

**BAŞKENT UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
MASTER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH THESIS**

**COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF TURKISH EFL  
LEARNERS AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN ARTICLE USE**

**PREPARED BY**

**SİMGE ÇAKIR**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**ANKARA- 2024**

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**HAZIRLAYAN**

**SİMGE ÇAKIR**

**MASTER’S THESIS**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR**

**ASSIST.PROF.DR. GÜLİN DAĞDEVİREN KIRMIZI**

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**İmza**

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Gülin Dağdeviren Kırmızı, Başkent Üniversitesi .....

Jüri Başkanı: Doç. Dr. Aydan Irgatoğlu, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi .....

Jüri Üyesi: Doç. Dr. Senem Üstün Kaya, Başkent Üniversitesi .....

**ONAY**

Başkent Üniversitesi

Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Müdürü

Prof.Dr. Servet Özdemir

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# ÖZET

**Simge ÇAKIR**

**Orta Seviyedeki Türk İngilizce Öğrencilerinin İngilizce Tanımlık Algıları ve Üretimi**  
**Başkent Üniversitesi**  
**Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü**  
**Yabancı Diller Eğitim Anabilim Dalı**  
**İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı**

**2024**

Bu çalışma, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen yetişkin Türk öğrencilerin orta düzeydeki tanımlık kullanımlarını anlama ve üretme açısından incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda Tanımlık Seçimi Parametresi ayarlarının öğrencilerin tanımlık kullanımlarında nasıl gözlemlendiğini test etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Nicel yaklaşımı izleyen veri toplama prosedürü, yazılı bir üretim testini, 50 maddelik bir kabul edilebilirlik değerlendirme testini ve bir zorunlu seçim ortaya çıkarma testini içermiştir. Yazılı üretim testinde tanımlık kullanımları, doğru kullanımlar ve ihmal, yanlış kullanım ve aşırı kullanım hataları olarak sayısal olarak girilmiştir. Lopez'den (2015) benimsenen kabul edilebilirlik testi, [+ belirli, - özgül], [+ belirli, + özgül], [- belirli, + özgül] ve [- belirli, - özgül] olmak üzere dört anlamsal bağlamı temsil eden isim öbeklerinin dilbilgisel açıdan açısından kabul edilebilirliğini yargılamayı gerektirmektedir. Ionin (2008)' den uyarlanmış zorunlu seçim ortaya çıkarma testinde [İlk bahsetme belirliliği], [+ belirli, -özgül], [+ belirli, + özgül], [-belirli, + özgül] ve [- belirli, -özgül] bağlamları belirtmiştir. Testler, bir vakıf üniversitesinin hazırlık sınıfında öğrenim gören 102 orta seviye L1-Türkçe İngilizce öğrencisine uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar, Türk öğrencilerin [+belirli] ve [-belirli] bağlamları ayırt edebildiklerini ancak aynı zamanda üretimlerinde [-belirli] isim öbeklerinde ihmal hataları yaptıklarını göstermiştir. D1-Türkçe konuşanların özgüllük belirlemede zorluk yaşadıkları ve [+ belirli, -özgül] ve [-belirli, + özgül] bağlamlar arasında gidip geldikleri belirtilmiştir. Son olarak sonuçlar öğrencilerin anlamsal ayrımları en iyi kavrama temelli test türlerinde yapabildiklerini göstermiştir. Bulgular, D1-Türkçe konuşanların dillerarası süreçlerinde hem aktarım hem de dalgalanma aşamasından geçtiklerini göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** tanımlıklar, tanımlık seçimi parametresi, ikinci dil edinimi, belirlilik, özgüllük

# **ABSTRACT**

**Simge ÇAKIR**

**Comprehension and Production of Turkish EFL Learners at the Intermediate Level in  
Article Choices**

**Başkent University**

**Institute of Educational Sciences Department of Foreign Languages  
Master Program of English Language Teaching with Thesis**

**2024**

This study aims to examine the article uses of adult L1-Turkish EFL learners studying at the intermediate level in terms of understanding and production. This study also aims to test how the Article Choice Parameter settings are observed in students' use of article. The data collection procedure followed the quantitative approach included a written production task, a 50-item- acceptability judgment task and a forced-choice elicitation task. In the written production task, article uses were entered numerically as correct uses and errors of omission, misuse and overuse. The acceptability task adopted from Lopez (2015) required the grammatical acceptability of the NPs representing four semantic contexts as [+ definite, -specific], [+ definite, + specific], [-definite, + specific] and [- definite, -specific] NP types. The forced-choice elicitation task adopted from Ionin (2008) denoted the contexts [First Mention Definite], [+ definite, -specific], [+ definite, + specific], [-definite, + specific] and [-definite, -specific] contexts. The tasks were administered to 102 intermediate-level L1-Turkish learners of English studying at the preparatory school of a foundation university. The results showed that Turkish learners could distinguish [+definite] and [-definite] contexts, but also commit omission errors in the [-definite] NP types in their production. It was indicated that L1-Turkish speakers had difficulty with the specificity setting and fluctuated between [+ definite, -specific] and [-definite, + specific] contexts. Lastly, the results demonstrated that learners could make the semantic distinctions best in comprehension-based task types. Findings suggest that L1-Turkish speakers go through both transfer and fluctuation stage in their interlanguage process.

**Keywords:** articles, Article Choice Parameter, second language learning, definiteness, specificity

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|        |                                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| 1ST SG | First Person Singular               |
| 3RD SG | Third Person Singular               |
| 1ST PL | First Person Plural                 |
| 3PL    | Third Person Plural                 |
| ABIL   | Ability                             |
| ACC    | Accusative Case                     |
| ACP    | Article Choice Parameter            |
| AOR    | Aorist                              |
| [+ART] | Languages with an Article System    |
| [-ART] | Languages without an Article System |
| CompM  | Complement Marker                   |
| D      | Determiner                          |
| DAT    | Dative Case                         |
| DP     | Determiner Phrase                   |
| EFL    | English as Foreign Language         |
| ENUM   | Enumerator                          |
| F      | Frequency                           |
| FH     | Fluctuation Hypothesis              |
| GEN    | Genitive Case                       |
| HK     | Hearer Knowledge                    |
| INF    | Infinitive                          |
| L1     | First Language                      |
| L2     | Second Language                     |
| LOC    | Locative                            |
| N      | Number of People                    |
| NEG    | Negation                            |
| NP     | Noun Phrase                         |
| ObjP   | Object Participle                   |
| PAST   | Past Tense                          |
| PF     | Perfective                          |

|           |                                             |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------|
| PL        | Plural                                      |
| 2S: POSS  | Second Singular Possessive                  |
| PROG      | Progressive                                 |
| RC        | Relative Clause                             |
| SPSS      | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| SD        | Standard Deviation                          |
| SR        | Specific Reference                          |
| UG        | Universal Grammar                           |
| $\bar{X}$ | Mean                                        |

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

Languages are studied and classified according to their linguistic structures which encompass them on the levels related to phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Each of these levels denotes some properties that are considered mainly in those levels. Those properties are the linguistic features that can be counted as parameters that are part of Universal Grammar (UG). Languages are related to or different from each other based on these parameters. Studying closely related languages with different clustering of features is particularly beneficial since it may be used to identify and clarify UG factors that allow for a variety of variations in the suggested principles. (Chomsky, 1981, p.6).

As stated by Chomsky (1981), parameters are the variations that create diversity across languages. The variety of linguistic elements that impact learning a second or foreign language can make it challenging, even for highly motivated learners, to acquire some grammatical concepts. (Dikilitaş & Altay, 2011). For this reason, while learning a second language, these parameters can come across as a challenge for the learners of that language.

Among the challenges that learners encounter while learning a second or foreign language, it is seen that articles also fall in this category of challenges. Articles, more specifically, create a parameter that is investigated at the semantic level across languages (Ionin, 2003). Articles are studied as a grammatical structure, and they have been a point of discussion among linguists for a long time. When it comes to language acquisition, it is seen that some grammatical structures are acquired early, and some of them are acquired in the later stages (Krashen, 1982). As an example, it was reported that children who acquire English as their L1 or L2 tend to acquire some structures earlier than others with no regard for their L1 (Brown, 1973; Dulay & Burt, 1974). A determining factor in whether these structures are acquired in the early or later stages depends on some factors is simplicity. Krashen (1982) explained what was meant by 'simple' as given below.

In particular, it appears to perform better when the rules are "simple" in two senses. First, simple rules with no complex motions or permutations; these are syntactically simple rules. Rules' semantic characteristics might also make them easy or difficult. Formally speaking, the English article system is simple to explain: one just places

‘the’ or ‘a/an’ or, occasionally, nothing before the word. But it's quite hard to characterize its semantics. (see, for example, Hawkins, 1978).

(Krashen, 1982, p.17-18)

Studies, carried out on the acquisition order of English articles by speakers of other languages (Dulay & Burt, 1974; Fathman, 1975; Murakami, 2011, 2013), showed that speakers with different L1 backgrounds acquire articles at different stages from each other. Based on the results of his study, Fathman (1975) investigated the acquisition order of the English morphemes by Korean and Spanish children and found out that the only morpheme in which Korean and Spanish children differed was articles. Similarly, Murakami (2013) showed that the accuracy rank of articles is significantly different between the groups whose L1s are [+ART] such as Spanish, German French, and the groups whose L1s are [-ART] Japanese, Korean, and Turkish.

The reason for this variety in the acquisition sequences of learners with different L1 backgrounds is that the articles create a difference across languages and classify them on this basis. Languages are distinguished from each other with respect to the nature of their article system, languages with an overt article system are defined as [+ART] and those without an article system are defined as [-ART] languages (Yılmaz, 2006). However, this distinction does not end with the presence or the absence of articles in a particular language, which is because articles are also classified in their own category. Ionin (2003) proposed a schema where [+ART] languages distinguish articles in two separate settings shown in (1):

(1) “The Article Choice Parameter:

A language with two articles distinguishes them on the basis of two settings as stated below:

Setting I: Articles are distinguished based on specificity.

Setting II: Articles are distinguished based on definiteness.”

(Ionin, 2003, p. 79)

According to the ACP, languages differ from each other in terms of the *definiteness* and *specificity* of articles. Some languages show the property *definiteness* with particular articles and they are marked [ $\pm$ definite] whereas some others do not have the *definiteness* setting or do not have an overt article system and are marked [-definite], these languages usually show the concept through discourse. The informal definition of *definiteness* is given in (2).

(2) “If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is marked with *definiteness* setting, then the speaker and hearer assume the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP.” (Ionin et al., 2004, p. 5)

Languages like English, French, Spanish and Italian fall into the first category where the feature [+definite] is realised with particular articles. In the English language, for example, the article ‘*the*’ denotes definiteness while the article *a/an* denotes indefiniteness. The definite article ‘*the*’ provides a variety of information, yet two main approaches have been presented to specify how familiarity and uniqueness of the definite article ‘*the*’ are distributed. (Qian et al., 2021). Familiarity, as stated by Lyon (1999) proposes that the entity referred by the noun phrase is known by both the speaker and the hearer. Apart from familiarity, definite descriptions are used to refer to things that have a unique property and it is related to some contextual domain only, they can be differentiated with the appropriate descriptions, e.g., the Sun (Schwarz, 2013).

In contrast with the definite article ‘*the*’, the indefinite article *a* does not presuppose that a unique entity exists, so it is used for the first mention of the entity. This is illustrated in (3). The first mention of the noun phrase ‘the girl’ does not meet the definiteness criterion, so the indefinite article is used. In the second sentence, it is presupposed that the girl exists, so definiteness occurs with the second mention. The subsequent uses of the entity are marked with the article ‘*the*’ denoting definiteness (Ionin et al., 2004).

(3) Peter saw a little girl in the park. The girl was playing.

In addition to definiteness, The ACP also distinguishes the languages with two articles according to the setting *specificity*. The informal definition of *specificity* is given below in (4).

(4) “If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is marked with *specificity* setting, then the speaker intends to refer to a particular individual in the set denoted by the NP and assumes this entity to possess some noteworthy feature. (Ionin et al., 2004).”

The article system of some languages such as Samoan has an individual article which separates the specific and non-specific entities and they are marked [+specific] while other languages do not use an article system or they do not distinguish the articles clearly on the specificity basis, so they are marked [-specific] and called non-specific. In non-specific languages such as English, Mandarin, Korean, etc. the concept of *specificity* is realised through discourse. Ko et al. (2008) states that an entity marked with an [+specific] article

means that the speaker has knowledge about the referent and aims to refer to that particular entity, whereas an individual marked with a [+definite] article is known both by the speaker and the hearer (Ionin & Wexler, 2002).

The English article system uses *a/an*, *the*, and  $\emptyset$  (zero article) with entities. Definiteness is given with the article '*the*', so the article '*a*' is used with indefinite individuals. However, there is not a particular article spared for specificity, so both the articles '*a /an*' and '*the*' can be used in [+specific] and [-specific] sentences (Dağdeviren, 2010b).

5.

- a. I'd like to talk to the winner of today's race. She is my best friend!
- b. I'd like to talk to the winner of today's race. Whoever that is; I'm writing a story about this race for the newspaper.
- c. Peter intends to marry a merchant banker even though he doesn't get on at all with her.
- d. Peter intends to marry a merchant banker; I have no idea who she is.

(Ionin et al., 2004, p. 7)

The sentences in (5) show the use of the definite and indefinite articles *the* and *a* respectively in [+specific] and [-specific] contexts. From the individual context in each sentence, it is understood that (5a) and (5c) mark the specificity feature while (5b) and (5d) are [-specific] contexts. Regardless of the *definiteness* setting, an entity can be featured [+specific] or [-specific] depending on the context, as seen in (5b) and (5d). This means that definiteness and specificity are different settings of the ACP independent of each other.

## 1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Despite their frequent use, articles pose a great challenge for language learners, especially those with an [-ART] L1 because of their highly complex grammatical structure. For this reason, articles have been investigated and their use has been observed for a long time which led studies on articles and their acquisition to come out in the literature. Studies regarding articles have been conducted aiming to shed light on the interaction between L1 and L2, the way acquisition of articles occurs in different domains of the article system in English among language learners, the effect of various L1 structures in articles and the reflections of all these factors on the learning process (Dağdeviren, 2010a).

Article studies first started with the discovery of semantic structures of the articles and their classification. Bickerton (1981) was the first researcher to study articles as semantic notions and put them into various semantic classes considering the nouns which refer to entities. As a result of this classification, articles were examined based on two terms which were Hearer Knowledge [HK] and Specific Reference or Referentiality [SR]. Referencing Bickerton's classifications, Huebner (1983) did a more thorough analysis of the taxonomy of the English articles. This updated classification brought about the analysis and division of NP contexts into four quadrants considering the articles' references based on [HK] and [SR] features. These 4 quadrants constitute the Semantic Wheel put forth by Huebner (1983) and each quadrant requires the use of the articles *a*, *the* or  $\emptyset$  (zero article), moving in a counter-clockwise direction. In the wheel, Type 1 is placed in the top-right quadrant, and it is marked with the articles *a*, *the* or  $\emptyset$  (zero article); it indicates the [-SR, +HK] context and is also called generics. Type 2 is placed in the top-left quadrant which includes the article *the*; it indicates the [+SR, +HK] context and so is called referential definites. Type 3 is placed in the bottom-left quadrant where the articles *a* and  $\emptyset$  (*zero article*) are used; it indicates the [+SR, -HK] context and so is called first mention nouns, so they now lack Hearer Knowledge. Last, of all, Type 4 is placed in the bottom right quadrant where the articles *a* and  $\emptyset$  (*zero article*) are used; it indicates the [-SR, -HK] context and so is called non-referentials. Later, another type which was Type 5 was added by Butler (2002a) and it included the articles in their idiomatic and conventional use.

After the first classifications made on articles, further studies focused on the relationship between these articles and their semantics. Additionally, different from the previous theoretical investigations, these studies examined the article use by the speakers and learners of English. Among these studies, Ionin (2003) aimed to investigate the place of articles in the whole field of second language acquisition; the way the second language learners use English articles and made their article errors. In the study, Ionin (2003) found out that the article preferences and errors were not randomly organized; they give information about learners' acquisition patterns. Besides, it was shown that the learners interpreted the English articles more prevalently on specificity than definiteness setting. In another study conducted by Ionin et al (2008), three sources of knowledge which the second language learners benefitted in the second language acquisition were used and they were *Access to Universal Grammar (UG)*, *L2 input* and *L1 transfer*. Access to UG meant all possible patterns that can be observed in a language while L2 input referred to the linguistic content that the

language learners obtain and L1 transfer referred to using the linguistic information they have already acquired in their L1 during second language acquisition. The study revealed that while learners coming from an L1 with an article system transfer the semantics of the article system from their L1 to L2 English and they made a correct categorization of the definiteness setting. Learners coming from an L1 without an article system showed changes, or *fluctuations*, in their article uses and errors (Ionin, Zubizarreta, & Maldonado, 2008).

### **1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Among the studies regarding second language acquisition, article use in L2 English has been one of the most commonly studied topics. The reason for this ongoing research on article acquisition is that during the process of language learning and acquisition, articles pose confusion for learners. This confusion arises from three factors according to Master (1997). First, articles are one of the most commonly used words in the English language. According to COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) (Davies, 2008), the article '*the*' is at the top with a frequency of over 50 million uses whereas the article '*a*' is the fourth most common word with a frequency of almost 25 million uses. Secondly, articles fall in the category of function words which lack stress in a sentence; that is why, they are hard to learn. Last, their use varies according to their functions, so there is not a one-to-one relationship between form and meaning. This lack of one-to-one form and meaning relationship causes complexity and challenge for L2-English learners, which creates interest among researchers (Butler, 2002b; Andersen, 1984).

According to Master (1997), articles are acquired differently, learners acquire them depending on whether or not there is an article system in the learners' L1. The way they learn and acquire articles also brings about the fact that the problems of English learners encounter mostly depends on their L1 background. Speakers of a [+ART] language make errors in the acquisition of English articles due to overuse, as shown in the study conducted by Ionin and Montrul (2010). On the other hand, the fact that especially learners with an [-ART] L1 make errors is because they have no reference from their L1. In light of these challenges, a lot of studies such as the ones by Qian et al. (2021) and Yılmaz (2006) were carried out on the use of articles.

In spite of the high number of studies that investigate article acquisition, much fewer studies concentrated on Turkish learners' acquisition of English articles. Most of these studies investigate the article use of L1-Turkish learners depending on their proficiency levels. Apart

from the English levels of learners, various task types such as fill-in-the-blanks (Ionin, 2003), acceptability judgment tasks (Lopez, 2015), and production tasks (Önen, 2007) have been used.

This study aims to explore how Turkish intermediate-level EFL learners perceive and produce L2-English articles. The article choices of the learners were analysed and discussed under the semantic settings *definiteness* and *specificity*. It was aimed to analyse these semantic features on the learners' article choices in various tasks which were a written production task collected as their in-class assignment, an acceptability judgment task, and a forced-choice elicitation task. The forced-choice elicitation task was adopted from Ionin (2008), and the acceptability task was adopted from Lopez (2015).

#### **1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to investigate the article use of adult Turkish EFL learners at the intermediate level in terms of comprehension and production. This study also aims to test how the settings of the Article Choice Parameter are observed in the article uses of the learners. These aims encompassed a task where the learners' way of article production and in their own written output, a task where they subconsciously judged the grammaticality of article usage depending on the given contexts and a task that aimed to see their comprehension and make them use their explicit knowledge of articles. In the study, the order of the tasks was organized in a way that the learners were required to use their implicit knowledge in the acceptability judgment task and the written production task, and their explicit knowledge in the fill-in-the-blanks task. In the acceptability judgment task, it was expected that the participants would not have an opportunity to take advantage of their explicit knowledge on articles and to remember which article to use in certain situations; with this expectation, all the items were delivered one by one, and they were not given a chance to go back to the items again. With this distinction of items testing different types of knowledge, the study also tested if the learners' choices would vary according to their comprehension when they call on their explicit and implicit knowledge.

## 1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In light of the research purposes of this study, 3 research questions were asked to aim to explore article use.

### 1. What type of errors do adult Turkish EFL learners commit?

Studies conducted in the literature of language acquisition (Master, 1987; Thomas, 1989) reveal that learners having an [-ART] L1 usually make three kinds of errors. They commit errors of omission when they neglect to use a necessary article. The errors of misuse stem from using the articles ‘a’ and ‘the’ in wrong phrases, i.e., they use the indefinite article *a* with a noun phrase which requires the definite article *the*, and vice versa. Lastly, they make the errors of overuse when they unnecessarily use an article with a noun phrase. In the previous studies regarding article use by Turkish learners of English, the results suggest that they mostly make errors of omission and then misuse. Based on the previous findings, intermediate learners in the current study are expected to commit omission errors.

### 2. Which settings (definiteness and specificity) of the Article Choice Parameter do Turkish EFL learners have difficulty with?

Being a part of the framework called ‘Principles and Parameters’ put forward by Chomsky (1981), parameters represent the varieties across languages. The Article Choice Parameter divides languages in terms of whether they use an overt article system or not. It has two settings on the grounds of which languages are distinguished, which are *definiteness* and *specificity*. While definiteness informs whether the listener/ hearer knows about the referent or not, specificity informs if the speaker refers to a particular referent. Findings of the studies conducted on Turkish learners or learners with [-ART] L1 background reveal that learners usually make errors in the definiteness setting, the misuse errors stem from the definiteness setting. Similarly, the expectation regarding the question is that Turkish EFL learners mostly have difficulty with the definiteness setting.

### 3. Does the article use of Turkish EFL learners vary in comprehension and production tasks?

For this study, 3 types of tasks were used which were a production written task, an acceptability judgment task, and an elicitation task. The acceptability judgment task and production task aimed to investigate their comprehension whereas the written task aimed to investigate their production of articles. Studies conducted to investigate article usage with

comprehension and production tasks showed differences in article preferences, accuracy rates, etc. Based on these findings, it was expected that Turkish EFL learners would have different uses of articles when it came to their comprehension and production.

## 1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Article choice of language learners has always been a matter of discussion in language learning contexts. The reason for this long-lasting discussion is that L2-English learners struggle when they use articles until the latest stages of their acquisition, or they may not even reach a native-like performance on their article choices (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008). As a result of these difficulties, frequently made errors and indecisions of language learners about the suitable article in a certain context have motivated language teachers and researchers to conduct studies on article choices in particular contexts in order to shed light on learners' acquisition of articles.

As stated above, articles come with difficulty in learning for EFL learners. This difficulty changes based on whether the learners' L1 has an article system or not. In this case, languages such as Turkish, Japanese, and Korean are [-ART] languages. This means that the features of *definiteness* and *specificity* are realized through other strategies rather than overt articles. This situation gives Turkish EFL learners difficulty to place articles correctly in their minds during the interlanguage process. As a result of this absence of articles in their L1 Turkish, they make errors in the article usage. What is more, although there are more studies carried out on article acquisition by learners with an [-ART] language such as Chinese, Thai and Korean, there is much less research done on Turkish EFL learners' acquisition of the articles.

In the current study, different from other studies focusing on the acquisition in different proficiency levels, only learners at the intermediate level take part. So, this study aims to enlighten what happens when they are in the middle stages of their second language acquisition. The results obtained from this study can require an update in the teaching methodologies from the very beginning of their language learning process. This way, it may be possible to detect the errors that the learners at the intermediate level have made and prevent them from making further errors in their interlanguage process that can affect their whole acquisition of articles.

Second of all, this study focuses on the application of the two semantic settings of the ACP which are *definiteness* and *specificity*. The items adopted from Ionin (2003) present data

about the application of these two settings in certain semantic contexts. This study can give new ideas to language teachers and language book publications to approach the topic from different perspectives such as delivering the grammar lessons of article teaching contextually or explicitly teaching the two settings.

There are other studies on the article acquisition of Turkish EFL learners as Çimen (2013) and Yılmaz (2006) carried out. Similar methods were used in some research such as the one carried out by Yılmaz (2006) in that a fill-in-the-article task and a written production task and were used. However, in the current study, an additional acceptability judgment task presented on a PowerPoint presentation document aimed to elicit learners' implicit knowledge about the article uses and the learners were only at the intermediate level at preparatory school. Besides, the current study concentrates on intermediate-level acquisition while others compare the other levels in terms of their accuracy rates.

### **1.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study has some limitations. To begin with, there are limited studies on article acquisition conducted on adult learners of English. Although the research on articles is increasing, the literature still needs more studies. Also, this study investigates article acquisition only in terms of written comprehension and production. Methods based on oral comprehension and production can be adopted in further studies to elicit implicit data on article use. Besides, in the methodology process, online methods were not used to investigate their perception. The lack of the use of online methods, such as software, leads this study to be more outdated.

Another limitation is that this study only focuses on intermediate-level learners. The reason why intermediate-level learners were tested was the aim to investigate the understanding level of the EFL learners who are in the middle of their language learning process. The goal was to observe the learners who have started to learn English in terms of the way they have comprehended the English articles to detect the misunderstandings and the errors they have made until that point. However, due to the fact that only one level is investigated, the study provided information from only one dimension. For this reason, results obtained from learners at one proficiency level can decrease the level of reliability.

Lastly, 102 participants took part in this study and this number could have been increased. The reason for this number of participants was that an earthquake hit certain parts of Türkiye, sadly. As a result, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) decided and

announced on February 20 in 2023 that all the universities could start their spring term in distance education, and they could go back to their face-to-face education as long as the conditions are available. Based on this decision, the university where the data collection was done switched to online education. In the last quarter of the term, the department started to apply the hybrid system where some classes were given online while others were given face-to-face. The data collection procedure was conducted in the fourth quarter, and it was done only in face-to-face classes. Besides, because of the political elections, students had to go to their hometowns to vote, which also led to a lower number of participants.

Similarly, for this study, the data collection procedure was conducted at only one university. Considering that participants from different universities would be going through different systems, exams, schedules, and programs at the department of Foreign Language, it was decided to collect the data from one university only. Data collected from multiple universities could provide more variable information. However, as stated above, all the universities switched to online education, and this affected the data collection period badly. The fact that only one university was visited for data collection risked the reliability of the results.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, literature related to the English articles and their acquisition is given. This literature consists of the definitions of articles, and a detailed explanation about the classification of articles with Bickerton's (1981) taxonomy of articles, which are followed by their equivalent in Turkish and the Fluctuation Hypothesis about the semantic features of articles and their acquisition. The chapter ends with studies conducted on article acquisition by EFL learners with different L1 backgrounds including Turkish.

This chapter starts with the foundation of the conceptual framework for the determiners and articles in general where they are explained in detail. This part is followed by the analysis and classification of Bickerton (1981) in the second sub-section. Besides Bickerton (1981), Huebner's (1983) analysis of the articles and Semantic Wheel is also provided.

As the current study focuses on article use by Turkish EFL learners, the current chapter provides background information on the article structure in Turkish in the third part. As Turkish lacks an overt article system, the way the semantic features are maintained in Turkish and strategies to establish these features are explained. In the subsequent part, the Fluctuation Hypothesis put forth by Ionin (2003) is identified which plays a big role in the acquisition of Articles by learners of English with various L1 sources.

The last part presents the earlier studies conducted on article use and acquisition and is divided into two sub-parts. It starts with the studies of article acquisition by learners from various L1 backgrounds other than Turkish. These L1 backgrounds vary from [+ART] languages such as German, Spanish, and Arabic, to [-ART] languages such as Russian, Chinese, and Japanese. In the final sub-part of this chapter, earlier studies about how Turkish learners of English acquire and use articles depending on the uses of the articles in various contexts, proficiency levels, and different task types are given. Additionally, common errors done by Turkish EFL learners in their article uses are presented and discussed. These studies are also presented on the basis of a theory or a hypothesis.

## 2.2. Conceptual Framework on Articles

### 2.2.1. Background on Determiners and Articles

#### 2.2.1.1. Determiners

Noun phrases refer to certain entities in a linguistic or situational context when they are used in a discourse. This reference in the context is specified by a determinative item, the element used to ‘determine’ the entity. These items constitute a functional closed class called ‘determiners’, which precede the noun phrase or its modifiers (Quirk et al., 1985). The main function of determiners is stated to be "to select one or more specific aspects from a given set of entities that the hearer wants to quantify" (Platteau, 1980).

Quirk et al. (1985) identify the determiners in three classes based on the place they are positioned. They are pre-determiners, central determiners, and post-determiners. Pre-determiner subclass includes determiners such as half, all, quite, etc. which are used before the other determiners. Post-determiners are those which are used right before the noun phrase or its modifier, such as the ordinal and cardinal numbers and quantifiers, e.g. quite a few people.

Central determiners are those used between the pre-and post- determiners. Central determiners are the main components in constructing a noun phrase element (Sri Agung & Fitriani, 2019). Similarly, Master (1993) suggests that central determiners are the most important sub-class among all the determiner classes because they include the articles. The properties of central determiners are identified by Master (1993) as follows:

- (1) They function as a separate element given within the noun phrase (Duskova, 1985),
- (2) they are a necessary component of noun phrases,
- (3) they can only exist one at a time since they are mutually exclusive.
- (4) They are at the front of the premodification hierarchy (determiner-modifier-head noun) and
- (5) they constitute items in a closed set (Klegr, 1987).

Central determiners include pronouns (demonstratives, possessive adjectives, relative, etc), the negative polarity item *no*, and most importantly, the articles *a/an*, *the*, and  $\emptyset$ (*zero article*). Because the focus of the current study is on articles, they were explained in further detail in the subsequent parts.

### 2.2.1.2. Articles

As stated above, the English articles *a/an*, *the*, and  $\emptyset$  (*zero article*) take part as central determiners. Depending on the context and their use, they have different distributions such as the number (singularity vs plurality) and definiteness (definite vs indefinite). These two features of articles overtly distinguish noun phrases, i.e., the definiteness and number features can show themselves clearly with the articles ‘a/an’ and ‘the’. Quirk et al (1985) identified the articles according to these two distributions in a table as shown in Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1.

Article Use with count and noncount nouns (Quirk et al., 1985, p.253)

|          |            | COUNT            | NONCOUNT             |
|----------|------------|------------------|----------------------|
| SINGULAR | definite   | <i>the book</i>  | <i>the furniture</i> |
|          | indefinite | <i>a book</i>    | <i>furniture</i>     |
| PLURAL   | definite   | <i>the books</i> |                      |
|          | indefinite | <i>books</i>     |                      |

When classified according to quantity, nouns are divided into two categories which are countable(count) and uncountable(noncount). The division of singularity and plurality entails the countable feature among nouns and noun phrases. Article use can give information about whether the noun is countable or noncount. As seen in Table 2.1., the indefinite NPs ‘a book/an apple’ is in the singular countable category, and the article ‘a/an’ clearly shows this. The rule, therefore, is that the article *a/an* is used with singular nouns which can only be countable. However, when the article ‘the’ is used with a noun, it does not necessarily determine the information of quantity. The noun ‘book’, as given in Table 2.1., can be used with the article ‘the’ both in singular and plural form. Besides, it is also seen that it can be used with the noncount noun ‘furniture’. Considering these instances, the rule is that the article ‘*the*’ does not have a distinction based on number and quantity. In the category of noncount nouns, the plurality of a noun requires the property of countability, so no noun can be both noncount and plural, and no article provides this possibility.

The main distinctions between the articles ‘a/an’ and ‘the’ are most clearly seen in the category of countable nouns. In the singular category, the NPs ‘the book’ and ‘a book’ gives this difference: In the latter one, the use of the article ‘a’ gives the meaning that the listener/

hearer is not familiar with the existence of a ‘unique’ book. Hence, any book applies to the listener. However, the definite article ‘the’ in the NP ‘the book’ gives the meaning that the listener already knows or clearly understands the existence of a ‘unique’ book. According to Quirk et al (1985), definiteness means ‘referring to an entity which can be uniquely picked out in the context which both the speaker and the listener/ hearer share or can be distinguished by general knowledge’. Another alternative is that the referent is already one of a kind, as given in the example taken from Thomas (1989 p. 337) below in (8). It is known that there is only one Moon; as the referent is unique in its own nature, it is given with the definite article ‘the’.

8. The Moon will be full tomorrow.

(Thomas, 1989 p. 337)

When it comes to plural nouns, there are two alternatives: They either get the definite article ‘the’, or they get Ø (zero article). In the Table 2.1., the use of the article ‘the’ makes the noun ‘books’ unique. In the utterance of the NP ‘the books’, the existence of those books are already known and acknowledged by the hearer. However, when the noun does not get any article in the surface, or get a Ø (zero article), that referent is identified in general considered as an undifferentiated whole (Quirk et al., 1985). In other words, books are considered as a general concept, like ‘cigarettes’ in the example taken from Quirk et al (1985, p. 282) given below in (9) where cigarettes are considered as a whole.

9. Cigarettes are bad for your health.

(Quirk et al, 1985, p. 282)

Although the main distinction between *a/an* and *the* is found in the distribution of definiteness, they are also distributed by specificity, as well. As formulated by Ionin et al (2004), specificity informally means that the speaker refers to a unique and particular individual and this individual has a specific property. The formal definition of specificity by Ionin (2004) is given below in (10).

10. “If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is [+specific], then the speaker refers to a specific individual in the set that the NP denotes and considers this individual to carry some remarkable quality.”

Considering the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings, it is seen that specificity diverges from definiteness on the grounds that specificity is related to the speaker’s intention to refer

regardless of the hearer's knowledge status while definiteness concerns the hearer's knowledge about the referent (Ko, Perovic, Ionin, & Wexler, 2008). In the English language, this feature is not assigned to a particular article, so it is realized through discourse.

11.

- a. Joan wants to present the prize to **the** winner, but he doesn't want to receive it from her.
- b. Joan wants to present the prize to **the** winner, so she'll have to wait around till the race finishes.

(Lyons, 1999, p.167)

As seen in the examples above (11a-11b) which were taken from Lyons (1999), the article '*the*' can be used in a specific and unspecific way. In 11a, it is understood from the context that the speaker knows about the winner of the race. The speaker refers to a unique winner and has knowledge of who the speaker is, so the article '*the*' makes the NP a certain person. However, in 11b, all the speaker knows is that there is a winner, but does not know that particular winner. In other words, the speaker does not clearly know which competitor is going to be the winner, so he/she does not refer to a particular person. Both distinctions can be realized with the help of context. The same situation applies to the article '*a/an*', as well, as given below in the examples (12a-12b) taken from Lyons (1999, p.167).

12.

- a. Peter intends to marry **a** merchant banker -though he hasn't met one yet.
- b. Peter intends to marry **a** merchant banker even though he doesn't get on at all with her.

(Lyons, 1999, p.167).

The examples in 12a and 12b clearly show that the article '*a*' in the NP *a merchant banker* was used in both specified and unspecified ways. In 12a, Peter has not met any merchant banker that he wants to marry. That is why, there is not a certain merchant banker that the speaker intends to refer to, which makes the article '*a*' used in an unspecific way. In 12b, though, it can be clearly understood that Peter has met a merchant banker and intends to marry her. In this example, there is now a particular merchant banker, so the specific meaning

is realized. As in the case of the article '*the*', these distinctions are made using contextual information.

Along with definiteness and specificity, articles also denote genericness and referentiality (Önen, 2007). Both of these features are more linked to specificity. Bickerton (1981) studied those terms in greater detail. According to Bickerton (1981), the two discourse features included in referentiality classify the NPs in terms of their semantic functions, the presence of a specific referent [+/- SR] and the knowledge of the hearer [+/-HK]. Based on these two binary features that Bickerton (1981) came up with, Huebner (1983) proposed a system to explain the article uses in NP contexts. As a result, Bickerton's (1981) two binary features led to four possible combinations.

### **2.3. Bickerton's Taxonomy of Articles**

Among the studies conducted on the L2 English article system, Bickerton (1981) first analysed the English articles and classified them on the basis of two binary systems which are *definiteness* and *referentiality*. His Binary Semantic System of articles led a great number of researchers to carry out studies on article acquisition.

*Definiteness* is the first distinction and the term "definite" actually refers to something that is assumed to be known by the listener, either by general awareness that a named class exists or by prior knowledge, uniqueness in the universe, uniqueness in a particular environment, or both. whereas "indefinite" means presumed unknown to the listener by the absence of this background knowledge, nonexistence of a nameable referent or the nonexistence of any referent (Bickerton, 1981). The term definiteness is symbolized with [+/- Hearer Knowledge].

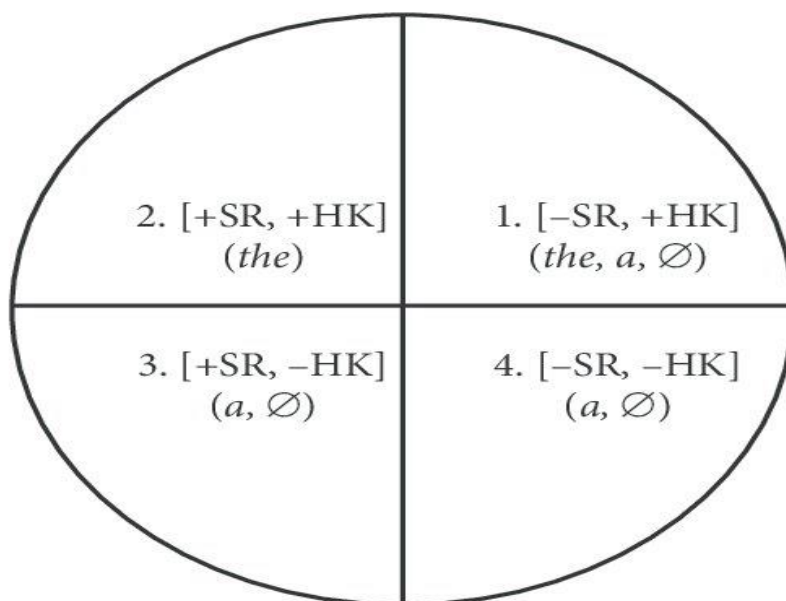
Referentiality is the second distinction in Bickerton's (1981) binary system, and this feature shows whether an article the phrase associated with that article refers to a specific entity (Hawkins, 2001). The term *referentiality* is symbolized with [+/- Specific Referent].

On the basis of Bickerton's (1981) binary system and the results of his own study, Huebner (1983, 1985) came up with a system where he analysed the article uses in various NP contexts and developed his Semantic Wheel. In this Semantic wheel seen in Figure 2.2., Huebner (1983, p.133) showed four possible combinations of NP contexts using the binary features [+/-Hearer Knowledge] and [+/- Specific Referent]. His classification of NP contexts regarding article uses has been used as a model to analyse the NP environments in the English

language. Each of these four NP environments is represented in a quadrant of the Semantic Wheel. Quadrant I covers the article *the*, *a* and  $\emptyset$  (zero article) as [+HK, -SR], quadrant II covers *the* as [+HK, +SR], quadrant III covers *a* and  $\emptyset$  (zero article) as [-HK, +SR] and the last quadrant covers *a* and  $\emptyset$  (zero article) as [-HK, -SR] (Huebner, 1985).

Figure 2.2.

Bickerton's Taxonomy of Articles (Huebner, 1983, p.133)



### 2.3.1. [+Hearer Knowledge, -Specific Referent]

If an NP refers to a non-specific entity that the hearer identified from the general knowledge of the entity, it can be presented with *a*, *the* or  $\emptyset$  (zero article). In this [+HK, -SR] context, these NPs take place in Quadrant I in Figure 2.2 and they are called *generics* (Hawkins, 2001). The article *a/an* is used with singular countable nouns, however, the article  $\emptyset$  is used with plural countable nouns, abstract nouns and mass nouns. The article '*the*' is used with a singular countable noun (Hawkins, 2001). The examples for the NPs in this context taken from Hawkins (2001, p. 235) are given below in (13). In (13a), the article '*the*' used for rabbit and gardener refers to these entities as a general concept and it was used with singular countable NPs. The article '*a*' was used with singular countable nouns and refers to the nouns rabbit and gardener in generic terms. The article  $\emptyset$  was used with plural countable nouns such as rabbits and gardeners and these entities are mentioned as general concepts.

13.

- a. **The** rabbit can cause problems for **the** gardener.
- b. **A** rabbit can cause problems for **a** gardener.
- c. **Ø** Rabbits can cause problems for **Ø** gardeners.

(Hawkins, 2001, p. 235)

### 2.3.2. [+Hearer Knowledge, +Specific Referent]

If the hearer can identify the entity shown with the NP in the context or in the previous discourse and the speaker addresses a specific entity, then the NP is presented with the article *the* (Hawkins, 2001, p. 234). In this [+HK, +SR] context, the NP takes place in Quadrant II in Figure 2.2 and is called '*referential 'definites'*'. The referential definites fall into four subcategories, such as specification by entailment, specification by definition, previous mention, and uniqueness by general knowledge and in a given context (Önen, 2007).

An NP is both referential and definite if it is used in the previous context. An example by Hawkins (2001, p.234) for this subcategory is given in (14). The NP '*contact*' is mentioned by Speaker B, so Speaker A refers to the contact with the article 'the' for the referential definites.

14.

Speaker A: How will you get a ticket for the England-France match?

Speaker B: I have a contact.

Speaker A: Is that **the** same contact who failed to get you tickets for Wimbledon?

(Hawkins, 2001, p. 234)

An NP is definite and referential if it is entailed in the context, so it gets the article 'the'. An example by Thomas (1989, p. 337) for this subcategory is given in (15). From the context, especially from the noun phrase 'the door' the noun 'bell' is entailed, so it is shown with the article 'the' and it becomes a referential definite.

15. I approached his front door and rang the bell.

(Thomas, 1989, p. 337)

An NP is definite and referential if it is defined in a context. In this case, the NP becomes specific due to the definition, and it is marked with the article ‘the’. An example taken from Garcí’a Mayo (2008, p. 552) is provided below in (16). The noun *sculpture* was defined and specified by the relative clause in the context. As a result, the NP became specific and definite, and it was shown with the article ‘the’.

16. The sculpture that is being displayed will later be sold.

(Garcí’a Mayo, 2008, p. 552)

Some NPs are unique and specific in all contexts or in a given context, so they also become definite and get the article ‘the’. The examples taken from Thomas (1989, p. 337) are given in (17) and (18) respectively. In (17), the NPs *Moon* and *Earth* are unique in all the contexts because they are one of a kind, thus they get shown with the article ‘the’. The NP in (18) is unique in the context among the students, so the NP ‘midterm exam’ is known by that community and it gets the article ‘the’.

17. **The** Moon is the satellite of **the** Earth.

18. Among classmates: **The** midterm exam is approaching.

(Thomas, 1989, p. 337)

### 2.3.3. [- Hearer Knowledge, + Specific Referent]

If an NP is mentioned for the first time in the given context and the entity that the NP refers to is identifiable by the speaker but not by the listener, it can be presented with *a/ an* or  $\emptyset$ . In this [-HK, + SR] context, the NPs take place in Quadrant III in Figure 2.2 and they are called *referential indefinites* (Hawkins, 2001, p. 235). In this environment, the NPs used with the article *a* are singular countable nouns and the NPs used with the article  $\emptyset$  are plural nouns. The examples of NPs taken from Hawkins (2001, p. 235) in this environment are given in (19). The NP contact used with the articles *a* and  $\emptyset$  is specific, so it refers to a particular contact, however, it is the first mention of this NP, so it is first introduced to the listener in the conversation.

19.

Speaker A: How will you get a ticket for the England-France match?

Speaker B: I have **a** contact/I have  $\emptyset$  contacts.

(Hawkins, 2001, p. 235)

#### 2.3.4. [-Hearer Knowledge, -Specific Referent]

If an NP cannot be identified by the listener from any mentions, and it refers to a non-specific entity in the context, the NP is presented with *a* and  $\emptyset$ . In this [-HK, -SR] context, the NPs take place in Quadrant IV in Figure 2.2. and are called *non-referentials* (Hawkins, 2001, p. 234). The examples in this context are given in (20). The NP *baby* used with the articles *a* and  $\emptyset$  is the first mention in the context, so it is not known by the listener, but by the speaker. Also, they do not refer to a particular baby, so it is non-specific.

20.

Speaker A: What does she want to do when she's married?

Speaker B: Have **a** baby / Have  $\emptyset$  babies.

(Hawkins, 2001, p. 234)

#### 2.4. Article Structure in Turkish

According to the Article Choice Parameter put forth by Ionin (2003), languages which have articles distinguish them based on two settings that are definiteness and specificity. In this sense, English is a [+ART] language and while the setting of definiteness is overtly marked by the article 'the', it cannot be assumed for the setting of specificity; in other words, specificity does not have a clearly marked article in the English language, so the context helps determine the marking of specificity. As for Turkish, Underhill (1986, p.38) states that Turkish does not have an over and systematic way to mark the statuses of such noun phrases. It means that the Turkish language does not have an overt article system with individual articles which are used to determine the definiteness and specificity features of the NPs. The definiteness and referentiality features of the NPs in Turkish are interpreted with the help of both extralinguistic and the linguistic contexts where those NPs are used (Tura, 1986).

### 2.4.1. Definiteness vs Indefiniteness in Turkish

According to Chafe (1974), *definiteness* is defined when a referent is marked by a definite article, it means the speaker believes that the hearer/listener already knows that referent, so the hearer can identify who the speaker addresses. In this case, the noun phrase that the speaker uses will be given the status of definite. In Turkish, *definiteness* is not marked overtly; or morphologically, due to the absence of a definite article (Kornfilt, 1997 p. 273; Underhill, 1987 p.38). Göksel & Kerslake (2005) mentioned three conditions in which the NPs are interpreted as definite which are 1) when an indefinite determiner is absent, 2) when there is accusative case marking with the noun phrase used as a direct object and 3) there is a noun phrase including a definite determiner. The examples below in (21) taken from Göksel & Kerslake (2005, p. 323-324) show the NPs marked as definite in Turkish.

21.

- a. {Garson} {temiz tabak-lar}-ı {masa}-ya koydu.

Waiter clean plate-PL-ACC table-DAT- PAST put

‘The waiter put the clean plates down on the table.’

- b. Siz {hangi kitap}-ı daha yararlı buldunuz?

You which book-ACC- more useful- PAST find

‘Which book did you find more useful?’

(Göksel & Kerslake, 2005, p. 323-324)

As seen in the examples in (21), all three conditions are met in the NPs. In 21a, there are three NPs which are *garson*, *temiz tabaklar* and *masa*. Except for the NP *temiz tabaklar*, the NPs *garson* and *masa* were not marked by an indefinite marker, which met the first criterion. The NP *temiz tabaklar* in 21a, however, is marked with the accusative marker in Turkish ‘-ı/ i’, that is why, the NP is interpreted as a definite referent, which met the second criterion. Similarly, in 21b, the accusative marker ‘-ı/ i’ attached to the noun ‘*kitap*’ meets the second criterion. Additionally, in 21b, it is seen that the noun ‘*kitap*’ is marked with an interrogative adjective ‘*hangi*’ in Turkish, which asks for a unique referent and so is a definite determiner, and this makes the NP ‘*hangi kitap*’ definite referent and marks it with the definite article ‘*the*’, meeting the third criterion. Apart from these, Kornfilt (1997, p.273) demonstratives can be viewed as an expression of definiteness. The demonstratives, which are: **bu** ‘this/ these’, **şu**

‘that/ those’, and **o** ‘yonder, that/ those over there’ (Kornfilt, 1997, p.273), are a sub-category of definite determiners and they function as direct objects (Dağdeviren, 2010a). Other than the demonstratives, Kornfilt (1997, p.274) states that abstract nouns and proper names are also indications of definiteness, as given in the example taken from Kornfilt (1997, p.274) below in (22). In (22a), the proper name ‘Hasan’ can be used with the demonstrative ‘şu’, and the NP ‘Şu Hasan’ becomes a definite referent. Similarly, the example in (22b) shows that the abstract noun phrase ‘yaş farkı (big age difference)’ can be marked with the definite demonstrative ‘bu’.

22.

- a.      Şu      Hasan              ne      kadar              garip              bir      insan ...  
             That   Hasan              what   as much as      strange              a      person  
             "What a strange person this Hasan is ... "
- b.      Ara    -mız -da    -ki      **bu** büyük yaş fark      -ın    -a              alış -a    -ma -dı -m  
             Interv.-1.pl- Loc- RC.-this big age difference -CompM-Dat.-used-abil-neg-past-1sg  
             "I haven't been able to get used to this big age difference between us"

(Kornfilt, 1997, p.274)

It is stated by Göksel & Kerslake (2005) that some classes of NPs do not get an overt definite marker but they are interpreted as definite referents by their nature. Proper names of places, people and institutions; pronouns which are simple, demonstrative, pronominal quantifiers and interrogative pronouns, pronouns like *öbürü/ öteki* and their plurals; and phrases that include a determiner denoting *definiteness* are interpreted as definite inherently, as stated and exemplified by Göksel & Kerslake (2005 p. 323-324)

23.

- a.      **Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu’nu** bundan sorumlu tutuyorum.  
             ‘I hold **the** High Commission on Monuments responsible for this.’
- b.      Murat **seni** seviyor.  
             ‘Murat loves **you**.’

- c. **Şunları** da yıkamamız lâzım.  
‘We’ve got to wash **these**, too.’
- d. Ömer **herkesi** sinirlendirdi.  
‘Ömer got on **everyone’s** nerves.’
- e. **Kim**-ler-i görüyorsunuz?  
**who**-PL-ACC  
‘Who do you see (nowadays)?’
- f. Bir anahtar burada, **öbürünü** gördün mü?  
‘One key is here; have you seen the other(one)?’
- g. Bana {**bu** oda}-yı ver-di-ler.  
I(DAT) this room-ACC give-PF-3PL  
‘They have given me {this room}.’

(Göksel & Kerslake, 2005, p. 323-324)

In the examples, (23a) shows that the NP is a proper name of an institution; because institutions are one of a kind, they are interpreted as definite. In (23b) the simple personal pronoun ‘sen-i’ is definite because the speaker refers to the hearer only, as a unique referent. Similarly, the demonstrative pronoun ‘şunları’ in (23c) refer to a unique group of objects to be washed in that situational context and it becomes definite. (23d) includes a pronominal quantifier ‘herkes’ which includes all the people in a particular area. A unique group of people is referred to, which makes the pronoun definite. The interrogative pronoun ‘kimi’ in (23e) is also a definite in its own nature. The pronoun ‘öbürü’ in (23f) refers to a unique key in the context, so it is definite. Lastly, as stated above by Kornfilt Kornfilt (1997, p.273) and in the example (23g), the definite determiner ‘bu’ makes the noun ‘oda’ definite because there is a unique room and only that room is referred to in the context.

The Turkish language shows the feature of indefiniteness with indefinite markers such as ‘bir’ (a) for singular nouns and ‘bazı’ for plural nouns (Kornfilt, 1997, p.275). The indefinite marker ‘bir’ can also be used as the numeral item ‘bir’ which means ‘one’. However, the way they are placed in the sentence differentiates if that ‘bir’ is indefinite or

plural, as given below in the examples in (24) taken from Kornfilt (1997, p.275). In (24a) and (24b), the NP ‘*çürük elma*’ is marked by the marker ‘*bir*’. However, in (24a), ‘*bir*’ is used as a numeral item and it means ‘one’ and it precedes the whole noun phrase. In (24b), it is seen that the marker ‘*bir*’ is used as an indefinite determiner which means ‘a’ and it is placed between the head noun and the adjective.

24.

- a.      *bir çürük elma*  
          one rotten apple  
          "one rotten apple"
- b.      *çürük bir elma*  
          rotten an apple  
          "a rotten apple"

(Kornfilt, 1997, p.275)

About the indefinite and numeral markers, Göksel & Kerslake (2005 p. 323-324) suggest that a noun phrase that includes a distributive or a cardinal numeral is also considered as indefinite as long as a definite determiner is not also present in that phrase, or the noun phrase is not followed by the clitic *da*. The examples taken from Göksel & Kerslake (2005, p. 185) in (25) show the two conditions when the numerals are interpreted as definite. As seen in (25a), the noun ‘*iskemle*’ is marked with the numeral ‘*yedi*’, but it is also marked with the definite determiner ‘*bu*’, so it becomes definite. The numericized noun ‘*çocuk*’ in (25b) is followed with the clitic *da*, making the noun phrase definite.

25.

- a.      *Bu yedi (tane) iskemle*  
          ‘These seven chairs’
- b.      *(Her) iki çocuk da uyumuş.*  
          ‘Both children had gone to sleep.’

Göksel & Kerslake (2005, p. 185)

The examples in (25) show when the numeral items marking a noun become definite. These numerals make the referents indefinite if they do not follow the two conditions. Finally, when noun phrases are only marked with the plural marker -lAr and do not get any other determiner or numeral, they are considered indefinite in some contexts, but not in others. Besides, when the noun phrases occur in the sentences as direct objects without any case markers, they are unambiguously indefinite (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005 p.324). The examples taken from Göksel & Kerslake (2005, p.324) exemplify the situations of indefinite interpretations given above in (26). In (26a), the noun ‘*defter*’ is marked by the indefinite marker ‘*bir*’ which means ‘a’ and it is placed before the noun. The noun ‘*defter*’ in (26b), this time, was marked by a numeral item and with an enumerator which repeats a linguistic unit with a similar semantic meaning. In this context, the word ‘*tane*’ functions as an enumerator which repeats the meaning of the numericized noun ‘*dört defter*’ semantically. In (26c), there is no numeral item or an indefinite determiner, but only a plural suffix -lAr; because the sentence lacks indications of definiteness, the sentence has an indefinite referent. The last sentence in (26d) is similar to (26c), but it includes the word ‘*birtakım*’, which is an indefinite quantifier in the Turkish language.

26.

- a. Çekmece-de **bir** defter bul-du-k.

drawer-LOC a notebook find-PF-1PL

‘We found a notebook in the drawer.’

- b. Çekmecedde **dört (tane)** defter bulduk.

four ENUM notebook

‘We found four notebooks in the drawer.’

- c. Çekmecedde defter-**ler** bulduk.

notebook-PL

‘We found notebooks in the drawer.’

- d. Çekmecedde **birtakım** defter-ler bulduk.

some notebook-PL

‘We found some notebooks in the drawer.’

(Göksel & Kerslake, 2005 p.324)

As given in (26d) above, the noun ‘*defter*’ is marked with both the plural marker and an indefinite quantifier ‘*birtakım*’, which make the noun indefinite. The quantifier ‘*birtakım*’ only marks the plural nouns and it is a very common determiner. However, when it comes to plural nouns, they are usually marked by the indefinite determiner ‘*bazı*’ in Turkish, as given below by the example in (27) taken from Kornfilt (1997, p.275). The noun ‘*elma*’ is pluralized by the plural marker ‘*-lar/-ler*’, so ‘*bazı*’ can be used with the noun as the indefinite determiner.

27. Bazı elma -lar

Some apple -pl.

"some apples"

(Kornfilt, 1997, p.275)

#### 2.4.2. Specificity in Turkish

There are various definitions put forward about specificity in the literature. In one of the definitions, an NP is characterized as specific when the speaker has an individual shown in the NP as its referent (Hellan, 1981; Ioup, 1977, cited in Enç, 1991). Furthermore, Aygen (2007, p.3) states that “Specificity assumes the existence of a set of individuals; the set of individuals is linked in the discourse and refers to a set that was mentioned previously in the context.”

As specificity is a parameter itself, as well as if this feature occurs in the system or not differs, the way it is marked also varies across languages. Turkish, as opposed to German and English, lacks overt determiners to express specificity and definiteness (Arıbaş, 2014). However, this lack of article for specificity can be resolved through case marking. Enç (1991, p.4-5) suggests that if an NP gets an overt case marker, it becomes specific; but NPs without this morphology lack the specificity and thus become non-specific. This system also occurs in Turkish as well because the indefinite referents in the object position are always clearly specified or nonspecific. “...If the NP is marked with the accusative case morpheme -(y)i, it is necessarily considered as specific. If the NP does not have this accusative case morphology, it is then considered as nonspecific (Enç, 1991)”. The examples in (28) below are taken from

Aygen (2007, p.4). In both (28a) and (28b), both referents are indefinite; but it is seen that (28a), the referent '*bir kitap*' used as the direct object was not marked in any case. This makes the entity '*bir kitap*' a non-specific entity. The speaker does not refer to a particular referent with the utterance of this NP. Conversely, it can be understood from the example (28b) that the NP '*bir kitap*' was again used as a direct object but marked by the accusative marker '-(y)I'. The use of this accusative case marker makes the entity specific. By using this marker, the speaker clearly refers to a particular '*kitap*' (*book*) among the set of all the books.

28.

a. Ben bir kitap okudum.

I a book read-PAST-1st sg.

'I read a book.'

b. Ben bir kitab-ı okudum.

I a book-ACC read-PAST-1st sg.

'I read one of the books.'

(Aygen, 2007, p.4)

As seen in the examples above, the use of accusative case markers turns a non-specific entity into a specific one although they both share the definiteness feature. Kornfilt (1997) suggests that the distinction between specific and non-specific indefinite referents is clear in the sentences where these referents are used with accusative and genitive case markers. The examples below in (29) taken from Kornfilt (1997, p.278) exemplify the situation. In both examples, the NPs denote indefinite entities. What differs between these NPs is that the NP '*birkaç kitap*' in (29a) got the accusative marker '-(y)I', so it can be claimed that there are a few books that he/ she read, and the speaker is presuming that the hearer already knows which books the speaker read. In this sense, the entity becomes specific. On the contrary, the NP '*birkaç kitap*' in (29b) did not get the accusative marker, so the entity became non-specific and it can be understood that the speaker does not presume that the speaker read any books that Hasan recommended. There are not any certain books that the speaker referred to.

29.

- a.     Dün           Hasan -ın tavsiye et    -tiğ    -i    birkaç kitab -ı    oku- du -m.  
yesterday Hasan -Gen recommend -ObjP -3.sg a few book -ACC- read -past -1.sg  
"Yesterday I read some books that Hasan recommended."
- b.     Dün           Hasan -ın tavsiye et    -tiğ    -i    birkaç kitap    oku- du -m.  
Yesterday Hasan -Gen recommend -ObjP -3.sg a few book -read -past -1.sg  
"Yesterday I read some books that Hasan recommended"

(Kornfilt, 1997, p.278)

In the Turkish language, accusative case is not the only indication that a referent is specific or non-specific. There are other certain ways to show the distinction between specific and non-specific entities (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005). The examples below in (30) are taken from Göksel & Kerslake (2005, p.325-326). In (30a), it is seen that the direct object '*yeni gömlekler*' took the plural marker '*-lar*' and no other determiners. For this reason, the NP as confined to a specific entity. In (30b), the predicate '*almamız lazım*' was formed with future sense; because the event has not happened yet, it is impossible for the speaker to refer to a particular '*shirt*'. The predicate was changed in such a way that the shirts lost the *specificity* they had, so the NP '*yeni gömlek*' denotes a non-specific entity. In (30c) and (30d) the sentences are almost the same. However, the distinction between these two sentences is that the word '*olan*' was overtly used in the sentence in (30c) but omitted in the sentence in (30d). According to Göksel & Kerslake (2005), in relative clauses where the verb was formed in '*-miş olan*' or '*-(y)AcAk olan*', the use of '*olan*' is preferred where the constituent which was turned to relative clause is a specific noun phrase whereas its omission is preferred where that constituent is a non-specific noun phrase. The use of '*olan*', therefore, in (30c) was used where the relativized constituent '*masaya bırakılmış (olan) not*' is a specific entity. On the other hand, the word '*olan*' in the sentence (30d) was omitted, which meant that this note did not refer to any particular notes left on the table, so this note became a non-specific entity.

30.

- a.     Dün Korkut-a yeni gömlek-ler al-dı-k.  
yesterday Korkut-DAT new shirt-PL buy-PF-1PL

‘Yesterday we bought (some) new shirts for Korkut.’

- b. Korkut’a yeni gömlek almamız lazım.

‘We need to get a new shirt/(some) new shirts for Korkut.’

- c. {[Masaya bırakılmış olan] bir not}-ta kaloriferler, çöplerin toplanması,  
pencerelerin kilitlenmesi gibi konularda bilgiler vardı.

‘In {a note [that had been left on the table]} there was information about the  
central heating, rubbish collection, locking of windows, etc.’

- d. {[Masaya bırakılmış] bir not} yeterli olurdu.

‘{A note [left on the table]} would have been enough.’

(Göksel & Kerslake, 2005, p.325-326)

#### **2.4.3. Other Strategies to Establish Definiteness and Specificity in Turkish**

Turkish does not have an overt system to establish definiteness and specificity. Dede (1986) states that these features can be realized through some discourse strategies such as the word order of sentences, the use of deictic terms and possessives, modality expressions, stress, and its case system. For example, the direct objects in Turkish take the accusative case to be marked with definiteness and specificity. However, this is not the case for NPs in the subject positions. The reason is that when an NP is put in the subject position, it gets a nominative case and gets no case suffix, which makes it more difficult for those subject NPs to show their definiteness and specificity features. Discourse strategies also help in this situation.

##### **2.4.3.1. Deictic Terms and Possessives**

Deictic words of a language refer to the linguistic forms which relates the utterance to a particular speaker, place, time, or discourse context (Brewer & Harris, 1974). Dede (1986) claims that in contexts with no modality, subjects NPs can gain definiteness and referentiality with the use of deictic terms and possessives. The sentences below in (31) taken from Dede (1986, p. 150) exemplify the situation.

31.

- a.     Şu öğrenci   sen-i     bekli-yor.

that student you ACC wait PROG

'That student is waiting for you.'

- b.     Arkadaş-in     sen-i     bekli-yor.

friend 2S:POSS you ACC wait PROG

'Your friend is waiting for you.'

(Dede, 1986, p. 150)

In (31a), the noun '*öğrenci*' was used in the subject position, so it took the nominative case with no ending. In this situation, it lacks definiteness and referentiality, so it creates a generic meaning. The use of the deictic term '*şu*' bring the noun the features of definiteness and referentiality. Similarly, the noun '*arkadaş*' in (31b) used as the subject took the possessive marker '*-In*' and thus gained these features stated above.

#### 2.4.3.2. Word Order

Apart from deictic terms and possessives, word order plays a role in marking the features of definiteness and specificity where they are already marked by other devices (Dede, 1986). For example, considering the examples above in (31), even if the word order changes, the nouns in the subject positions would not lose their definiteness or specificity due to the use of deictic terms and possessives. So, the changed order of the words would not make any difference. In a situation where the NPs do not get any determining markers, it is seen that word order changes the features. The examples below in (32) taken from Tura (1973, p.102) exemplify the situation where the word order affects definiteness of the subject NPs.

32.

- a.     Çocuk yer-de yat-iyor-du.

child ground LOC lie PROG PAST

'The child was lying on the ground.'

- b. Yer-de çocuk yat-ıyor-du.  
 ground LOC child lie PROG PAST  
 'On the ground (a) child was lying.'  
 or 'On the ground children were lying/

(Tura, 1973, p.102)

In both (32a) and (32b), the noun '*çocuk*' is in the subject position and it did not get any markers in either option. In (32a), however, the noun '*çocuk*' refer to a unique child lying on the ground; besides, the speaker presumes that the listener already knows that the speaker is referring to a particular child. Therefore, the noun has a definite-referential status. On the other hand, in (32b), the use of the noun '*çocuk*' in the middle of the sentence caused ambiguity because there are two possible interpretations: The noun 'child' does not refer to a specific child; so it either refers to the incident of the children as a generic meaning or just an unknown child lying around (Dede, 1986, p.152).

#### 2.4.3.3. Stress

Stress in the words is obtained and maintained with other discourse strategies. Whether a subject NP is defined as definite or indefinite and specific or nonspecific may depend only on the stress factor in some cases as explained and exemplified below in (33) by Dede (1986, p.152).

33.

- a. Kedi miyavli-yor.  
 cat meow PROG  
 'A cat/cats is/are meowing.

(Dede, 1986, p.152)

In (33), there is neutral stress on the noun '*cat*' alone, but when it is considered as an answer to the question 'What is this noise? Where is it coming from? etc', the noun '*kedi*' gets a word stress and it gains definiteness and referentiality.

#### 2.4.3.4. Modality

The statuses of the features on the subject NPs also depend on the modal verbs indicating the meanings of obligation, future, negation, necessity, possibility, condition, probability habitual, etc. Dede (1986) claims that the use of these modal operators may cause a subject NP to lose the definite or referential status. The examples below in (34) taken from Dede (1986, p.154) show the differences between the NPs with and without modal operators.

34.

- a. Çocuk sev-il-mek iste-r.  
child love PASS INF want AOR  
'Children need to be loved.'
- b. Çocuk sevmek iste-di.  
want PAST  
'The child needed to be loved.'

(Dede, 1986, p.154)

In both (34a) and (34b), the noun '*çocuk*' was used as subject NP. In (34a), the modal verb of necessity was used in the sentence, which gave the NP an indefinite meaning because it does not refer to a unique child. Therefore, the NP '*çocuk*' lacks definiteness. In (34b), there is no use of modal operator, so the NP '*çocuk*' refers to a unique child, so it preserves the definiteness. The same situation occurs in the distinction of referentiality and non-referentiality, as given in the examples below in (35) taken by Dede (1986, p.154).

35.

- a. Bir öğrenci böyle söyle-me-meli.  
a student so say NEG must  
'A student should not say so.'
- b. Bir öğrenci böyle söyle-di.  
say PAST

'A student said so.'

(Dede, 1986, p.154)

As seen by the examples above in (35), the assignment of the referentiality to the subject NPs depends on the modal context. In (35a), with the use of the modal operator indicating negative necessity 'should not', the subject NP '*bir öğrenci*' does not refer to a particular student whereas in (35b), it refers to a particular student due to the absence of any modal operators.

## **2.5. Fluctuation Hypothesis**

Research on articles is not confined to their exploration on a theoretical basis. i.e., they are also studied in terms of the ways they are acquired and processed. Theories depend on whether the acquisition occurs in the L1 or L2. In the L2 acquisition, L2 learners go through a process called the interlanguage where they show clear evidence as to their access to parameter settings that occur in neither the first nor the second language, as stated by Finer and Broselow (1985). Ionin et. al (2004) state that in the interlanguage process, L2 learners show their preferences in the parameter settings. In other words, they choose to adhere to a particular parameter setting for a while and then sometimes adhere to another parameter for a while, as well. These linguistic attitudes indicate that L2 learners have UG access. In light of these findings, Ionin, et al. (2004) proposed a hypothesis called the Fluctuation Hypothesis which accounts for the optional behaviours of L2 learners, explained below in (6).

### **2.5.1. The definition of fluctuation hypothesis**

In the process of article acquisition, L2 learners make errors based on misuse, substituting one in the context of another, as well as omission (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008). Regarding this inappropriate use of article, Ionin et al (2004) came up with a parameter-setting hypothesis to account for the variation of the second language learners' article choices. According to the Fluctuation Hypothesis, L2 learners of English can access to the settings of the Article Choice Parameter and set these two settings correctly in their mind at the end of their article acquisition process, as stated in (a). However, until they are exposed to input sufficient enough to acquire this parameter accurately, they tend to change their article preferences on different contexts, i.e., they fluctuate between the two parameter settings, as stated in (b) (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008).

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

(Ionin et al., 2004)

In consideration of the Article Choice Parameter, the Fluctuation hypothesis proposes that L2 learners that have an [-article] L1 will fluctuate between the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings of the parameter when they learn a language with [ $\pm$ definite] or [ $\pm$ specific] features (Pilar & Hawkins, 2009). At the end of their interlanguage process, they finally choose the correct value for their L2. In the case of English, the parameter setting is [+definiteness]. L2 learners speaking an [+article] L1 that encodes the definiteness setting, on the other hand, transfer their L1 knowledge to their knowledge of the target language instead of showing fluctuation (Pilar & Hawkins, 2009). The formulated version of the ACP for the English article system is shown below in (7):

### **2.5.2 The fluctuation hypothesis for l2 English article choice:**

While learning English, learners with an [-ART] L1 encounter two different settings of the Article Choice Parameter which are definiteness and specificity. Until the end of their article acquisition process, they are exposed to a lot of input based on the articles and their use on contexts based on definiteness and/or specificity, so they can set these two settings in their mind. They still end up fluctuating between the articles a/an and definite and specific contexts (Ionin, Ko, & Wexler, 2004; Zdorenko & Paradis, 2008).

- “ a. The two Article Choice Parameter options are fully accessible to L2 learners.
- b. L2 learners fluctuate between the two settings of the Article Choice Parameter until the input leads them to set this parameter to the proper and standart value (Ionin et al., 2004).”

Studies on article acquisition usually made use of these hypotheses and check the acquisition of different settings of the ACP put forward by Ionin (2003). They investigated if the learners of English speaking an article-less first language would fluctuate between the settings. In addition, whether L2 learners of English with an [+article] L1 will transfer this knowledge into their target language or not is examined. A lot of research such as the ones carried out by Choi (2017) and Ying (2013) is carried out for these purposes and they are

based upon a theory or a hypothesis. In the next section, the statement of the problem in the current research was explored and discussed.

## **2.6. Earlier Studies Conducted on Article Acquisition**

### **2.6.1. Earlier Article Acquisition Studies Conducted on Learners with Different L1 Backgrounds**

Huebner (1983) based his Semantic Wheel on a longitudinal study he conducted regarding how an adult learner forms his knowledge of articles in his interlanguage. He worked with an adult Laotian who is acquiring English in its natural setting in the U.S.A and recorded him doing the story telling once in three weeks during 54 weeks. The results of his longitudinal study indicate that there was an overuse of the article ‘the’, but the difference in its use varied according to the NP contexts, so Huebner (1983) proposed that learners acquire the articles in a systematic way.

Parrish (1987) also conducted a longitudinal study so as to investigate how learners acquire English articles in a systematic way and how an analysis solely based on the presence or absence of morphemes in an obligatory context cannot explain the systematic variability in a learner’s interlanguage. In the study, Parrish (1987) worked with a 19-year-old Japanese female learner who had got English instruction for six years, but her instruction did not provide enough practice for listening and speaking comprehension. At the beginning, the participant was a beginner-level learner. Data were collected every ten days in 30-minute-long- sessions for four months and she was asked to tell two stories about the U.S and Japan. The results showed that her accuracy in the use of the definite article ‘the’ rose to almost 85%, and her scores in the accuracy of the indefinite article rose to 50%, but she also overgeneralized the use of the ‘null article’. In light of these results, Parrish (1987) suggested that the null and definite article ‘the’ were the first articles acquired in the initial stages of her second language acquisition, and later the indefinite article ‘a/an’ was acquired in the subsequent stages.

Similarly, Master (1987) carried out a pseudo-longitudinal study on the L1 effect of the participants in different proficiency levels. Master (1987) hypothesized that the correctness of the article use of L2 learners reflects their linguistic competence. His second hypothesis was that the way they use the English articles shows their linguistic strategies in their interlanguage process. In view of the hypotheses, Master (1987) worked with 20 EFL learners with [-ART] languages such as Japanese, Chinese and Russian and [+ART] languages such as

German and Spanish. The study was conducted on tape-recorded informal interviews with the learners for 6 years. It is shown in the study that especially the learners speaking [-ART] languages very commonly made errors regarding article omission, yet this rate decreased as the learners' proficiency improved. Besides omission, they were also found to overuse the definite article 'the' in [-SR, +HK] contexts, but there was not the same situation in the [-SR, -HK] context. Based on this result, it can be suggested that [+HK] is the determinant setting for the use of the definite article *the* (Yılmaz, 2006).

With the aim of investigating the use of articles in the first-mentioned contexts, Thomas (1989) carried out a study where the story-telling method was used with 30 adult Japanese or Chinese ESL learners with proficiency levels ranging from low-level, intermediate level to high level and they speak an [-ART] L1. In the study, Thomas (1989) found that the learners use 'the' in referential indefinite contexts i.e., the contexts where a noun appears for the first time, at higher rates than in non-referential contexts. In other words, they did not use the article *a* in [-SR, -HK] contexts and *the* in [+SR, +HK] contexts appropriately. The main reason for these errors was reported to stem from omission errors. Besides omission, overuse of *the* was observed in [+SR, -HK] contexts. However, Thomas (1989) suggests that this overuse is not much enough to be counted as 'the-flooding'.

Article uses of the learners of English may vary according to the L1 of those L2-English learners because whether L2 learners have an [+ART] L1 or not may affect how they use them. Ionin (2003) aimed to explore her predictions on the Fluctuation Hypothesis of the cases where the learners' L1 does not instantiate any settings of the Article Choice Parameter i.e., learners have an [-ART] L1. Another aim of Ionin's (2003) study was whether L2 learners can access both settings of the ACP when they do not have the opportunity to transfer from their L1. The participants in the experimental group were 30 Russian and 40 Korean learners of English whose first languages both lack an article system; those in the control group were 14 English speakers. Participants were asked to do a forced-choice elicitation task and a written production task. Under the hypotheses put forward by Ionin (2003) in the study, it was shown that article choice in L2 English is not randomly done; it reflects the learners' access to the Article Choice Parameter settings, and the findings are not related to L1 transfer. It is suggested that 2 learners of English have direct UG access to the semantic distinctions based on the article choices (Ionin, 2003).

Snape (2005) aimed to explore if Japanese learners with an [-ART] L1 and Spanish learners with an [ART] would overuse the definite article 'the' in [-definite, + specific] NP

contexts. 10 Japanese, 10 Spanish and 5 native English speakers as control group participated in the study. Both experiment groups had 5 intermediate-level and 5 advanced-level learners. In his study, Snape (2005) used a gap-filling task used in the study of Ionin et al (2004). The results of the study indicated that the definite article 'the' was overused by L1-Japanese learners in both groups whereas L1-Spanish learners of English performed better in their article use. Based on these findings, Snape (2005) suggested that the reason why Japanese learners committed these errors was that their L1 lacked an overt system for articles and Spanish learners were more successful due to their *definiteness*-based L1 which made transfer possible.

Ekiert (2007) aimed to study the marking of indefiniteness in English as L2 is acquired by Polish speakers who have an [-ART] L1. Based on this aim, a case study was conducted where an adult Polish learner of English was observed for 15 months. In this case study, the participant completed some context elicitation tasks in limited and extended versions, written production tasks and took part in interviews. Ekiert (2007) found out that the participant started to use the articles more accurately during this time. What is more, [-definite] contexts were marked with higher accuracy than [+definite] contexts because native-like accuracy was observed in [-definite] NP environments.

Similar to the research carried out by Ionin (2003), Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) aimed to test the effect of L1 transfer and the Fluctuation Hypothesis. However, participants were chosen among children and they were from different countries. That is why the study also aimed to compare the findings obtained from child participants with those from adults. 17 child learners of English with [+ART] L1 such as Spanish, Romanian, and Arabic as well as [-ART] L1s such as Mandarin, Japanese and Korean were tested every 6 months for 2 years and they were told to elicit a narrative from the picture books. Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) found that L1 influence in children's development was limited and also unrelated to their accuracy rates of the article uses. Moreover, child learners were found to converge on the target article system faster than adult learners regardless of the L1. Therefore, it is suggested by Zdorenko and Paradis (2008) that fluctuation is a development-based process that overrides transfer in child L2 acquisition of articles.

Sarko (2009) investigated the article use by L2 learners of English coming from L1 Syrian Arabic and French backgrounds, where there is an overt article system with a definiteness setting. For this purpose, Sarko (2009) worked with 57 Syrian Arabic, 18 French, and 9 L1 English speakers. The participants were asked to complete a written forced-choice

elicitation task, an oral story-retelling task for the study. The results report that both L2 groups with intermediate and advanced proficiency showed target-like article choices in [+definite] count singular contexts in the forced-choice elicitation task. Conversely, these two groups tended to choose *Ø* (*zero article*) instead of 'the' in [+definite] count plural and mass contexts. The results obtained from the forced-choice elicitation task were found surprising because both Arabic and French have an overt article necessary to be used in cognate contexts. Similar results were found in the story recall task. They used the article 'the' like L1 English speakers in [+definite] count singular contexts whereas they tended to use bare NPs in [+definite] count plural and mass contexts. However, this tendency was seen less frequently by the French learners of English. With these findings, Sarko (2009) suggested that learners with L1 Syrian Arabic and French do not fluctuate between definite and specific interpretations of the articles. The findings were found in line with the Full Transfer Full Access (FT/FA) which proposes that L1 grammar with all the parameter settings forms the first state of L2 acquisition, which means full transfer, but that L2 learners access fully to UG at all times in their L2 acquisition, which means full access (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996).

L1 transfer plays a big role in the interpretation of articles in English by learners. Besides L1 background, the interpretation of the referents marked with the features *definiteness* and *specificity* show variations as well. Ionin and Montrul (2010) aimed to examine the interpretation of plural noun phrases marked as definite. In the study, it was expected that. For the study, speakers of Korean (N=29), a [-ART] language, and of Spanish (N=24), a [+ART] language), participated in the data collection procedure. It was hypothesized that Spanish learners of English make transfers when they interpret the definite plurals from their L1 Spanish background. The participants completed an acceptability judgment task (AJT) which tests their familiarity with the English articles, a truth-value judgment task (TVJT) which tests their interpretation of plural nouns as generic vs specific and a picture-matching task on inalienable possession. As a result, Ionin and Montrul (2010) stated that the study proved the effect of L1 transfer, for example, definite plural noun phrases were permitted to have generic interpretations by Spanish speakers. Similarly, Korean speakers permitted plurals with *Ø* (*zero article*) to have specific readings due to their articleless L1 Korean background. However, it was also shown that both groups could do the target readings of bare plural and definite noun phrases as expected at the end of the study.

A lot of studies on article acquisition aim to investigate the acquisition process of articles by learners in English whose L1 lacks an article system, and their proficiency level of

English is also taken into consideration. Ying (2013) aimed to find out how Chinese learners of English acquire the article system in a process. Ying (Ying, 2013) also sought the effects of proficiency levels and task types on the learners' acquisition process. For these purposes, 114 university students took part in the study and their levels ranged from primary to advanced levels. Two tasks were used which were a test comprising 2 parts and an interview process. There were 25 fill-in-the-blank items in the first part and 25 error correction items in the second part. In the test process, 96 students' answers were found valid out of 114 students. 10 students from each proficiency group participated in the interview process. Ying (2013) found that errors on emission and misuse are more possible, but they also gradually decrease as the proficiency level increases. The learners stated that they tended to translate the sentences into Chinese in the interview process. In conclusion, it is suggested that Chinese learners perform poorly on articles, but their level and the tasks affect their proficiency.

The ACP settings have been studied in a variety of studies in terms of their acquisition. Some of them focus on their acquisition as a result of explicit instruction. Lopez (2015) investigated whether explicit instruction of specificity has a positive influence on lower intermediate classroom-based learners for their rate of accuracy with the articles of English to figure out and overcome systematic errors. Lopez (2015) also aimed to explore if and how complex and linguistically informed instruction on specificity can be communicated to low-level learners of English. 50 adult Chinese learners of English took part in the study and they registered in a 10-week long pre-sessional English during data collection. Participants were divided into a standard group where the definiteness setting was taught, an experimental group where the specificity setting was taught and a control group where no instruction was involved. It is indicated that specificity instruction did not prove beneficial for lower-intermediate Chinese learners because they did not perform higher than the other two groups. Along with the low proficiency, the short intervention period contributed to their difficulty. It is suggested that Chinese learners' performance worsens under time pressure and explicit instruction about the settings does not help Chinese learners of English for the use of articles.

In order to examine the use of articles by learners with [-ART] L1 backgrounds, Crosthwaite (2016) conducted a study where he analysed written production of L1 Chinese, Korean and Thai speakers. For the analysis, 575 written essays were obtained from an international corpus. As a result, Crosthwaite (2016) found out that the use of articles and their accuracy varies depending on the L1 background, and the choice of writing prompts affects certain article forms' accuracy. It was also seen that development in article usage as the

proficiency in L2 increases, however, it is not consistent across all cases. All L2 groups were observed to tend to overuse articles in generic contexts. Notably, Mandarin L2 English learners perform better in article accuracy compared to Korean and Thai learners, potentially due to Mandarin's grammatical markers that help in English article acquisition.

In addition to Chinese, Korean is a [-ART] language and Korean learners of English are also investigated in terms of their article acquisition. Choi (2017) studied the use of English articles by Korean learners of English studying in an American college. In the study, it was aimed to investigate if there is an order of accuracy in the use of articles. Also, whether direct exposition of English affects the learners' acquisition of articles was investigated. 35 adult Korean learners of English who went to America for education participated in the study. Based on the length of their stay, they were divided into three groups. Choi (2017) used an oral translation task where the learners translated the traditional Korean folk tale "Gold Axe and Silver Axe" into English. The results indicate that Korean learners of English follow the accuracy pattern of "the/a-an/ zero article" in descending order. It was also shown in the study that there was no correlation between the accuracy of the article use and the length of stay. The errors were stated to stem from definite and indefinite contexts. The results suggest that Korean learners of English have the least difficulty with the definiteness setting even when they make misuse errors of articles "the" and "a/an".

As stated above, all learners of English with a different L1 background go through a process regardless of whether their L1 has an article system or not. Languages like English, German, and Spanish use articles overtly and they mark the features differently from each other. Similarly, Arabic is a [+ART] language like English. It is definiteness-based and marks this feature with the bound morpheme '-al'. However, it lacks an overt article that marks the indefiniteness in contrast with English. With these similarities and differences, Ahmed (2018) aimed to explore if learners with an L1 Arabic background transfer their knowledge from their own native language or fluctuate between the features of *definiteness* and *specificity* in the Article Choice Parameter (ACP). For this purpose, Ahmed (2018) worked with Arabic learners (N=42) of English and L1 English speakers (N=12). The participants completed two written production tasks which were a forced-choice elicitation task and a picture-description task. The results from the elicitation task show that Arabic learners of English indicate similar success rates to English speakers at the usage of the definite article '*the*' in [+definite] contexts and the indefinite article '*a*' in [-def, -spec] context, yet they were less successful at giving the indefinite article '*a*' in [-def, +spec] context. In the error analysis, the results

suggest that Arabic learners of English make more errors in misuse than omission in the [-def, +spec] context. These results mean that adult learners of English go through fluctuation between the settings of the ACP at the initial stages of their learning process with no regard to their L1 background.

Some studies such as the one by Takahashi (2020) investigate a specific setting of the Article Choice Parameter. Basing the study on Ionin's (2004) hypothesis, Takahashi (2020) aimed to examine the role of specificity on the acquisition of Japanese EFL learners whose L1 lacks an article system and came up with two hypotheses: The first hypothesis is that Japanese EFL learners may apply 'specific and non-specific distinction' first to determine the article choice in English before applying the distinction of definiteness. The second hypothesis is that the criterion of specificity may account for the correct usage of article better than the context-only criterion when a general reference is made with the article. To test these hypotheses, Takahashi (2020) collected data from 20 Japanese university students. The data collected included multiple-choice questions and a questionnaire survey. Both data were used in a previous study (Takahashi, 2016). The multiple-choice part of the data had 21 questions asking for the participants to choose the definite article *the*, the indefinite article *a/an* and the *zero article*. In the study, higher accuracy was obtained when the distinction of specificity was used in singular noun contexts. Besides, the developmental path of English article choice was shown to require the distinction of whether general or specific reference was made with the article. The results suggest it might be helpful for Japanese learners of English to learn to use the General and specific criterion successfully before the acquisition of definiteness distinction.

Another study focused on the ACP settings was carried out by Qian et al. (2021) across five different semantic contexts. The study aimed to investigate the learnability of the usages of English articles (a, the, zero) by Chinese learners of English. In the study, Qian et al. (2021) looked into what extent Chinese learners with different English proficiency levels can use articles in various semantic contexts accurately as well as the varying discourse modes. With these purposes, 107 Chinese sophomore students at the university participated in the study and they were divided into two groups at low and medium levels based on the scores they obtained on a national English exam. They were asked to complete a forced-choice elicitation task, a task geared for the use of zero articles and a fill-in-the-article task. The results obtained from the tasks indicated that both groups could use the indefinite and definite articles across five semantic contexts. Also, it is shown that NP-licencing contexts play a

bigger role than the changes of discourse modes in explaining the variances of the accurate article uses.

### **2.6.2. Earlier Article Acquisition Studies Conducted on Learners with L1 Turkish Backgrounds**

Similar to Korean, Chinese, and Japanese, Turkish also falls in the category of languages which lack an article system. This is the reason why a lot of Turkish EFL learners have difficulty using them accurately. This lack of articles in their L1 has motivated researchers to conduct their studies on English article uses by Turkish learners of English. Yılmaz (2006) investigated the L2 acquisition of the English article system by L1 Turkish EFL learners to examine the effects of L1 transfer. In the study, Yılmaz (2006) also aimed to see whether L1 Turkish learners would fluctuate in their article use because of their L1. Participants from the preparatory school (N=20) and students in their senior year (N= 20) at university took part in the research. An elicited oral production task, a written production task, and a fill-in-the-article task were used respectively. As a result, Yılmaz (2006) found out that Turkish EFL learners could make semantic distinctions across various article environments, and they could provide the definite article *the* in obligatory contexts earlier and at a higher rate than the indefinite article *a/an*. The lack of an article system in the Turkish language was not found as a problem for L2 learners. Among the errors made in the tasks, those stemming from omission appeared mostly in the oral and written production tasks. Learners also show some examples of overuse errors of *the* and *a* in contexts where the *zero article* was required. In this study, Yılmaz (2006) suggested that Turkish learners of English can acquire the English articles in spite of the lack of an article system in Turkish. Moreover, perfect mastery in the use of English articles is not easy for learners despite the long years of exposure to English.

Studies such as the one by Önen (2007) were conducted for the article use by learners across different proficiency levels. Önen (2007) aimed to explore the article use by Turkish learners of English at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. In the study, it was aimed to analyse the English articles used in five contexts in order to investigate if the use of articles varies according to NP context types as well as the task types and proficiency levels. The study was carried out with 10 learners from beginner, intermediate and advanced levels each. The participants were supposed to complete a written production task and a multiple-choice task. The results revealed that the accuracy rate in the use of articles depends on the NP contexts in the multiple-choice task, yet there was not a significant difference observed in the

written production task. Moreover, although omission and misuse errors were observed in the learners from each proficiency level, the variety and frequency of those errors largely depended on the levels, the NP contexts, and the task types.

In addition to the article uses observed across different proficiency levels, Dağdeviren (2010) aimed to investigate the article usage in different levels based on definiteness, specificity, and partitivity. For data collection, adult Turkish EFL learners at a university preparatory school (N=60) participated in the research and they were divided into ‘high-proficiency’ and ‘low-proficiency’ based on their levels. A fill-in-the-blanks test adopted from Ionin (2003) with 40 items was used and there were 6 semantic contexts. As a result, Dağdeviren (2010a, 2010b) found that Turkish learners could make semantic distinctions. Furthermore, it was found that the learners’ overuse of the definite article ‘*the*’ in some semantic contexts was not higher than the accuracy rate. Overall, the study suggests that Turkish learners can use the English articles and semantically distinguish them although their L1 does not have an article system for them to transfer their knowledge to their L2.

The Fluctuation Hypothesis put forward by Ionin and Ionin et al. (2003; 2004) have led the way to other studies investigating article use on learners with various backgrounds, including Turkish. Atay (2010) carried out research to explore the role of certain semantic universals of the UG during the process of language acquisition and to find out if L1-Turkish learners of English fluctuate between the two semantic concepts which are *definiteness* and *specificity*. The students from a preparatory school (N=120) took part in the study at the levels of elementary (N=40), intermediate (N=40), and upper-intermediate (N=40). Each participant completed the forced-choice elicitation task. The findings indicated that intermediate-level learners displayed significant fluctuations between the concepts of definiteness and specificity in (+definite/-specific) and (-definite/+specific) contexts. The same contexts showed a higher success rate for elementary-level learners, but it was seen that they committed article omission errors in definite contexts. In a nutshell, in spite of some surprising results, students at the upper-intermediate level were proven proficient in correctly using articles in defined contexts. These results support the positive relationship between proficiency and acquisition of the article system.

The ACP setting *specificity* is also connected to genericity. An article in a [+specific] context denotes non-genericity (Bickerton, 1981). Hawkins (2015) came up with the ‘Location Theory’ where he classified the non-generic (specific) uses of the article *the* into eight categories. Liu and Gleason (2002) suggested that the eight categories in the Location

Theory can be reduced to four because the theory claims the idea that the speaker actually invites the hearer or reader to locate the referent by using provided or assumed known cultural, situational, structural or textual information when he or she uses the article '*the*'. On this basis, Dikilitaş and Altay (2011) conducted a study where they aimed to investigate the use of definite articles by Turkish EFL learners. The hypothesis was that the learners of English with an article-less L1 system make omission errors in contexts where an article was required. Besides, Dikilitaş and Altay (2011) aimed to clarify that learners can have different levels of difficulties regarding the use of the definite article *the* in certain contexts due to the L1 context. Faculty members (N= 77) participated in the study, and they were divided into groups 'Upper', 'Advanced', and 'Proficient' based on their proficiency levels. A questionnaire developed by Liu and Gleason (2002) was adopted in the study. The results indicate that Turkish learners use '*the*' in English with different success rates regarding the four categories of non-generic use. Moreover, the participants' level of proficiency in the use of articles was found to increase in a U-shaped fashion in accordance with their proficiency levels rather than a linear fashion. Also, the fact that the learners experienced a particular difficulty with the cultural use of the article 'the' can be used to address in teaching to improve learners' understanding.

Koban (2015) conducted a study on the non-generic use of the article 'the'. The purpose of the study was to analyse the non-generic use of the definite article in seven different written contexts as mentioned by Hawkins (2015) and Liu & Gleason (2002). 50 intermediate and low-advanced level learners (N=50) at a preparatory program of a university took part in the study and they were given a written production task. The results show that the learners made omission errors more than overuse errors regarding the definite article. Additionally, the participants from these two proficiency levels differed from each other to a great extent, but those differences were observed only in structural and cultural contexts and the omission rates were at a higher rate in intermediate learners' uses. It can be inferred that the lack of an article system in learners' L1 causes omission errors, which can be considered interlingual errors (Koban, 2015). It can also be suggested that the use of *the* in structural and cultural contexts significantly improves as the learners' proficiency increases.

Büyükaşık (2015) conducted a study to examine if Turkish learners of L2 English, who do not have articles in their L1, would exhibit fluctuations in expressing definiteness and specificity. The study also aimed to explore whether these fluctuation patterns would differ between tasks that explicitly elicited responses and tasks that required implicit production.

What is more, the study investigated article omission rates depending on task and context type, and the way of interaction between proficiency and target-like article use was examined. The participants (N=50) were students of the English Language Teaching Department, and they were divided into two groups based on their levels which were elementary (N=25) and intermediate (N=25). Data were collected from the participants through a written elicitation and a written narrative task which were adopted from Ionin et al. (2004). The results were not in line with the Fluctuation Hypothesis in that the participants chose articles based on the *definiteness* feature, and they showed target-like use in their own use of articles in general. Büyükaşık (2015) observed article omission in both the written elicitation and narrative tasks. Among elementary-level learners, it was seen that the definite article '*the*' was omitted more often than the indefinite article. However, this high-frequency rate was reported to decrease significantly at the intermediate level. The overall accuracy of article usage and the notable reduction in article omission among intermediate-level learners indicated a positive connection between achieving native-like article usage and proficiency level.

Some studies investigate the article use on the participants without focusing on the proficiency levels. In some studies such as the one by Yıldırım (2015), article uses may be based on one level, or similar levels or they may not even specify a proficiency level. In the study, Yıldırım (2015) aimed to study the acquisition of the definite article *the*, more specifically, its variable non-generic uses. The participants in this research included 80 Turkish ELT students at a state university, who are considered to be future English teachers. The only difference among these ELT students was that 40 of them were in their first year whereas the other 40 were in their 4<sup>th</sup> year, but they were similarly proficient users of English. In the research, a grammaticality judgment test adapted from Liu and Gleason (2002) was used. The results indicate that there were common problems by the ELT students while applying the use of non-generic version of the article *the*, especially in terms of its cultural use. However, there was not a significant difference between the students at 1<sup>st</sup> year and those at their 4<sup>th</sup> year. The results reveal that although it may be easy for the L1 speakers of English or another language with an article system, it might be challenging for L2 learners because they may ignore the potential complexity of the articles such as their cultural uses.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology procedure followed in the data collection process. The methodology encompasses the design of the study, the profiles of the participants, the setting where the study was carried out, information about the tools used to collect data from the participants, and the data analysis procedure respectively.

The aim of this study is to examine how adult Turkish EFL learners at the intermediate level comprehend, interpret and produce on a written basis. The study also examines article use by the learners on the frame of the Article Choice Parameter. The article use of the Turkish learners of English is examined and analyzed by means of a written production task, a acceptability judgment task, and a fill-in-the-blanks task. In the written production, a writing assignment of the learners at the institution was analyzed without raising their awareness about how to use articles, which helped the analysis procedure of the papers written with the learners' implicit knowledge. In the acceptability judgment task, all the items were delivered one by one for a short period, which prevented the learners from using their explicit knowledge and they did not have a chance to go back to the items again. The last task, the fill-in-the-blanks-task, aimed to examine the learners' use of articles with their explicit knowledge.

The article choice of the learners was analyzed in different ways in tasks. In the written production part, their article use was recorded based on the number of correct uses of the articles 'a/an' and 'the', and their incorrect uses and these incorrect uses were analyzed in different categories. In the other tasks, their preferences were analyzed considering the quadrant of the two parameters' which are [+definite, -specific], [+definite, + specific], [ -definite, + specific] and [-definite, -specific].

The results of the current study may provide a contribution to the literature regarding article acquisition and use by L2 learners. The research studies carried out previously gave significant insights for the current study and for the studies in the future for their examination of the learners with different L1 systems which lack an overt article system or have a different article system from that of English.

### **3.2. The Design of the Study**

The current study aimed to investigate the article use of adult Turkish EFL learners at the intermediate level in terms of comprehension and production. For these purposes, data were collected from intermediate-level university students studying at the preparatory school of a foundation university. The reason for working on intermediate-level learners was to detect their preferences for English articles and the errors they make in articles to find out the common problems of Turkish learners with English articles. Considering those errors, it was hoped to shed light on the language teachers to adjust their methodology for teaching English articles.

The study was conducted basically to explore the types of errors made by Turkish EFL learners at the middle of their learning process. Because the ACP settings, which were definiteness and specificity, were in the focus of this research, it also tested which settings the L1 Turkish learners of English have difficulty with learning. Besides, due to the tasks that aimed to explore the learners' performance in comprehension and production, whether their article use change according to the comprehension and production tasks was aimed for exploration.

The data collection method followed in this study comprised three pieces of data. For this study, quantitative approach was adopted. Dörnyei (2007, p.27) states that quantitative studies follow a 'meaning in general' strategy. Also, it is stated that the focus of quantitative research is on variables that represent these common characteristics and can be measured by scaling, counting, or giving values to categorical data (Dörnyei, 2007, p.33). As a part of this approach, a written production task that the participants were already supposed to do as a part of their scored portfolio was administered in the classroom. In this task, each paper was analyzed for correct article uses of '*a*' and '*the*', and the number of omission, misuse, and overuse errors were entered and analyzed as numerical data. Apart from that, they also took part in two additional tasks which are an acceptability judgment task and a fill-in-the-blanks task respectively.

### **3.3. Setting and Participants**

The current study was carried out by students learning English at the intermediate level. The reason why the study was carried out on intermediate-level learners was to observe the stage where they have acquired basic structures of the language and started to form their

interlanguage process where they also have challenges in the use of the articles ‘a/an’, ‘the’ and ‘Ø(zero article)’.

The tests and the writing procedure were administered at a private English-medium university in Ankara. For the study, participants were chosen among the students studying at the preparatory school where only English was being taught. An English medium university and participants from the preparatory school were chosen to provide more valid and reliable data due to the quality of the students’ exposure to the language. These students’ levels were measured and determined by the Exemption Exam, which directly tested four basic skills that are listening, reading, writing, and speaking at the beginning of the year. After the Exemption Exam, those who passed the Exemption Exam started their departments and the others were placed in the classes at the preparatory school which was divided into 4 different tracks. Similar to the Exemption Exam, the exams they had at the end of the tracks directly measured the basic four skills. The data was collected in the fourth track from the intermediate-level students. Students had 24 lessons every week in all tracks. In the 4<sup>th</sup> track, students took intermediate-level courses which were grouped as Reading-Writing-Grammar and Listening-Speaking where they were using all the materials according to their level.

Participants were supposed to sign a consent form before the main task procedures. Including the consent form, all tasks were presented on Google Forms. After the data collection procedure ended, it was seen that there was an inequality in the number of participants who did the tasks, so it was required to remove the ones who provided missing data, leaving 111 participants’ data. Because the present study focused on Turkish learners of English, 9 participants with an L1 other than Turkish were eliminated and their data were removed, which meant that 102 participants completely participated in the study. Demographic data about the students is presented in Table 3.1. and Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.1

The distribution of the participants' age

| Age   | f   | %      |
|-------|-----|--------|
| 18    | 69  | 67.65  |
| 19    | 25  | 24.51  |
| 20    | 5   | 4.90   |
| 21    | 3   | 2.94   |
| Total | 102 | 100.00 |

Table 3.1 above shows that the age of participants ranged from 18 to 21 in general. Because the participants mostly started their first year after their fourth year at high school, The most frequent age group was 18-year-old participants, with a frequency of 69 (67.65%). After the 18-year-old students, the largest group belonged to the 19-year-old group with a frequency of 25 (24.51%). Furthermore, as shown in Table 3.1, the participants at the age of 20 comprised the third most frequent group with a frequency of 5 (4.90%). The least frequent age group was 21-year-old participants, with a frequency of 3 (2.94%). The participants' average age was 18.43 ( $SD = .72$ ). Table 3.2. below shows the distribution of the participants' gender.

Table 3.2.

The distribution of the participants' gender

| Gener  | f   | %     |
|--------|-----|-------|
| Female | 69  | 67.6  |
| Male   | 33  | 32.4  |
| Total  | 102 | 100.0 |

Table 3.2. shows the distribution of the EFL learners on a gender basis. Among all 102 students who participated in the study and completed all the tasks, the largest group comprised female learners and with 69 (67,5%) participation. On the other hand, male participants took part in the study with a frequency of 33 (32.4%).

### **3.4. Data Collection Tools and Procedure**

The data collection procedure started with taking participant consent through a consent form. On the consent form (see APPENDIX 1), the instructions were given both in English and Turkish. The participation was done on a voluntary basis; that is why, the participants did not get any extra credit or a score. Besides being given on the consent form, the instructions on how to do the tasks were explained in the class with examples.

#### **3.4.1. Written Production Task**

The written task was the first task that started the whole data collection procedure. In the consent form, the participants were informed that their written task would be collected and analysed, so they would not have to write an essay just for the study. They had been given 50 minutes to write their essays. Also, because they had not written their essays just for the task, they just produced the articles without thinking about them, which enabled them to use their implicit knowledge about the articles.

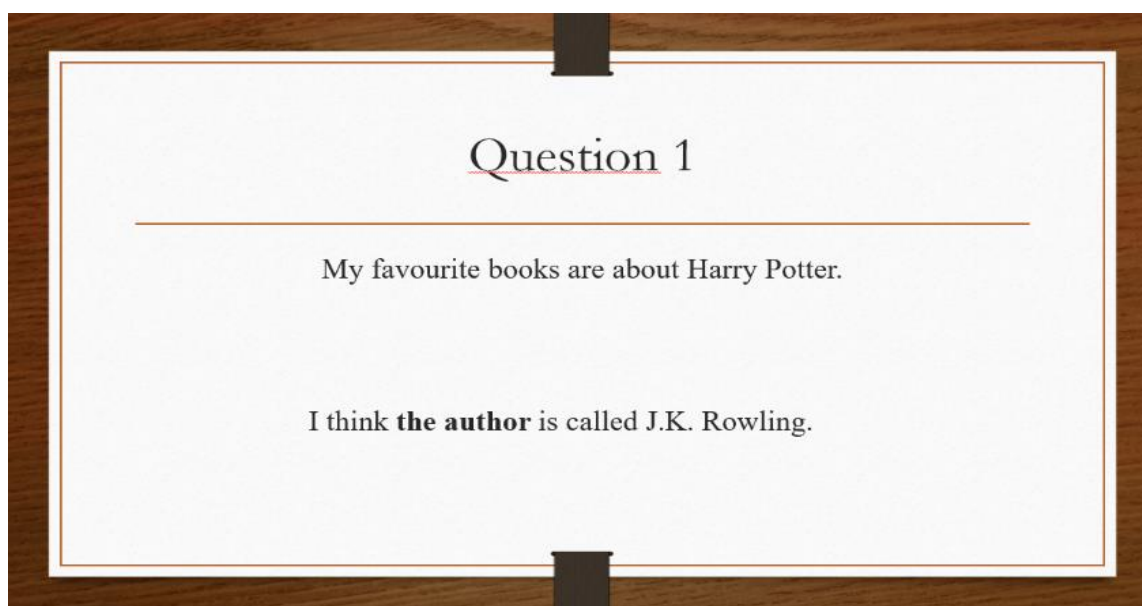
During the data collection period, participants' second written essays that they wrote in the class as a part of their scored portfolio were collected from the participants and their instructors. Because they were intermediate-level learners, they were being taught how to write academic essays and they had written a compare-contrast essay for their second assignment. The study aimed to test the learners' production of the articles in their most natural moment. Considering that they would pay extra attention to their article use, they were not asked to write their essays just for the study, so their most recent work was taken into consideration. The participants were required to write their essays with 250-300 words. During the writing procedure of their in-class essays, they were forbidden to use their cell phones and Internet, but necessary aid in vocabulary was provided by the instructors in the class. On the other hand, learners in different classes were given different topics such as "Life before the Covid-19 pandemic vs life after the Covid-19 pandemic", "Attending College vs Distance Learning", "Watching Movies Online vs. Going to Cinema". However, because the focus was to analyse their article preferences and errors, their use of grammar was taken into consideration, thus the difference in the topics was ignored.

### 3.4.2. Acceptability Judgment Task

Following the written production task, the participants did the acceptability judgment task (See APPENDIX 2) on a PowerPoint presentation. The original version of this task was used in the study by Lopez (2015) and the permission to use this test was taken from the author of this study (See APPENDIX 4). In the acceptability judgment task, there were 50 items and the item to be judged was also given to the participants through an online form on Google Forms. All the items were first presented on the PowerPoint presentation. For each item, a sentence appeared for contextual information. Below the first sentence, the second sentence which was also the test item was given in the presentation. In the second sentence, there was a bolded word that was supposed to be judged for acceptability considering the context provided by the two sentences. The second sentences were also given on the online form because they were test items, so the participants could first understand the context of the sentences on PowerPoint and clearly see the sentence to be judged. In this stage, it was aimed to investigate their comprehension of the articles by making the participants use their implicit knowledge through this task, so it was not allowed to go back to the items. Figure 3.1 below shows a sample item shown on the PowerPoint Presentation.

Figure 3.1.

A Sample Item Shown to Students on PowerPoint Presentation



As seen in Figure 3.1, the participants first saw these sentences. In the beginning, only the first sentence appeared on the screen. Then, the second sentence came up with a bolded

NP. The purpose of the first sentence is to provide a context for the participants to mark the grammatical acceptability of the bolded NP accordingly. After the second sentence appeared on the screen, the participants were asked to evaluate both sentences and to mark the bolded NP in the second sentence in terms of how acceptable it is on a scale from (-2) to (+2) on Google Forms. Figure 3.2. shows the same test item on the scale to be judged for grammaticality.

Figure 3.2.

#### A Sample Item on the Acceptability Judgment Task and the Scale of Judgment

(-2) Yes, a big e... (-1) Yes, a sma... (0) I can't decid... (+1) It is OK. (+2) No errors

I think **the aut...** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

As seen in Figure 3.2., only the second sentence was shown on the form. After they saw the whole context, they went to Google Forms and judge how grammatical the second sentence was considering the bolded NP on a scale from (-2) which meant a big error to (+2) which meant totally acceptable. The task included 32 test items and 18 filler items. The test items were divided into 4 contexts and there were both grammatical and ungrammatical versions of these contexts as given in the items from (18a) to (18h) taken from Lopez (2015).

18.

- a. **[+ definite, - specific] grammatical**  
Today the teacher has some special prizes for her students.  
She will give them to the first children who arrive in class.
- b. **[+ definite, - specific] ungrammatical**  
Laura hasn't met any people at her new university yet.  
She is looking for a head of department to ask about module choices.
- c. **[+ definite, +specific] grammatical**  
My favourite restaurant is called Casa Italiana.  
This is because the chef is my best friend.
- d. **[+ definite, +specific] ungrammatical**  
A new student is asking for directions on campus.  
She wants to find a main library so she can start studying.

- e.     **[- definite, +specific] grammatical**  
Two ladies are sitting in a restaurant.  
They are waiting for a friend but she is late.
- f.     **[- definite, +specific] ungrammatical**  
Tonight we're going to our favourite bar.  
The bar has the new cocktail which I want to try.
- g.     **[- definite, -specific] grammatical**  
Two children are talking about when they grow up.  
Bill wants to be very rich and drive a fast car
- h.     **[- definite, -specific] ungrammatical**  
There are 10 computers available in the library and Emma is looking for one.  
She is trying to find the computer that is available.

(Lopez, 2015)

### 3.4.3. Forced-Choice Elicitation Task

After the acceptability judgment task was completed, as the last stage, the forced-choice elicitation task (See APPENDIX 3) was given to the participants. The original version of this task was used in the study by Ionin (2008) and the permission to use the data set was taken from the author of the study (See APPENDIX 5). In this task, it was aimed to explore the participants' use of articles when they implemented their explicit knowledge and to investigate the differences between the tasks requiring implicit and explicit knowledge of articles. The original version included 60 items and all the items were prepared as short answer questions embedded in 60 individual short dialogues. The participants were supposed to write the expected article as 'a/an', 'the' or '-/ Ø'. Considering that the participants already completed another task with 50 items, the items were decreased from 60 to 30 in the current study. Furthermore, the task was turned into a multiple-choice task prepared on the Google form with the purpose of a more precise data analysis procedure. Table 3.3. below shows an example of an item turned into a multiple-choice question.

Table 3.3.

A Sample Item from the Forced-Choice Elicitation Task

|                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Alex:</b> Your neighbor Robert is very nice. What does he do?          |
| <b>Charles:</b> Robert is _____ musician. He plays in our town orchestra. |
| a. a/ an                                                                  |
| b. The                                                                    |
| c. Ø                                                                      |

(Ionin, 2008)

In the task, the items were organized around 5 contexts. The filler items targeted the use of Ø (zero article) because of the use of a time expression that did not require an article and an uncountable noun. Other than that, the items were focused on the contexts which were expected to help the participant choose their option varied as [First Mentioned Definite], [+definite, +specific], [+definite, -specific], [-definite, +specific], and [-definite, -specific] environments. In the task, 2 filler items were used. The analysis section started with the [First Mentioned Definite] environment. The task included 5 items in this context. The item in (19) (Ionin, 2008) below shows an example of the [First Mentioned Definite] context which enables the article ‘the’ to be used for a referent because the same referent was already mentioned previously in the context with the use of the article ‘a/an’. In this context, the use of the article ‘the’ was aimed since the referent ‘*little girl*’ was already provided in the dialogue with the article ‘a/ an’, which made the referent unique and specific for the speaker and the hearer afterwards.

19.

Sarah Yesterday, I took my granddaughter Becky for a walk in the park.

Claudia: How did she like it?

Sarah: She had a good time. She saw one little girl and two little boys in the park.  
Claudia is a little shy. But finally, she talked to \_\_\_\_\_ little girl.

(Ionin, 2008)

After the [First Mentioned] context, the first context defined [+definite, +specific] environment given with 6 items in the task. The item in (20) below taken from Ionin (2008) exemplified this environment and required the use of *'the'* because the entity *principal* bears the uniqueness and is marked with *definiteness*. Apart from that, according to the context the speaker has information about the referent and refers to a particular principal, so the NP gets the *specificity* feature as well.

20.

Louise: Where's your mother?

Julie: She is meeting \_\_\_\_\_ principal of my brother's elementary school. He is a very nice man. He is talking to my mother about my brother's grades.

(Ionin, 2008)

The second context of the test items defined the [+definite, -specific] environment. The task included 6 items in this context. The item in (21) below from Ionin (2008) illustrates this context. The *definiteness* feature in this context enables the use of the article 'the' although it lacks the *specificity* feature. The hearer in this sentence presupposes the existence of a unique *house*. That is why, it requires the use of 'the'. However, the speaker does not refer to a particular 'house', which crosses out the [specific] feature.

21.

Ruby: It's already 4pm. Why isn't your little brother home from school?

Angela: He just called and told me that he got in trouble! He is talking to \_\_\_\_\_ principal of his school! I don't know who that is. I hope my brother comes home soon.

(Ionin, 2008)

The third context in the task defined the [-definite, + specific] environment which included 7 items where this context was used. The item in (22) is an example of the [-definite, + specific] environment taken from Ionin (2008). The dialog was expected to be completed with the article 'a/ an'. The reason for this preference is that there is not a common presupposition of a unique *green scarf* by the speaker and the hearer. The lack of uniqueness

leads to a [-definite] context. However, from the context, it is understood that the speaker intends to refer to a particular green scarf, which checks out the [+specific] environment.

22.

Clerk: Can I help you? Are you looking for something you lost?

Customer: Yes... I realize you have a lot of things here, but maybe you have what I need. You see, I am looking for \_\_\_\_\_ green scarf. My little granddaughter lost it here yesterday, and she is very upset!

(Ionin, 2008)

The fourth context identified in the task defined the [-definite, -specific] environment and there are 4 questions formed according to this environment as given in (23) from Ionin (2008). As can be seen from the environment below, the noun phrase *little boy* does not refer to a unique *warm hat*, so neither the speaker and the hearer presupposes the presence of a known *warm hat* which eliminates the *definiteness* context. Furthermore, the context given in (23) clearly states that the speaker does not refer to a particular *warm hat*, that is why, the feature *specificity* is also crossed out in this environment. For these reasons, the dialogue was expected to be completed with the article ‘a/ an’.

23.

Rose: Will you come shopping with me this week-end?

Jen: Sure. Where do you want to go?

Rose: Oh, anywhere. I am looking for \_\_\_\_\_ warm hat. It's getting rather cold outside!

(Ionin, 2008)

In short, there were 5 individual contexts according to which the test items were formed. Apart from 2 fillers, there were 6 items in [+definite, +specific], 6 items in [+definite, -specific], 7 items in [-definite, +specific], and 4 items in [-definite, -specific] environments respectively, which consisted of 30 items in total. After the test was completed, the collection procedure was finished.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

Several data analysis approaches were used in this investigation. At first, descriptive statistics were utilized, such as central tendency measures, mean and standard deviation for continuous variables, and frequencies and percentages for nominal or interval variables (Büyüköztürk, 2018; Field, 2017). Descriptive statistics describe the current state of the variables under consideration.

Two independent raters graded the students' assignments to ensure the validity and reliability of writing task scoring. Their results were examined for rater agreement using intern-class correlations, which are used to verify absolute agreement between two separate measures (Bartko, 1966; Fleiss & Cohen, 1973; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). The values greater than .700 indicate that the raters' grading is consistent.

The acceptability judgment task and forced-choice elicitation test were initially subjected to item analysis to verify its validity and reliability. During the item analysis, the difficulty and discrimination indices of each test item were obtained. The difficulty index assesses the exam's complexity based on the percentage of successfully answered questions by students. It is estimated to be .50 for an accomplishment test (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The discrimination index evaluates an item's ability to distinguish strong performers from low achievers. Higher discrimination is expected, with high achievers answering to questions more accurately than poor (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The internal consistency reliability coefficient, KR-21, can be used when all items are not of the same difficulty level (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991).

Repeated-measure ANOVA was used to answer the study questions. It is a parametric analysis, and the current study's variables were all tested for normal distribution. The Skewness and Kurtosis values for each variable ranged between 2, indicating that the normal distribution can be accepted (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). If there are more than two repeat measures in a repeated-measure ANOVA, the sphericity assumption must be tested using Mauchly's test (Field, 2017). The assumption was violated when this test was significant. There were two possibilities in this scenario, which were mostly revising the analysis results depending on the degrees of freedom. Greenhouse-Geisser or Huynh-Feldt values were used in these selections. To select the best alternative, the sphericity estimate was determined, and if it is less than .75, the Greenhouse-Geisser value should be used; if it is greater than .75, the

Huynh-Feldt value should be used. This assumption was expressly validated for the current study's analysis, and the approach described above was used. When there was a significant difference, the effect size measures partial 2 and Cohen's f were used to investigate it (Cohen, 2013; Field, 2017). The effect size was utilized to assess the practical importance of the outcome. In some circumstances, a meaningful outcome was possible; nevertheless, the size was very small. Researchers can exert control on effect size. The thresholds for partial 2 effects were .01 small, .06 medium, and .14 big. Cohen's f; thresholds were .10 for small, .25 for medium, and .40 for large effects. The effect sizes of the significant outcomes were also examined.

Finally, if there was a significant difference, pairwise comparisons of repeated measures were used to determine the major explanation for the discrepancy (Field, 2017). With this technique, it would be feasible to grasp how each measure differed from another, so enriching the interpretation.

### 3.5.1. Written Production Task

After the collection of the written tasks, each paper was analysed individually, and the article uses were counted. The correct uses of the articles 'a/an', and 'the', and the errors made about 'a/an', and 'the' were divided into omission, misuse, and overuse. Figure 3.3. below shows the analysis procedure of a sample written paper in terms of the article choice according to the categories.

Figure 3.3.

Analysis Procedure of the Written Essays for Article Use and Errors

| Participant Nu | 'a/ an'Correct Use | 'the'Correct use | 'a/ an'Omission Errors | 'a/ an'Misuse Errors | 'the' Omission Errors | 'the' Misuse Errors | A/ an' Overu | The' Overuse |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Participant 1  | 2                  | 6                | 1                      | 0                    | 4                     | 0                   | 0            | 5            |
| Participant 2  | 3                  | 6                | 0                      | 0                    | 5                     | 0                   | 0            | 6            |
| Participant 3  | 2                  | 7                | 0                      | 0                    | 2                     | 0                   | 0            | 0            |
| Participant 4  | 0                  | 2                | 5                      | 0                    | 2                     | 0                   | 0            | 0            |
| Participant 5  | 6                  | 2                | 1                      | 0                    | 4                     | 0                   | 1            | 0            |
| Participant 6  | 3                  | 7                | 5                      | 0                    | 1                     | 0                   | 0            | 0            |
| Participant 7  | 3                  | 14               | 0                      | 0                    | 0                     | 0                   | 0            | 1            |
| Participant 8  | 1                  | 6                | 2                      | 0                    | 0                     | 0                   | 0            | 1            |

As seen in Figure 3.3 above, all the findings included numerical data, for this reason, the analysis step of this task was organized according to the quantitative approach. The questions regarding the article preferences of the intermediate-level learners and the reason

for their errors were analysed and aimed to be answered in the analysis section. The frequency of the errors was also compared.

### 3.5.1.1. Writing task internal consistency reliability

Students completed a writing assignment, and their writings were scored independently by two graders. The inter-class correlation coefficient was used to measure the consistency of those raters for correct use and different types of errors (Bartko, 1966; Fleiss & Cohen, 1973; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). Table 3.5 displays the results. According to the findings in Table 3.4, the raters' agreement was satisfactory, and their grading was consistent.

Table 3.4.

The inter-class correlations of correct use of the articles, the errors made with the articles, and the total number of errors

| Grading components of writing task       | ICC  |
|------------------------------------------|------|
| Correct Use of the Article “a/an”        | .991 |
| Correct Use of the Article “the”         | .975 |
| Omission Errors about the Article “a/an” | .972 |
| Misuse Errors about the Article “a/an”   | .837 |
| Omission Errors about the Article “the”  | .945 |
| Misuse Errors about the Article “the”    | .847 |
| “A/an” Overuse                           | .962 |
| “The” Overuse                            | .936 |

### 3.5.2. Acceptability Judgment Task

The Acceptability Judgment Task was the first task that was actively applied to the participants. There were 50 items asked to the participants and each item had 2 sentences. The first sentences were used to set a context for the second sentences with a bolded word. The first and second sentences were provided on a PowerPoint presentation to measure implicit knowledge (Lopez, 2015). Participants were expected to evaluate the grammatical acceptability of those bolded items in the second sentence of each item on a scale from (-2) to

(+2). In the analysis procedure of this task, the contexts used in this task were marked according to their categories as given in the Table 3.5. and the filler items were found.

Table 3.5

Item Types with Defined Contexts, the Target Article and the Number of Questions

| Contexts                | Grammaticality /<br>Ungrammaticality | Target Article | Number of Questions |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| [+definite, +specific]  | Grammatical                          | the            | 4                   |
|                         | Ungrammatical                        |                | 4                   |
| [+definite, - specific] | Grammatical                          | the            | 4                   |
|                         | Ungrammatical                        |                | 4                   |
| [-definite, +specific]  | Grammatical                          | a/ an          | 4                   |
|                         | Ungrammatical                        |                | 4                   |
| [-definite, -specific]  | Grammatical                          | a/ an          | 4                   |
|                         | Ungrammatical                        |                | 4                   |

As seen in the Table 3.5. above, there are 4 contexts with the existence or absence of *definiteness* and *specificity* features having 4 questions each, making 32 test items in total. The filler category which included 18 items were removed from the task in the analysis step. Answers obtained in these items varied from (-2) to (+2). SPSS 22.0 was used for the descriptive statistics. The same values were assigned to the categories. The values assigned to the categories were -2= ‘Yes. A big error’, -1= ‘Yes. A small error’, 0= ‘I can't decide’, 1= ‘No. I think it's ok’, and 2= ‘No, no errors’. After the data entry on the program, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated. The mean percentages in four contexts were found and compared with each other.

### 3.5.2.1. Acceptability Judgment Task Item Analysis and Internal Consistency Reliability

For the acceptability judgment task, item analysis and KR-21 reliability coefficient were performed. The difficulty and discrimination indices of each item in the test were determined during the item analysis. The difficulty index measures the exam's difficulty level as determined by the proportion of correctly answered questions by students. An

accomplishment test is projected to have average .50 difficulty (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The discrimination index is primarily concerned with an item's capacity to identify high performers from low achievers. Higher discrimination is expected, with high achievers answering to questions more accurately than poor achievers (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The internal consistency reliability coefficient, KR-21, can be used when all items are not of the same difficulty level (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The results of each item's item analysis are reported in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

The difficulty and discrimination indices of acceptability judgment task

| Items  | Difficulty Index | Discrimination Index |
|--------|------------------|----------------------|
| Item01 | 0.784            | 0.223                |
| Item02 | 0.284            | 0.428                |
| Item03 | 0.412            | 0.317                |
| Item04 | 0.794            | 0.211                |
| Item05 | 0.539            | 0.248                |
| Item06 | 0.363            | 0.414                |
| Item07 | 0.480            | 0.097                |
| Item08 | 0.294            | 0.279                |
| Item09 | 0.510            | 0.389                |
| Item10 | 0.520            | 0.282                |
| Item11 | 0.569            | 0.029                |
| Item12 | 0.775            | 0.336                |
| Item13 | 0.343            | 0.426                |
| Item14 | 0.392            | 0.378                |
| Item15 | 0.686            | 0.362                |
| Item16 | 0.824            | 0.326                |
| Item17 | 0.510            | 0.459                |
| Item18 | 0,725            | 0.213                |
| Item19 | 0,549            | 0.232                |
| Item20 | 0,490            | 0.566                |
| Item21 | 0,441            | 0.425                |
| Item22 | 0,520            | 0.266                |

|        |       |        |
|--------|-------|--------|
| Item23 | 0,294 | 0.071  |
| Item24 | 0,392 | 0.029  |
| Item25 | 0,647 | 0.303  |
| Item26 | 0,539 | 0.301  |
| Item27 | 0,627 | 0.375  |
| Item28 | 0,392 | 0.391  |
| Item29 | 0,206 | -0.004 |
| Item30 | 0,804 | 0.266  |
| Item31 | 0,451 | -0.020 |
| Item32 | 0,118 | 0.061  |
| Item33 | 0,725 | 0.150  |
| Item34 | 0,510 | 0.181  |
| Item35 | 0.647 | 0.524  |
| Item36 | 0.735 | -0.017 |
| Item37 | 0.235 | 0.323  |
| Item38 | 0.392 | 0.352  |
| Item39 | 0.353 | -0.032 |
| Item40 | 0.735 | 0.358  |
| Item41 | 0.520 | 0.317  |
| Item42 | 0.794 | 0.300  |
| Item43 | 0.392 | 0.352  |
| Item44 | 0.382 | 0.441  |
| Item45 | 0.608 | 0.184  |
| Item46 | 0.539 | 0.257  |
| Item47 | 0.265 | -0.019 |
| Item48 | 0.363 | 0.427  |
| Item49 | 0.725 | 0.238  |
| Item50 | 0.853 | 0.261  |

In Table 3.6, all items produced average difficulty and discrimination values of .52 and .34, respectively, which are suitable for an achievement exam because they represent medium level difficulty and discrimination between high achievers and low achievers (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The gray background-colored cells, on the other hand, show that the discriminating index values for each item were less than the

threshold value of .200 (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). Even though the overall discrimination of the exam was satisfactory, these items had to be extracted from the test; thus, they did not correctly distinguish high-achieving students from low-achieving students. As a result, 12 items were removed from the test, leaving 38 items. The average difficulty and discrimination indices after this technique were .55 and .35, respectively. Finally, KR21 reliability was discovered for 38 items. .78 indicates satisfactory reliability. To summarize, the acceptability judgment task with 38 items exhibited adequate difficulty, discrimination, and reliability. This meant that the task included the items ranging from easy, medium and difficult items without focusing on only one difficulty level. That is why, the items discriminated the learners who have little, medium, and a lot of knowledge about the use of articles successfully.

### 3.5.3. Forced-Choice Elicitation Task

Fill-in-the-blanks task was the last task applied to the participants. There were 30 items presented in the multiple-choice form and the participants were expected to complete a short dialogue by choosing the correct article from the options. There were 2 filler items and 28 test items, the 2 test items were removed in the analysis procedure. The NP contexts were defined and coded as in the Table 3.7. below.

Table 3.7.

Contexts, Target Articles and the Number of Questions

| Contexts                | Target Article | Number of Questions |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| [+definite, +specific]  | The            | 6                   |
| [+definite, - specific] | The            | 6                   |
| [-definite, +specific]  | A / an         | 7                   |
| [-definite, - specific] | A / an         | 4                   |
| First Mention Definite  | The            | 5                   |

The answers to the test were given as ‘a/an’, ‘the’, or ‘Ø’ which meant ‘zero article’, but numerical values were assigned to these answers. The values assigned were 1= ‘a/ an’, 2= ‘the’, and 3= ‘Ø’ (zero article). The mean scores and standard deviations were measured. The mean percentages of the article choices in each context were found. The NP where the

participants had the most problems with was found thanks to the mean scores. Necessary analyses were done based on the problematic NP contexts for EFL learners.

### 3.5.3.1. Forced-choice Elicitation Task Item Analysis and Internal Consistency Reliability

For forced-choice elicitation test, item analysis and the KR-21 reliability coefficient were also carried out. The difficulty and discrimination indices of each item in the test were determined during the item analysis. The difficulty index measures the exam's difficulty level as determined by the proportion of correctly answered questions by students. An achievement test is projected to have .50 average value (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The discrimination index is primarily concerned with an item's capacity to identify high performers from low achievers. Higher discrimination is expected, with high achievers answering to questions more accurately than low achievers (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The internal consistency reliability coefficient, KR-21, can be used when all items are not of the same difficulty level (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The results of each item's item analysis are given in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8.

The difficulty and discrimination indices of forced-choice elicitation test in fill-in-the-blanks

| Items  | Difficulty Index | Discrimination Index |
|--------|------------------|----------------------|
| Item01 | 0,882            | 0,192                |
| Item02 | 0,618            | 0,526                |
| Item03 | 0,725            | 0,556                |
| Item04 | 0,676            | 0,363                |
| Item05 | 0,598            | 0,257                |
| Item06 | 0,627            | 0,296                |
| Item07 | 0,637            | 0,454                |
| Item08 | 0,657            | 0,437                |
| Item09 | 0,706            | 0,322                |
| Item10 | 0,637            | 0,383                |
| Item11 | 0,422            | 0,327                |
| Item12 | 0,627            | 0,366                |
| Item13 | 0,765            | 0,430                |
| Item14 | 0,716            | 0,395                |
| Item15 | 0,608            | 0,284                |
| Item16 | 0,598            | 0,358                |

|        |       |       |
|--------|-------|-------|
| Item17 | 0,657 | 0,377 |
| Item18 | 0,814 | 0,337 |
| Item19 | 0,706 | 0,364 |
| Item20 | 0,686 | 0,287 |
| Item21 | 0,696 | 0,440 |
| Item22 | 0,647 | 0,312 |
| Item23 | 0,637 | 0,442 |
| Item24 | 0,314 | 0,111 |
| Item25 | 0,637 | 0,379 |
| Item26 | 0,627 | 0,476 |
| Item27 | 0,686 | 0,397 |
| Item28 | 0,598 | 0,412 |
| Item29 | 0,529 | 0,377 |
| Item30 | 0,637 | 0,355 |

In Table 3.8., all items produced average difficulty and discrimination values of .65 and .37, respectively, which are suitable for an achievement exam because they indicate medium level difficulty and discrimination between high achievers and low achievers (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). The gray background-colored cells, on the other hand, show that the discriminating index values for each item were less than the threshold value of .200 (Clauser et al., 2017; Lehmann & Mehrens, 1991). Even though the overall discrimination of the exam was satisfactory, these items had to be extracted from the test; thus, they did not correctly distinguish high-achieving students from low-achieving students. As a result, two items were removed from the test, leaving 28 items. The average difficulty and discrimination indices after this method were .65 and .36, respectively. Finally, KR21 reliability was discovered for 38 items. .76, showing adequate reliability. To summarize, the forced-choice elicitation test in fill-in-the-blanks with 28 questions had enough difficulty, discrimination, and reliability.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### 4.1. Introduction

The present study aimed to explore the article use of Turkish learners of L2-English at the intermediate level in terms of their comprehension and production. To test how learners perceive and produce the English articles, 3 pieces of tasks were used in the study. The first is a written production task which was done by collecting the last written assignments of the learners. In the task, the article use of learners was analyzed in the categories of their correct uses and errors of omission, misuse, and overuse. The second task was a 50-item-Acceptability Judgment Task which was done on a PPT where the participants were expected to mark the acceptability of the bolded words in each item on a scale from (-2) to (+2). The last task was a 30-item Forced-Choice Elicitation task where the participants were expected to complete the short dialogues by choosing the correct article ‘a/an’, ‘the’ or ‘Ø’. The tasks except for the written task included test items and fillers; the test items included the semantic contexts of [+definite, +specific], [+definite, -specific], [- definite, +specific], and [-definite, -specific]. Additionally, the Fill-in-the-Blanks task included the [First Mention Definite] context, as well. The participants of this study were intermediate-level students at the preparatory school of a private university. Reliability and validity measurements, the mean scores of the participants in all the tasks, and the distribution of their article choices and errors in different test groups were analyzed and compared for this chapter.

#### 4.2. Results of the Written Task

The tables and figures in this part indicate the means of article usage of the Turkish learners of English in their written production task. More specifically, the mean scores of their correct use along with their errors related to omission, misuse, and overuse of articles were reported, compared, and interpreted.

##### **4.2.1. Is there any significant difference between the percentage of the numbers of the article “a/an” and “the” correct use?**

A repeated-measure ANOVA analysis was performed to compare the percentage score of the numbers of the articles “a/an” and “the” correct use in the writing task. The analysis revealed that there is a significant difference between the correct uses of “a/an” vs. “the”,  $F(1, 101) = 30.241$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .230$  indicating 23.0% of explained total variance.

The effect size of this significance was Cohen's  $f = .53$ , and it represents large effect (Cohen, 2013). The correct use of "the" scores ( $\bar{X} = 32.95$ ,  $SD = 23.78$ ) was higher than the correct use of "a/an" score ( $\bar{X} = 17.48$ ,  $SD = 15.95$ ). This result pointed out students were able to use "the" more correctly than "a/an" article.

#### 4.2.2. Is there any significant difference between the percentage of the number of different types of the errors (omission, misuse, and overuse) made while using the article "a/an" and "the"?

A repeated-measure ANOVA analysis was performed to compare the scores out of 100 of the numbers of the different types of the errors (omission, misuse, and overuse) made while using the article "a/an" and "the" in a writing task. The Mauchly's test of sphericity yielded a significant result, Mauchly  $W = .338$ ,  $\chi^2(14) = 107.376$ ,  $p < .001$  so the assumption was violated. For that reason, Greenhouse-Geisser corrected values were presented ( $\epsilon = .709$ ) as suggested by Field (2017). The analysis revealed that there is a significant difference between the different types of errors,  $F(3.546, 358.194) = 28.007$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .217$  indicating 21.7% of explained total variance. The effect size of this significance was Cohen's  $f = .51$ , and it represents large effect (Cohen, 2013). The descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.

The descriptive statistics of the different types of errors

| Error Types                                      | $\bar{X}$ | SD    |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Omission Errors about the Article "a/an" Percent | 25.04     | 21.90 |
| Misuse Errors about the Article "a/an" Percent   | 3.59      | 12.98 |
| Omission Errors about the Article "the" Percent  | 23.02     | 18.88 |
| Misuse Errors about the Article "the" Percent    | 5.56      | 15.79 |
| "A/an" Overuse Percent                           | 3.63      | 13.41 |
| "The" Overuse Percent                            | 16.67     | 25.81 |

Note.  $N = 102$

The highest mean number of made errors type was omission errors about the article "a/an" percent ( $\bar{X} = 25.04$ ,  $SD = 21.90$ ); on the other than, the lowest mean number of made error types were misuse errors about the article "a/an" percent ( $\bar{X} = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 12.98$ ) and

“a/an” overuse percent ( $\bar{X} = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 13.41$ ). Table 4.2. presents the pairwise comparisons of the error types.

Table 4.2.

Pairwise comparison of error types

| Errors                                              | 1      | 2       | 3      | 4      | 5       | 6 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---|
| 1. Omission Errors about the Article “a/an” Percent | -      |         |        |        |         |   |
| 2. Misuse Errors about the Article “a/an” Percent   | 21,45* | -       |        |        |         |   |
| 3. Omission Errors about the Article “the” Percent  | 2,02   | -19,43* | -      |        |         |   |
| 4. Misuse Errors about the Article “the” Percent    | 19,49* | -1,96   | 17,47* | -      |         |   |
| 5. “A/an” Overuse Percent                           | 21,42* | -,033   | 19,40* | 1,93   | -       |   |
| 6. “The” Overuse Percent                            | 8,38   | -13,07* | 6,36*  | -11,11 | -13,04* | - |

Omission errors about the article “a/an”, omission errors about the article “the”, and “the” overuse percent were significantly higher than misuse errors about the article “a/an”, misuse errors about the article “the”, and “a/an” overuse ( $p < .05$ ). Students were making mistakes related to omissions of the articles very often. The second most frequent error type they made was “the” overuse; however, the similar case was not true for “a/an” overuse. Misuse errors for both articles were very low.

#### **4.2.3. Is there any significant difference between the percentage of the total numbers of the article “a/an” and “the” correct use and the percentage of the total number of the errors made while using the article “a/an” and “the”?**

A repeated-measure ANOVA analysis was performed to compare the correct use and errors made, and there was no significant difference found,  $F(1, 101) = .505$ ,  $p = .479$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .005$ . This result indicated that students used articles correctly while they were making also errors.

### **4.3. Results of the Acceptability Judgment Task**

#### **4.3.1. Are there any significant differences between the following contexts in terms of acceptability judgment tasks scores?**

- Context 1: [ +definite, +specific]
  - ✓ grammatical
  - ✓ ungrammatical
- Context 2: [ +definite, -specific]

- ✓ grammatical
- ✓ ungrammatical
- Context 3: [ -definite, +specific]
  - ✓ grammatical,
  - ✓ ungrammatical
- Context 4: [ -definite, -specific]
  - ✓ grammatical
  - ✓ ungrammatical

A repeated-measure ANOVA analysis was performed to compare the contexts divided as grammatical and ungrammatical. The Mauchly's test of sphericity yielded a significant result, Mauchly  $W = .472$ ,  $\chi^2(27) = 73.976$ ,  $p < .001$  so the assumption was violated. For that reason, Huynh-Feldt corrected values were presented ( $\epsilon = .866$ ) as suggested by Field (2017). The result was significant,  $F(6.059, 611.911) = 41.365$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .291$  indicating 29.1% of explained total variance. The effect size of this significance was Cohen's  $f = .63$ , and it represents large effect (Cohen, 2013). The descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

The descriptive statistics of the contexts

|                                    | Context          | $\bar{X}$ | SD    |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------|
| Context 1: [ +definite, +specific] | 1. grammatical   | 74.51     | 32.81 |
|                                    | 2. ungrammatical | 38.97     | 28.49 |
| Context 2: [ +definite, -specific] | 3. grammatical   | 69.61     | 25.03 |
|                                    | 4. ungrammatical | 42.16     | 32.81 |
| Context 3: [ -definite, +specific] | 5. grammatical   | 53.59     | 31.17 |
|                                    | 6. ungrammatical | 38.97     | 31.18 |
| Context 4: [ -definite, -specific] | 7. grammatical   | 68.87     | 28.24 |
|                                    | 8. ungrammatical | 42.89     | 29.93 |

Note.  $N = 102$

The results illustrated in both Table 4.3 and Table 4.4. indicated that students' scores from the grammatical contexts in acceptability judgment task were significantly higher than ungrammatical ones. In grammatical contexts, context 3 was significantly lower than the rest

of the contexts. In ungrammatical contexts, there was no significant differences and average scores were ranged from 38 to 42.

Table 4.4.

Pairwise comparison of contexts

| Contexts                              |                  | 1          | 2       | 3          | 4       | 5       | 6       | 7      | 8 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------|---------|------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---|
| Context 1:<br>[+definite,+specific]   | 1. grammatical   | -          |         |            |         |         |         |        |   |
|                                       | 2. ungrammatical | 35,54<br>* | -       |            |         |         |         |        |   |
| Context 2:<br>[ +definite, -specific] | 3. grammatical   | 4,90       | -30,64* | -          |         |         |         |        |   |
|                                       | 4. ungrammatical | 32,35<br>* | -3,19   | 27,45<br>* | -       |         |         |        |   |
| Context 3: [ -definite,<br>+specific] | 5. grammatical   | 20,92<br>* | -14,62* | 16,01<br>* | -11,44  | -       |         |        |   |
|                                       | 6. ungrammatical | 35,54<br>* | 0,00    | 30,64<br>* | 3,19    | 14,62*  | -       |        |   |
| Context 4: [ -definite,<br>-specific] | 7. grammatical   | 5,64       | -29,90* | 0,74       | -26,72* | -15,28* | -29,90* | -      |   |
|                                       | 8. ungrammatical | 31,62<br>* | -3,92   | 26,72<br>* | -0,74   | 10,70   | -3,92   | 25,98* | - |

The analysis revealed that students were more successful for their judgment related grammatical contexts compared to ungrammatical. Moreover, in [-definite, +specific] context, they were lower scores than the other contexts. Ungrammatical contexts were overall lower than grammatical context, and they were not different from each other.

#### 4.4. Results of the Forced-Choice Elicitation Task

##### 4.4.1. Are there any significant differences between the following contexts in terms of forced-choice elicitation test scores?

- First Mention Definite
- Context 1: [ +definite, +specific]
- Context 2: [ +definite, -specific]
- Context 3: [ -definite, +specific]
- Context 4: [ -definite, -specific]

A repeated-measure ANOVA analysis was performed to compare the correct use and errors made. The Mauchly's test of sphericity yielded a significant result, Mauchly  $W = .799$ ,  $\chi^2 (9) = 22.283$ ,  $p < .05$  so the assumption was violated. For that reason, Huynh-Feldt corrected values were presented ( $\epsilon = .940$ ) as suggested by Field (2017). and there was a significant difference found,  $F (3.760, 379.715) = 2.956$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .028$  indicating

that 2.8% of the total variance was explained. The effect size of this significance was Cohen's  $f = .13$ , and it represents small effect (Cohen, 2013). The result was significant; however, the effect size was very low. This means that the difference did not have any practicality in the real-life settings. The descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

The descriptive statistics of the forced-choice task contexts

| Contexts                           | $\bar{X}$ | SD    |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| First Mention Definite             | 63.48     | 29.99 |
| Context 1: [ +definite, +specific] | 62.25     | 25.14 |
| Context 2: [ +definite, -specific] | 65.20     | 27.86 |
| Context 3: [ -definite, +specific] | 64.22     | 25.84 |
| Context 4: [ -definite, -specific] | 72.06     | 26.40 |

Note. N = 102

The underlying reason for the significance among the contexts were the significant mean differences of Context 4: [ -definite, -specific] with Context 1: [ +definite, +specific] and Context 3: [ -definite, +specific],  $p < .05$ . This finding suggested that in [ -definite, -specific], students were able to locate the accurate articles compare to [ +definite, +specific] and [ -definite, +specific] contexts.

#### 4.5. Comparison of Correct Use of Articles, Acceptability Judgment Task, and Forced-Choice Elicitation Tasks Scores

##### 4.5.1. Are there any significant differences between correct use of articles, acceptability judgment task, and forced-choice elicitation task scores?

A repeated-measure ANOVA analysis was performed to compare the correct use and errors made. The Mauchly's test of sphericity yielded a significant result, Mauchly  $W = .863$ ,  $\chi^2 (2) = 14.770$ ,  $p < .01$  so the assumption was violated. For that reason, Huynh-Feldt corrected values were presented ( $\epsilon = .894$ ) as suggested by Field (2017), and there was a significant difference found,  $F (1.787, 180.513) = 99.087$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .495$  indicating that 49.5% of the total variance was explained. The effect size of this significance

was Cohen's  $f = .97$ , and it represents large effect (Cohen, 2013). The descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6.

The descriptive statistics of the forced-choice task contexts

| Scores                         | $\bar{X}$ | SD    |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Correct use of articles        | 32.53     | 18.59 |
| Acceptability judgment task    | 52.63     | 17.20 |
| Forced-choice elicitation task | 65.08     | 18.11 |
| Note. N = 102                  |           |       |

Students were significantly more successful in terms of article uses for the forced-choice elicitation task in fill-in-the-blanks form ( $\bar{X} = 65.08$ ,  $SD = 18.11$ ) compared to correct use of articles in writing task ( $\bar{X} = 32.53$ ,  $SD = 17.20$ ) and acceptability judgment task ( $\bar{X} = 52.53$ ,  $SD = 18.59$ ). All task scores were significantly different from each other ( $p < .05$ ). Students demonstrated the best article use performance in fill-in-the-blanks task, however, their performance was decreased in terms of correct use of the articles in writing tasks.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides the interpretations of the results given in the present study along with the discussion of these results. The findings are discussed in terms of their relation to the research questions, those found in the previous studies which were conducted on learners speaking other languages and Turkish as L1. It was stated in the previous chapters that the current study aimed to explore the article use of adult intermediate-level Turkish EFL learners in the way they comprehend and produce the articles. It was also aimed to investigate the way the ACP settings were observed among Turkish EFL learners. In the light of these aims, three questions were put on target. The first question was asked to shed light on the article errors that Turkish EFL learners commit. Secondly, the ACP setting with which Turkish EFL learners have difficulty was questioned. The study also asked whether the article use of Turkish EFL learners changed according to comprehension and production tasks. Based on these aims and questions, three tasks- a written production task, an acceptability judgment task, and a forced choice elicitation task - were applied and analyzed. In the written production task, learners' uses regarding articles were counted for the correct use of articles and article errors which included omission, misuse, and overuse. The acceptability judgment task included 50 items to investigate the use of articles in [+definite, +specific], [+definite, -specific], [-definite, +specific], and [-definite, -specific] contexts each of which included 8 items with 4 grammatical and 4 ungrammatical items. The forced-choice elicitation task included 30 items and investigated the same contexts with the First Mention Definite context. The results were analyzed in terms of their accuracy rates in each task, and the contexts were compared to each other. The error rates were also compared in the analysis process. The conclusions were interpreted and drawn considering all these findings and analyses.

#### **5.2. Research Question 1: What type of errors do adult Turkish EFL learners commit?**

##### **5.2.1. Written Production Task**

The present study aimed to explore the errors commonly made by L1-Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level and account for the frequency of these errors. The rates of total success and errors yielded insightful outcomes. The results state that Turkish learners at the intermediate level make errors as much as they use them correctly. Although they have

reached the intermediate level, article use is seen to pose a difficulty to the Turkish learners, which might stem from their [-ART] L1. Given the fact that they do not think of what they know about the articles, the findings related to their production suggest that Turkish learners of English still have difficulty in using the articles correctly in their interlanguage process.

The analyses conducted on the correct uses of ‘the’ and ‘a/ an’ indicated that learners could discriminate the definiteness setting with their article preferences. In other words, they performed better at [+definite] contexts than [-definite] contexts. As stated by Ionin (2003), English is a [±definite] language which overtly discriminates noun phrases based on this setting. Some previous studies conducted on learners’ article use exhibited similar results to the current study. To exemplify, Büyükaşık (2015) found that Turkish learners chose their articles in accordance with the *definiteness* setting. In a similar manner, the Japanese learner with an article-less L1 who took part in the study of Parrish (1987) showed a higher accuracy rate on [+definite] NP types than [-definite] contexts. As for the present study, the outcomes show that definite contexts are easier to acquire than indefinite contexts for language learners coming from a [-ART] L1 background. A possible reason behind this situation might be the fact that the definite article ‘the’ is used in a wider range than ‘a/an’.

Master (1987) stated that learners commit omission, misuse and overuse errors regardless of their L1 structure. Omission errors occur when the necessary article is not supplied in an obligatory context (Parrish, 1987). The sentences in (24) show examples of omission errors of the articles *a/an* and *the* respectively found on a participant’s written production task. In (24a), it is seen that the learner made an omission error by neglecting to use the article ‘*a/an*’ for the referent ‘*more special area*’. In (24b), the omission error stems from the lack of the definite article ‘*the*’ for the noun ‘*movie*’.

24.

- a. Watching a movie online provides more special area.
- b. You can easily watch a movie. If you want to stop movie, you can do it at home, but not at the cinema.

Findings obtained from the present study suggest that the participants mostly made their errors in the category of omission. The higher rates of omission errors in [+definite] and [-definite] contexts mean that Turkish learners of English tend to omit articles in their production. This finding is in line with Thomas’ (1989) study in that learners’ errors were

found to mostly stem from omission. Apart from Thomas (1989), Yılmaz (2006) found a similar result in her study where it was reported that the sources of errors were based on omission in *definiteness* setting and their overuse errors in Ø (zero article) contexts. That there were common points such as the L1 of the participants and the error type between Yılmaz's (2006) and the current study could be an indication of Turkish as L1 due to its article-less structure. However, Yılmaz (2006) also stated that there was not a persistent L1 effect in the article use, for they also committed overuse errors and this variable article use rate was lower in the advanced group, so it was found that this changing use of articles is not a permanent problem. Because the current study included only intermediate-level learners, there was not a chance to compare the results with learners at another level.

Especially among the omission errors, the results showed that learners were more successful at [+definite] than [-definite] contexts due to the higher rate of 'a/an' omission than that of 'the'. However, taking the overuse errors observed in 'the', another reason of this difference between the omission errors of 'a/an' and 'the' might be that the learners use the definite article 'the' in a more flexible manner because of its wider range of use compared to 'a/an' as much as it could be an advantage for Turkish EFL learners. These findings contradict the results of Büyükaşık (2015). Büyükaşık (2015) found out that elementary level learners tend to omit the definite article 'the' to a much greater extent than the indefinite article 'a/an' but this high rate also decreases significantly among intermediate learners, yet the rate of omission errors of 'a/an' in [-definite] contexts remain higher than that of 'the' in [+definite] contexts.

Apart from the omission errors, findings suggest that the learners also committed misuse errors. It was stated that misuse errors stem from substituting an article in the context of another article (Goto-Butler, 2002; Huebner, 1985; Master, 1987; Parrish, 1987; Thomas, 1989). The sentences in (25) show examples of errors in misuse of 'a/an' and 'the' respectively found on a participant's written production task. In (25a), the error was made on misuse because the definite article '*the*' necessary for the 'Covid-19 pandemic' context was substituted with the indefinite article '*a/an*'. Conversely, as seen in (25b), the indefinite article '*a/an*' was necessary in the context of 'real experiment', but it was substituted with the definite article 'the', causing a misuse error.

25.

- a. With **a** Covid-19 pandemic, everybody was locked down and spent time watching movies online.
- b. If you want **the** real experiment about a movie, you can go to cinema.

The lower rate of misuse errors in comparison with omission and overuse suggest that L1-Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level can usually make semantic distinctions of the articles ‘a/an’ and ‘the’ in their production and avoid using ‘the’ in [-definite] contexts and ‘a/an’ in [+definite] ones. As a whole, the higher rate of misuse, lower rates of omission and higher rate of overuse errors observed in the definite article ‘the’ is an indication that the learners perform better at the [+definite] contexts. A possible explanation of this situation might be that the wider scope of use for the definite article ‘the’ compared to the indefinite article ‘a/an’ lead to more frequent use of ‘the’ by the learners, which may have eventually caused them to use it in [-definite] contexts. The findings of the present study contradict some previous studies. Ying (2013) found that omission and misuse errors are more possible than overuse. Similarly, Ahmed (2018) showed that learners tend to substitute articles rather than they omit or overuse them. As a result, Ahmed (2018) suggested that learners go through a fluctuation stage rather than transfer. However, the present study showed that learners are more likely to omit articles than they replace them

Overuse errors were the second most common errors made by Turkish learners of English. Overuse was named as ‘commission error’ by Hakuta (1976) and defined as the use an article in a non-obligatory context. It is also named as ‘the-flooding’ by Huebner (1983) and Master (1997). The sentences in (26) show overuse errors found in a participant’s written task. In (26a), because this rope does not refer to a specific rope, i.e., it encompasses all the ropes in general, an article was not obligatory, but the use of ‘a/an’ as the indefinite article caused an overuse error. Similarly, the learner is seen to have overused the definite article ‘the’ on a general context where there was no need for a specific reference.

26.

- a. During the pandemic, people started to do sports activities like skipping **a** rope at home.
- b. It is both enjoyable and convenient to watch **the** movies online.

In the current study, the results of overuse errors demonstrate that learners also tend to overuse articles in unnecessary contexts after their tendency to omit them. When observed more specifically, the significantly higher rate of ‘the’ overuse may be an indication of ‘the-flooding’, which contradicts the results of Thomas (1989). Thomas (1989) indicated that Japanese and Chinese learners made overuse errors of ‘the’ in [-definite, +specific] in addition to their omission errors. However, these errors were reported to be not much enough to be counted as ‘the-flooding’. These findings might be a result of the fact that learners know the indefinite article ‘a/an’ can be used only with countable singular nouns regardless of *definiteness* and *specificity* settings, yet the definite article ‘the’ is not restricted to number, its larger scope of use may be confusing for learners and they may use it in the contexts where they are not sure whether to use it or not. The finding that the rate of correct use of ‘the’ was considerably higher than overuse errors is in line with what Huebner (1983) discovered. According to Huebner (1983), overuse errors of ‘the’ were detected in the story-telling sessions of an adult Laotian whose L1 also lacks an article system. Master (1987) also found that learners with an [-ART] L1 commonly overused the definite article ‘the’ in [+definite, -specific] contexts, but it was not the case for [-definite, -specific] contexts.

### 5.2.2. Acceptability Judgment Task

In the present study, it was aimed to investigate how the L1-Turkish learners of L2-English comprehend the articles and how they would judge the grammatical acceptability of the article use with the use of the acceptability judgment task, so the main aim was to explore their implicit knowledge in terms of their comprehension. The items in the task were divided into 4 contexts with grammatical and ungrammatical versions. Context 1 defined (+definite, -specific) use of the articles and Context 2 included (+definite, +specific) article use while Context 3 showed (-definite, +specific) and Context 4 defined (-definite, -specific) use of the articles.

The varying accuracy rates in each NP context in the task revealed that Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level comprehend the articles in different degrees and these degrees depend on whether these referred NPs denote *definiteness* and *specificity* settings. This result is consistent with what Önen (2007) found in that the rates of accuracy and errors depended on NP contexts, task types and proficiency levels. The present study included only L1-Turkish intermediate-level learners of English, so the effect of levels on the article use could not be observed. The effect of the NP contexts on learners’ article use is in line with Önen’s (2007) findings. Among these accuracy rates, the highest rates are observed among

grammatical items of the contexts. In each context, the ungrammatical items posed confusion for the participants, leading them to make errors. These significant differences in learners' scores between grammatical and ungrammatical versions suggest that L1-Turkish learners of L2-English have obtained a better grasp of the correct article use, which means that intermediate-level learners can distinguish the semantic differences between the articles and the NP contexts which require a particular article, as found by Dağdeviren (2010) and Ionin (2003). However, this considerable decrease in the scores in ungrammatical versions of the NP contexts represents the challenges faced by the learners, because it is seen that L1-Turkish learners still have difficulty placing the correct article according to the context.

In the first context, the highest success rate in article use was observed. Context 1 defined the article use for [+definite, -specific] environments. Each item in this context required the use of the definite article '*the*' due to the uniqueness they denote. The item in (18b) above taken from Lopez (2015) shows the ungrammatical test sentence where the learners answered with the lowest accuracy rate, hence they had most difficulty with it. As seen in (18b), the NP *head of department* was marked by the indefinite article 'a/an' instead of being marked by the definite article 'the'.

Ko et al. (2008) state that specificity deals with the speaker's intent to refer to a particular entity and knowledge about this entity. When the whole sentential discourse in (18b) is observed, it is understood that the NP *head of department* lacks the specificity feature because the sentence entails that there is not a person chosen as the head of department yet, so there is no particular reference to a particular departmental head. On the other hand, the NP checks out the definiteness setting due to its uniqueness. Schwarz (2013) explained that definite descriptions are used when the referred entities have a unique property and are related to only some contexts. Considering that there can be only one head in a department, it becomes definite and the NP is marked with the article 'the'. That is why, the choice of the indefinite article 'a/an' with this NP makes an inaccurate sentence. In the current study, the significantly high difference between the accuracy rates of grammatical and ungrammatical versions in [+definite, -specific] context reveal that they still have difficulty comprehending the uniqueness of the NP context and relating it with definiteness. The findings of this study yielded similar results with some previous studies. Atay (2010) found that learners at the intermediate level also chose indefinite articles in [+definite, -specific] contexts in a considerable degree like in the current study, which means they make misuse errors by replacing 'the' with 'a/an' when they encounter this context. An underlying reason might be

that the [-specific] feature may have confused learners into using the indefinite article ‘a/an’ instead of using the definiteness setting. As a result, they went through a fluctuation process where they changed their article choices based on these settings, which might stem from their [-ART] L1, as suggested by Ahmed (2018) with the findings that Arabic learners also showed lower success rate in [+definite, -specific] and [-definite, +specific] contexts which was also suggested as an indication of the fluctuation stage. As proposed by Ionin (2003), learners with an [-ART] L1 background show tendency to fluctuations between the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings as a result of the lack of an overt article system to transfer to their L2 knowledge. Therefore, the fact that learners with L1-Turkish background were observed to change their article preferences based on these two settings and they have not achieved a full mastery in the L2 can be explained by the effect of the fluctuation stage they go through their L2 acquisition process.

Context 2 had the second highest success rate and it included the NP environment where the entities are marked with both *definiteness* and *specificity* settings. Each item in this context was expected to be marked with the *definiteness* setting because of the presence of previous mention, specification by entailment and definition, uniqueness in a given context and in all contexts. The item in (18d) above taken from Lopez (2015) shows the test sentence answered with the lowest accuracy rate among the others given in the ungrammatical version of this context. Considering that there can be only one main library in a campus and the hearer has information about it, the entity *main library* is marked with the definiteness setting. Besides, it is understood that the speaker intends to refer to a particular university, so it also checks out the specificity feature, as well. As a result, this entity was supposed to be marked with the article ‘*the*’.

The success rates obtained in the [+definite, +specific] context show that the L1-Turkish learners of English can use the article ‘the’ in the necessary contexts, which means that they can basically distinguish the definite and specific contexts although they are still challenged by ungrammatical versions. Compared to the first context, they are more accurate in using ‘the’ and the reason could be the effect of specificity. Considering it is the only difference between these contexts, it could be thought that specificity plays a helping role for Turkish learners of English in making the distinctions of meaning between the contexts at the intermediate level. Another possible reason could be that Turkish learners of English perform the best when they need to use articles for the NP contexts denoting [+definite] and [+specific] features together. The findings of this study are in line with some studies conducted

previously. Yıldırım (2015) reported that they are learners of English with an [-ART] background have difficulty in using ‘the’ for cultural use in [+definite, +specific] versions. Huebner (1983) also reported that the learners of English could provide ‘the’ in the contexts requiring the definite article. However, taking the findings in the first and second contexts to account due to its [+definite] feature, the current study partly contradicts Ahmed’s (2018) study because it was found that learners use ‘the’ in [+definite] contexts like L1 English speakers; it is not the case considering the findings of the current study because of the significant differences in grammatical and ungrammatical scores.

Context 3 had the lowest success rate among 4 NP types and it defined [-definite, +specific] environment where the referents are [-definite] but marked as [+specific]. Hawkins (2001, p. 235) states that first-mentioned NPs and the entities referred by the NPs are identified by the speaker and are marked with the *specificity* feature, but they are not identified by the listener, so they lack the *definiteness* feature and they are presented with the article ‘a/an’ or  $\emptyset$  (zero article). The item in (18f) above taken from Lopez (2015) shows the ungrammatical test sentence in which the learners had most difficulty. In (18f), neither the speaker/writer nor the listener/ reader presupposes the existence of the referent new cocktail. Even if it can be considered that the bar has a lot of cocktails, the existence of a cocktail which is new is not known by the listener and the speaker, so this referent was supposed to be marked with the indefinite marker ‘a/an’. However, according to the context, it is understood that this referent is [+specific] because the speaker refers to a particular cocktail in the bar. Hence, it is in the [-definite, +specific] NP context.

The findings of the present study showed that learners have difficulty discriminating the indefinite contexts. The results indicated that they performed worse in [-definite] context than the [+definite] contexts. Although there is not a significant difference between the grammatical and ungrammatical versions in this NP type, the success rate obtained from the ungrammatical version is still as low as or lower than those in other contexts. This situation means that they make misuse errors in [-definite] NP environments and stick to using the definite article ‘the’. The underlying reason behind this might be the effect of the *specificity* setting. The [+specific] feature of these referential indefinite NPs might have confused learners at the intermediate level into marking these NPs as [+definite], as well. These findings are opposite to what was shown in the study carried out by Ekiert (2007) in that it was found learners were more successful at marking the indefinite NPs than definite NPs. In the current study, with the NPs losing their definiteness setting, it was seen that the

performance worsened. However, this study has similar results to some previous studies. Ahmed (2018) found that Arabic learners whose L1 has an article system based on *definiteness* make more errors and show a lower rate of success in [-definite, +specific] contexts. Similarly, Choi (2017) suggested that Korean learners with an [-ART] L1 are more successful at using ‘the’ than ‘a/an’ and their errors stemmed from definite and indefinite contexts. Atay (2010) suggested that intermediate learners showed fluctuations between [+definite, - specific] and [-definite, +specific] contexts, which is a sign of misuse errors. Based on the findings in the study, it can be reported that learners at the intermediate level exhibit a tendency to commit misuse errors in [+ definite, - specific] and [-definite, + specific] contexts by going through fluctuation and the fact they their L1-Turkish does not have an overt article system leads them to go through this stage.

Compared to context 3 with the [-definite] NP environments, context 4 was observed to have a considerably higher success rate with [-definite, -specific] NPs. Hawkins (2001, p. 234) states that NPs that cannot be identified by the listener/ reader from any mentions and that do not refer to any particular entity in the context are marked by neither *definiteness* nor *specificity* settings and they are presented with the indefinite article ‘a/an’ or  $\emptyset$  (zero article). The item in (18h) above taken from Lopez (2015) shows the ungrammatical test sentence with the lowest success rate.

In (30) the existence of the entity *computer* is not presupposed by the listener/reader and the speaker/writer. Because the hearer does not know about the referent *computer*, it lacks the *definiteness* setting. What is more, the speaker/writer does not refer to a particular computer because any available computer applies to the situation, so the *specificity* feature is not marked here, either. As a result, it is included in the [-definite, -specific] NP context and can be marked with the indefinite article ‘a/an’ or  $\emptyset$  (zero article). This item was supposed to be judged as ungrammatical due to the use of ‘the’.

Considering the high success rates, the findings show that learners are more aware of the article use when both the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings are in harmony when it is in harmony with the [-specific] feature. They can discriminate the indefinite entities when they are also non-specific, so there is not a setting which may lead to confusion and misuse. The higher success rate even in the grammatical version suggest that NPs are better discriminated when both settings are marked or both are missing in the context. This means that when one of the settings is marked and the other is not, they make more misuse errors and start to perform worse. The current study is in line with some other research in terms of the findings.

Master (1987) detected overuse errors of ‘the’ in the [+HK, -SR] contexts but it was not the same situation in [-HK, -SR] context which was applied to [-definite, -specific] NP types. As a result, it was suggested that [+definite] feature is the determinant setting for the use of ‘the’, as observed in the current study. Choi (2017) suggested that even in the misuse errors, Korean learners had the least difficulty with definiteness setting. However, it contradicts the study of Thomas (1989) in that learners did not use the indefinite ‘a/an’ in [-HK, -SR] contexts and ‘the’ in [+HK, +SR]; however, it is not the case in the current study because the learners performed their best in these contexts.

### 5.2.3. Forced Choice Elicitation Task

Forced choice elicitation task including 5 NP environments aimed to test whether L1-Turkish learners of English could use the English articles correctly using their explicit knowledge because they will directly use their knowledge of articles by thinking about the article use they have learned and acquired. The NP environments included ‘First Mentioned Definite’ where the entities were supposed to be marked with ‘the’ because they were already presented previously in the context, Context 1 defining [+definite, +specific] types requiring the use of ‘the’, Context 2 defining [+definite, -specific] also requiring ‘the’, Context 3 defining [-definite, +specific] types requiring the use of ‘a/an’ and Context 4 defining [-definite, -specific] types requiring ‘a/an’ respectively. The item in (19) taken from Ionin (2008) shows the test sentence included in [First Mentioned Definite] environment with the lowest success rate.

The items like the one in (19) above defined the article ‘the’ in first mentioned contexts because it was aimed to focus on these contexts specifically and reveal if the Turkish learners’ choice of ‘the’ stems from the referent’s mention in the previous context only or are they aware of the other [+definite, +specific] types. The items like the one in (20) above, on the other hand, required ‘the’ because the referent *principal* is a unique entity in the context inasmuch as there can be only one principal in a school, so the entity is marked with the *definiteness* setting. It is also marked with specificity because the speaker referred to a particular principal according to the context. (21), however, defined [+definite, -specific] contexts in that the speaker has no information about the *principal*, so the referent loses its *specificity* feature.

The findings obtained from the forced-choice elicitation task reveal that L1-Turkish learners of English semantically distinguish the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings on similar

levels considering the basically insignificant differences between the contexts. More specifically, they performed similarly on the contexts with the definiteness setting, which suggests that they make semantic distinctions inside the [+definite] types. The results contradict the findings of Thomas (1989) since Japanese and Chinese learners with a [-ART] L1 were found not to use ‘*the*’ [+HK, +SR] appropriately which was the opposite situation in the current study. However, these results are in line with the findings of other studies. Sarko (2009) found that both Arabic and French learners with a [+definite] L1 used ‘the’ in countable singular entities with [+definite] setting like L1-English speakers. Taking the L1-Turkish language with an [-ART] system into consideration, the high rates of the use of ‘the’ in [First Mentioned], [+definite, +specific] and [+definite, -specific] and their similarity suggest that they can use distinguish the variations of [+definite] contexts. Similarly, Dağdeviren (2020) found that Turkish learners are aware of the semantic distinctions of these contexts with *definiteness*. As stated above, findings demonstrate that the [+definite] feature has become the determinant setting for Turkish EFL learners at the intermediate level, as suggested for learners with [-ART] L1 by Master (1987). This consistent performance in [+definite] NP contexts could be a result of the fact that Turkish EFL learners learn articles according to their being definite or indefinite and this distinction is clear, so it can be suggested that explicit instruction on the *definiteness* setting help EFL learners to distinguish referents marked with this feature.

Context 3 and 4 defined the [-definite] contexts. The items like the one in (22) above taken from Ionin (2008) show the test items including these contexts respectively with the lowest accuracy rate. In (22), the existence of the NP *green scarf* is not presupposed by the listener and the speaker, also its uniqueness is not stated; that is why, the entity obtains the [-definite] feature. However, because the speaker refers to a particular green scarf, it is marked as [+specific]. As a result, the referent was supposed to be presented with the indefinite article ‘*a/an*’. Like (22), the items like the one in (23) above is also marked [-definite] because neither the speaker nor the listener presupposes the existence of a unique *warm hat*, yet (23) differs from (22) in terms of the specificity because the speaker does not refer to a specific hat; any warm hat applies the situation.

The results of the present study suggest that learners of English with L1-Turkish background perform better with the [-definite] settings. More specifically, the higher rate of success in the [-definite, -specific] context reveals that they were more successful at distinguishing indefiniteness and non-specificity (Ekiert, 2007). These findings suggest that

when *definiteness* and *specificity* are in harmony in NPs, they are easier to distinguish and use for Turkish EFL learners. However, although this accuracy rate was found higher than in other contexts, it can still be suggested that learners were generally successful in definiteness and specificity settings due to the similarity of the success rates. These similar rates of accuracy also suggested that they make less errors of misuse when they use their knowledge about articles explicitly. More specifically, the findings revealed that learners made their misuse errors due to the *specificity* setting. These findings contradict the results of some previous studies. Parrish (1987) found that learners were more successful in [+definite] contexts than indefinite contexts. Also, it was revealed by Parrish (1987) that learners overgeneralized  $\emptyset$  (*zero article*). In the present study, the findings indicated that the learners mostly tended to choose ‘the’ when they made an error in [-definite] contexts, which suggested that they overgeneralized the definite article ‘*the*’. Also, the results in Thomas’s (1989) demonstrated that learners did not use the indefinite article ‘a/an’ in [-HK, -SR] contexts, which was the opposite situation in the current study. However, this study is in line with the findings of Ekiert (2007) since it was found that learners performed better at marking indefinite entities than definite entities.

### **5.3. Research Question 2: Which settings (definiteness and specificity) of the Article Choice Parameter do Turkish EFL learners have difficulty with?**

#### **5.3.1. Written Production Task**

The reason why the second question was asked in the study was to analyze the success rates observed for each context established with these settings and come up with interpretations based on the findings. For this aim, both the acceptability judgment task and forced-choice elicitation task were integrated and the items in the task were divided into contexts and analyzed accordingly. The written production task in the current study was used with the aim to investigate the types of errors committed by the L1-Turkish learners of L2-English in their production and to explore if the Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level would use articles differently with their comprehension and production skills. However, it was not integrated in the task to explore the use of articles according to the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings; as a result, the participants’ correct article uses and their errors were not analyzed under the categories of [±definite] and [±specific] settings. For this reason, the results obtained from the written production task were not analyzed in a way to answer this research question and discussed accordingly.

### 5.3.2. Acceptability Judgment Task

The current study aimed to find out the article use of L1-Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level and investigate with which setting the learners have difficulty. Analyses were conducted by calculating the accuracy rates obtained in each particular context. The contexts in the tasks were based on whether the NPs were marked with *definiteness* and *specificity* settings. Taking the accuracy rates obtained from the grammatical and ungrammatical versions of the contexts into consideration, the findings obtained from the study regarding the [+ definite] contexts revealed that the only significant difference was observed between the grammatical versions with the higher success rate in the [+definite, -specific] and [+definite, -specific] NP types. Along with the fact that there was a slightly higher rate in the ungrammatical version of [+definite, +specific] NP context suggested that the learners could usually distinguish the contexts denoting definiteness; however, they had trouble with the *specificity* setting. The fact that they changed their article preferences in these two contexts might account for the Fluctuation Hypothesis by Ionin et al (2003, 2004). Similarly, when the [-definite] contexts were observed, the presence of specificity feature caused a lower accuracy rate, which was another indication of the problem that L-1 Turkish learners of English encounter in their L2 acquisition process. The findings of the Ionin and Wexler (2002) support the results in this study, since Ionin and Wexler (2002) found that their L1-Russian and Korean learners made overuse errors of the article ‘the’ in indefinite specific contexts. This study revealed that they confused specificity with definiteness, as observed in the current study. Snape (2005) also reported that L1-Japanese learners also overused the definite article ‘the’ in the [-definite, +specific] context. L1-Spanish learners of English, on the other hand, did not show the same overuse rate, which meant suggested that they transferred their L1-Spanish knowledge into English because of the [+ART] structure similar to English. The findings in the current study might suggest that Turkish learners of English fluctuate between the two settings mostly because of the specificity setting because they do not have any L1 knowledge on articles to transfer to their L2-English knowledge. Furthermore, as there is not a particular article for *specificity* in English like *definiteness*, this feature is only understood by context and is not explicitly taught in language classrooms. That is why, Turkish EFL learners at the intermediate level may not have acquired this feature and as a result, they confuse the properties of this setting with those of definiteness.

When the Context 2 and Context 3 were compared and analyzed by keeping the specificity feature, the findings stated that the accuracy rates decreased significantly during the transition from [+definite] to [-definite] context, meaning that Turkish learners of English

performed much worse when an entity lost the definiteness setting but kept its specificity feature. Ahmed (2018) has shown that L1-Arabic learners of English with a definiteness-based L1 used the definite article ‘the’ in [+definite] contexts and also used the indefinite article ‘a/an’ in [-definite, -specific] setting with a target-like performance, however, they could not use the same performance in [-definite, +specific] context. As a result, Ahmed (2018) explored that that L1-Arabic learners went through a fluctuation phase rather than a transfer stage. The current study revealed similar results in that they committed misuse errors in [-definite, +specific] NP types. Considering that this NP type also had specificity feature, it can be considered that this feature confused the Turkish learners at the intermediate level into thinking about the article ‘the’ in [-definite] contexts. The accuracy rates noticed on the category of [-specific] NP contexts, the results demonstrated that the learners again performed worse when they transitioned from [+definite] to [-definite] context, however, this decrease in the performance was not found as significant as in [+specific] contexts. These findings reveal that although they may have problems with *definiteness*, they usually commit their errors and have troubles with the *specificity* setting. The results of the present study are in line with some research. Atay (2010) also found that Turkish learners at the intermediate level tend to show fluctuations between [-definite, +specific] and [+definite, -specific] NP contexts. The current study has similar results because the learners tended to go between two settings from time to time aside from the fact that they had challenges with the *specificity* setting. However, the findings of the study partly contradict those found by Büyükaşık (2015). Büyükaşık (2015) reported that learners chose their articles based on the *definiteness* setting and do not fluctuate between the two settings. The contradicting part is that they do not exhibit fluctuation patterns in their interlanguage, as opposed to the learners who took part on the study. The similar point is that they made their article choice based on *definiteness* because they showed higher accuracy levels in [+definite] contexts. As a result, the findings suggest that L1-Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level usually choose *definiteness*-based articles but may fluctuate between [+ definite, - specific] and [- definite, + specific] NP environments due to the *specificity* setting which is not also in their L1 and not explicitly taught in Turkish EFL classrooms.

### **5.3.3. Forced Choice Elicitation Task**

Forced-choice elicitation task was the last task given to the learners and it required them to use their explicit knowledge on articles. [First Mentioned] Context, Context 1 [+definite, +specific] and Context 2 [+definite, -specific] denoted *definiteness* setting with [+definite] NP environments whereas Context 3 [- definite, + specific] and Context 4 [-definite, -specific]

denoted [-definite] NP types. Findings observed from this task suggested that intermediate-level-learners of English with Turkish L1 background could basically distinguish the semantic differences between the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings when they think about the article structure rules that they have learned and use their explicit knowledge about the articles. In this sense, these results are in line with the findings of Dağdeviren (2010) in that it was also demonstrated that Turkish learners could distinguish the articles in semantic ways. When the contexts were taken into consideration by each setting, it was seen that the [+definite] NP contexts had similar success rates. Although not significant, the higher success rate of the context 2 may be an indication of the lack of *specificity* setting. The results also indicated that the same situation happened for [-definite] contexts. The fact that context 3 had similar success rates with the [+definite] NP types might account for the possible situation that Turkish learners of English similar perceive the *specificity* setting similar to the *definiteness*. That the Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level had problem with the *specificity* setting can be best explained by the highest success rate in the [-definite, -specific] NP type. These findings suggested that even if they actively use their knowledge about the articles, they perform better without the specificity setting. Although they may have shown fluctuation between these settings, this degree of fluctuation is not as prevalent as in the acceptability judgment task, which is possibly because the learners tend to change their article use based on specificity and definiteness less when they use their explicit knowledge. These findings are in line with some previous research. Büyükaşık (2015) found that Turkish learners of English chose *definiteness*- based articles. The same suggestion can be made considering that the learners usually had problems with the *specificity* setting and showed consistently high levels of success in [+ definite] contexts. However, the findings obtained from the current study also partly contradicts the findings of Büyükaşık (2015) because the results were not found in agreement with the Fluctuation Hypothesis by Ionin (2003). The rate of fluctuation was much lower but still it slightly affects Turkish learners or English on their article use in [+definite, -specific] and [-definite, + specific] NP contexts. Similarly, Ahmed (2018) reported that Arabic and French learners of English with a definiteness- based article system used the definite article ‘the’ in [+definite] contexts and the indefinite article ‘a/an’ in [-definite, -specific] contexts with a native-like performance, but they performed worse in [-definite, +specific] contexts. Because the learners’ L1 were [-specific], they could not use the articles according to specificity- required contexts. Hence, the results indicated that learners go through a fluctuation stage rather than a transfer. The learners taking part in the current study speak Turkish as an [-ART] L1 and they also do not get explicit instruction on the specificity,

which could be a possible reason why they have problems with this setting and exhibit fluctuation patterns with [+specific] setting. The findings of this present study partly contradict the findings of Ionin (2003). According to Ionin (2003), article choice of the learners of English isn't at random because it reflects their ACP access and learners can directly access these settings from the UG and semantically distinguish articles based on their choice even if they come from a [-ART] L1. It was claimed in the present study that L1-Turkish learners cannot access *specificity* due to its lack in their L1 and their unawareness of this setting in the middle stages of their interlanguage.

#### **5.4. Research Question 3: Does the article use of Turkish EFL learners vary in comprehension and production tasks?**

The study lastly aimed to explore the effect of tasks focusing on comprehension and production on the L1-Turkish learners' use of articles. The written production task aimed to find out their performance in article use in terms of production whereas the acceptability judgment task and the forced-choice elicitation task aimed to investigate their article choice based on their comprehension. Findings obtained from the study show that article use and comprehension by learners of L2-English depend on the task types significantly. As suggested in the study of Önen (2007), learners use articles differently according to task types. This means that they still have not achieved a target-like accuracy and acquisition based on articles. A possible reason behind this inconsistency might be their L1, since the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings are manifested only through some markers, some demonstratives or in the discourse (Underhill, 1987 p.38; Enç, 1991; Kornfilt, 1997 p. 273; Göksel & Kerslake, 2005 p.322-337). As these unstable performances in the learners' article use, the findings partly contradict what was revealed in the study of Ionin (2003). Ionin (2003) proposed that Russian and Korean learners of English who speak [-ART] L1 do not choose articles randomly; they directly access the settings from UG and make the semantic distinctions depending on their article preferences. Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level may need to get more proficient in their article use to access these settings from UG better. However, the results are partly in line with the findings of Büyükaşık (2015) in that the findings did not support the Fluctuation Hypothesis because both levels chose their articles based on the *definiteness* setting in both tasks. When the three tasks were analyzed, it was also shown that choices were mostly done on the definiteness setting and errors were lower in the definite article 'the'. Considering the significant differences in the scores between the three tasks, it can be said that the specificity factor may be a possible reason for the lower rates;

however, this conclusion cannot go beyond possibility because the article choices in the written production task were not divided into definiteness and specificity features.

In specific observation, the findings indicated that intermediate-level learners of English with L1-Turkish background perform the best in comprehension-based tasks considering the accuracy rates of the acceptability judgment task and the forced-choice elicitation tasks. Taking the forced-choice elicitation task requiring the use of explicit knowledge by learners into account, the results showed that Turkish learners succeed the most when they use their knowledge of articles actively, i.e., explicitly. When they unconsciously tried to comprehend the contexts and judge the grammaticality of the articles, the rate was seen to decrease, explaining that they still have not acquired mastery of article use. The lowest success rate in the written production task also supports the fact that article acquisition has not been achieved well enough for the learners to use them implicitly. The results are in line with the findings of Lopez (2015). Lopez (2015) revealed that Chinese learners of English performed better in the elicitation task and this rate fell when they completed the acceptability judgment task which was used as a basis in the current study and the written production task, which supports the higher level of success in explicit knowledge than implicit knowledge. Also, the findings in the study of Çimen (2013) suggested that learners of Turkish follow a variant article use pattern in the elicitation and written production tasks. In the present study, the highest rate of errors detected in the omission suggests that learners of English with L1-Turkish because of their article-less L1 structure, proving the transfer effect in the production tasks, as in the study of Ionin and Montrul (2010). Among the comprehension tasks, misuse errors were focused and fluctuation between [+definite, -specific] and [-definite, + specific] NP contexts, which meant that Turkish learners confused these two settings in comprehension tasks and change their choices when one setting is present but the other is absent. This means that fluctuation interferes with their interlanguage process.

Lastly, although the accuracy rates were significantly different among all tasks, the prevalent effect on definiteness on the Turkish learners was common because the learners performed better on the use of the definite article ‘the’ than the use of the indefinite article ‘a/an’ and made less errors in *definiteness*- based contexts even in the production task. This consistent choice of the definiteness setting can result from the overt distinction of this setting; that is, Turkish learners of English could distinguish the definite and indefinite contexts due to the explicitly marked distinction shown in the articles ‘a/an’ and ‘the’.

Furthermore, this definiteness-based choice could stem from the explicit instruction of articles focusing only on this setting.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter briefly summarized the study from the beginning to the interpretations of the results and the conclusions drawn from the findings. The current chapter also includes the implications of these results in the language teaching field and the suggestions for further research that could be carried out about the article use and acquisition.

The present study investigated the article use of Turkish learners of English in terms of their comprehension and production. It aimed to explore the most common errors, the setting with which the L1-Turkish learners of English as L2 have most difficulty and whether their use changed according to the comprehension and production tasks. In light of these aims, 3 types of tasks were used and given to 102 (69 female and 33 male) participants studying at the preparatory school of a foundation university. All the students were chosen as intermediate-level learners and their participation occurred on a voluntary basis. The first task was a written production task which the participants had done as an in-class assignment, an acceptability judgment task adopted from Lopez (2015) and a forced-choice elicitation task in multiple choice form adopted from Ionin (2008). The acceptability judgment task included 50 items and tested the grammatical acceptability of article uses in [+ definite, -specific], [+definite, + specific], [-definite, + specific] and [-definite, -specific] NP contexts with 32 test items and 18 filler items. The forced-choice elicitation task included 30 items and tested the learners' article use with their explicit knowledge according to the contexts which are [First Mention Definite], [+definite, + specific], [+ definite, -specific], [- definite, + +specific] and [-definite, -specific] with 28 test items and 2 filler items. The acceptability judgment task and the forced- choice elicitation task were administrated on Google Forms. The answers were put on analysis with the use of the program Statistical Package for Social Science 22.0 (SPSS)

#### 6.2. Summary of the Findings

The present study aimed to explore the article use by L1-Turkish learners of L2-English at the intermediate level. The article use investigated in the study included the common errors committed by Turkish learners, the most challenging setting of the ACP that they have difficulty and the differences observed in the article use in comprehension and production tasks. As a result, 3 questions were asked on behalf of these aims.

1. What type of errors do adult Turkish EFL learners commit?
2. Which settings (definiteness and specificity) of the Article Choice Parameter do Turkish EFL learners have difficulty with?
3. Does the article use of Turkish EFL learners vary in comprehension and production tasks?

For the first question, findings indicated that learners of English with L1-Turkish background mostly committed omission errors. After the omission errors, they show tendency to overuse the articles ‘a/an’ and ‘the’ and misuse errors were the least frequent errors observed in their use. They made slightly more errors in articles than they correctly produced them, which means that they can usually make the semantic distinctions between the articles, but they are still affected by their article-less L1 in their production considering the omission errors. Among these errors, it is seen that learners omit the indefinite article ‘a/an’ more than the definite article ‘the’ but their misuse and overuse errors stem from ‘the’. Learners of English with Turkish L1 are found to use this article because of its wider range of use. Besides, these dominant errors of ‘the’ can be a possible reason for their confusion about the *specificity* setting although it was not explicitly analyzed in the written production task. Their performance in the acceptability judgment task and the forced-choice elicitation task showed that intermediate-level Turkish learners tended to substitute the articles when they denoted [+definite, -specific] and [-definite, +specific] referents.

Secondly, the findings revealed that Turkish learners perform better when the articles refer to [+definite, + specific] and [-definite, -specific] NP contexts, i.e., when both settings are existent or absent in the NP environments denoted by these articles. However, they start to fluctuate between [+definite, - specific] and [-definite, + specific] contexts and the main reason lies in the [+specific] contexts when all four contexts are compared. The fact that the *specificity* feature is only given through the context whereas definiteness is explicitly shown by the articles makes learners have difficulty with the *specificity* setting.

Lastly, it is seen that Turkish learners of English perform differently in their article use depending on the comprehension and production tasks. When the tasks are based on the learners’ comprehension such as the elicitation task and the judgment task, the learners think about what they know and they use the articles more properly with less errors. As a result, make the semantic distinctions better between the NP contexts. In the production tasks that

require them to use their implicit knowledge, on the other hand, their accuracy decreases to a great extent because they have not achieved the expected mastery of the articles.

In conclusion, the findings obtained from quantitative analyses reveal that, L1- Turkish learners of English at the intermediate level can basically distinguish the articles according to their semantic context and use the articles properly. However, they still have L1 effect in their interlanguage process and transfer their [-ART] L1 with omission errors in their production. In this interlanguage process, they also show tendency to fluctuate between the *definition* and *specificity* settings in their comprehension tasks and this fluctuation mainly results from the *specificity* setting. As a result, because they are affected by different stages and their linguistic awareness changes according to comprehension and production tasks, they have variant preferences about their article use in NP contexts.

### **6.3. Pedagogical Implications of the Study**

Acquisition of articles is a problematic issue in the field of linguistics and language teaching due to its complex semantic structure for L2 learners of English (Önen, 2007). From beginner to advanced learners of English, even the language teachers have challenges using the articles properly from time to time. The results obtained from this study have some implications for language educators, learners and even publications of language teaching sources.

Articles in Turkish EFL classrooms are taught only with the definiteness setting. In light of the findings from the study, new teaching methodologies where articles are taught with the ACP settings explicitly to the language learners can be focused. Because Turkish learners lack an overt article system in their L1 and learn the articles as being only definite and indefinite, they do not have any explicit knowledge of the specificity feature, which may cause them to substitute the articles. Designing the grammar lessons and lesson plans according to teaching these ACP features starting from pre-intermediate level learners may yield fruitful results in terms of their correct article use. Another suggestion could be to integrate Turkish as L1 in the instruction stage because L1-Turkish learners are already challenged to use English articles correctly and complete English instruction may be a factor that leads article acquisition to a more difficult level. Therefore, L1 use in the EFL classroom may ease this acquisition process for Turkish learners of English.

English is a [+definite] language where the articles are divided overtly according to this setting, however, the other settings such as specificity and partitivity are understood in the

context. Inductively delivering these articles through contextualized explanations, activities and exercises such as creating real-life examples and scenarios can help language learners apply their knowledge and turn what they explicitly know of articles into implicit knowledge, which will be reflected on their usage of articles.

In the running of the current study, data were collected with production and comprehension-based tasks. Considering that these tasks can be integrated to EFL classrooms, the outputs can be collected. Carrying out error analyses based on the learners' performances can provide an opportunity for language educators to give fruitful and constructive feedback. Raising awareness about the common errors can help update the teaching strategies in the EFL classrooms.

The findings of the studies conducted on article use by EFL learners can even help publishers of language teaching books arrange their grammar teaching design to better give the topic of articles and article use. Grammar presentations, practice exercises and production activities can be updated, diversified and organized based on the results of the study so that learners can better benefit from the grammar section of articles and improve their article use.

#### **6.4. Suggestions for Further Research**

This study aimed to explore the article use of 102 intermediate-level learners through written production task, acceptability judgment task and forced-choice elicitation task and it was carried out in cross-sectional methods. Research in the future can direct the focus onto longitudinal case studies. To illustrate, data can be collected in certain time periods to observe the acquisition process of articles. Furthermore, article uses in the learners' written production could be categorized according to the *definiteness* and *specificity* settings and compared through time. The reason why it was not analyzed in the current study was that the written production was integrated to the data tools in order to analyze the types of errors which are omission, misuse and overuse; it was not designed to investigate the use of articles in terms of specific features. Another alternative could be to categorize these article uses according to the [+definite, -specific], [+definite, + specific], [-definite, + specific] and [-definite, - specific] contexts.

All the data were administrated to the participants with offline production task and online surveys. Future research on article use can be conducted through online processing methodology. Eye-tracking or self-paced reading programs could be used to investigate how

Turkish learners of English process articles. This way, more comprehensive analyses can be made about L1-Turkish learners' perception and use of articles.

Furthermore, because all the data were collected through typing and writing tasks in the present study, future studies can integrate oral tasks such as narrative tasks, retelling story tasks, interviews and picture description tasks to explore the learners' article acquisition level in terms of oral production.

Lastly, future research on articles could integrate experimental design in the methodology section. To illustrate, research could investigate the effect of explicit instruction of the ACP settings as done by Lopez (2015) with Chinese learners of English or any specific setting could be focused during a given period of time on the L1-Turkish learners of English. The experimental design of the research could also integrate production and comprehension performances of the learners to come to more thorough conclusions.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: Consent Form

This is a form prepared to get participant consent to take part in a thesis study. This study aims to investigate the article uses of Turkish EFL learners at the intermediate level in terms of their comprehension, and production in order to shed light on the way they acquire English articles (a/an, and the). In the tasks, your personal information will be kept confidential and not be shared anywhere. For this study, your pure focus and knowledge of article use will be very valuable for the correct analysis. Thanks for being a part of this study.

For these purposes, three individual tasks will be used to collect data from the learners which are stated as follows respectively:

- 1) A written production task (2<sup>nd</sup> in-class written exam will be used, you will not have to write another text)
- 2) An acceptability judgment task (50 items) (You will see a context for each item and you are supposed to judge if the article use is acceptable in the sentence given with the context on a scale from -2 to +2.)
- 3) A fill-in-the-blanks task (30 items)

Turkish:

Bu form, tez çalışmasında yer alacak katılımcıların katılım iznini sağlamak için oluşturulmuştur. Bu çalışma, orta derecedeki Türk İngilizce öğrencilerinin İngilizce tanımlıkları nasıl edindiklerine ışık tutmak amacıyla oluşturulmuştur ve bu öğrencilerin İngilizce tanımlıkları (a/an, ve the) kavrama ve üretme bazındaki kullanımlarını araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışmada, kişisel bilgileriniz gizli tutulacak ve hiçbir yerde paylaşılmayacaktır. Bu çalışma için, soruları bütün bilginizle ve dikkatinizle cevaplamanız, sonuçların analizinde büyük önem taşımaktadır. Katılımınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Bu amaçlarla, öğrencilerden sırasıyla bu veriler toplanacaktır:

- 1) Yazılı Üretim Testi (İkinci yazılı sınavınız dikkate alınacaktır, bu yüzden tekrar bir yazma testi talep edilmeyecektir.)
- 2) Kabul Edilebilirlik Testi (50 sorudan oluşmaktadır. Sizden, bir PowerPoint sunumunda verilen 50 bağlamın her birinden sonra verilen cümlede, kullanılan tanımlığın (a/an ve the) ne ölçüde uygun olduğunu -2'den +2'ye kadar değişen bir ölçekte yargılamanız beklenmektedir)

3) Boşluk Doldurma Testi (30 sorudan oluşmaktadır. Verilen cümleye/diyaloğa göre en uygun tanımlığı yazmanız beklenmektedir.)

Simge ÇAKIR

## APPENDIX 2: Acceptability Judgment Task

| Nu  | Sentence                                                                  | (-2)<br><br>Yes, a<br>big<br>error. | (-1)<br><br>Yes, a<br>small<br>error. | (0)<br><br>I can't<br>decide. | (+1)<br><br>No. I<br>think it's<br>ok. | (+2)<br><br>No, no<br>errors. |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.  | I think <b>the author</b> is called J.K. Rowling.                         |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 2.  | <b>He</b> starts at 6pm in the Owen building, room 1021.                  |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 3.  | He needs to buy <b>the winter coat</b> before it snows.                   |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 4.  | He thinks <b>she</b> is very beautiful and wants to marry her.            |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 5.  | She needs help <b>about</b> her laptop because it has a virus.            |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 6.  | <b>A squirrel</b> is too fast and cannot be caught.                       |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 7.  | She will give them to <b>the first children</b> who arrive in class.      |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 8.  | She is trying to find <b>the computer</b> that is available.              |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 9.  | I will meet you outside <b>a station</b> at 10.30am.                      |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 10. | I'll make <b>a dish</b> called 'flautas', it is filled with chicken.      |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |
| 11. | Today <b>it</b> is very cold and they are not happy about having to wait. |                                     |                                       |                               |                                        |                               |

|     |                                                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 12. | First he must find <b>a hotel</b> that is cheap enough.                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. | She doesn't know which issue is <b>a latest one</b> .                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. | She is wearing <b>the red skirt</b> with one yellow shoe and one green boot. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15. | When it ends, <b>the winner</b> will receive a gold medal.                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16. | <b>He</b> comes home every Christmas to visit his family.                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. | Her lessons are interesting and <b>he</b> teaches them lots of new things.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18. | She wants to buy <b>a pineapple</b> and some grapes.                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19. | Today, staff have found <b>a boy</b> wearing a red t-shirt.                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. | She is afraid <b>with</b> the dark and cries if the light is off.            |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21. | He must find <b>a nearest</b> post office before it closes.                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22. | Bill wants to be very rich and drive <b>a fast car</b> .                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23. | Essays must be handed <b>in</b> before 3pm and submitted online too.         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24. | You can buy them when <b>a trolley</b> passes                                |  |  |  |  |  |

|     |                                                                             |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|     | your seat.                                                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25. | This is because <b>the chef</b> is my best friend.                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26. | They are waiting for <b>a friend</b> but she is late.                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27. | <b>The headteacher's</b> name was Mr. Johnson.                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28. | He is having <b>the argument</b> with his mother.                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29. | He works for <b>a very large company</b> which makes jeans.                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30. | I don't remember the name of <b>the author</b> .                            |  |  |  |  |  |
| 31. | Mariana will marry <b>a man</b> named David but they haven't met him yet.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 32. | She wants to get over <b>the bus</b> at the next stop.                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 33. | First, I need to find out the name of <b>the teacher</b> .                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 34. | The students are all looking forward <b>to</b> it.                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 35. | He needs <b>the pen</b> and some paper as well as two books.                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 36. | <b>She</b> wants some new perfume but it is very expensive.                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 37. | She is looking for <b>a head of department</b> to ask about module choices. |  |  |  |  |  |

|     |                                                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 38. | She has <b>the appointment</b> with the dentist at 3pm.                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 39. | I was sitting <b>at</b> my desk all weekend writing it.                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 40. | She wants <b>a new handbag</b> but doesn't know if anybody will buy her one. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 41. | It is 20 minutes long and <b>he</b> hates public speaking.                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 42. | Someone told her it is next <b>to</b> the computer room.                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 43. | She wants to find <b>a main library</b> so she can start studying.           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 44. | The bar has <b>the new cocktail</b> which I want to try.                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 45. | The city has too many hills and <b>he</b> get really tired.                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 46. | When I am a member I will visit <b>a gym</b> every day.                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 47. | Students must arrive <b>at</b> time or the door will be locked.              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 48. | They want to find <b>the good location</b> for their picnic.                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 49. | I can't hear their conversation but <b>the boy</b> is wearing jeans.         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 50. | <b>He</b> would prefer a short name like Mark or                             |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |       |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|-------|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | John. |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|-------|--|--|--|--|--|

### APPENDIX 3: Forced Choice Elicitation Task by Ionin (2008)

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | <p>Alex: Your neighbor Robert is very nice. What does he do?</p> <p>Charles: Robert is _____ musician. He plays in our town orchestra.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |
| 2. | <p>At the bus stop</p> <p>Mike: Hello, this is my first time seeing you here. When did you start taking the city bus?</p> <p>Chris: I started taking the bus when I started school _____ last week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                        |
| 3. | <p>Mother: What are you reading in the newspaper?</p> <p>Daughter: I'm reading a poem about baby lions – I really like it. I would like to write a letter to _____ author of that poem – unfortunately, I have no idea who it is... The poem isn't signed!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul> |
| 4. | <p>Barbara: Did Betsy get anything at the bookstore yesterday?</p> <p>Rick: Yes – she bought a novel and a magazine. She read _____ magazine first.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                        |
| 5. | <p>In an airport, in a crowd of people</p> <p>Man: Excuse me, do you work here?</p> <p>Security guard: Yes. Can I help you?</p> <p>Man: Yes, please. I am trying to find _____ red-haired girl; I think that she flew in on Flight 239.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                    |
| 6. | <p>Carrie: Did your funny uncle Reuben visit you for Thanksgiving?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | <p>Older sister: No, he and his wife went to visit her family instead. They went to _____ capital of North Dakota – I can't remember what its name is. It's probably a very cold place!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   |
| 7.  | <p>Marcus: Can you and your friend Rick come over this week-end?</p> <p>Jim: I'll come over, but Rick isn't here. He went to _____ house of his uncle George... I have no idea where that is. But Rick was very excited about going!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                                      |
| 8.  | <p>Grandfather comes for a visit</p> <p>Grandfather: Where is my little granddaughter Beth? Is she home?</p> <p>Father: No... She is not going to be back till late. She is having dinner with _____ girl from class – her name is Angie, and Beth really likes her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                      |
| 9.  | <p>Mother comes home</p> <p>Mother: How did Peter spend the day at his grandmother's?</p> <p>Father: He had a good time. He did his homework for tomorrow. Then he went outside and played with _____ little girl – I don't know who it was. Then he came back inside; and then I came and took him home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul> |
| 10. | <p>At a bookstore</p> <p>Chris: Well, I've bought everything that I wanted. Are you ready to go?</p> <p>Mike: Almost. Can you please wait a few minutes? I want to talk to _____ owner of this bookstore – she is a very nice lady, and I always say hi to her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> </ul>                                                                            |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 11. | <p>Louise: Where's your mother?</p> <p>Julie: She is meeting _____ principal of my brother's elementary school. He is a very nice man. He is talking to my mother about my brother's grades.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |
| 12. | <p>Maryanne: What did you do yesterday?</p> <p>Richard: I visited my friend Kelly. Kelly and I went to a pet store – we like to play with animals! We saw two cats and one dog at the pet store. I took _____ dog for a walk around the block!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                   |
| 13. | <p>Jessie: I baby-sat yesterday for the first time ever.</p> <p>Lesley: How was it?</p> <p>Jessie: Fine. I baby-sat a little boy named Niles. I played a monopoly game with him. Then I did my homework, and Niles read _____ short story – I don't know what it was about. And then I put him to bed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>           |
| 14. | <p>Father comes home</p> <p>Father: Thank you for taking care of Karen. How did you spend the day?</p> <p>Baby-sitter: Well, we went to a park. Karen played in the sandbox for a while. And then she met _____ beautiful friendly dog – he was very well-behaved, and Karen played with him for almost an hour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul> |
| 15. | <p>Tamara: Hi, Genie. How is your brother George doing?</p> <p>Genie: Great! Last week-end, he went to visit his friend Ben. He stayed at _____ house of Ben's</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | <p>parents – it’s a very beautiful house near a lake!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 16. | <p>Sarah: Yesterday, I took my granddaughter Becky for a walk in the park.</p> <p>Claudia: How did she like it?</p> <p>Sarah: She had a good time. She saw one little girl and two little boys in the park. Claudia is a little shy. But finally, she talked to _____ little girl.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                |
| 17. | <p>At a toy store</p> <p>Sales clerk: May I help you?</p> <p>Client: Yes! I am very angry. I bought a toy for my child at this store, but it’s broken! I want to talk to _____ owner of this store – I don’t care who that is! I am going to complain!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                            |
| 18. | <p>Phone conversation</p> <p>Grandma: Hi, Billie! This is your grandma.</p> <p>Billy:Hi, grandma, How are you?</p> <p>Grandma: I’m fine, but I miss you and your brother Jim. I haven’t seen you for almost a year! Is Jim home?</p> <p>Billy: No, he’s still at school. He is tutoring _____ little boy – I don’t remember who it is. Jim will be home by seven.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul> |
| 19. | <p>Phone conversation</p> <p>Aunt: Hi, Jessie. This is your aunt Trudy from New York. I know it’s your birthday next week. So tell me, what would you like for your birthday?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | <p>Jessie: Um... I'd like some money, please.</p> <p>Aunt: Money?! But you are only eight years old! What do you need money for?</p> <p>Jessie: For my stamp collection. I'd like to buy _____ beautiful stamp – I just saw it at the stamp store. It's really rare, and I really want to have it!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul> |
| 20. | <p>Dominique: I heard that your sister went on vacation. Where did she go?</p> <p>Raquel: Latin America. She spent two weeks in _____ capital of Mexico: Mexico City. It's a beautiful city, and she really enjoyed her trip.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                                      |
| 21. | <p>At the end of a running race</p> <p>Laura: Are you ready to leave?</p> <p>Betsy: No, not yet. First, I need to talk to _____ winner of this race – he is my good friend, and I want to congratulate him!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                        |
| 22. | <p>Father: How did little Billy spend the evening yesterday, when I wasn't here?</p> <p>Mother: He did all his homework! And he read _____ very interesting story: it's about a small fishing village in Portugal, and the lives of the people who live there. He told me all about it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>            |
| 23. | <p>After a girls' soccer game at school</p> <p>Child: Excuse me! Can you please let me in?</p> <p>Coach: What do you need?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | <p>Child: I am a reporter for my school newspaper! I need to talk to _____ winner of this game – I don't know who she is, so can you please help me?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                      |
| 24. | <p>Phone conversation</p> <p>Mother: What did you have for dinner last night?</p> <p>Son: Well, I had just two things in my refrigerator – a pot of soup and a cheese sandwich. I didn't want to cook anything else. So I ate _____ cheese sandwich.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>      |
| 25. | <p>At an ice cream parlor</p> <p>Younger Sister: What ice cream flavor would you like?</p> <p>Older Sister: Chocolate ice cream would be nice. Younger Sister: I don't like chocolate very much. I prefer ____ vanilla.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul>                                   |
| 26. | <p>Ruby: It's already 4pm. Why isn't your little brother home from school?</p> <p>Angela: He just called and told me that he got in trouble! He is talking to _____ principal of his school! I don't know who that is. I hope my brother comes home soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a/ an</li> <li><input type="radio"/> the</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ø</li> </ul> |
| 27. | <p>Eric: I really liked that book you gave me for my birthday. It was very interesting!</p> <p>Laura: Thanks! I like it too. I would like to meet _____ author of that book some day – I saw an interview with her on TV, and I really liked her!</p>                                                                                                                                                           |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 28. | <p>Rose: Will you come shopping with me this week-end?</p> <p>Jen: Sure. Where do you want to go?</p> <p>Rose: Oh, anywhere. I am looking for _____ warm hat. It's getting rather cold outside!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |
| 29. | <p>In a "Lost and Found"</p> <p>Clerk: Can I help you? Are you looking for something you lost?</p> <p>Customer: Yes... I realize you have a lot of things here, but maybe you have what I need. You see, I am looking for _____ green scarf. My little granddaughter lost it here yesterday, and she is very upset!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul> |
| 30. | <p>Robin: How is your little sister Clara doing? Does she still like animals?</p> <p>Julie: Oh yes! In fact, yesterday, she went to an animal shelter. She saw a very cute kitten and a little puppy there. She played with them all day long. And she gave some milk to _____ kitten.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a/ an</li> <li>○ the</li> <li>○ Ø</li> </ul>                              |

## APPENDIX 4: Permission from Lopez (2015)

Crustal Data Tools



## 4. 3. 2011

29 Eylül 2022 10:31

Elaine Lopez  
Vice-Secretary

29 Eylül 2022 14:52

The dialogues for the explicit task were taken from Ionin et al., 2019, which is based on the task used in Ionin et al, 2004 so I suggest you access that from the original source. I have attached the sentences used in the judgement task and the answer sheet which you are welcome to use, citing my 2015 thesis. There are some flaws with the task so I wouldn't recommend using it in published research, but for an MA thesis it should be fine. Unfortunately, I can't find the Ppt itself anymore, but the attached document shows how it looks so you can easily produce your own (it's taken from the appendix of my PhD but in Word format so it's easier to use).

Hope that helps, and good luck with your research.  
Best wishes,  
Elaine

## APPENDIX 5: Permission from Ionin (2008)



Simge Çakır ·

### Data Tools

2 ileti

Simge Çakır ·

25 Eylül 2022 23:41

Alıcı: I

Dear Prof. Dr. Ionin,  
I am Simge ÇAKIR, a Master's student from Turkey. Currently, I am in my thesis process and going to write my thesis about articles. During literature review, I found your study 'Sources of Linguistic Knowledge in the Second Language Acquisition of English Articles' and I liked it very much. If it is okay for you, I would love to see the data tools which are the dialogues and the cloze test. The data you used can be of great help for my study. I will make sure I will send you another email that I ask for your official permission for me to use them in the study and also provide the necessary citations.  
Yours sincerely,  
Simge ÇAKIR

Ionin, Tania ·

27 Eylül 2022 04:19

Alıcı: Simge Çakır ·

Hi Simge,

Sure. I'm sending the cloze test, the elicitation test itself, a list of codes for the target categories, and a key for the fillers; when actually administering the test, make sure to remove all category codes. If you use this task in your own research, please cite the 2008 Lingua paper when presenting or publishing.

Tania Ionin

Tania Ionin

Professor of Linguistics

Acting Associate Head for Linguistics (Fall 2022)

University Scholar

## APPENDIX 6: Turnitin Report

tez 12

ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

|                   |                     |            |                  |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------|------------------|
| % <b>13</b>       | % <b>12</b>         | % <b>9</b> | %                |
| BENZERLİK ENDEKSİ | İNTERNET KAYNAKLARI | YAYINLAR   | ÖĞRENCİ ÖDEVLERİ |

BİRİNCİL KAYNAKLAR

|                  |                             |     |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1                | acikbilim.yok.gov.tr        | %2  |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 2                | etheses.whiterose.ac.uk     | %2  |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 3                | eprints.soton.ac.uk         | %1  |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 4                | core.ac.uk                  | %1  |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 5                | repository.stcloudstate.edu | <%1 |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 6                | www.tdx.cat                 | <%1 |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 7                | nealsnape.com               | <%1 |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 8                | cronfa.swan.ac.uk           | <%1 |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |
| 9                | etd.lib.metu.edu.tr         | <%1 |
| İnternet Kaynağı |                             |     |

## APPENDIX 7: Research Ethics Committee Approval

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 22.02.2023-208566



Sayı : E-62310886-605.99-208566  
Konu : Etik Kurul İzni (Simge Çakır)

22.02.2023

### EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi : 07.02.2023 tarih ve 203853 sayılı yazınız.

Enstitünüz İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Simge Çakır'ın, Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Gülin Dağdeviren Kırmızı danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı, "İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Anadili Türkçe Olan Başlangıç Seviye Öğrencilerin Tanımlık Algıları ve Kullanımları" adlı tez önerisi değerlendirilmiş ve bilgilerinize ekte sunulmuştur.

Prof. Dr. M. Abdülkadir VAROĞLU  
Kurul Başkanı

Ek: Değerlendirme Formu

Sayı : 17162298.600-51  
Konu : Tez Önerisi

16 ŞUBAT 2023

**İlgili Makama**

Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Simge Çakır'ın, Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Gülin Dağdeviren Kırmızı danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı, "İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Anadili Türkçe Olan Başlangıç Seviye Öğrencilerin Tanımlık Algıları ve Kullanımları" adlı tez önerisi değerlendirilmiş ve yapılmasında bir sakınca olmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Bilgilerinize saygılarımızla sunarız.

**Başkent Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler ve Sanat Araştırma Kurulu**

| Ad, Soyad                       | Değerlendirme  | İmza |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------|
| Prof. Dr. M. Abdülkadir Varoğlu | Olumlu/Olumsuz |      |
| Prof. Dr. Gözen Güner Aktaş     | Olumlu/Olumsuz |      |
| Prof. Dr. Sadegül Akbaba Altun  | Olumlu/Olumsuz |      |
| Prof. Dr. Hasan Tahsin Fendoğlu | Olumlu/Olumsuz |      |
| Prof. Dr. Filiz Kalelioğlu      | Olumlu/Olumsuz |      |
| Prof. Dr. Hidayet Hale Künüçen  | Olumlu/Olumsuz |      |
| Prof. Dr. Özcan Yağcı           | Olumlu/Olumsuz |      |

Prof. Dr. Hidayet Hale Künüçen'in, çalışmaya ilişkin görüşleri:

Eğitim Bilimleri alan uzmanı kurul üyesi hocalarımızın toplantıdaki öneri ve onayları yerine getirilmek koşuluyla UYGUN kabul edilmiştir.

Prof. Dr. Filiz Kalelioğlu'nun, çalışmaya ilişkin görüşleri:

Araştırmanın yöntemi açık değil; açıklamalardan karma yöntem kullanılacağı anlaşılıyor. Ancak, hangi karma yöntem olduğu belirtilmelidir. Veri toplama sürecinde kişilere ait demografik bilgiler testlerin öncesinde eklenebilir. Gönüllüleri bilgilendirme formu/onam formu veya buna yönelik açıklama bulunmamaktadır.

## APPENDIX 8: Research Approval



**MEDİPOL**  
**UNV-ANKARA**  
ANKARA MEDİPOL ÜNİVERSİTESİ

T.C.  
**ANKARA MEDİPOL ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
Rektörlük

Sayı : E-81477236-100.99-1977

02/06/2023

Konu : Anket İzni Hk

**ANKARA MEDİPOL ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Müdürlüğü

Üniversitemiz Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu İngilizce Hazırlık Programı öğretim görevlisi Simge ÇAKIR "Orta Seviyedeki Türk İngilizce Öğrencilerinin İngilizce Tanımlık Algıları ve Üretimi " başlıklı tezinin verilerini üniversitemiz öğrencilerle (anket ile) toplanması Rektörlüğümüzce uygun bulunmuştur.

Gereğini bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet Zeki ŞENGİL  
Rektör

Ek:

- 1- Üst Yazı (1 Sayfa)
- 2- Dilekçe (1 Sayfa)
- 3- Etik Kurul İzni ve Araçlar (53 Sayfa)