

## The Ways of Teaching Articles in the English Language Classroom

Bayramli Aynur Fazil Gizi

Azerbaijan University of Languages, Azerbaijan

### Abstract:

*According to their lexical meaning, morphological characteristics and syntactical functions words fall into classes which are called parts of speech. For example, the words such as question, answer, hand, sentence, and others are distinguished as nouns as articles precede them. If the articles are not used before these nouns then there are not any morphological signs that they show they are nouns. The use of articles shows that they are nouns such as a question, a hand, an answer, a sentence, etc. O.Musayev writes that there are thirteen kinds of parts of speech. They are: 1) the noun, 2) the adjective, 3) the pronoun, 4) the numeral, 5) the verb, 6) the adverb, 7) the modal words, 8) the interjection, 9) the article, 10) the particle, 11) the preposition, and 12) the conjunction (Musayev 1997, p.296). These parts of speech differ from each other according to their characteristics in the speech and in the language. For instance, the noun, the adjective, the numeral and others have nominative meanings. That is why they are called independent parts of speech and they have independent communicative function. These are called notional parts of speech. They can make relationship among the sentences inside the text and they have crucial functions in the sentence.*

*The conjunction, the article, the preposition and the particle are called functional (structural) parts of speech. They do not have any independent nominative meaning in the sentence and they cannot perform any independent functions in the sentence.*

*O Musayev writes: "The functional parts of speech express the grammatical meanings existing in the language and they have structural functions.<sup>1</sup> Like the notional parts of speech the functional parts of speech can be used to make relationship among sentences inside the text. Some parts of speech play a very important role in creating the text (Musayev 1997, p.8).*

**Keywords:** article, way, method, classroom, types, meaning.

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<sup>1</sup>Musayev O.İ.English Grammar. Baku, Qismet, 1997, p.8.

## Introduction

According to the investigations, the article is considered to be one of the functional parts of speech. It is noteworthy to mention that the Azerbaijan language does not have such a kind of speech.

O.Musayev writes: “ The article is considered to be the sign of the noun in modern English. V.Kaushanskaya, M.Bloch, A.Thomson and A.Martinet and other linguists have the same opinion. V.Kaushanskaya writes: “The article, the functional part of speech is used with the noun”<sup>2</sup> (Kauşanskaya 1973, p.25).

The main functions of the article is to express the category of definiteness, and the indefiniteness in the speech and in the writing. There are two kinds of article in modern English:

1.The definite article: a (an);

2.The indefinite article: the.

The indefinite article has two forms: a and an. The indefinite article a is used before the nouns beginning with a consonant. For example,

*A book*

*A pen*

*A student* and others.

The indefinite article *an* is used before nouns beginning with a vowel. For example:

*An apple*

*An opera*

*An hour*

*An instrument* and others.

It is necessary to stress that the indefinite article *a* is pronounced as [ə], the indefinite article *an* is pronounced as [ən].

The origin of the indefinite article is believed to be the numeral “one” (bir). It is necessary to underline that this article keeps the meaning of “one” nowadays. One may observe this in everyday speech in English. For example,

*Not a word was spoken between them.* – Onların arasında bir söz belə danışılmadı.

*Stay here just a minute.* – Birdəqiqəlikburadagözlə.

*We are going to stay here for a week.* – Biz birhəftəburadaqalmağahazırışıq.

The indefinite article is mainly used with countable nouns in the singular. In many cases the article is not observed before nouns in the plural.

For example,

*A pen – pens*

*A book – books*

*A door – doors* və s.

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<sup>2</sup>V.L.Kauşanskaya, R.L.Kovner. *English Grammar*. St.Petersburg, 1973, s.25.

### Discussion

According to the investigations of O.Musayev, V.Kaushanskaya, A.Thomson and A.Martinet, one can come to the conclusion that the indefinite article *the* took its origin from the word *se* in old English. *Se* in old English had the meaning of the demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that*.

For instance,

*sēo sunne* - *the Sun*

*se mōna* - *the Moon* and others.

Like the indefinite article, the definite article keeps its original meaning “this and that”. For instance,

*at that* time = *at the* time – *o vaxt*

Nothing of *that* kind = nothing of *the* kind – *beləşeyyoxdur; olabilməz; mümkündeyilvə*  
s.

The definite article has two pronunciation forms in modern English:

1.[z9]; 2.[z7].

It depends on the spelling of the word. If the word begins with a consonant sound, it is pronounced as [z7], if the word begins with a vowel sound then it is pronounced as [z9].

For example:

*The pen*

*The apple*

*The book*

It is necessary to stress that unlike the indefinite article, the definite article can be used with nouns in the singular and with nouns in the plural. This usage of the definite pronoun depends on its usage inside the context.

For example:

*The girl – the girls*

*The chair – the chairs*

*The book – the books* and others.

### Difficulties of teaching articles

Investigations show that there exist the notion of “zero article” in modern English. This term is generally observed before nouns of material and abstract nouns. The usage of this term may be observed in many books of the linguists such as V.Kaushanskaya, M.Bloch, G.Macgrew Hill, L.A.Barmina and others. It is necessary to underline that not all linguists accept the term of “zero article”. For example, Ganshina writes that an article is a word, and its usage cannot be meant as zero. The Azerbaijan linguist O.Musayev claims that the opinion of the second group of linguists may be acceptable. He writes: “The nouns which are used without article are nouns of material and abstract nouns. The usage of these nouns without articles cannot be searched outside them but inside them. It depends on their meaning and grammatical features.”<sup>3</sup> (Musayev 1997, p.216).

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<sup>3</sup>Musayev O.I. *English Grammar*. Baku, *Qismet*, 1997, p.296.

As it has been stated the indefinite article has the meaning of one and it keeps its origin in many cases. The use of the indefinite article with nouns in the singular depends on this. The indefiniteness shows its uniqueness. Nouns of material and abstract notions do not have the category of quantity. These nouns may also be called as uncountable nouns. O. Musayev writes that the use of articles in modern English deals with its relation to the category of definiteness and indefiniteness. The nouns denoting definiteness are used with the definite article, and the nouns denoting indefiniteness are used with the indefinite article.

In English the two kinds of articles are used before the nouns they introduce. For instance:

He took **a book** from **the shelf**. – O rəfdən bir kitab götürdü.

We looked out of **the window**. – Biz pəncərədən bayıra baxdıq.

He is **a doctor**. – O həkimdir.

She is **an American**.

If there is an attribute before the noun in this case the article is used before that attribute.

For example:

They had **abeautifulgarden**. – Onların gözəl bağları var.

**A youngboy** came up to me. – Gənc oğlan mənə yaxınlaşdı.

It is noteworthy to mention that this usage may not be observed in some cases:

1. If the pronouns **all** and **both** are used in the sentence, then the definite article is used after them:

We argued **all the way**. – Biz bütün yol boyu mübahisə etdik.

Both **the proposals** have been accepted. – Təkliflərin hər ikisi qəbul edilmişdi.

2. The indefinite article is used after the words *what, such, quite*:

**What a nonsense** you have said to him! – Bu nəcəfəngiyyatdır onademişən!

I have never heard **such a foolish answer**! – Mən heç vaxt belə axmaq cavab eşitməmişəm.

The baby is **quite a child** still. – Körpə tamamilə sakitdir.

3. The indefinite article is used after the adjectives which are preceded by the adverbs *too, as, so*:

That is **too easy an** answer for me to give! – Bu mənim asanlıqla verə biləcəyim cavabdır!

It is **as good an** excuse as any other comfort. – Üzr istəmə digər təsəllilər kimi yaxşıdır!

I have never seen **so happy a** girl as this little baby. – Mənbubalacakörpəkimixəşbətqızgörməmişəm.

It is necessary to mention that the use of articles in modern English is considered to be complex and argumentative. The kinds of nouns such as common, and proper nouns, countable and uncountable nouns, concrete or abstract nouns, plural or singular nouns and other problems are necessary to be paid attention to while using articles.

The investigations prove that unlike the Azerbaijan language, the English language has the functional part of speech named “the Article”. There are two kinds of articles in English: the definite article and the indefinite article. Each of these articles has its usage in the English language.

There many functions of these articles in English. Sometimes the usage of these articles cause some difficulties for the students as well as teachers. The American writer and the educator B. Yağoda experimented that the definite article “the” is considered to be often used in English. According to the investigation of this scientist the definite article is used in texts and in speech

nearly “62, 000” times. According to the list of usage the indefinite article occupies the 34th place among the often used words<sup>4</sup>(Yagoda 2007, p.60).

The scientist L.Berezovski considers the use of articles difficult. So, the obstacles that the speakers often come while using articles either in speech or in writing make him write the book about articles in English named as “The myth of Articles”<sup>5</sup> (Berezovski 2009, p.21).

### **Conclusion**

The use of definite and indefinite article the notion of “The zero article” has attracted attention to itself. Te linguists have already accepted the use of the articles in English. The teachers and the students also pay attention to the use of this article in speech and in writing.

Besides these, there are some kinds of expressions in English which are definitely used with the definite article or the indefinite article. These expressions are called the “fixed phrases” in sentences, and the students or the language learners should leran them by heart.

Generally talking, the use of articles in the process of teaching needs to be dealt with comprehensively. Each kind of articles needs to be taught separtely by the lectures. Students are also demanded to pay special attention to the use of either of these articles.

In modern English the article has its usage in any linguistic environment either in a sentence, or in a text, etc.

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<sup>4</sup>YagodaB. *When You Catch an Adjective, Kill It: The Parts of Speech, for Better and/or Worse*. Broadway Books: Language Arts and Disciplines, 2007, p.124.

<sup>5</sup>Berezovski L. *The Myth of the Zero Article*. UK: A&C Black, 2009, p.49.

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