

Chapter V

Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

Based on findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the two Indonesian teachers, teacher 1 and teacher 2, have acquired definite article *the* in their L2 article choice as suggested by both forced-choice elicitation task and observation data. As instantiated by the measure of supplied in the obligatory context (SOC) in the forced-choice elicitation task, teacher 1 could produce 92.5% accurate definite article *the*. In addition, teacher 2 was able to produce accurate *the* as much as 83.75%. Furthermore, the target-like use (TLU) measure of the task, teacher 1 and teacher 2 could accurately produce *the* as much as 83% and 73.6% respectively. To further corroborate such results, the observation results substantiated that both participants could produce accurate *the* as much as 92%. Since the results of SOC measure of the task and the observation data adhere to 80% and higher correct use (Brown, 1973; Andersen, 1978), it can be concluded that both participants have acquired definite article *the*.

Despite the high accuracy in producing *the*, teacher 1 still produced minor errors substantiating more omission errors with 5% and 5.6% than *a/an* misuse with 2.5% and 2.4% in both data sources respectively. Such omission errors are typical of L2 learners of English (Huebner, 1985; Master, 1987; Parrish, 1987; Thomas, 1989; Murphy, 1997; Robertson, 2000; Lu, 2001). In contrast, teacher 2 attested more *a/an* misuse in the task with 11.25% than omission with 5% yet the observation data instantiated more omission with 6.4% than *a/an* misuse with 0.7%. Based on the

results of the task, the higher misuse of *a/an* supports the developmental path of article acquisition proposed by Andersen (1978, cited in Kadaryanto, 2010, p. 14) in which *a/an* or \emptyset are acquired after *the*. Yet such results are not in line with Ekiert's finding (2005) that intermediate and advanced learners only misuse *a/an* at early stages of acquisition.

In terms of the use of indefinite articles *a/an* and \emptyset , both participants instantiated variability in such uses. As shown in the SOC analysis of the task, teacher 2 could accurately supply *a/an* as much as 90% and \emptyset as much as 70%. Such a result was also corroborated by the TLU analysis results in which she could produce *a/an* more accurately than \emptyset with 70.6% and 59.6% subsequently. However, the observation data instantiated that teacher 2 could produce \emptyset more accurately as much as 80.7% than *a/an* with 64.4%. Such variability in producing *a/an* and \emptyset indicates that the production of indefinite articles are evidently more elaborate than that of the definite article (Andersen, 1978, cited in Kadaryanto, 2010, p. 14).

Furthermore, teacher 1 also substantiated variability in producing *a/an* and \emptyset as shown in both data sources. On one hand, the SOC measure of the task attested that he could supply \emptyset more accurately than *a/an* with 77.5% and 75% respectively. On the other hand, the TLU analysis substantiated that when involving non-obligatory contexts, teacher 1 could produce *a/an* more accurately than \emptyset with the percentages of 69.8% and 53.5% subsequently. Furthermore, the results of the observation data support the SOC measure of the task yet contradicted the TLU measure of the task in which teacher 1 could produce \emptyset slightly more accurate than *a/an* with the percentages of 70.8% and 70.7% respectively. Despite the variability, teacher 1 attested slight differences in producing accurate *a/an* and \emptyset indicating that

the production of indefinite article is more complex than the definite article (Andersen, 1978, cited in Kadaryanto, 2010, p. 14).

In reference to the two data sources, the semantic-pragmatic context of definiteness contributed accurate use of *the* and *the* overuse or *the* flooding (Huebner, 1983; Master, 1987) to teacher 1's article choice. Such a context also contributed accurate use of *the* to teacher 2, yet it also contributed *the* underuse. Such results adheres to the results of the previous studies claiming that accurate use of *the* occurred earlier than *a/an* as the suggested developmental pattern (Huebner, 1983; Master, 1987; Parrish, 1987; Lardiere, 2004; Robertson, 2000; White, 2003; Zdorenko and Paradis, 2008, among others).

However, teacher 1 and teacher 2 have not encoded indefiniteness in their article choice since the uses of *a/an* and \emptyset were contrastingly different in the two sources of data. In addition, teacher 1 instantiated more omission errors of *a/an* while teacher 2 demonstrated more commission errors of overusing *a/an* as suggested by the UOC measure of the task¹. However, based on the observation data, teacher 1 attested almost similar accuracy in the use of *a/an* (70.7%) and \emptyset (70.8%). He still omitted *a/an* as much as 17.6% much higher than *the* misuse with only 5.4%. Furthermore, in contrast to the task, teacher 2 used \emptyset (80.7%) more accurately than *a/an* (64.4%). She omitted *a/an* (23.8%) much more than misused *the* (4%). Such omission errors are more typically produced by L2 learners with articleless L1 (Parrish, 1987; Thomas, 1989, among others).

In terms of specificity, based on the two data sources, both participants demonstrated that the semantic-pragmatic context of specificity contributed minor fluctuation to their article choice as evident in [+def, -spec] and [-def, +spec]

¹ Refer to page 66

contexts. In reference to the SOC measure of the task, teacher 1 instantiated low misuse of *a/an* (2.5%) and \emptyset (5%) in [+def,-spec] contexts. When required to supply *a/an* in [+spec] contexts, he demonstrated low overuse of *the* (5%). However, when required to supply \emptyset in [+spec] contexts, he overused *the* as much as 15%. It means that specificity contributed more fluctuation in the use of \emptyset . Furthermore, in the TLU measure of the task, teacher 1 showed the least accurate use of \emptyset in [+spec] contexts (59.3%) and followed by the use of *a/an* (63.6%). In UOC measure of the task, teacher 1 overused \emptyset (115%) and underused *a/an* (80%) in [+spec] contexts. In short, in teacher 1 article choice, specificity contributed more fluctuation to the use of indefinite articles of \emptyset contributing overuse and *a/an* contributing underuse subsequently.

In further details, based on SOC analysis, teacher 2 also showed minor fluctuation in [+def, -spec] contexts. She misused *a/an* (10%) more than \emptyset (7.5%) in such a context. However, fluctuation was invident in the use of *a/an* in [+spec] contexts. It was evident in the use of \emptyset as shown in the overuse of *the* (15%). Moreover, despite a slight difference in the TLU measure, she least accurately produced \emptyset (72.7%) and *a/an* (73.1%) in [+spec] contexts. In further analysis, UOC measure further instantiated different results from teacher 1 in which she underused \emptyset (90%) and overused *a/an* (125%) in [+spec] contexts. In short, specificity still plays a role in the participants article choice as exhibited in the low overuse of *a/an* and \emptyset in [+def,-spec] contexts used by both participants and the overuse of *the* in teacher 1 suppliance of *a/an* and in both teachers suppliance of \emptyset in [-def,+spec] contexts (IKW, 2003; Ionin, Ko, and Wexler, 2004).

In addition, there are other cases of overuse of *the* in [+def,+spec] contexts and *a/an* or \emptyset in [-def,-spec] contexts. Based on UOC measure of specificity, teacher 1 overused *the* in [+def,+spec] contexts as much as 102.5%. He also overused \emptyset in [-

def,-spec] contexts as much as 105%. However, teacher 2 only substantiated *a/an* overuse in [-def,-spec] as much as 110%. Such results indicated that the teacher 1 has not fully acquired (in)definiteness in his article choice while teacher 2 has not fully encoded indefiniteness in her article choice (Humphrey, 2007; Ionin, Zubizaretta, and Maldonado, 2008).

In terms of noun countability, both participants exhibited that noun countability triggered noun misidentification to their article choice². Teacher 1 demonstrated that the four types of nouns contributed to errors in his article production, i.e. abstract singular nouns, mass nouns, imaginable singular nouns, and imaginable plural nouns respectively. Meanwhile Teacher 2 showed that three types of nouns, i.e. abstract singular nouns, imaginable singular nouns, and mass nouns, contributed errors to her use of articles subsequently. The high omission errors attested by both participants in their article production in NPs containing abstract singular nouns suggest that Indonesian (L1) bare NPs which are indefinite in numbers, i.e. singular or plural (Kadaryanto, 2010) still play a role in their L2 article choice.

In addition, there are cases of two conflating variables out of the three variables, i.e. definiteness, specificity, and countability, contributed to the article choice of the two participants. Such accounts were shown in the task in which Teacher 1 omitted *the* in [+def, +spec] contexts with imaginable and abstract singular nouns and he also omitted *a/an* in [-def, -spec] contexts with imaginable and abstract singular nouns suggesting two conflating variables of noun misidentification (Hiki, 1991. Butler, 2002; White, 2009) and inaccurate (in)definiteness marking (Humphrey, 2007; Ionin, Zubizaretta, and Maldonado, 2008). Furthermore, Teacher 1

² Refer to page 90 and 93 for further details

also omitted *the* in [+def, -spec] contexts with imaginable and abstract singular nouns and he also omitted *a/an* in [-def, +spec] contexts with imaginable and abstract singular nouns suggesting two conflating variables of noun misidentification (Hiki, 1991. Butler, 2002; White, 2009) and specificity fluctuation (IKW, 2003; Ionin, Ko, and Wexler, 2004). In terms of mass nouns, Teacher 1 also produced *a/an* overuse in [-def, +spec] contexts in both data sources suggesting two conflating variables of noun misidentification (Hiki, 1991. Butler, 2002; White, 2009) and specificity fluctuation (IKW, 2003; Ionin, Ko, and Wexler, 2004). As a matter of fact, such conflating variables were evident in Teacher 2 article choice but not as frequent as Teacher 1. This study could not offer the significance between the two variables since such an attempt requires quantitative approach.

All in all, in relation to UG, the overall result shows that both participants have access to UG since they have acquired definite articles. However, in terms of indefinite articles, the access is partial since both participants also shows a minor degree of specificity effect as evident in low degree of fluctuation (IKW, 2003, 2004). In addition, L1 influence also plays a part in the article choice of both participants in terms of the noun countability (Kadaryanto, 2010).

5.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Relating to the scope of this study, further studies need to be conducted to explain which variable, i.e. definiteness, specificity, or noun countability, plays a more significant role in non-NESTs article choice by means of quantitative studies. In addition to non-NESTs with intermediate and advanced proficiency, the participants should also involve non-NESTs with lower proficiencies. Furthermore, it should also involve Indonesian EFL learners with different proficiency levels to better provide a clear notion of article choice produced by L2 learners with Indonesian L1.

Furthermore, as suggested by Trenkic (2007b) and Pongpairoj (2007), further studies need to be conducted on article choice distinguishing the semantic aspects of specificity [spec] and explicit speaker knowledge [ESK]. By doing so, the phenomenon of article choice can be further extended and addressed in line with the growing body of research in this area.

