Acquisition of English Articles by Iranian English language Learners

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English articles which include zero article, definite article "the" and indefinite articles "a/an" have been one of the most difficult parts of grammar for EFL learners. The aim of the present research is to examine the sequence of the acquisition of English articles by EFL Iranian learners. To this end, four groups of students, studying English as a foreign language in semesters 4, 8, 11 and 12 in private language institutes were selected on the basis of their general proficiency in English. Oxford Placement Test (1985) was administered in order to have homogenous groups. Meanwhile, a test was developed in accordance with different uses of three kinds of articles, zero, indefinite and definite article, containing 98 sentences, each of which has 35, 20 and 80 items, respectively. Definite article categories structural and cultural use); each category contains 20 items. The results showed that all the students got the least score in the category of cultural use of definite article (3 out of 20) and the most score in zero article (35 out of 35). The analysis of data also showed that all the three groups learned zero article first, then two categories of definite article (situational and textual use) followed by indefinite article and finally two other categories of definite article (structural and cultural use). Concerning definite article, students got the most and the least scores (19 out of 20 and 3 out of 20) in situational and cultural use, respectively. The results revealed that students acquire zero article, then to some extent definite article and finally indefinite article.