

Analysis of Errors in the Use of French Articles by Iranian learners

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

French is one of the Roman languages and it is the second most modern language in the world. Now in Iran, French is the most popular language for people to learn after English (Barazesh, 1388). Considering the significant range of academic and non-academic French language teaching practices in Iran, we aimed to study the extent to which Iranian learners make errors while using articles. Furthermore, the causes of errors among Iranian learners in the process of using articles were investigated. As article is one of the challenging issues in learning French, Iranian language learners face major problems learning it.

According to previous research, the similarity of elements in the structure of mother tongue and second language can play an important and influential role in learning a second language (Parvizi, 1391). French language and Persian language are structurally different. The existence of differences in the structure of these two languages has resulted in cognitive difficulties in the process of learning French as a foreign language (Parvizi, 1391). Among the structural differences between French language and Persian language, we can mention the existence of articles in French grammar. In the process of learning French, most Iranian language learners have problems using articles. There is no concept in Persian language structure called “Articles” as in French. The high percentage of errors made by Persian language learners in recognition and proper use of articles led us to conduct a research in this field. In this research, we first sought to identify the errors of learners in the use of articles. In the second step, our goal was to find out the causes of these errors and provide solutions for avoiding them.

2. Method

To investigate the causes of errors in applying articles among French language learners, causal statistical analysis was utilized in the current study. The participants of this study

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were Iranian learners. In order to collect the data, quota sampling which is a non-random method was utilized. The participants were chosen based on two criteria. The first criterion was gender (male or female) and the second one was learners' level of knowledge (elementary, intermediate and advanced). Statistical analysis was carried out using inferential statistics based on the collected data from a grammar test. In these grammar tests, the participants were asked to answer questions that were designed to evaluate their use of articles. Then, completed grammar tests by the learners, with the correct and incorrect use of the articles, and the obtained statistical information were presented in separate tables and charts.

3. Discussion

The results of the study demonstrated that 57.5% of respondents responded incorrectly and only 42.5% of them responded correctly. The use of articles is sometimes confusing for Iranian language learners since articles must match the noun followed by them in French. Moreover, in Persian, the concept of article does not exist as it does in French. As a general rule, all nouns come with an article in French, unless preceded by a determinant, such as a possessive adjective or an attributive adjective. Moreover, in certain cases, in accordance with the rules of French language, removal of the article is required.

In French, articles are divided into four categories. The findings of the research revealed that the percentage of errors among Iranian learners is significant in the use of articles. These errors included grammatical errors and semantic errors.

4. Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that Iranian learners face major problems in the use of articles. In order to solve these problems, learners should create an accurate and clear picture of the articles from the very beginning. If learners have a clear picture of the role of articles with the help of a creative teacher from the very beginning, then, by practicing the use of these linguistic elements, they can convey these concepts with fewer errors. On the other hand, the role of educational resources should not be ignored. In fact, the educational resources available to French learners are limited to simple and marginal explanations and exercises regarding articles. Finally, it should be noted that most errors in the application of articles originally stem from the negative impact of the mother tongue, and they sometimes are due to interference of the mother tongue with the target language. These errors may occur because of learners' lack of knowledge to comply with rules or ignorance of some grammatical points that lead to mistaken use of articles.

Key Words: analysis of language learner's errors, language instruction, the article, French language, linguistics

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