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The English Determiner Use of a Vietnamese EFL Learner

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Table of Contents

Összefoglalás.....	4
1. Literature Review.....	10
1.1. Mother tongue	10
1.2. SLA, ESL, EFL	10
1.3. Transfer.....	11
1.4. Error, mistake.....	12
1.5. Vietnamese.....	12
1.6. Typical errors made by Vietnamese students.....	13
1.6.1. Suffixes	13
1.6.2. Tenses	14
1.6.3. Articles	15
1.7. Errors observed in this study.....	15
1.8. Previous experiments on this topic	16
2. Methods.....	16
2.1. Research questions	16
2.2. The participant	17
2.3. Data collection, time and place	17
2.4. Instruments and the Observer's Paradox	18
2.5. Tasks.....	18
2.6. Methods of analysis	19
3. Results and Discussion.....	20
3.1. Rules of determiner use	20
3.1.1. Determiners	20
3.1.2. Articles	21
3.1.3. Possessive determiners	22
3.2. Errors in speech.....	23
3.2.1. Incorrect determiner use	24
3.2.2. Addition	25

3.2.3. Omission	26
3.3. Errors in writing	31
3.3.1. Addition of <i>a/an; the</i>	32
3.3.2. Article omission	32
3.3.3. Incorrect / omitted possessive determiners	32
4. Summary and Conclusion.....	33
4.1. Answers to the Research Questions.....	33
4.2. Limitations of the research.....	34
4.3. Future directions.....	34
References	35
Appendix A	37
Appendix B	43

Összefoglalás

A dolgozat célja, hogy feltárja az anyanyelven alapuló hibákat egy vietnami anyanyelvű tanuló angol nyelvhasználatában, ezzel hozzájárulva vietnami tanulók angoltanításához. A hipotézis szerint a vietnami anyanyelv különböző szabályai, eltérései az angolétól különböző hibákat eredményez. Egészen pontosan a következő kérdésekre kerestem választ:

1. Milyen hibákat vét az alany az angol nyelvhasználatában, mely egyben a harmadik nyelve, és milyen gyakorisággal teszi azt?
2. Transzfer vagy fejlődési hibákról van szó, tehát köthetőek-e a hibák a beszélő anyanyelvéhez?
3. Hatással van-e a beszélő mindhárom nyelve egymásra, és ha igen, ez hogy manifesztálódik?
4. Kevesebb hibát vét a tanuló írásban, feltételezve, hogy írásban nem akkora a spontaneitás, mint beszédben?

Hogy választ kapjunk ezekre a kérdésekre, először is meg kell vizsgálni a fogalmakat. Az **anyanyelv** (*mother tongue*) az ember életében elsőként elsajátított nyelve. Második nyelvnek (L2) hívunk minden olyan nyelvet, melynek elsajátítására az anyanyelv megtanulása után kerül sor. Alkalmazott nyelvészeti környezetben, az ember minden anyanyelvén kívüli nyelve második nyelv lesz, függetlenül a nyelvek elsajátítási sorrendjétől és mennyiségétől. Természetesen ezen belül hívhatunk egy nyelvet harmadik nyelvnek is; így pl. a dolgozatban a magyarra L2-ként hivatkozom, az angolra pedig L3-ként, mivel ilyen sorrendben kezdődött elsajátításuk.

A következő fogalom a **transzferhiba**, melynek két csoportja van. Transzfernek nevezzük az anyanyelv második nyelvre gyakorolt hatását, melynek pozitív és negatív eredménye lehet. Akkor beszélünk pozitív transzferről, amikor az anyanyelv és a célnyelv (tanult nyelv) szisztémája, szabályrendszere hasonló, így a tanuló az anyanyelvi szabályokat, rendszereket pozitív eredménnyel használja. Ezzel ellentétben, negatív transzfer akkor jelentkezhet, ha a két nyelvben bizonyos dolgokat más szabályokkal fejezünk ki, és így az anyanyelvi szabályokat negatív eredménnyel, tehát hibát eredményezve használja a tanuló az új nyelvben.

A dolgozat egy másik lehetséges hibát, a **fejlődési hibát** (*developmental error*) is vizsgálja. Érdekes módon ugyanis nem minden hiba fakad az anyanyelv másságából. Fejlődési hibának tekinthetők azon formák, melyek sem az anyanyelvben, sem a célnyelvben nem találhatók meg, azok a tanulási folyamat részét képezik (pl. angol **ated*). A dolgozat

egyik célja az volt, hogy megállapítsa, milyen típusú hibák sorolhatóak a két különböző kategóriába.

A kutatás során egy vietnami származású, Magyarországon született általános iskolás kislány volt a segítségemre, akinek másfél éve segíték az angol tanulmányaiban. A kislány, akit Lan-nak nevezek dolgozatomban, tökéletesen beszél vietnamiul, mely tonális nyelv, hat tónussal vagy dallammal. A vietnami tehát az anyanyelve, melyet beszél, de nem jól ír és olvas. Második nyelve (L2) az óvodában és általános iskolában elsajátított magyar, mellyel kezdetben adódtak nehézségek, de mára tökéletesen beszéli. Harmadik nyelve pedig az angol, melyet az iskolában tanul idegen nyelvként. Az első ok, amiért az angol nyelvhasználatát és az arra az anyanyelve által gyakorolt hatást vizsgáltam, az, hogy feltűnt, mennyivel nehezebben megy neki az angol, mint magyar kortársainak. Másik okom az, hogy angoltanári ambícióimból kifolyólag kíváncsi voltam, valóban anyanyelvi transzfer gátolja-e Lan harmadik-nyelv tanulását.

Az adatgyűjtés folyamán Lan spontán angol beszédét rögzítettem diktafonnal, valamint írásos feladatokat oldattam meg vele. A begyűjtött adatokat elemeztem, kiszűrtem a hibás mondatokat, majd azokat összevettem a vietnami megfelelőikkel. A vietnami mondatok leírásában Lan édesanyja segített, aki felnőttként vándorolt be Magyarországra.

Kutatásom elején megvizsgáltam néhány gyakori hibát, melyet vietnami tanulók vétenek az angol nyelvben. Azért irányítottam a figyelmemet a kislány anyanyelvére, mert ahhoz, hogy megállapítsuk a transzferhibák jelenlétét, tisztában kell lennünk az anyanyelv szabályaival. Ilyen hibák például a ragok elhagyása vagy helytelen használata, vagy az igeidők hibás használata. Ezeken kívül azonban egy még érdekesebb területben vétett hibák tűntek fel: a névelők (*a, an, the*) és a birtokos névmások mint névelők (*my, your, his, etc.*) helytelen használata vagy kihagyása (NA, 1981).

A szakirodalom arra világított rá, hogy az ún. determinánsok (*determiners*), ezen belül a névelők valóban hiányoznak a vietnami nyelvben, habár néhány éve ebben nincs teljes egyetértés. Nguyen (2004) megemlíttette, hogy például a számnév *một* (egy) tekinthető határozott névelőnek, ezzel megalapítva a névelők csoportját a vietnami nyelvben, ezzel ellentétben, a többség azon a megállapításon van, hogy a nyelvben nincsenek névelők, csak számok, és úgy nevezett osztályozók (*classifiers*), melyek többletinformációról gondoskodnak a főnevek esetében (Ngo, 2001). Ilyen információnak számít például, hogy élő vagy élettelen (*con, ca*) dologról beszélünk, de utalhatnak a személy életkorára, nemére, sőt még foglalkozására is. Ezen ismeretek tudatában a többség véleménye mellett foglaltam állást, miszerint nincsenek névelők a vietnami nyelvben, és annak tudatában építettem fel a

kutatásomat. A másik csoport, személyes névmások, mint névelők, szintén érdekes anyanyelvi sajátosságokat tárt fel. Megtudtam, hogy a vietnami nyelvben csak személyes névmások vannak, így a birtokviszonyt is azokkal jelölik.

Utolsó lépésként az eredményeket elemeztem. A begyűjtött hanganyagokból a hibákról szövegkörnyezettel együtt átiratot készítettem, majd azokat összehasonlítottam a vietnami megfelelőikkel. A hibákat csoportosítottam, kialakítva három főbb csoportot (határozott névelő, határozatlan névelő, birtokos névmások, mint névelők) és három-három alcsoportot (helytelen használat, hozzáadás, kihagyás). Az adatgyűjtés sikeresnek bizonyult, mindkét módszerrel találtam elegendő hibát az elemzéshez, melyből néhány példát be is mutatok. Mivel a transzfer az a jelenség, amikor az anyanyelv befolyásolja a tanult, új nyelvet, olyan összefüggéseket kell a hibaelemzéskor keresni, amelyek alátámasztják a transzferhibák jelenlétét. Azokban a hibás mondatokban, ahol nem azt a szisztémát követte Lan, mint az anyanyelvében, valószínűleg fejlődési hibákat találunk. Ebbe a kategóriába sorolható a helytelen használat és a hozzáadás. Mivel feltételezéseim szerint a névelő hiánya az anyanyelvében befolyásolja az angol nyelvhasználatát, azon hibák, mikor a névelőt csak helytelenül mondja, vagy olyan helyre teszi be, ahova nem kellene, egyértelműen fejlődési hibára utal. Ilyen például a következő mondat.

*And in the kitchen we have **a** best TV. (And in the kitchen we have **the** best TV.)

Tisztán látszik, hogy a hiba a melléknév-fokozásnál található. A felsőfokú melléknév elé angolban odatesszük a *the* határozott névelőt. Ehelyett Lan határozatlan névelő *a*-t tett elé, a nyelvelsajátítás egyenetlenségét és a fejlődési hibák fellelhetőségét alátámasztva. Tehát, a hiba típusát nézve, ez minden bizonnyal fejlődési hiba.

A harmadik hibacsoport, a kihagyás viszont nagy eséllyel mondható transzferhibának, mivel a hibás mondatok és a vietnami megfelelőiknek a szerkezete nagyon hasonló. Névelők esetében egyértelműnek bizonyul, hogy Lan azért hagyja ki a névelőket, mert az anyanyelv szabályaiból kiindulva, nem érzi szükségesnek azoknak a mondatba toldását, mint ahogy a következő példa is mutatja.

*This is car. (This is a car.)

Ha összehasonlítjuk, az angol mondatot a vietnamival, egyértelművé válik a feltételezés, miszerint anyanyelvi transzfer miatt hibázik a beszélő.

This	is	car.
Cái này là	-	ô tô.

Azon kívül, hogy a vietnami mondat nem tartalmaz igét, nem találunk semmilyen névelőnek nevezhető szót, mely még inkább alátámasztja feltételezéseinket.

A feltett kérdésekre a következő válaszokat kaptam.

1. *Milyen hibákat vét az alany az angol nyelvhasználatában, mely egyben a harmadik nyelve, és milyen gyakorisággal teszi azt?*

Többféle hiba volt felfedezhető adatgyűjtés során, melyeket nem említettem meg a dolgozatban, mivel nem relevánsak. A legszembetűnőbb és leggyakoribb hiba a névelőkihagyás volt. Mivel a dolgozat célja az volt, hogy a lehetséges transzferre világítson rá, eredményesnek mondható, mivel számos példával támasztottuk alá a transzfer jelenségét.

2. *Transzfer vagy fejlődési hibákról van szó, tehát köthetőek-e a hibák a beszélő anyanyelvéhez?*

Mivel a vietnami nyelv nem tartalmaz névelőket, minden névelőkihagyással kapcsolatos hiba feltételezhetően transzferhiba, ellentétben a helytelen használattal és hozzáadással, melyek valószínűleg fejlődési hibák. A birtokos névmások, mint névelők használata, feltételezhetően szintén transzferhiba, mivel párhuzamba állíthatóak az anyanyelvi, azaz vietnami rendszer és a Lan által produkált angol mondatok.

3. *Hatással van-e a beszélő mindhárom nyelve egymásra, és ha igen, ez hogy manifesztálódik?*

A kutatás nem vizsgálta Lan L2, magyar nyelvhasználatát, így erre a kérdésre személyes tapasztalatok alapján kerestem a választ. Az adatgyűjtés során nem tapasztaltam a három nyelve közötti interakciót, mely arra utalhat, hogy a magyar nyelvet is anyanyelvi szinten tudja használni.

4. *Kevesebb hibát vét a tanuló írásban, feltételezve, hogy írásban nem akkora a spontaneitás, mint beszédben?*

Írásban szintén találtam feldolgozható hibákat, melyek ugyanazon a szisztémán alapulnak, mint a beszédben ejtett hibák. Az érdekesség az írott hibákkal kapcsolatban az volt, hogy míg körülbelül kétszer annyi beszélt anyag gyűlt össze adatgyűjtés során, mint írott, addig, arányosan több hiba volt az írott feladatokban, mint beszédben. Mivel ez az eredmény ellentétes várakozásaimmal, konklúziót levonni csak újabb kutatással lehetséges.

Összegzőképpen, a kutatás megpróbálta alátámasztani a fellelhető anyanyelvi transzferhibák jelenlétét az angol nyelvben, melyek nagy valószínűséggel mondhatjuk, hogy a vietnami anyanyelv miatt térnek vissza.

Hivatkozott szerzők

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Introduction

When a Vietnamese father from the neighborhood asked me to help her daughter with her English studies I did not think about the future of our beginning relationship. It slowly turned into friendship. As time went by and the little girl started to produce English more bravely, some parts of her language use got stuck in my mind. I knew that her mother tongue (also marked as L1) was not the same as mine, but after some time I started to think about her L1 as a different world. Vietnamese actually *is* a different world, both the language and the culture. The time I have spent in their home made me realize that these people are having difficulties in another country not only in everyday life but in their language use as well. As immigrants from Vietnam, with a different linguistic background, the parents had to learn Hungarian as adults. Their children, born into a bicultural and bilingual world, had hard times in learning Hungarian as their second and English as their third language (L2 and L3, respectively). The possible interaction of the three languages resulted in some peculiarities in the English production of the girl. This gave me the idea of looking more closely at these distinct features between Vietnamese and English.

The aim of this research is to demonstrate that the linguistic differences between languages are the reasons for the incorrect determiner use in the English production of a Vietnamese speaker, based on the fact that the lack of determiners in Vietnamese does have an effect on English determiner use, also known as transfer. Vietnamese does not have determiners as such; instead they use classifiers before nouns. The fact that students have to face the problem of transfer (positive or negative), in which the rules and systems of L1 appear in the use of L2 or L3 is in connection with the participant's English use in the case of determiners. As an example, Vietnamese say *Cái này là ô tô* which can literally be translated as **This is car*.

Such examples will be included in the study to show that article omission is a manifestation of L1 transfer. On the other hand, incorrect articles and article additions are thought to be developmental errors since Vietnamese L1 with no determiners cannot influence the speaker's English use. Apart from articles, possessive pronouns as determiners will also be included since Vietnamese has no possessive pronouns either. This way we are going to examine articles and possessive determiners.

In order to reach our goal many examples, taken from interviews with the participant, will be introduced, first to demonstrate these errors, and secondly to examine the incorrect L2

structures in the Vietnamese L1. Thirdly with Vietnamese equivalents of the mistaken sentences are included to indicate that the system of L1 is present in the system of L3.

This essay will first survey the previous studies made on this topic, discussing the relevant terms and abbreviations, to show the theoretical basis of the study. Then it will introduce the methods and other details, to see how data were collected and analyzed. The results will be first categorized into three sub-groups: addition, omission and incorrect use of determiners. Then the examples for omission will undergo a detailed analysis, by comparing the English sentence and its Vietnamese equivalent to detect the used L1 structure in the participant's L3. Both spoken and written examples will be introduced while only spoken examples will have their Vietnamese equivalents. This is because the speaker used roughly the same structures in writing as in speaking. The examples taken from interviews can be found in a written format in Appendix 1 while the written examples in Appendix 2 in pictures, scanned from the participant's exercise books.

1. Literature Review

The focus of this study is the English use of a student whose mother tongue is Vietnamese. This topic falls into the category of Second Language Acquisition. The present section is going to introduce the definitions used in the research and other researchers' findings about SLA.

1.1. Mother tongue

First of all there is a term mother tongue or L1 that has to be defined. A language learned during early childhood in the first years is called the first language or mother tongue of a child. In this case the shorter version L1 will be used which indicates the order of acquired language. The second term is L2 which requires a broader definition. Every language learned after the mother tongue is referred to as second language or L2, so even the fifth language of a person can also be called as L2 (Troike, 2006). In this research the term L3 will be used to refer to English as the third language in order to indicate the number of languages the participant knows.

1.2. SLA, ESL, EFL

Second Language Acquisition observes the learning process and its consequences of a language being learned following the mother tongue of a learner. It also covers foreign language learning which is called EFL (English as a Foreign Language). Sometimes EFL

needs to be distinguished from ESL (English as a Second language). The difference between EFL and ESL is that the first one is required in a non-native environment such as in schools in the country of the learner, while the second term indicates the language which is learned in a native environment, for example in the USA (Troike, 2006). In the present study, the speaker's L2 (Hungarian) is a second language, whereas her L3 (English) is a foreign language.

1.3. Transfer

During SLA learners often meet difficulties during learning. One of these difficulties is negative transfer.

Transfer is of two types, positive (facilitating) and negative (interference) (Ellis, 1997). The effect of these transfer types are based on the mother tongue of the learner. If the systems of the L1 and the L2 are very much alike, much of the transfer will be positive, while if the systems are different, much of the transfer will be negative (VanPatten & Williams, 2007). This can be explained by the fact that students of new languages often tend to rely on the basics of their mother tongue and they try to produce the newly acquired language by using rules or structures from their L1 (Ringbom, 1986). Transfer errors (that is, negative transfer) occur every time a learner acquires a new language.

In the case of negative transfer learners use the system or rules of their mother tongue, while it is not correct in the target language. Positive transfer means the opposite of the negative, the established system and rules in L2 are the same as in L1, resulting a positive consequence (Troike, 2006).

In the case of Vietnamese learners of English negative and positive transfer can be exemplified in the following way. Let us mention the positive first. Vietnamese has the same SVO structure as English, therefore the learner is likely to use an SVO order in the L2, and this will result in positive transfer. Unlike positive transfer, negative transfer will surface in learner language as errors. For instance, the Vietnamese language does not have suffixes, thus students are likely to neglect the use of English suffixes when producing English sentences.

From the psycholinguist point of view, students go through stages while learning. During this process, they tend to use encoding during processing sentences in the new language. Kormos (2006, p. 23) suggests that "grammatical encoding is assumed to consist of six phases and involves a grammatical memory store, which is responsible for storing the intermediary processes of grammatical encoding". To exemplify these six stages, Kormos also includes a sentence *The child enters the room* from which we are going to use the first three

steps to illustrate this encoding in the case of articles. First the learner will select the word ‘child’ from his mental dictionary, secondly he will recognize that the word is a noun and it will serve as the noun phrase in the sentence, and lastly he will recall the definite article which is learnt to be connected to the noun (Kormos, 2006). If one of these steps is missing, such as the recall of the determiner, there will be the possibility of errors, which originates in L1 transfer.

This is exactly what happens when Vietnamese L1 speakers start acquiring a language, in this case English. The learner will tend to mix the structures of English in phonology, grammar and he will use those relating to his mother tongue (Nguyen, 1967). In the following section some characteristics of Vietnamese will be discussed in order to see the problematic features.

1.4. Error, mistake

According to Ellis (1997), **errors** occur if a learner does not know a rule in grammar, while **mistakes** are made because the student cannot use the rule effectively, although he already ‘knows it’, i.e. it is part of his language knowledge or competence. This means that the student will not be able to correct his error when asked, but will be able to do so with his mistakes.

In the following section several sources of negative transfer will be pointed out through introducing some features of Vietnamese grammar.

1.5. Vietnamese

Vietnamese is the part of the Austroasiatic language family and the group of Mon-Khmer languages which include languages from Southeast Asia such as Mon, spoken in Burma, and Vietnamese. Vietnamese is in a close relationship with the Thai language; for instance they are both tonal languages. As Ngo writes, “Vietnamese is a tonal language in which changes of the pitch level and/or contour signal a change in meaning” (Ngo, 2001, p. 7).

Furthermore, the word classes in Vietnamese include only “nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, numerals classifiers, prepositions, conjunctions, particles and interjections”, as Ngo states (Ngo, 2001, p. 12). Another feature is that the Vietnamese language is isolating, which means that “there are no inflectional endings and all the words are invariable” (Ngo, 2001, p. 10).

1.6. Typical errors made by Vietnamese students

This section is going to consider Vietnamese speakers' typical ESL errors. Vietnamese learners of English have more difficulties in learning English than, for instance, European learners, because of the great differences between the language system of their mother tongue and that of English.

In the following some characteristic errors will be discussed based on the document *Teaching English to Speakers of Vietnamese* (1981) published by the US Department of Education in order to help teachers of Vietnamese students of English, and an article by Tang (2007).

1.6.1. Suffixes

English grammar makes use of suffixes, which are added to nouns, verbs or adjectives in order to indicate grammatical position (very few), or as a means to create new words. For instance, *-er* put after verbs creates nouns, such as *driver*, to indicate the doer of the action, and often to tell the occupation of a person, such as in *teacher*. This feature is nonexistent in the Vietnamese language. Plural forms are also missing from Vietnamese, which indicates plurality by making use of numerals in front of the noun. This means that Vietnamese learners of English are expected to leave out the plural *-s* from the end of a noun. As long as Vietnamese grammar indicates the plurality of nouns only with numerals it will not be important to students to use the plural suffix in English as well. As an example consider the following tables.

Tôi	cần	sach.
I	need	book.

Tôi	cần	một cuốn	sach.
I	need	one piece	book.

Tôi	cần	ba cuốn	sach.
I	need	three piece	book.

Tôi	cần	vài cuốn	sach.
I	need	few piece	book.

Observing these examples, it is visible how Vietnamese students will possibly think in English (at least at the beginner's level).

It is also the case that the possessive –s can also be omitted because Vietnamese expresses possession in a different fashion. Possession is indicated by the Vietnamese equivalent of the *of-structure*, like in the sentence:

Tôi	cần	cuốn	sách	của	ông Quang.
I	need	piece	book	of	Mr. Quang.

Yet another suffix not found in Vietnamese is the English adjectival –*er* and –*est* comparative and superlative. Sentences containing comparison will be like the English one with no suffix.

Minh	cao	hơn	Thang.
Minh	tall	than	Thang.

These sentences indicate that Vietnamese structure will possibly have an effect on English suffix production.

1.6.2. Tenses

The Vietnamese language lacks any grammatical indication of present, past or future tenses. Whether it is about the past, the present or the future will depend on the context of the sentence. This way, beginners may initially assume that English does not have tenses either, or at least produce sentences according to their L1 rules. Instead of tenses, Vietnamese grammar uses adverbs of time. For instance, the word-by-word translation of a Vietnamese sentence is *Last week I go home*. However, for Vietnamese ESL students what is also difficult about learning English, is the use of auxiliaries, especially in the present perfect tense (NA, 1981). Vietnamese students of English tend to produce utterances such as *You go already*, which are grammatically incorrect.

These examples show us that Vietnamese learners of ESL may typically have problems with tenses and also with auxiliaries as well – apparently because of their L1 influence.

1.6.3. Articles

At the time this thesis is being written, there is no complete consensus about Vietnamese articles, in spite of the above mentioned view, according to which there are no such things. The consensus on nonexistent Vietnamese determiners has only recently been broken by Nguyen (2004), who argues in his dissertation that some classifiers or numerals such as *một* (the numeral *one*) can be the equivalent of the indefinite article *a/an*. He nevertheless mentions that this idea is still not sufficiently proven and therefore needs further research.

The Vietnamese language has the word class of classifiers, which are not quite clear to English speakers (Tang, 2007). The question whether classifiers are similar to determiners further complicates the question. Vietnamese sentences have the same SVO word order as English and almost all nouns have to be preceded by a classifier. According to Nguyen (2004), there are three types of classifiers. They are shown in a table with examples and their meanings and use below.

Type	Example	Meaning
Unit-classifier	bà	for female adults (một bà giáo ‘a teacher’)
Kind-classifiers	loài	for a species, race or breed (một loài chó ‘a breed of dog’)
Event-classifiers	niêm	for a feeling (niêm vui ‘pride’)

As long as articles show the plurality and definiteness of a noun, classifiers give more information about nouns such as the gender or the age of people as objects. This also indicates a possible source of errors, and Vietnamese learners might produce sentences with incorrect article use.

1.7. Errors observed in this study

Above, several areas have been discussed in order to find the most typical mistakes made by Vietnamese ESL learners. We found that all these above mentioned errors were produced by the participant.

Since this study is going to focus on determiner use, only those errors will be discussed. Given the fact that article and determiner use is a crucial and sometimes difficult part for English learners, the aim of this study is to show that Vietnamese students begin their learning with a serious disadvantage because of their mother tongue.

1.8. Previous experiments on this topic

To the best of my knowledge no experiment has been carried out on the English determiner use of Vietnamese speakers. As far as we know the present study is the first to deal with this problem.

2. Methods

In this chapter data collecting instruments and other details about the whole process such as the participant, time included and the place will be discussed. First the research questions will be presented. Then the informant who participated in the research will be introduced. This will be followed by the description of different DCIs (data collecting instruments) since they represent the soul of a study (Griffie, 2012). The next step is to examine the time and place of carrying out the research and the last is to discuss the methods of analysis.

2.1. Research questions

The research questions focus on the determiner use of a Vietnamese learner in order to find the different determiners which are misused, the reasons for their misuse and to shed light on a possible L1 transfer in the English language. To be able to prove the presence of L2 transfer, further data collection and research would be needed, so L2 transfer is not investigated in depth here. The research questions are as follows:

- Q1. What type of errors are made in English, which is the third (and foreign) language of a Vietnamese speaker and with what relative frequency?
- Q2. Are the errors developmental or transfer errors? In other words, can these errors be connected to the mother tongue of the speaker, or are they independent developments?
- Q3. Do the speaker's three languages interact, and if they do, how is it manifested? (L1-L2-L3 interaction)
- Q4. Does the speaker make fewer errors in writing than in speaking, assumed that the language user is allowed to think more when writing than when speaking?

During data collecting the main aim was to gather examples for typical errors made by the learner. As it was mentioned before, Vietnamese ESL learners tend to make errors which are results of L1 transfer, so my aim is to show whether these errors occur indeed in the English use of a Vietnamese student. Another major aim is to find an interaction between the three languages, however difficult it may be, considering the fact that the student's mastery of her L2, Hungarian, is not comparable to her English foreign language knowledge.

2.2. The participant

The participant is a member of a Vietnamese family, having lived in Hungary for over a decade. I was fortunate enough to develop a close friendship with them. The parents moved here at the end of the nineties and started to learn Hungarian from that time on. The father managed to acquire a basic Hungarian knowledge and he is able to talk quite fluently, the mother can only say words but not whole sentences. Into this situation were born two children, who naturally acquired Vietnamese as their mother tongue.

Their daughter, whom I shall call under the pseudonym Lan, is fourteen years old and is finishing eighth grade in the year of this paper being written. Lan started learning Hungarian as a second language when she was three years old. She has been speaking Hungarian for eleven years at the time of this paper being written. For about a year, Lan was not able to learn and produce the language, she had problems with pronunciation and vocabulary, therefore she needed a Hungarian tutor in the second grade. In her first grade she started learning English as a foreign language, so she has been learning her third language for eight years now. Because her English was not progressing as it was required, and she was not able to speak properly, she needed an English tutor. This is when I met her.

Lan's now nine-year-old brother had a similar experience with the languages; however, he could learn Hungarian more easily, with the help of his sister who was good at the language by that time.

My reason to choose Lan as the participant was that while helping her improve her English, I found that she makes comparatively more serious determiner errors in her English production than one would expect on the level of her knowledge. She is a good student, and she knows the grammar rules; yet her production, her ability to use the rules in practice is weak. As a child with a Vietnamese mother tongue which differs a lot both from Hungarian and English she might have a lot of problems with acquiring a greatly different language. She thinks a lot before speaking. Using articles and determiners is very problematic for her.

2.3. Data collection, time and place

Data collecting took place in the family's house, the interviews or conversations were recorded by a cell phone and a voice recorder, on a relatively irregular basis, from March 2013 to January 2014. There are fifteen recordings altogether. Not every session produced a recorded interview; there were times when no recordings were made.

During recording we were in the family's house, the participant was in her familiar, comfort zone. The only interference was her brother who insisted on staying there. I made the interviewing as friendly as possible. Sometimes the talking turned into personal chatting.

The length of recorded material depended on the frequency of lessons and the types tests or exercises the participant was given.

The interviews were 13 minutes on the average, ranging from 2 minutes to 45 minutes.

During the recordings, Lan was not aware of the aspects which I chose to focus on.

2.4. Instruments and the Observer's Paradox

There are several ways to collect language data. In this study two types of DCI were used. The first was interviewing, the second were written text analysis. According to Griffiee (2012), we can use for example conversation transcriptions, interviews, performance tests.

It needs to be mentioned that collecting naturally occurring data is nearly impossible because of the Observer's Paradox. Originally introduced by William Labov, the idea is that the presence the researcher will distort the data and therefore our results. When the main aim is "to observe the way people use language when they are not being observed" (Labov, 1972, p. 61), the observation makes it impossible to collect the sort of data that is really interesting for us. However, if we take certain precautions, we can carry out the voice recording without altering the participants' behavior too much. During data collecting for the study we tried to ease the stress on the participant by making the voice recorder less visible.

During text analysis the focal point was her natural writing so she was given tasks such as writing about her home or family focusing on her spontaneous, not guided language use.

2.5. Tasks

The collection of spoken language took place through recording conversations in everyday situations such as describing the family's house, as well as carrying out tasks such as picture description guided by direct questions.

As I was primarily interested in determiner use, I needed special tasks. The simplest way was asking the 'What is this?' question and pointing at an object on a picture. Yet the most interesting task was asking her to speak freely since Lan produced most of the incorrect sentences in a natural conversation context.

Written language was collected in two types of tasks: a) free writing and b) writing about a set topic. The second, such as describing her family's house, produced shorter texts. The topics were chosen with regard to the chance of determiner occurrence.

It also has to be mentioned that in order to find an answer to the question in connection with the interaction between the three languages of Lan, her Hungarian language use was also observed. Because the main aim was to find the possible L1 to L3 transfer, no recordings have been made of the participant's Hungarian use. However, it was still possible to observe her Hungarian speech, as well as dig through her Hungarian grammar exercise books spanning the past four years. Her Hungarian is errorless. Lan has mastered Hungarian and can be considered a stable bilingual, according to Ng and Wigglesworth's definition, who state that "stable bilinguals are generally people for whom bilingualism is a way of life, and for whom the daily use of two languages is the norm rather than the exception" (2007, p. 20). This results that her L2 knowledge does not contain crucial errors which could be included in this research. This means that her L2 determiner use is correct, which makes it even more interesting that her L3 determiner use is so much behind her classmates'.

2.6. Methods of analysis

Data collecting uncovered several mistakes in Lan's speech. The errors were analyzed, that is, the English examples were compared to their Vietnamese equivalents to indicate the basic differences and to find reason for the mistakes made by Lan. Since I am not a speaker of Vietnamese, Lan and her mother were asked to translate the incorrect sentences.

As mentioned above, Vietnamese is a tonal language. There are six tones (Ngo, 2001), and they are marked in writing by diacritics. The tone is an integral part of creating the meaning of words. This means, that *toi* and *tôi* are two different words, the first means *to die*, while the second means *I* or *me*.

Although a good user of the tones, Lan cannot write the diacritics, only the words. Therefore the correct transcription of her spoken language was provided by her mother, who sat with us for that time.

During analysis most of the errors will be introduced to show the possible transfer from L1 to L3. Their Vietnamese equivalents will also be included in tables and there will be a word-by-word English translation of all of them. On the other hand after the incorrect sentences their 'correct pairs' will be in brackets to show what Lan should have said instead of the incorrect ones..

In this section we have covered the data collecting methods employed.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter is going to deal with results in order to find answers to the research questions. The aim of this part is to indicate the possible L1 transfer with examples and to discuss the determiner use of a Vietnamese speaker.

The errors which are introduced in groups, according to different types, will also be written in Vietnamese to show the system of L1 and the English (L3) system used. The errors are sorted into three main groups; omission, addition and incorrect use. This results six sub-groups, the use of the indefinite articles *a/an*, the definite *the* and the possessive pronouns as determiners.

Although some examples from written tasks are also used, spontaneous speech is emphasized. During writing there is more time to think about the rules and systems the learner wants to use.

3.1. Rules of determiner use

Students of English as a foreign language (EFL) often experience difficulties of learning and acquiring several aspects of the new language. One of the grammar books aiding the learner is *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al., 2002). This grammar book targets students with easier-to-use format and examples. This study relies on this book in explaining correct determiner use in English. The original focus of the study was article use, but since Biber et al. (2002) classified articles together with other determiners, such as the possessive determiner, we also included the latter in the research.

3.1.1. Determiners

First of all, it has to be clarified what determiners are in English. According to the writers “determiners are function words used to specify the kind of reference a noun has” (Biber et al., 2002, p. 65). In the following table, there will be the four main types of determiners, which are being observed in this research.

determiner type	countable nouns		uncountable nouns (singular)
	singular nouns	plural nouns	
zero article	—	<i>books</i>	<i>milk</i>
indefinite article	<i>a book</i>	—	—
definite article	<i>the book</i>	<i>the books</i>	<i>the milk</i>
possessive	<i>my/your book</i>	<i>my/your books</i>	<i>my/your milk</i>

Four main types of determiners (Biber et al., 2002, p.65)

It can be seen that among the four types of determiners, three are articles (zero, indefinite and definite articles) and one is the possessive determiner. If we are about to examine the article use of a Vietnamese L1 speaker, we might as well include possessive determiners in the study.

As far as we know, Vietnamese has none of the before-mentioned syntactic elements (Ngo, 2001; NA, 1981). In the following, we shall overview determiner types and use.

3.1.2. Articles

The use of articles depends on whether the noun is definite or indefinite.

3.1.2.1. Indefinite

If the noun requires an indefinite article, *a* or *an*, the beginning of the noun (vowel, consonant) has to be taken into consideration before the correct one is chosen. A noun starting with a vowel has to be paired with the indefinite *an*, such as in the noun phrase, *an arrow*. The indefinite articles are used before countable, singular nouns, as it can be seen in the table. According to the handbook, the indefinite articles can have three types of use, a) specific, b) unspecific and c) classifying or generic use (Biber. et al., 2002). The choice depends on the situation we are about to mention something.

- a) If we use the specific *a/an*, it means that we introduce a new, precise element in our conversation. ‘*Look! There is an apple on the floor.*’
- b) The second, unspecific use of *a/an* is needed if there is no reference to a peculiar person or thing. For example, when we say ‘*you need a doctor*’, we mean something unspecific, “any person of that kind” (Biber et al., 2002, p. 68).
- c) Finally, the third type is the classifying or generic use of the indefinite articles. In this type, articles can determine an individual, or refer to someone or something in general, such as in the sentence, ‘*A dog is better than a cat*’.

3.1.2.2. Definite

The definite article can be used both with uncountable and countable nouns. The definite article is used, when it is thought that the other participant of the communication knows what is being discussed. In short, we use *the* when we talk about something known. The book *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al., 2002) informs the learner that there are six special ways the definite article can be used. These are the following:
a) anaphoric, b) indirect anaphoric, c) use of *the* with synonyms, d) cataphoric, e) situational

and f) other uses of *the* (Biber et al., 2002). Below, I would like to discuss these different uses of *the*.

- a) When the discourse requires the introduction of a new element that is accompanied by the indefinite *a/an*. Later on this element becomes known and is used with *the* before the noun to refer back to it. “*I have a cat. Now, I am in the garden with the cat.*”
- b) In indirect anaphoric use, the new noun is not repeated as known, but becomes known through a connecting noun, e.g: ***The house*** was a beautiful one... ***The doors*** were made of wood, ***the windows*** were huge.
- c) After mentioning something, we can use a synonym of that item with a definite article before it, e.g: ***Peter McDermott*** went home and watched TV. Soon after ***the man*** had dinner. (fict)
- d) The cataphoric use is the absolute contrast of the anaphoric use. It means that the determiner refers forward to something (not mentioned yet), the possessive *of* structure can be a good example here, eg: *I’m talking about **the food** of your dog.*
- e) *The* can be used if we talk about something current in our nation, or all around the world. For example, we say *the* before global warming, because *we are in the situation of the global warming.*
- f) As the authors write “definiteness depends on assumed shared knowledge in the minds of speaker and addressee, so some uses of *the* are more difficult to explain” (Biber et al., 2002, p. 71). Here some idioms can also be mentioned such as *by the way*, *at the end of the day* etc. (Biber et al., 2002).

3.1.2.3. Zero

The third article type is the zero article usually marked with the symbol ‘Ø’. Zero articles are used with uncountable nouns and also with countable plural nouns, for example: *I like cats but...* or *You eat bread for breakfast every day.* The rule here is that the zero article can occur only before uncountable or plural countable nouns. In special cases we also use the zero article before concepts such as times of the day, months and seasons, and means of transportation. For example before proper names it is not always needed to have articles eg: *I live in Ø Budapest*, but *I can see **the** Moon.*

These rules and examples show how complex determiner use is.

3.1.3. Possessive determiners

Possessive determiners are used to show the connection between the object that is being talked about and the object’s owner. These determiners are possessive pronouns, which are

related to personal pronouns and they can serve as determiners they are placed before the noun in the noun phrase.

However, while articles can be definite or indefinite, these determiners make noun phrases definite. The difference can be seen if two sentences are compared, with the same structure, but different articles in the noun phrases.

a) *A car is parked by a police station.*

b) *My car is parked by a police station.*

Sentence a) has an indefinite noun phrase, the communicated message does not seem to have any specific information it is only a fact that someone parked a car next to a police station. While in sentence b) the noun phrase tells us that the object is connected to someone, showing the specification of the information. It also gives the feeling of a continuation as it seems to be a part of an ongoing story.

English sentences have an SVO word order, which means a sentence is often made of a Subject (in most cases a noun phrase), a Verb and an Object (probably a noun phrase as well). A noun phrase may consist of a noun and most often a determiner. Determiner use is described on the rules mentioned above and the learner has to acquire this knowledge to form grammatical sentences.

In this section we have covered the importance of determiners and the rules of their use. In the following the results will be discussed.

3.2. Errors in speech

As mentioned above, the Vietnamese language does not have determiners, but classifiers, which are used almost everywhere to give information about the objects being talked about. As long as there are no English equivalents of these classifiers, it cannot be explained how and why they use this word class. The connection between determiners and classifiers is the simple fact that they are both followed by nouns and the system of classifiers give a basis of determiner use, they have to come before the noun and it also has to indicate, in the case of determiners, the definiteness and plurality of nouns. Vietnamese classifiers also show the definiteness of nouns; this is why they are sometimes considered as determiners or articles. While this is still a topic of debate among linguists, the basic opinion is that there are no articles and determiners in Vietnamese (Nguyen, 2004; Ngo, 2001). As it was mentioned before in this study the aim is to show the evidence of determiner misuse caused by L1 transfer in the case of a Vietnamese student of EFL.

In this section the focus is on the three main groups; omission, addition and incorrectness and the eight subgroups according to definite, indefinite articles and possessive pronouns. Let us start with the introduction of the groups.

The first and smallest group is **incorrect article/possessive pronoun use**. This contains the smallest amount of errors which will be discussed later on.

The second, larger group is **addition**. The examples from this group will show the uncertainty of Lan in order to choose the correct form of determiner use.

The third and the largest group is not surprisingly the group of **omission**. During data collecting the greatest amount of errors was found in the group of determiner omission. This also indicates that the presence of L1 transfer is very much the cause of this error type. All these groups listed below will be discussed in more detail later together with examples.

3.2.1. Incorrect determiner use

Incorrect determiner and article use in free speech is a group containing the fewest examples.

3.2.1.1. Incorrect *a/an*; *the* use

Lan uses determiners in her speech, although sometimes incorrectly. On the assumption that there are no determiners in her L1, these can be considered developmental errors.

Let us begin with the utterances which contain incorrect articles.

(1.) *And in the kitchen we have **a** best TV. (And in the kitchen we have **the** best TV.)

(2.) *I live in **the** big house with my family. (I live in **a** big house with my family.)

The second utterance is a part of a longer text told by Lan when introducing herself and her family. Before the noun *house* she should have used an indefinite *a* because she introduced a new topic or object. This example also can be considered as a developmental error.

(3.) *And one dad. (And **a** dad.)

The third example seems to be different from the first two above. Instead of the indefinite *a* Lan used the numeral *one* in the sentence. The reason for this might be the fact that Vietnamese language refers to singular nouns by saying the numeral *one* before them. Probably this is the reason why Lan added an extra, unnecessary numeral instead of the indefinite *a*. Therefore this seems to be a case of negative transfer.

3.2.1.2. Incorrect possessive pronoun

In English, possessive pronouns can function as determiners as far as they stand in the determiner position, such as *My book is blue*. Vietnamese grammar has no possessive

pronouns. It uses the personal pronoun to indicate the connection between the object and the person.

Despite the few examples in talking, L1 transfer exists in this area. It must be noted, however, that the total number of correct utterances with possessive pronouns that was produced was higher than the sentences with errors. There are two incorrect examples below.

(4.a) *And **she** favorites food is carrot. (And **her** favorite food is carrot.)

(4.b)

Bã ậy	thích nhất	cá rô.
She	favorite [food]	carrot.

(5.) ***She** fur is grey and **she** favorites food is carrot. (**Her** fur is grey and **her** favorite food is carrot.)

So far we have covered the question of incorrect determiner use with some examples. Next is addition of determiners.

3.2.2. Addition

During the time of observation the participant seemed to make mistakes by adding some unnecessary words such as *are* into a sentence in present simple tense. This type of mistake again can be a developmental error given the fact that the two present tenses can be mixed for a long time when learning English. Furthermore Lan made some other mistakes which are not included in the study, which is restricted to determiner use.

Lan did add articles where not needed.

3.2.2.1. Addition of *a/an*

As it was mentioned several times, Vietnamese does not have articles, only classifiers. Therefore the errors presented will also have the possibility to be considered as developmental errors.

(6.) *He has a jeans. (He has a pair of jeans/He is wearing Ø jeans.)

(7.) *He has a small eyes. (He has Ø small eyes.)

(8.) *I have a breakfast. (I have Ø breakfast.)

(9.) *We have a nine rooms. (We have Ø nine rooms.)

(10.) *She has a grey hair. (She has Ø grey hair.)

In Lan's speech, article addition does not occur as much as the omission of articles. There is, however, an interesting example of addition where a numeral is added together with a correct article:

(11.a) *Besides we have two bathroom and **a one** kitchen. (Besides we have two bathrooms and **a** kitchen.)

The addition of *one* again is something that has to do with L1 transfer. If we look at the Vietnamese equivalent of this sentence we see the reason for this error.

(11.b)

Minh	có	2	phòng	tắm	vòi	1 (một)	phòng	bếp.
We	have	2	room	bath	and	1 (one)	room	kitchen.

The Vietnamese sentence and the meaning of the words show that the Vietnamese language does have the effect on the English sentence by adding the numeral *one*, while the next examples with *the* addition can be considered as developmental not transfer errors.

(12.) *Peter have the two dogs. (Peter has Ø two dogs.)

(13.) *In the Budapest. (In Ø Budapest.)

It seems like there is no possible connection between the systems L1 and L3 in this case. So, as it was assumed above, these additions also can be classified as developmental errors.

3.2.2.2. Addition of Possessive determiner

As a matter of fact, Lan did not add possessive determiners, therefore there will not be examples from that area.

3.2.3. Omission

This last part is going to deal with determiner omission. As the aim of this research, the transfer from L1 to L3 will be dealt with by giving several examples to indicate the relevancy of the hypothesis. Having said that the lack of articles and determiners in Vietnamese may transfer to Lan's English, these examples, one by one, will have their Vietnamese equivalences to show the assumed effect.

First, let me introduce the omission of the possessive determiners as the smallest subgroup of omission.

3.2.3.1. Omission of the possessive determiner

Although there are only two examples, it is still possible to state that the occurrence of these errors is based on the L1 transfer.

(14.) *Grandfather is... (My grandfather is...)

(15.) *I hit head. (I hit my head.)

The first sentence was an answer to the question *Do you have a grandfather?* In Vietnamese, it is clear for the addressee that the speaker talks about his or her relative from the context. This is the case in the second example as well.

3.2.3.2. *A/an* omission

In English the two most common and most widely used articles are the indefinite articles *a/an*. Their function is to define a newly-introduced object or to refer to countable, singular nouns in general. Since Vietnamese does not have this feature, article omission is expected to be a common error in English. Indeed, the largest number of errors observed, are included in this main group, supporting my initial assumption.

Interestingly enough, it is not only Vietnamese students who experience problems with article use. This is the case with Finnish students as well since the Finnish language also lacks articles. The learner of English cannot base his English knowledge on his L1 system, resulting a possible L1 transfer with omitting articles (Ringbom, 1986).

Now, let us turn to the examples, observing their Vietnamese translations as well. Several examples have the same structure because of the simple fact that the error awareness of Lan was also tested during observation, whether she can recognize and correct her own mistakes or not. A few below starts with ‘*This is*’.

(16.) *This is book. (This is **a** book.)

This	is	book.
Cái này là	-	quyển sách.

(17.) *This is car. (This is **a** car.)

This	is	car.
Cái này là	-	ô tô.

(18.) *This is bottle. (This is **a** bottle.)

This	is	bottle.
Cái này là	-	chai.

(19.) *This is pencil case. (This is **a** pencil case.)

This	is	pencil case.
Cái này là	-	hộp bút.

- (20.) *This is mobile phone. (This is **a** mobile phone.)

This	is	mobile phone.
Cái này là	-	điện thoại.

- (21.) *This is paper. (This is **a** paper.)

This	is	paper.
Cái này là	-	giấy.

In the Vietnamese examples *cái* is a classifier and it is always before an object such as *table*, and it can never be used with a living object. Also while in English there is the verb *be*, in Vietnamese it is not present.

The examples show that Lan did not use articles in her English sentences.

Another way of making Lan say sentences with articles was describing pictures or her environment. These sentences always started with 'I can see'. Here are the examples found during observation.

- (22.) *I can see children and dog and mouse and fish. (I can see children and **a** dog and **a** mouse and **a** fish.)

Tôi	nhìn thấy	trẻ con,	con chó,	con chuột,	con cá.
I	[can] see	children	[and] dog	[and] mouse	[and] fish.

- (23.) *I can see book. (I can see **a** book.)

Tôi	nhìn thấy	quyển sách.
I	[can] see	book.

- (24.) *I can see table. (I can see **a** table.)

Tôi	nhìn thấy	cái bàn.
I	[can] see	table.

- (25.) *I can see skirt. (I can see **a** skirt.)

Tôi	nhìn thấy	váy.
I	[can] see	skirt.

If we compare the Vietnamese sentences with the English ones, we can see the possible transfer.

It is reasonable to find article omissions in sentences with different structure, to avoid the possibility of finding chunks of words learned in the wrong way. Below are further examples

showing that article omission is a typical transfer error, independent from the system of sentences.

(26.a) *You are wearing sweater and jeans and T-shirt. (You are wearing **a** sweater and jeans and **a** T-Shirt.)

Let us see the Vietnamese equivalent of this sentence and find a reason for this.

(26.b)

Ban	mặc	aó len	quần bò
You	wear	sweater	jeans

Vietnamese vocabulary does not make a difference between words referring to tops, they call a sweater, a pullover, a T-shirt, or a top the same way, *aó len*. Similarly, Vietnamese uses the word *quần bò* for trousers, jeans and shorts; although it does not refer to them as plural clothing items.

Apart from all these, the last and most important feature of these sentences is the same as above, articles cannot be found in neither of them.

(27.a) *He has round face. (He has **a** round face.)

(28.a) *She has big mouth. (She has **a** big mouth.)

(29.a) *They have got pencil case. (They have got **a** pencil case.)

(27.b)

Ông ấy	có	mặt tròn.
He	has	face round.

(28.b)

Bà ấy	có	mồm to.
She	has	mouth big.

(29.b)

Bon nó	có	hộp bút.
They	have	pencil case.

From the first two word-by-word translations it can be seen that the Vietnamese adjectives follow the nouns, unlike in English, but this does not seem to cause difficulties to the speaker. The problem is again the missing articles.

(30.) *Nickelodeon is very funny channel. (Nickelodeon is **a** very funny channel.)

Nickelodeon	buồn cười	lắm.
Nickelodeon	funny	very.

So far we have discussed the most important examples of the omission of indefinite articles, while in the next subsection the omission of the definite article will be exemplified.

3.2.3.3. Omission of the definite article *the*

The small error corpus contains fewer examples for the omission of the definite article than for that of the indefinite article. Let us see some of the examples.

(31.a) *Why boy is older? (Why is **the** boy older?)

(32.a) *My favorite room is kitchen. (My favorite room is **the** kitchen.)

(33.a) *In nineteenth district. (In **the** nineteenth district.)

(34.a) *All family must clear house. (The whole family must clean **the** house.)

(35.a) *It is a Vietnamese soup, ingredients are pasta... (It is a Vietnamese soup, **the** ingredients are pasta...)

(36.a) *And clear house. (And clean **the** house.)

If we look at the Vietnamese equivalents of these sentences we will see that the omission error is definitely a transfer error.

(31.b)

Sao	bạn	nhìên tuổi	hon?
Why	he	older	than?

The structure of the first sentence is clearly based on the Vietnamese structure. The word order is the following: question word, noun, adjective and a specific word in the Vietnamese sentence which always follows a comparative adjective, comparing the object with the speaker. It is visible that there is no verb in the Vietnamese sentence but Lan used the verb correctly in the English sentence. The article is missing. Let us see the other Vietnamese sentences.

(32.b)

Thích nhất	phòng bếp.
Favorite	room kitchen.

Vietnamese vocabulary uses two words to refer to rooms, the first is the word *room* (*phòng*) to indicate that is a room, and second word tells which room it is (*bếp*). So it is positive that Lan put the verb *be* in the sentence but the article is missing again.

(33.b)

Quận	19.
District	nineteen.

(34.b)

Cả nhà	dọn	nhà.
All family	clean	house.

(35.b)

Gia vị	súp	Việt Nam	là	mì
Ingredients	soup	Vietnamese	are	pasta

(36.b)

Dọn	nhà
Clean	house

These omission errors are evidently transfer errors.

To conclude this section, the number of spoken errors, 36, is not high if we compare it the total amount of time, 210 minutes of recording. While most of the errors can directly be connected to Lan's L1, larger-scale research would be needed to look at other examples of transfer such as the use of tenses or word order. In the next part of this chapter the errors in writing will be discussed in detail.

3.3. Errors in writing

This section will be dealing with the examples found during data collecting, from written tasks. In order to receive the data needed, some extra tasks were given to Lan, as it was mentioned in the Methods chapter. She had to describe a picture or simply write about a broad topic such as introducing her home. Also her exercise books were observed from a year ago to collect more information about the possible transfer of missing determiners.

With regard to article errors, Lan's writing resulted in fewer examples than her speech production, while her possessive determiner use contained more errors in writing than in speech observation.

3.3.1. Addition of *a/an; the*

(37.) *My birthday is in the December. (My birthday is in Ø December.)

(38.) *I eat the breakfast. (I eat Ø breakfast.)

As it was mentioned in the speech errors section, as far as Vietnamese grammar does not have the word class of articles or determiners, these examples of addition cannot be considered as transfer errors, only developmental errors.

3.3.2. Article omission

(39.) *She has hat. (She has **a** hat.)

(40.) *He wants sheep. (He wants **a** sheep.)

(41.) *She has big nose. (She has **a** big nose.)

(42.) *He is wearing black belt. (He is wearing **a** black belt.)

These sentences also show that L1 has a considerable effect on the English use of Lan even in writing when she has more time to think

The last part to discuss is the omission and misuse of possessive determiners. Interestingly enough in writing Lan tended to make more errors in connection with this group of determiners than in speech. Let us see the examples.

3.3.3. Incorrect / omitted possessive determiners

(43.) *Petra and brother live in the one room. (Petra and **her** brother live in one room.)

(44.) *Which you favorite star? (Who is **your** favorite star?)

(45.) *She favorite sport is tennis. (**Her** favorite sport is tennis.)

(46.) *It food is on the table. (**Its** food is on the table.)

(47.) *We house is very interesting. (**Our** house is very interesting.)

These examples all prove the assumption of L1 transfer in writing. All of them are produced in the same way as it would have been written in Lan's mother tongue. As it was also mentioned in connection with speech errors, Vietnamese makes possessive sentences with only the personal pronoun and that pronoun indicates the relation between the speaker and the object he or she speaks about. This is the case with these sentences as well.

In conclusion, L1 transfer was traced and identified through observation, analysis and comparison. My hypothesis has been proved. The very last step is to find the answers to the raised questions based on these examples and the discussed facts about Vietnamese.

4. Summary and Conclusion

The goal of the research was to show that Vietnamese as an L1 influences the determiners in the speaker's English use. Many examples indicate that the system of Vietnamese has a strong effect on English determiners because of the fact that Vietnamese does not have this type of word class. As it was discussed, three types of article misuse were found during the observation. Based on our findings we can conclude that addition and incorrect article and possessive determiner use can all be classified as developmental errors since Vietnamese does not have these word classes, their use in English cannot be influenced by the mother tongue of the speaker. On the other hand, omission of articles and possessive determiners are the results of L1 transfer, since the English sentences in which determiners were omitted had the same structures as their Vietnamese equivalents. These findings tell us that the participant's English use is definitely influenced by Vietnamese as L1.

4.1. Answers to the Research Questions

As a reminder let us look at all the questions again then try to define the answers according to the findings.

Q1. What type of errors are made in English, the third (and foreign) language of a Vietnamese speaker and with what relative frequency?

During observation, several mistakes were recognized which are not included in the research as they are not connected to the topic. The aim of the research was to find the trace of L1 transfer in English determiner use of a Vietnamese EFL student. It can be stated that the research has reached the goal because the transfer can be seen in the determiner use of the speaker. In short, the most visible and spectacular error was the omission of determiners and the misuse of possessive determiners the first most of the time in speech while the second mostly in writing. Also, articles were incorrectly used or added but these seem to be not connected to the speaker's mother tongue.

Q2. Are the errors developmental or transfer errors? In other words, can these errors be connected to the mother tongue of the speaker, or are they independent developments?

Vietnamese does not have any determiners so in the cases where the participant omitted any type of determiners are transfer errors. On the other hand, determiner addition and incorrectness are considered to be developmental errors because as long as Vietnamese does not have those characteristics those errors cannot be influenced by the speaker's mother tongue. In the case of possessive determiners, both omission and misuse are considered as

transfer errors because Vietnamese indicates the relationship between a person and another person or an object by using the personal pronoun instead of, as in English, referring to them by possessive pronouns. The research showed no trace of possessive pronoun addition.

Q3. Do the speaker's three languages interact, and if they do, how is it manifested?

Lan's L2 use was not emphasized in this research and during the observation, as a result the answer of this question is also partly based on personal observation and experiences. However, the observation has not found any traces of interaction of the three languages. This is probably because of the fact that the speaker is at native or near-native level both in her L1 and L2.

Q4. Does the speaker make fewer errors in writing than in speaking, assumed that the language user is allowed to think more when writing than when speaking?

Data collecting resulted approximately 210 minutes of recorded speech with around 56 incorrect utterances transcribed as sentences, out of which 36 were included in this paper. Written language data contained 43 sentences, out of which 11, containing errors, were included here. However, there was approximately twice as much recorded material as written, so the errors found are not proportional. Still it seems that written language errors are relatively higher. At this point it seems that contrary to our expectation, more time to think about a written task did not mean a lower number of mistakes than during spontaneous speech. This phenomenon would require further investigation.

4.2. Limitations of the research

Although enough evidence was provided through data collection, observing only one participant could be a problem in proving L1 transfer. The reason for this is that finding other participants would have been very difficult. On the other hand, the relevant literature supports our findings in that determiner omission is one of the many results of Vietnamese L1 transfer.

4.3. Future directions

The aim of this research was to find the possible reason for the incorrect determiner use in English of a Vietnamese EFL learner. This topic can be developed in order to find other transfer errors resulting from Vietnamese L1. Several other areas of English are different from Vietnamese and they could provide more examples for L1 transfer. Another direction would be to see if there is L2 transfer to the learner's L3.

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Appendix A

Rec. 01.

*A: "Do you have a grandfather?"

B: "Grandfather is..."

Rec. 02.

**What is in the picture?*

B: "One armchair"

B: "Two balls"

B: "One house"

B: "One radio"

B: "One apple"

B: "One mug"

B: "One pencil"

A: "This is...?"

B: "Book."

A: "In a full sentence?"

B: "This is book."

A: "What is this?"

B: "This is car."

Rec. 03.

**Picture description*

B: Dad is reading the book to... Dad is reading a book to children."

Rec. 04.

*B: "Beütöttem a fejemet az asztalnak a sarkába."

B: "I hit head, I hit my head." (corrected)

*A: "What can you see in this picture? I can see..."

B: "I can see children and dog and mouse and fish."

A: "And what can you see here?"

B: "Children. I can see children."

A: "And what is this?"

B: "Book. I can see book."

A: "And what is this?"

B: "I can see table."

A: "And what is this?"

B: "Skirt. I can see skirt. I can see book, I can see old man."

A: "And what is this?"

B: "I can see a young baby."

Rec. 05.

****Showing Hungarian sentences written on papers***

Van macskád?

B: "Have you a cat? Have you the cat?"

A: "If I start with *Do...*?"

B: "Do you have a cat?"

Péternek van 2 kutyája.

B: "Peter have the two dogs. Peter have two dogs."

Nem szereti a focit.

B: "She doesn't like football."

*A: "Why are they happy?"

B: "Miért boldogak? I don't know."

A: "Maybe because..."

B: "...ettek egy fagyit... they ate..."

A: "Present perfect?"

B: "They... have ... eaten the ice-cream."

*A: "And what can you see here? Who are these people?"

B: "Two children."

A: "Two children and...?"

B: "And one dad."

A: "OK."

B: "Why boy is older?"

*A: "Can you tell me something about this room?"

B: "TV, Pho."

A: "In full sentences."

B: "We have a TV, a Pho... Pho."

A: "There is..."

B: "There is Pho, there is table, there is sofa, there is pencil case."

A: "What is that?"

B: "That is armchair."

A: "What did you have for breakfast today?"

B: "I eat a sandwich today."

A: "In the past?"

B: "I ate the sandwich today."

****(Pointing at objects in the room.)***

A: "What is this? In a full sentence?"

B: "This is book."

A: "What is this?"

B: "This is bottle."

B: "This is pencil case."

B: "This is mobile phone."

B: "This is paper."

Rec. 06.

****Pointing at objects***

B: "This is a dictionary."

B: "This is a paper."

Rec. 07.

*A: "What am I wearing?"

B: "You are wearing sweater, and jeans and T-shirt."

*A: "What is this?"

B: "This is a pen."

****Describing a person***

B: "He has a cap. He has a curly hair and a red hair. He has a glasses. He has a big ears. He has a small eyes. He has a small nose. He has a moustache. He has a T-shirt. He has a jeans. He has a belt. He has a long arm. He has short leg.

A: "His face is...?"

B: "His face is round."

A: "He has...?"

B: "He has round face."

Rec. 08.

****Describing a person***

B: "She has big mouth... She is wearing a T-shirt."

****Pointing at objects***

B: "This is paper."

B: "This is pen."
B: "This is sticker."
B: "This is book."
B: "This is pencil case."
B: "This is mobile phone."
B: "This is exercise book."
B: "This is watch."
B: "This is pullover."
B: "This is trousers."
B: "This is sofa."
B: "This is table."
B: "We have got a bottle."
B: "We want a book."
B: "I have got stickers."
B: "They have got pencil case."

Rec. 09.

*A: "Do you have a pet?"
B: "Yes I have a rabbit. My rabbit is female and her name is Bolyhoska. She is 3 years old. She favorites food is carrot. Her hair is grey and her hair is soft."

Rec. 10.

*B: "I have got a rabbit. My rabbit is female. She is..., her name is Bolyhoska and she is three years old. She has a grey hair and her hair is soft. And she favorites food is carrot."
A: "Can you tell me something about that dog?"
B: "Yes. Chow-chow is a big dog. And it has a big hair."
*A: "Can you tell me something more about it?"
B: "This soup is very delicious. Ingredients are pasta, meat, onion..."
*A: "Your topic is *daily routine*."
B: "On weekdays I get up at 7 o'clock next I have a breakfast but I haven't got breakfast at home, I have breakfast at school."
*A: "What kind of programs do you watch?"
B: "Nickelodeon. Nickelodeon is very funny channel."

Rec. 11.

*A: "Tell me something about your house."

B: "I live in a big house with my family and I have a big garden... We have a lot of statue and a lot of vase..."

A: "Which is your favorite place in your house?"

B: "My room."

A: "Your room. How does it look like?"

B: "Oh, no. My favorite room is kitchen."

Rec. 12.

*B: "I live in Budapest and I'm Vietnamese. I live in the big house with my family."

A: "How do you eat your soups?"

B: "We eat this soup, we use the chopsticks and we have a spoon and when we eat the pasta next we drinking the water."

Rec. 13.

*B: "Our house is very beautiful and we have a nine rooms. My parents' room is beautiful, my parents' room is brown and yellow. My parents have to vases and a TV and three bed in the room... three beds. And my brother room is dirty. And my brother can't sleep in the room because too big and he's afraid. Besides we have two bathroom and a one kitchen and a ... guestroom and a living room."

A: "Which is your favorite room?"

B: "My favorite room is kitchen."

A: "Why?"

B: "Because I... sometimes I eat a lot of food. And in the kitchen we have a best TV."

*A: "Tell me something about your school."

B: "My school is..."

A: "Where?"

B: "In the Budapest."

A: "Yep, in which district?"

B: "District nineteen, nineteenth district."

A: "In..."

B: "In nineteenth district, and in the Csokonay Street... We, in my school is, has a three class A, B, C."

A: "Would you like to learn, in the future, another language?"

B: "Yes, I would like learn the Spanish."

A: "So, *I would*..."

B: "I would learn the Spanish."

A: "And why Spanish?"

B: "Because a lot of people speak Spanish."

Rec. 14.

*A: "Do you recognize the mistakes you make?"

B: "Yes, if I have a mistakes, I correct..."

A: "...them."

B: "I correct them."

*A: "Do you have a pet?"

B: "I have a rabbit, it is female. She fur (az a bunda), she fur is grey and she favorites food is carrot."

Rec. 15.

*B: "I attend XY primary school. I have a rabbit, it is female and her name is Bolyhoska, her fur is grey and soft and her favorite food is carrot."

A: "What do you do together?"

B: "Sometimes we going to cinema and going shopping and stay at home and all family must clear house."

*A: "Can you tell me something about your favorite food?"

B: "My favorite food is Pho, it is a Vietnamese soup, ingredients are pasta, meat, onions and water and spices. We use chopsticks we eat pasta with chopsticks and after we drinking the soup."

*A: "What do you do in your free time?"

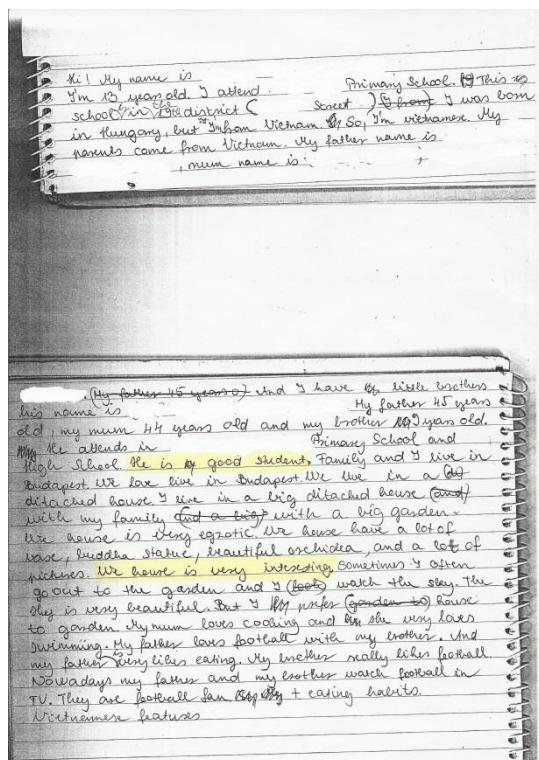
B: "In my free time I do my homework. And clear house and I help my mom, my father and my brother. Sometimes I play with my brother."

Signs

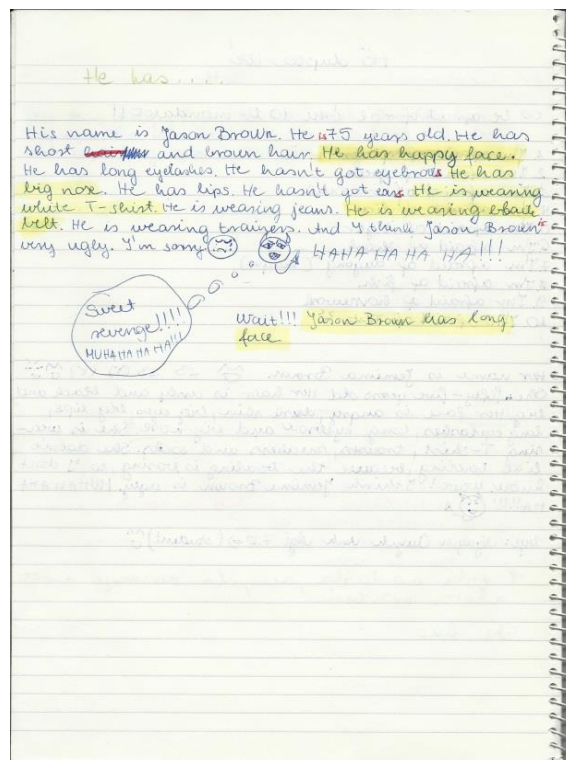
*-Beginning of a "task"

***text**-Task type

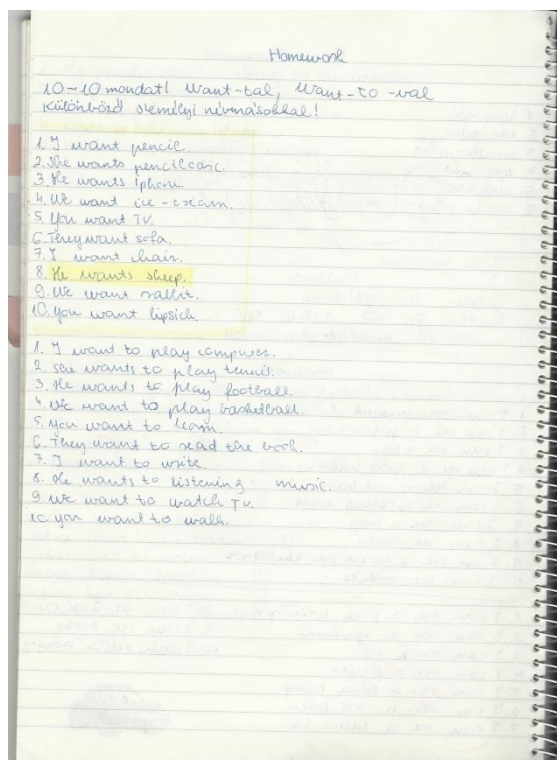
Appendix B



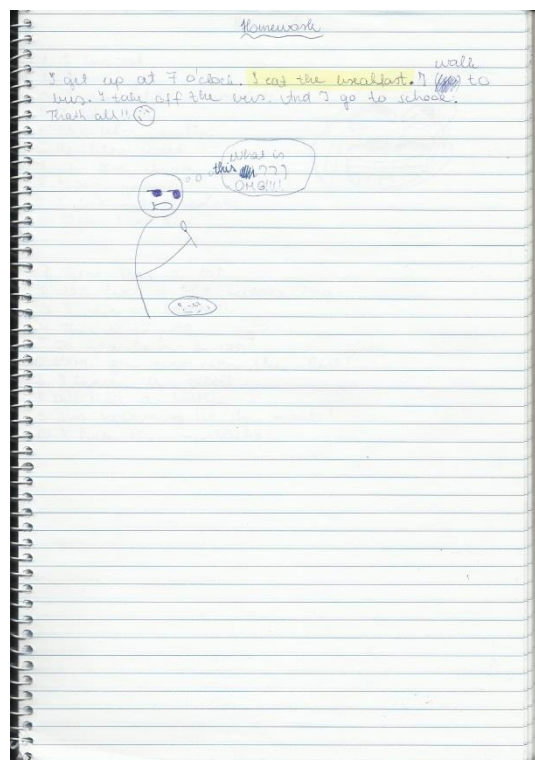
1. Indefinite article, possessive pronoun omission



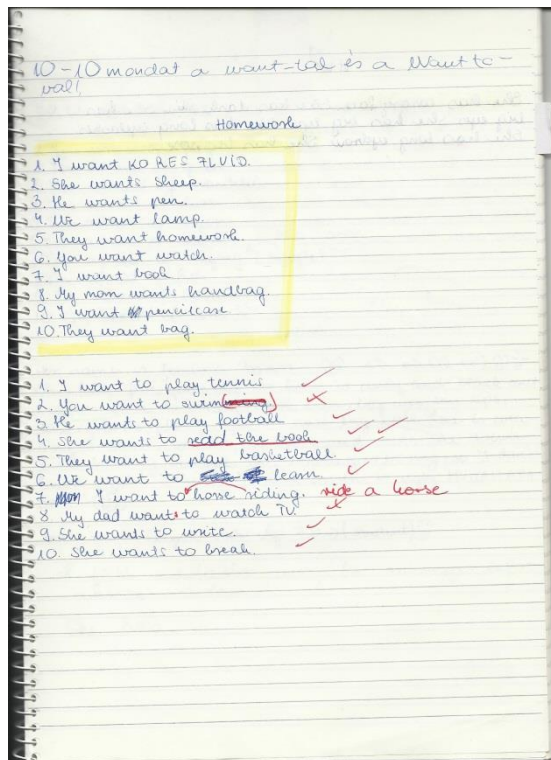
3. Indefinite article omission



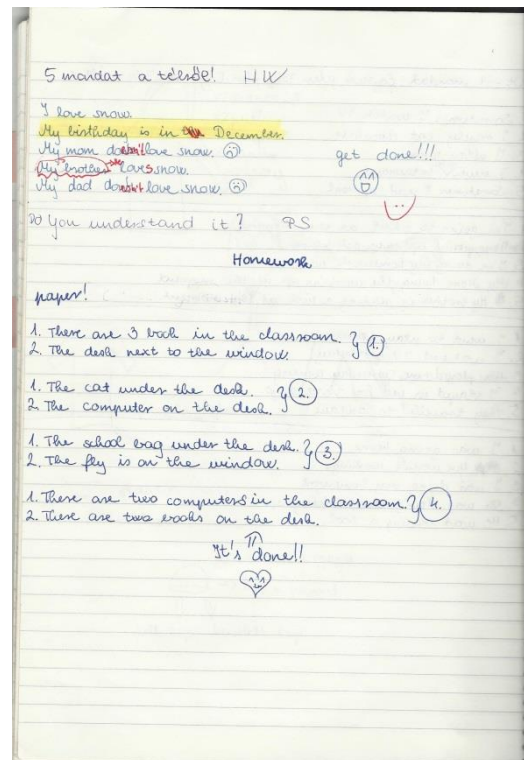
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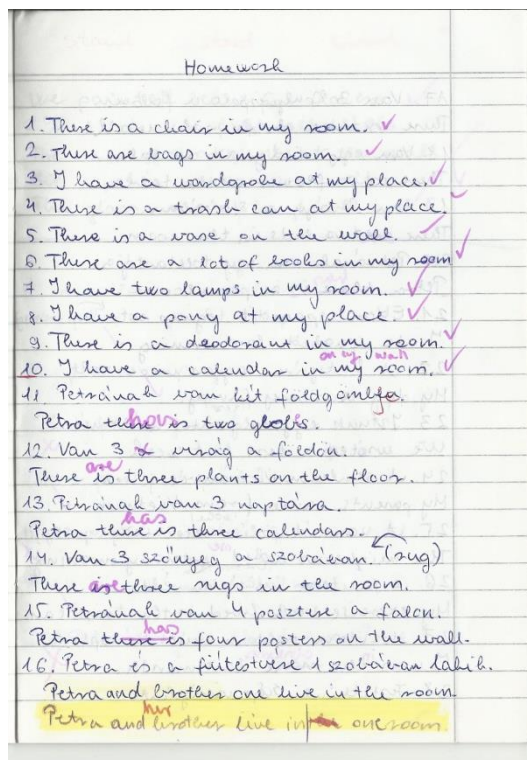
4. Definite article addition



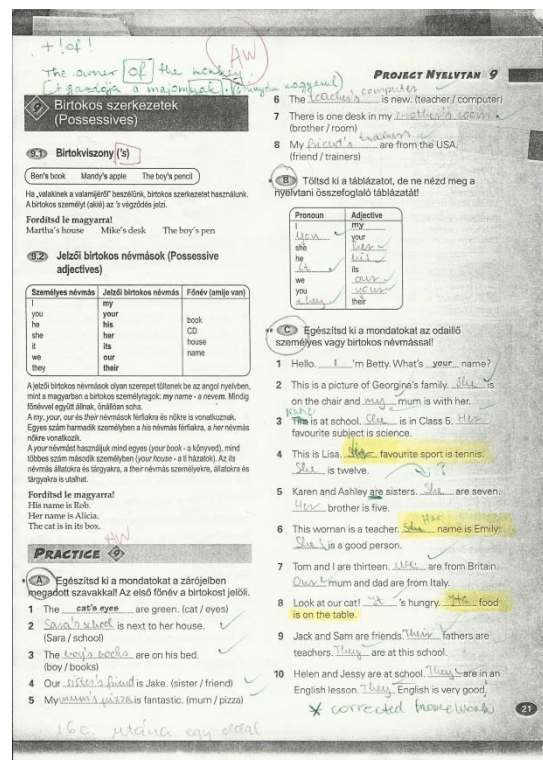
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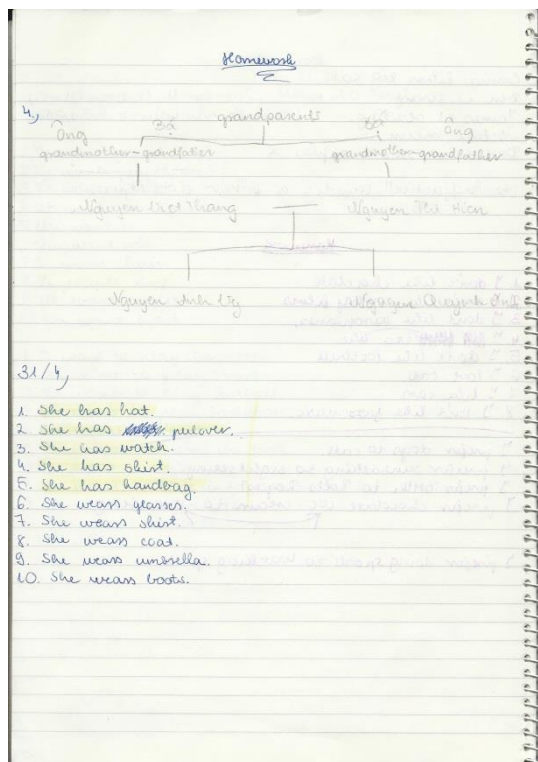
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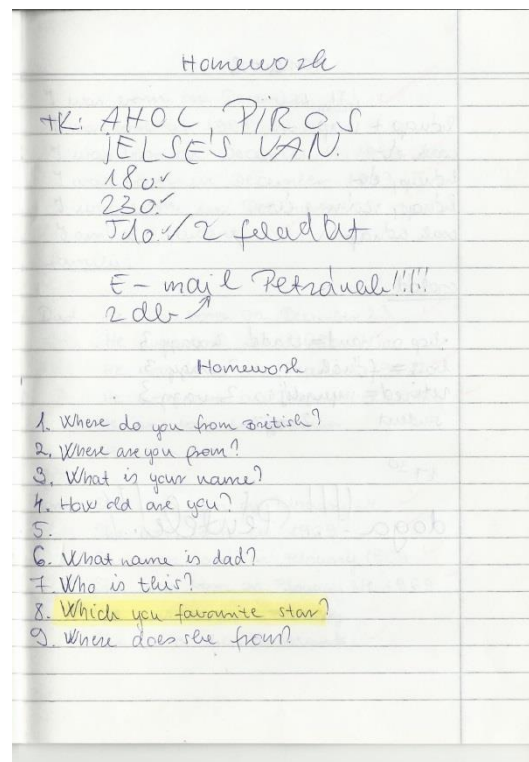
6. Possessive pronoun omission



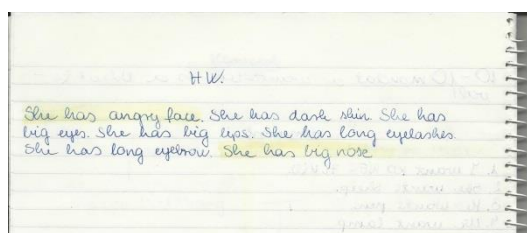
8. Incorrect possessive pronoun



9. Indefinite article omission



11. Incorrect possessive pronoun



10. Indefinite article omission