

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON ARTICLE USAGE IN EFL STUDENTS' WRITING OF REPORT TEXT

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Abstract

Articles are one of the most difficult parts in writing, especially for EFL students. Different use of articles often leads the students to make errors. This study is intended to know the types of article errors made by students in writing report text and to explain why the errors occur. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The subjects of this study were the students of class nine at X Junior High School in Jombang. Based on the analysis, it had been found that there were 3 types of article errors: the definite article, the indefinite article, and no article. The results of this study indicated that the students made errors on all types of articles. The errors happened because of both interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Finally, it can be concluded that the students had a lack of knowledge in English articles.

Keywords: Grammatical Errors, Article, EFL Students' Writing, Report Text

1. Introduction

Phuket & Othman (2015) define that writing as one of the English skills that are taught by teachers to students in Indonesia. Mastering English writing skills is a very difficult task for the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (p. 99). In writing class, students learn how to put ideas in sentences. An idea is an important thing but it is still not enough to write a good writing. Students must learn syntax, grammar, and vocabulary that will help them to compose good foreign language writing. Belo et al., (2017) stated that from all subjects, grammar is the most complicated subject to be mastered (p. 20).

In grammar, we learn about how to construct sentences well. Therefore, the sentence will be organized neatly and easy to understand. Every word is a part of speech. It has its role when composing a sentence in which there is a missing word or less or more. One of the parts of speech is articles. According to Swan (2009) "*Articles are small words that are often used at the beginning of noun phrases*" (p.

51). The English articles belong to a word group called 'determiners'.

In the English articles, there are definite and the indefinite articles. Mitteager (2010) explains that the definite article is used when the noun is either singular or plural and has already been specified. Whereas, the indefinite article is used when the noun is not specific and used in a general sense (p. 1-2). For example, Someone said that I didn't like "the film". It means that the speaker and the listener knew the film or has seen the film. It would be different when someone said that Let's go and see "a film". The speaker didn't say which film so the listener didn't know what film (Swan 2009, pp. 51-53).

The EFL students learnt about the articles in seventh grade without exception the ninth grade students of State Junior High School in a city that is located in Jombang. The students had learnt English articles in seventh grade and eighth grade. They had learnt it during two years and still had applied the material in the ninth grade. However, many students did not

understand and could not use the articles in writing text correctly.

Analyzing the grammatical errors, more specifically about English articles usage is very important to do. The ability of appropriate use of articles may reflect the writer's competence of grammar, on the contrary. Furthermore, the inappropriate use of an article in a text may cause readers to confuse or misunderstand the content of the text, for example, the omission or incorrect use of a single article to a noun can make readers fail to comprehend the meaning of the noun, whether it is clear or not.

Sholihatun (2017) conducted the research entitled *An Error Analysis on the Use of English Article in Descriptive Texts Written by the Eight Grade of SMP Nurul Iman Palembang*. The purposes of this study were to know the types of errors and to know the dominant type of error on the use of English articles in descriptive text. The participants of this research were the eighth grade students of SMP Nurul Iman Palembang. The errors were collected,

identified, and classified based on the Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST) that specifies three types of errors namely omission, addition and substitution. The result indicated that there were 105 article errors consisting of 52 errors of omission, 32 errors of addition, and 21 errors of substitution.

Another research was conducted by Swasti (2016) entitled *An Error Analysis on the Use of English Articles in the Students' Written Descriptive Text (A Case of Class X MIA of SMAN 1 Binangun Cilacap)*. This study focused on the errors made by tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Binangun, Cilacap in descriptive texts writing. The data were analyzed based on Ellis's Error Analysis Procedure and normalization formula by Pica. The result showed that the dominant error made by the students was grammatical error (indefinite a/an-for-zero). This condition indicated that the students had difficulties distinguishing between countable and uncountable nouns.

This study also got the relevant facts from the previous study that many students still made the errors in using English articles. Furthermore,

due to the fact that lack of good knowledge of the English article of foreign learners, then they are demanded to write an English text, researchers are curious to know more about grammatical errors, more specifically English article usage made by the ninth grade students of Islamic Junior High School and want to know why the errors occur. Then, to know the sources of errors, this study used the theory proposed by Brown (2000), they were *inter-lingual transfer* and *intra-lingual transfer*.

The result of students' writing of a report text is chosen in this analysis since the text gives us information about an object, such as an animal, place, event, etc. In the text, it is assumed that a lot of use of *articles* to the object reported are found there. In addition, this kind of text is learnt by Junior High School. This makes researchers interested in analyzing students' writing of the text.

In addition, analyzing an error and its sources is important. The result of the study can be used as an evaluation by the English teachers in teaching English articles effectively. It

is because by knowing and understanding the grammatical errors that are made by the students, English teachers can prepare the best teaching materials, methods, and strategies to handle the problems.

2. Literature Review

Grammatical Error

According to Erlangga et al. (2019) Grammatical Error is “*a deviation of wrong pattern, semantics meaning, and uses a foreign language by reason of incomplete comprehension from learners about foreign language's rules and it makes someone's writing become not effective to be seen by the readers*” (p. 22). From the definition, grammatical error is a deviation made by EFL students because of the lack of understanding when using foreign language. As a consequence, it makes the bad writing that difficult for readers to be understood.

Learning foreign language is difficult, especially for the Indonesian EFL students. In process of learning English, there are grammatical errors that happened. Many sources that

make Indonesian EFL students do the errors. According to Brown (2000) there are some sources of errors that are Interlingual Transfer and Intralingual Transfer (pp. 232-233).

Interlingual Transfer

The native language or interference occurs in Interlingual transfer. In these early levels, before the system of the second language is acquainted, the native language is the handiest linguistic system in preceding experience upon which the learner can be used. Therefore, mother tongue is influential when learning a new foreign language. One of the effects also occurs when learning English, especially in the use of articles. the use of articles in Indonesia is often omitted, like “Saya membaca buku” which if interpreted directly it will be “I read book”. However in English language, articles must be included before a singular noun. Thus, it should be “I read a book”.

Intralingual Transfer

Intralingual transfer is a transfer inside the target language itself. Researchers have found that the early levels of language getting to know are

characterized by using a predominance of interference interlingual transfer, however as soon as learner have started to accumulate components of the new system, increasingly more intralingual transfer-generalization in the target language-is manifested. negative intralingual transfer, or overgeneralization, has already been. Illustrated in such phrases as “an university?” other instance like “The Surabaya.” and “Scenery”?

Articles

Swan (2009) defines that articles are small words commonly used before noun phrases (p. 51). Mas’ud (2005) said that it is possible to use the articles the, a/an, or no with countable nouns which represent class types (p. 303). There are two of English articles: the definite article (the) and the indefinite article (a /an). Articles can show whether they are (obviously) known to both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader (definite), or unknown to both (indefinite). There are Two points that will make EFL students understand about articles easier than before:

1. You know what I talk about, so it means we use the definite article (the). So we put the before a noun. Example: ^{a)}Have you fed the cats? (you know which one: I mean). ^{b)}Could you close the window? (you can see the window are opened)
2. You do not know what I talk about, so it means we can put the indefinite article (a/an) before the noun if a noun is a singular noun. For example ^{a)}I eat an apple. ^{b)}There is a mouse in the garden. But, if the noun is a plural /uncountable noun, we can use no article. ^{a)}I love eating some apples. ^{b)}I need help.

The Definite Articles (The)

Swan (2009) clarifies that ‘the’ can be used before a noun (singular, plural, or uncountable) when our listener/reader knows the specific person(s), topic(s), etc., to which we are talking (p.53). The definite article can be used in some cases, such as: ¹⁾ The object is unique or considered to be unique. It means that there is only one and in the world like the sun, the sky, the moon, the earth, the world, the

universe, the future. For example: I have seen **the sun** for three days.

²⁾Before a noun that became definite after the second mention: for example: His bike hit a tree; the bike was still left under the tree. ³⁾Before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause. For example: Who are **the girls over there** with James?

⁴⁾Before a noun which by reason of locality can represent only one particular thing. So it is clear situation which one(s) we mean. For example: Ann is in **the kitchen**.

⁵⁾Before superlatives and ordinal number used as adjectives or pronouns, and only: For example: The second performance is Ballet dancing. And Kapuas river is the longest river in Indonesia.

⁶⁾Before a noun is used after an adjective, for example: The latest news. ⁷⁾To show the location and direction of the wind. For example: The top, the bottom, the middle east, the west coast, etc.

⁷⁾To show the location and direction of the wind. For example: The top, the bottom, the middle east, the west coast, etc.

The Indefinite Articles (a/an)

Swan (2009) points out that we only use a/an with singular countable nouns. Countable nouns are the names of specific things, people, ideas that we can count. The indefinite article a/

an has one meaning but is a little different. likes the indefinite article 'a' is followed by a consonant pronunciation. For example: a tiger and a university. Meanwhile, the indefinite article 'an' is followed by a vowel pronounced. For example: an apple and an hour (pp. 55-57). Both of them have the same functions. i.e:

¹)When we talk about one person or thing, for example: There is **a fire truck** outside and Joko lives in **an old house**. ²)When we talk about anyone member of a class, for example: An actress must like people and I would like to live in an old house. ³)When we classify or define people and things, for example: She is a doctor and Use your handkerchief as a mask. ⁴)Descriptions, A/an is common to use before nouns that are used in description, e.g. She is a good person and It is an extremely hot day.

No Article

Sometimes, articles is not used in noun phrase. According to Mas'ud (2005)there are three conditions that don't use articles (p. 305). i.e: ¹)No article is used with a noun that shows a certain place. E.g : Go to school, Go

to class, and Go to mosque, etc. ²)No article before the name of the streets and avenue. For example: Fifteenth street and Six avenue. ³)No article before the names of city and country, with a few exceptions such as : The Hague. The Soviet Union, The United States, The Congo, and The Sudan. Besides the these names always no article. For example: Indonesia and Japan.

Swan (2009) explains that there are three conditions that don't use articles (pp 52-63). Such as: ¹)No article when adjectives alone. E.g: It is nice not it is a nice. ²)No article when using a noun together with my, this, or other determiners. For example: My assignment not the my assignment and This book not the this book. ³)No article when the noun is plural noun and uncountable noun—show general things. For example: There are cats in my room not there are a cats in my room.

Thomson & Martinet (1986) states that there are four conditions that don't use articles (pp. 8-14). ¹)No article when the noun is plural noun and uncountable noun—show general

things. For example: I have books in my library not I have a books in my library and Sita drinks water not Sita drinks a water. ²⁾No article before names of meals, except when a noun is added by an adjective: for example: We have breakfast at eight and He gave us a good breakfast. ³⁾The article is also used when it is a special meal given to celebrate something or in someone's honour: For example: I was invited to dinner (at their house, in the ordinary way) but I was invited to a dinner given to welcome the new ambassador. ⁴⁾No article before games, for example: Roni likes playing football. ⁵⁾No article before home, church, hospital, prison, school, work, sea and town. Example: Vina is at home and we go to sea as sailors.

EFL Students' Writing

Pardiyono (2006) defines that in English categorization, a writing is considered as the most difficult skill between another skills, likes speaking and reading. Listening may be have difficult as same as with writing. (p. ix). Sokolik (2003) explains that at the most primary level, a writing is the mental work of inventing thoughts,

considering a way to specific them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs a good way to be clear to a reader. The goal of writing is both to express idea and impress the readers. Each types of writing has a different level, depend on goal. In writing, we have processes and a product. "This process of writing is often cyclical, and sometimes disorderly". a product is like an essay, a letter, a story, or research report (p.88). From the definition above, we know that writing is a linguistic competence which is poured in written form to convey an idea or impress the reader. Writing is difficult. Therefore, writing is not enough with one step but requires several steps so that the purpose of the writing can be conveyed properly.

EFL Students' Writing

Phuket & Othman (2015) explain that writing is one of the English skills that are taught by teachers to students in Indonesia. Mastering English writing skills is a hard work for the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (p. 99). In writing class, students learn how to get

ideas and put it in sentences. An idea is a key thing but it is still incomplete to write well. Syntax, grammar, and vocabulary must be learnt by students. It will help them to arrange good foreign language writing.

Hogue (2008) states Academic Writing is the types of writing that done in the class. Every types of writing have a specific goal and a specific audience. Giving explanation about something or to give information about something is the goal of academic writing. Certain skills is required in academic writing. These skills are sentence structure, organization, grammar and punctuation (p. 2). It means that in academic writing, we learn about how to arrange words in a sentence well (sentence structure). We also learn about how to combine idea in sentences into paragraph (organization). The last, we need grammar and punctuation so the writing will be a good writing.

From the explanation above, we know that in writing we need learn about sentence structure, how to arrange idea, vocabulary, grammar,

and punctuation. If all aspects is met, a writing will be an excellent writing. It is one of reason why writing is laborious task for Indonesian EFL students because there are many aspects in writing must be understood.

Report Text

Barker (2000) states that report text is a writing text whose aims is to describe something in general terms (p. 23). Simple present tense is always used in Report text. Report text usually contains: information that describes something based on facts. When writing a report text, the author must observe the object. According to Pardiyono (2006), report text contains a presentation of current information about a matter or fact supported by data presentation, description of characteristics, and grouping or tabulating. (p. 166). Based on the explanation above, we know that report text is a text that describes something in general. This text is written based on fact so the writer must observe the object first before writing it. Report text also is always written using simple present tense because it shows the current

information. The purpose of the text is to provide information about something complete with a description of its characteristics.

3. Research Method

Research Design

This research was designed as a qualitative descriptive study. Therefore, this study analyzed the types of articles errors in EFL students' writing. Gall et al. (2007) state that a descriptive research qualitative explains phenomena and their properties. This research focused more on what rather than what and why things happened. Therefore, giving tests and interviews were used in collecting data (p.129). Based on the explanation above, this study used descriptive qualitative. The data was collected from giving tests to find out what types of article errors that are made by EFL students in report text writing and interview to find why the article errors occur.

Research Participant

Research Participants of this research were 17 students of ninth grade of X Junior High School in Jombang that tested. All of the

students were given codes A-Q. After giving tests from the students, the researcher chose five students with using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was a sampling technique of data sources with specific considerations. The reason for using the purposive sampling technique was that not all samples have criteria that match the phenomena studied. Therefore, the researcher chose the Purposive Sampling technique that stipulates specific considerations or criteria that might be met by the samples used in this study. The criteria that were used were the students' works that had many articles errors that were analyzed and would be interviewed.

Research Location

The location of this research was an X Islamic Junior High School in Jombang. The school is located approximately 7 kilometers from the city center. This school was chosen with the consideration that the location was reachable, permission was obtained from the school, and the participants were willing to be tested and interviewed.

Research Instrument

The research instruments used in this study were tests which was used to find out what the errors made by the students in writing report text and interview list to find out why the errors occur.

Data Collections

In this research, there were two types of data needed to answer the questions. To answer the first question, the researchers needed the article's errors from students' works. So, the researchers needed to:

1. Arrange of tests on writing report text. The source of test was taken from Book “ *Bahan Ajar Insentif Penunjang Siswa Kreatif : Bahasa Inggris Untuk IX SMP/MTs*”
2. Validate the test and discuss it with the expert.
3. Give the tests to the students about writing report text.
4. Collect the test result.

To answer the second question, the researcher needed to know about the causes of errors, the researcher needed to:

1. Arrange of a interview list.
2. Validate the interview list and

discuss it with the expert.

3. Interview the students based on interview list.
4. Transcribe the interview.

Data Analysis

Miles et al. (2018) states that “*Deciding on and generating the format displaying qualitative data in research is important. There are two models of data displays, i.e: “Matrices, with defined rows and columns 2. Networks: a series of nodes with links (lines and arrows) between them”*” (p. 109). The researchers showed the data in matrices in point two and four.

1. Selecting the errors according to the types of articles based on the observation list.
2. Showing the data in the result of the observation checklist.
3. Describing the errors based on types of articles.
4. Showing the data transcript of the interview in the matrices.
5. Describing the errors based on why the errors occur.
6. Getting a general Conclusion.

4. Results and Discussions

Results

The research focussed on the analysis of article errors: the definite and the indefinite article in report text writing by ninth grade students of junior high school in a city that located in Jombang. The researcher gave the students twenty items that were divided into two texts and each text consisted of ten 'fill the blanks' questions about of articles (a, an, the, no article). The test was given to

twenty students but only seventeen students did the test. After that the researchers selected the errors according to the types of articles. In this study, the article' errors made by students in writing report texts were classified based on the class types of articles by Swan (2009) The researchers found the types of errors made by students are the definite articles, the indefinite articles, and no articles.

Table 1. the result of observation checklist.

The Definite Article "the"

No.	<u>Errors</u>	<u>Types of Errors</u>			<u>The Correctness</u>
		<u>The definite article "the"</u>	<u>The indefinite article "A/an"</u>	<u>No Article</u>	
Student A					
1	It comes from an trunks and branches of trees.	✓			It comes from the trunks and branches of trees.
2	One of a rare animals is rhinoceros.	✓			One of the rare animals is rhinoceros.
3	They usually live alone, except during a breeding season.	✓			They usually live alone, except during the breeding season.
4	an males have	✓			The males have
Student B					
5	.... depending on how strong furniture needs to be.	✓			.... depending on how strong the furniture needs to be.
6	One of a rare animals is rhinoceros.	✓			One of the rare animals is rhinoceros.
7	.... word rhinoceros is derived from	✓			the word rhinoceros is derived from Greek.
8	They usually live alone, except during breeding season.	✓			They usually live alone, except during the breeding season.
9	One of these rare rhinoceros is a Javan	✓			One of these rare rhinoceros is the Javan rhinoceros,....

10	..... males have	✓	The males have
Student C			
11	depending on how strong furniture needs to be.	✓	depending on how strong the furniture needs to be.
12	They usually live alone, except during breeding season.	✓	They usually live alone, except during the breeding season.
13	One of these rare rhinoceros is a Javan	✓	One of these rare rhinoceros is the Javan rhinoceros,....
14	..... males have	✓	The males have
Student D			
15	One of these rare rhinoceros is a Javan	✓	One of these rare rhinoceros is the Javan rhinoceros,....
16	a males have	✓	The males have
Student E			
17	It comes from trunks and branches of trees.	✓	It comes from the trunks and branches of trees.
18	.... depending on how strong furniture needs to be.	✓	.... depending on how strong the furniture needs to be.
19	..... word rhinoceros is derived from	✓	the word rhinoceros is derived from Greek.
20	They usually live alone, except during a breeding season.	✓	They usually live alone, except during the breeding season.
21	..... males have	✓	The males have

The Indefinite Article "A/An"

No.	Sentence	<u>Types of Errors</u>			<u>The Correctness</u>
		<u>The definite article "the"</u>	<u>The indefinite article "A/an"</u>	<u>No Article</u>	
Student A					
1	Wood is the innate material.		✓		Wood is an innate material.
2	Wood has the unique smell.		✓		Wood has a unique smell.
3	When you hit it with an hammer,		✓		When you hit it with a hammer,
4	it has an distinctive sound.		✓		it has a distinctive sound.
5	.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock the nail into them,....		✓		.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock a nail into them,....
6	Rhinocheros is a enormous heavy mammal....		✓		Rhinocheros is an enormous heavy mammal....
7	Some rhinoceros have two horns and other have an horn.		✓		Some rhinoceros have two horns and other have a horn.
8	They live in grassy areas or in an jungle.		✓		They live in grassy areas or in a jungle.
Student B					
9	Wood is a innate material.		✓		Wood is an innate material.
10	When you hit it with the hammer,		✓		Wood is an innate material.

11	.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock nail into them,....	✓	.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock a nail into them,....
12	Rhinocheros is the enormous heavy mammal....	✓	Rhinocheros is an enormous heavy mammal....
13	Some rhinoceros have two horns and other have an horn.	✓	Some rhinoceros have two horns and other have a horn.
14	They live in grassy areas or in the jungle.	✓	They live in grassy areas or in a jungle.
15	the males have an single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet) length,	✓	the males have a single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet) length,
Student C			
16	Wood is is innate material.	✓	Wood is an innate material.
17	Wood has an unique smell.	✓	Wood has a unique smell.
18	it has an distinctive sound.	✓	it has a distinctive sound.
19	.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock nail into them,....	✓	.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock a nail into them,....
20	Rhinocheros is a enormous heavy mammal....	✓	Rhinocheros is an enormous heavy mammal....
21	They live in grassy areas or in the jungle.	✓	They live in grassy areas or in a jungle.

22	the males have the single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet) length,	✓	the males have a single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet) length,
Student D			
23	Wood is a innate material.	✓	Wood is an innate material.
24	Wood has an unique smell.	✓	Wood has a unique smell.
25	When you hit it with the hammer,	✓	When you hit it with a hammer,
26	it has an distinctive sound.	✓	it has a distinctive sound.
27	Rhinoceros is a enormous heavy mammal....	✓	Rhinoceros is an enormous heavy mammal....
28	Some rhinoceros have two horns and other have the	✓	Some rhinoceros have two horns and other have a horn.
29	They live in grassy areas or in the jungle.	✓	They live in grassy areas or in a jungle.
30	the males have the single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet) length,	✓	the males have a single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet) length,
Student E			
31	Wood is the innate material.	✓	Wood is an innate material.
32	When you hit it with the hammer,	✓	When you hit it with a hammer,
33	.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock nail into them,....	✓	.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock a nail into them,....

34	Rhinocheros is a enormous heavy mammal....	✓	Rhinocheros is an enormous heavy mammal....
35	They live in grassy areas or in jungle.	✓	They live in grassy areas or in a jungle.
36	the males have single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet)	✓	the males have a single horn up to 10 inches (25 feet) length,

No Article

N o.	<u>Errors</u>	<u>Types of</u>			<u>The Correctne ss</u>
		<u>Th e def init</u>	<u>The inde finit e</u>	<u>No Ar tiel e</u>	

Student A

1	Most woods are a light	✓	Most woods are light
2	....you can easily break it	✓	....you can easily break it
3	Different woods are chosen to make an	✓	Different woods are chosen to make
4	They eat	✓	They eat

Student B

5you can easily break it	✓you can easily break it
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6	Different woods are chosen to make a	✓	Different woods are chosen to make
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7	They eat	✓	They eat
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Student C

✓

8	Most woods are the light	✓	Most woods are light
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9you can easily break it	✓you can easily break it
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10	Different woods are chosen to make an	✓	Different woods are chosen to make
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1	They eat	✓	They eat
---	----------	---	----------

Student D

12you can easily break it	✓you can easily break it
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13	Different woods are chosen to make a	✓	Different woods are chosen to make
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1	They eat	✓	They eat
---	----------	---	----------

Student E

15you can easily break it	✓you can easily break it
----	-----------------------------	---	-----------------------------

16	Different woods are chosen to make a	✓	Different woods are chosen to make
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Types of Article Errors

The Definite Article “The”

The definite article is used before a noun. The noun can be a singular noun, a plural noun, or a uncountable noun. The noun may be specific and the listener/reader know which is the noun. Based on the data found, it showed that the students made these kinds of errors, the following are the sample of students' error.

The Use of the Indefinite Article 'An' Instead of The Definite Article 'The'

The sentence "*It comes from an trunks and branches of tree*" that was written by the student A showed error in using the definite article 'the'. The student A used the indefinite article 'an' instead of the definite article 'the'. The student A should use the definite article 'the' because the word *trunks and branches* could be understood by the reader. The reader could understand that trunks and branches which is written is the part of tree. The indefinite article also only could be used when the noun was singular but the noun here was plural noun. So the correct sentence was "*It comes from the trunks and branches of tree*"

The Use of the Indefinite Article 'A' Instead of The Definite Article 'The'

The sentence "*One of these rare animals is a Javan rhinoceros.*" that was written by the student B, C, and D showed error in using the definite article 'the'. The student B, C, and D used the indefinite article 'a' instead of the definite article 'the'. They should use the definite article 'the' because the word *Javan rhinoceros* became definite by clear situation which one(s) the speaker means. The word *rhinoceros* was also plural noun whereas in the rules indefinite article, only the singular noun was available. So the correct sentence was "*One of these rare animals is the Javan rhinoceros.*"

The Use of No Article Instead the Definite Article 'The'

The sentence "*Ø males have*" that was written by the student B, C and E showed error in using the definite article 'the'. They used no article instead of the definite article 'the'. They should use the definite article 'the' because the word *males* was specific. The word *males* could be understood by readers that

the word *males* was the male rhinoceros not other animals. So the correct sentence was “*males have*”

The Indefinite Article “A/An”

The indefinite article is used before a singular countable noun. There are two indefinite articles that are a/an. They have same functions but different position. The indefinite article ‘a’ is used before a singular countable noun that have consonant pronunciation. Meanwhile, the indefinite article ‘an’ is used before a singular countable noun that has vowel pronunciation. Based on the data found, it showed that the students made these kinds of errors, the following are the sample of students’ error.

The Wrong Form of the Indefinite Article

The sentences “*Rhinoceros is a enourmous heavy mammal.*” And “*Wood has an unique smell.*” used the wrong form of the indefinite article. The first sentence “*Wood is a innate material.*” That was written by the student A, C, D, & E. They should use the indefinite article ‘an’ not the

indefinite article ‘a’ the word *enourmous heavy mammal* was a description and the word *enourmous* was followed by a vowel. It also had vowel sound that was /i'nôrmƏs/. So the correct sentence was “*Rhinoceros is an enormous heavy mammal.*”

The second sentence was “*Wood has an unique smell*” that was written by Student C and D They should use the indefinite article ‘a’ instead of the indefinite article ‘an’ because the word *unique* had consonant pronunciation that was /yoo'nĕk/ despite the word *unique* being a vowel. Thus, the sentence should be “*Wood has a unique smell*”.

The Use of the Definite Article ‘The’ Instead of The Indefinite Article ‘An’

The sentence “*Wood is the innate material*” that was written by the student A & E showed error in using the indefinite article ‘an’. The student B used the definite article ‘the’ instead of the indefinite article ‘an’. They should use the indefinite article ‘an’ because the word *innate* was followed by a vowel. It also had a vowel sound that is /i'nāt/. Thus the

correct sentence was “*Wood is an innate material*”.

The Use of the Definite Article ‘The’ Instead of The Indefinite Article ‘A’

The sentence “*When you hit it with the hammer*” was written by student B, D, and E. It showed error in using the indefinite article ‘a’. They used the definite article ‘the’ instead of the indefinite article ‘a’. The sentence should use the indefinite article ‘a’ because the word *hammer* the word *hammer* classified what a thing used for. The word *hammer* has pronounced /'hæmðr/. the consequent of the word *hammer* was followed by a consonant, it should be use the indefinite article ‘a’ So the correct sentence was “*When you hit it with a hammer*”.

The Use of No Article ‘The’ Instead of The Indefinite Article ‘A’

The sentence “*It is almost possible to saw or knock Ø nail into them*” was written by student E. It showed error in using the indefinite article ‘a’. They didn’t use article instead of the indefinite article ‘a’. the sentence should use the indefinite article ‘a’ because the word *nail*

showed a thing. The word *nail* was followed by a consonant (/nāl/). Therefore the article should be used was the indefinite article ‘a’. So the correct sentence was “*It is almost possible to saw or knock a nail into them*”.

No Article

No article is occurred when a noun is not preceded by an article (*a, an, or the*). A noun is in the form of proper noun, plural noun (show general things), or uncountable. They do not need an article. Based on the data found, it showed that the students made these kinds of errors, the following are the sample of students’ errors:

The Use of the Indefinite Article ‘A’ Instead of No Article

The sentence “*Most wood are a light enough to float...*” was written by student A and “*Different woods are chosen to make a different types of furniture,....*” was written by the student B, D, and E. these sentence showed errors in using no article. They used the indefinite article ‘a’ instead of no article. In the first sentence should use no article because the word *light*

was an adjective. An adjective alone is not followed by an article. So the correct sentence was “*Most wood are Ø light enough to float...*”. Whereas in the second sentence should use no article because the word *different types* was specific and also showed a plural noun and a general thing. So the correct sentence was “*Different woods are chosen to make Ø different types of furniture,...*”.

The Use of the Indefinite Article ‘An’ Instead of No Article

The sentence “*They eat an plants*” was written by student D. It showed error in using no article. They used the indefinite article ‘an’ instead of no article. the sentence should use no article because the word *plants* was a plural noun. It also showed general thing. The word *plants* has a broad meaning. So the correct sentence was “*They eat Ø plants*”.

The Use of the Definite Article ‘The’ Instead of No Article

The sentence “*You can easily break it with the your fingers*” was written by student B, C, dan E. It showed error in using no article. They used the definite article ‘the’ instead of

no article. the sentence should use no article because the word *your finger* used other determiner that was your. Articles could not together with other determiners. When a noun together with determiners, there is no need to use the article. Possessive and demonstrative are part of determiner. So the correct sentence was “*You can easily break it with Ø your fingers.*”

Sources of Article Errors

To find sources of errors previously discussed, the researchers interviewed five students that had many errors and willing to be interviewed. The result of interview of the students were identified to determine the source of errors. The theory used is that proposed by Brown (2000). From the result of interview, it was found two sources of errors which are Interlingual transfer and Intralingual Transfer.

Interlingual Transfer

Interlingual Transfer happens in learning a new language or foreign language because of the mother language or first language. Each language has its own grammar. However a mother tongue usually

influences in learning the new language. It also occurs when Indonesian learners learn English as a foreign language. Based on the result of interviews, they show that the article errors made by students due to

interlingual transfer , the following are the sample of students' error:

Table 2. Interlingual Transfer

Students' Errors	Reason
Wood is the innate material.	Karena 'innate material' jika diartikan adalah bahan dasar, jadi sifatnya spesifik oleh karena itu saya pakai 'the'. (Student E)
Wood has an unique smell.	Karena 'unique smell' jika diartikan adalah bau yang unik jadi saya rasa masih umum, jadi saya menggunakan an. (Student C)
When you hit it with the hammer.	<p>Karena 'hammer' sifatnya sudah jelas kalau dilihat dari artinya. Ketika kamu memukulnya dengan palu. (Student D)</p> <p>Karena hammer artinya palu jadi barangnya udah jelas, oleh karena itu saya pakai 'the'. (Student E)</p>
You can easily break it with the your finger.	Karena 'your fingers' jika diartikan adalah 'jarimu' jadi saya rasa sifatnya udah spesifik. Oleh karena itu, saya menjawab 'the'. (Student C)
Different woods are chosen to make a different types of furniture,...	Karena 'different types of furniture' jika diartikan adalah 'tipe yang berbeda-beda dari furniture', ini sifatnya umum jadi pakai 'a'. (Student E)
Rhinocheros is a enormous heavy mammal....	Karena 'enormous heavy mammal' jika diartikan mamalia yang berat dan besar jadi akan cocok dengan a. Seekor mamalia yang berat dan besar.

Karena jika 'enormous heavy mammal' diartikan maka jawabannya adalah 'mamalia yang sangat berat dan besar' jadi sepertinya akan cocok dengan 'a' yang diartikan seekor. (Student C)

One of these rare rhinoceros is a rhinoceros,....

Karena 'javan rhinoceros' artinya badak jawa akan cocok menggunakan 'a'. Jadi artinya seekor badak jawa. (Student C)

Karena 'javan rhinoceros' artinya badak jawa akan cocok menggunakan 'a'. Jadi artinya seekor badak jawa. (Student D)

They eat **an** plants.

Karena 'plant' itu sifatnya umum kalau dilihat dari artinya mereka makan sebuah tanaman. jadi saya menggunakan 'an' (Student D)

The reasons showed that the source of errors was interlingual transfer. As it was seen based on the table above. The first sentence was "Wood is **the** innate material" by the student E and the second sentence was "Wood has **an** unique smell" by the student E. the student E answered that because the word 'innate material' mean *bahan dasar*, so it was specific. Therefore he used 'the'. Based on the answer, the student E made an error in classifying general or specific things. He called it specific because of the meaning so he was influenced by his first language. In fact, the word 'innate material' was general because it shows a description. Not much different from the student E, the student D also answer that the word 'unique smell' was general due to the meanings. Therefore, she used 'an'.

The third sentence "When you hit it with **the** hammer." That was written by student D and E. The student D said that because the word 'hammer' was clear if it was seen by the meaning, *ketika kamu memukulnya dengan palu*. The student C said that since the word 'hammer' meant *palu* so the thing was clear, on the consequent he used 'the'. From the

reasons, it was gotten that they did the errors because of the meaning. They got wrong in classifying general or ungeneral.

The fourth sentence “*You can easily break it with **the** your finger.*” It was written by the student C. the student C said that because ‘*your fingers*’ means jarimu so he thought it was specific. Therefore, he answered ‘the’. Student C got confused that the word ‘*your fingers*’ was general due to the meaning.

The fifth sentence “*Different woods are chosen to make **a** different types of furniture...*” was written by the student E. Student E said that because the word ‘*different types of furniture*’ means *tipe yang berbeda-beda dari furnitur*, it was general so he used ‘a’. Student E just classified general or not from the meaning but forgot to identify whether the noun was singular or plural because a general plural noun is used in no article.

The sixth sentence “*Rhinocheros is **a** enormous heavy mammal...*”, student A said that why she answered it because of the word

enormous heavy mammal means ‘*mamalia yang berat dan besar*’ so it will match with the indefinite article ‘a’ so the meaning is *seekor mamalia yang berat dan besar*. The answer’s of student A was nearly same with Student C. The students just gave the attention to the meanings but not the grammar. A/an if interpreted would have the same meaning. Knowing the meaning was not enough. The sentence should use the indefinite article ‘an’. Because the word enormous had a vowel pronunciation. From the reason, it could be concluded that student A was influenced by the first language.

The seventh sentence “*One of these rare animals is **a** Javan rhinoceros*” was written by student C and D. They said that because the word *Javan rhinoceros* means badak Jawa so it will match if using ‘a’. the indefinite article ‘a’ means seekor. They are similar with the previous sentence, they should be not only given the attention on the meaning but also about specific or not. Because in English articles, we could differentiate the definite article or indefinite article based on the general or general. The

word *Javan rhinoceros* was a plural noun. So it could not use the indefinite article. The word *Javan rhinoceros* was specific. So it could be used the definite article. The correct sentence was “*One of these rare animals is the Javanese rhinoceros*”.

The eighth sentence “*They eat an plants.*” Which was written by the student D. She answered that since ‘*plants*’ as general if seeing from the meaning *mereka makan sebuah tanaman*. So she used ‘an’. The reason was not wrong but the student D should give attention if the word “*plants*’ ’ was plural so should use no article. Thus, it could be concluded that all of the sentences above are

interlingual transfers because they are influenced by mother language.

Intralingual Transfer

Intralingual Transfer is an error in learning a new language because of the language itself. Many grammatical differences affect it. There will be a lot of new things to understand so that sometimes Foreign learners learners get confused and make mistakes. This also due to a lack of knowledge about the language being studied consequently they are doubtful and unsure. Based on the result of interview, it showed that the article errors made by students due to intralingual transfer , the following are the sample of students’ error:

Table 3. Intralingual Transfer

Students’ Errors	Reason
Wood is the innate material.	Karena ‘innate material’ berupa kata sifat + kata benda jadi saya menggunakan ‘the’. (Student A)
It comes from an trunks and branches of trees.	Ini saya asal jawabnya karena nggak tahu jawabannya. (Student A)
Most woods are a light enough to float....	Ini saya asal jawabnya karena nggak tahu jawabannya. (Student A)
Wood has an unique	

smell.	Karena 'unique smell' itu sifatnya umum jadi saya menggunakan 'an'. (Student D)
When you hit it with the hammer,	Karena 'hammer' disini sebagai alat jadi harusnya sudah spesifik. Oleh karena itu saya menggunakan 'the' (Student B)
.... it is almost impossible to saw or knock nail into them,....	Saya tidak menggunakan artikel apapun disini karena saya bingung 'nail' itu umum atau spesifik jadi saya kosongkan saja.. hehe (Student B) Kata 'nail' itu umum atau spesifiknya? Saya masih ragu jadi saya memilih jalur tengah yaitu no article. (Student C) Karena 'nail' saya ragu ini umum atau udah spesifik, jadi saya memilih no artikel saja. (Student E)
....you can easily break it with the your fingers.	Saya menggunakan 'the' karena 'your fingers' ini kan jamak jadi nggak cocok kalau pakai a/an. Karena 'your fingers' ini udah spesifik jadi pakai 'the'. (Student E)
Different woods are chosen to make a different types of furniture,....	Sebenarnya saya tidak terlalu yakin tapi akhirnya saya memilih menggunakan 'a' mengacu pada kata 'furniture'. (Student B) Ini saya asal menjawabnya karena ragu sama jawabannya. (Student D)
Rhinocheros is a enormous heavy mammal....	Karena 'enormous heavy mammal' itu sifatnya umum jadi saya menggunakan 'a'. (Student D) Karena 'enourmous heavy mammal' ini sifatnya umum jadi harusnya pakai 'a'. (Student E)

One of these rare rhinoceros is a rhinoceros,....

Saya masih bingung perbedaan a/an, jadi saya asal jawabnya. (Student B)

..... males have

Males bukankah jamak tapi sifatnya umum, jadi saya rasa jawabannya no artikel. (Student B)

Karena kata 'males' itu umum tapi ini jamak jadi saya menggosongkannya saja, no artikel. (Student C)

Karena 'males' sifatnya umum dan bentuknya juga jamak jadi tidak perlu pakai artikel, (Student E)

The reasons showed that the source of errors was intralingual transfer. As it was seen based on the table above. In the first sentence "*Wood is the innate material.*" was written by student A. The student A said that this happen because the word '*innate material*' is an adjective + a noun so she used the definite article 'the'. From the answer of student A was not wrong but nomally when adjective + noun it should be shown description , except there was something specific.

The second sentence was "*It comes from an trunks and branches of trees.*" And the third sentence was "*Most woods are a light enough to float....*" That was written by student A. The reasons for the answers were

the same. Because she did not know the answer and just answered it. The fourth sentence was "*Wood has a unique smell*" that was written by the student D. The reasons from them were not at fault because the word '*unique smell*' was unclear. But they did not give the attention if the word '*unique*' had a consonant pronunciation so it should be used as the indefinite 'a' not the indefinite 'an'.

The fifth sentence was "*When you hit it with the hammer*" which was written by student B. The student B said that because the word '*hammer*' was used as a tool so it must be specific. Therefore, he used 'the'. From the reasons, it can be noted that the students had misunderstanding

how and why a noun was specific or general. In fact, the word ‘hammer’ was general because of classifying what it was used for.

The sixth sentence was “... it is almost impossible to saw or knock nail into them,....” that was written by the student B, C, and E. All of them said that they did not use the article because he was still confused the word ‘nail’ as general or specific so they do not use any article. From the answers, it can be said that the students had difficulty in distinguishing general and specific aspects in English grammar. They need to learn more about it.

The seventh sentence was “....you can easily break it with the your fingers.” Which was written by student B and E. Student B said that he used article ‘the’ since the word ‘your fingers’ was plural so it would not be matched if using the indefinite article ‘a/an’. Mostly the same with student B, student E said that ‘your fingers’ was specific so he used ‘the’. From the reasons, knowing that student B had a different reason from student E although their answers were the same. All of the reasons were not wrong but

they need to know that possessives could not be together with the article.

The eighth sentence was “Different woods are chosen to make a different types of furniture,....” that was written by students B and D. The student B said that he was not sure but finally he used the indefinite article ‘a’ reference to the word ‘furniture’. Meanwhile, the student D answered that she just answered it because she doubts the answer. From the reasons, it was gotten that although their answer was similar but they had different reasons. For students B and D, they should give more attention to the word “different types”. It was a general noun but it was plural. Consequently, they should use no article.

The ninth sentence was “Rhinoceros is a enormous heavy mammal....” that was written by the students D and E. Their answer was the same. They said that because ‘enormous heavy mammal’ was general so the article used the indefinite article ‘a’. Their reason was not wrong but they should know that in the indefinite article there is also the indefinite article ‘an’. Their difference

was in their function. The indefinite ‘a’ for a noun followed a consonant and the indefinite ‘an’ for a noun followed a vowel. The word “*enormous heavy mammal*” was a noun followed by a vowel. Then it should use the indefinite article ‘an’.

The tenth sentence was “*One of these rare rhinoceros is a Javan rhinoceros,....*” that was written by student B. The student B said that he was confused about the difference between the indefinite article ‘a/an’ so he just answered it. From the reasons, it can be concluded that student B still had to learn more about an article that the indefinite article ‘a/an’ could not be used in a plural noun. Meanwhile, the word “*Javan rhinoceros*” was a plural noun.

The eleventh sentence was “*.... males have*” that was written by the students B, C, and E. Their answers from the interview were nearly the same. They answered that ‘*males*’ was plural but general so he thought the answer was no article. Their reason was not wrong but they might have given more attention to specific or general nouns. The word “*males*” was

a plural noun but it was a specific noun. Because in the sentence, it was clear that the word “males” was male rhinoceros.

Discussions

Based on the findings above, the students of the nine grade of X Junior High School made errors on article usage. The researcher found errors in all types of article of from all respondents such as the definite article, the indefinite article, and no article. From the results of the interview, it appears that the errors made by the respondents happened because of interlingual transfers and intralingual transfers.

The first source of errors was interlingual transfers. The students made the errors because of directly translating and matching it with the article. The students also made the errors because they gave a lot of attention to the meaning in classifying general or specific objects. It was supported by Septiana (2020) her research found that the errors happen because the definite article ‘an’ can be translated into *sebuah* in Indonesian while in Indonesian, there is no

difference like in English between “a and an”. (p.51)

The second source of errors was intralingual transfers. The students had difficulty in grammatical usage. They felt difficult in differentiating singular or plural nouns and in classifying general or specific things. Therefore, they are often inverted when using the definite article and the indefinite article. Swasti (2016) also found that the dominant errors on English article usage in the students’ written descriptive text was the indefinite article a/an. These errors happen because of a lack of understanding of grammatical rules in English articles, especially in differentiating singular or plural nouns and countable and uncountable nouns (pp. 30-33).

The students also made the errors in the special rule on zero article usage. They used the indefinite article in a general singular noun and article with possessive pronoun or when the adjective alone. Students are also still confused between using the indefinite article ‘a’ and ‘an’. They still could not differentiate between consonant sound and vowel sound. It was relevant with

Yusuf’s research. Yusuf (2011) stated that there were some rules on English article usage that lead the students into errors. In using the definite article, the students are not convinced whether to use an article for a certain thing, they often overgeneralize it or omit it. They often use unnecessary ‘the’ and ‘a/an’ in a noun with special rules. Meanwhile, on using the indefinite article, they still confused to choose ‘a’ or ‘an’. Because both of them indicate a singular noun (pp. 10-13).

In this research, intralingual transfers happened more than interlingual transfers. It was shown that the students had lack of knowledge especially English article. It was supported by Fatimah (2017) in her research that the strongest factor influenced students’ errors in using article was intralingual transfers and overgeneralization had highest score. It was more than interlingual. (p. 7). It was also supported by Telaumbanua (2020), she found that the students did errors in their thesis namely, the definite article, the indefinite article, and zero article. Based on the interview, they said that they could not

improve errors in using English article better because of lack of knowledge on usage of English articles as well as lack of attention to find proofreaders to make better papers (pp. 491-492).

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, it was shown that the 9th-grade students of X Junior High School Jombang made errors on English article usage in the report text writing. These show that students still have problems using English article. The errors found in the students' tests can be categorized into three types: the definite article, the indefinite article, and no article. The results showed that English article errors occurred in the students' tests. Based on the result of the interview, it was concluded that mostly errors happen because of intralingual transfers. Intralingual transfers happened when the students had difficulty in learning a new language because of the language self. Finally it can be concluded that the students had a lack of knowledge in English articles.

It is hoped that other researchers who deal with the analysis

of grammatical errors, more specifically about the article usage and its causes, can take benefits of the result of this study to conduct further research. In addition, English teachers are supposed to find good teaching strategies to anticipate the errors in order that the same case will not occur any more.

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