1 THE CATEGORY OF DETERMINATION

Determination is a category which is implied in the grammar of any language. It consists of the opposition of definite and indefinite meanings. The term determination is not used by all authors. Some authors such as Bážlik use the term definiteness. Bážlik (1991, p. 51) distinguishes a grammatical category of definiteness and a semantic one. When the expression of definiteness depends on other grammatical categories (like countability and number), it is called a grammatical category. When definiteness is not expressed systematically and is not grammatically conditioned, we distinguish a semantic category of definiteness.

There are many ways of signalling determination in the languages of the world. The following division deals with three basic ways of expressing determination:

- expressing determination by using articles
- expressing determination without using articles
- expressing determination by using suffixes

1 Expressing determination by using articles

“In languages with the grammatical category of determination, a special subclass of determiners developed whose exclusive, or at least main, function is to serve as determiners, as indicators of determination. They are referred to as articles.” (Bážlik, 1991, p. 53)

The two basic types of articles are the definite article, which carries the definite meaning and the indefinite article, which carries the indefinite meaning. Except these two types, the English language has the zero article, which is implied as the definite article but is not pronounce, and the French language has a partitive article, which indicates an indefinite quantity of a mass noun. The English language does not have a partitive article, since it uses the determiner “some“ (any) to express quantity of a mass noun.

There are languages (German, French, Italian) which have both definite and indefinite articles, but there are also some which have just one of them. Languages such
as Welsh and the constructed languages as Esperanto or Ido have the definite article, but no indefinite article. For example, in Esperanto we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>la domo</th>
<th>domo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the house</td>
<td>house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, Hindi language has the indefinite article **ek** and no definite article.

In many European languages (Spanish, German) articles have more than one form, each corresponding to a particular gender and number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sing. masculine</th>
<th>sing. feminine</th>
<th>pl.masculine</th>
<th>pl.feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPANISH L.</td>
<td>el mundo</td>
<td>la cena</td>
<td>los aviones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH L.</td>
<td>the world</td>
<td>the dinner</td>
<td>the planes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the example above the English definite article **the** has four equivalents (**el, la, los, las**) in the Spanish language.

The English language has a similar rule for the indefinite article which corresponds with number of a noun.

“A noun in singular combines with **an** or **a**, in plural it takes the zero article instead, e.g. a book – books. With some nouns – those taking the zero ending in plural – the number distinction in the article is the only indication of number in the noun phrase.

They were looking for a sheep.

Sheep is a noun which can be used in both numbers, but does not change in form to distinguish them. The indefinite article used with it is the only indicator of number here, it shows that sheep is used in singular.“

(Bázlik, 1991, p. 53)

For more-detailed analysis of English articles, see chapter 2.

Except determination, number and gender, in some languages articles are indicators of case as well. For example, in the German language an article changes with the particular case. Since the German language distinguishes four cases, the definite article
occurs in four equivalent forms according to the particular case.

**sing. masculine**

N. *der* Bruder  
G. *des* Bruders  
D. *dem* Bruder  
A. *den* Bruder

Although articles in all languages express the same concept, their use may vary between languages. We can analyse it on the following examples:

a) whereas in the English grammar the zero article is used with nouns in general sense, in the Spanish language the definite article is used in those examples:

SPANISH L.  *La* ciencia es importante.  
ENGLISH L. ( ) Science is important.

b) whereas in the English grammar the zero article stands before the mass noun, the French grammar recommends the definite article:

FRENCH L.  *Le* maïs est un grain.  
ENGLISH L. ( ) Maize is a grain.

1.2 **Expressing determination without using articles**

There are languages (Latin, Russian, Serbian) which do not have a system of articles in their grammar. In spite of this fact, these languages have certain grammatical elements which serve to express determination. They are “translation equivalents” of the English definite and indefinite article. Determination in these languages can be
expressed either through word order or through other linguistic markers, such as possessive or demonstrative pronouns. The Slovak language belongs to this type of languages as well. For more-detailed analysis of markers of determination in the Slovak language, see chapter 3.

3 Expressing determination by using suffixes

In Scandinavian languages as well as in some languages on the Balkans the definite article can be a suffix. Bázlik (1991, p. 52) mentions the following examples of the definite article as suffix:

BULGARIAN L. grupata
ROMANIAN L. grupul
SWEDISH L. grupen
ENGLISH L. the group

The suffixes –ta, -ul, -en are equivalents of the English article the. The similar example is from Macedonian language:

MACEDONIAN L. drvo drvoto
ENGLISH L. tree the tree
2 THE USE OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

1 Determiners

The definition of determiners according to Quirk (1985, p. 253) is that “they are closed-class items, which occur before the noun acting as head of the noun phrase (or before its premodifiers)“. Determiners can be divided into these classes:

(I) PREDETERMINERS, e.g.: half, all, double
(II) CENTRAL DETERMINERS, e.g.: a, an, the
(III) POSTDETERMINERS, e.g.: many, few

“The three classes of determiners have been set up on the basis of their position in the noun phrase in relation to each other. Thus we do not find central determiner + predeterminer (*their all trouble), or postdeterminer + central determiner + predeterminer (*five the all boys), but only the order I + II + III given above: all their trouble, all the five boys.“ (Quirk, 1985, p. 253)

2 Articles

In the English language we distinguish these types of articles:

1. The definite article the
The definite article is written “the” when the initial sound of the following word is pronounced as a consonant as well as it is pronounced as a vowel. Thus we have: the car, the autumn.

2. The indefinite article a/an
The indefinite article is written “a“ when the initial sound of the following word is pronounced as a consonant. In case that the initial sound of the following word is pronounced as a vowel, it is written “an“. Thus we have: a car, a use, an orange.

3. The zero article ( )
In the English language there are some cases when we use neither definite, nor indefinite article, e.g.: ( ) dogs, ( ) water.

Articles as well as some pronouns (e.g. this, that, my, which) belong to the class of central determiners. In a noun phrase they can stand before a noun (a dog) or be followed by a modifier (a beautiful girl, the most interesting role).

“Determiners are mutually exclusive in English. That means that only one determiner is used in a NP.” (Bázlik, 1991, p. 56)
Thus we can say “the boy“, but we can not say “the my son“.

2.3 The use of articles

When we are studying the use of articles, we have to take into consideration two basic concepts:

a) countability vs. uncountability
b) specific vs. generic reference

a) countable and uncountable nouns
Countable nouns are nouns which can be counted. It means that they can have a singular form and a plural form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a dog</td>
<td>( ) dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the dog</td>
<td>the dogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uncountable nouns are nouns which we can not count. They have just a singular form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>furniture</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the furniture</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uncountable nouns can be divided into these subclasses:

1. **Food and Drink**: bacon, beer, bread, butter, coffee, cream, fish, fruit, ice cream, meat, milk, oil, rice, salt, sugar, tea, water...
2. **Substances**: gas, gold, iron, leather, paper, silver, steel, wood, wool...
3. **Abstract nouns**: advice, fun, happiness, health, information, intelligence, love, truth, wealth...
4. **Others**: equipment, furniture, jewelry, luggage, money, poetry, pollution, scenery, violence, weather... ([http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/esl.html](http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/esl.html))

There are some cases when a noun can be both countable and uncountable according to the context:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>countable</th>
<th>uncountable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you want one coffee or two coffees?</td>
<td>Coffee is made in Arabia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(coffee = a cup)</td>
<td>(coffee = substance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) specific vs. generic reference
A lion and two tigers are sleeping in the cage. (1)

( ) Tigers are dangerous animals. (2)

On the basis of these examples Quirk (1985, p. 265) explains specific and generic reference. In (1) the reference is specific, since we have in mind particular specimens of the class “tiger“. In (2) the reference is generic, since we are thinking of the class “tiger“ without specific reference to particular tigers. It is important to distinguish between specific and generic reference because there is a different use of articles in these references.

1 Common nouns

(I) The use of the definite article

The definite article can be used with singular countable nouns, plural nouns, as well as with uncountable nouns.

a) specific reference

In specific reference “the“ is used in these cases:

1. Immediate situation

It is a situation where there is the identity of the speaker’s and listener’s thinking.

- *Have you visited the castle?* The speaker and the listener share the idea of the same castle. They are either in front of the castle or they are looking at the photo.

- *Before we start talking about the problem, we should realize these factors.* The speaker uses the definite article because the listeners know
what problem they are going to talk about.

2. **Uniqueness**

The noun refers to a unique thing, person or place.

- *The Earth revolves around the Sun* once every 365 days. There is only one earth and only one sun in our solar system.
- *The President granted a pardon to 40 prisoners*. In this case we have in mind the specific person of a country and everyone in the country knows who is the president of their country.
- *the Equator, the Pope, the Renaissance, the moon*

3. **Anaphora**

The noun has already been mentioned.

- *I saw an interesting film yesterday. The film was directed by Steven Spielberg*. When we mention some information for the first time, we use the indefinite article. When the information is repeated, we use the definite article.
- *John bought a new bicycle, but found that one of the wheels was defective*. In the first part of the sentence we mention “a new bicycle“, what is a new information. Therefore we use the indefinite article. On the other hand, in the second part of the sentence we use the definite article in “the wheels“, because we know that a bicycle has wheels.

4. **Cataphora**

A phrase (a clause) which follows the noun helps the listener to specify a thing or a person.
Do you know the boy who is standing in front of the door? The speaker and the listener have in mind the same person, because there is just one boy standing in front of the door.

“John is reading a book about quantum physics. Here the noun “book” is modified by the phrase “about quantum physics”. But there is undoubtedly more than one book about quantum physics. Therefore, to make “book” definite, we would have to add more information: “the book about quantum physics that was assigned by Professor Jackson last week.”

(http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/esl.html)

5. Sporadic reference
There is the reference to an institution of human society.

- My sister goes to the theatre every month. One explanation for the use of the definite article is that my sister visits the specific theatre in the city. But there is also another explanation. Under “the theatre” we understand the institution which may be observed at various places and times.

- the television, the radio, the news

6. Predeterminers and adjectives
There are predeterminers and adjectives which make the situation unique.

- superlative expressions: Betty was the tallest girl in the classroom. It is clear that Betty was the only one girl in the classroom who was the tallest.

- comparative expressions: The more you learn, the more clever you are.

- ordinal numerals: He was the first man who reached the North Pole.

- general ordinals: The next bus leaves at 5 o’clock.

7. Body parts
The noun refers to body parts.

- Mary banged herself on her forehead. In the prepositional phrase “on her forehead” the possessive pronoun “her” can be substituted for “the”, because there is the reference to the object. Thus this sentence is correct: “Mary banged herself on the forehead.”
- “She throws the ball with her left hand.” Quirk (1985, p. 271) says that “the possessive pronoun must be used if the body part does not refer to what is denoted by the direct object.” Therefore we can say: “She throws the ball with the left hand” just in the interpretation that she is left-handed.

b) generic reference

In generic reference Quirk (1985, p. 282) discusses the following cases of the use of the definite article:

1. The noun refers to a class represented by its typical specimen.
   - No one knows precisely when the wheel was invented. “The wheel” symbolizes an archetype and it includes all the wheels in general.

2. The noun refers to musical instruments and dances.
   - Kate plays the piano every day.
   - I have been dancing the tango for one year.

3. In plural noun phrases the noun phrase refers to the people of a nationality or an ethnic group.
   - What do you think about the Chinese?
   - the Japanese, the Greeks, the Italians, the Russians, the Americans, the Danes, the Finns
4. There is a phrase with an adjective head referring to a **group of people**.
  - *The* blind have better sense for feeling than the others.
    Under “the blind“ we understand all the people who are blind.
  - *the* poor, *the* rich, *the* unemployed

(II) **The use of the indefinite article**

The indefinite article is used only with singular countable nouns.

**a) specific reference**

In specific reference “a“ (an) is used in these cases:

1. We bring a **new information**, which has not been mentioned yet.
   - *I have got a new job. The job is not demanding.* The speaker informs us about his job. When he mentions it for the first time, he uses the indefinite article. When the new information is repeated, we have to use the definite article.

2. The noun refers to an **occupation**. The noun phrase then functions as complement.
   - *Carol is a teacher.*
   - *He is an engineer.*

3. The noun refers to **nationality** or **religion**.
   - *John is an Englishman.*
   - *Jenny is not a Catholic.*

4. The sentence starts with the existential expression “there is“.
   - *There is a table in the middle of the room.*
   - *There is a crowd of people standing in front of the shop.*
5. The indefinite article can be substituted for “one“.
   - The sweater costs a hundred and fifty. “A hundred“ is used in the sense of “one hundred“.
   - I will stay for a day or two. In this sentence “for a day or two“ means “for one day or two“.

6. The indefinite article can be substituted for “every“ in expressions of time and quantity.
   - How much do the potatoes cost? Twenty crowns a kilo. It means that every kilo of the potatoes costs twenty crowns.
   - Suzie’s pulse was 80 strokes a minute. (= 80 strokes per every minute )

7. The indefinite article follows the predeterminers WHAT, SUCH, MANY, HALF, QUITE, RATHER.
   - What a beautiful day!
   - He is such a fool!
   - It took him half an hour.
   - Terry is quite a nice fellow.

b) generic reference

According to Quirk (1985, p. 281) in generic reference “a, an“ is used in the case that we have in mind any representative member of the class. Thus any can be substituted for a/an.

   - The best way to learn a language is to live among its speakers. Under “a language“ we mean any language.

(III) The use of the zero article
The zero article is used with plural nouns and uncountable nouns.

**a) specific reference**

In specific reference Quirk (1985, pp. 277-281) mentions these types of the use of the zero article:

1. The noun refers to an **institution of life and society** and someone is a part of that institution. Thus we do not have in mind the actual buildings, but the institutions associated with them.
   
   - John went to ( ) sea when he was a child. (John is a sailor)
   
   - Peter has been in ( ) hospital for ten days. (Peter is a patient)

   But:

   - I was in the hospital for one hour. (I was a visitor)

Eastwood (2005, p. 206) presents another examples of this type of nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Without article</th>
<th>With article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bed</strong></td>
<td>stay in ( ) bed, go to ( ) bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church</strong></td>
<td>be in/at ( ) church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class</strong></td>
<td>be in ( ) class (= in a lesson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College</strong></td>
<td>be at/in ( ) college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Court</strong></td>
<td>go to ( ) court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home</strong></td>
<td>stay at ( ) home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jail</strong></td>
<td>be in ( ) jail (= as a prisoner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prison</strong></td>
<td>be in ( ) prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td>be in/at ( ) school (= as a pupil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town</strong></td>
<td>meet in ( ) town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University</strong></td>
<td>be at ( ) university (a student)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The noun refers to **means of transport and communication**.

   - *I usually go to school by ( ) bus.*

Another examples are presented in the charts below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>travel</th>
<th>by</th>
<th>bike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>leave</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>plane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| communicate | by | radio |
| communication | by | telephone |
|              |    | post   |
|              |    | mail   |

3. There is the reference to **times of day and night**.

   - *Jane came back before ( ) morning came.*
   - *at ( ) sunset, at ( ) sunrise, at ( ) night, by ( ) night,*
   - *after ( ) fall, before ( ) morning, before ( ) night*

4. The noun refers to a **season**.

   - *She came to England in ( ) summer.*
   - *in ( ) winter, in ( ) autumn, in ( ) spring*

However, the definite article has to be used when we have in mind the particular season.

   - **The spring** of 1995 was an exciting time.

Despite the grammar rules, nowadays there is a tendency to put the article before a season:

   - *On the beach there are many people in the summer.*
5. The noun refers to **meals**.

- *When is ( ) lunch usually served?*
- *She got up and went to ( ) breakfast.*

Another examples are mentioned in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stay for</th>
<th>breakfast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>brunch (in US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at/for</td>
<td>supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coctails (in US)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The noun refers to **illnesses**.

The question of the use of articles with illnesses and diseases is a controversial one because the authors of grammar books do not agree on the same rules.

Hais (1991, p. 62) introduces these rules for the use of articles with illnesses and diseases:

a) zero article is used with these illnesses:

- *() pneumonia, () bronchitis, () influenza, () fever, (*)
- *() cancer, () lumbago, () sunstroke*

b) the article is used when the illness is described:

- **The meningitis was extremely mild last winter.**

c) sometimes it is possible to omit the article and use it at the same time:

- *to have (the) toothache, to have (the) measles, to have a flu*
According to Quirk (1985, pp. 279-280) articles are used in this way:

a) the zero article combines with these illnesses:
   - ( ) anaemia, ( ) appendicitis, ( ) diabetes, ( ) influenza,
   - ( ) pneumonia

b) it is possible to use or omit the article in:
   - (the) flu, (the) measles, (the) mumps, (the) chicken pox

c) the article is obligatory in:
   - the/a plague, the bends, the jitters, the/a bellyache,
   - a fever, a temperature, a cold, a headache

When we look at different grammar books, we find several examples where the use of articles with illnesses and diseases differs. A typical example is plague. Whereas grammar books recommend the use of the definite or indefinite article, according to Kadorová, Ondráčková (2005, p. 26) it is not necessary to use an article. Another example is chicken pox. According to grammar books we can use or omit the definite article, but Kadorová, Ondráčková (2005, p. 26) do not use any article.

There is one more rule which helps us to decide for an article or not. “If an illness is understood as uncountable and abstract, the zero article is preferred. On the contrary to this, if an illness or disorder is countable and somehow visible or touchable, the indefinite article is used. (a mole, a wart, a hernia, an aneurysm, an allergy)”

(Kadorová, Ondráčková, 2005, p. 27)

7. There are fixed expressions which consist of a pair of nouns with the same meaning.
   - They were coming ( ) hand in ( ) hand.
   - ( ) arm in ( ) arm, ( ) face to ( ) face, ( ) day by ( ) day,
   - ( ) back to ( ) back, ( ) side by ( ) side, ( ) eye to ( ) eye,
   - ( ) mile upon ( ) mile
There are **fixed expressions** which consist of a pair of nouns **with the opposite meaning**.

- The soldiers moved from ( ) east to ( ) west.
- from ( ) father to ( ) son, distinguish between ( ) right and ( ) wrong, from ( ) first to ( ) last, from ( ) head to ( ) foot, ( ) husband and ( ) wife, from ( ) beginning to ( ) end

**b) generic reference**

According to Quirk (1985, p. 282) in generic reference the zero article is used in case when we have in mind any class considered as an **undifferentiated whole**:

- ( ) Cigarettes are bad for your health.
- ( ) Hydrogen is lighter than ( ) oxygen.
- ( ) Necessity is the mother of ( ) invention.
- ( ) Hunger and ( ) violence will continue to mark the future of ( ) mankind.
2.3.2 Proper nouns

1. The use of the definite article

Hais (1991, pp. 52-54) discusses these examples of the use of the definite article with proper nouns:

a) Geographical names:

(I) countries of a plural form:
   - the United States, the Netherlands, the East Indies, the Ukraine, the Sudan

(II) rivers, seas and oceans:
   - the Thames, the Ganges, the Mississippi, the Danube,
   - the Pacific Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean (Sea), the Baltic (Sea)

(III) range of mountains, groups of islands:
   - the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Himalays
   - the Hebrides, the Canaries, the Philippines

b) Proper names:

(I) some famous buildings:
   - the Houses of Parliament, the British Museum, the Tower, the Kremlin

But
• ( ) St. Paul’s Cathedral, ( ) Westminster Abbey, ( )
London Bridge

(II) some literary works, newspapers and periodicals:
• the Koran, the Last Judgement, the Times, the London
  Review of Books

(III) tituls:
• the Emperor, the Tsar, the Sultan, the Archduke

2. The use of the zero article

Quirk (1985, pp. 288-294) discusses the following use of the zero article
with proper nouns:

  a) Geographical names

(I) continents
• ( ) America, ( ) Australia, ( ) Europe, ( ) Asia,
  ( ) Africa, ( ) Antarctica
But
• the Arctic

(II) countries, counties, states
• ( ) England, ( ) Scotland, ( ) Canada, ( ) Brasil
But
• the Argentine, the Saar, the Sahara, (the) Sudan, (the) -
  Ukraine, (the) Sinai, (the) Yemen

(III) cities, towns
• ( ) Boston, ( ) Rome, ( ) Brussels, ( ) New York
But

- *The* Hague, *The* Bronx

(IV) lakes

- ( ) Ladoga, ( ) Silver Lake, ( ) Lake Michigan

But

- *the* Great Salt Lake

(V) mountains

- ( ) Mount Everest, ( ) Mont Blanc, ( ) Vesuvius

But

- *the* Matterhorn, *the* Eiger

b) Proper names:

(I) personal names

- ( ) Margaret, ( ) Jane, ( ) Mark
- ( ) Wilson, ( ) Smith, ( ) Riordan
- ( ) Mr. and ( ) Mrs. Johnson, ( ) Lord Nelson

But

- “A Mr Jones came to see you this afternoon. (I do not know which Mr. Jones)” (Longman, 2003, p. 274)

(II) temporal names (festivals, religious periods, names of months and days of the week)

- ( ) Christmas Day, ( ) Independence Day, ( ) Easter,
  ( ) New Year, ( ) New Year’s Eve
- ( ) January, February, ( ) Monday, ( ) Friday

But

- *It happened on a Monday in June.* (I do not know the date exactly)
3  THE CATEGORY OF DETERMINATION IN THE SLOVAK LANGUAGE

Since most of Slovak noun phrases do not contain a determiner, it can often be difficult to distinguish whether the noun phrase carries semantically definite or indefinite information:

Našiel som psa.

In the sentence above it is not clear whether the meaning is definite or indefinite. The sentence can carry both the meanings:

**def. meaning**  Našiel som **toho** (môjho, vášho) psa.
I found the/that (my, your) dog.

**indef. meaning**  Našiel som **nejakého** (jedného) psa.
I found a/some (one) dog.

Although the Slovak language does not have a system of articles, there are parts of speech which help to indicate whether a noun phrase is definite or indefinite. They can be divided into three groups:

1. **demonstrative pronouns** (ukazovacie zámená)
In the Slovak language there is one more way of signalling determination – **word order** (slovosled). In the following part we will deal with all the ways of expressing determination in the Slovak language.

## 1 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns seem to be semantically definite since they separate a thing, person or object from the others of the same class. They express whether the thing, person or object is near or distant to the speaker.

Those demonstrative pronouns which express that the thing, person or object is near to the speaker are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ten</th>
<th>tento</th>
<th>tento tu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the/that</td>
<td>the/this</td>
<td>the/this one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast with the English language where demonstrative pronouns agree just with number as a grammatical category, in the Slovak language they agree with gender and case as well. Thus each of the above-mentioned pronouns has many forms, each of them with the corresponding gender, case and number. We demonstrate it on the demonstrative pronoun **ten**:

**Sing. masculine**

N. ten
As can be seen, the Slovak language distinguishes seven cases. Thus the pronoun “ten” has many equivalents according to the particular case.

Those demonstrative pronouns which express that there is a distance between a thing, person or object and the speaker are:

```
  tamten       tamto ten
  the/that     the/that/that one
```

Similarly, both the above-mentioned Slovak pronouns change their form with the particular gender, case and number. Thus, in nominative case we have “tamten muž“ (the/that man) for singular masculine, but in genitive case we have “tamtoho muža“ (the/that man).

2 **Indefinite pronouns**

The class of indefinite pronouns, which indicates that a noun phrase is indefinite, consists of these pronouns:

```
  nejaký       dajaký       vol'jaký
  a/some       a/some        a/some
```

The declension of this type of indefinite pronouns is similar to the declension of the demonstrative pronoun “ten“.

There is one more pronoun – **jeden** (one) which is included in this class of
pronouns. It carries the indefinite meaning of a noun phrase as well:

Bolo tam **jedno** dieťa.
There was a/one child.

3 Possessive pronouns

The class of possessive pronouns seems to carry the definite meaning since it expresses the speaker’s possession to a thing, person or object. Like in the English language, Slovak possessive pronouns are derived from personal pronouns. The following table presents possessive pronouns with the corresponding personal pronouns in both languages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>personal pronoun</th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>possessive pronoun</td>
<td>ja (I)</td>
<td>môj (my)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>personal pronoun</td>
<td>ty (you)</td>
<td>tvoj (your)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>possessive pronoun</td>
<td>on, ona, ono (he, she, it)</td>
<td>jeho, jej (his, her, its)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>personal pronoun</td>
<td></td>
<td>ich (their)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Slovak language possessive pronouns agree with number, gender and case as well. There is no such a distinction in the English language. The only exception is the third person plural where there is gender distinction similar to the gender distinction in the Slovak language.

There is another distinction between Slovak possessive pronouns and the English ones. In the Slovak language “the same pronoun may be used either as a noun
phrase-pronoun or as a determiner-pronoun.” (Bázlik, 1991, p. 112)

Thus both these sentences are correct:

(1) Moja sestra je v škole.
(2) Moja je v práci.

In the sentence (1) the possessive pronoun “moja” functions as a noun phrase-pronoun. In the sentence (2) the same pronoun functions as a determiner-pronoun. The English translation of these two sentences is:

(1) My sister is at school.
(2) My is at work

In this case the sentence (2) is incorrect because the possessive pronoun “my“ functions just as a determiner-pronoun. To make the sentence correct we have to put “mine“ instead of “my“:

Mine is at work.

It has been said that Slovak possesive pronouns make the reference definite. Since in the Slovak language it is possible to use more than one pronoun before a noun, the following noun phrase is correct:

jeden môj priateľ

The noun phrase contains two pronouns – the possessive pronoun “môj“ and the indefinite pronoun “jeden“ . The possessive pronoun “môj“ is supposed to be definite, but when we put the indefinite pronoun “jeden“ before it, the reference looses the definite meaning and the whole noun phrase is indefinite.

In the Slovak language there is a reflexive possesive pronoun “svoj“ which can be used instead of a possesse pronoun in some cases. It does not change its form with
3.4 Word order

“The generalization that the initial part of the sentence (clause) typically carries “given“ information, and the final part of the sentence (clause) carries “new“ information was first brought to the attention of the linguistic community by the scholars of the Prague school.”

(http://www.rceal.cam.ac.uk/working%20Papers/trenkic.pdf)

It has been noted that such a phenomenon occurs in all the languages, not just in those with a system of articles. On the basis of this fact the initial part of a sentence (clause) is considered to be definite and the final part of a sentence (clause) is considered to be indefinite.

In the Slovak language a change of word order causes that the definite reference changes into indefinite and vice-versa:

(1) Skončila vojna. (A war finished.)
(2) Vojna skončila. (The war finished.)

In the sentence (1) the noun phrase “vojna” is in the final position of the sentence, therefore the reference is indefinite. When we put the noun phrase into the initial position of the sentence, the reference is definite. In the English translation of these two sentences the change of the meaning is marked by the change of articles.
4 EQUIVALENTS OF ENGLISH ARTICLES

The chapter is interested in a specific English text and its Slovak translation as well. It deals with the use of articles in the English text and the subsequent translation in the Slovak language. It studies the ways of how an English sentence with an article is translated into the Slovak language and adds some other possible translations.

When studying a Slovak translation of the English text it has been noted that no Slovak sentences (clauses) do translate an article exactly. It is the result of the difference between the Slovak morphology and the English one. Whereas in the English
morphology it is necessary to use a determiner before a noun, in the Slovak morphology it is grammatically correct to omit it.

“When the table was cleared, the broken bread collected, the sugar and butter safe under lock and key, she began to reconstruct the interview which she had had the night before with Polly.”

(Dubliners – The Boarding house, 1996, p. 69)

“Keď bol stôl uprataný, kásky chleba pozbierané a cukor aj maslo bezpečne pod zámkou, spomínala na včerajši večerný rozhovor s Polly.”

(Dublinčania – Penzión, 1980, p. 64)

Unlike in the English language, in the Slovak language it is possible to omit the whole noun phrase. However, the omission depends on the context:

“I objected that the boys were too small, and so we walked on...“

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 21)

“Namietal som, že sú primalí, a tak sme sa pobrali d’alej...“

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 19)

There are some ways in the Slovak language by which determination is expressed:

- Word order as a signal of determination
- A demonstrative pronoun instead of the definite article
- A possessive pronoun instead of the definite article
- An indefinite pronoun instead of the indefinite article

These ways are studied individually in the following subchapters.

4.1 Word order as a signal of determination

1 A noun phrase in the initial position of a sentence
It has been noted in the previous chapter that the “given“ information precedes a "new“ one. In the English language the “given“ information is expressed by the definite article, a „new“ one by the indefinite article. One of the ways of translating the definite article into the Slovak language is to put the phrase (clause) into the initial position of a sentence.

In such a way this English sentence is translated:

“It was Joe Dillon who introduced the Wild West to us.“

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 18)

“S divokým západom nás zoznámil Joe Dillon.“

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 16)

In the English sentence there is the definite article although this is the first sentence of the story which brings a “new“ information. It is caused by the fact that the first sentence signalizes what the whole story is about. The following lines describe the features of the Wild West. (the cataphorical use of the definite article)

In the Slovak sentence the phrase “s divokým západom“ is put into the initial position of the sentence to mark that the reference is definite.

There is a different use of the definite article in the following sentence:

“There was nobody but ourselves in the field.“

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 24)

“The field“ has been mentioned in the text for several times, therefore it is correct to use the definite article. (the anaphorical use of the definite article)

The Slovak translation of the sentence is:

“Na lúke okrem nás nebol nikoho.“ (Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 21)

As can be seen in the translation, the phrase “in the field“ is translated as “na lúke“ and put in the initial position of the sentence.

The following example is similar to the previous one:
“After an interval the man spoke to me.”

"Po chvíli ma chlap oslovil."

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 27)

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 21)

In the English sentence the use of “the” is anaphorical because “the man” has been mentioned yet in the story. The noun phrase “the man” is translated as “chlap” and it precedes the verb phrase “oslovil”. Although it follows the adverbial phrase “po chvíli”, it would be correct to put the noun phrase at the beginning of the sentence:

Chlap ma oslovil po chvíli.

Word order in the Slovak translation would be different, if the article in the English sentence changed:

After an interval a man spoke to me.

Po chvíli ma oslovil chlap.

The noun phrase “a man” is again translated as “chlap“, but it is put into the final position of the sentence.

2 A noun phrase in the final position of a sentence

It has been mentioned that a noun phrase (clause) in the final position of the sentence carries a “new“ information. Such a situation can be seen in the following sentence:

“A spirit of unruliness diffused itself among us, under its influence, differences of culture and constitution were waived.”

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 18)

“Medzi nami sa rozmohol nepoddajný duch a pod jeho vplyvom sme zabúdali na rozdiely vo vzdelaní aj v telesnej sústave.“
The indefinite noun phrase “a spirit of unruliness“ is translated as “nepoddajný duch“ and is put into the final position of the sentence.

There are two more possible translations of the English sentence. The first one uses the Slovak indefinite pronoun “akýsi“ (some) without the change of word order in the sentence:

Medzi nami sa rozmohol akýsi nepoddajný duch a pod jeho vplyvom sme zabúdali na rozdiely vo vzdelaní aj v telesnej sústave.

The second translation uses the pronoun “akýsi“ as well, but the noun phrase changes its position in the sentence:

Akýsi nepoddajný duch sa rozmohol medzi nami pod jeho vplyvom sme zabúdali na rozdiely vo vzdelaní aj v telesnej sústave.

If an indefinite pronoun is missing in the sentence, the noun phrase looses the indefinite meaning and these two sentences are equivalent:

The spirit of unruliness diffused itself among us, under its influence, differences of culture and constitution were waived.

Nepoddajný duch sa rozmohol medzi nami pod jeho vplyvom sme zabúdali na rozdiely vo vzdelaní aj v telesnej sústave.

The following example demonstrates the use of both the definite and indefinite article in one sentence:

“Refreshed by this, Mahony chased a cat down a lane, but the cat escaped into a wild field.“  

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 23)
When “the cat” is mentioned for the first time, the indefinite article is used. When it is mentioned for the second time, we use the definite article. In the Slovak translation the phrase “za mačkou” is in the final position of the clause, the second clause starts with the noun phrase “mačka” to express that the meaning is definite.

The position of a noun phrase in the sentence (clause) does not necessarily mark that the noun phrase is definite (indefinite). This is demonstrated on the following example:

“Leo Dillon was afraid we might meet Father Butler or some one out of the college...“  
(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 20)

“Leo Dillon sa bál, že by sme mohli stretnúť otca Butlera alebo niekoho zo školy...“  
(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 18)

Although the English sentence uses the definite article in the phrase “out of the college“, its Slovak equivalent is put into the final position of the sentence. It is caused by the fact that the English sentence can be translated also in this way:

Leo Dillon sa bál, že by sme mohli stretnúť otca Butlera alebo niekoho z našej školy...

Such a translation is a combination of both word order and the use of a demonstrative pronoun as ways of expressing determination. The use of the Slovak possessive pronoun “našej“ (our) signalizes that it is clear what college we have in mind and the reference is definite.

1 A demonstrative pronoun instead of the definite article

Generally, there is a close relationship between demonstrative pronouns and the
definite article. It is claimed that demonstrative pronouns are the source of the definite article. The definite article as well as a demonstrative pronoun is used in cases where the reference is known. Therefore it is possible to use a demonstrative pronoun instead of the definite article in a translation. Both in the Slovak language and in the English language demonstrative pronouns link a sentence (clause) with the previous one. Such a situation is presented in the following example:

“He described to me how he would whip such a boy, as if he were unfolding some elaborate mystery. He would love that, he said, better than anything in this world, and his voice, as he led me monotonously through the mystery, grew almost affectionate and seem to plead with me that I should understand him.” *(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 28)*

“Opisoval mi mlátenie chlapca, ako keby mi odhaľoval nejaké zložité tajomstvo. Nič na tom svete by ho vrah váčšmi netešilo, a hlas mu takmer znežnel, keď ma monotónne oboznamoval s tým tajomstvom, ba akoby priam prosil o pochopenie.” *(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 25)*

In the English original the definite article is used anaphorically as it refers to the mystery which has been described in the previous sentence. In the Slovak translation the demonstrative pronoun “tým” is used instead of the definite article. It can be noted that the use of the Slovak demonstrative pronoun is also anaphorical.

The use of the demonstrative pronoun is anaphorical in the following example as well:

“He and his fat young brother Leo, the idler, held the loft of the stable while we tried to carry it by storm, ...“ *(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 18)*

“On a jeho tučný mladší brat Leo, ten lenivec, obsadili senník nad maštaľou, a my sme sa usilovali dobyť ho útokom, ...“ *(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 16)*

The definite article in the noun phrase “the idler“ refers to the “known“ person – Leo. In
the Slovak language the article is replaced by the demonstrative pronoun “ten”. In this case the Slovak noun phrase “ten lenivec” carries the emotional meaning as it expresses the speaker’s negative attitude to Leo. The noun phrase is emphasised by the demonstrative pronoun “ten”.

It has been mentioned that demonstrative pronouns carry the definite meaning. Therefore in the Slovak language they are considered to be translation equivalents of the definite article only. The following example is a specific one where the demonstrative pronoun is the equivalent of the English indefinite article:

“Mahony asked why couldn’t boys read them – a question which agitated and painted me because I was afraid the man would think I was stupid as Mahony.”

“Mahony sa opýtal, prečo by ich chlapci nemohli čítať, a tá otázka ma pobúrala a zamrzela, lebo som nechcel, aby si ten chlap myslel, že som hlúpy ako Mahony.”

The English indefinite noun phrase “a question” is in the Slovak language translated as the definite noun phrase “tá otázka“. If we look at the translation from the syntactic point of view, whereas the English noun phrase is followed by the relative clause “which agitated and painted me“, the structure of its Slovak translation differs. If the structure of the Slovak sentence retained the structure of the original sentence, the translation would be:

Mahony sa opýtal, prečo by ich chlapci nemohli čítať – otázka, ktorá ma pobúrala a zamrzela, lebo som nechcel, aby si ten chlap myslel, že som hlúpy ako Mahony.

The meaning of the sentence is considered to be neutral. The structure of the underlined clause in the English sentence changes to express the speaker’s attitude to “the question“.

The use of demonstrative pronouns is not always anaphorical. There are some cases where something what follows the noun phrase makes the reference clear. Then the
reference is cataphorical:

“The man who wrote it, I suppose, was some wretched fellow who writes these things for a drink.”

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 19)

“Ten, čo to napísal, je iste nejaký hnusný škrabák, a píše len zato, aby mal na pijatiku.“

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 17)

The definite reference in the English sentence is established by the underlined clause which follows the clause with the definite article. It can be seen that in the Slovak language the noun phrase “the man” is translated as “ten”. In this case the Slovak language allows to use the demonstrative pronoun without the noun following. In the English language it is not possible. Therefore, this sentence is incorrect:

The who wrote it, I suppose, was some wretched fellow who writes these things for a drink.

4.2.1 English demonstrative pronouns compared with Slovak demonstrative pronouns

There is a difference between English demonstrative pronouns and Slovak demonstrative pronouns. In the English language a demonstrative pronoun can function as a determiner as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>determiner</th>
<th>demonstrative pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I bought this book</td>
<td>This is the book I bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yesterday.</td>
<td>yesterday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the Slovak language does not have the system of determiners, Slovak demonstrative pronouns do not have any other function.

It has been proved that in some cases the definite article can be translated as a demonstrative pronoun. On the other hand, the Slovak demonstrative pronouns (ten,
tamten, títo, tamtí) are translation equivalents of the English demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those) as well. Such a situation is presented in the following example:

“Though there was nothing wrong in these stories and though their intention was sometimes literary, they were circulated secretly at school.“

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 19)

“Hoci v tých knižách nebolo nič zlého a neraz mali aj literárne zámery, v škole kolovali len tajne.“

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 17)

The English demonstrative pronoun “these“ functions as a determiner in the example. The Slovak translation uses the demonstrative pronoun “tých“.

Since Slovak demonstrative pronouns are translation equivalents of both the definite article and demonstrative pronouns, such a problem should be investigated:

“To what extent are Slovak demonstrative pronouns equivalent to the definite article?“ The following figure presents the occurrence of demonstrative pronouns in both the languages:

Fig.1 Occurrence of demonstrative pronouns in the text per 3000 words

As can be seen in the figure, there has not been found a significant difference between the occurrence of English demonstrative pronouns and Slovak demonstrative pronouns. Therefore Slovak demonstrative pronouns are supposed to be translation equivalents of the definite article in a small extent.

4.3 A possessive pronoun instead of the definite article

Possessive pronouns are considered to carry the definite meaning since they
express possession to a thing, person or object. Therefore in the Slovak language they are translation equivalents of the definite article only. In the analysed text there have been found examples where the definite article is translated as a possesive pronoun:

“In his parents went to eight-o’clock mass every morning in Gardiner Street and the peaceful odour of Mrs. Dillon was prevalent in the hall of the house.”

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 18)

“In ho rodičia chodievali každé ráno o ôsmej na omšu do Gardiner Street a v predizbe ich domu bola vždy cítiť jemnú vôňu pani Dillonovej.”

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 16)

In the English sentence the use of the definite article is allowed because it is clear which house the hall is a part of. In the Slovak translation the definite article is replaced by the possesive pronoun “ich”. It can be seen that a possesive pronoun must be in concord with the personal pronoun to which it posseses to. In this case the possesive pronoun “ich” (they) is in concord with the personal pronoun “oni” (they) which is represented by the noun “rodičia“ (parents).

In the following example the definite article is translated with the use of a possesive pronoun as well:

“We were reassured, and I brought the first stage of the plot to an end by collecting sixpence from the other two, ...“

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 20)

“Tým sme si dodali odvahy: a ja som završil prvú etapu nášho sprisahania, vyzbieral som od tých dvoch po šesť pencí, ...“

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 18)

In the English original text the definite article is used in the noun phrase “the plot“ because the previous sentences have refered to “the plot“. It has been mentioned that the possesive pronoun must be in concord with the personal pronoun it posseses to. In the
Slovak translation the personal pronoun “my“(we) is not expressed directly since it is not necessary in the Slovak grammar. If it was expressed, such a sentence would sound unnatural:

    My sme si tým dodali odvahy: a ja som zavŕšil prvú etapu nášho sprisahania, vyzbieral som od tých dvoch po šesť penci, ...

There has been found an example in the analysed text where the definite article is expressed by the possessive reflexive pronoun “svoj“:

    “She governed the house cunningly and firmly, knew when to give credit, when to be stern and when to let things pass.“
    (Dubliners – The Boarding House, 1996, pp. 66-67)
    “Vládla v svojom dome šikovnou a pevnou rukou, vedela, kedy môže poskytnúť úver, kedy má byť tvrdá a kedy má nechať všetko plávať.“
    (Dublinčania – Penzión, 1980, pp. 61-62)

In the Slovak version the pronoun “svojom“ posseses the house to its owner. Unlike in the English original text, the personal pronoun “ona“ (she) is not expressed directly in the Slovak translation.

4.3.1 English possesive pronouns compared with Slovak possesive pronouns

The basic differences between English possesive pronouns and Slovak possesive pronouns have been analysed in the chapter 3. There have also been presented some examples where Slovak possesive pronouns are translation equivalents of the definite article. However, there are cases where a Slovak possesive pronoun is the equivalent of an English possesive pronoun as well:
“School and home seemed to recede from us and their influences upon us seemed to wane.”

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 22)

“Škola a domov akoby sa od nás vzdaľovali a ich vplyv sa pomaly strácal.“

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 20)

Since Slovak possesive pronouns are translation equivalents of both the definite article and possesive pronouns, they are supposed to occur in a text with a higher frequency than English possesive pronouns. The occurrence of possessive pronouns in both the languages is compared in the figure 2.

Fig. 2 Occurrence of possesive pronouns in the text per 3000 words

The research has shown that English possessive pronouns occur in the text with a higher frequency than Slovak possessive pronouns. On the basis of this fact, such a question is relevant and should be investigated:

“What have you there in your pocket?”

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 19)
The possessive pronoun “your” refers to a personal belonging in the example. There is not such a phenomenon in the Slovak language, therefore the English possessive pronouns need not to be translated:

“Čo to máš vo vrecku?” (Dublínčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 17)

The higher occurrence of English possessive pronouns does not deny that Slovak possessive pronouns are equivalents of the definite article. It is just the result of the fact that English possessive pronouns are often used in cases where the Slovak language uses different forms.

4 An indefinite pronoun instead of the indefinite article

Since indefinite pronouns carry the indefinite meaning, they are supposed to be translation equivalents of the indefinite article. Such a situation is presented in the example:

“We could find no dairy and so we went into a huckster’s shop and bought a bottle of raspberry lemonade each.”

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 23)

The example represents a specific use of the indefinite article. The huckster’s shop which the speaker is talking about is one of the huckster’s shops in the village, therefore we use the indefinite article. The Slovak translation of the sentence is:

“Nevedeli sme nájsť mliekáreň, tak sme vošli do akéhosi zeleninárstva a kúpili si každý fľašu malinovky.” (Dublínčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 21)
The indefinite meaning of the noun phrase “a huckster's shop” is kept by the use of the Slovak indefinite pronoun “akéhosí”. In the Slovak language there are some other indefinite pronouns which can be substituted for the pronoun “akýsi“. Thus these translations are correct:

...tak sme vošli do nejakého (some) zeleninárstva...
...tak sme vošli do dajakého (some) zeleninárstva...
...tak sme vošli do jedného (some) zeleninárstva...

It has been mentioned that the use of the indefinite article is specific in this case, therefore the indefinite article can not be replaced by the Slovak indefinite pronoun “hocijaký“ (any, whatever). Thus such a translation is not correct:

...tak sme vošli do hocijakého (any, whatever) zeleninárstva...

The following example is a different case:

“And if a boy had a girl for a sweetheart and told lies about it, then he would give him such a whipping as no boy ever got in this world.“

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 27)

“A keby nejaký chlapec mal dievča a tajil to, zmlátil by ho tak, ako ešte nikdy na svete nijakého chlapca nikto nezmlátil.“

(Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 25)

The English indefinite article in the noun phrase “a boy“ is equivalent with the Slovak indefinite pronoun “nejaký“. The use of the indefinite article is generic because the speaker does not have in mind a particular boy. It can be any boy in the world. In such a case it is possible to replace the indefinite article by the Slovak indefinite pronoun “hocijaký“:

A keby hocijaký chlapec mal dievča a tajil to, zmlátil by ho tak, ako ešte nikdy na svete nijakého chlapca nikto nezmlátil.
Slovak indefinite pronouns compared with the English indefinite pronoun “some“

It has been mentioned that Slovak indefinite pronouns (nejaký, dajaký, voľajaký) are in some cases translation equivalents of the indefinite article. On the other hand, there have been found cases where the same Slovak pronouns are translation equivalents of the English pronoun “some“:

“He described to me how he would whip such a boy, as if he were unfolding some elaborate mystery.“ (Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 28)

“Opisoval mi mlátenie chlapca, ako keby mi odhaľoval nejaké zložité tajomstvo.“ (Dublinčania – Stretnutie, 1980, p. 25)

Like demonstrative pronouns, the indefinite pronoun “some“ functions both as a determiner and a pronoun:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{determiner} & \text{pronoun} \\
\text{I want some chocolate.} & \text{Some of them did not come.} \\
\end{array}
\]

Unlike the Slovak indefinite pronoun “nejaký“, the English indefinite pronoun “some“ does not usually combine with singular countable nouns. Thus the phrase “some boy“ is not usual.

Another difference between the Slovak pronoun “nejaký“ and its equivalent “some“ is that the English pronoun changes in the question:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{affirmative} & \text{question} \\
\text{I have got some apples.} & \text{Do you want any apples?} \\
\end{array}
\]
Since Slovak indefinite pronouns (nejaký, dajaký, voľajaký) are translation equivalents of the indefinite article and the indefinite pronoun “some“(any) as well, they are supposed to occur in a text with a higher frequency than English indefinite pronoun “some“(any). The occurrence of the above-mentioned pronouns in both the languages is compared in the figure 3.

Fig. 3 Occurrence of Slovak indefinite pronouns and the indefinite pronoun “some“ in the text per 3000 words

The result of the research signalizes that there is not a significant difference between the occurrence of the English indefinite pronoun “some“ and Slovak indefinite pronouns. Therefore Slovak indefinite pronouns are considered to be translation equivalents of the indefinite article in a small extent.

4.5 The usage of English articles in functional styles

The following subchapter deals with two main areas. Firstly, it studies whether the occurrence of articles differs in separate functional styles. From all the styles it concentrates on the belles-lettres style and the scientific prose-style. The reason for such a choice is that unlike the other styles these styles differ in most of the areas. Secondly,
it investigates Slovak equivalents of articles in the styles.

1 English articles in the belles-lettres style and the scientific prose-style

As has been mentioned, the belles-lettres style and the scientific prose-style differ to a high extent. The following table presents basic characteristics of the styles which make the opposite pairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>belle-letter style</th>
<th>scientific pro-style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>informal</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjective</td>
<td>objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fictional</td>
<td>factual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we take into consideration differences between the belles-lettres style and the scientific prose-style, we suppose that the word-stock in the styles also differs. A research has been done to find out in what extent articles occur in both the styles. The results of the research are presented in the figure 4. and 5.

Fig. 4 Occurrence of articles in the belles-lettres style text (3000 words)
From the above mentioned figures it is clear that articles occur in the scientific prose-style in a higher extent than in the belles-lettres style.

The text of the belles-lettres style is a subjective utterance of the author. It describes a situation in details with the aim to captivate the reader. Therefore it uses adjectives, adverbs, pronouns and verbs rather than other word classes, for example nouns. The following sentence consists of 25 words, but there are just three nouns:

> “*While we were waiting he brought out the catapult which bulged from his inner pocket and explained some improvements which he had made in it.*“

( *Dubliners – An Encounter*, 1996, p. 21)

Since articles refer to nouns, the low occurrence of nouns in the belles-lettres style causes the low occurrence of articles as well.

On the other hand, there is an objective utterance of the author in the scientific prose-style. The utterance is always based on facts which are true. Since the scientific prose-style is brief and terse, nouns occur in a text in a higher extent than other word classes. The following sentence consists of 21 words and there are six nouns:

> “*The core of the problem was the immense disparity between the country’s productive capacity and the ability of people to consume.*“

(An Outline of American History, p. 254)

Nouns used in the scientific prose-style are specific to each branch of science. The
example below is of a historical character. The higher occurrence of nouns in the scientific prose-style explains the higher occurrence of articles in the text.

It has been found out that articles generally occur in the scientific prose-style more than in the belles-lettres style. In the figure 6. And 7. the occurrence of the definite article (the) and the indefinite article (a, an) is compared in both functional styles.

![Fig. 6 Occurrence of articles in the belles-lettres style](image)

![Fig. 7 Occurrence of articles in the scientific prose-style](image)

As can be seen in the figure, the occurrence of the indefinite article “an” is the lowest. It is caused by the fact that there are generally few words beginning with a vowel in the English language. When comparing the part of “an” in the styles, it can be seen that it is similar in both the styles.

The indefinite article “a” occurs in both functional styles in a similar extent as well. Its occurrence is higher than the occurrence of the article “an”, but it is lower than the occurrence of the definite article. Generally, the use of the indefinite article (a, an) differs from the use of the definite article. Whereas the indefinite article can be combined just
with singular countable nouns, the definite article can be followed by singular countable nouns, plural countable nouns as well as by uncountable nouns.

The use of the definite article is the highest in both styles. One reason for such a phenomenon has been mentioned in the previous paragraph. Another reason is that there are many possibilities where the definite article can be used (see pp. 13-16). The higher occurrence of “the” in the scientific prose-style is caused by the higher occurrence of all articles in the style.

2 Translation equivalents of English articles in the belles-lettres style and the scientific prose-style

Translation equivalents of English articles have been described in details in the previous subchapters. The aim of the subchapter is to investigate Slovak equivalents of articles in the scientific prose-style and compare them with the belles-lettres style.

As has been found out, some Slovak pronouns are considered to be equivalents of English articles. On the other hand, they are equivalents of English pronouns as well. The occurrence of Slovak and English pronouns in the scientific prose-style should be investigated.

a) demonstrative pronouns

The occurrence of demonstrative pronouns in the English and the Slovak language is demonstrated in the figure 8.
From the figure it is clear that there is not a significant difference between the use of English and Slovak demonstrative pronouns in the text. Since there are more demonstrative pronouns in the Slovak text, we suppose that they cover the use of both the definite article and English demonstrative pronouns.

If we compare the number of demonstrative pronouns in the scientific prose-style with their number in the belles-lettres style, the result signalizes that the scientific prose-style uses demonstrative pronouns with a lower frequency. This is because the use of demonstrative pronouns is more natural in the belles-lettres style. What is more, in the scientific prose-style forms “this”/“these” are more common than forms of a distant form “that”/“those”.

b) possessive pronouns

The rate of English possessive pronouns to the Slovak ones is expressed in the figure 9.

Unlike in the belles-lettres style, in the scientific prose-style there is not a significant difference between possessive pronouns in the languages. The reason lies in the high number of English possessive pronouns in the belles-lettres style. The use of possessive
pronouns differs in the styles. Whereas in the belles-lettres style it is usual to use a possessive pronoun with human-reference (my, his, her), the scientific prose-style requires forms with non-human reference (its).

If Slovak possessive pronouns cover the use of both the definite article and English possessive pronouns, they should occur in the text in a higher extent than English possessive pronouns. The research has shown that it is not actual in the text. Before we make a decision whether Slovak possessive pronouns are equivalents of the definite article or English pronouns, we should take into consideration the fact that in many cases where the English language uses a possessive pronoun, it is not the same in the Slovak language.

c) indefinite pronouns

There is a significant difference between the occurrence of indefinite pronouns in the belles-lettres style and the scientific prose-style. Analysing the text of the belles-lettres style it has been noted that Slovak indefinite pronouns are translation equivalents of both the indefinite article and English indefinite pronoun “some“. The occurrence of these pronouns in the languages is lower than the occurrence of other pronouns.

In the text of the scientific prose-style no indefinite pronoun has been observed. The reason lies in the difference between the styles. In the belles-lettres style it is natural to use an indefinite pronoun. In the scientific prose-style such a use is rare since the style is based on facts which are true and no indefinite information is allowed.

5 Final notes on equivalents of English articles

The following part investigates a frequency of the use of Slovak equivalents of articles. Firstly, it studies a text of the belles-lettres style, then a text of the scientific prose-style.

a) the belles-lettres style

The frequency of the ways of the usage of Slovak equivalents of English articles is
presented in the figure 10.

As has been supposed in the previous subchapters, Slovak pronouns are translation equivalents of English articles in a small extent. They occur with a higher frequency as translation equivalents of English pronouns. On the other hand, the Slovak language often uses word order as an equivalent of articles.

The highest percentage in the figure is represented by “zero translation“. In most cases an English article has not an equivalent in the Slovak language. A typical example of “zero translation“ is a translation of time clauses. We present some examples from Dubliners (1996):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the English phrase</th>
<th>the Slovak translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in the morning</td>
<td>ráno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the evening</td>
<td>večer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the end</td>
<td>nakoniec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas in the English phrases articles are required, it is not necessary in the Slovak language.
A similar phenomenon occurs with proper nouns. In cases where the English language uses an article, the Slovak language does not require it:

"We walked along the North Strand Road till we came to the Vitriol Works and then turned to the right along the Wharf Road."

(Dubliners – An Encounter, 1996, p. 21)

“Pustili sme sa po North Strand Road až k továrni na vitriol, a potom sme sa dali doprava na Wharf Road.“

(Dublinčania, 1980, p. 19)

b) the scientific prose-style

In the figure 11. representation of Slovak equivalents of articles in the scientific prose-style is presented.

The research has shown that Slovak pronouns as translation equivalents of articles occur in the scientific prose-style less than in the belles-lettres style. On the other hand, “zero translation“ is used in more cases. The reason for this lies in a character of a text. Since the text is of a historical character, it uses proper nouns in a high extent. The following examples are from An Outline of American History (1994):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the English phrase</th>
<th>the Slovak translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the United States</td>
<td>Spojené štáty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Germans</td>
<td>Nemci</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5  TYPICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR LEARNERS

The following part is interested in some problems which learners face when they are learning English articles. It divides the problems into two groups. The first group is devoted to problems of students speaking a language with a system of articles. The second group concentrates on problems of students who have a system of articles in their own language. The chapter also offers types of exercises which are useful both for teachers and learners.

a) students speaking a language without a system of articles

The Slovak language belongs to a group of languages which do not use articles to express whether the reference is definite or indefinite. For a Slovak student it is not easy to understand the use of English articles because he has not met with such a system before. There are two basic mistakes which students of this group make:

- missing an article
- not using appropriate article

The first mistake which learners make is that they forget to put an article before a noun. It happens because they have not been informed about the basic difference between the English language and their own language. Students should be aware of the fact that unlike their own language, in the English language there is an obligatory use of a determiner before a noun. Even if students are aware of the fact that they have to use a determiner before a noun, they may miss an article out. Such a phenomenon usually
occurs when a student concentrates on the content rather than on the structure. It is a
typical mistake of speaking when a student does not realize mistakes.

A different mistake occurs when students do not use the correct article. A typical
example is that they use an article in case when it is not necessary. According to Parrot
(2000) such a mistake "may be the result of not realising that a noun is uncountable.
Learners may treat uncountable nouns as though they are singular and therefore require
an article."

Before students are introduced to general rules of the use of articles, they should know
what kind of nouns articles are followed by. Students do not use correct articles also in
case when they do not know the rules for using them. Even if a student masters rules for
using articles, he may make a mistake. In the English language there are many fixed
phrases where the use of an article is not predictable. The only way for students is to
learn them by heart.

b) students speaking a language with a system of articles

It may seem that students who use articles in their own language find it easier to
learn English articles. These students usually do not make mistakes with missing an
article. Unlike the first group, in this group the only problem occurs:

- not using appropriate article

We think that even for students of this group it is quite difficult to learn to use English
articles correctly. It is caused by the fact that rules for the use of articles vary in different
languages. A typical mistake which students make is that they put an article before
a noun in case where the English language does not use it. According to Parrot (2000)
such a mistake occurs in generalisations.

Another mistake occurs in languages where determiners are not mutually exclusive
(e.g. Italian). Whereas in these languages a possesive pronoun can be preceded by an
article, in the English language it is not possible.

“Individual mistakes in using articles rarely lead to serious problems of
communication. However, when learners consistently make mistakes in using them, their readers or listeners have to work much harder to understand.“ (Parrot, 2000, p. 51)

5.1 Useful exercises

The following exercises may be helpful for students who want to practise the use of English articles. On the other hand, teachers may use these types of exercises in their work. The choice of the exercises supports the theoretical part of the diploma work. There is a practice of general and specific meanings, anaphoric and cataphoric reference, and sporadic reference as well. On these types of exercises typical mistakes of students may be observed. Moreover, English articles may be easily compared with their Slovak equivalents.

Exercise 1.
Put in a, an or the.

a) This morning I bought a newspaper and .......... magazine. .......... newspaper is in my bag, but I can’t remember where I put .......... magazine.
b) I saw .......... accident this morning. .......... car crashed into .......... tree. .......... driver of .......... car wasn’t hurt, but .......... car was badly damaged.
c) There are two cars parked outside: .......... blue one and .......... grey one. .......... blue one belongs to my neighbours, I don’t know who .......... owner of .......... grey one is.
d) My friends live in .......... old house in .......... small village. There is .......... beautiful garden behind .......... house. I would like to have .......... garden like that.
Excercise 2.
Put the or zero article in each blank.

There must be something wrong with me. .......... people usually think that .......... babies are sweet and .......... teenagers are annoying. Not me. I think .......... babies are boring. For me, .......... children are only interesting from about .......... age of two, when you can understand .......... things that they say. But .......... time between ages thirteen and twenty are .......... years that I like best. Oh, it’s difficult at times, but I still prefer talking about .......... money with a teenager to cleaning a baby’s bottom.

Excercise 3.
Put in the words in brackets. Decide if you need the.

The four members of the gang were sent to prison (prison). Their wives drove together to the prison (prison) every week to visit their husbands.

a) Not many people go to .......... (church) regularly nowadays. I saw some tourists walking to .......... (church) last week, but they only wanted to take photos of it.
b) A group of people came out of .......... (cinema), crossed the road and went into .......... (pub).
c) When my father was ill and had to go to .......... (hospital), my sister went with him in the ambulance. She’s a doctor, and she works at .......... (hospital).
d) Mark has always known what he wanted to do in life. After leaving .......... (school) he took a course in business studies at .......... (college).

Excercise 4.
Laura is talking about the food she and Trevor had on holiday. Put in the words and use a/an or the if you need to.

The meals (meals) we had weren’t very good. We had .......... (breakfast) in the hotel,
and that wasn´t too bad. We usually went out for .......... (lunch) because .......... (lunch) they served in the hotel was always the same. And .......... (dinner) we had at the hotel on our first evening was pretty awful, so we tried a few restaurants. On our last evening we had .......... (marvellous meal) in a Chinese restaurant. I wish we´d discovered the place a bit sooner.

**Exercise 5.**

Put in the words. Decide if you need to use the.

CLAIRE: Hello, Henry. Come in.
HENRY: Oh, sorry. You´re having lunch (lunch).
CLAIRE: No, this is .......... (breakfast). I had a late night. It was long after .......... (midnight) when I got in.
HENRY: Someone told me you´re going away after .......... (Christmas).
CLAIRE: Yes, I´m going to the Seychelles on .......... (Wednesday).
HENRY: What a life you lead, Claire. What time do you leave for the airport?
CLAIRE: Oh, in .......... (morning) some time. About ten. It´s cheaper to fly at .......... (night), but I decided it would be easier during .......... (day).
HENRY: I can drive you to the airport. I´m usually free on .......... (Wednesday)
mornings. I´d like to see you off.
CLAIRE: That´s sweet of you Henry, but I can take a taxi.
HENRY: I´ll just check in my diary that it isn´t .......... (Wednesday) of our next board meeting. No, it´s OK. I can do it. And when will you be back?
CLAIRE: At the beginning of .......... (February). The second, I think.