. In the following section, the three sub-contexts within the definite context are compared. These sub-contexts are the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts.

5.4.3 Comparing mean percentages for the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts

The definite context in the task was comprised of three sub-contexts: the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts (cf. Section 4.3.6.5). Drawing on the preceding finding that all groups performed better in the definite context than in the indefinite context (even though the difference was not always significant), I assumed that all three definite sub-contexts posed the same level of difficulty. Thus, the null hypothesis was that the mean percentage scores for the three definite sub-contexts were equal. In this section (5.4.3), the three sub-contexts are presented in pairwise comparisons, first for the entire cohort, then for the three schools and finally for the three proficiency groups.

5.4.3.1 Comparison by considering the entire cohort

Table 5.12: Comparing overall accuracy in the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
Entire cohort	160	anaphoric	51	29	0.0000**
		associative	72	24	
	anaphoric	51	29	0.0000**	
		encyclopaedic	77		19
	associative	72	24	0.0280*	
		encyclopaedic	77		19

The table above shows that the mean percentage scores for the entire cohort were 51, 72 and 77 for the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts respectively. The LSD follow-up tests run indicated that the differences between these mean percentage scores were significant, $p < 0.05$, for each of the three pair-wise comparisons, as can be seen in Table 5.12. The results presented in this table suggest that the hierarchy of difficulty (from the most difficult to the least difficult) in the use of the definite article for the Swahili-speaking EFL learners is: anaphoric > associative > encyclopaedic contexts. The following section compares performance on articles in these contexts within the schools.

5.4.3.2 Comparison within each of the three schools

Table 5.13 below shows the results of pair-wise comparisons between the different definite contexts within each school.

Table 5.13: Per-school comparison of accuracy in the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
School B	56	anaphoric	62	30	0.0001**
		associative	77	21	
		anaphoric	62	30	0.0001**
		encyclopaedic	77	18	
		associative	77	21	0.9933
		encyclopaedic	77	18	
School J	48	anaphoric	51	29	0.0000**
		associative	81	19	
		anaphoric	51	29	0.0000**
		encyclopaedic	86	16	
		associative	81	19	0.2225
		encyclopaedic	86	16	
School M	56	anaphoric	40	25	0.0000**
		associative	61	25	
		anaphoric	40	25	0.0000**
		encyclopaedic	70	20	
		associative	61	25	0.0098**
		encyclopaedic	70	20	

As can be seen in Table 5.13, in all three schools, all pairwise comparisons indicated significant differences, except the comparison between the associative and encyclopaedic contexts in the case of Schools B and J. For School M, for example, the learners performed significantly better in the encyclopaedic contexts than in the associative contexts and significantly better in the associative contexts than in the anaphoric contexts. The following bar graph is illustrative. It shows that, even though not all differences are significant, the pattern noted for the entire cohort – anaphoric > associative > encyclopaedic contexts – also holds within each school, except for the fact that School B learners’ percentages for the associative and encyclopaedic contexts are equal.

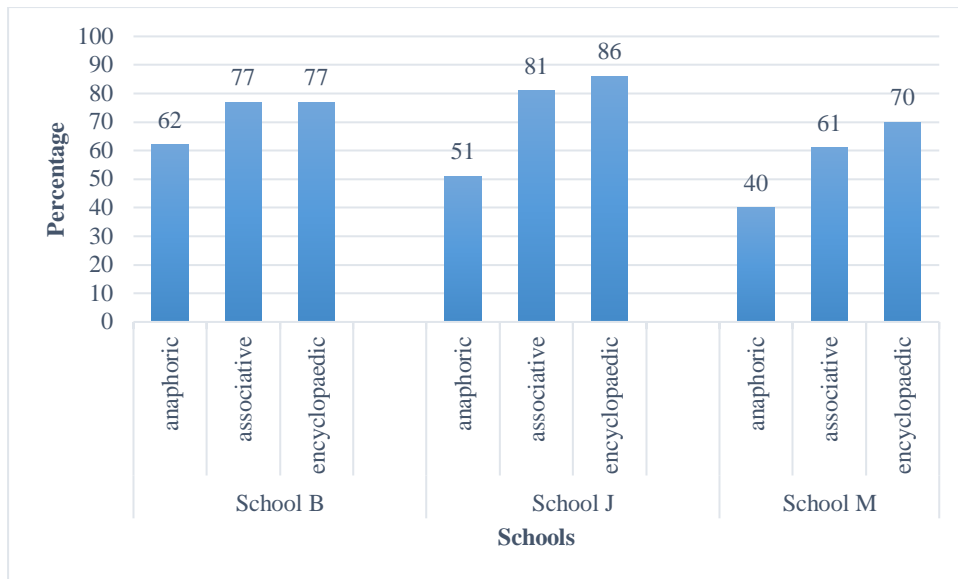


Figure 5.2: Per school comparison of performance in the three definite sub-contexts

5.4.3.3 Comparison within each of the proficiency levels

Table 5.14 below shows the results of pair-wise comparisons between the different definite contexts within each proficiency group.

Table 5.14: Per-proficiency comparison of accuracy in the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value	
UI	19	anaphoric	79	22	0.0359*	
		associative	92	15		
		anaphoric	anaphoric	79	22	0.0144*
			encyclopaedic	95	9	
		associative	associative	92	15	0.7265
			encyclopaedic	95	9	
LI	84	anaphoric	49	30	0.0000**	
		associative	75	19		
		anaphoric	anaphoric	49	30	0.0000**
			encyclopaedic	78	19	
		associative	associative	75	19	0.2200
			encyclopaedic	78	19	
E	57	anaphoric	43	24	0.0000**	
		associative	62	27		
		anaphoric	anaphoric	43	24	0.0000**
			encyclopaedic	69	17	
		associative	associative	62	27	0.0402*
			encyclopaedic	69	17	

The pairwise comparisons in the table above show that within each proficiency group the scores in all contexts differed significantly, except the comparison between the associative and encyclopaedic contexts for the UI and LI learners. All three proficiency groups' performance on the anaphoric context was more non-target-like, consistently followed by the associative and then the encyclopaedic contexts, as illustrated in the following bar graph.

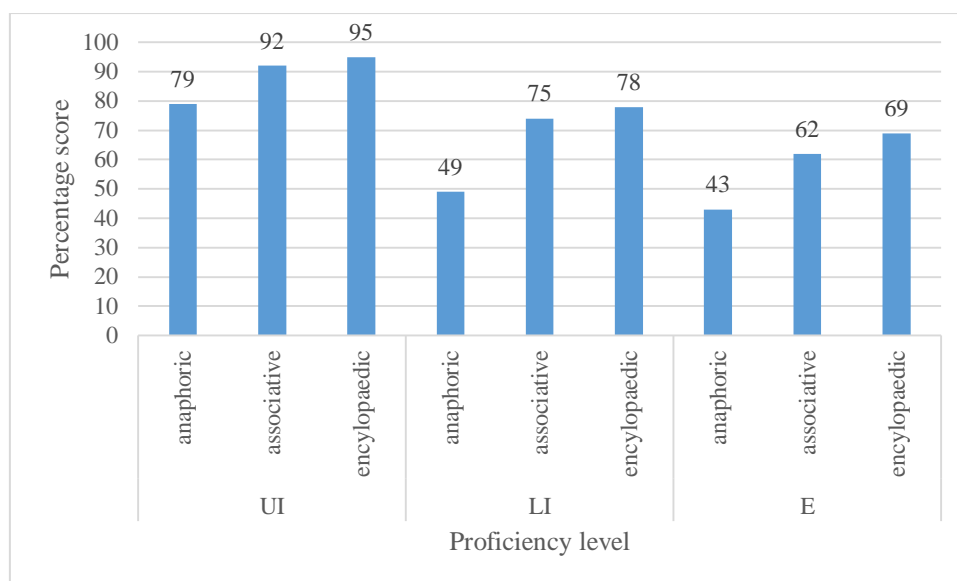


Figure 5.3: Per-proficiency level comparison of scores in the three definite sub-contexts

In summary, when comparing performance on the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic contexts (see Figure 5.3), the learners' performance on the anaphoric context is more non-target-like than on the associative and encyclopaedic contexts, for the entire cohort, as well as within each school and within each proficiency group (with minimal exceptions, as noted above). This is not surprising as the anaphoric context is claimed to involve a more complex cognitive process. As Nel (2015:108) states, the anaphoric context requires a learner to use the indefinite article to introduce a referent and then the definite article to refer back to the same referent. In contrast, associative and encyclopaedic contexts simply allow the learner to use the definite article without considering whether the (same) referent has been previously mentioned.

5.4.4 Comparing the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts

Having compared the learners' accuracy on the three definite sub-contexts, in this section I focus on the three indefinite sub-contexts specified in the task. These are the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts. Akin to the presentation in the preceding section, this section presents the scores in pairwise comparisons, first for the entire cohort and then within each school and within each proficiency group.

5.4.4.1 Comparison by the entire cohort

Table 5.15 presents the results of pairwise comparisons of the indefinite sub-contexts for the entire cohort.

Table 5.15: Comparison of overall accuracy in the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
Entire cohort	160	simple indefinite	66	27	0.0076*
		opaque	60	22	
		simple indefinite	66	27	0.5610
		transparent	64	25	
		opaque	60	22	0.0369*
		transparent	64	25	

The table above shows that the entire cohort manifested significantly lower performance in the opaque contexts than in the simple indefinite and transparent contexts. Lyons (1999) opines that opaque contexts normally involve scope ambiguity between specific and non-specific readings. Consequently, L2 learners generally find the opaque context more challenging than the transparent context in their use of the English article system.

5.4.4.2 Comparison within each of the three schools

Table 5.16 presents the results of pairwise comparisons of the indefinite sub-contexts within each school.

Table 5.16: Per-school comparison of accuracy in the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
School B	56	simple indefinite	62	27	0.5757
		opaque	60	23	
		simple indefinite	62	27	0.2659
		transparent	66	26	
		opaque	60	23	0.0945
		transparent	66	26	
School J	48	simple indefinite	74	22	0.2729
		opaque	69	20	
		simple indefinite	74	22	0.8993
		transparent	74	21	
		opaque	69	20	0.2214
		transparent	74	21	
School M	56	simple indefinite	62	30	0.0027**
		opaque	51	20	
		simple indefinite	62	30	0.0224*
		transparent	53	22	
		opaque	51	20	0.4701
		transparent	53	22	

In Table 5.16, the pairwise comparisons between the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts indicated that none of these differences was significant for Schools B and J. In School M, learners performed significantly better in the simple indefinite context than in the transparent and opaque contexts.

5.4.4.3 Comparison within each of the proficiency levels

Table 5.17 presents the results of pairwise comparisons of the indefinite sub-contexts within each proficiency group.

Table 5.17: Per-proficiency comparison of accuracy in the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
UI	19	simple indefinite	82	16	0.8207
		opaque	83	10	
		simple indefinite	82	16	0.3077
		transparent	88	15	
		opaque	83	10	0.4276
		transparent	88	15	
LI	84	simple indefinite	69	28	0.0948
		opaque	64	21	
		simple indefinite	69	28	0.5605
		transparent	67	23	
		opaque	64	21	0.2763
		transparent	67	23	
E	57	simple indefinite	56	26	0.0069**
		opaque	46	17	
		simple indefinite	56	26	0.3461
		transparent	52	22	
		opaque	46	17	0.0773
		transparent	52	22	

The pairwise comparisons of the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent contexts within each of the proficiency groups show that none of the differences is significant, except that between the simple indefinite and opaque contexts ($p < 0.01$) in the case of the E level learners. These results show that, while the opaque context seems more non-target-like than the other two contexts for the E level learners, all three sub-contexts pose roughly the same level of difficulty for the UI and LI level learners.

5.4.5 Comparing percentage scores for *a* and *the* in the [-def, +spec] context

This part of the task – the comparison between the accurate use of *a* and the inaccurate use of *the* in the [-def, +spec] context – focuses on testing the FH (Ionin et al., 2004; Tryzna, 2009). As pointed out in Section 3.3.1, Pongpairoj (2007) and Trenkic (2008) criticise the use of explicitly stated statements in Ionin et al.’s (2004) task. Such statements explicitly show

speakers' acquaintance with or denial of knowledge of the objects under discussion. Trenkic (2008), in particular, argues that such statements influenced the learners' choice of articles in Ionin et al. (2004) and in other studies that employed the same elicitation task. According to Trenkic (2008), specificity was operationalised in such studies. Following Trenkic's views, such explicitly stated statements were avoided in modifying Ionin et al.'s FCET for use in the present study (cf. Section 4.3.6.5). Having avoided such statements, the null hypothesis was therefore that the Swahili-speaking EFL learners would not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in their use of the English article system. This hypothesis was tested by comparing the learners' accurate use of *a* and inaccurate use of *the* in the [-def, +spec] contexts, as reported below.

5.4.5.1 Comparison by the entire cohort

Table 5.18 presents the results of the comparison of performance between the [+spec *a*] and [+spec *the*] conditions, and shows that the entire cohort performed significantly better ($p < 0.01$) in the [+spec *a*] than in the [+spec *the*] conditions. Next, tests were conducted to determine the different schools' and the different proficiency groups' use of the two articles in this context.

Table 5.18: Comparing the overall use of *a* and *the* in the [-def, +spec] contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
Entire cohort	160	[+spec <i>a</i>]	60	24	0.0000**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	33	22	

5.4.5.2 Comparison within each of the three schools

In this subsection, the learners' percentage scores for *a* and *the* in the indefinite context are compared within each of the three schools, as shown in the following table.

Table 5.19: Per-school comparison of the use of *a* and *the* in the [-def, +spec] contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
School B	56	[+spec <i>a</i>]	61	27	0.0000**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	32	25	
School J	48	[+spec <i>a</i>]	70	21	0.0000**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	25	18	
School M	56	[+spec <i>a</i>]	50	19	0.0068**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	40	20	

The table above shows that, within each of the schools, the learners' mean percentage scores were consistently much higher for the indefinite article than for the definite article in the indefinite specific context. The LSD follow-up tests indicated that these differences were highly significant, $p < 0.01$, for all three schools.

As mentioned above, this particular part of the task aimed at testing the FH, which assumes that learners of EFL/ESL with L1s which do not have articles fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP (Ionin et al., 2004). This phenomenon is predicted to continue until the learners receive sufficient input to enable them to determine that the English article system makes (in)definite distinctions but not (non-)specific distinctions (Ionin et al., 2004). The results of the comparisons for the entire cohort and within each school do not lend credence to the FH. The learners consistently scored higher for *a* than for *the* in the indefinite specific context. Note that, while Schools B and M fluctuated on the AJT (Table 5.3), they did not fluctuate on the FCET (cf. Table 5.19). The reason for this difference in performance on the two tasks will become clear later –in addressing the third research question, about the differences in performance on different tasks (cf. Section 5.5.2).

Although none of the three schools fluctuates in using the article system, one cannot draw a conclusion before examining the learners' results based on their levels of English proficiency.

5.4.5.3 Comparison within each of the proficiency levels

Table 5.20 presents the results of the comparison of performance between the [+spec *a*] and [+spec *the*] conditions within each of the proficiency groups.

Table 5.20: Per-proficiency comparison of the use of *a* and *the* in the [–def, +spec] contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
UI	19	[+spec <i>a</i>]	82	15	0.0000**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	15	12	
LI	84	[+spec <i>a</i>]	63	24	0.0000**
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	31	22	
E	57	[+spec <i>a</i>]	47	19	0.1428
		[+spec <i>the</i>]	41	20	

In line with the per-school performance reported above, the per-proficiency-group results show that the UI and LI level learners score significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) for *a* than for *the* in the indefinite specific context. Recall that the acceptable article in this context is *a*. The statistical results indicate that the UI and LI learners do not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in their choice of articles. However, the difference between the E level learners' percentage scores for *a* and *the* was not significant. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, which stated that the Swahili-speaking EFL learners would not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in their use of the English article system in the FCET, since the E level learners did actually exhibit this fluctuation.

In general, the results reported in this section (5.4.5) suggest that Swahili-speaking EFL learners fluctuate between definiteness and specificity at the E level of English proficiency. This finding, in part, supports Ionin et al.'s (2004) FH. At the intermediate proficiency levels, the Swahili-speaking EFL learners mainly use the English article system in line with the definiteness setting of the ACP; they do not fluctuate. This result is in part contrary to that of the intermediate proficiency level L1 Russian learners of English in Ionin et al. (2004). These participants fluctuated between definiteness and specificity. The difference between the intermediate proficiency level learners' performance in the two studies might be due to three reasons: First, the two studies used different placement tests to determine the participants' levels of English proficiency. While Ionin et al. (2004) used the written portion of the Michigan test, the present study employed the OQPT (Syndicate, 2001). Second, while the Michigan test was designed and used in the American context, the OQPT was designed in the UK and then used in the Tanzanian context. Because this is a standardised test, I did not change any of its items; consequently, some test items might have been unfamiliar to the Swahili-speaking EFL learners. Such unfamiliarity might, in turn, have affected their responses on the test. And third, while Ionin et al. (2004) included explicit statements to show speaker's acquaintance with or denial of knowledge of the referents in the FCET, such statements were intentionally avoided in the modified version of the FCET in the present study (see Section 4.3.6.5 and the introduction to Section 5.4.5 above for an explanation as to why I avoided such statements). Partly, these differences might have contributed to the performance differences demonstrated by the intermediate level respondents in the two studies. Having discussed the substitution of articles in relation to the FH, the following part of this section focuses on the omission of articles.

5.4.6 Comparing the percentage of article omission between the [ART+ADJ+N] and [ART+N] contexts

The aim of this part of the task was to test the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA) (cf. Section 3.5). The SMA holds that EFL/ESL learners with L1s which do not have articles but which can have adjectives in the pre-nominal position misanalyse English articles as adjectives. Consequently, the SMA predicts that such learners will omit articles more frequently in [ART+ADJ+N] contexts than in [ART+N] contexts. However, Swahili adjectives occur post-nominally. This means that the Swahili-speaking EFL learners in this study would not conflate the article system with adjectives in English. Thus, the null hypothesis was that the learners would not omit articles more in the adjectivally modified nouns than in the non-adjectivally modified nouns specified in the FCET. The following is a comparison of learners' performance on these two types of nouns, first for the entire cohort, and then per school and per proficiency group.

5.4.6.1 The omission of articles by the entire cohort

Table 5.21 below presents the results of the comparison between learners' performance in the case of adjectivally modified versus non-adjectivally modified nouns. It shows that the learners omitted articles more in the case of non-adjectivally modified nouns than in the case of adjectivally modified nouns. The LSD follow-up test run indicated that the difference was significant, $p < 0.05$.

Table 5.21: Comparison of the overall omission of articles between the [ART+ADJ+N] and [ART+N] contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
Entire cohort	160	[ART+ADJ+N]	4	6	0.0315*
		[ART+N]	9	10	

5.4.6.2 Comparison within each of the schools

Table 5.22 below presents the results of the comparison between learners' performance in the case of adjectivally modified versus non-adjectivally modified nouns within each of the schools. The table shows that, in each school, the frequency of the omission of articles was numerically higher for the non-adjectivally modified nouns than for the adjectivally modified nouns. Statistically, however, the LSD test run indicated that the differences were not

significant. In the following section, I compare the omission of articles in relation to the learners' proficiency levels.

Table 5.22: Per-school comparison of the omission of articles between the [ART+ADJ+N] and [ART+N] contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
School B	56	[ART+ADJ+N]	6	6	0.1808
		[ART+N]	11	12	
School J	48	[ART+ADJ+N]	2	4	0.4512
		[ART+N]	5	6	
School M	56	[ART+ADJ+N]	4	6	0.0939
		[ART+N]	11	11	

5.4.6.3 Comparison within each of the proficiency levels

Table 5.23 below presents the results of the comparison between learners' performance in the case of adjectivally modified versus non-adjectivally modified nouns within each of the proficiency groups. The table shows that the difference in the percentages of article omission between the adjectivally modified nouns and the non-adjectivally modified nouns was not significant for any of the proficiency levels. The UI group is the only group that shows the opposite pattern of what is found for the entire cohort, each of the school groups and the other two proficiency groups: this group's percentage of omission is higher in the case of adjectivally modified nouns than non-adjectivally modified nouns. However, this difference is not significant and involves extremely low percentages (2% and 1%, respectively).

Table 5.23: Per proficiency comparison of the omission of articles between the [ART+ADJ+N] and [ART+N] contexts (FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Sub condition	Mean % score	Std. dev.	p-value
UI	19	[ART+ADJ+N]	2	3	0.8588
		[ART+N]	1	2	
LI	84	[ART+ADJ+N]	4	6	0.1037
		[ART+N]	9	9	
E	57	[ART+ADJ+N]	5	6	0.0630
		[ART+N]	12	12	

The question arises as to why the comparison of article omission in the adjectivally modified nouns versus non-adjectivally modified nouns did not show significant differences when the data were considered per school (see Table 5.22) or per proficiency group (see Table 5.23) while, when considering the entire cohort (Table 5.21), the results show that there is a significant difference. A possible explanation for the noted difference is that each of the mean comparisons in Tables 5.22 and 5.23 is based on smaller numbers of participants (because the participants are divided into three schools and three proficiency groups respectively) than the comparison in Table 5.21, which is based on the entire cohort. Therefore, the differences become non-significant. Nonetheless, the trend in all three schools and in two of the three proficiency groups shows that the learners omitted articles more frequently in the case of non-adjectivally modified nouns than in the case of adjectivally modified nouns. Accordingly, when combining these groups in Table 5.21, the difference becomes significant.

Table 5.21 clearly shows that the entire cohort does not consider English articles as adjectives, since they do not omit articles more in the case of adjectivally modified nouns than in the case of non-adjectivally modified nouns, contrary to what the SMA would predict (cf. Section 3.5 and the introduction to Section 5.4.6 above).

Recall that the SMA was developed based on data collected from L1 Serbian learners of English (cf. Trenkic (2007), reviewed in Section 3.5.1). Akin to adjectives in English, adjectives in Serbian precede nouns. The Serbian learners of English in Trenkic (2007) were noted to omit articles more frequently in adjectivally modified nouns than in non-modified nouns, in accordance with the SMA's predictions. Consequently, Trenkic (2007) concluded that her Serbian participants misanalysed English articles as adjectives. As described in Section 2.5.1.3, adjectives in Swahili follow nouns. The following examples are instructive.

- (116) a. *Viatu vyeusi*
 N Adj.
 Shoes black
 ‘*black shoes*’
- b. *Gari jeupe*
 N Adj.
 Car white
 ‘(a/the) *white car*’

The examples above show that, while adjectives follow nouns in Swahili, such items precede nouns in English. Apparently, the presence or absence of adjectives in English does not

influence the omission of articles by the Swahili-speaking learners; rather the absence of the syntactic DP category in Swahili might have caused such omission. It is thus not the case that all learners with [-ART] L1s will misanalyse articles as adjectives in their acquisition of ESL/EFL. Instead, this is only true for learners whose L1s have adjectives in the prenominal position. The omission of articles in the present study can more accurately be explained under the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Prévost & White, 2000) (cf. Section 3.4). Employing this hypothesis, one can argue that the Swahili-speaking EFL learners have acquired the [+def] feature but have not yet mastered the ability to use the article system to realise (in)definiteness accurately in English.

Finally, the learners in this study seem to rely on the semantic-pragmatic realisation of definiteness. As such, they omit articles whenever they assume that the referent is unique in the context of interaction. Item analysis revealed that more omissions were noted in the encyclopaedic contexts than in the other contexts, as instanced in the following two test items for the encyclopaedic context.

- (114) [+def, -spec]
 (*Conversation between two friends*)
 A: Who is Paul living with?
 B: He is living with _____ (**the**, who, a, in, \emptyset) mother of his best friend; I would like to meet her.
- (115) [+def, +spec]
 (*In class*)
 A: We have finished that interview.
 B: What did you learn?
 A: It was an interesting conversation; _____ (**the**, who, a, in, \emptyset) mayor told us that he was born in the early 1940s.

Considering the learners' performance on the two example items above, most learners seemed to transfer the structure of their L1 Swahili to English. In (114), the phrase *the mother of his best friend* literally translates to the Swahili phrase *mama wa rafiki yake mkubwa*, which, translated word for word, would be 'mother of friend his best'. The absence of articles in Swahili might have led to more omissions on this item than on the other items. As for (115), most of the learners omitted the definite article before *mayor*. This might be because the English phrase *the mayor* translates to the Swahili word *meya*. Swahili borrowed this word from English, and the similarity between this word and its Swahili equivalent might have caused the Swahili-speaking learners to omit the definite article more in this item than in the others.

Having discussed the FCET results in relation to the different hypotheses, the following section discusses the FCET and AJT results in relation to the study's specific research questions.

5.5. Discussion of the AJT and the FCET results in relation to the specific research questions

In the light of the results presented and discussed in the preceding sections, we are in a good position to assess the extent to which these results address the relevant research questions of this study (questions (ii), (iii) and (iv); cf. Sections 1.4 and 5.1). Each of the questions is addressed below.

5.5.1 Contexts that manifest as non-target-like

Research question (ii) asked which contexts of the article system of English manifest as non-target-like in the Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use. In this respect, the results reported in this chapter revealed that the different contexts that were compared present different levels of difficulty for the learners.

When comparing the mean percentage scores for the definite and indefinite articles, it becomes clear that the majority of the learners had more difficulty in using the indefinite article. Their percentage scores in the FCET were significantly lower for the indefinite article than for the definite article. This finding concurs with those of Lardière (2005), Morales-Reyes and Soler (2016), Robertson (2000) and Zdorenko and Paradis (2008), who also report that their participants demonstrated better mastery of *the* than of *a/an*. The difficulty in using *a/an* can, at least in part, be attributed to its rarity in the input when compared to *the*. Based on the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE; McCarthy and Carter (1997:23-24)), Saville-Troike (2006:139) shows that despite both of these words being among the most frequently occurring morphemes of English, the indefinite article does not occur as frequently in spontaneous speech as the definite article does. More specifically, based on the British National Corpus, Zdorenko and Paradis (2007:489) show that *the* is the most frequent morpheme (39,604 tokens per 1,000,000 English words), whereas *a(n)* holds the eighth position (18,633 tokens per 1,000,000 English words). In addition, Ellis (2002) and Huebner (1985, in Zdorenko & Paradis, 2007) contend that the frequency of an entity in the input determines its rate of acquisition and appropriate use (specifically, how much exposure to the target L2 is needed before the relevant property is mastered). I discuss this finding further in Chapter 6.

The comparative analysis of learners' performance on the anaphoric, associative and encyclopaedic sub-contexts in the FCET reveals that the anaphoric context is noticeably less target-like than the associative and encyclopedic contexts for the Swahili-speaking EFL learners. The absence of the syntactic category D in Swahili and processing constraints are two possible explanations for the noted non-target-like performance in the anaphoric context. First, the anaphoric context (as opposed to the other two contexts) involves *referentiality*, which is situated at D, as realised via *the* in English or via augments/pre-prefixes in some languages (Alexiadou et al., 2007). Since the syntactic DP category is not available in Swahili, as the language does not have a definite article or augments/pre-prefixes (cf. Section 2.2.3), the L1 Swahili-speaking learners of EFL faced challenges in the *referential* use of *the* in the anaphoric context. Second, regarding processing constraints, the anaphoric context involves referring to an entity that has been introduced earlier in the discourse (Lyons, 1999; Nel, 2015). In this study, each target entity was previously introduced by *a* in the indefinite context and was to be referred back to by using *the* in its subsequent mention. Therefore, for each item, the anaphoric context required the learners to employ additional cognitive processes to keep in mind whether the speaker had previously mentioned an entity in the discourse. Consequently, most Swahili-speaking EFL learners found this context more taxing than the other two contexts. This finding concurs with Geranpayeh (2000) and Nel's (2015) findings. In her study on L1 Afrikaans children learning English, for example, Nel (2015) reports that, unlike for the associative context, her participants attained low scores for the anaphoric context (what she refers to as "generic-specific relations"). In contrast to the anaphoric use, the associative and encyclopaedic uses of *the* allow learners simply to use *the* without considering the previous mention of the same referent in the discourse. Likewise, Yamasaki (2013) reports that Japanese learners of EFL demonstrated more non-target-like performance on the use of *the* in items that required them to consider shared knowledge and linguistic context (what Yamasaki terms "associative anaphora") than when they had to use *the* by considering only shared knowledge, since the former involves more complex cognitive processes than the latter does. This finding implies that L2 learners generally learn those aspects requiring less complex cognitive processing mechanisms more easily.

When comparing learners' performance on the simple indefinite, opaque and transparent indefinite sub-contexts, the opaque context seems to be more taxing for the EFL learners in this study. Lyons (1999) noted that this context represents counterfactual situations. As explained previously (cf. Section 5.4.4.1), such contexts are responsible for creating

ambiguity between specific and non-specific conditions. Accordingly, learners of EFL with L1s which do not have articles might well struggle, as the learners in this study did, to distinguish the use of *the* and *a* in this particular context.

In sum, the results of the AJT and FCET indicate that (i) the indefinite context is more taxing than the definite context, (ii) the anaphoric use of the definite article is more taxing than its associative and encyclopaedic uses, and (iii) the opaque context is more taxing than the simple indefinite and transparent contexts.

5.5.2 Performance on different tasks

Research question (iii) was whether Swahili-speaking EFL learners perform differently, in terms of the article system, on different tasks, in particular writing, speaking, and comprehension and acceptability judgements. In this respect, it is important to discuss the similarities and differences between the results of the AJT and the FCET.⁶² I will first discuss the similarities between the learners' performance on the AJT and the FCET.

First, the learners in School J perform relatively better on both of the tasks than those in Schools B and M do. As described in the methodology chapter (cf. Section 4.3.5), some of the participants from School J occasionally communicated in English with their parents/guardians in their homes. In contrast, the learners in Schools B and M had no access to English in naturalistic environments. Consequently, they only relied on explicit knowledge acquired based solely on explicit formal instruction. This finding is consistent with Tryzna (2009) who reports that the L1 Chinese learners in her study outperformed the L1 Polish learners of English. Tryzna says that whereas the L1 Chinese group acquired the article system in a naturalistic environment, the Polish group acquired it via classroom instruction.

Second, on both tasks, neither the UI nor the LI proficiency group learners fluctuate between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP in their use of the English article system. Both of these groups use the indefinite article significantly more appropriately than the definite article in the indefinite specific context. Partly, this finding contradicts Ionin et al.'s (2004) FH. Section 5.4.5.3 discussed the possible reasons for the contrast.

⁶² I will of course return to this question in Section 6.4 after presenting the PDT results, so that I can compare these written data to the spoken data.

Third, on both tasks, the E level learners fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in their use of the English article system: the difference between their use of *a* and *the* in the indefinite specific context was not significant in either of the two tasks. These results support Ionin et al.'s (2004) FH. Fourth, considering the effect of proficiency on performance, the learners' performance on articles improves on both tasks as proficiency increases. More specifically, the incorrect substitution of articles decreases steadily with the increase in proficiency.

Fifth, the learners' performance on both tasks did not show evidence that they associate *the* with specificity. Although they overused *the* in [-def, +spec] contexts, no group of learners overused *the* significantly more than *a* in the [-def, +spec] contexts in the AJT and the FCET. The overuse of *the* in [-def, +spec] contexts, in part, concurs with Lu (2001), Master (1987), Parrish (1987) and Thomas' (1989) findings. These scholars report that their respondents used *the* more frequently when they had specific referents (+SR) in mind than when the referent was familiar to the hearer (i.e. Hearer's Knowledge (+HK)). The present study and these previous studies differ on the methods used to collect data (cf. Chung, 2011; Tarone & Parrish, 1988). While the present study used the AJT and the FCET, Lu (2001) used a cloze test. However, Świątek (2014) reminds us that cloze tests sometimes deprive the learner of clear contexts that would otherwise have helped them select the right articles. In Master's (1987) longitudinal study, the participants were involved in informal interviews (see Section 3.2.2). Likewise, Thomas (1989) used a pairwise story-telling task. Master and Thomas's data were thus oral. I will compare their findings with the oral production data collected for this study, in Chapter 6.

There are, however, also a number of differences between the results of the AJT and the FCET, especially when considering the school effect in relation to the FH. Whereas Schools B and M fluctuated on the AJT, they did not fluctuate on the FCET. This might well be due to the fact that the two tasks present different levels of difficulty. As described in Section 4.3.6, whereas the AJT elicits higher-level competencies via its requirements of complex analytical thinking in evaluating the acceptability status of a sentence, the FCET elicits lower level competencies via its objective questions (Frías, 2014; Richards, 2006). In this regard, the AJT requires more complex cognitive processing than the FCET does (cf. Klein-Collins, 2013:12), and it is thus not entirely surprising that learners exhibited more fluctuation on the AJT than on the FCET.

Although the Swahili-speaking EFL learners largely demonstrate the same pattern of performance on the AJT and the FCET, the conclusions drawn at this point are only preliminary since the performance reported and discussed in this chapter is only from their written data. I will return to this question in Section 6.4 in Chapter 6, after reporting and discussing their spoken data. For the purpose of the results reported in this chapter, the respondents largely show the same pattern of performance on the two tasks (in terms of the entire cohort, the individual schools and the individual proficiency levels). Regarding the individual schools, however, Schools B and M fluctuated between definiteness and specificity on the AJT but not on the FCET.

5.5.3 Performance between different form levels

Research question (iv) asks whether there are differences in the performance of the learners at different form levels (F1 to F4, corresponding to South African grade levels 9 to 12) which might indicate the development of their IL knowledge of the English article system. The results of the FCET indicate that there is some development in terms of the learners' IL knowledge of English articles, but some notes are in order. Consideration of the following bar graph is useful. (Note that the pattern illustrated in this bar graph is found for all three schools individually as well.)

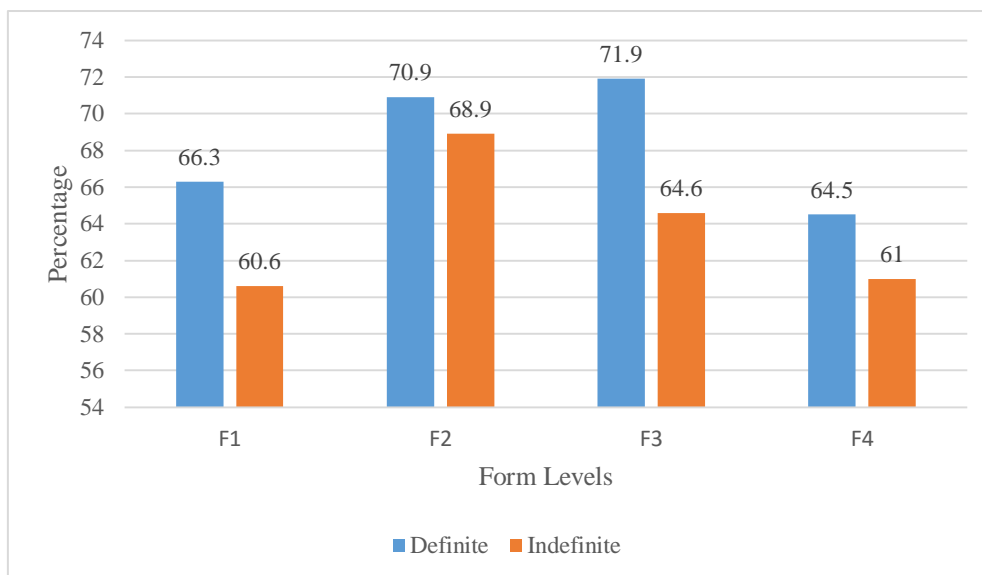


Figure 5.4: Per-form level comparison of the overall correct use of the definite and indefinite articles

Figure 5.4 clearly shows that the overall performance on articles by the Swahili-speaking EFL learners improves from F1 to F2 to F3 for the definite article and from F1 to F2 for the indefinite article. However, the learners' performance seems to regress from F3 to F4 for the definite article and from F2 to F3 to F4 for the indefinite article. This pattern of performance is most likely due to the role of input. Recall that English is a foreign language in Tanzania and that learners thus mainly receive input in this target language in their classrooms. Importantly, their teachers remarked (cf. Section 7.4.3.1 in Chapter 7) that they explicitly teach their learners about articles only in F1 and F2, and not in F3 and F4. The regression noted in the latter two grades could thus be an indication that this explicit instruction, as well as reading texts (in other content areas) in English, improved their knowledge and appropriate use of the English article system but that this knowledge is lost when explicit instruction on the topic ceases. Of course, there are probably other factors at play as well, but this difference in terms of input between F1 and F2, on the one hand, and F3 and F4, on the other hand, does offer a tenable explanation for the difference in performance noted in this study. Importantly, though, as was stated above, none of the differences from one form level to the next was significant, and we thus have to conclude that the AJT and the FCET data do not provide evidence of IL development.

These results concur with Dikilitas and Altay (2011) who report that the intermediate proficiency L1 Turkish learners of EFL in their study performed better than their advanced level counterparts, in part, because of decreased emphasis on learning (in)definiteness at the advanced level of proficiency. In another study, Isabelli-García and Slough (2012:102) report that the results of the more proficient learners in their study were more non-target-like than those of the less proficient learners. Isabelli-García and Slough explain their results based on the notions of 'scaffolding' and 'restructuring' (Donato, 1994; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lightbrown, 1985), as follows. When highly proficient learners interact with more proficient speakers, the learners may notice some new or accurate structures in the utterance of the more proficient speakers (Donato, 1994; Schmidt, 2010). The difference (or gap) noted may lead to scaffolding –learners develop their IL via real life communication (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). Such scaffolding leads to restructuring which is characterised by the destabilisation of their IL grammar. Eventually, their production manifests increased non-target-like performance in one area (for instance, in article use) and increased target-like performance in another area (Lightbrown, 1985). Isabelli-García and Slough (2012) add that at this stage, the learner may overgeneralise the newly acquired structure in some way. Nevertheless, explaining the results

of the present study grounded in the notions of ‘scaffolding’ and ‘restructuring’ may not be entirely correct since the Swahili-speaking EFL learners neither had the advanced levels of proficiency nor contact with more advanced/native English speakers in a naturalistic environment such as that referred to in the studies above (cf. Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Thus, the practice of teaching about articles to only F1 and F2 classes and the lack of opportunities to communicate in English outside of the classroom offer a more tenable explanation for the non-target-like performance that was more noticeable among the F3 and F4 learners than among the F1 and F2 learners.

Although the performance difference between one form level and another is not substantial, the numerical differences in performance between the form levels indicate that explicit teaching might play an important role in the acquisition and use of the article system in EFL contexts. Additionally, due to the complex nature of the article system, and in line with the data in the present study, teachers should probably teach it gradually across all form and proficiency levels or at least continue teaching (about) this property (Cowan, 2008; Snape & Yusa, 2013). Teaching the article system to all form levels will help avoid the regression to non-target-like performance noted among the (F3 and) F4 learners in the present study.

5.6 Chapter conclusion

In summary, this chapter presented the comparative analysis of data collected from 163 Swahili-speaking EFL learners. The data were collected by means of an AJT and an FCET. One of the aims of these tasks was to determine whether the learners’ choice of articles is affected by (non-)specificity conditions. The FH and the association of *the* with specificity were tested. The written data obtained via the AJT and the FCET indicated that the Swahili-speaking EFL learners fluctuate between definiteness and specificity only at the E level of English proficiency. At the LI and UI levels of English proficiency, the learners largely use the article system for the definiteness setting. As regards the second hypothesis, the results indicated no evidence that the learners associate *the* with specificity. They did not use *the* more than *a* in the indefinite specific context. With regard to the SMA, the FCET results indicated that the learners did not analyse English articles as adjectives.

Considering research question (ii), the indefinite, anaphoric and opaque contexts were noted to be more non-target-like than the other contexts in the FCET. Concerning research question (iii), the learners largely demonstrated similar performance on the AJT and the FCET. As for research question (iv), there are some numerical differences in performance between the

different form levels. Such differences indicate a positive role for explicit instruction for the development of learners' IL knowledge of (the use of) the English article system. However, since none of the relevant differences between the form levels was significant, one has to conclude that there was no evidence of IL development.

Pedagogically, the results presented in this chapter point to the role of input, real life communication, and continued instruction, for the Swahili-speaking EFL learners to master the English article system (in line with the findings of, among others, Chaudron (1998), Master, (1997), and Vanpatten and Cadierno (1993)). I discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter 8. However, it should be emphasised that the findings in this chapter only offer a partial picture of the situation, since the data are only from the written tasks. In order to obtain a more complete picture of the Swahili-speaking EFL learners' use of articles, it is necessary to examine the learners' use of articles in speaking. Accordingly, Chapter 6 presents and discusses the oral production data collected via the picture description task.

CHAPTER 6

SPOKEN DATA

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the spoken data collected using the Picture Description Task (PDT) (cf. Section 4.3.6.3) as well as the results of the analysis of these data. This presentation aims to examine which contexts of the English article system manifest as non-target-like in the learners' oral production and then compare this with the contexts found to manifest as non-target-like in the learners' written data (as reported in Chapter 5). Recall that the results of the oral data analysis, as well as the comparison between the oral data results and the written data results, are meant to address the following research questions (cf. Section 1.4):

- ii. Which contexts of the article system of English manifest as non-target-like in the Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use?
- iii. Do Swahili-speaking EFL learners perform differently, in terms of the article system, on different tasks, in particular writing, speaking, comprehension and acceptability judgements?
- v. How does the realisation of definiteness and specificity in Swahili influence the learners' acquisition of the English article system?

This chapter is comprised of two major sections. Section 6.2 compares the learners' performance on the different contexts within the task (within-task comparison), and Section 6.3 compares the learners' performance on the PDT and with their performance on the Forced Choice Elicitation Task (FCET) (between-task comparison).⁶³

6.2 Results of the PDT: within-task comparisons

6.2.1 Article use in definite and indefinite contexts

Recall from Section 4.3.6.3 that this task required each participant to describe three series of pictures to the experimenter, who could not see them. I recorded these descriptions and, due to time constraints, transcribed only the first two of each learner's three descriptions.

⁶³ Since the spoken data were collected with the nested sample of 35 learners, randomly selected from the data pool of 163 learners (cf. Section 4.3.6.3), the presentation of results in this chapter will not consider their individual schools or levels of proficiency, as such groupings render the groups too small for any meaningful analysis.

Thereafter, I identified all instances of the experimental items for this study in each of the descriptions. As explained in Section 4.3.6.3, coding focused on the use of *the*, *a(n)* and \emptyset ‘*the omission of articles*’ before singular common nouns.

As pointed out in Section 4.3.6.3, there were 1,931 instances relevant to definite and indefinite contexts produced in the 70 transcripts. Among them, 1,574 instances (81.5%) were definite and 357 instances (18.5%) were indefinite. In the 1,574 definite instances, 1,207 (76.7%) were correctly supplied with *the*, 251 (15.9%) were incorrectly substituted with *a(n)* and 116 (7.4%) were incorrectly omitted. As for the 357 indefinite instances, 155 (43.4%) were correctly supplied with *a(n)*, 137 (38.4%) were incorrectly substituted with *the* and 65 (18.2%) were omitted. The smallest number of article-instances found in one transcript was 12 and the largest number of article instances found was 53. On average, each transcript contained approximately 28 article-instances.

To determine the learners’ accuracy in article use, I first calculated their percentage scores for the correct use, incorrect substitution and incorrect omission of the definite and indefinite articles taken together. I wanted to see whether the learners would more often incorrectly substitute articles than incorrectly omit them, as was noted in the FCET data (cf. Section 5.4.1). The following table presents these overall results.

Table 6.1: Overall article use by the nested sample (PDT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Category	Percentage
Nested Sample	35	Correct use	70.5%
		Incorrect substitution	20.1%
		Incorrect omission	9.4%

As the table above indicates, the 35 learners’ overall performance on articles in the PDT shows that they had not yet mastered the English article system, since their performance had not reached the level of 90% accuracy (cf. footnote 61). In addition, these learners substituted articles more frequently than omitting them. These results concur with those of the entire cohort reported in Section 5.4.1 for the FCET.

Next, I calculated the learners’ percentage scores for the following categories: definite and indefinite contexts, *the* and *a(n)* in the indefinite specific context, the association of *the* with specificity, and the omission of articles in adjectivally modified noun contexts versus non-adjectivally modified noun contexts. A one-way between-categories ANOVA was conducted, and showed that the percentages for the different categories were significantly different,

$F_{(19,646)} = 54.78$, $p < 0.01$.⁶⁴ A pairwise LSD follow up test was run to determine specifically which categories were different from each other. To begin with, I present the overall percentages of the use of *the* and *a(n)* separately.

Table 6.2 presents the results of the pairwise comparisons of the learners' article use in the different definite contexts.

Table 6.2: Article use in the definite context (PDT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested Sample	35	Correct <i>the</i>	74.2%	56.5%	0.0000**
		Incorrect substitution	17.7%		
		Correct <i>the</i>	74.2%	66.1%	0.0000**
		Incorrect omission	8.1%		
		Incorrect substitution	17.7%	9.6%	0.0591*
		Incorrect omission	8.1%		

As can be seen in this table, the learners' oral data indicate that their accuracy in the definite context is relatively high – they correctly used *the* in 74.2% of the required instances, which is significantly more often than incorrectly omitting or incorrectly substituting the article ($p < 0.01$ in both cases). Moreover, the learners' incorrect substitution of articles (in 17.7% of instances) occurs significantly more frequently than their incorrect omission of articles (in 8.1% of instances) in this context. The following extracts exemplify the learners' use of articles in the three categories referred to above.

(117) [Definite contexts]: *Controls supplied 'the'*

i. Correct use of *the*

J3HZI: There is a rat... *the* rat is.... [Anaphoric context]

M4TMR: When the cat try to catch the bird, the dog catch *the* tail of the cat and throw him down. [Associative context]

⁶⁴ As was the case for the written results, a p-value lower than 0.05 is taken to indicate significance.

- ii. Incorrect substitution
 [Anaphoric contexts]
 J2KFK: I can see the boy coming along the road... A boy is wearing a dark blue trouser
 B1SSA: On that small bush, there was a butterfly. A butterfly was feeding from the flower.
- [Encyclopaedic context]
 J3KWC: Ok. I can see there is a nice sea in a mainland
- iii. Incorrect omission of *the*
 [Anaphoric context]
 B4ESB: But the pouch was left down and the dog go... and that pouch was have a sausage that was eaten by \emptyset dog.
 J3SNJ: He was have basket and ball, and inside of the basket, there are fish. Then, we see that the boy that he was \emptyset basket and \emptyset ball ...

Table 6.3 presents the learners' use of articles in the indefinite context. Akin to the previous table, it focuses on the correct use, incorrect substitution and incorrect omission of *a(n)*.

Table 6.3: Article use in the indefinite context (PDT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested sample	35	Correct <i>a(n)</i>	43.0%	3.9%	0.4400
		Incorrect substitution	39.1%		
		Correct <i>a(n)</i>	43.0%	25.1%	0.0000**
		Incorrect omission	17.9%		
		Incorrect substitution	39.1%	21.2%	0.0000**
		Incorrect omission	17.9%		

Table 6.3 above shows that the difference between the frequency of the correct use of the indefinite article (43%) and the incorrect substitution of the indefinite article (i.e. the use of *the* where *a* is required) (39.1%) is not significant. In contrast, the difference between the frequency of the correct use of the indefinite article and the incorrect omission of the article (17.9%) is significant ($p < 0.01$). As for their incorrect use of articles, the learners substituted the indefinite article (in 39.1% of cases) significantly more frequently than they omitted it (in 17.9% of cases) ($p < 0.01$). This pattern concurs with their use of the definite article

presented in Table 6.2: in both cases (i.e. in definite as well as indefinite contexts), the learners used the incorrect article more than twice as frequently as they omitted the article. What is more, the results in the two tables also concur with the results of the analysis of the written (FCET) data noted in the preceding chapter (cf. Section 5.4.1): more frequent incorrect substitution than incorrect omission. The following extracts exemplify the learners' use of articles in the indefinite context:

- (118) [First mention (indefinite) contexts]: *Controls supplied 'a'*
- i. Correct use of *a(n)*
 - B2JKM: At the first picture, it shows that *a* dog is chasing *a* cat.
 - J2BNN: There was a small cat looking at *a* yellow butterfly.
 - M4TMR: There is a big tree with *a* nest of birds.
 - ii. Incorrect substitution
 - B3HNS: The two birds were sitting within *the* nest while...
 - J4JMS: In this piece of picture, I see *the* little animal and *the* butterfly.
 - M4MAO: At the first picture, we see *the* tree ...
 - iii. Incorrect omission of *a(n)*
 - B2LJA: I can see that there is the dog and the tree with \emptyset good necklace
 - M2AAJ: I see \emptyset tree, \emptyset dog, \emptyset mouse and houses and \emptyset man.
 - M2ASN: This picture, it show \emptyset green place and \emptyset goat and \emptyset young goat.

Table 6.4 presents the results of the comparison between the omission of articles in definite versus indefinite contexts.

Table 6.4: Omission of *the* and *a(n)* (PDT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested Sample	35	Incorrect omission of <i>the</i>	8.1%	9.8	0.0544*
		Incorrect omission of <i>a(n)</i>	17.9%		

As can be seen in Table 6.4, the learners incorrectly omitted *a(n)* significantly more frequently than they incorrectly omitted *the* (cf. White (2003a), reviewed in Section 3.4.3 in Chapter 3). These results suggest that their use of the indefinite article was more non-target-like than their use of the definite article. The learners' difficulty in using the indefinite article correctly was clearly visible when their overall accuracy on *the* and *a(n)* was compared as illustrated in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Overall accuracy in the use of *the* and *a(n)* (PDT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested Sample	35	Correct <i>the</i>	74.2%	31.2%	0.0000**
		Correct <i>a(n)</i>	43.0%		

The results reported in the table above show that the learners' performance on the definite article (correct use in 74.2% of instances) was significantly better ($p < 0.01$) than their performance on the indefinite article (correct use in 43% of instances). These results are consonant with those of the entire cohort reported in Chapter 5 for the FCET data (cf. Section 5.4.2.1). Similar results are reported in Lardière (2004), Lee (2013) and Morales-Reyes and Soler (2016) (discussed previously in Sections 3.3 and 3.4). Lardière (2004), in particular, noted that the indefinite article has more complex feature specifications than the definite article does. For instance, whereas *a(n)* distinguishes number or a singular from plural noun or a count noun from a mass noun, *the* is neutral with regard to making such distinctions. It is less complex in terms of feature specification since it can freely occur with singular, plural, count and mass nouns.

Table 6.6 compares the use of *the* and *a(n)* in the indefinite specific context. This comparison is necessary to test the prediction made by the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) (cf. Section 3.3) that learners will use the definite article and the indefinite article to roughly the same extent in [–def, +spec] contexts because they fluctuate between the definiteness and the specificity settings of the Article Choice Parameter (ACP).

Table 6.6: Use of *the* and *a(n)* in the [–def, +spec] context (PDT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested Sample	35	Incorrect <i>the</i>	39.1%	3.9%	0.4400
		Correct <i>a(n)</i>	43.0%		

The results reported in the table indicate that the use of *the* and *a(n)* in the [–def, +spec] context is fairly similar (39.1% versus 43%) –the difference between them is not significant. Item analysis was also conducted, and this also indicated that the learners used *the* at roughly the same rate as they used *a(n)*. The following examples from the data are illustrative.

(119) [*Indefinite specific contexts*]: Controls supplied ‘a’

- B2IOB: From the first picture, we are seeing *the* dog was chasing *a* rat
 B2LJA: I can see that there is a big tree and *the* small house.
 J3SNJ: In a first picture... I see *the* dog, *a* rat and... tree
 M4TMR: There is a big tree with *a* nest of birds ... and *the* cat was coming ...
 M3TAK: There are some dog see *a* cat who around near *the* tree.

The prediction of the FH (Ionin 2003; Ionin, Ko and Wexler, 2004) is thus borne out in the learners’ performance in that they clearly fluctuated between the definiteness and specificity settings of the ACP in their oral production of articles. I will compare these results with the results of the FCET in Section 6.3 to determine whether these 35 learners also fluctuate between the two settings in writing.

6.2.2 The effect of adjectival modification

In Table 6.7, I present the PDT results in terms of the omission of articles in adjectivally modified nouns versus non-adjectivally modified nouns, to test the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA), which holds that L2 learners with L1s without articles [–ART] misanalyse English articles as adjectives. Consequently, they are predicted to omit articles more frequently before adjectivally modified nouns than before non-adjectivally modified nouns (cf. Section 3.5).

Table 6.7: The omission of articles between ART+N and ART+ADJ+N contexts (PDT)

Group	<i>n</i>	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested Sample	35	ART+N	9.8%	1.0%	0.8434
		ART+ADJ+N	8.8%		

The results presented in Table 6.7 suggest that adjectival modification does not affect the rate of article omission by Swahili-speaking EFL learners, as the article was omitted to roughly the same extent in adjectivally modified nouns (8.8%) as in non-adjectivally modified nouns (9.8%) (leading to a p-value of 0.8434). However, these results should be viewed with caution as most learners –especially those with low English proficiency –completely avoided employing adjectives before nouns. There were very few instances of ‘ART+ADJ+N’ in the data, making up only 7% of the total number of nouns produced. The majority of the learners used adjectives in the post-nominal position, especially in *wh*- and appositive clauses as modifiers of nouns, as illustrated in the extracts in (120) below.

- (120) B3HNS: Those birds were in colour, *white colour*
 J2BNN: He was carrying his balloon, *which is yellow in colour*
 M1HSA: I see a dog *with yellow colour in her neck, which is blue in colour*
 M1HSA: There is a crow, *which is black in colour*

Their avoidance of the use of adjectives before nouns might be a result of the post-nominal position of adjectives in Swahili (cf. Section 2.5.1.3), and it is thus highly likely that it is due to transfer from their L1 Swahili. Although the learners did omit the article more often in the non-adjectivally modified nouns than in the adjectivally modified nouns in the FCET data (cf. the entire cohort's performance in Section 5.4.6.1), this difference was minimal and not significant. The prediction above that the 35 learners would omit articles more frequently in adjectivally modified nouns than in non-adjectivally modified nouns was not supported by the PDT data. This pattern of omission provides no evidence that adjectival modification plays a role in learners' article use.

6.2.3 Additional evidence of transfer from L1 Swahili

Qualitative analysis indicates that some learners transferred the realisation of definiteness in their L1 Swahili to English. For instance, as discussed in Section 2.6.1, Swahili uses Subject Markers (SMs) (among other strategies) to realise definiteness. Example (69) in Chapter 2, partly repeated in (121) below, illustrates this observation.

- (121) *Paulo; a;lisafiri.*
 Paulo **SM**+pst+travel
 'Paul travelled'

Structurally, the SM immediately follows the subject noun of the Swahili sentence.⁶⁵ Thus, the Swahili sentence normally has the form [S [**NP**_i] + [VP [**SM**_i+TM+OM+V+FV]]] (cf. Section 2.5.2.1). Recall that the Swahili SM functions in much the same way as personal pronouns do in English (Deen, 2006). Consequently, it is interesting to note that the learners used the 'noun+pronoun' pairing in cases where they wanted to refer back to a subject that they had already mentioned in the preceding phrase or discourse, as in the following extracts.

⁶⁵ If speakers want to indicate definite object nouns in Swahili, they use Object Markers (OMs), demonstratives, word order permutations and the context of interaction, among many other mechanisms (cf. Section 2.6.1).

- (122) M2ASN: A cat you seen
 N+PRON+V
 ‘The cat has seen’
- A dog you run it
 N+PRON+V+O_{PRON}
 ‘The dog is chasing it.’
- A dog over a tree you see a cat
 NP + PRON+V+O_{NP}
 ‘The dog sees a cat on the tree’

In each extract above, the learner used *you* to refer back to the cat and the dog respectively, which she had already mentioned in the subject position. In addition, in the following extracts, the first learner (J4ARA) used *he* to refer to the boy who is also familiar in the discourse context. The second learner (M2AAJ) used *they* to refer back to the cat that she had already mentioned in the subject position. Likewise, the third learner (M4MAO) used *he* to refer to the eagle that she had previously mentioned in the subject position.

- (123) J4ARA: That boy he was holding aah... fish⁶⁶
 Dem+N+PRON+aux+V+ing_fish
 ‘That boy was holding fish’
- M2AAJ: Cat they climb
 N +PRON+ V
 ‘The cat is climbing (the tree)’
- M4MAO: the eagle he run a wolf
 N + PRON +V +N
 ‘The eagle is chasing the wolf’

As described in Section 2.3.1.4, pronouns realise definiteness in many languages. In Swahili, the SM can function as a pronoun. Note that the extracts above provide evidence that the learners transferred the [NP + SM] structure from their L1 Swahili to English. Consequently, in the absence of SMs in English, they used the ‘noun+pronoun’ pairing. The data show that these learners know that pronouns denote definiteness in English but, in some instances, they fail to choose the right pronouns according to number, gender and person distinctions (cf. Patty’s data in Lardièrè (2005), reviewed in Section 3.4.4). This finding shows the learners

⁶⁶ Note that this construction is sometimes acceptable to native speakers of English. Consider, for example, “The grapes from that part of the country, they’re delicious”. This is of course something that is only accepted and used by some native speakers and only in spoken form.

have acquired definiteness but have difficulty in correctly expressing it overtly in the English morpho-syntactic configuration. The data support Prévost and White's (2000) Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) in that the learners' failure to map definiteness on the surface morpho-syntactic structure does not necessarily mean that they have not acquired it, but rather shows that they have not yet acquired the ability to correctly map definiteness on its surface structure.

As pointed out in Section 2.7.2, Swahili deictic demonstratives occur in the pre-nominal position, just as English demonstratives do (cf. Section 2.5.1.1), the prediction was therefore that the learners would prefer the English distal demonstrative *that* to the definite article *the* for definite entities in the PDT (cf. Ionin, Baek, Kim, Ko and Wexler, 2012; Rezai & Alishvandi, 2015). However, the data did not support the prediction. The learners produced only 451 instances of *that* (including repetitions), compared to the 1,574 instances of *the* identified in the data. Clearly, these learners had acquired knowledge of the morpho-syntactic distribution of *the* in English but had not yet completely acquired its semantic-pragmatic uses.

In summary, the within-task comparisons of the spoken data yielded the following results:

- The learners incorrectly substituted articles more frequently than incorrectly omitting them.
- They used *the* more accurately than *a(n)*.
- There were more omissions of *a(n)* than of *the*.
- The learners used *the* and *a(n)* interchangeably in the [-def, +spec] context –they fluctuated between definiteness and specificity.
- Adjectival modification had no impact on the learners' frequency of article omission; rather, the transfer of the L1 Swahili bare NP structure seems to have led the learners to omit articles.

6.3 Comparison between the PDT and the FCET data: Between-task comparisons

In this section, I compare the 35 learners' spoken data (reported in the preceding section) to their written data (reported in the previous chapter). This comparison will help to understand the differences and similarities between the learners' performance on articles in speaking and writing. Below, I compare their overall performance, accurate use of *the*, accurate use of *a(n)*, accurate use of *a(n)* in the [-def, +spec] context, inaccurate use of *the* in the [-def, +spec] context and the omission of articles in adjectivally modified nouns versus non-adjectivally modified nouns.

6.3.1 Article use in definite and indefinite contexts

Table 6.8 below presents the learners' overall accuracy in terms of article use in the spoken data (the data from the PDT) and the written data (the data from the FCET).

Table 6.8: Overall accuracy on articles in the two discourse types (PDT & FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Discourse	Mean %	Mean diff	p-value
Nested sample	35	Spoken	58.6%	6.8%	0.1807
		Written	65.4%		

As Table 6.8 shows, there is no significant difference between the spoken and written discourse when the learners' performance in definite and indefinite contexts is taken together. However, significant differences between the learners' article use in speaking and writing become apparent as soon as one considers the different contexts separately. This is what is done in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: Per-discourse comparison of performance on individual articles (PDT & FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Discourse	Article	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested sample	35	Spoken	<i>the</i>	74.2%	31.2%	0.0000**
			<i>a(n)</i>	43%		
		Written	<i>the</i>	71.7%	12.7%	0.0125*
			<i>a(n)</i>	59%		
		Spoken	<i>the</i>	74.2%	2.5%	0.6282
			Written	<i>the</i>	71.7%	
		Spoken	<i>a(n)</i>	43%	16.0%	0.0016**
			Written	<i>a(n)</i>	59%	

On comparing the learners' use of articles in the two discourse types, Table 6.9 shows that the learners perform significantly better on the definite article than on the indefinite article in both speaking ($p < 0.01$) and writing ($p < 0.05$). These results concur with those reported in Chapter 5 (cf. Section 5.4.2), in that the learners demonstrated better mastery of the definite article than the indefinite article.

As for the learners' accuracy on *the* in speaking and writing, the difference between the two discourse types is not significant. Their accuracy in the use of *the* is relatively high in both writing (71.7%) and speaking (74.2%). In contrast, their performance on the indefinite article shows a significant difference between the two discourse types ($p < 0.01$): The learners' use of the indefinite article was significantly less target-like in the spoken discourse than in the written discourse.

Next, I examined whether the prediction of the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) is borne out in the data –that is, whether the learners (incorrectly) use *the* and (correctly use) *a(n)* interchangeably in the indefinite specific context. If they are fluctuating between the two settings of the ACP, one would expect no significant difference between the use of *a(n)* and *the* in the [–def, +spec] context –neither in speaking nor in writing.

Table 6.10: Per-discourse comparison of the correct use of *a(n)* and incorrect use of *the* in the [–def, +spec] context (PDT & FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Discourse	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested sample	35	Spoken	Correct <i>a(n)</i>	43.0%	3.9%	0.4400
			Incorrect <i>the</i>	39.1%		
		Written	Correct <i>a(n)</i>	57.5%	23.2%	0.0000**
			Incorrect <i>the</i>	34.3%		

Table 6.10 shows that, whereas the difference in performance between *a(n)* and *the* in the spoken discourse is not significant, the difference between the two articles in the written discourse is highly significant ($p < 0.01$). These results show that, whereas the participants in the nested sample fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in speaking, they did not do so in writing. This might well be due to the fact that in writing learners have the opportunity to utilise conscious knowledge for grammatical accuracy, while such an opportunity is not available in speaking due to the speed of processing (i.e. time pressure) and the pressure to achieve fluency. When the learners have the opportunity to make use of their conscious knowledge of article use in [–def, +spec] contexts, this helps them to use the correct article *a(n)* significantly more frequently than the incorrect article *the*. However, when they do not have the opportunity (i.e. the time) to make use of this conscious knowledge, one gets a more reliable indication of their unconscious knowledge, including parameter settings in the IL grammar, and it is precisely here that there is indeed evidence of fluctuation.

6.3.2 The effect of adjectival modification

Finally, in Table 6.11, I compare the learners' omission of articles in relation to the presence or absence of adjectival modifications in the spoken task and the written task.

Table 6.11: Comparing the omission of articles in relation to adjectival modification (PDT & FCET)

Group	<i>n</i>	Discourse	Category	Mean %	Mean diff.	p-value
Nested sample	35	Spoken	[+adjective]	8.8%	1%	0.8434
			[-adjective]	9.8%		
		Written	[+adjective]	3.8%	5.8%	0.2514
			[-adjective]	9.6%		

Table 6.11 shows that adjectival modification does not have a significant effect on the frequency with which the learners omit articles. As seen in the table above, the differences in the percentage scores for the omission of articles between the [+adjective] and [-adjective] contexts are not significant, neither in speaking nor in writing.

6.4 Discussion of the results

The aim of collecting the oral production data was to be able to draw parallels between the learners' use of articles in speaking and writing. Some patterns –similar to the ones reported in this chapter –were discussed in Chapter 5 (cf. Sections 5.3 and 5.4). Thus, to avoid unnecessary repetition, I will briefly expand on the observed higher accuracy for *the* than for *a(n)*, the fluctuation between definiteness and specificity, the association of *the* with specificity, and the omission of articles between adjectivally and non-adjectivally modified nouns. In addition, I discuss the comparison between the learners' incorrect substitution and incorrect omission of articles, 'directionality' and the comparison of performance in writing and speaking.

To begin with the comparison between the accuracy on *the* and *a(n)*, the oral data show that the learners are more accurate in the use of *the* than of *a(n)*. In line with the written results in Chapter 5, the indefinite article seems to be more taxing, something which Lardière (2005) argues is due to the fact that this article has more complex semantic conditions than *the*. Number or the mass/count distinctions need to be adhered to in using the indefinite article. In contrast, the definite article occurs freely with singular, plural, count and mass nouns. In part,

this difference in complexity thus contributed to the more frequent occurrence of non-target-like performance on the indefinite article than on the definite article.

In the light of the comparison between *the* and *a(n)* above, it makes sense to discuss ‘directionality’, described as the noted tendency of learners of L2 English to use *the* more frequently and more accurately than *a* (García-Mayo, 2009). The results in the present study show that, both in writing and speaking, the learners’ frequency and accuracy of using articles reflects ‘directionality’. This finding concurs with García-Mayo (2009), among her lower intermediate group, and with Haiyan and Lianrui (2010), Kamal (2013), Lardière (2004), Master (1987), Robertson (2000), White (2003a), Xia and Yan-xia (2015) and Zdorenko and Paradis (2008). In line with the explanation given in the preceding paragraph, Lardière (2004), for example, says that the ‘directionality’ effect is caused by the differences in feature specifications bundled up with each article. For example, while *the* denotes ‘definiteness’, *a(n)* denotes ‘singularity’ and ‘indefiniteness’. Consequently, Lardière argues that the more features are bundled up with a morpheme, the more difficult it is for an EFL/ESL learner to master it.

As for the incorrect use of articles, the learners demonstrated more incorrect substitution of articles than incorrect omission of articles. They produced substitution errors more frequently than omission errors, both in the FCET and PDT. Most research on the acquisition of morpho-syntax, in particular grammatical morphology, shows that many EFL/ESL learners tend to acquire grammatical morphology more quickly in the nominal domain than in the verbal domain (Paradis, 2007b). Grounded on this observation, it is reasonable to assume that such EFL/ESL learners (correctly or incorrectly) supply more morphemes in the nominal domain than in the verbal domain. Contrary to the verbal domain, where L2 learners are noted to produce more omission errors than substitution errors, in particular for finite verbal morphology (see, for instance, Ionin and Wexler (2002) and Paradis (2005))⁶⁷, in the nominal domain, the Swahili-speaking EFL learners in the present study produce more article

⁶⁷ However, this pattern is not always the case. Prévost and White (2000), for instance, noted that the learners in their study made more substitution than omission errors in verbal morphology. They then argue that this is because these learners had already acquired the relevant underlying structures but had not yet mastered the correct suppliance of overt morphemes –what they referred to as the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH).

substitutions than article omissions—both in writing and in speaking.⁶⁸ In part, these results support the observation that L2 learners produce less omission errors in the nominal morphology (when compared to the omission errors in the verbal morphology). The substitution and omission of articles are discussed further, respectively, in the following two paragraphs.

Regarding the substitution of articles, similarly to the results of the AJT and FCET reported in Chapter 5, the oral production data (in this chapter) do not provide evidence for the association of *the* with specificity. As explained in Chapter 5, the learners did not use *the* (the wrong article) significantly more than *a(n)* (the right article) in the [–def, +spec] context. These results partly concur with those reported in Master (1987) and in Thomas (1989). The Swahili-speaking learners overused *the* in [–def, +spec] contexts but did not use *the* more than *a(n)* in these contexts. The use of *the* and *a(n)* in the [–def, +spec] contexts was similar. These results suggest that the learners had access to both settings of the ACP in speaking and could utilise their conscious knowledge of English articles in writing. Accordingly, they (incorrectly) fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in speaking, but correctly attributed the definiteness setting to the English article system in writing.

Concerning the omission of articles, more omissions are noted in the indefinite context than in the definite context. Results show *a(n)* was omitted more frequently than *the* by the Swahili-speaking EFL learners. Again, the difficulty in the use of *a(n)* also explains why more omissions are noted for this article. In contrast, the learners' frequency of omission of *the* was very limited. What is more, since the learners in the present study did not omit articles more in the adjectivally modified nouns than in the non-modified nouns, these results do not support the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (Trenkic, 2007, 2008, 2009). In part, these results are due to the occurrence of Swahili adjectives in the post-nominal position (cf. Chapter 2). Thus, the learners seemed to transfer their bare NP structure of Swahili to English. These results concur with those found for the entire cohort (reported in Chapter 5).

Finally, when comparing the learners' overall performance on the two discourse types, it is clear that the learners were more accurate in writing than in speaking—particularly in their use of the indefinite article. They demonstrated significantly higher performance on *a(n)* in

⁶⁸ In line with this observation, in her study on the frequency of and variability in errors in the use of English prepositions, Catalán (1996:179) reports that her respondents incorrectly substituted prepositions (11.88%) more than incorrectly omitting them (3.71%).

writing than in speaking. Kim and Lakshmanan (2009), Lee (2013) and Sarko (2009) aver that learners perform better in writing since they have enough time to utilise their conscious knowledge of grammar. Ellis and Yuan (2004) examined the effects of three planning conditions –pre-task planning, unpressured on-line planning and no planning conditions – among 42 Chinese learners of EFL (divided into three groups, one for each planning condition). Eliciting narratives from a picture composition, these scholars report that the pre-planning group showed more fluency. The *unpressured* on-line planning group demonstrated greater accuracy since they had better opportunities for monitoring. In contrast, the no planning group demonstrated negative consequences for fluency and accuracy because they were under pressure to monitor their production. In speaking, attention to *meaning* may lead to inaccuracy of *form* –especially in the case of an EFL/ESL learner (Abdi, Eslami and Zahedi, 2012; Skehan, 1996; Vanpatten, 2002). The need for spontaneity and the speed at which processing occurs in speaking does not allow the learner to utilise their knowledge of grammar. Studies (such as Ellis (1987), Foster and Skehan (1996), Robinson (1995), Skehan and Foster (1997, 1999) and Yuan and Ellis (2003)) indicate that when learners have sufficient time to plan prior to their descriptions, high levels of fluency and accuracy are largely achieved.

The learners used *a(n)* and *the* interchangeably in speaking but not in writing. In contrast to the results in the preceding chapter that the learners exhibited fluctuation only at the elementary level of English proficiency (see Section 5.3.2, for the AJT’s results, and Section 5.4.5.3, for the FCET’s results), the results in this chapter show that the nested sample fluctuated between the two settings in speaking but not in writing. This finding offers further support for the argument that, in speaking, learners generally have limited time to utilise their conscious knowledge of grammar. Accordingly, the PDT results in this study support Ionin et al.’s (2004) FH.

6.5 Chapter conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present spoken data and compare them with the written data collected via the FCET and AJT. This comparison highlighted the differences and similarities in performance between the two discourse types. I collected the spoken data from a nested sample of 35 Swahili-speaking EFL learners, who participated in a PDT. This chapter aimed at addressing the three research questions highlighted in Section 6.1 above, as follows.

To begin with research question (ii), the indefinite article manifested as more non-target-like than the definite article. Substitution errors were also more frequent than omission errors. These results concur with those of the entire cohort reported in Chapter 5.

Considering research question (iii), on one hand, the data indicated that the learners' performance on the two discourse types is similar in a number of respects. For instance, they are more accurate in their use of *the* than of *a(n)*. This pattern reflects 'directionality', as reported in most previous studies. As for the incorrect use of articles, the learners demonstrated more incorrect substitution and less incorrect omission. Considering the substitution of articles, the data do not provide evidence of the association of *the* with specificity. Regarding the omission of articles, more omissions were noted in the indefinite context than in the definite context.

On the other hand, the data also indicated differences between the learners' performance on the two discourse types. For instance, they were more accurate in writing than in speaking. In the same manner, they did not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in writing but they did do so in speaking. The PDT required more complex cognitive processes than those required by the FCET to introduce the referents using *a(n)* and to spontaneously refer back to the same referents using *the*.

Concerning research question (v), the influence of L1 Swahili was evident in the data via the learners' omission of articles (because of relying on the context of interaction) and via using 'noun+pronoun' pairings (because of transferring the N+SM pattern of their L1 Swahili) to realise definiteness in English. In the next chapter, I present the collection, analysis and discussion of interview data to determine how teachers address non-target-like performance such as that reported here, with respect to the article system.

CHAPTER 7

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the collection and analysis of the third set of data for this study – qualitative data from semi-structured interviews – as well as the results of the data analysis, their interpretation and a discussion of the most important findings. The qualitative data reported in this chapter help to address the following two research questions:

- vi. How do Tanzanian EFL teachers address the non-target-like properties of the IL grammars of Swahili-speaking learners of English with regard to the article system of the language?
- vii. Which suggestions can be made to Tanzanian EFL teachers regarding the teaching of the relevant contexts of (in)definiteness as realised via articles in English to Swahili speakers in Tanzania?

This chapter is organised as follows: Section 7.2 presents the profile of each teacher who participated in the interviews. In Section 7.3, I describe how I processed and analysed the data. Section 7.4 presents the themes identified in the data, and Section 7.5 presents the results of the data analysis, and a discussion of the most important findings. In Section 7.6, I explain the mechanisms employed to ensure rigour in this qualitative component of the study. Finally, Section 7.7 concludes this chapter.

7.2 The profile of each interviewed teacher

This section briefly presents the profile of each teacher who participated in the interviews. These profiles contain information pertaining to age, gender, the number of languages they speak, where they received their primary and secondary education, what their teaching experience was and in which form levels they teach EFL. This information is summarised in the table below. I provide a description of each teacher below the table.

Table 7.1: The profile of each teacher

Teacher	Age	Gender	Number of languages	Primary and secondary education	Teaching experience	Class(es)
TB1	59	M	3	Public	30 years	F2
TB2	60	F	3	Public	40 years	F3
TB3	41	F	3	Public	19 years	F1
TB4	38	F	2	Public	9 years	F4
TJ1	31	M	3	Public	4 years	F3
TJ2	58	F	3	Public	32 years	F4
TJ3	44	F	3	Public	11 years	F1
TM1	31	M	3	Public	4 years	F2
TM2	28	M	3	Public	4 years	F3
TM3	53	F	4	Public	33 years	F1 & F4

7.2.1 TB1

TB1 was a 59-year old male teacher. He grew up in a community speaking L1 Luguru and L2 Swahili. He attended a primary school at which the MoI was initially English, and was later changed to Swahili by the government. The MoI at his secondary school was also English. After obtaining a diploma in education from a teachers' training college, he started teaching English at a primary school for the visually impaired. He then completed a BA and started teaching at secondary school level. By the time I was collecting data, he had already been teaching English in Tanzania for 30 years. He was teaching F2 learners at School B.

7.2.2 TB2

TB2 was a 60-year old female teacher. She grew up in a L1 Vunjo speaking community in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania. She attended a primary school with Swahili as the MoI, and English as a subject, and then a secondary school with English as the MoI. After school, she received a certificate in teaching and later (in 1978) a diploma in education. From 1974 to 1979, she taught at primary school level. From 1980 to the time of data collection, she had been teaching English at secondary school level. Taking her primary and secondary school teaching together, she already had 40 years of teaching experience at the time of data collection. She was teaching F3 learners at School B.

7.2.3 TB3

TB3 was a 41-year old female teacher. She was born and raised in a community that speaks L1 Kiwoso and L2 Swahili. She learned English as a subject at primary school and it was the MoI at her secondary school. After school, she joined a teachers' training college, and she

received a diploma in education in 1995. At the time of data collection, she had 19 years of teaching experience. She was teaching F1 learners in School B. This teacher answered the interview questions in Swahili and did not consent to be audio recorded.⁶⁹ I thus took some notes during the interview.

7.2.4 TB4

TB4 was a 38-year old female teacher, born and raised in the Arusha region of Tanzania. She spoke L1 Swahili, and learned English as a foreign language. English was also the MoI at her primary and secondary schools. The primary school that she attended was one of the few English medium primary schools that the government established to enable children of foreign expatriates who were working and staying in Tanzania to learn in English, since Swahili was the MoI in all other Tanzanian primary schools. After school, TB4 received a diploma of education in English in 2005 and then pursued a BA degree in Accounting and Finance⁷⁰. She also completed a post-graduate diploma in education in 2013. At the time of data collection, she was teaching F4 learners at School B, and she was enrolled in an MA programme at a university. She had been teaching English in Tanzania for nine years.

7.2.5 TJ1

TJ2 was a 31-year old male teacher. He grew up in a L1 Swahili speaking community. He had English as a subject in a primary school with Swahili as the MoI, and then attended a secondary school with English as the MoI. Thereafter he completed a B.A in education. He stayed in the USA for one year, working as a foreign language-teaching assistant under the FULBRIGHT-FLTA programme. When he returned to Tanzania from the USA in 2014, he joined School J as a teacher of English. He had four years teaching experience.

7.2.6 TJ2

TJ1 was a 58-year old female teacher. She grew up in a community that speaks L1 Pare in Kilimanjaro. She learned English as a subject at primary school level and it was the MoI at her secondary school. After school, she completed a diploma in education. Since 1982, she

⁶⁹ I discuss the fact that some teachers did not want to speak English and/or did not want to be audio recorded, in Section 7.5.

⁷⁰ In the Tanzanian public education system, a diploma of education in English (and in any other subject) qualifies a teacher to teach English at secondary level to the first four form-class learners, viz. Forms One, Two, Three and Four.

had been teaching English in different secondary schools in Tanzania. At School J, she was teaching F4 learners. This teacher also did not consent to be audio recorded. (I return to this in Section 7.5.) I thus took some notes during the interview.

7.2.7 TJ3

TJ3 was a 44-year old female teacher who grew up in a community that speaks L1 Swahili. Although her parents could speak L1 Sambia and L1 Pare, they used Swahili in all social situations as well as at home. English was the MoI at her primary and secondary school. She had a diploma in education and a B.A degree. At the time of data collection, she had been teaching English and History at secondary school level for 11 years. She was teaching F1 learners at School J. This teacher did not consent to be audio-recorded unless allowed to answer the interview questions in Swahili. During the interview, she also made use of code-switching, from Swahili to English, to a limited extent.

7.2.8 TM1

TM1 was a 31-year old male teacher at School M. He grew up in an L1 Sukuma and L2 Swahili speaking community. He was exposed to English as a subject at primary school and as the medium of instruction at secondary school. He did his B.A studies at a private university in Tanzania. He had been teaching at School M since 2010. At the time of data collection, he was teaching F2 learners. He was also teaching remedial English to F5 learners at another private school in Dar es Salaam.

7.2.9 TM2

TM2 was a 28-year old male teacher at School M. He spoke three languages: L1 Bena, and L2s Swahili and English. He received his education in the public educational system, from elementary to tertiary levels, with Swahili as the MoI at primary level and English as the MoI at secondary level. He had a B.A and four years of teaching experience. At the time of data collection, he was teaching F3 learners.

7.2.10 TM3

TM3 was a 53-year old female teacher at School M. She was born in an L1 Chagga speaking community and grew up in Dar es Salaam because her parents moved to the city when she was still young. She spoke L1 Chagga and L2s Swahili, Ngoni and English. She had a B.A, and she was studying towards a master's degree. She had been teaching English in Tanzania since 1981. At the time of data collection, she was teaching F1 and F4 learners at School M.

As might be gathered from the profiles above, eight of the 10 teachers (80%) who participated in the interviews speak three languages: an ethnic language, Swahili and English. One teacher (10%) speaks four languages, and another teacher (10%) speaks only two languages (L1 Swahili and L2 English). Note also that all the teachers interviewed received their primary and secondary education in the public educational system of Tanzania.

As explained in Chapter 4 (cf. Section 4.3.5), the use of purposive sampling for this qualitative component was necessary because the aim was to understand EFL teachers' perspectives on non-target-like performance by their learners. Hence, it was important to recruit only teachers who had been teaching the learners who participated in the present study. Practically, therefore, there was no opportunity for probability sampling, in particular, when one considers the small number of only 10 EFL teachers who were available (and willing) to participate in the interviews.

7.3 Data processing and analysis

In this section, I explain how I processed the interview data and thematically analysed them. Attride-Stirling (2001:386) advises researchers to report in detail the “how” segment of qualitative analysis since it helps readers to judge and understand the value of the research, as well as being extremely useful for other researchers who want to conduct similar research. Accordingly, this section is organised as follows: Section 7.3.1 presents the key decisions I made prior to the analysis. Section 7.3.2 demonstrates the steps that I followed in the analysis.

7.3.1 Key decisions prior to the analysis

Before starting to analyse the data, I had to consider and select a number of guiding principles for my analysis in order to make sure that my analysis would be systematic. Such principles offer clear guidelines towards the identification and analysis of themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) insist that deciding on what counts as a theme, the type of analysis, the approach to analysis and the level of analysis is vital in thematic analysis. In the following paragraphs, I explain the relevant decisions that I made.

Firstly, I decided to regard anything in the data that was relevant to the specific research questions as a theme. Braun and Clarke (2006:82) maintain that a theme should be something that in one way or another captures relevant information about the overarching research question. Hence, I consistently regarded everything that fulfilled this requirement as themes in the present study.

Secondly, I had to decide which type of thematic analysis I wanted to perform. Researchers can select from either a rich description of the data set or meticulous interpretation of certain instances for each theme within the data (ibid). In my analysis, I selected the latter option, since it helps to provide detailed descriptions of different themes within the data in relation to the relevant research questions.

Thirdly, I decided to use the inductive approach, rather than the deductive approach to analysis, because, in this approach, patterns are strictly linked to data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:83), the inductive approach is data-driven. In this regard, coding does not consider theoretical interests but considers only what the data say. Following this approach, I identified codes based on the salient issues that emanated from the transcripts themselves (cf. Attride-Stirling, 2001:390; Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008:429).

Finally, thematic analysis offers two levels at which one can identify themes: semantic and interpretive. Since themes identified at the interpretive level are normally already theorised, this would contradict with the inductive approach opted for in this analysis (cf. the preceding paragraph). Braun and Clarke (2006:84) maintain that analysing data at the interpretive level is associated with the constructionist paradigm⁷¹. To use this paradigm, the analysis of data has to take some form of discourse analysis –which is typically deductive. Since the constructionist paradigm does not guide the present study, I inductively identified the themes at the semantic level. This means I looked at the surface meanings of the data, rather than speculating about what lies beyond what an interviewee had said.

In summary, I analysed the data thematically. I chose this method of analysis because its flexibility enabled me to: select relevant themes in the data set, provide detailed descriptions of themes, use the inductive thematic analysis approach and identify themes at the semantic level. In the following sections, I present the analysis of the data. I followed Attride-Stirling (2001:390ff.) and Clarke and Braun's (2013:121) six steps to analyse my data thematically. I highlight the steps as I describe the process below.

⁷¹ The constructionist paradigm rejects the existence of objective reality. Constructionists believe that realities are social constructions which do not stem from cause-effect laws or manipulative (experimental) approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Levers, 2013; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). Their viewpoint is contrary to that of the post-positivist philosophical paradigm guiding the present study (cf. Chapters 4, 5 & 6).

7.3.2 Steps followed in the data analysis

The first step in my analysis of the interview data was to familiarise myself with the data – see Vaismoradi et al. (2013:401) and Rice and Ezzy (1999:258) on the importance of reading transcripts several times. Because I collected and transcribed the data myself, I gained prior familiarity with some patterns in them, which later helped me in the identification of themes. In line with this, Braun and Clarke (2006) urge researchers to transcribe data themselves because the process offers the opportunity to get a thorough understanding of the content and consequently interpret the data more easily. To ensure the accuracy of the data transcriptions, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006:88) advice by verifying the transcripts against the original audio recorded data for appropriate transcription and adding relevant information that I missed in transcribing the data the first time around. For this reason, I am confident that the transcriptions are accurate renderings of the audio recordings.

Generating initial descriptive codes from the transcripts marked the second stage. I focused on the semantic level. As mentioned above, the analysis conducted was data-driven. Boyatzis (1998:30) urges researchers to create codes inductively from raw data for further analysis. In the present study, I selected interesting parts of the data that formed particular patterns across the data set, coded them with numbers and wrote some notes for identification.

According to Bryman (2012:578), a major criticism against thematic analysis is that sometimes the context is lost, in particular, when someone extracts only the target chunk of data. In line with this, Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012:51) maintain that carefully extracted data offer clear contexts to the researcher. To retain such contexts, I extracted the relevant data with their surrounding sentences in order to see more clearly the different themes that the data portrayed.

In the third stage, I searched for themes. I interpreted the data at the broader level to identify possible themes. I grouped the codes depicting related ideas together and collated pertinent data extracts that I could interpret under a particular theme. Thereafter, I prepared a thematic map for each set of related data extracts portraying overarching themes (cf. Vaismoradi et al., 2013:403). To refine the themes, I carefully examined the relationship between each set of codes, data extracts, intermediate themes and their respective overarching themes. Attride-Stirling (2001:393) insists that this is a crucial procedure in the verification and refinement of a thematic network. In the end, I managed to have abridged sets of data that meaningfully cohere within the themes summarising the text.

Thereafter, in stage four, I reviewed the themes. At this point, I noticed that some initially identified themes were not really themes since they lacked (sufficient) evidence from the data to support them. In addition, some themes, which I previously considered distinct, ended up constituting a single theme because they contained evidence supporting all of them; I thus merged them into one larger theme. Finally, the data emanated four overarching themes in teachers' explanations of the causes of non-target-like performance by Swahili-speaking EFL learners. I present these themes in Section 7.4 below.

7.4 Themes identified

The themes identified are (i) cross-linguistic differences between English and Swahili, (ii) one-teacher-same-class practice, (iii) challenges in implementing the Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) curriculum and (iv) teachers' insufficient level of English proficiency. The following explication of these four major themes marked the fifth stage in the analysis.

7.4.1 Cross-linguistic differences between English and Swahili

The first theme is about the structural differences between English and Swahili in terms of the realisation of (in)definiteness (cf. Chapter 2). Whereas English uses its article system to realise (in)definiteness, Swahili does not have an article system. According to the teachers (and in agreement with theories in L2 acquisition – cf. Sections 3.4 and 3.5 in Chapter 3), this difference is among the factors contributing to non-target-like performance on articles by Swahili-speaking EFL learners in Tanzania.

Six of the 10 teachers interviewed said that Swahili has neither articles nor specific grammatical morphemes for (in)definiteness. Accordingly, Swahili speakers normally rely on the context of interaction to distinguish between definite and indefinite entities. When learning English, these learners keep on relying on the context of interaction for such distinctions. As a result, at the elementary level of English proficiency, they omit articles both in writing and in speaking. When asked what they thought to be the source of their learners' non-target-like performance on articles, some of these teachers had the following to say.⁷²

⁷² Since the qualitative data in the present study were analysed thematically, all forms of fillers in the data were disregarded for they were not relevant to the identification of themes (cf. Burnard, 1991; Field & Morse, 1985).

Because they [Swahili and English]⁷³ are two languages mostly with different structures ... they are two languages which differ in grammar; but so long as they [learners] don't keep this in mind, it is very easy to think that oh! –even forget all about the articles ... they omit them completely where they are needed. (TB1)

Maybe if I take it from experience of teaching my students. I find the students –and it could be also for grownups– most of the time when they are doing any work which you give them in English, they tend to do it in KiSwahili first and change into English, and therefore when they are struggling to change into English, they change word after word. So someone says “Ng’ombe amesimama hapa” so he says “Cow standing here”. And there’s nothing wrong with it. Where will this person get that *a* or *the* because in Swahili “ng’ombe amesimama hapa”. ... most of the people, even adults, they want to write something, they write it in Swahili and then they translate it. (TB2)

I am teaching Swahili too. Swahili have very few vocabularies. You can't compare with English, and the structure is different. English and Swahili structures are different. (TB4)

On my view, I think that Swahili language does not play any [positive] role in the learners' use of articles, as far as Swahili itself it has no articles. Rather than it is just influencing the students negatively, because they trying to take the pieces ... of Swahili language into English. Hence, you find that they are mixing up, sometime, they are making errors due to that influence of that background of Swahili. (TM2)

The teachers thus attributed their learners' omission of English articles to the influence of their L1 Swahili. These teachers said that their learners employed direct translation. Due to this, they used the morpho-syntactic structure of Swahili in learning and using English. Since articles are among the most frequently occurring morphemes in English (as discussed Section 5.5.1), the learners easily supplied articles in the pre-nominal position of the DP, but they could not consistently distinguish the two articles in either speaking or writing. Eventually, most of these learners used the definite and indefinite articles interchangeably.

Thus, the structural difference between the two languages contributed to the non-target-like performance noted among the learners. The learners therefore relied on the Swahili morpho-syntactic structure at the elementary level of proficiency.

7.4.2 One-teacher-same-class practice

The term ‘one-teacher-same-class practice’ is my own coinage. It denotes the practice of assigning a particular teacher to teach EFL to the same group of learners from F1 through F4. This practice was prevalent in all three of the schools the participants were attending. In this practice, a teacher does not change their group unless the necessity for doing so arises. In the

⁷³ In the transcriptions, I use the following coding conventions: [] shows a word inserted for clarification, / introduces a more appropriate word, ‘ ’ shows translated text, and ... stands for deleted text.

interviews, six of the 10 teachers said that the one-teacher-same-class practice was inappropriate for EFL teaching and learning in Tanzania, especially when considering the quality of input to which the teachers exposed their learners. These teachers said that they were not proficient in English. Hence, if only one teacher taught a particular group of learners throughout secondary school, and was therefore their main source of EFL input, the learners were more likely to acquire the non-target-like properties of EFL that were part of their teacher's IL use (including properties related to (in)definiteness). Two of the six teachers had the following views on this practice:

Because here there is a system: this year you teach Form 1, the next year you go with them to Form 2 –which is also not a very good system. Because if the teacher lacks –I don't know ... –if there's a problem with the teaching, it means these kids will go with that problem up to when they go to Form 4. I don't support that. (TB2)

Na hiyo pia inatokana na source hiyo hiyo: kwamba hata sisi from the beginning tulivyokuwa tunasoma, yaani tumejifunzia lugha tayari tumeshakuwa professionally. Sijui tuko pamoja eeh? Ee yaani mimi kwa mfano kama umenikuta nimesoma Saint Kayumba⁷⁴ zile, si ndio eeh? Nimesoma huko Saint Kayumba nikaja pia nikaenda sekondari za huko huko nae ndio hivyo hivyo tukapigapiga tuu, nikaja labda nikaenda T... nani... nini.. teaching...sijui... hivyo hivyo nae. Halafu nakuja by the way nakabidihwa darasa. Sasa natakiwa nifundishe. To teach...what do you expect? (TJ3)

'The non-target-like performance results from the same reason: we were exposed to English when we were already professionals. Consider my case, for instance, I attended a public primary school, right? I studied there, and then I joined a public secondary school. Thereafter, I joined a public teachers' training college. Finally, I am entrusted with the task of teaching English –what do you expect?' (TJ3)

Since most teachers received their education in the public education system, their exposure to English only started at secondary school level (where English was the MoI). Along with the lack of exposure to English outside the classroom, most of them could not use the language in real life communication. Since the learners solely relied on their teachers to acquire the article system, the one-teacher-same-class practice did not offer the learners the opportunity to receive input from different teachers. Consequently, they will be exposed to the same non-target-like features, those appearing in their teacher's EFL use, throughout secondary school.

In brief, the teachers' responses indicate that the one-teacher-same-class practice is not ideal for the teaching and learning of EFL in Tanzania. Most of the teachers were not proficient in

⁷⁴ In Tanzania, this term informally refers to “poor quality” public schools when compared to “good quality” private schools.

English. Therefore, their learners did not get sufficiently (near-)native-like input to enable them to acquire a (near-)native-like level of proficiency in the language.

7.4.3 Challenges in implementing the CBLT curriculum

The third theme is about the challenges that the teachers face in their attempt to implement the CBLT curriculum in their respective secondary schools. As pointed out in Section 1.5, English is the MoI at secondary school level. Prior to the introduction of the CBLT curriculum in Tanzania, English was taught via the traditional Grammar Translation approach, with its exclusive focus on grammatical rules and structures. Subsequent to the newly introduced CBLT curriculum, teachers had to teach English communicatively for their learners to be able to use English for communication. This theme is comprised of four sub-themes: difficulty in interpreting the syllabus, the requirement for teachers' creativity, the discrepancy between what is taught and what is evaluated, and the CBLT curriculum's impracticability for EFL teaching/learning in Tanzania. I describe each of these sub-themes below.

7.4.3.1 Difficulty in interpreting the syllabus

Seven of the 10 teachers interviewed said that they did not know how to interpret the syllabus. To prepare a functional English language syllabus, a number of stakeholders should be involved, including EFL teachers. Such teachers know the type of learners they have. They are also the ones who utilise the syllabus. However, the teachers in this study said that they were not effectively involved in the process of adopting the CBLT curriculum in Tanzania.

It's the government which has to go into the syllabus itself and involve teachers. Involve teachers to prepare something. (TB2)

In addition to not being effectively involved in the preparation of the syllabus, the teachers said that they had not received sufficient training in implementing the CBLT curriculum. For this reason, they were not facilitating their learners in learning EFL as stipulated in the CBLT syllabus. One teacher said the following:

... there is Competency-based⁷⁵, but we are not using it. It's difficult to practise Competency-based –plenty of challenges. First of all, they have changed the syllabus to Competency-based

⁷⁵ Recall from Section 1.5.3 that the term “CBA” (Competency-based approach) is identical to “CBE” (Competency-based education), and the application of the principles of CBE in language teaching is what is known as the “CBLT” (Competency-based language teaching) approach (cf. Christison & Murray, 2014:224).

without the teacher being trained. How to practise that CBA? ... Now our syllabus wants us to teach what I am telling you now –something which is very difficult, but for the students who are coming from medium English, it's easy for them. Because they know these wh-clause, tenses, structure, conjunction ...this approach is impractical, because we have 60 to 70 learners in one class. (TB4)

The extract above shows that some teachers did not implement the CBLT curriculum as required. In part, the large number of learners impeded their teaching. Adding to this, another teacher insisted that the large number of learners per class hindered them from utilising reading materials that could otherwise have helped their learners acquire the ability to use the English article system. The following data extract is illustrative:

Being in a very congested class, the time is so limited, you don't have much time to read. So, with those problems it will be difficult for teachers to look for more materials to make sure that the students are well equipped with all what they need. (TB1)

Furthermore, it seems that the effectiveness of the implementation of the CBLT curriculum in Tanzania had not been successfully evaluated. As noted in the extract above, some teachers just decided not to implement this curriculum simply because they were not trained to do this. One teacher had the following to add:

It is true that teachers are not trained ... it is just the changes of their policy and plan ... but without preparation. Thus, teachers are not prepared and that's why it is rarely used in our classes. So probably, teachers, they fail to implement it. (TM1)

Instead, the teachers resorted to the traditional Grammar Translation approach (the one that they had been using to teach English all along – cf. Section 1.5.3 of Chapter 1). In line with the lack of training, the teachers professed that the syllabus does not offer a specific set of guidelines for teaching EFL in Tanzania. Instead, the CBLT approach generally requires teachers to create situations in which their learners can participate actively while learning. Thus, learning is outcome based. Under the CBLT approach, teachers are free to create varying situations according to the type of learners they have. When asked about their assistance to the learners of EFL to acquire its article system via the CBLT approach, one teacher said the following:

...there are some problems with the curriculum, because the curriculum is the one which orients all the teachers to work uniformly ... on the important things; because at the end of the day, what is tested is what is termed/[aimed] to be taught to the students countrywide. (TB1)

The freedom that teachers have in the competency-based curriculum might have led them to over-emphasise particular aspects of English while ignoring others. The downside is that in the final examinations, all learners have to take the same national examination countrywide.

The teachers also claimed that the syllabus is not specific enough. They held that it does not point out specifically what they should teach. They said that, for instance, the O-level syllabus, as opposed to the A-level syllabus⁷⁶, does not specify grammatical aspects of English such as Parts of Speech (which include articles, (un)countable nouns and adjectives, among others). Yet, as all the teachers interviewed observed, the national examinations and tests focus precisely on such elements. When asked whether he had been teaching articles to the learners explicitly, one teacher responded as follows:

Because the way the syllabus is prepared, it doesn't show you exactly what to do what... for example, it will tell you to teach about 'used to...' and give examples: "used to... when I was young I used to"...you know, something like that, but it doesn't touch which tense is this, which tense are you dealing with, and I think it is important for language, and especially, for ... a second language. (TB2)

The teachers claimed that the CBLT approach does not emphasise grammatical knowledge. Since the current syllabus does not specify Parts of Speech, some teachers were incorporating some topics from the traditional Grammar Translation syllabus, which specifies Parts of Speech as a topic. When asked about the weight that the syllabus gives to the article system, teachers responded as follows:

Articles has been given just a little weight in a syllabus because I can see that articles only in Form 1 and Form 2 ... whereby we do teach these articles... and after all, they are just taken as small part of Parts of Speech. (TM1)

Yes, but for some limits. In case of Form 1, Form 2 they are learning articles in general. Article so and so, types of articles are these ones. That's it, and construction of sentences. ... we are teaching articles not very much. We can spend even two days. That's it. Two days or three days then you finish up with articles. (TB4)

In the syllabus, the weight, I think, it is not enough. It is just spoken as a sub-topic. I don't remember the topic, but it is just a sub-topic. [If] it was being taught as a main topic, maybe it will help these students to master these articles ... It is being taught in Form 1 ... and Form 2. (TB2)

⁷⁶ According to MoEVT (2005), Ordinary level (O-level) secondary education is a four-year programme which prepares a learner for Advanced level (A-level) secondary education and for other tertiary education.

The extracts above show that the teachers taught articles to F1 and F2 learners only. Considering these extracts and the teachers' claim that the current syllabus is not specific enough, it is clear that the teachers are unaware of what exactly the CBLT approach entails. While CBLT is primarily outcome based, their learners should acquire grammatical knowledge while acquiring competencies in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, it is actually the task of teachers to ensure that they design sufficient comprehension and production tasks to help their learners acquire the article system.

Moreover, since the teachers lacked training, they decided to teach only those aspects with which they were comfortable. Most of them admitted that they skipped teaching articles exhaustively to their learners because they were also not taught articles when they were learning English. One teacher had the following to say:

...frankly speaking, teachers teach these things, for example articles, I will tell you, it also depends on, maybe, the age of the teacher, because if a teacher was not taught about the articles, and this teacher was not taught about the articles because, in the syllabus, if I take you for example through the O-level syllabus, from Form 1 to Form 4, you will find, for example, no place which says 'articles'. (TB2)

The excerpt above shows that some teachers incorrectly used the freedom available in the CBLT syllabus to skip teaching the English article system. Such teachers were used to the induction method of teaching; thus, they relied on guidebooks as the quintessence of what was to be learned. Since their guidebooks did not explicitly indicate the article system, some teachers were not teaching it to their learners. In the end, Swahili-speaking EFL learners finish their secondary education with only partial knowledge of and poor skills in English. Evidently, some teachers were self-conscious of their insufficient level of English proficiency. Some of them were struggling to use it in the interviews. Moreover, two of the 10 teachers interviewed even avoided responding to the interview questions in English. I return to these issues in the next theme. While six of the 10 teachers interviewed did not know how to teach the article system to their learners using the CBLT approach, one teacher said he knew and was using this approach.

So, if I want to teach them about letter writing, we will read a story about someone who was in school and this someone was having some difficulties. Then this someone decided to communicate with parents. Then he wrote a friendly letter. So in that aspect at the end of the story, students you are much concerned, you will be, let us imagine that we are in the school. Write the letter to our parents...So while they are communicating writing their letters, then, you will go through the letters and then say no, here you were supposed to put this article and this one. (TJ1)

This particular teacher learned to use the CBLT approach in the USA when he went there to teach Swahili for one year under the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistance programme. As seen above, while some teachers tried to incorporate the teaching of the article system, others did not, due to the flexibility of the CBLT syllabus. However, most teachers confirmed that they could hardly identify areas that needed their intervention in speaking because they similarly manifested non-target-like performance, just as their learners did.

7.4.3.2 Requirement for teachers' creativity

The second challenge in using the CBLT approach is that it requires the EFL teacher to be creative in designing interesting situations for their learners in which to interact actively. The teacher has to consider, for example, age, cultural background, sex and classroom environment before creating such situations. The teachers in the present study said that they faced serious challenges in creating appropriate learning situations for their learners since they were used to the traditional Grammar Translation approach to EFL teaching. Following the traditional approach, they teach their learners explicit rules of English grammar and structure; they do not focus on enabling learners to use such rules and structures in communication.

7.4.3.3 Difficulty in evaluating learners

The third challenge that came up during the interviews was that assessment procedures employed by teachers were not fully in line with the CBLT requirements explained in Chapter 1 (cf. Section 1.5.3.2). This sub-theme pertains to the inability of the teachers to evaluate competencies in listening, speaking and reading. Given that the CBLT approach should develop a language learner in all four skills, the teachers stated that evaluation should also focus on the use of articles in (listening and) speaking.

We don't grade the spoken component. So most of the time, we don't grade the spoken component. We end up grading the written. I think this is one of the things that we need to go through it. (TJ1)

They added that assisting and evaluating their learners in writing was easier than doing so in speaking. They held that their assistance in writing contributed to their learners producing comparatively fewer errors in writing than in speaking.

They [learners] are not free [in speaking] because ..., when somebody makes a mistake, the others will laugh at him/her. So he tend to get annoyed. They don't want to even to attempt, but in writing, they write and sometimes you say this is correct, this is not correct. So, they

easily change or make correction. But, when it comes to the same sentence to speak, it is a problem because they face problems of pronunciation, apart from vocabulary, apart from the structure of the sentence they utter. (TB1)

As for the spoken component, the teachers said that it was difficult for them to notice such non-target-like performance because speakers normally speak fast, and they focus primarily on the content they communicate.

When someone is speaking, [...] they don't even notice that the articles are not there, in spoken, but when in written, you cannot avoid noticing that the article is missing. There are a lot of errors in the spoken form than in the written form. (TB2)

Due to such non-target-like performance in speaking, some teachers said that they insisted that their learners practise speaking –especially in debates. In addition, there were classroom presentations in which they asked the learners to present something to their fellow learners. Yet, the teachers were not grading the spoken component. Receiving feedback on their speaking skills and making use of such feedback could be highly useful for the Swahili-speaking EFL learners. The teachers opined that if learners knew that their speaking would be evaluated, this could motivate them to put more effort into speaking English and reading English books for authentic, native-like input.

When evaluating performance among the four different form levels, the teachers claimed that there was some improvement as the learners kept on advancing to higher form levels. The reason provided was that the teachers kept on providing feedback during class work. TB2 remarked the following:

These [learners] coming from the ordinary/[public] primary schools, some of them become very good after a time. Even [in the English] language, they catch up. I have some students there in Form 3; they write an essay here; I am asking [them] which primary school did you go to? –“just an ordinary primary school”. (TB2)

7.4.3.4 Lack of exposure to English outside classrooms

The fourth challenge was that English is a foreign language in Tanzania. Hence, the majority of the learners could not access it outside their school environment.

Actually, the source is, as I said that here in our locality, English is taken as, I cannot say, as a second language, it can be a following one, the third language or a following one. (TM1)

The extract above shows that the learners have no access to English in naturalistic environments. Given that the CBLT approach focuses on developing all four skills, the Swahili-speaking EFL learners actually need authentic spoken input in their naturalistic

environment for them to learn to speak English fluently. However, the reality was that they relied solely on their teachers as their source of English input to acquire grammatical knowledge, including knowledge of the article system. As mentioned before, one problem with this is that the teachers themselves omitted articles and/or used them interchangeably. I explain this in detail in my presentation of the next theme.

Additionally, the teachers questioned the practicability of learning EFL in Tanzania without providing their learners with class notes. The teachers said that the CBLT approach requires them to facilitate learning based on activities that the learners do while communicating in English. Thereafter, the learners would have the task of recognising what they learned in such activities. For instance, if a teacher wanted his/her learners to learn articles, he would create situations in which the learners would be using articles without telling them that the focus of the lesson was on articles. Then, at the end of the activity, the teacher would ask the learners to identify what they had learned.

What I am supposed to do [is] to ask them what are they recognising in that passage. Is it possible? for them to recognise whether tense or articles, let's say wh-clause? Is it possible? Without teaching them before...? (TB4)

Due to the difficulty noted in applying the CBLT approach, six of the 10 EFL teachers in the present study decided to continue using the Grammar Translation approach to teaching English. They claimed that they were somewhat familiar with this approach. In this approach, the teacher simply presents a particular lesson in class and asks his/her learners to practise and produce what they learned. When asked what the competency-based approach was, one of the six teachers explained it in the following way.

Competency-Based Approach is just...I can say that's a system centred more on participatory –I think. Rarely, we use [it]. (TM2)

The extract above again shows that the teachers who participated in this study did not really employ the CBLT approach. In fact, in the extract above, the teacher showed uncertainty about what the CBLT approach even involves. Consequently, teaching the article system using the CBLT curriculum was challenging. It is thus clear that the teachers desperately needed training in the CBLT curriculum.

From the above presentation, it should be clear that the poor implementation of the CBLT curriculum must have contributed to the non-target-like performance on articles observed among the Swahili-speaking EFL learners who participated in this study. According to the

teachers interviewed for this part of the study, the implementation of the curriculum in Tanzania faced manifold challenges. They said that they had not been consulted in the education department's decision to employ the CBLT curriculum in Tanzania, they had not received training in this curriculum, and they did not know how to implement it. Furthermore, assessment did not fully reflect the CBLT curriculum. The teachers claimed that the syllabus did not specify Parts of Speech, but that normally there were questions on articles and on the other parts of speech during assessment. This claim shows that the teachers were not trained to use the focus on form (FonF)⁷⁷ approach while guiding their learners to master English communicatively.

Finally, it is worth noting that while code-switching largely characterised EFL classes, many teachers taught the majority of other subjects in Swahili, regardless of the requirement that they teach all subjects, except Swahili, in English (cf. Section 1.5.2). This seemed to be due simply to teachers not having a sufficient level of proficiency in English. Consequently, they even failed to identify areas that needed their intervention in class. Indeed, the issue of teachers' insufficient level of English proficiency and its contribution to the non-target-like performance of their learners on articles is one of the four overarching themes identified in this study. In the following section, I therefore show how the teachers were not comfortable with English and how this situation contributed to the non-target-like performance of their learners.

7.4.4 Teachers' insufficient level of English proficiency

This theme is about the inability of most EFL teachers in Tanzania to communicate efficiently in English. As mentioned previously, all 10 teachers received their primary and secondary education in the public educational system (cf. Table 7.1). As pointed out in Chapter 1, the system is largely characterised by the shift of the MoI from Swahili at primary school level to English at secondary school level and beyond. In part, the shift in the MoI at that stage contributed to the teachers' insufficient level of English proficiency, which was notable in three areas: among the teachers, between the teachers and their learners, and in setting examination questions, as explained below.

⁷⁷ Long (1991) defined Focus on Form (FonF) as an incidental attention to form which occurs while learners are negotiating meaning (in a communicative class). FonF is contrary to Focus on Forms (FonFs) which is identical to the traditional Grammar Translation approach in its exclusive focus on grammatical rules and structure (Komorowska, 2014; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

7.4.4.1 Communication among the teachers

The teachers said that some of their colleagues could not effectively discuss various issues at their work places in English. Since English was the MoI in secondary schools, all teachers were to communicate in English, for instance, in school meetings, debates and all other communication activities. However, some teachers observed that only a few public schools in Tanzania adhered to this requirement. Many teachers in the rest of the schools were more comfortable to communicate in Swahili than to do so in English. One teacher had the following to answer when asked about the language used for communication with her colleagues inside the school.

[In school meetings] ... I realised one thing, if a head of school doesn't want many problems to be raised in his system of administration, he will conduct the meeting in English, because there will be no questions; but if the meeting is held in Swahili, the head of school will be in trouble. (TB2)

Evidently, the extract above shows the EFL teachers were self-conscious of their insufficient proficiency in English and were afraid to speak English. Even the heads of schools were aware that their staff members were fearful of speaking English, but they were also aware that they might get into trouble if they did not adhere to the requirement to use English in meetings. In addition, some teachers mentioned that the heads sometimes capitalised on the situation to avoid their staff's interrogation about important matters.

7.4.4.2 Communication in the classroom context

In the classroom context, the teachers could not teach efficiently in English throughout. Six of the 10 teachers interviewed admitted that the use of English throughout the lesson limited their ability to teach lessons that could otherwise have been efficiently taught in Swahili. TJ3, for instance, opined the following when asked about the language she uses in class.

...hata sisi walimu wenyewe, it is a big problem. Kwa sababu hata sisi walimu wenyewe hatuko ile competence katika ile speaking ya ile language. Sijui umenielewa vizuri eeh? Ee... kwa sababu sisi wenyewe hatuko ile fluently speaking yaani, au hatuko ile competence katika nanilii, kwa hiyo hata jinsi ya kuweza ku-deliver kile ambacho kinatakiwa kwa mwanafunzi...sijui umenipata vizuri eeh? Kwamba bado inakuwa ni problem. (TJ3)

'Proficiency in English is a challenge even for us teachers. We are not competent in speaking. This situation has affected even our ability to teach the content that our learners need in class –do you understand? Therefore, it is still a problem.' (TJ3)

In addition, the lack of English-proficient teachers seemed to stem from the primary school level already. In the interviews, the teachers mentioned that, in Tanzanian public primary schools, teachers had always avoided the responsibility of teaching English. Consequently,

the Swahili-speaking EFL learners and their teachers in this study could not have received a solid foundation in English at this crucial stage. Recall that at this stage, English was only taught as a subject and then only by a teacher who had also learned it as a foreign language in Tanzania.

Six of the 10 teachers said that, for the Swahili-speaking EFL learners to understand their lessons, they sometimes had to switch from English to Swahili –the language of which they and their learners had a sufficient command. They held that the switch to Swahili ensured successful clarification and led to the active participation of their learners. One teacher had the following to say about the matter.

With learners inside classes... mostly English... although sometimes we mix up with Swahili once you want to make clarification. (TM2)

In addition, because of their low proficiency in English, some teachers taught English in Swahili throughout. This means the teachers mentioned only a few content morphemes of English during the lesson. All other morphemes were Swahili. Consider the following extract from a teacher in School B.

Someone may think that I am criticising, I am not criticising anyone, but I am telling you... a lesson which is supposed to be taught in English is taught in Swahili throughout...right from the beginning.... “Nimesema hivii, hizi articles, ukishaweka hapa, huku mbele...” *‘What I have said concerning these articles is that, when you insert them here, later on...’*. It’s a problem. It is a very big problem. (TB2)

Some of the teachers, like TB2 in the extract above, said that they were not happy to use code switching in class but they had been doing so, since they were not competent in English. It is thus clear from the teachers’ responses that they did not have negative attitudes towards English as the MoI – they simply were not proficient enough in the language to use it as the MoI.

7.4.4.3 Setting up of examination questions

Considering the setting up of examinations, some teachers said that the majority of EFL teachers were themselves unsure of the correct use of articles in English, and that this was noticeable during their examination moderation meetings where the EFL teachers came up with different answers to similar questions. One teacher shared the following experience from one of the moderation meetings they attended.

And then, you start again arguing, teachers of English language, they are arguing about this article –which article should be used here? This one says you must use *a*. This one you must use *the*; reasons? “I have always been taught like this”. There’s no... “I have always been taught like this” and “I have always been teaching like this”... that cannot be a sufficient

reason to make this article right, just because you have been teaching it. You could be teaching the wrong thing... then at the end of the day... the teachers say ok let's take it as the answer. (TB2)

The excerpt above reveals that EFL teachers were unsure of the wording of and the answers to the examination questions they set because of their insufficient level of proficiency in English, which resulted from having received insufficient exposure to and instruction in this language themselves. Additionally, it was evident in the data that some of the teachers were not aware that uncountable nouns (such as *information* and *bread*) do not receive the overt realisation of the indefinite article in English. When asked whether they were teaching articles to their learners, and how they noticed the learners' errors in their use of articles, one teacher had the following to say:

After teaching articles ... I gave them an assignment to perform. Write 10 ... sentences by using articles so and so and so. When they are constructing, then you will know now the problem is here. The use of *the*... maybe... or *an* or *a*... but zero article? For our level? O-level? We are not using [it]. Though, we are telling them that the zero article is there. We are using zero articles in A-level. (TB4)

The excerpt above provides evidence that the EFL teachers faced serious challenges in using and teaching the English article system. The fact that the Swahili-speaking EFL learners who participated in the current study had been receiving this kind of input, of course explains the learners' non-target-like performance. In addition, some of these learners are also aspiring EFL teachers. This means that the next generation of EFL teachers, would also not have received sufficient EFL teaching themselves. This situation thus clearly involves a vicious cycle, leading to continued poor proficiency in English in Tanzania. In part, teachers' late exposure to English via the public educational system contributed to this situation. This reason, and those discussed previously, generally contribute to the non-target-like use of English in Tanzania.

Finally, it was also evident from the interviews that some of the teachers were self-conscious about their inability to teach and communicate effectively in English. Recall that two teachers did not consent to be audio recorded fearing that someone might find out how poor their English was. A third teacher consented to be audio-recorded only under the condition that she could respond to the interview questions in Swahili. Likewise, she feared speaking English.

In summary, because English really is a foreign language in Tanzania, the Swahili-speaking EFL learners in this study relied on their teachers as their sole source of English input. However, the majority of the teachers could not communicate effectively in English.

Accordingly, they were unable to teach in English; they avoided speaking it; they employed code-switching between English and Swahili; some taught EFL (and other subjects) in Swahili only; and some were unsure of the wording of and the answers to the examination questions they set. Due to these reasons, the Swahili-speaking learners lacked sufficient English input for them to acquire the article system successfully. After summarising the thematic network in this section, the following interpretation of all the themes taken together is presented below, and marks the sixth (and the final) stage in this thematic analysis (cf. Attride-Stirling, 2001:401).

7.5 The interpretation of data and discussion of findings

The semi-structured interview data in the present study help us to understand how the EFL teachers in Tanzania address the non-target-like properties of the Swahili-speaking learners' use of English, particularly in relation to the acquisition and use of articles. The data also help us to offer suggestions to EFL teachers regarding the acquisition of the relevant contexts of (in)definiteness as expressed by articles in English. Following Attride-Stirling's (2001:402) advice, I use the key conceptual findings summarised in each thematic network above and discuss them in relation to the overarching research question which focuses on how Swahili-speaking learners of EFL acquire the English article system. I explain the source of the non-target-like performance and then discuss the impact of such non-target-like performance on communication. Since in qualitative research the researcher is also one of the participants of the study (Brinkmann, 2013:84; Krauss, 2005:759), I will marginally make use of additional contextualising information in interpreting the data in this section.

To begin with, two major factors contribute to learners' non-target-like performance. Such performance results from the interplay of both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. Linguistically, the morpho-syntactic differences between Swahili and English in realising (in)definiteness is one factor, while extra-linguistically, the challenges of implementing the CBLT curriculum in teaching EFL in Tanzania is the other factor.

As for the linguistic factor, the teachers point out that the two languages are very different. Saville-Troike (2006:177) remarks that when the L1 and L2 belong to different families, L2 learners find the acquisition of the target L2 very challenging (see also Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:97), Lado (1957:2), Rubagumya (1990:8) and Thyab (2016:1)). As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, Swahili belongs to the Niger Congo family while English belongs to the Indo European family (Lewis, 2009). More specifically, whereas Swahili is a Bantu language,

English is a Germanic language. In terms of realising (in)definiteness, whereas Swahili realises such notions via the interaction of morpho-syntactic and semantic-pragmatic processes, English grammaticalises (in)definiteness via its article system. The two languages clearly differ in this respect. In line with theories such as the Syntactic Misanalysis Account in L2 acquisition (cf. Chapter 3), the English article system is thus something completely unfamiliar to Swahili-speaking learners of EFL. Accordingly, they continue to rely on the context of interaction to distinguish definite from indefinite entities. Consequently, the EFL learners in this study omit articles at their elementary level of English proficiency (see Table 5.23) and/or use the definite and indefinite articles interchangeably (cf. Table 5.20 in Chapter 5).

As regards the extra-linguistic factor, the teachers' accounts in this study indicate that the implementation of the CBLT curriculum in Tanzania faces many challenges. Such challenges cut across deciding on implementing and evaluating the CBLT curriculum. I discuss these challenges in the following paragraphs.

The first challenge concerns the initial decision to shift from the traditional Grammar Translation approach to the CBLT approach. Since its introduction in 2005, the implementation of the CBLT curriculum has been facing a number of challenges and criticisms. The teachers claim that the government did not actively involve them in making relevant initial preparations for its successful implementation. Pasch, Sparks-Langer, Gardner, Starko and Moody (1991:1) and Rossouw (2009:3) insist that involving teachers is important since their roles span making decisions on content planning, curriculum implementation and classroom management. Hence, if EFL teachers are involved right from the beginning, they can offer useful suggestions regarding the key linguistic areas which Swahili-speaking EFL learners in Tanzania need to master. They can also provide useful suggestions on how to implement and evaluate the curriculum successfully.

The second challenge is that the teachers have not received sufficient training in implementing CBLT. Kitta and Fussy (2013:29) rightly opine that a successful transformation of the education system will only be possible if the quality of teaching is improved (see also Rumberger and Thomas (2000:42) and Rumberger and Palardy (2004:238)). The teachers in this study lack relevant training. Consequently, they fail to interpret the syllabus correctly and to create learning situations as discussed in the following two paragraphs, respectively.

The first consequence of insufficient training in implementing the CBLT approach is that these teachers fail to interpret the syllabus correctly. They claim that the syllabus is not specific. They add that it lacks uniform guidelines on the teaching of grammar for all EFL teachers. In my opinion, however, the CBLT syllabus is well prepared since it gives teachers sufficient guidance in designing such tasks and provides a list of such tasks. It also explicitly states that the “list [sic] is not exhaustive [...] where necessary the teacher should think of more appropriate strategies to use in teaching English” (MoEVT, 2005:vii). Drawing on their claim, the teachers are therefore unaware of two important facts, among others. First, the CBLT approach requires them to be creative in identifying competencies relevant to the needs of their learner groups. Second, according to the syllabus, their learners have to acquire the article system implicitly while communicating in English (cf. Klein-Collins, 2013; Nkwetisama, 2012). Therefore, the absence of strict guidelines on teaching grammar in the syllabus is an opportunity offered deliberately to allow teachers to employ appropriate pedagogical strategies in relation to the specific needs of each learner group by considering, for example, their proficiency level.

The second consequence is that the teachers fail to create situations for their learners to learn English successfully. Instead, they teach EFL predominantly via the traditional Grammar Translation approach. As Wesche and Skehan (2002: 208-209) opine, the downside of the Grammar Translation approach to language teaching is that the learner merely knows explicit rules of the language but can hardly use the language for communication in real life situations. In addition, most EFL teachers in Tanzania are not acquainted with a large number of grammatical rules of English, so even explicit teaching of grammatical rules will be insufficient.

The third challenge is that assessment at the national level⁷⁸ involves writing only. Multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions are common. The written assessment is only one component of the CBLT curriculum (see Griffith & Lim, 2014:5). Assessing learners’ oral production would also help to better understand their performance on articles, especially in listening and speaking, and might therefore provide teachers with additional insight into their learners’ existing skills and needs (cf. Al-Nouh, Abdul-Kareem and Taqi, 2015; Yilmaz, 2013).

⁷⁸ Assessment at the national level involves F2 and F4 classes only, at the end of their respective academic years.

The fourth challenge is that English truly is a foreign language in Tanzania (Rugemalira, 2005). In addition, since it is used as the MoI from secondary school level, the learners are supposed to acquire English while they learn the content of other subjects; hence, EFL learning occurs in some form akin to Content-Based Instruction. While using English as the MoI generally increases learners' exposure to the language (Wesche & Skehan, 2002:220), such learners normally "bypass grammatical accuracy since their primary concern is mastery of content rather than development of accurate language use" (Richards, 2006:30). In part, bypassing grammatical accuracy is promoted further by the limited opportunities that learners have to practise the use of articles in real life situations (cf. Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Based on Gass (2010) and Richards and Rodgers' (2001) functional and interactional perspectives on the nature of L2 acquisition, Swahili-speaking learners thus do not get sufficient exposure to English input and feedback on their English use to improve their ILs. Consequently, most of them fail to, among other things, distinguish the different contexts of the use of articles. Since they use English mainly in classrooms in Tanzania, the learners also do not retain most of what they learn without continued teaching and reminders. The regression to non-target-like performance noted among the F4 learners in the present study illustrates this observation (cf. Figure 5.4 and Section 5.5 in Chapter 5).

Teachers' insufficient level of English proficiency is also an obstacle to implementing the CBLT curriculum in teaching the article system successfully. Qorro (2006) remarks that EFL teachers in Tanzania cannot communicate efficiently in English. In part, this situation results from their late exposure to English as the MoI as well as their learning of EFL via the traditional Grammar Translation approach, and the fact that they, just like their learners, do not use English outside their classrooms. The teachers admit that the problem of using articles correctly is not limited to their learners but also exists for the teachers themselves. Because the teachers' IL grammars for English do not fully reflect the correct definiteness setting of the Article Choice Parameter (ACP), they frequently omit and substitute articles. Their Swahili-speaking learners acquire such non-target structures at the elementary level of proficiency and then cannot reset the definiteness parameter setting at this level because they receive confirmation for incorrect structures in the input to which they are exposed (cf. Mbise, 1994:96; Ssentanda, 2014:133). The teachers add that their insufficient level of proficiency limits their ability to clarify issues in class (cf. McNeill, 2005:107; Woods, 2007:18).

Combined with the one-teacher-same-class practice, the learners continue receiving non-target-like input from their teachers.⁷⁹

The large number of learners per classroom is also a heavy burden for the EFL teachers (Lessing & Mahabeer, 2007; Little, 2001; Riyandari, 2004). The teachers in this study opine that to use the CBLT approach in a class with an average of 60 to 70 learners in five 40-minute sessions per week per form is impractical. Under the CBLT approach, teachers are required to treat each learner as a unique individual with their own linguistic needs. Clearly, this requirement is near to impossible in a class of 70 such individual learners (cf. McNeal (1997:216) and Rumberger & Thomas' (2000:55) view that schools with lower learner to teacher ratios normally offer situations conducive to their learners engaging actively in learning). Given the size of these teachers' EFL classes and their limited time, it makes sense that they would resort to the traditional Grammar Translation approach. This finding concurs with Skehan (1996) who noted that the Grammar Translation approach gained popularity for its convenience in terms of planning, implementation and evaluation. Additionally, it guarantees teachers' control of the predetermined grammatical rules to be covered.

According to Nomlomo and Vuzo (2014), the practice of (some) learners remaining silent in class is also an obstacle towards the successful implementation of the CBLT curriculum in Tanzania, which impacts on, among other things, the teaching and learning of articles. As pointed out in Section 1.5.3, the article system can be learned successfully when learners are provided with opportunities for input, output, interaction and practice (cf. Hall, 2011:50; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011:13). However, the teachers interviewed in this study say some learners are afraid to ask questions or give their views in class, because of their inability to speak English. However, the CBLT approach requires them to participate actively in the construction of meaning (cf. Section 1.5.3.2). Accordingly, the implementation of the CBLT curriculum is a serious challenge in Tanzania. In the following three paragraphs, I discuss how the teachers and learners manage their lack of mastery of the English article system in their use of the language and the impacts of such non-target-like performance on the meaning communicated.

⁷⁹ This finding concurs with Nel and Müller (2010:644) who report that many ESL final year student teachers enrolled for the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in 2008 at the University of South Africa (Unisa) were not proficient in English, and that their low proficiency, in turn, affected the learners in their ESL classes in terms of the proficiency that they would be able to obtain in English.

The nature of learners' versus teachers' non-target-like performance on the English article system seems to differ primarily because the majority of the learners are unconscious of their errors, while the teachers are acutely aware of theirs. To begin with, most of the learners omit articles in English. More omissions occur in speaking than in writing. The teachers opine that there are fewer omissions in writing because of their (the teachers') assistance to the learners during writing exercises. One can add that learners normally have more time to think and correct themselves when writing (see Kim & Lakshmanan, 2009; Lee, 2013). The semantic-pragmatic realisation of definiteness, which involves the use of bare NPs in their L1 Swahili, causes such omissions in English. The learners also use the definite and indefinite articles interchangeably since they have not yet mastered the appropriate rules of the English article system. When comparing the different form levels, the teachers claim, though, that there are comparatively fewer omissions and substitutions among higher form level learners than among lower form level learners, in both the spoken and written discourse types.⁸⁰

Concerning the teachers, most of them are self-conscious about their inability to use the English article system correctly. Consequently, they avoid the use of English, fearing that others would judge them –a condition which Nkwetisama (2012:519) refers to as “lathophobic aphasia”. As noted earlier, because of this, some of the teachers were even unwilling to be audio-recorded in the interviews; and one teacher opted against responding to the interview questions in English. While teaching EFL, the teachers switch between English and Swahili. This practice is in accord with Cleghorn and Rollnick's (2002:357) observation that bilingual discourse is a common practice in African classrooms. Moreover, some of the teachers teach English in Swahili throughout. As I explained previously, this situation might be contributing to the omission and substitution of articles by the learners. Regarding what and how they teach, most teachers teach only those grammatical items with which they are comfortable via the traditional Grammar Translation approach. They avoid teaching problematic aspects of English such as articles. In this way, they transfer their own learning to their learners (Selinker, 1972).

The teachers observe that the effects of such non-target-like performance on articles on the meaning of the message differ according to the level of English proficiency of the

⁸⁰ However, this pattern was not evident in the quantitative data. A clearer difference emerged from comparing the different proficiency levels (cf. Figure 5.1). More omission and substitution of articles characterised the elementary level learners than the upper intermediate level learners. The learners' frequency of article omission and substitution thus relates to proficiency level rather than form level.

listener/reader as well as the type of discourse. They claim that non-target-like performance on articles does not hinder comprehension among low proficiency users of EFL. It seldom leads to miscomprehension. Low proficiency learners of EFL normally understand each other since they rely more heavily on the discourse-pragmatic context to understand the nouns the speaker is describing. In contrast, the teachers said that when the hearer's proficiency level in English is higher, substitutions of articles may hinder the hearer from understanding the message clearly, since such a hearer has learned to rely on the grammatical realisation of (in)definiteness via the article system. However, he/she may still comprehend the intended message by relying on the context of interaction. Considering the type of discourse, the teachers observe that non-target-like performance on articles can more easily distort the intended message in the written discourse than in the spoken discourse, since in writing, there is sometimes no immediate context. In speaking, however, the hearer can understand the referent by relying on the immediate context, where the interaction takes place.

7.6 Ensuring rigour in the thematic analysis

All studies have limitations (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:91). I conducted the collection of data, their transcription, coding and the identification of themes in this study, myself. Then, I discussed the analysis with my supervisors. While this method allowed me to really understand the phenomena by familiarising myself with the data and indeed to maintain consistency in the analysis, it offered no opportunity for other people with differing expertise to interpret the data. Thus, the method of analysis chosen influenced the results obtained and the interpretation of the results in this qualitative part of the present study. If the data had been analysed using different methods, coding might have involved more than one researcher. Consequently, themes might have evolved from discussions among various researchers. Such an approach to analysis would have offered more opportunity for multiple perspectives from researchers with different expertise but, unfortunately, falls outside the scope of this dissertation given the constraints on time and other resources.

Qualitative research has been criticised for lacking scientific rigour, especially, of course, when compared to quantitative research –which is value free and objective (cf. Chapters 5 and 6). In addition, quantitative research is based on causal relationships among two or more variables (Hammersley, 2007:297ff.). One way to ensure rigour in qualitative research is via inter-coder reliability. However, Vaismoradi et al. (2013:403) note that inter-coder reliability is more commonly used in Content Analysis since this approach allows for some

quantification of data. In thematic analysis, inter-coder reliability is not always possible because of its purely qualitative and subjective nature (ibid). Therefore, peer checking is not possible, except in the way that I suggest in the previous paragraph. To increase rigour, these scholars advise researchers to keep personal research diaries. Yet, during the analysis of data, I noted that the notes I kept contributed very little to understanding and interpreting the interview data. In part, this is because I collected the data myself and was therefore already quite familiar with them. Besides using the notes, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006:88) advice by checking the transcripts against the original spoken data for inaccuracies. I did this three times. Moreover, I rigorously analysed the data by following the six steps to thematic data analysis as recommended by Attride-Stirling (2001:390ff.), Braun and Clarke (2006:87), Clarke and Braun (2013:121) and Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006:84) (cf. Sections 7.4 – 7.6).

7.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter described the procedure that I followed in the collection and analysis of the semi-structured interview data. The major aim of the interviews was to understand the teachers' perspectives on the non-target-like performance on articles of their Swahili-speaking EFL learners and to provide suggestions for EFL teachers in Tanzania. Following the six steps to thematic data analysis, four major themes emerged: (i) cross-linguistic differences between English and Swahili, (ii) the one-teacher-same-class practice, (iii) challenges in implementing the CBLT curriculum and (iv) teachers' insufficient level of English proficiency.

These four themes represent reasons that the teachers in this study identified for (their own and) their learners' non-target-like performance on articles in the following way. The differences between English and Swahili led the learners to omit and substitute the definite and indefinite articles. The one-teacher-same-class practice denied the learners access to L2 input from other teachers of English. Due to the challenges of implementing the CBLT curriculum, the teachers did not know how to assess learner needs; also, they could not select and evaluate competencies. Additionally, they did not know how to make use of FonF while implementing the CBLT curriculum. Due to their insufficient level of English proficiency, the teachers failed to identify and teach the different contexts of the use of articles in class. As a result, both the teachers and their learners manifested non-target-like performance in their use of the English article system.

Finally, this chapter highlighted an important limitation of the method of analysis used in this part of the study and recommended that the data be analysed using other methods of analysis as well to gain more insights into the Swahili-speaking EFL learners' non-target-like performance on articles. The next chapter summarises and concludes this dissertation, and recommends areas for further research.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This study set out to examine the acquisition of (in)definiteness in EFL by secondary school learners with Swahili as their L1 in Tanzania. The general theoretical literature on the acquisition of (in)definiteness as realised by the English article system in the specific context of African L1s is scarce. Focusing on the Tanzanian context, I examined the cross-linguistic differences between English and Swahili in the realisation of (in)definiteness to predict aspects that were likely to manifest as non-target-like in the learners' EFL use. The study also sought to determine the contexts in which the learners would manifest more non-target-like performance and, drawing on the research findings, to provide Tanzanian teachers of EFL with suggestions for teaching those contexts to Swahili-speaking learners. Although literature on the acquisition of articles abounds, manifold crucial questions on this topic are still unaddressed. In this regard, the present study sought to address the following seven of such questions (repeated here from Section 1.4):

- i. What are the differences and similarities between English and Swahili in expressing (in)definiteness?
- ii. Which contexts of the article system of English manifest as non-target-like in the Swahili-speaking learners' EFL use?
- iii. Do Swahili-speaking learners perform differently, in terms of the article system, on different tasks, in particular writing, speaking, comprehension and acceptability judgements?
- iv. Are there differences in the performance of the learners at different form levels (corresponding to South African grade levels) which might indicate the development of their IL knowledge of the English article system?
- v. How does the realisation of definiteness and specificity in Swahili influence the learners' acquisition of the English article system?
- vi. How do Tanzanian EFL teachers address the non-target-like properties of the IL grammars of Swahili-speaking learners of English with regard to the article system of the language?

- vii. Which suggestions can be made to Tanzanian EFL teachers regarding the teaching of the relevant contexts of (in)definiteness as expressed by articles in English to Swahili speakers in Tanzania?

This chapter is organised as follows: Section 8.2 briefly summarises the research methodology employed in this study. In Section 8.3, I present the empirical findings of the study in relation to the specific research questions above. Sections 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6, respectively offer the theoretical, policy and pedagogical implications of the findings. Section 8.7 describes the limitations of the present study, and Section 8.8 recommends areas for further research. Finally, Section 8.9 concludes this chapter and the dissertation.

8.2 Research methodology

Employing a Mixed Methods Embedded Design, I firstly conducted a detailed descriptive analysis of the realisation of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity in English and Swahili. This analysis formed the first qualitative component of the study. Thereafter, the collection of quantitative data from 163 Swahili-speaking learners of EFL, including a nested sample of 35 of these learners, followed. This set of data formed the primary quantitative component of the study. I analysed the data statistically to discern differences and similarities between various categories. This analysis helped to identify non-target-like contexts in the learners' use of articles. Finally, I collected semi-structured interview data from 10 teachers of EFL. This set of data formed the second qualitative component of the study. I analysed the data thematically to see how the teachers address non-target-like properties of their learners' EFL use and to obtain information that might lead to suggestions for the teaching and learning of the English article system.

8.3 Empirical findings

The key empirical findings are question specific. I summarised these findings at the end of their respective empirical chapters (Chapters 2 to 7). In this section, I synthesise the key findings to address the seven research questions of the present study.

The first research question was about determining cross-linguistic differences and similarities between English and Swahili in expressing (in)definiteness. Whereas English realises grammatical definiteness via its article system, Swahili realises semantic-pragmatic definiteness at the interface between morpho-syntactic processes and the context of interaction. Thus in acquiring the ability to use the English article system, the learners in the

present had to acquire a completely different way of realising (in)definiteness. Due to this, the prediction was that, at the elementary (E) level of English proficiency, the learners would still rely heavily on their L1 Swahili to realise definiteness in English. Consequently, they would omit English articles and/or use them interchangeably.

The second question involved investigating the contexts that are (more) non-target-like in the Swahili speakers' use of the English article system. The finding is that those contexts which involve (more) complex cognitive processes are more non-target-like than those which do not. Such cognitive processes encompass differentiating various feature values attached to a particular article and recalling whether a particular referent is familiar to the hearer or not. In this regard, the indefinite use of the article system, the anaphoric use of the definite article and the opaque use of the indefinite article proved to be more non-target-like than any other contexts. Furthermore, the comparison between the use of *a(n)* in specific and non-specific indefinite contexts indicated that the use of *a(n)* in the specific context was more non-target-like than its use in the non-specific context. Drawing on this finding, the indefinite article and the anaphoric use of the definite article require special attention in the EFL classroom right from the beginning. The associative and the encyclopaedic uses of the definite article may receive attention later.

The third research question asked whether Swahili-speaking EFL learners perform differently, in terms of the article system, on different tasks, in particular writing, speaking, comprehension and acceptability judgements.

On the one hand, the learners' performance on the three tasks indicated similar patterns in a number of respects. First, all groups demonstrated more accuracy for *the* than for *a(n)*. Second, all groups exhibited more accuracy for *a(n)* in the non-specific context than in the specific context. Third, only the elementary (E) proficiency level group (i.e. neither the lower intermediate (LI) nor the upper intermediate (UI) proficiency level groups) fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in writing just as they did fluctuate in speaking. Fourth, none of the proficiency groups showed evidence of associating *the* with specificity. Fifth, all groups incorrectly substituted articles more frequently than incorrectly omitting them. Sixth, adjectival modification did not affect the frequency of article omission by the Swahili-speaking EFL learners.

On the other hand, the data revealed that the learners also performed differently in writing than in speaking in some respects. The different tasks required different levels of

competencies. The learners were more accurate on the FCET than on the AJT and the PDT. Whereas the FCET requires lower level competencies, the AJT and the PDT require higher level competencies (cf. Frías, 2014; Klein-Collins, 2013). Schools B and M, for instance, incorrectly fluctuated between definiteness and specificity on the AJT but not on the FCET, and this is not completely surprising since AJTs normally require learners to employ complex cognitive processes to decide on the acceptability status of items. On comparing the two discourse types, the nested sample's use of *a(n)* was more non-target-like in speaking than in writing. Furthermore, these 35 learners incorrectly fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in speaking but not in writing. They performed better in writing since writing offers more time to attend to grammatical accuracy. This finding shows that when learners have sufficient time to attend to grammatical accuracy, their overall performance is less non-target-like.

The fourth research question focused on comparing performance at different form levels. The data revealed that there was a positive role for explicit instruction in acquiring the English article system. Lower form level learners performed better than higher form level learners did. Their access to explicit teaching on the article system only in Form One (F1) and Form Two (F2) seemed to have occasioned the noted difference. Although there is some role for explicit teaching, the data provide no evidence of IL development in terms of the ability to use the English article system. This finding suggests that teachers should continue teaching this property of English at all form levels.

Concerning the fifth research question, since Swahili relies mainly on the context of interaction to realise definiteness, some E level learners transferred the bare noun phrase structure of Swahili to English. Consequently, their production was characterised by article omissions. In line with this finding, most of these learners also used the two articles interchangeably. In addition, they used 'noun+pronoun' pairings to realise definiteness in English. The impact of L1 Swahili was more noticeable at the E level of English proficiency than it was at the LI and UI levels. As learners' proficiency in English improves, the influence of L1 Swahili begins to fade, and they start using the article system in accordance with grammatical definiteness in English.

The sixth research question asks how Tanzanian EFL teachers address the non-target-like properties of the IL grammars of Swahili-speaking EFL learners with regard to the article system of the language. The data revealed that the ability to use the English article system is a

challenge even for some teachers. The lack of opportunities to use English for communication in real life situations contributed to this challenge. These teachers received significant English input late, at secondary school level. In addition, they were not comfortable with the Competency Based Language Teaching (CBLT) approach because they had not received the necessary training in implementing it successfully. All these reasons contribute to non-target-like performance on the English article system among many Tanzanians, especially among those who only start receiving significant English input at secondary school level.

As for the seventh research question, the suggestion is that learners should learn in English as the MoI right from primary school. They should also receive authentic input in the naturalistic environment. The teachers should receive training in implementing the CBLT curriculum. This training should also focus on enabling them to make use of the focus on form (FonF) approach and to treat their learners differently in relation to their respective levels of English proficiency. I explicate this suggestion in Section 8.6 on the pedagogical implications of the findings. In the following section, I start with the theoretical implications of the findings.

8.4 Theoretical implications

The current study drew on the Minimalist Program; more specifically, it was grounded in the Principles and Parameters theory and the cognitive viewpoint on the processing role of the language faculty (Hornstein et al., 2005). The study examined two competing standpoints: The Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) (Ionin et al., 2004; Tryzna, 2009) and the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA) (Trenkic, 2007). The results reported in this study indicated that Swahili-speaking EFL learners seem to be accessing both parameter settings at the E level of proficiency. Consequently, they fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. These results support Ionin et al.'s (2004) FH. Respecting misanalysing articles as adjectives, the data show that the presence or absence of adjectival modifiers in English did not determine the frequency of article use by the learners. This finding therefore does not concur with Trenkic's (2007) SMA. The difference between the L1 Swahili data in the present study and the L1 Serbian data in Trenkic (2007) stems from the positions occupied by adjectives in the two languages (cf. Chapters 2 and 3). Therefore, while the SMA is very useful in explaining the omission of articles by Serbian learners of English, it cannot sufficiently explain the phenomenon in the case of Swahili learners of EFL. Instead, the data in the present study can expand on the SMA. For L1s with adjectives in the post-nominal position, learners' omission

of articles in the English DP does not result from misanalysing articles as adjectives but, possibly, from the transfer of the absence of the syntactic DP category in Swahili to English. In line with this position, Prévost and White's (2000) Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) sufficiently explains the omission of articles in the present study.

The study was also grounded in the functional and interactional perspectives on the nature of language learning (Gass, 2010; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The learners' results are consistent with the view that using language in a naturalistic environment has a remarkable impact on the learner's mastery of that language. Empirically, the learners in School J exhibited better overall performance on articles than did the learners in Schools B and M. The most likely reason for this is that some of them were occasionally communicating in English in their homes.

8.5 Implications for policy

Drawing on the Minimalist Program in relation to the role of L2 input and on the functional and interactional perspectives on L2 acquisition (Hornstein et al., 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), learners acquire an L2 successfully when they have opportunities to access authentic L2 input and interact in the language in real life situations. Previous research has shown that learners who acquire and use English in real life situations outperform those who rely solely on explicit instruction. Tryzna (2009), for instance, reports that L1 Chinese learners of English performed better on articles than L1 Polish learners because the Chinese learners were exposed to English in a naturalistic environment (cf. the performance of School J's learners in the present study). On the contrary, most of the learners and their teachers in the present study did not have such opportunities to use English in real life situations; in addition, they only started receiving significant exposure to English as the MoI late –at secondary school level. There was no evidence of IL development in terms of article use, despite learners spending four years learning English at secondary school. Furthermore, none of the groups had attained complete acquisition. The empirical results of the present study show that the current educational and language in education policies do not yield the anticipated results (cf. MoEVT, 2005:102).

The results of the current study suggest the need to revise the current policy to enable the use of English as the MoI right from primary school and to expose the learner to authentic L2 input. Cummins (2000) presents plenty of evidence showing interdependence between the L1 and L2 in developing academic skills. He therefore calls for instruction in both languages.

Research shows that the majority of both parents and learners in Tanzania want English to be the MoI right from primary school (see Mwalimu, 2015; Hilliard, 2015). I attribute this to the perceived value of English as a language of socio-economic mobility and as an international lingua franca. Although one should not underestimate the value of mother tongue education (Alexander, 2004), having learners' L1 as the MoI for the first couple of school years, and then only introducing the target L2 later on, might be more sensible when the two languages are similar (i.e. at least belong to the same language family). In Tanzania the two languages – Swahili and English – belong to different language families, and are structurally different to the extent that one lacks (at least) one of the syntactic categories that the other has (here, the English DP). The mother-tongue-first approach might also work better in cases where the learners' later exposure to the target L2 would involve (near-)native-like input. In the case of Tanzania, teachers of EFL do not have a sufficient level of proficiency in English. These reasons might, in part, explain why Alexander's 'mother-tongue based bilingual model' has not worked for Tanzania. Drawing on these reasons, I therefore suggest that the overall system of Tanzanian education should allow learners to access both Swahili and English as the MoI right from primary level. This suggestion is supported further by research on the role of age in language acquisition (Meisel, 2009; Pierce, Genesee and Paradis, 2013; Vanhove, 2013); a child is capable of learning two (or more) languages successfully, provided that they receive sufficient input to acquire the languages during the critical period (i.e. sometime before puberty). After this period, language learning requires an effort and is most often not complete (i.e. does not lead to (near-)native proficiency). In addition, Schwartz and Rovner (2015) present data that children with early exposure to English demonstrated better mastery of definiteness than those with late exposure to English. It thus follows that it would be ideal to revise the current policy in education to expose Tanzanian children to both Swahili and English as the languages of teaching and learning right from primary school.

8.6 Pedagogical implications

In this section, I offer suggestions for teaching the English article system to Swahili-speaking EFL learners. Some of these suggestions, which I garnered from the interview data, may even be relevant to the general teaching of EFL in Tanzania. Since the article system is a component of the English grammar, it should, under the view adopted in the current study (cf. Section 1.7), be possible to attain complete acquisition as the learner receives sufficient input, learns via FonF, uses English in real life situations and pays attention to his/her own errors

(Master, 1997). Therefore, the suggestions I offer below span reworking the EFL curriculum and EFL teaching and learning approaches in Tanzania.

8.6.1 Reworking the curriculum on language teaching

As for the EFL curriculum, it is clear from the interview data that it would be very valuable for teachers to be involved right from the beginning of any educational reforms in teaching. This is supported by research: Arthur (2001:348) insists that teachers occupy an important position as both products and implementers of the (language) policy on education; additionally, they are implementers of the curriculum. Teachers can suggest the content for the syllabus because a successful language syllabus today should systematically cover crucial aspects of language for successful communication (Richards, 2006:26). Among these aspects are general language skills in the L2 (i.e. being able to speak, understand, read and write the L2), knowledge of grammar, a sufficient vocabulary and the ability to use the L2 for different purposes. Therefore, teachers need to be involved in deciding on relevant items of learning for each of these aspects. Not only should they be involved at the preparatory stage but they should also be kept abreast of any developments in the field; for instance, through in-service training in interpreting the syllabus, assessing learner needs, selecting competencies, creating situations and evaluating competencies. More importantly, teachers need training to be able to employ the FonF approach in their communicative classes.

8.6.2 Integrating CBLT with other approaches to teaching and learning

L2 learners can acquire grammar inductively in real life situations or deductively via explicit classroom instruction. Drawing on the findings of the present study, however, an exclusively inductive approach is not possible because English is a foreign language in Tanzania. Likewise, an exclusively deductive approach is not desirable since most teachers do not have a sufficient level of English proficiency. I therefore suggest that teachers should consider an integrated approach to teaching EFL in Tanzania. In this approach, teachers need to integrate authentic input, real life communication, FonF, and the lexical approach to teaching and learning the English article system. Teachers should first determine their learners' levels of English proficiency and then employ relevant approaches for each level of proficiency, as I explain below.

8.6.2.1 At the elementary level

At the elementary level of English proficiency, Swahili-speaking EFL learners should get exposure to authentic English input. As reported in Chapter 7, the teachers of EFL taught

some rules of articles to the F1 and F2 learners only. However, such rules are actually less useful for learners with an elementary level of English proficiency (cf. Master, 1997). Their mental lexicon is not yet well developed, which means that they can probably not fully comprehend such rules or utilise them in the future (Little, 1994). Furthermore, as was indicated by Figure 5.4 (cf. Section 5.5), when such learners reach F4, their performance on articles seems to regress to non-target-like performance. These learners needed authentic input via relevant written and audio-visual materials to improve their comprehension and production of articles. While I do not discourage code-switching input, authentic English-only input ensures appropriate use of the article system in terms of the appropriate morphological, syntactic and semantic configurations of English. As an example, when teachers want to introduce or focus on particular vocabulary items, they should ensure that countable nouns are presented within lexical phrases (cf. Master, 1997:228). This means *a(n)* should precede countable nouns to distinguish them from uncountable nouns; for instance, the teacher should present *furniture* and *a chair*, instead of simply *furniture* and *chair*. Presenting countable nouns within their lexical phrases will enable the learners to understand right from the beginning that, in English, countable nouns require the indefinite article in first mention contexts. In this way, the input will facilitate more target-like performance on articles.

8.6.2.2 At the intermediate level

When learners have received exposure to articles via authentic input at the elementary level, teachers can employ the CBLT approach in tandem with the Text Based Instruction (TBI) approach at the intermediate level of proficiency. Both approaches are outcome based. The TBI approach specifies components of texts such as grammar, vocabulary, topics and function (Richards, 2006:37). It involves speaking, reading and writing, and it facilitates learning grammatical elements (such as articles) via the mastery of texts rather than in isolation (Richards, 2006:36ff.). In line with Littlewood's (1981:1) view on communicative language teaching, the TBI approach pays systematic attention to form and function. Procedurally, L2 learners work cooperatively in pairs or groups to solve a particular problem using available language resources. Using this approach, the learners will achieve the acquisition and accurate use of articles primarily through communication. Drawing on Richards and Rodgers (2001:155), this approach does not simply focus on activating dormant English knowledge but on facilitating development of proficiency in English via communication. Moreover, since learners would have acquired basic grammar and

vocabulary items at the elementary level of proficiency, teachers can explicitly direct their attention to the article system (as well as to other aspects of grammar) at the intermediate level of proficiency (Snape & Yusa, 2013).

A large body of research shows that FonF is useful for EFL/ESL learners (see, for example, Asadi and Gholami (2014), Doughty and Varela (1998), Ellis (2002, 2003), Harley (1998), Lightbown and Spada (1990), Lyster (2004), Mennim (2003) and Muranoi (2000)). In FonF, teachers can integrate the teaching of articles into listening comprehension, cloze and editing exercises and oral production tasks. Before describing how teachers can employ FonF, it should be mentioned that the suggestions I offer draw on the data described in Chapter 2 and on the results reported in Chapters 5 and 6, in the following way: Chapter 2 explored the differences and similarities between Swahili and English in realising (in)definiteness. The chapter also described several function groupings for the article system. Such groupings are making count/non-count distinctions, anaphoric references, associative anaphoric inferences, encyclopaedic entities (via situational and general knowledge), as well as realising indefiniteness. Chapters 5 and 6 examined how the learners use the article system in relation to these function groupings. The learners manifested non-target-like performance more on *a(n)* than on *the*, and more on the anaphoric contexts than on the associative and encyclopaedic contexts. Pedagogically, therefore, it is important for teachers to start by focusing on *a(n)*, especially in relation to count/non-count distinctions, and then move on to focusing on *the* in relation to the anaphoric, associative anaphoric, situational and finally generic uses of articles, as illustrated below.

8.6.2.2.1 Steps for teaching the English article system⁸¹

At the beginning of each of the following steps, the teacher should describe to their learners how the English article system actually functions for each function grouping below, so that the learners will understand its various uses. They will also understand that a particular article is necessary in a particular context. Where necessary, I explain the rationale behind this ordering in each function grouping.

⁸¹ The descriptive account presented in this section is solely based on the results of the qualitative and quantitative data collected, analysed and reported within the scope of the present study. Since idiomatic/conventional uses of articles are beyond the scope of this study, I urge the interested reader to consult Butler (2002), Cowan (2008), Díez-Bedmar and Papp (2008), Haiyan and Lianrui (2010), Mahmood et al. (2011), Rowan (2013) and Thomas (1989).

Step (i) Count/non-count distinctions

Considering the count/non-count distinction, *a(n)* is used for singular countable nouns, whereas \emptyset is used for plural and mass nouns. Two reasons motivate me to position the teaching of *a(n)* in relation to count/non-count distinctions first in this order. Firstly, considering the results reported in this study, *a(n)* manifested as more non-target-like than *the*, and secondly, according to Whitman (1974:258), the notion of “‘counting’ is easier to talk about than the concept of ‘known groups’”. Thus drawing on the findings of the present study and of the relevant previous research, it is reasonable to state that *a(n)*, in relation to count/non-count distinctions, deserves special pedagogical attention.

Step (ii) Anaphoric use

The anaphoric use involves introducing an entity in the discourse context and subsequently referring back to the same entity using *the* as shown in the following example:

(124) I read *a book* about Napoleon. *The book* was really well written.

(Dikilitas & Altay, 2011:186, *emphasis added*)

The comparative analysis of the definite sub-contexts in Chapter 5 (cf. Section 5.4.3) indicated that the anaphoric use of *the* was more non-target-like than the associative and the encyclopaedic uses. Since the anaphoric use involves referring back to the same referent that had been introduced by *a(n)* or *the zero article* as in Step (i), the anaphoric use of *the* should be taught subsequent to *a(n)*.

Step (iii) Associative use

In the associative use, a mention of a particular noun in the preceding discourse triggers the use of *the* with another noun, which is newly mentioned in the discourse (Guillemin, 2007:288). Consider the example below.

(125) I have a bicycle, but *the gears* are out of order.

(Jovunen, 2009:192; *emphasis added*)

In (125), the speaker uses *the* with *gears* because he/she presupposes that the hearer can cognitively associate the gears with the bicycle, which has just been mentioned in the discourse. The associative use involves anaphoric reference and presupposed shared knowledge of the entities described. Since the associative and anaphoric uses have the *anaphoric* characteristic in common, teaching the associative use of *the* should be Step (iii) – that is, subsequent to the anaphoric use.

Step (iv) Situational use

The speaker uses *the* when he/she presupposes that the hearer possesses first-hand knowledge of what the speaker is referring to, via knowledge of their immediate physical environment, as exemplified below:

- (126) [At home]
 Clean *the bathroom* please
 Can you put this fish into *the aquarium*? (Lyons, 1999: 3ff.)

In the situational use, *the* is used for an entity that uniquely satisfies the description given in the discourse context. The entity should not necessarily be visible to the interlocutors by the time of utterance.

Step (v) Generic use

In the generic use of articles, the speaker uses the article system for non-specific entities, especially when they want to make a general statement. In the following examples, the speakers do not refer to any specific elephants or tigers. They refer to the general classes of such animals.

- (127) *The elephant* is a mammal. (Givón, 1978:296)
An elephant never forgets. (Snape, García-Mayo & Gürel, 2013:2)
The tiger is a dangerous animal. (Cowan, 2008:221)
Tigers are solitary animals.

I suggest that teachers should teach the generic use of articles last because of two reasons: firstly, the results in the present study show that the encyclopaedic context (which includes the situational and generic uses of the article system) was the least non-target-like context for the learners (cf. Section 5.4.3 in Chapter 5). Secondly, it is widely agreed that the generic use of articles should not be over emphasised since all articles are acceptable in the generic use. Thus when learners are taught this use before the other uses, they can think that articles are used interchangeably even in the other contexts. Teachers should focus on this only after they have taught all other contexts of article use (cf. Berry, 1991; Master, 1990; McEldowney, 1977; Whitman, 1974). In the following section, I demonstrate how a teacher can teach the article system in their communicative class.

8.6.2.2.2 Example activities

Note that I only use a cloze and editing task and an oral production task for expository purposes; teachers are thus encouraged to employ additional tasks that they consider appropriate. In the same way as I have done for the tasks below, teachers should ensure that their tasks encompass both lower-level and higher-level competencies and develop both the learners' comprehension skills (via reading and listening) and their production skills (via writing and speaking) (cf. Klein-Collins, 2013; Richards, 2006).

i) *Cloze and editing task*

In cloze and editing tasks, the teacher may decide to engage his/her learners in a communicative task on a particular text. The teacher removes all articles from the text and asks the learners to read the text carefully and collaboratively (i.e. in groups or in pairs) from beginning to end and insert appropriate articles. The teacher should be careful to ensure that the text selected is on an interesting subject to encourage active communication among the learners. Drawing on the results presented in Section 6.3.1, learners generally perform better in writing than in speaking due to the availability of time to reflect on their writing and employ their conscious knowledge of the target L2 grammar. Hence, ensuring sufficient time for the learners to utilise their conscious knowledge of articles is important at this stage in their development (cf. Nassaji & Swain, 2000). The following excerpt from a Tanzanian daily newspaper article headlined '*Why parents prefer English in school*' is exemplary.

Most parents want English to be used as ____medium of instruction in ____ schools from primary level, recent Twaweza research findings show. ____research shows that nine out of 10 (89 per cent) parents said that ____ children face difficulties in changing ____ languages upon enrolling for O-Level after finishing ____ primary school. Under ____ current policy, Kiswahili is used as ____ medium of instruction in primary education while English is used for ____ remaining levels up to university. ____ Twaweza research, aimed at finding citizens' views on ____ education, found out that despite ____ new Education and Training Policy 2015 stipulating that Kiswahili should be used as ____ language of instruction for both primary and secondary schools, ____ majority of parents prefer English.

(Mwalimu, 2015)

Thereafter, the teacher may ask the learners to explain why they chose the articles that they did. The teacher then follows up by correcting instances of the learners' non-target-like performance via, for example, recasts, clarification requests and repetitions (Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004, 2008). In this situation, the learners will become consciously aware of contexts of the English article system that may manifest as non-target-like in their ILs.

ii) *Picture description task*

Turning to the picture description task, the teacher can give one learner a series of pictures (such as those used in the PDT in this study). Then, the teacher can ask the learner to describe what he/she sees in the pictures to other learners who cannot see the pictures. The listeners then ask questions about the story. At this point, the teacher may evaluate the learners' use of articles in speaking and listening, and correct them where necessary. After the oral description, questions and corrections, the teacher tells the learners to write summaries of what the speaker described. The aim is to engage them actively in using articles communicatively via writing. Hence, the learners learn how to use the article system in all four language skills, as mapped in Figure 8.1.

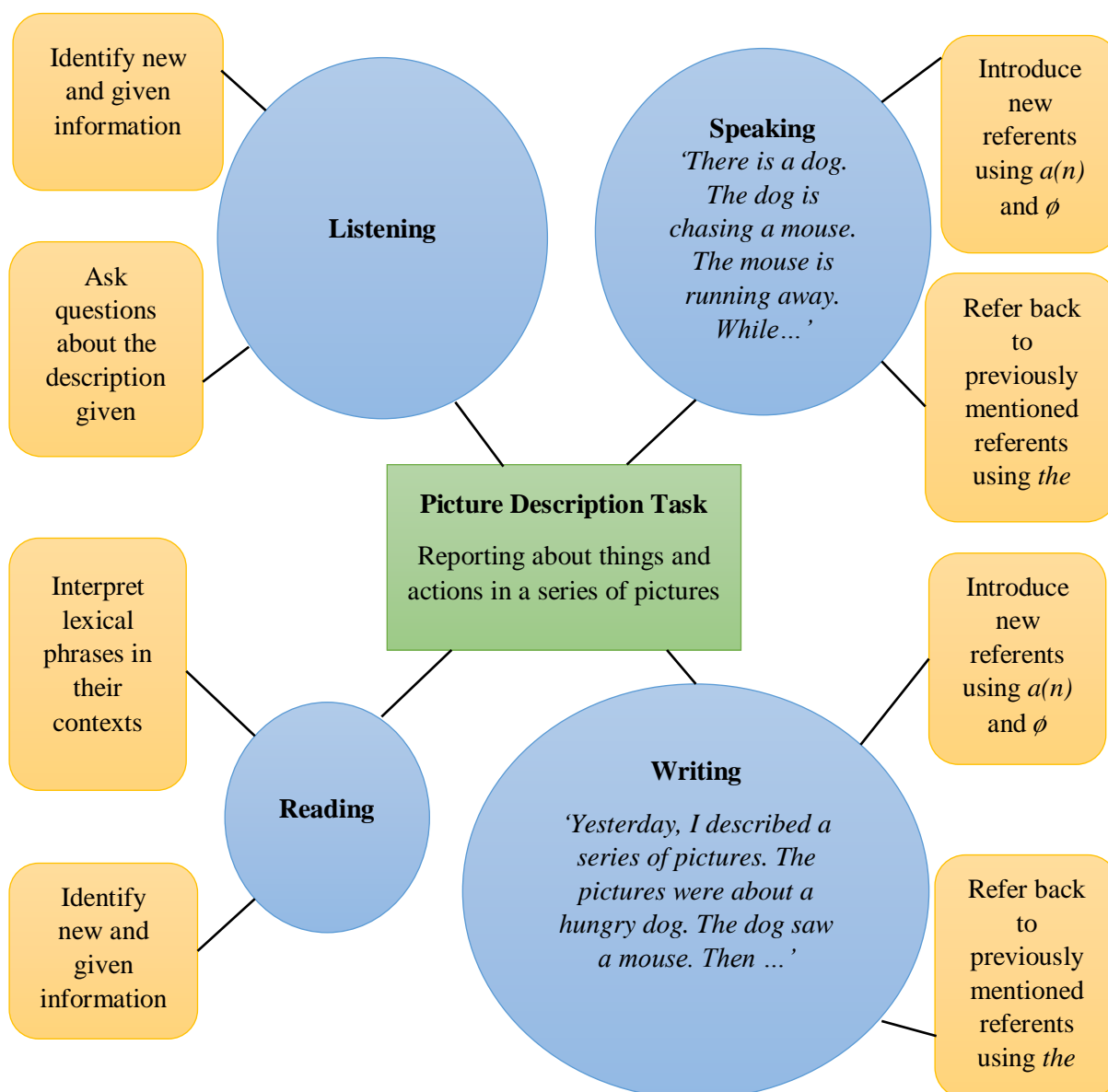


Figure 8.1: Mapping competencies for the picture description task

The CBLT approach stands in contrast to the Grammar Translation approach in which lessons are organised around a particular topic and sub-topics such as tenses and Parts of Speech. While these topics are still taught in the CBLT approach, they do not dictate the lesson and are not the focus (Griffith & Lim, 2014:4). As depicted in Figure 8.1, the primary focus is to report about the things and activities in the pictures via reading, speaking, listening and writing. These four competencies should be demonstrable and therefore measurable (Christison & Murray, 2014:224). The teacher's task is to guide the learners cognitively and engage them actively in various situations until they master the prescribed competencies.

8.6.2.3 At the advanced level

At the advanced level of English proficiency, where most of the EFL teachers in Tanzania are assumed to be, one can use a lexical approach, since grammatical rules are assumed to be mainly automatic⁸² and hence difficult to correct consciously (Master, 1997:228). The lexical approach serves to correct the few instances of non-target-like performance that still occur. Teachers can successfully implement the lexical approach in reading and writing tasks. At this stage, errors in article use usually occur only in particular contexts (Master, 1997). Following Master's recommendation, non-native teachers and learners of EFL in Tanzania should keep records of their own article use errors. This means, they become ethnographers of their "own learning process" (Master, 1997:228). At the advanced level of proficiency, learners generally play significant roles in enhancing their own learning when provided with opportunities to correct their own errors consciously. This position is in line with Schmidt's (2010:724) "noticing the gap" proposal which holds that in order to achieve more target-like performance, "learners must make conscious comparisons between their own output and target language input". Generally, advanced proficiency level learners can easily notice non-target-like properties of their L2 use via comparing their production with that of more advanced (or native) speakers, and can thus work at improving them (cf. Afitska, 2015; Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Hanaoka, 2007; Wach, 2014). Notwithstanding the findings and implications of the current study set out above, the study inevitably also has some limitations.

⁸² As used in this study, automatic grammatical knowledge is knowledge about the rules of grammar that an advanced proficiency learner has already acquired and uses unconsciously, without really thinking about them. The opposite of this type of knowledge is controlled (explicit) knowledge of grammatical rules (Chan, 2016:67; Paradis, 2009:6; Rastelli, 2014:104).

8.7 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the present study relate to its scope, sampling, data-collection and analysis. I discussed these in the methodology chapter (cf. Section 4.3.6). One that is worth emphasising relates to the scope of the present study –the exclusion of mass and plural nouns. Since this study aimed at testing the omission of articles in relation to the Syntactic Misanalysis Account (SMA), it would be difficult to ascertain whether a learner has rightly used the zero article or wrongly omitted it in the first mention context of mass and plural nouns. To avoid such uncertainties, I deliberately excluded these nouns from the present study.

Another limitation is that I have not evaluated the effectiveness of the suggested approach to teaching the article system which I presented in Section 8.6. To evaluate this approach, one has to begin with a group of learners at the elementary (E) level of English proficiency and then pedagogically treat them differently as they keep on advancing to the next level of proficiency. Notionally, the process would require four years of exposure to English input. Due to the limited time and other resources available for my PhD studies, I could not evaluate the effectiveness of the approach suggested in the previous section. Based on these limitations, I recommend further research in the following areas.

8.8 Recommendations for further research

It would be useful to conduct a study on the acquisition of the English article system that would encompass a wider range of article usage; for instance, investigating how Swahili-speaking EFL learners use articles in relation to mass and plural nouns, as well as in relation to idiomatic and conventional contexts. This study would offer a better understanding of how such learners acquire the English article system.

I recommend a comparative follow up study evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching approach suggested in the present study. In the recommended study, one can employ two E level proficiency groups with L1 Swahili. The first group will receive varying treatments in accord with its respective level of proficiency, whereas the second group will learn EFL in line with the current form-level mode of teaching and learning characterising Tanzanian secondary education. At the end of the four years of learning, the researcher(s) will then compare the two groups to determine whether there are significant differences between them in their performance on the article system.

Other relevant learning contexts to consider would be simultaneous bilingual children's acquisition of Swahili and English, as well as sequential bilingual contexts where L1 Swahili-speaking learners of English are educated through the medium of English from elementary school (as in the case of private schools in Tanzania), as well as learners living in more rural areas of Tanzania. Consideration of these different contexts can help disentangle the relative impact of, among other factors, input, developmental universals, cross-linguistic influence and language transfer on the acquisition and use of the English article system.

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate the L2 acquisition of English by [-ART] L1 Swahili-speaking learners, but in a naturalistic environment such as in Kenya. Such a study would help us gain useful insight into the differences between acquiring the article system mainly in the classroom situation and in naturalistic environments.

8.9 Conclusion

As explained in Chapter 1, in Tanzania English is the MoI from secondary school onwards, but it is also a foreign language in this country, since it is not really used outside the EFL classroom. Consequently, learners struggle to obtain sufficient input to master the language. One of the aspects of English that Swahili speakers find particularly challenging and that even advanced Swahili-speaking learners have usually not yet mastered, is the English article system. Their non-target-like performance on articles stems from the absence of the syntactic DP category in their L1 Swahili and from the teaching and learning approaches used in their EFL classrooms. Consequently, learners use the definite and indefinite articles interchangeably, as well as omitting articles in both speaking and writing. The present study collected qualitative data from the literature and via interviews with EFL teachers, as well as quantitative data from Swahili-speaking EFL learners. The data were used to identify the precise locus of the English article system that learners have trouble mastering and the findings were then used to suggest a method of teaching the article system to Swahili-speaking learners of English in Tanzania (though this method is of course still in a preliminary form and in need of being fleshed out).

The study is significant in a number of ways. Theoretically, it presented a detailed analysis of the realisation of definiteness and specificity in Swahili in comparison to English (cf. Chapter 2). It also presented data on the acquisition of the English article system by Swahili speakers, which is an important contribution, given that most such studies feature data from European or Asian learners (cf. Chapter 3). Moreover, the data collected from these learners helped to

examine the processing role of the ACP and the SMA. In this way, the study has contributed to the scholarly literature on the L2 acquisition of articles (cf. Chapters 5 & 6). On a more practical level, the findings of the present study have policy and pedagogical implications, as set out earlier in this chapter. It is hoped that the findings of the study might offer some guidelines along which the educational policy on the language of instruction, the language-teaching curriculum and approaches to teaching EFL, might be revised, and that such revision will lead to more effective EFL teaching in Tanzania, which will, in turn, be more rewarding for both the teachers and the learners.

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APPENDICES

A. Introduction letter: Ilala District Council



UNIVERSITY OF DAR-ES-SALAAM

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
P.O. BOX 35091 ♦ DAR ES SALAAM ♦ TANZANIA

Ref. No: AB3/3 (B)
Date: 25th August, 2014

To: The District Executive Director,
Ilala District Council,
Dar es Salaam.

UNIVERSITY STAFF AND STUDENTS RESEARCH CLEARANCE

The purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr. Gerald Kimambo** who is a bonafide staff of the University of Dar es Salaam and who is at the moment conducting research. Our staff members and students undertake research activities every year especially during the long vacation.

In accordance with a government circular letter Ref. No. MPEC/R/10/1 dated 4th July, 1980 the Vice-Chancellor was empowered to issue research clearances to the staff and students of the University of Dar es Salaam on behalf of the government and the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, a successor organization to UTAFITI.

I therefore request you to grant the above-mentioned member of our University community any help that may enable him to achieve his research objectives. What is required is your permission for him to see and talk to the leaders and members of your institution in connection with his research.

The title of the research in question is "**The Acquisition of (in)definiteness in English as a Foreign Language by Tanzanian L1 Swahili Secondary School Learners**".

The period for which this permission has been granted is from **August, 2014 to January, 2015** and will cover the following areas: **Ilala District Council**.

Should the areas be restricted, you are requested to kindly advise him as to which alternative places could be visited. In case you may require further information, please contact the Directorate of Research, Tel. 2410500-8 Ext. 2084 or 2410727.

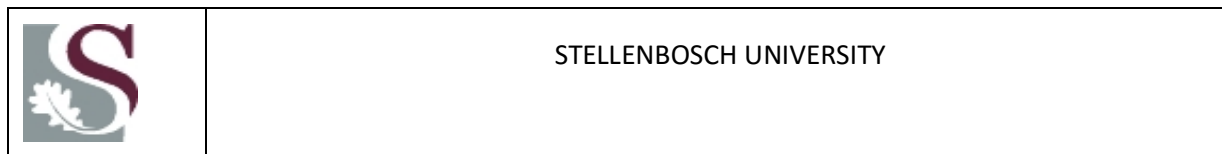

Prof. Rwekaza S. Mukandala
VICE-CHANCELLOR

Direct +255 22 2410700
Telephone: +255 22 2410500-8 ext. 2001
Telefax: +255 22 2410078



Telegraphic Address: UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM
E-mail: vc@admin.udsm.ac.tz
Website address: www.udsm.ac.tz

B. Assent form: Children



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM/ FOMU YA TAARIFA KWA MUHUSIKA NA RIDHAA YAKE



TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: The acquisition of (in)definiteness in English as a foreign language by Tanzanian L1 Swahili secondary school learners

JINA LA UTAFITI: *Uelewa wa “(in)definiteness” kwenye Kiingereza kama lugha ya Kigeni kwa wanafunzi wa sekondari wazungumzaji wa lugha mama ya Kiswahili Tanzania.*

RESEARCHER’S NAME(S)/JINA LA MTAFITI: Gerald E. Kimambo

ADDRESS/ANWANI: P. O. Box 35040 Dar es Salaam

CONTACT NUMBER/NAMBA YA SIMU: +255 764 005233

What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do find **NEW KNOWLEDGE** about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about children and teenagers and the things that affect their lives, their schools, their families and their health. We do this to try and make the world a better place!

UTAFITI ni nini?

Utafiti ni utafutaji maarifa mapya kuhusu jinsi vitu (na watu) vi/wanafanya kazi. Tunatumia miradi ya utafiti kutusaidia kutafuta mambo mengi zaidi kuhusu wanafunzi na vitu wanavyokabiliana navyo

katika maisha yao, shuleni mwao, familia zao na afya zao. Tunafanya hivi kuifanya dunia iwe sehemu bora.

What is this research project all about?

This research project is about finding out how Swahili-speaking learners acquire English as an additional language.

Utafiti huu unahusu nini?

Utafiti huu unahusu uchunguzi wa jinsi wanafunzi wanaozungumza KiSwahili kama lugha mama wanavyojifunza na kuielewa lugha ya nyongeza ambayo ni Kiingereza.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

You have been invited to take part in this project because (i) you are a secondary school learner in Tanzania, (ii) you speak Swahili as your first language, and (iii) you are learning English in school.

Kwa nini nimealikwa kwenye huu utafiti?

Umealikwa kwenye huu utafiti kwasababu (i) wewe ni mwanafunzi wa sekondari Tanzania, (ii) unaongea KiSwahili kama lugha yako ya kwanza, na (iii) unajifunza Kiingereza shuleni.

Who is doing the research?

Mr Gerald E. Kimambo is doing this study. This project is part of efforts to facilitate the successful learning of English in our country and in Africa.

Nani anafanya huu utafiti?

Bw Gerald E. Kimambo ndiye anayefanya huu utafiti. Huu utafiti ni sehemu ya juhudi za kusaidia katika kujifunza vyema lugha ya Kiingereza katika nchi yetu na bara la Afrika.

What will happen to me in this study?

In this study, you will be expected to participate in the following tasks: (i) to complete a short language background questionnaire, (ii) to complete a short proficiency test, (iii) to describe pictures depicting an everyday activity such as searching for food, (iv) to complete an acceptability judgement task and (v) to complete a fill-in-the-gap task.

In order to accomplish these tasks, the total length of your participation during the entire period of data collection will amount to approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes.

Nitahitajika kufanya nini kwenye utafiti huu?

Kwenye utafiti huu, utahitajika kufanya kazi zifuatazo: (i) Kujaza fomu inayohitaji taarifa zako za lugha, (ii) kujaza fomu fupi ya uwezo wa lugha, (iii) kuelezea picha zinazoonesha maisha ya kila siku kama vile kutafuta chakula, (iv) kufanya kazi ya kuamua sentensi na (v) kujaza sehemu zilizo wazi.

Ili kufanikisha haya, muda wa ushiriki wako katika utafiti huu ni takriban saa 2 na dakika 40.

Can anything bad happen to me?

There is nothing bad that can happen to you. This is an educational project, for educational purposes only.

Kuna baya lolote litakalonitokea?

Hakuna baya lolote litakaloweza kukutokea. Huu ni utafiti wa elimu, kwa madhumuni ya elimu pekee.

Can anything good happen to me?

By participating in this study, you will help future learners of English because teachers will know which properties of English need special attention in the English classroom.

Kuna zuri lolote litakalonitokea?

Kwa ushiriki wako kwenye utafiti huu, utawasaidia wanafunzi wa Kiingereza wa hapo baadae kwa sababu walimu watafahamu ni maeneo gani katika lugha ya Kiingereza yanahitaji msisitizo kwenye darasa la Kiingereza.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

No-one will know that you are in the study, except the researcher and the researcher's supervisors.

Kuna atakayejua nimehusika kwenye utafiti huu?

Hakuna atakayejua umehusika katika utafiti huu, isipokuwa mtafiti na wasimamizi wake.



Whom can I talk to about the study?

In case you have any questions or problems related to this study, you may contact the following people:

Nani nitaweza kuongea nae kuhusu huu utafiti?

Kwa maswali au matatizo kuhusiana na utafiti huu, unaweza kuwasiliana na hawa wafuatao:

- i) Mr/Bw Gerald Kimambo email: gkimambo@gmail.com cell/*Simu*: +255764005233
- ii) Dr/Dkt Simone Conradie email: sconra@sun.ac.za Tel/*Simu*: +27 21 808 2052
- iii) Dr/Dkt Johan Oosthuizen email: jo@sun.ac.za Tel/*Simu*: +2721 8082008
Fax/Faksi: +27 21 808 2009

What if I do not want to do this?

You can refuse to participate in this project at any time even if your parents have agreed to allow you to participate, and I assure you that you will not get into any trouble.

Je kama sitaki kushiriki?

Unaweza kujitoa kwenye utafiti huu muda wowote hata kama wazazi wako wamekuruhusu kushiriki, na ninakuhakikishia kuwa hutapata tatizo lolote.

Tick either YES or No for each of the following questions:

Jibu NDIYO au HAPANA kwa maswali yafuatayo:

Do you understand this research study? *Je umeuelewa utafiti huu?*

YES/NDIYO

NO/HAPANA

Has the researcher answered all your questions? *Mtafiti amejibu maswali yako yote?*

YES/NDIYO

NO/HAPANA

Do you understand that you can STOP being in the study at any time? *Unaelewa kuwa unaweza kusitisha ushiriki wako wakati wowote?*

YES/NDIYO

NO/HAPANA

Are you willing to participate in this study? *Uko tayari kushiriki katika utafiti huu?*

YES/NDIYO

NO/HAPANA

Name of Child/ *Jina la Mtoto*

Signature of Child/ *Sahihi ya Mtoto*

Date/ *Tarehe*

C. Consent form: Parents

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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY / CHUO KIKUU CHA STELLENBOSCH
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH / RIDHAA YA KUSHIRIKI KATIKA UTAFITI**

The acquisition of (in)definiteness in English as a foreign language by Tanzanian L1 Swahili secondary school learners

Uelewa wa “(in)definiteness” kwenye Kiingereza kama lugha ya Kigeni kwa wanafunzi wa sekondari wazungumzaji wa lugha mama ya KiSwahili Tanzania.

You are receiving this letter because your child might be a suitable candidate for the research project mentioned above. The research is to be conducted by Gerald E. Kimambo from the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. The study is to form the basis of his dissertation that will be submitted in fulfilment of a PhD degree in General Linguistics. As such, the results of the study will be published in the form of a dissertation and possibly, at a later stage, also in the form of articles in scientific journals.

The study requires as participants native speakers of Swahili who are secondary school learners of English in Tanzania.

If you are willing to allow your child to participate in the study, please read the information below and complete the attached consent form.

Unapokea barua hii kwa sababu mtoto wako anaweza kufaa kama mtahiniwa kwenye utafiti uliotajwa hapo juu. Utafiti huu utafanywa na Gerald E. Kimambo kutoka idara ya Isimu katika Chuo Kikuu cha Stellenbosch, Afrika ya Kusini. Utafiti huu ni sehemu ya msingi wa tasnifu yake ambayo itakabidhiwa kwa ajili ya shahada ya uzamivu katika isimu. Hivyo, matokeo ya utafiti huu yatachapishwa katika mfumo wa tasnifu na ikiwezekana, hapo baadaye, pia katika machapisho ya kisayansi.

Utafiti huu unahitaji wahusika ambao ni wazungumzaji wa Kiswahili kama lugha mama ambao pia ni wanafunzi wa kiingereza Tanzania.

Kama upo tayari kumruhusu mwanao kuhusika katika utafiti huu, tafadhali soma taarifa ifuatayo kasha ujaze fomu ya hati iliyoambatanishwa ili kutoa ridhaa yako.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Because the educational system of our country is characterised by the shift of the medium of instruction from Swahili at primary school level to English at secondary school and higher education levels, many native speakers of Swahili learning English demonstrate non-target performance in their use of English. Therefore, the aim of the study is to determine which aspects of English manifest as non-target-like among Swahili-speaking learners and to provide Tanzanian teachers of English with information and suggestions regarding which aspects of the language should be given special emphasis during teaching.

1. LENGU LA UTAFITI

Kwa sababu mfumo wa elimu katika nchi yetu unahusisha kubadilika kwa lugha ya kufundishia kutoka KiSwahili katika shule ya msingi kwenda Kiingereza katika shule ya sekondari na elimu za juu,

wazungumzaji wengi wa lugha mama ya KiSwahili wanaojifunza Kiingereza wanaonesha matokeo yasiyofikia shabaha katika matumizi ya Kiingereza. Hivyo, dhumuni la utafiti huu ni kutambua maeneo ambayo yanajidhihirisha kutofikia shabaha miongoni mwa wazungumzaji wa KiSwahili wanaojifunza Kiingereza Tanzania na kuwapatia walimu wa Kiingereza Tanzania maeneo muhimu yanayohitaji msisitizo katika kufundisha Kiingereza.

2. PROCEDURES

If your child volunteers to participate in this study, we would first ask you as parent/primary caregiver to sign the form whereby you give permission for your child to participate in the study.

If you allow your child to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to do the following things:

- 2.1 complete a short language background questionnaire (10 minutes)
- 2.2 complete a quick test of their English proficiency (40 minutes)
- 2.3 describe pictures of an everyday scene (for example, looking for food) (30 minutes)
- 2.4 complete an acceptability judgement task (40 minutes)
- 2.5 complete a fill-in-the-gap task (40 minutes)

Therefore, the total length for your child's participation during the entire period of data collection would be 2 hours and 40 minutes. Each of the activities highlighted above will be done once only and in the classroom.

2. UTARATIBU

Kama mwanao ataridhia kushiriki kwenye utafiti huu, tutakuhitaji kama mzazi/mlezi kusaini fomu ya hati iliyoambatishwa ambapo utatoa ruhusa ili mwanao aweze kushiriki katika utafiti huu.

Kama utamruhusu mwanao kushiriki kwenye utafiti huu, tutamuhitaji kufanya yafuatayo:

- 2.1 *Kujaza fomu inayohitaji taarifa zake za lugha (dakika 10)*
- 2.2 *Kujaza fomu fupi ya uwezo wa lugha (dakika 40)*
- 2.3 *Kuelezea picha kuhusu maisha ya kila siku (mfano kutafuta chakula) (dakika 30)*
- 2.4 *Kuamua kiwango cha kukubalika au kutokubalika kwa sentensi (dakika 40)*
- 2.5 *Kujaza sehemu zilizo wazi (dakika 40)*

Hivyo muda wote wa ushiriki wa mwanao katika ukusanyaji wa data ni takribani saa 2 na dakika 40. Kila kilichotajwa hapo juu kitafanyika mara moja tuu darasani.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS /UWEZEKANO WA HATARI NA USUMBUFU

There are no foreseeable risks to your child or anyone related to him/her.

Hakuna hatari yeyote kwa mtoto wako wala kwa yeyote anayemuhusu.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY /UWEZEKANO WA FAIDA KWA WASHIRIKI NA/AU JAMII

By participating in this study, s/he will help herself/himself and future learners of English because teachers will know which areas need special pedagogical attention in the English classroom.

Kwa kushiriki kwenye utafiti huu, atanufaika yeye na wanafunzi watakaofuata kwa sababu walimu watafahamu ni maeneo gani yanahitaji mkazo katika ufundishaji kwenye madarasa ya Kiingereza.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION /MALIPO YA USHIRIKI

Your child's participation in this study is based on their voluntary willingness. Hence, remuneration will not be involved; but your child will receive a small confectionery present as a token of gratitude.

Ushiriki wa mwanao kwenye utafiti huu unatokana na ridhaa yake mwenyewe. Malipo hayatahusika; lakini mwanao atapokea zawadi ndogo kama ishara ya shukrani.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding his/her name by using numbers and letters, and data will be kept on a password protected computer. Only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to the original data.

The recordings are for research purposes only. To ensure confidentiality, children's names will not be mentioned when results are published.

6. USIRI

Taarifa zitakazopatikana kuhusiana na utafiti huu na zitakazotambuliwa kupitia mwanao zitabaki kuwa siri na zitatolewa pale tuu utakaporuhusu au zitakapohitajika kwa mujibu wa sheria. Usiri utazingatiwa kwa kutumia namba na herufi kama sehemu ya utambuzi wake, pia taarifa zake zitahifadhiwa kwenye kompyuta inayolindwa na neno la siri. Ni mtafiti na wasimamizi wake pekee ndio watapata ruhusa ya kuziona taarifa hizo.

Rekodi hizo ni kwa ajili ya utafiti tuu. Kuhakikisha usiri, majina ya mwanao hayatatajwa pale matokeo yatakopochapishwa.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your child can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If your child volunteers to participate in this study, s/he may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions s/he does not want to answer and still remain in the study.

7. USHIRIKI NA KUJITOA

Mwanao ana uhuru wa kuchangua kushiriki kwenye huu utafiti au kutoshiriki. Kama mwanao atajitolea kushiriki kwenye huu utafiti, ataweza kujitoka muda wowote bila ya madhara ya aina yeyote. Mwanao ana uhuru wa kutojibu swali lolote ambalo hataki kujibu na kuendelea kushiriki kwenye utafiti huu.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS/UTAMBUZI WA WACHUNGUZI

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Kama una maswali yeyote au hofu kuhusu utafiti huu, tafadhali kuwa huru kuwasiliana na:

- i) Mr/Bw Gerald Kimambo email: gkimambo@gmail.com Cell/Simu: +255764005233
- ii) Dr/Dkt Simone Conradie email: sconra@sun.ac.za Tel/Simu: +27 21 808 2052
- iii) Dr/Dkt Johan Oosthuizen email: jo@sun.ac.za Tel/Simu: +27 21 808 2008 Fax/Faksi: +27 21 808 2009

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You and/or your child may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. Neither you nor your child is waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of the participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your child's rights as a research subject, contact Ms Clarissa Graham [cgraham@sun.ac.za; +27 21 808 9183] at the Division for Research Development.

9. HAKI ZA WASHIRIKI

Wewe na/au mwanao mnaweza kuondoa ridhaa yenu muda wowote na kusitisha ushiriki wenu bila adhabu. Wewe wala mwanao hamtakuwa na madai ya kisheria, haki, au matibabu kwa ajili ya ushiriki kwenye utafiti huu. Kama una maswali kuhusu haki za mwanao kama mshiriki kwenye utafiti huu, wasiliana na Bi Clarissa Graham [cgraham@sun.ac.za; +27 21 808 9183] kwenye Kitengo cha Maendeleo ya Utafiti.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Gerald E. Kimambo or by a research assistant in English/Swahili. I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent that my child may voluntarily participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

SAHIHI YA MSHIRIKI WA UTAFITI AU MWAKILISHI WA KISHERIA

Taarifa hapo juu zilielezwa kwangu na Gerald E. Kimambo au mtafiti msaidizi kwa Kiingereza/KiSwahili. Ninaiielewa hii lugha au ilitafsiriwa vizuri kwangu. Nilipewa fursa ya kuuliza maswali na maswali hayo yalijibiwa vizuri. Ninaruhusu mwanangu kushiriki kwa ridhaa yake katika utafiti huu. Nimepewa nakala ya fomu hii.

Name of Child (Participant)/ Jina la Mtoto (Mshiriki)

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian/ Jina la Mzazi/ Mwakilishi wa Kisheria

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)/ Jina la Mwakilishi wa Kisheria (Kama yahusika)

 of Parent/Legal Guardian/ Legal Representative/
Sahihi ya mzazi/Mlezi/Mwakilishi wa Kisheria

 Signature

Date/ Tarehe

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR/ SAHIHI YA MTAFITI

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [name of the parent] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [name of the representative]. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and Swahili, and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Ninatamka kwamba nilieleza taarifa zilizo kwenye hati hii kwa _____ [jina la mzazi] na/au mwakilishi wake _____ [jina la mwakilishi] Alishauriwa na kupewa muda wa kutosha kuuliza maswali. Mazungumzo haya yalifanyika kwa Kiingereza na KiSwahili, na hakuna mtafsiri alitumika.

Sahihi ya Mtafiti

Tarehe

D. Consent form: Teachers



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The acquisition of (in)definiteness in English as a foreign language by Tanzanian L1 Swahili secondary school learners

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Gerald E. Kimambo, from the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. The study is to form the basis of his dissertation that will be submitted in fulfilment of a PhD degree in General Linguistics. As such, the results of the study will be published in the form of a dissertation and possibly, at a later stage, also in the form of articles in scientific journals. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a native speaker of Swahili and you teach English in Tanzania. Your participation may contribute to helping Swahili-speaking learners of English to master the language more effectively.

10. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Because the educational system of our country is characterised by the shift of the medium of instruction from Swahili at primary school level to English at secondary school and higher education levels, many native speakers of Swahili learning English demonstrate non-target performance in their use of English. Therefore, the aim of the study is to determine which aspects of the English article system manifest as non-target-like among Swahili-speaking learners and to provide Tanzanian teachers of English with information and suggestions regarding the aspects of the language that should be given special emphasis in the English classroom.

11. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- 2.1 Complete a short language background questionnaire (10 minutes)
- 2.2 Participate in an interview session (30 minutes)

Therefore, the total length of your participation would be 40 minutes. The interview will be conducted on the school premises.

12. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks to you or anyone related to you.

13. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

By participating in this study, you will help future learners of English because teachers will know which areas of the language need special pedagogical attention.

14. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is based on your voluntary willingness. Hence, no remuneration is involved.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding your name by using numbers and letters, and data will be kept in a password protected computer. Only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to the original data.

As a participant in the study, you will have the right to review/edit audio recorded data. The recordings are for research purposes only. To ensure confidentiality, your name will not be mentioned when results are published.

16. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

17. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

- iv) Mr Gerald Kimambo email: gkimambo@gmail.com cell: +255764005233
- v) Dr Simone Conradie email: sconra@sun.ac.za Tel:+27 21 808 2052
- vi) Dr Johan Oosthuizen email: jo@sun.ac.za Tel:+27 21 808 2008 Fax:+27 21 808 2009

18. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Clarissa Graham [cgraham@sun.ac.za; 021 808 9183] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Gerald E. Kimambo or by a research assistant in English/Swahili. I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and Swahili, and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator _____ **Date** _____

E. Language background questionnaire

Respondent number _____

LANGUAGE BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer all the questions below. Note that your responses on this questionnaire will be handled in confidentiality and that you will remain anonymous in all documents that make reference to the information you have supplied.

1) Personal Details:

a) Age _____ Sex _____ Class _____ Stream _____ Surname _____
 First name _____ email _____ Cell phone _____

2) Linguistic Profile:

The following questions are intended to provide the researcher with your linguistic background information. Please answer each of them.

a) How many languages do you speak?

b) Please, list them i)

ii)

iii)

Others

Which one of them is your first language?

c) Please indicate the languages of the following people in your family:

i) Mother's first language....., other languages

ii) Father's first language....., other languages.....

iii) Caregiver's first language....., other languages.....

iv) Which language(s) did you speak at home while growing up?,

.....,

v) Which language(s) do you currently use: at home?

in class?

on the playground?.....

3) Educational Profile:

a) Name the primary school that you attended.....

b) At which level did you start learning English? (*Circle the answer that is relevant to you.*)

i) Kindergarten

ii) Primary school?

iii) Secondary school?

iv) Other (specify)

c) Were all the subjects in primary school taught in English?

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire!

F. Acceptability judgement task

Respondent number.....

ACCEPTABILITY JUDGEMENT TASK**Instructions:**

- i. For each item read both the underlined and the non-underlined sentences. Then, judge whether the underlined sentence is acceptable or unacceptable.
- ii. Indicate your acceptability rating by circling the number, between 0 - 3; whereby:

Absolutely makes sense	Somewhat makes sense	Somewhat doesn't make sense	Doesn't make sense at all
3	2	1	0

Items:

1. I need a teacher. Anyone will be useful.
3 2 1 0
2. I plan to close a bank account. There is one I don't use.
3 2 1 0
3. John needs a pair of slippers. He wants to go running.
3 2 1 0
4. We are looking for the hotel. We prefer any safe hotel in town.
3 2 1 0
5. I have got a dream. I am ashamed to share it with you.
3 2 1 0
6. They enjoy playing football. I enjoy watching movies.
3 2 1 0
7. I would like to have the drink. I can take any drink available.
3 2 1 0
8. I am going to buy a suit tomorrow, even if I can't find one I really like.
3 2 1 0
9. I need a new cell phone. I will buy one tomorrow.
3 2 1 0
10. I plan to close the bank account. There is one I don't use.
3 2 1 0
11. Somebody gave me the gift for my birthday; but I will not tell you what it is.
3 2 1 0

12. My father wants to rent the room in our house. There is one which is unoccupied.
3 2 1 0
13. John was speaking to Paul. Both were very happy.
3 2 1 0
14. I wish to buy a shirt. Please help me to choose one.
3 2 1 0
15. I am going to buy the bag next week. I don't know which one to buy.
3 2 1 0
16. Somebody gave me a gift for my birthday; but I will not tell you what it is.
3 2 1 0
17. That's the moon. It's always hotter than the sun.
3 2 1 0
18. My father wants to rent a room in our house. There is one which is unoccupied.
3 2 1 0
19. I want to buy you a school bag. There is one on sale.
3 2 1 0
20. I saw the cow. It was eating meat.
3 2 1 0
21. I am trying to find a gardener. I will hire any good gardener.
3 2 1 0
22. I need the teacher. Anyone will be useful.
3 2 1 0
23. I was thirsty. Therefore I ate rice.
3 2 1 0
24. I am going to buy you a new dress. You will never believe how beautiful it is!
3 2 1 0
25. I am trying to find the gardener. I will hire any good gardener.
3 2 1 0
26. We are looking for a hotel. We prefer any safe hotel in town.
3 2 1 0
27. I plan to buy you a gift. You may find it useful for English.
3 2 1 0
28. Anneth was sick. So she went to school.
3 2 1 0
29. I wish to buy the shirt. Please help me to choose one.

- 3 2 1 0
30. I have got the dream. I am ashamed to share it with you.
3 2 1 0
31. This is the book we read yesterday. I will read it again tomorrow.
3 2 1 0
32. The player is missing. There should be 7, but I only count 6.
3 2 1 0
33. I met an artist. You will never guess which artist I met!
3 2 1 0
34. We will travel to Johannesburg next year. But only if we win this competition.
3 2 1 0
35. I would like to have a drink. I can take any drink available.
3 2 1 0
36. I want to buy you the school bag. There is one on sale.
3 2 1 0
37. Have you seen the snake? It has two legs instead of four.
3 2 1 0
38. I am going to buy you a bicycle. Joseph is selling one.
3 2 1 0
39. I am going to buy the suit tomorrow, even if I can't find one I really like.
3 2 1 0
40. Do you always watch TV? It is not good to watch too much TV.
3 2 1 0
41. Peter always carries the book in his bag. Let me ask him which one he has today.
3 2 1 0
42. I am going to buy you the new dress. You will never believe how beautiful it is!
3 2 1 0
43. There was no water at home yesterday. I had to sleep without having a shower.
3 2 1 0
44. I plan to buy you the gift. You may find it useful for English.
3 2 1 0
45. He is a good boxer. He has never lost a single match.
3 2 1 0
46. I intend to buy a pair of shoes. Any pair of shoes will be fine.
3 2 1 0
47. I met the artist. You will never guess which artist I met!

- 3 2 1 0
48. John is very intelligent. He failed all the subjects.
3 2 1 0
49. They were looking for a teacher. You can't imagine the teacher they got!
3 2 1 0
50. We were stuck in a traffic jam. That's why we arrived early.
3 2 1 0
51. I am always punctual for classes. I never arrive late.
3 2 1 0
52. A player is missing. There should be 7, but I only count 6.
3 2 1 0
53. I am going to buy you the bicycle. Joseph is selling one.
3 2 1 0
54. Peter always carries a book in his bag. Let me ask him which one he has today.
3 2 1 0
55. I plan to buy a heavy jacket. The weather is too hot.
3 2 1 0
56. The lion is the most dangerous animal alive. I read about it on the internet.
3 2 1 0
57. They were looking for the teacher. You can't imagine the teacher they got!
3 2 1 0
58. I am going to buy a bag next week. I don't know which one to buy.
3 2 1 0
59. I have lost a cell-phone; therefore I should buy a new shirt.
3 2 1 0
60. I intend to buy the pair of shoes. Any pair of shoes will be fine.
3 2 1 0

Thank you for your responses!

G. Forced choice elicitation task

Respondent Number

FORCED CHOICE ELICITATION TASK (Modified from Ionin et al, 2004)**Instructions:**

Read each set of sentences carefully. Then choose the correct word from the list in brackets, i.e. *the, who, a, in* or \emptyset , and write it on the line as shown in the following examples. The sign " \emptyset " shows that you think that no word should be inserted into the sentence (as in example (3) below).

1. *At home*

A: What did you do last night?

B: I went to a video store and got two videos –an animal movie and a video game. Then, I came home and watched the (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) movie.2. *Conversation between parents*

A: What are the children doing?

B: They are playing in (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) groups.3. *In town*

A: Has your younger sister started primary school?

B: No, she's going to start \emptyset (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) next year.

Items:

1. *At a supermarket*

A: Come on! We've been in this shop for hours.

B: I can't make up my mind. Which shirt do you like best?

A: I prefer (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) blue shirt.2. *Conversation between two friends*

A: Last Saturday, I didn't have anywhere to go, and it was raining.

B: So what did you do?

A: First, I cleaned my room. Then I ate lunch. Then I read (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) short book.3. *At home*

A: Why do you look so confused?

B: I wonder (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) this message is from.4. *On Monday, at school*

A: Where were you over the weekend?

B: I went to the beach. I met a man and his wife, and (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) couple was very happy.5. *In town*

A: I heard that it was your brother Rodger's birthday last week. Did he have a good celebration?

B: Yes! It was great. He got lots of gifts – books, toys. He also got _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø)
red shirt.

6. *In class*

A: Where have you put my mathematical set?

B: It is _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) my drawer.

7. *At a butcher's*

A: Why are you so angry?

B: Because I bought some meat from this shop, but it is completely spoiled! I want to talk to _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) manager of the shop – whoever that person is.

8. *At school*

A: Where is Janet?

B: She has gone to _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) state house. She said she would tell us where it is when she gets back.

9. *Conversation between teachers*

A: Where did you get the information that the national examination results are out?

B: I read about it _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) Friday's newspaper.

10. *A pupil talking to a parent*

A: My teacher, Tom, was in his office, but he really didn't want to work.

B: So what did he do?

A: Well, he walked around the school. He had a cup of tea. And he talked to _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) sick student.

11. *At a school*

Student: I am new in school. This is my first day.

Teacher: Welcome! Are you going to be at the school party tonight?

Student: Yes. I'd like to get to know my classmates. I am hoping to find _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) new friend! I don't like being alone.

12. *In class*

A: My brother is not good at mathematics.

B: What are your parents going to do?

A: Well, they are trying to find _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) competent teacher to assist him. I think they are doing the right thing.

13. *At a shop*

A: Do you see that laptop on the shelf?

B: Yes, it's beautiful.

A: I want to know _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) manufacturer of that laptop.

14. *Conversation between two pupils*

A: I haven't seen your father in a long time. He must be very busy.
B: Yes. His friend was murdered several weeks ago. He is trying to find _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) murderer– He almost caught him at the train station yesterday.

15. *Conversation between two pupils*

A: We had physics in school today.
B: What did you learn?
A: We learned that Neil Armstrong was the first human to walk on _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) moon.

16. *In a children's library*

Child: I'd like to get something to read, but I don't know what exactly.
Librarian: Well, what are some of your interests? We have books on any subject.
Child: Well, I like all sorts of things that move – cars, trains... I know! I would like to get _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) good book about airplanes! I like to read about flying!

17. *At a hospital*

A: Who is that man accompanying you?
B: This is the man _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) helped you in the accident.

18. *Searching for something in a bedroom*

Child: May I help you, Mother?
Mother: Yes, please! I have been looking for _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) warm hat everywhere without success. It's yellow.

19. *Phone conversation*

A: Hello, you've reached Mr Jones's office.
B: Hi, Mr Jones. This is Rob's father. Do you have time to talk?
A: Not right now. I'm sorry, but I'm busy. I am meeting with _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) pupil from my English class; we started talking about something yesterday and we need to finish our discussion.

20. *In an English lesson*

A: Everybody will get a chance to share their story with the class.
B: How will you decide _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) gets to tell their story first, Teacher?

21. *Phone conversation*

A: Hello, are you coming over?
B: Yes, I will be there _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) five minutes.

22. *At school*

A: Why didn't you come to school yesterday?
B: We were moving into a new house.
A: How do you like _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) new house?

23. *At home*

A: What did you call me for?

B: Go and greet the guests _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) arrived yesterday.

24. *At a bus terminal, in a crowd of people who are meeting arriving passengers*

A: Excuse me, do you work here?

B: Yes.

A: In that case, perhaps you could help me. I am trying to find _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) red-haired girl; I think that she travelled with bus number T 549 BTU.

25. *Along the street*

A: Every Sunday we have one couple who wed at our church.

B: Oh, I love weddings! That means on Sunday, I will see _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) bride, if there happens to be a couple that wants to get married.

26. *At a shop*

A: Which colour pen do you prefer between these two? A blue one or a black one?

B: Give me _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) blue pen.

27. *On the playground*

A: What are you looking for?

B: I am looking for _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) golden watch. I must have left it here yesterday.

28. *Students on their way back home*

A: What did you learn in school today?

B: Barack Obama, _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) is the president of the USA, has two daughters.

29. *At a bookshop*

A: Well, I have bought everything that I wanted. Are you ready to go?

B: Almost. Can you please wait a few minutes? I want to talk to _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) manager of the bookshop. I left my keys with him.

30. *Conversation between two friends*

A: How was your trip to Arusha?

B: Great! I went to the cinema, and ate in lots of wonderful restaurants. I also visited many friends. And I saw _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) good movie.

31. *Conversation between students*

A: Were you able to find teachers in school?

B: No, because they usually don't work _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) June.

32. *At school*

A: I really liked that book you gave me for my birthday. It was very interesting!

B: Thanks! I like it too. I would like to meet _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) writer of that book. On a TV show, she promised to release another book later this year.

33. *At school*

A: Why are your students making such a noise?

B: I haven't started my class yet; I am missing _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) student – I have warned him several times about his behaviour.

34. *A teacher and a pupil*

A: Where is your friend Rosa?

B: She is at home lying _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) bed.

35. *Pupils on their way back home*

A: Can we go and watch football tomorrow?

B: I'm sorry! Our family is going to have lunch with _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) president tomorrow. That is if the election takes place today.

36. *Two pupils on their way back home*

A: Have you gone to the library today?

B: Yes, what about you?

A: I have been there. I read _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) good book. It is about animals.

37. *At home*

A: What is the major effect of eating a lot of chocolate?

B: Children _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) eat a lot of chocolate usually get bad teeth.

38. *On the playground*

A: Why can't you start this competition?

B: Because _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) player is missing from the other team. They should be 7; I only count 6.

39. *Conversation between friends*

A: I heard that Rose is a news reporter.

B: Yes! She is interviewing _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) mayor of Ilala today. I must watch the interview on TV – then I can see what he looks like.

40. *Conversation between students*

A: Where did you spend the Eid al-Fitr holiday?

B: We travelled to Zanzibar _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) July.

41. *Conversation between two friends*

A: Who is Paul living with?

B: He is living with _____ (the, who, a, in, Ø) mother of his best friend; I would like to meet her.

42. *In class, two pupils are gossiping about their teacher*

A: Who does Mr Smith intend to marry?

B: He intends to marry _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) beautiful lady – even though he doesn't really love her.

43. *Conversation between pupils*

A: Do you enjoy life?

B: Not now, I enjoyed life _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) my childhood, because I was not in school.

44. *Meeting on the street*

A: Hi Miss, where are you running to?

B: If you see _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) young boy in green, please let me know! He is my son!

45. *In class*

A: Why are you not looking at the black board?

B: I am sorry. I am trying to find my pencil _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) my bag.

46. *In class*

A: We have finished that interview.

B: What did you learn?

A: It was an interesting conversation; _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) mayor told us that he was born in the early 1940s.

47. *At home*

A: The fireplace has scratch marks.

B: Yes, _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) small dog was in here last night. Its name is Lulu, and Fred always lets it sit by the fire on wet nights.

48. *Conversation between teachers*

A: Where were you yesterday?

B: I took the man _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) is living with us to the bus stop.

49. *At school*

A: John's backpack seems very heavy.

B: Yes, he always carries _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) book. Let me ask him which one he has today.

50. *At school*

A: My parents cannot attend the meeting tomorrow.

B: But any parents _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) do not attend that meeting will be reported to the authorities.

51. *In school*

A: Where were you born?

B: I was born _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) Tanzania.

52. *At the end of a school competition*

A: Are you ready to leave?

B: No, not yet. First, I need to talk to _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) winner of the competition. I promised her a gift if she wins.

53. *At a baking sale*

A: Who stuck their fingers in the cake?

B: Well, it must have been _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) child. Look how tiny the holes are.

54. *Conversation between two pupils*

A: What are your plans for tomorrow?

B: Our class is meeting with _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) prime minister. I am looking forward to meeting him.

55. *Conversation between friends*

A: Who are you talking about?

B: I am talking about the friend _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) called you a while ago.

56. *Conversation between teachers*

A: Why were the pupils not outside during the first break?

B: They stayed _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) their classes because the weather was too cold outside.

57. *At home*

A: Peter asked me to accompany him to town.

B: What is he going to do?

A: Perhaps he is meeting _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) friend in town.

58. *At home*

A: Where is Ann?

B: I took her to _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) train station this morning. She is going back to school.

59. *Conversation between school security guards*

A: Someone broke into the staff room last night.

B: Do you know _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) did it?

60. *At home*

A: What did you like about the meeting?

B: I enjoyed talking to _____ (the, who, a, in, \emptyset) prime minister.

Thank you for your responses in this questionnaire!

H. Semi-structured interview plan

Semi-Structured Interview Plan

Participant number: _____

Time _____ Day _____

Place of Interview _____

Introduction by Interviewer

Hello, my name is Gerald E. Kimambo, from Stellenbosch University, in South Africa. I am conducting a research project on **the acquisition of definiteness/articles in English as a foreign language by Tanzanian Swahili-speaking secondary school learners**.

During the interview, I would like to discuss with you the following issues: errors in learners' speaking and writing when referring to things with English articles *the*, *a* and *an*, the impact of these errors on communication (if any), the role of Swahili in learning how to use such elements, the weight that they have been given in the syllabus, and procedures for evaluating the use of such elements by learners.

With these issues in mind, I would like to firstly get some information about your linguistic background, then we will come back to the issues.

Language Background

Note that everything you say during the interview will be handled in confidentiality and that you will remain anonymous in all documents that make reference to the information you have supplied. You also have the right to withdraw yourself from the study at any stage.

A. Personal information

1. Tell me about your background:

Surname: _____ First name: _____

Telephone number: _____ Best time to contact: _____

E-mail: _____

Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Year of birth: _____

Place of birth: City _____ Country _____

If you were not born in Tanzania, how long have you been living here? _____

B. First language (mother tongue) and English as a second language

1. What is your first language? _____

2. What is the first language of your mother? _____

3. What is the first language of your father? _____

4. Which language(s) did you speak at home as a child? _____
5. What language did your primary caretaker (e.g. mother, grandmother, older sibling or other caregiver) speak when interacting with you? _____
6. What is the dominant language(s) spoken in the community that you grew up in?

7. At what age did you receive your first significant exposure to English (not counting the English heard in the media)? _____
8. In what context was this, e.g. at school, at a good friend's house, etc.?

C. Education and Language Use

1. What language(s) were used as the medium of instruction in the schools that you attended? Please also mention the name of the schools and their locations (city and country).

	Languages	Location
Pre-primary School		
Primary School		
Secondary School		

2. Which language(s) do you currently use:

At home?	
In social situations?	
When preparing your lessons?	
At school: -with colleagues?	
-with learners inside classes?	
-with learners outside classes?	
At religious gatherings?	

D. Semi-structured Interview Questions

Main Question	Additional Questions	Clarifying Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about non-target performance among Swahili learners of EFL in their use the English article system in speaking and writing. • What aspects of article use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you notice the errors? • What do you consider to be the source of such errors? • In which type of discourse (written or oral?) are such 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you expand a little on this? • Can you tell me anything else? • Can you give me some

<p>manifest as non-target among Swahili-speaking learners of English, i.e. what errors do learners make when speaking and writing English?</p>	<p>errors more remarkable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why, do you think, are they common in that type of discourse? 	<p>examples of ...?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What role does Swahili play in learners' use of English articles, as well as the errors that they make? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •In which instances do you notice the influence of Swahili? •What impact do these errors have in communication, i.e. do they lead to misunderstandings, to learners misinterpreting messages or conveying messages incorrectly? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What is the weight that has been given to teaching the English article system? <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How do you teach the English article system? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To which classes are articles being taught according to the syllabuses? • How do you evaluate the learners' correct use of articles? Do you evaluate both written and spoken work? • Do you notice any signs of improvement when you compare different class levels' performance on articles, i.e. do you think that the higher level classes perform better than the lower level classes? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What are your recommendations to other teachers in helping the learners to learn the English article system? 		

