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ABSTRACT
        A study of Japanese learners' acquisition of the article
system in English noun phrases investigated whether (1) presence or absence
of a modifier affected the choice of definite article used, and (2) whether
the choice of definite article was influenced by reliance on knowledge of
commonly-occurring sequences. Subjects were 111 Japanese university students
who completed a multiple-choice cloze test and a multiple-choice article
insertion test. Results indicate the learners' responses were more accurate
when the noun phrase modified by a prepositional phrase required the definite
articles than when it did not. Thus the subjects tended to use the definite
article for modified noun phrases even if there was more than one potential
entity to which the modified noun phrase referred. It was also found that the
subjects' responses were significantly more accurate when use of "the" was in
accord with commonly-occurring sequences than when it was not. Pedagogical
implications are discussed. The tests are appended. Contains 24 references.
(MSE)

JAPANESE LEARNERS' ACQUISITION
AND USE OF THE ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM

Toshiaki Takahashi (DAL)

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Abstract

A multiple-choice article insertion test was given to 99 Japanese EFL college students to examine (1) whether the presence or non-presence of a modifier affected the choice of the definite article, and (2) whether the choice of the definite article was influenced by reliance on knowledge of commonly occurring sequences (e.g. Where's the X ?, the first X, etc.). As regards the first question, the study showed that the subjects were more accurate when the NPs modified by a PP or a relative clause required the definite article than when they did not. Thus the subjects tended to use the definite article for modified NPs even if there was, in fact, more than one potential entity to which the modified NP referred. As regards the second question, the study showed that the subjects were significantly more accurate when the use of 'the' was in accord with the commonly occurring sequences than when it was not. The pedagogical implications of these results are ussed.

1. Introduction

Since the Japanese language has no formal equivalent of the English article system, and English articles (e.g. the, (an), Ø)[1] have little lexical meaning, Japanese EFL learners often have difficulties in acquiring the rules of the English article system (see Whitman, 1974: 253, Master 1990: 461). Furthermore, since relatively little research (e.g. Yamada and Matsuura, 1982; Hiki, 1992) has been carried out in the area of English article acquisition by Japanese EFL learners, much work remains to be done to clarify the major difficulties which Japanese learners (or possibly ESL learners as a whole) have in acquiring the rules of the English article system and explore any implications for how English articles should be taught. The purpose of the present study is to see whether Japanese learners have a tendency to link the presence of a modifier after a head noun to the use of the definite article, which is not necessarily correct. If this tendency is found, it may imply the need for explicitly teaching that the presence of a modifier after the head noun does not necessarily guarantee the use of the definite article. The present study also examines whether the learners are dependent on commonly occurring sequences (e.g. *Where's the X?, the first X*, etc.) in their choice of articles irrespective of whether there is more than one potential referent in the situation relevant to speaker and hearer. If the study finds such dependency, then it may imply the need to caution against being too dependent on such sequences, and to teach that the definite article cannot be used when there is more than one alternative choice of referent available in the situation.

1.1 When to use the definite article

Since the present study is concerned with the choice of the definite article, I shall begin by discussing in what circumstances the definite article can occur. First of all, the referent should be assumed known to the hearer ([+HK]) as much research[2] (e.g. Brown (1973), Heubner(1979), Parrish (1987), Thomas (1989)) suggests.

(1)   I saw a funny-looking dog today (Brown, 1973: 342).

(2)   Go ask the guy over there (Parrish, 1987: 364).

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Thus the definite article can be used in example (2), but it cannot be used in example (1) even if the speaker 'does not have just any canine in mind but a very definite dog about whom he has a quite a

lot of information' (Brown, 1973: 343) because 'a funny-looking dog' is not assumed known to the speaker.

Furthermore, the use of the definite article is possible only when the referent exists and is unique within the range of potential referents which are mutually manifest to both speaker and hearer on-line (Hawkins, 1991 : 414). Thus, the definite article cannot be used when there is more than one possible referent in the situation relevant to both speaker and hearer.

(3)   Would you like a chocolate? (Lacey 1977: 36)

Therefore, a person with a box of chocolates would say 'a chocolate' as in (3) instead of 'the chocolate(s)' even if the referent(s) is(are) thing(s) that you have already seen before. As Lacey (1977: 36) explains, the indefinite article should be used when the choice is not restricted (see McEldowney 1977: 101 for a similar example). Thus, even if the referent is assumed known to both speaker and hearer, the definite article cannot be used if the referent is not unique (or if there is more than one possible referent) in the situation which is relevant to both speaker and hearer.

The restrictions described above should apply irrespective of whether the head noun is modified or not. Thus the use of 'the' instead of 'a' in example (4) would produce a syntactically correct sentence but the sentence would only be appropriate if it is known that there is only one person in the situation who meets the criteria.

(4)   I am looking for a person who can type more than 80 words a minute. (Koizumi 1989: 64)

The present study, therefore, examined one of the conditions to be met for the use of the definite article: the uniqueness of the referent in the situation relevant to both speaker and hearer on line. In order see to what extent the subjects understand what is meant by uniquely identifiable reference, the subjects' performance was compared in two conditions: (1) a modified NP of which the referent is unique in the situation and therefore requires the definite article, (2) a modified NP which is not unique and therefore requires the indefinite article. If the accuracy in the second condition (i.e. (2)) were lower than that in the first condition (i.e. (1)), it might indicate the subjects' tendency to use the definite article in a modified NP condition, and that the subjects do not understand that the definite article cannot be used where there is more than one possible referent in the situation relevant to speaker and hearer.

1.2   Knowledge of commonly occurring sequences and accuracy of definite article use

In the previous section, it was argued that the definite article can only be used when the referent is unique within a set of possible referents which are manifest to both speaker and hearer on line and that if the learner uses the definite article based on the rule, then he or she would use the definite article only when the referent of a NP is unique irrespective of whether the head noun is modified or not. In this section, the author argues that if the learner knows the rule just described, then he or she should also be able to use the definite article correctly irrespective of whether the relevant NP contains a commonly occurring sequence (e.g. *the first X*, etc.).

According to Pawley and Syder's view (1983), producing fluent stretches of connected discourse exceeds human capacities if novel speech has to be created from scratch. Therefore, fluent linguistic encoding is considered to be partly dependent on a repertoire of commonly occurring 'formulaic sequences (or structures)'. Similarly, Beaumont and Gallaway argue that L1 article selection

(particularly at the earliest stages) is often based on what they call learned chunks or memorized sequences (Beaumont and Gallaway, 1994: 166-170) which include the indefinite article used within the scope of negation (e.g. *I haven't got an X*) and in naming or existential utterances (e.g. *He's an X, There's an X*, etc.), or in object position after a limited number of verbs (e.g. *I've got an X, We saw an X, Yesterday I met an X*, etc.). They also include the definite article used in locative prepositional phrases (e.g. *in the X, cross the X*, etc.) and in the subject noun phrases introducing given information (see Rutherford 1987: 167 for 'topic-comment structure') as well as some 'co-occurrence restriction' examples (e.g. *the first, the next, the same, the thing is*, etc.). Thus Beaumont and Gallaway (1994) seems to suggest that L1 children tend to select articles based on the knowledge of commonly occurring sequences (e.g. the definite article (i.e. *the*) often precedes the word *first*).

Some may argue that some of these commonly occurring sequences are instances of rule-based language use rather than formulaic language use. For example, the use of *the* in (5) can be explained by the logical uniqueness implied by the adjective *last* because the book has only one last section. I agree, and in fact most examples of the commonly occurring sequences described above may be explainable in logical, syntactical terms. However, if the use of the definite article in sentences like (5) is far more accurate than that in sentences like (6), it would be difficult to explain such a result, because the rule should be equally available in both situations.

(5)   I began the last section of the book (Berry, 1993: 33).

(6)   Now it seems there might be a third choice (Berry, 1993: 34).

Furthermore, there are many sentences like (6). Therefore, it seems important that the learner has the ability to choose the correct article irrespective of whether the NP contains a commonly occurring sequence or not.

The present study also compared two English language proficiency groups (high and low proficiency groups). Both groups were expected to be less accurate in the non-formulaic use of the definite article (cf. (6)) than in the formulaic use of the definite article based on commonly occurring sequences (cf. (5)) because Parrish (1987)[3] indicated second language acquisition moves from formulaic language use to rule-governed language use. In other words, a lower accuracy is expected for the non-formulaic use of the definite article where the knowledge of rules rather than commonly occurring sequences can only lead to correct selection of the definite article.

2.   The studies

2.1.   Hypotheses

The main purpose was to investigate to what degree the learner's selection of the definite article is rule-governed. The following two hypotheses were examined:

(1)   the presence of a modifier after a head noun would tend to make the subjects choose the definite article even if the referent is not unique in the situation relevant to speaker and hearer.

(2)   the choice of the definite article in formulaic language use (i.e. commonly occurring sequences (e.g. *the third X, in the X*, etc.) is more accurate than in rule-governed language use.

2.2 Subjects

18 Yamaguchi University subjects and 93 Matsuyama University subjects participated in the experiment. The subjects were given a multiple choice cloze test (11 items) and a multiple choice article insertion test (60 items: see Appendix). The cloze test was chosen from those in Sato (1988: 186-187) and was about the tea party scene in *Alice in Wonderland*. The data from 12 subjects were excluded from the analysis because they could not complete the two tests in 15 minutes. The top 30 of the remaining 99 subjects in the cloze test were regarded as the more proficient learners of English (**HIGH**) while the bottom 30 were regarded as the less proficient learners (**LOW**). There was a significant difference between the two proficient groups in the mean scores for the cloze test ($t = 14.854$, df = 58, $p < .001$ [4]).

2.3 Test materials and procedure

The article insertion test (**ARTICLE** for short), which consisted of 60 questions, asked the subjects to complete each question sentence by circling either *the*, *a(n)* or X (the subjects were told to select X when neither *the* nor *a(n)* was necessary).

In order to test the first hypothesis, 4 types of NPs with modifier were prepared:

    (a)   **PP-DEF** (note: questions 9, 25, 37, 59 belong to this type)

    A: I often forget (a / the/ X) names of my students recently.

    B: You are getting old.

    (b)   **PP-INDEF** (note: questions 26, 34, 50, 53 belong to this type)

Freezing is (a / the / X) way of preserving food.

    (c)   **Relative Clause - Definite: RC-DEF** (note: questions 35, 40, 45, 47 belong to this question type)

I looked for (a / the / X) place where Mr. Ryoma Sakamoto was born but I couldn't find it.

    (d)   **Relative Clause - Indefinite : RC-INDEF** (note: questions 15, 55, 56, 60 belong to this question type)

In some countries, (a/ the/ X) person who steals a loaf of bread could be sent to prison.

Category (a) consisted of 4 questions in which the head noun was modified by a prepositional phrase and the referent was definite (**PP-DEF**) and category (b) consisted of 4 questions in which the head noun was modified by a prepositional phrase but the referent was indefinite (**PP-INDEF**). In the same way, category (c) consisted of 4 questions in which the head noun was modified by a relative clause and the referent was definite (**RC-DEF**), and category (d) consisted of 4 questions in which the head noun was modified by a relative clause and the referent was indefinite (**RC-INDEF**).

In order to test the second hypothesis, two types of questions were compared:

    (e)   **Commonly Occurring Sequences: COMMON** (note: questions 7, 11, 21, 32 belong to this question type)

I asked him to go with me. But (a / the / X) first word he said was ' No. '

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(f)   **Non-Commonly Occurring Sequences: NON-COMMON** (note: questions 19, 22, 43, 51 belong to this question type)

She often dreams of swimming in (a / the / X) beautiful sea off Greece.

Category (e) consisted of 4 questions in which the knowledge of commonly occurring sequences could lead to the correct answer (**COMMON**). Category (f) consisted of 4 questions in which the knowledge of such sequences could lead to the wrong article selection (**NON-COMMON**). In the present study, the author, using the idea of memorized sequences (Beaumont and Gallaway 1994), operationally defined the following sequences as commonly occurring sequences: the definite article used in some fixed contexts (e.g. *the first x* (question 11), *the only x* (question 32), *where is the x?* (i.e. the definite expression follows '*Where is*' (question 7)), and the definite article used in locative prepositional phrases (e.g. *on the X* question 43) . As Table 1 shows, the frequency of the commonly occurring sequences used in the test (e.g. the occurrence of *the* in the sequence ___ *first x*) is very high in the LOB corpus from h.dat to r.dat. Therefore, it seems legitimate to regard the sequences used in the test as commonly occurring sequences.

Table 1   The Frequency Statistics of Collocation Based on the LOB Corpus Data (from n.dat to r.dat)

Sequences	1)	2)	3)
Where's ___ ?	the (3)	she (1)	Corporal (1)
___ first	the (169)	at (19)	The (18)
___ third	the (9)	J (3)	a (3)
___ only	the (56)	not (53)	was (35)
There (there) is ___	no (40)	a (33)	an (8)
in ___	the (1919)	a (444)	his (232)
___ second	the (42)	a (26)	The (10)

Three most frequent collocates are listed: the number within parenthesis is the frequency which each collocate occurred in the position marked with the underline ('___').

Finally, the total score of the article insertion test (ARTICLE) as well as those of the above 6 types of questions were simply calculated by counting the number of correct responses. In the analysis of the test result, 2 (the high and low groups) X 6 (types of questions) two-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used because the analysis involved the comparison of more than two means (with more two means, t test cannot be used because the use of t test increases the chance of finding a

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spuriously significant result) and the two-way ANOVA can look at the interaction effect (proficiency group ~ question type) whereas one-way ANOVA cannot.

3.   Results

Table 2: The mean accuracy of the subjects in the six types of questions

| VAR.	OVERALL (n=99)			HIGH (n=30)			LOW (n=30)		
	Mean	(SD)	%	Mean	(SD)	%	Mean	(SD)	%
ARTICLE	32.5	(5.87)	54%	36.6	(5.86)	61%	27.8	(3.24)	46%
PP-DEF	2.02	(1.00)	51%	2.40	(1.00)	60%	1.90	(0.71)	48%
PP-INDEF	1.81	(1.20)	45%	2.00	(1.41)	50%	1.37	(0.81)	34%
RC-DEF	2.11	(1.06)	53%	2.47	(0.94)	62%	1.60	(0.89)	40%
RC-INDEF	1.49	(0.98)	37%	1.60	(0.81)	40%	1.27	(1.08)	32%
COMMON	2.12	(0.96)	53%	2.53	(0.86	63%	1.77	(0.90)	44%
NON-COMMON	1.62	(0.92)	41%	1.77	(0.97)	44%	1.30	(0.88)	33%

Standard Deviations (SD) are shown in parentheses, and the symbol '%' indicates the percentage ratio of the mean score to its maximum score (ARTICLE : 60, and each of the 6 types of questions : 4) . 'HIGH' means the more proficient group and 'LOW' means the less proficient group.

The result of 2 (PROFICIENCY GROUP: the high and low proficiency groups) X 6 (QUESTION TYPE: types of questions) two-way ANOVA analysis showed that the overall effect for GROUP was significant (F (1,58) = 26.34, p < .001), but there was no significant GROUP X TYPE interaction effect. This indicates that the more proficient group was constantly better than the less proficient group in all 6 questions types (cf. Table 2 and Figure 1).

Since the ANOVA analysis showed that the overall effect for TYPE was also significant (F (5,290) = 7.23, p < .001),an ad-hoc Tukey test[5] was conducted to discover the source of the significant effect for TYPE.

As Table 2 and Figure 1 show, the subjects were more accurate when the NPs modified by a PP required the definite article (PP-DEF: M=2.02, n=99) than when they did not (PP-INDEF: M=1.81, n=99) although the Tukey test does not show a significant difference between PP-DEF and PP-INDEF. A greater difference was found in the case of NPs with a relative clause: the Tukey test (p < . 05) showed the subjects were significantly more accurate when the NPs modified by a relative clause (RC-DEF: M= .11, n=99) required the definite article than when they did not (RC-INDEF: M=1.49, n=99) . Since the accuracy for PP-DEF, RC-DEF were higher than that for PP-INDEF, RC-INDEF respectively, there seems to be a general tendency for the subjects to use the definite article for the NPs modified by a PP or a relative clause even if there was more than one possible entity to which the modified NP referred. Thus the subjects did not seem to understand that the presence of a modifier does not necessarily justify the use of the definite article.

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Figure 1 The mean accuracy of the subjects on the six types of questions (%)
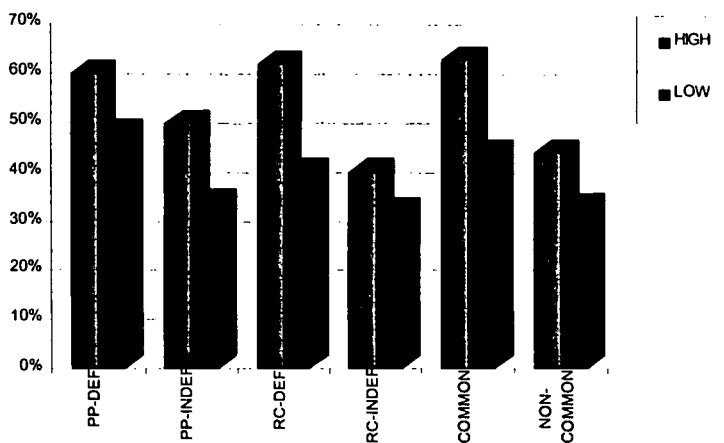
As regards the second hypothesis, the Tukey test (p < .05) showed that the subjects were significantly more accurate when the use of *the* was in accord with commonly occurring sequences (COMMON: M= 2.12, n= 99) than when it was not (NON-COMMON: M= 1.62, n= 99). The result pattern was exactly the same for both proficiency groups: the proficient group was consistently more accurate than the less proficient group on COMMON (M=2.53 for the high proficiency group and M=1.77 for the low group) as well as on NON-COMMON (M=1.77 for the high group and M=1.30 for the low group)[6]. Thus, regardless of English language proficiency, the subjects tend to be more accurate with COMMON than NON-COMMON. The pedagogical implications of this result will be discussed in the next section.

4.   Discussion

The accurate selection of the definite article probably requires understanding that a modifier after the head noun does not necessarily justify the use of the definite article. In other words, the correct selection of cataphoric *the* requires understanding that *the* cannot be used when there is more than one possible referent in the situation relevant to speaker and hearer. In this study, the subjects were less accurate when the NP modified by PP required the indefinite article (PP-INDEF) than when it required the definite article (PP-DEF). In the same way, in the NPs modified by a relative clause, the subjects were more accurate in the use of articles when the NP modified by a relative clause required the definite article (RC-DEF) than when it required the indefinite article (RC-INDEF). Thus there was a general tendency for the subjects to use *the* in front of modified NPs irrespective of whether the referent of a modified NP was unique in the situation. This seems to have an important pedagogical implication because the learner may benefit from being explicitly taught that *the* cannot be used when the referent is not unique in the situation relevant to speaker and hearer.

The second hypothesis was also supported in that the definite article was more accurate in formulaic language use (COMMON) than in rule-based language use (NON-COMMON). Assuming the tendency of English native speakers to rely on a repertoire of memorized expressions for a fluent encoding of a message, it may be natural that the subjects of the present study (not only the less proficient learners but also the more proficient learners) showed a general tendency to rely on memorized sequences rather than grammatical rules in their choice of articles. Yet it is important to

note that the native speaker's competence also includes the ability to select the right article irrespective of whether the NP contains a commonly occurring sequential pattern. In addition, it seems practical as well as beneficial to teach Japanese learners of English the conditions in which the definite article can occur (e.g. the definite article cannot be used when the referent is not unique in the situation relevant to speaker and hearer).

However, further research is necessary to specify in more detail the restrictions on where the definite article can occur. For instance, Zehler and Brewer (1982: 1273-4) explain that the definite article can be used in certain contexts even if the referent is not unique (e.g. 'John got hit on the leg by a bat.'[7]) if (a) the referent is one of a few like-items available; (b) the specification of the item is not particularly relevant for discourse continuity; and (c) the item is an intrinsic, highly predictable, element of the discourse context frame[8]. The specification of when the definite article can be used seems necessary in future research (including the specification of what is meant by 'a few like-items' relative to 'many like-items').

Notes

[1]   *Some* may also be considered as an article. For example, Whitman (1974: 256) points out that *May I have some water* rather than *May I have water?* is probably preferred because *water* (without *some*) sounds as if the speaker is referring to its conceptual character rather than its real character.

[2]   Although Brown (1973), Parrish (1987), Thomas (1989) defines [+definite] as [+SR (specific referent) + HK (assumed known to hearer), Master (1990: 467) seems to suggest that the [±SR] distinction may not necessarily be relevant to the selection of articles.

[3]   Parrish (1987) showed in her longitudinal study of a Japanese learner that the subject moved from correct article use based on memorized sequences to erroneous use of articles caused by over-generalization of acquired rules to idiomatic use.

[4]   Dan Robertson (personal communication) points out that, although it is a common practice to report values of p which are significant at various levels of significance (e.g. $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$) as a way of indicating the relative size of the effects as I am doing here, this practice may not be accepted by some as legitimate because the logic of the null hypothesis test requires that one establishes his or her criterion of statistical significance before conducting the test, and if the chosen level of significance is $p < 0.05$, then, this should be the only critical value which one should report, for all significant results.

[5]   Dan Robertson (personal communication) points out that the Tukey test is appropriate here, since it is more powerful than the Scheffe test when all possible pairs of means are compared (see Kirk 1982 for further discussion of post-hoc comparison tests).

[6]   The difference between the two groups was significant in COMMON ($p < .05$), but it is not in NON-COMMON by the Bonferroni test (which is commonly used instead of the t test when multiple comparisons of means are made in order to find a spuriously significant result). The Bonferroni test, based on Student's t statistic, adjusts the observed significance level for the fact that multiple comparisons are made. For example, if the pre-determined alpha level for the whole experiment at 0.05 and you want to carry out multiple comparisons among 6 means, then there are $(6x5)/2 = 15$ possible pairwise comparisons, so you set the alpha level per comparison at $0.05/15 = 0.0033$ and then carry out t tests in the usual way and compare the observed value of t with the critical value of t for the relevant degrees of freedom at an alpha level of 0.0033. In the present study, I set the alpha level per comparison at $0.05/6 = 0.0083$ since there were only 6 pairwise comparisons between the two proficiency groups (e.g. the comparison of means of the two groups in COMMON) (see Myers (1979) for further discussion). The significant difference between the two groups for COMMON but not for NON-COMMON seems to indicate that the major difference between the two groups lies in the knowledge of

commonly occurring sequences rather than that of the rules of the English article system. This also implies the possibility that even the proficient learners might benefit from being taught that the definite article cannot be used where there is more than one potential referent in the situation relevant to speaker and hearer.

[7]   See Pica (1983: 224) for a similar example.

[8]   H. Trappes-Lomax (personal communication) points out that the sentence 'He took me into the hall and turned on the light (or chandelier)" is perfectly acceptable, while the sentence 'He took me into the hall and turned on the golden chandelier' is much less likely to be acceptable because the hearer is by no means expected to anticipate that there will be a 'golden' chandelier in the hall.

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APPENDIX

The Article Insertion Test

(a)   **PP-DEF**

(9)   As soon as I got into the lift, I asked the operator to push (a / the / X) button for the 6th floor.

(25)   (A / The / X) beginning of the movie was boring.

(37)   A: I often forget (a / the / X) names of my students recently.   B: You are getting old.

(59)   I am studying (a / the / X) development of English agriculture.

(b)   **PP-INDEF**

(26)   Yesterday Tom saw (an / the / X) advertisement for a new drink. Then he went to the shop and bought a bottle of the new drink.

(34)   Freezing is (a / the / X) way of preserving food.

(50)   Robert is listening to (a / the / X) record of Mozart music.

(53)   I borrowed (a / the / X) book of 16th century British history.

(c)   **Relative Clause - Definite: RC-DEF**

(35)   (A / The / X) beef that is produced in the United Kingdom is not allowed to be exported to other European nations.

(40)   I looked for (a / the / X) place where Mr. Ryoma Sakamoto was born but I couldn't find it.

(45)   A: Have you got (a / the / X) record which you promised to lend me the other day? B:I am sorry, I forgot to bring it.

(47)   When the phone rang, Father was reading (a / the / X) new book he got for his birthday.

(d)   **Relative Clause - Indefinite : RC-INDEF**

(15)   When she was studying she heard (a / the / X) noise from the backyard which she had never heard before. She began to feel uneasy.

(55)   His wife left him at (a / the / X) time when he needed her very much.

(56)   In some countries, (a / the / X) person who steals a loaf of bread could be sent to prison.

(60)   English is (a / the / X) subject that he is slightly interested in.

(e)   **Commonly Occurring Sequences: COMMON**

(7)   A: Where's (a / the / X) coffee? B: It's on the table.

(11)   I asked him to go with me. But (a / the / X) first word he said was ' No. '

(21)   My room is on (a / the / X) third floor.

(32)   Jane is (an / the / X) only person I know at the party.

(f)   **Non-Commonly Occurring Sequences: NON-COMMON**

(19)   Be careful: there is (a / the / X) glass everywhere.

(22)   I have taken part in many competitions but never won (a / the/ X) first prize.

(43)   She often dreams of swimming in (a / the / X) beautiful sea off Greece.

(51)   A: What do you think of him. B: Honestly speaking I think he is (a / the / X) second-class player.

(g)   **OTHERS**

(1)   Excuse me, would you pass me (a / the/ X) salt, please?

(2)   A: We're going to (a / the / X) town center? Do you want to come with us?: Sure.

(3)   It was Sunday. So there was (a / the / X) large crowd in the zoo.

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(4) Japan is a country in Asia. (A / The / X)capital is Tokyo.

(5) A: Let's go to (a / the / X) restaurant this evening. B: That' s a good idea. Which restaurant shall we go to?

(6) That's interesting. Actually, this is (a / the / X) funniest story I have ever heard.

(8) A: Stop at the corner. (A /The / X) car might come. B: I don't see any cars, Mom.

(10) Would you like (a / the / X) Japanese tea?

(12) John hasn't got (a / the / X) job at the moment.

(13) A: Could you tell me the way to (a / the / X) city hall? B: Sure. Go along this street for three blocks and ....

(14) I have just seen (a / the / X) play that I can highly recommend to anyone.

(16) A: Why were you late for school today? B: Because (a / the / X) bus was late.

(17) A: How was (a / the / X) winter vacation, John? B: It was really good. I went to Hawaii.

(18) A: Any news about the brutal murder in the newspaper? B: Well, it says that (a / the / X) middle-aged man was arrested this morning.

(20) She was very kind. She gave me (a / the / X) best advice I could get as to the purchase of a house.

(23) A: Did you enjoy the lecture? B: Most of it but I didn't like (a / the / X) jokes.

(24) I had a pleasant time at the party yesterday. (A / The / X) wine was really good.

(27) The biggest problem in the world today is (an / the / X) air pollution.

(28) Most of (a / the / X) European nations are against whale fishing.

(29) I am living in (a / the / X) commercial area of Tokyo.

(30) Jane has a headache, so she' s going to (a / the / X) usual doctor.

(31) Be careful! (An / The / X) oven is still hot.

(33) When we were in Japan, we stayed at (a / the / X) small hotel in Kyoto.

(36) A: Did you see (a / the / X) baseball game yesterday? B: No, I didn't have time to see it.

(38) Look at (a / the / X) sharks. They look very hungry.

(39) A: Do you like to live in (a / the / X) city like this? B: No, not really. I prefer to stay in the country.

(41) We have (a / the / X) reliable information that a terrorist attack is planned next month.

(42) Many tourists are surprised to know that (a / the / X) houses are very expensive in Japan.

(44) A: What are you doing at college?   B: I am studying (a / the / X) modern Italian art.

(46) A: Do you want (a / the / X) ticket for the concert next month. I have some. B: Thanks.

(48) A: I saw (a / the / X) totally strange man near Kate's house. B: How scary.

(49) I got into the car. But (an / the / X) engine wouldn't start.

(52) Yesterday I met (a / the / X) girl who graduated from college this spring.

(54) I am studying (a / the / X) modern evolution of the English language.

(57) A: Where is (a / the / X) key, honey?   B: It's on the table in the kitchen.

(58) Have a good vacation. Don't forget to send me (a / the / X) postcard.

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NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS