

A Comparative Study of The Indonesian and English Articles

F.X. Nadar

1. Introduction

Commonwealth Department of Education in Australia (1983:22) has concluded that articles will be an area of difficulty for Indonesian students. This is because the "BI (Bahasa Indonesia) has no real equivalents of the English definite and indefinite articles. In many cases where the articles are used in English no corresponding word occurs in Bahasa Indonesia". Errors related to the use of articles deserve close attention because articles are not only one of the grammar elements, but also "extremely frequent in English (Berry, 1991:252). Carrol, et al (1971) have found that articles account for almost every tenth word in English. This paper means to explore the similarities and differences of the articles in Indonesian and English, and how the findings may affect Indonesian students' difficulties in using the English articles.

is essential for learners of English either as a second or foreign language. Fromkin, et al. (1984:11) write that "to understand the nature of language we must understand the nature of this internalised, unconscious set of rules which is part of every grammar of every language". There are some definitions about grammar, and "the word grammar has various meanings" (Quirk et al., 1985:12). Robin (1971:17) states that grammar "is concerned with the patterns and arrangements of units established and organized on criteria other than those referable to phonetic features". Ur (1988:4) defines grammar as "the way a language manipulates and combines

words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning". Quirk et al. do not want to define grammar (1985:10) but stress that grammar includes both syntax and the aspect of morphology (the internal structure of words) that deals with inflections. However, they provide a definition about prescriptive grammar (Quirk et al., 1985:14) i.e. a set of regulations that are based on what is evaluated as correct or incorrect in the standard varieties".

There are "several thousands of languages" (Finegan et al. 1992:247) all over the world. Those languages can be identical to one another or strikingly different. These differences may include the sound, grammar, syntax, morphology, meaning, etc. There have been studies on grammar comparisons from one language to another. The result of the study may not only deepen the understanding of the language users in general but also the advancement of the study of languages in particular. It is with that in mind that this paper, about the comparative study of the Indonesian and English articles, is written.

Sentences used as examples are numbered for easier reference, and certain symbols and special printing effects are used in this paper, for clarity and ease in reading. They are:

1. Underlining : for specifically referred English words
e.g. The indefinite article an is used before a noun beginning with a vowel sound.
2. Italics : for specifically referred Indonesian words

e.g. The definite article *sang* is often used.

3. ---> : to replace the expressions: This becomes or the right form is ...
Dua buah rumah
Two CLASS house
---->Two houses
4. * : Grammatically not acceptable
* He turned on light as room dark.
5. CLASS : Classifier;
6. ART : Article
7. Num : Numeral
8. Prep : Prepositional
9. Adj : Adjective

2. The Noun Phrase

In Indonesian, a noun phrase may be defined as a phrase with a noun in its structure. As in English (Leech, 1989: 295) the noun normally functions as the head of the noun phrase. The noun phrase typically functions as a subject, an object, a complement of sentences, a complement of prepositional phrases (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973:59). Indonesian noun phrases may be expanded not only to the left of the head nouns, as premodifiers, but also to the right, as postmodifiers.

The premodifiers may consist of adjectives, articles, numerals, nouns, while the postmodifiers mostly consist of phrases with prepositions. Consider the examples below:

- (1) empat rumah
four house
----> four houses

Empat is a numeral and *rumah* is a noun. The structure is similar to that of the English four houses.

- (2) empat buah rumah
four CLASS houses
----> four houses

Buah is a noun classifier. There are many noun classifiers in Indonesian, which will be discussed in the later part of the paper. The complexity of the noun classifiers may cause difficulties to those learning the Indonesian language. The noun classifier is put between the noun and the numeral. In English, there are noun phrase structures with noun classi-

fiers identical to those in Indonesia, such as four sheets of paper, four pairs of shoes, four pieces of meat. Perhaps, *empat buah rumah* may be best expressed into four units of houses.

- (3) rumah empat buah
house four CLASS
----> four houses

The numeral and noun classifier may be put on the right of the head noun. When other determiners exist, such as *ini*(this), *itu*(that), *nya*(possessives: her,his,its), *adjectives*, the numeral and noun classifiers should be put on the left of the head noun, e.g.

- (3) a. empat buah rumah ini
four CLASS houses these
---->these four houses
- (3) b. empat buah rumah itu
four CLASS houses those
----> those four houses
- (3) c. empat buah rumahnya
four CLASS houses HIS/HER
----> his/her four houses
- (3) d. empat buah rumah besar
four CLASS houses LARGE
----> four large houses
- (4) rumah indah
house beautiful
----> beautiful house

The adjective *indah* is put on the right of the head noun. The noun phrase in English has the adjective on the left of the head noun. More adjectives in the Indonesian noun phrase can be put after *indah*, for example *besar*(big), *kuat*(strong). The word *yang* (which) is used, e.g:

- (4) a. rumah indah yang besar
houses beautiful which large
----> large beautiful houses
- (4) b. rumah indah yang kuat
houses beautiful which strong
----> strong beautiful houses
- (5) empat buah rumah indah
four CLASS house beautiful
----> four beautiful houses

The combination of a numeral, noun classifier, head noun and adjective is also possible. The acceptable structure is the numeral and noun classifier should be

put before the head noun and the adjective after the head noun.

(6) empat buah rumah indah dekat danau
four CLASS houses beautiful near the/a lake
----> four beautiful houses near the/a lake

Dekat danau is a qualifier. This is considered a prepositional phrase in Indonesian context, because *dekat* may function not only as an adjective, the opposite of far, but also as a preposition preceding a proper noun (*danau*). The position of such a qualifier is always after the head noun, which is similar to the position of a qualifier in an English noun phrase.

(7) empat buah rumah kayu indah dekat danau
four CLASS house wood beautiful near lake
----> four beautiful wood houses near the/a lake

The word *kayu* (wood) from which the house is made is added. As *kayu* modifies house and becomes an integral part of it, the word is put closest to house. *Indah* comes afterwards. The noun phrase **rumah indah kayu* is unacceptable. Sometimes, *yang* is put between *kayu* and *indah*, because *yang* (which) is useful to put adjectives after adjectives. Similarly, in English *wood beautiful house is not acceptable.

(8) empat buah rumah kayu putih indah dekat danau
four CLASS house wood white beautiful near lake
----> four beautiful white wood houses near the/a lake

In the phrase above, another adjective *putih* is added. Adjectives denoting colours are put after *kayu*. In the long phrase noun phrase **rumah indah kayu* is unacceptable. Sometimes, *yang* is put between *kayu* and *indah*, because *yang* (which) is useful to put adjectives after adjectives. Similarly, in English *wood beautiful house is not acceptable.

(8) empat buah rumah kayu putih indah dekat danau
four CLASS house wood white beautiful near lake
----> four beautiful white wood houses near the/a lake

In the phrase above, another adjective *putih* is added. Adjectives denoting as (8) it is possible to reverse the position of *indah* and *putih*, depending on the stress of information to convey.

To test the correctness of the post modifiers' order, it is useful to ask :

- What is the phrase about ? house (*rumah*)
- What is the house made of ? wood (*kayu*)
- What colour are the houses? white (*putih*)
- What do they look like? beautiful (*indah*)
- Where are they ? near a/the lake (*dekat danau*)

If the beauty of the houses is given more stress, rather than the colour, the *empat buah rumah kayu indah putih dekat danau* will be an alternative.

The structure of the Indonesian and English longest phrases (8) can be summarized as follows:

1. A noun phrase in Indonesian may be formed with a noun head preceded by premodifiers consisting of numeral and nounclassifier ; and followed by adjectives and prepositional phrase (Figure 1). A noun phrase in English also has a noun head which can be preceded by numerals, adjectives and followed by a prepositional phrase (Figure 2).

Figure 1.

Num. CLASS.	Head	Adj.(1,2,3)	Prep. Phrase
empat buah	rumah	kayu putih indah	dekat danau

Figure 2.

Num.	Adj. (1,2,3)	Head	Prep phrase
four	beautiful white wood	house	near the/a lake

3. Indefinite Articles

In (2) the word *buah* is a noun classifier. *Buah* may go with nouns such as *rumah* (house), *mobil* (car), *hadiah* (present), *gedung* (building). But it is not suitable for *orang* (man), *anak* (child), *dokter* (doctor) and for them the noun classifier is *orang*. Moeliono (1988) presents the examples of noun classifiers in Indonesian as follows:

- orang* for *manusia* (man)
- ekor* for *binatang* (animals)
- buah* for *buah-buahan* (fruit)
- batang* for *pohon* (tree), *rokok* (cigarette) or other things with long circular shape
- bentuk* for *cincin* (ring), *gelang* (bracelet) and other things which are elastic and can be bent.

bidang for *tanah* (land), *sawah* (rice field)

helai for *kertas* (paper), *rambut* (hair) and other thin, soft materials

bilah for *pisau* (knife), *pedang* (sword) and other sharp things

utas for *benang* (thread), *tali* (rope) and other tiny, long items

potong for *baju* (shirt), *celana* (trousers), and other pieces of items

tangkai for *bunga* (flower), *pena* (pen)

butir for *kelereng* (marble), *telur* (egg), and other small round items

pucuk for *surat* (letter), *senapan* (rifle)

carik for *kertas* (paper)

rumpun for *padi* (rice), *bambu* (bamboo), or other plants in groups

keping for *uang logam* (coin)

biji for *mata* (eye), *jagung* (corn)

kuntum for *bunga* (flower)

patah for *kata* (word)

laras for *senapan* (rifle)

keras for *roti* (bread), *daging* (meat)

The notion of indefiniteness in Indonesian is among others expressed by forming *se* plus a noun classifier for examples *sebuah*, *seorang*, *setangkai*, *sepatah*, *sepucuk*, *sebutir*, etc. Another way of expressing indefiniteness is by using *suatu* which is quite close to a or an in English. *Suatu* is very suitable to use with abstract nouns such as opportunity, problem, question, event, kegagalan, etc. *Suatu* cannot go with persons and animals.

In usage, the indefinite articles in Indonesian is frequently dropped without changing the meaning of the sentence. In (6) for example *dekat danau* can also be expressed into *dekat sebuah danau* where *sebuah* is an indication of indefiniteness. The articles are also frequently deleted when there is the sense of generic reference in the sentence:

(9) *Ikan suka cacing*
Fish like worm

(10) *Harimau suka daging*
Tiger like meat

In the sentences above the use of indefinite articles *sebuah* before *daging* and *seekor* before *ikan*, *cacing* and *harimau* are not common. Close, R.A. (1975: 129) writes that in " (11) A cat is a small domestic animal" the presence of indefinite article *a* is obligatory. In Indonesian,

the sentence is expressed without any article at all in

(12) a. *Kucing binatang piaraan kecil.*
Cat animal domestic little

It will even sound funny when indefinite articles are added:

(12)b. **Seekor kucing seekor binatang piaraan kecil*
A CLASS cat a CLASS animal domestic little

or
(12)c. **Kucing seekor binatang piaraan kecil*
Cat a CLASS animal domestic little

or
(12)d. **Seekor kucing binatang piaraan kecil*
A CLASS cat animal domestic small

According Close, R.A. (1975:129) *a* in (11) with the noun refer to a class of thing as a whole. In (12) *kucing* (cat) does not refer to one or a certain *kucing* either. It is of similar structure to:

Anjing suka tulang
dog like bone
(Moeliono, 1993:313) and in this case no article is needed.

A very common word to express indefiniteness is *suatu* which means *a* and *one* in English. *Suatu* is frequently substituted by *satu* meaning *one*. The phrase *pada suatu hari* meaning *one day* can be expressed alternatively as *pada satu hari*. But *suatu* does not always express the same meaning as *satu*. In the phrases *satu jam lagi* meaning *one more time*, *satu* cannot be replaced by *suatu*.

In English the definite articles are more clearly defined. *A* is used before a word beginning with a consonant or a vowel sounding like consonant, while *an* is used before words beginning with a vowel (Woods and McLeod, 1990:160). Thompson and Martinet (1980:1) state that an indefinite article is used before a singular countable noun and certain numeral expressions.

When compared with the use of indefinite articles in Indonesian, the presence indefinite articles in English cannot be easily deleted, as illustrated in the following figure :

In English	In Indonesian
(13) He is a teacher	(13a) Dia guru he teacher (No article)
	(13b) Dia seorang guru, He aCLASS teacher
(14) Two dollars a kilo (a means one)	(14a) Dua dolar sekilo two dollars a kilo (se means one)

In English	In Indonesian
	(14b) Dua dolar satu kilo. two dollars a kilo
(15) They live in a village (With article)	(15a) Mereka tinggal di desa they live in a village
	(15b) Mereka tinggal di satu desa they live in a village
	(15c) Mereka tinggal di suatu desa they live in a village
(16) Mother gave me advice (No article allowed)	(16a) Ibu memberi saya sebuah nasihat mother gave me aCLASS advice (Article and classifier may be used)
	(16b) Ibu memberi saya nasihat. mother gave me advice (without article)
	(16c) Ibu memberi saya suatu nasihat. Mother gave me an ad- vice
	mother gave me aCLASS advice (with indefinite article)
	(16d) Ibu memberi saya satu nasehat. mother gave me one ad- vice (with a numeral, advice is considered countable)

The comparison indicates that in English the deletion of articles in (13), (14), (15), and the addition of an article *an* in (16) is unacceptable. In Indonesian the omission of articles of *seorang* as can be seen in (13a) and *satu* or *suatu* in (15a) will not change the meaning. It is possible

to use an indefinite article and a numeral before *nasihat* (an abstract noun), where in English no article may be put before *advice*. The word *se* before *kilo* which means *one* cannot be omitted, though *satu* also meaning *one* can be used instead.

4. Definite Articles

Moeliono et al. (1993:340342) explain the three different kinds of articles expressing definiteness in Indonesian. They are articles referring to singularness, referring to groups and plurality, and referring to neutrality.

Articles which refer to singularity are *sang*, *sri*, *hang* (old use), *dang* (old use), all of which have the equivalent of *the* in English. Interestingly *sang* is used to show the high position of the noun, but also sometimes used to mock the noun it precedes.

(17) *Sang raja telah tiba*

ART king has arrived

may refer to the real situation where the king has arrived, or a situation in which when a chair of the student council enters the classroom, for example, others may mockingly say "*Sang raja telah tiba*". *Sri* is used to denote high respect to someone, e.g. *Sri Paus* (the pope), *Sri Sultan* (the sultan), *Sri Ratu* (the queen), *Sri Paduka* (Your highness), *Sri Baginda* (the king). In old Indonesian, *Dang* for woman and *Hang* for man is commonly used to show their very high position, and these are found mostly in literature.

Para is the article used to denote plurality or group. This *para* is for human only. Animals and plants cannot be preceded by *para*. So *para* cannot be used with nonhuman nouns such as dog, table, buku, tree. The plural noun in Indonesian is formed by repeating the singular form. *Guru* (teacher) is singular and *guruguru* is plural. When *para* is used the nouns must not undergo repetition to show plurality. *Para guru* is right but *para guruguru* is wrong, because it contains two plural expressions.

The definite article which has reference to neutrality is *si* (Moeliono et al., 1993:342). Moeliono et al. (342) ex-

plain that " *Di samping artikel yang menyatakan makna tunggal dan kelompok, ada pula artikel yang sifatnya netral. Artikel SI dapat mengacu ke makna tunggal atau generic, bergantung pada konteks kalimatnya*" (Besides the articles which refer to singularity and group or plurality, there is also an article which refers to neutrality. This article SI may be used to express definiteness and generic reference depending on the sentence context). The use of *si* is limited as it should only be used with human nouns. This article can be used with both singular and plural nouns. The examples are *Di dunia ini si kaya seharusnya membantu si miskin* (In this world the rich should help the poor), *Si anak ini sungguh murid yang rajin* (This child is really a hardworking pupil).

Sang, Sri, Dang, Hang, are not extensively used. *Para*, and *si* also have their limitations. The widely used and accepted forms to denote definiteness are *itu* (that), *ini* (this), *tadi* (mentioned just now), *tersebut*(as previously mentioned), *..nya* (possessive forms : his, her, its) which are not originally articles. *Ini* and *itu* are demonstrative pronouns, *tadi* and *tersebut* are adverbs meaning previously mentioned. There are no limitations ,in both oral and written discourse, to what nouns should come with *itu, ini, tadi, tersebut, ..nya*. The examples are:

- (18a) *anak itu*
child that
---> that child
- (18b) *anak-anak itu*
children those
---> those children
- (18c) *kambing itu*
goat that
---> that goat
- (18d) *kambing-kambing itu*
goats those
---> those goats
- (18e) *kambing tadi*
goat previously mentioned
---> the previously mentioned goat
- (18f) *kambing-kambing tadi*
goats previously mentioned
---> the previously mentioned goats
- (18g) *ibu itu*
mother that
---> that mother

- (18h) *ibu-ibu itu*
mothers those
---> those mothers
- (18i) *keterangan tersebut*
explanation previously mentioned
---> the previously mentioned explanation
- (18j) *keterangan tadi*
explanation mentioned just now
---> the explanation mentioned just now
- (18k) *keterangan itu*
explanation that
---> that explanation
- (18l) *keterangan ini*
explanation this---> this explanation

In Indonesian a noun can be definite even without the introduction of definite articles or words functioning as definite articles. The underlined definite articles in the English sentences below are not necessarily expressed with definite articles in Indonesian. The nouns after the underlined are considered definite based on the context in the sentence.

- (19a) It was dark in the room. So, he turned on the light.
- (19b) The nuclear protesters sailed across the Pacific ocean.
- (19c) The students of La Trobe University work hard even during the semester break.
- (19d) The prime minister will visit Melbourne next week.
- (19e) The sun sets at nine in the summer.
- (19f) The Australians like sport and music.
- (19g) The United States will have a new president in 1997.
- (19h) The Amazon is the longest river in the world.
- (19i) The United Nations help developing countries solve their problems.
- (19j) My friends prefer the Herald Sun to the Age.

The definite article in English the , is the same for singular and plural and for all genders (Thomson, 1983: 3). It is used with nouns of which there is only one (the Pacific), nouns which are made definite by a phrase (the man in the blue Volvo), made definite by a previous sentence (The city was struck by a hurri-

cane; the destruction was so devastating) (Thomson, 1983:3). The is also used with nouns made definite by reference forward with superlative and ordinal number (first, second, next, same) (Close, R.A., 1975:134). examples are:

- (20a) Beijing is now the largest city in the world,
 (20b) The same car accident happened to me yesterday,
 (20c) This is the second time he has lost the book he borrowed.

Certain comparisons with adjectives also use the (Close, 1975:135-136) as in the sooner the better. The is also used to refer to a class distinct from the other (Close, 1975:135), (Thompson and Martinet, 1983:4) as in The housewife has a harder life than the office worker.

The is used in sentences such as John is in the garden, watering the flowers because the speaker refers to some object or person that he assumes the hearer can identify in the environment that they share.

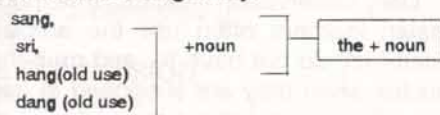
The is also used as part of a name of a country, seas (oceans), rivers, mountain ranges, ships, hotels, newspapers, organisations (Thomson, 1980:4) (Close 136-137). Examples are: (20a) The United States of America
 (20b) The Atlantic
 (20c) The Yarra river
 (20d) The Andes
 (20e) The Jakarta LLOYD
 (20f) The South Cross Hotel
 (20g) The Age
 (20h) The United Nations

The usage of the definite article in Indonesian and English can be roughly contrasted as shown in the figure below:

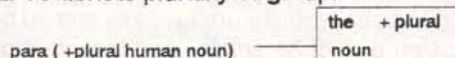
Indonesian

English

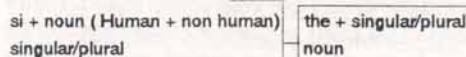
1. To refer to singularity:



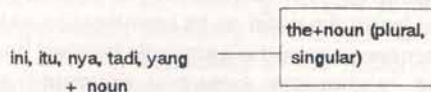
2. To denote plurality or group:



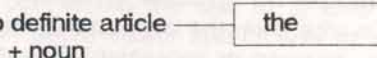
3. To denote neutrality



4. To denote definiteness:



5. Zero definite article



to denote definiteness based on context in the sentence where the noun appears.

5. Discussion

From the viewpoint of position, the indefinite articles in Indonesian and English are relatively similar. They are placed in front of the head nouns. The meaning carried by the indefinite articles are also identical, e.g. *a* and *suatu* both mean (one). The function of the articles *a* and *suatu* is basically expressing the notion of definiteness. The form of the articles are different. The Indonesian article takes the forms of *se* plus a suitable noun classifier, while in English the article used is *a* or *an* depending on the first sound of the noun.

Understanding the definite articles in Indonesian and English is not easy. Indonesian definite articles can be put both before the head noun such as *sang*, *hang*, *sri*, *dang*, *para*, *si*; and after the head noun such as *tadi*, *tersebut*, *yang*, *nya*, *ini*, *itu*. In English they are placed only in front of the head noun.

Understanding the underlying ideas behind the value of indefiniteness and definiteness in both languages may reduce the errors in using them. The report of the Commonwealth Department of Education writes that (1983:22) "the nearest approach to a definite article is the use of *itu* (that); *suatu*, is sometimes used in places where English would use the indefinite article". Quirk et al. describe the eight usage types of the (1985: 265-272). For the Indonesian learners, the

use of the definite and indefinite articles in English are problems unless the underlying concepts are well understood. Heaford (1993:56) makes it clear that "while much attention has been given in the past to the presentation and explanation of structures, comparatively little thought has been devoted as to how best to help learners across the semantic barrier" and "the relationship between concepts as indicated by syntax must remain nebulous whenever the concepts themselves are unknown or imprecise". The deeper problem is not the similarity of form and function, but how the conceptual ideas actually lead the language users to a decision about using a definite article or an indefinite one.

To grasp the key concept, the description proposed by Hawkins, (1991: 406-407) and Declerck (1985:25-33) may help the students. Hawkins (1991: 406) describes the concept behind the sentence The professor is drunk includes three claims: (a) Existence: There is a professor (b) Uniqueness: There is only one professor (c) Predication: This individual is drunk. The logical analytical translation of the sentence would be: there is an X who is a professor, and there is no Y such that Y is a professor and nonidentical to X, and X is drunk. The sentence The professor is drunk is different from A professor is drunk because of the uniqueness claim. In A professor is drunk there is a sense of a nongeneric reading, and the analytical translation would be: there is an X who is a professor, and he is drunk. Besides A professor is drunk implies there should be at least one professor who is drunk. It is logically compatible with there being more than one such, or with one only.

The explanation is repeated in Declerck (1985:30) who proposes two examples: John is the victim of his own generosity and John is a victim of his own generosity. Declerck explains that in the first sentence John is the only victim while in the second sentence it is suggested that at least one other person is also a victim of John's generosity.

The greatest problem when comparing the articles in Indonesian and English is perhaps the fact that when definite articles are used in English frequently zero articles are used in Indonesian. It is possible however to grasp the concept of definiteness in the Indonesian language, as can be seen in the following comparison:

(21a) Dalam ruangan gelap. Maka dia menyalakan lampu.
 in room dark so he/she turned on light
 ---> It was dark in the room. So, he turned on the light.

In the English sentence, the in the light is used because of the definiteness quality of the light i.e. its existence is in the room which is dark. In Indonesian, similar understanding of the definiteness value of the light can also be felt by the speakers, and shared by the hearer, and so it is not obligatory to explicitly express the definiteness using any definite articles.

Certain words in English may cause problems for Indonesian learners because of the concept of countability and uncountability. Woods and McLeod (1990:159) list words which are uncountable in English but may be countable in other languages. They are: advice, anger, behaviour, clothing, conduct, courage, education, equipment, furniture, homework, information, machinery, news, parking, photography, poetry, progress, publicity, research, safety, scenery, shopping, sunshine, traffic, transportation, violence, weather. In Indonesian it is absolutely right and acceptable to put the equivalent of a or an before those words, because they are considered countable. As they are considered countable, they can also be transformed into plural nouns, which is not acceptable in English.

Daily observation indicates that Indonesian learners often use the articles when they do not have to, and omit the articles when they are supposed to use them. The examples are the omission of the before the nouns when because of the nouns' definite uniqueness should be given a definite article, and the addition

of a or an before uncountable nouns. Forth and Naysmith (1995:80) suggests that in order for learners to have more confidence in grammar they can be asked to : change or modify rules presented in their course books so that they are clearer and more accessible; add their own examples; represent rules in the form of classroom posterdisplays perhaps with the addition of pictures or diagrams. The suggestion above seems suitable for Indonesian learners. It will be better if the changes and modification are made after the students really understand about the underlying concepts of the two articles. Diagrams and pictures may also make the learners remember more about the rules they have conceived.

Berry (1991:255) states there are incorrect or misleading formulation, unwarranted emphasis on certain usage types and the lack of variety in formats. According to Berry, a formulation that ends up the learners' awareness as " the first time you mention a noun use a, the second time you use the" is incorrect and misleading. He proves this by presenting an example " Johny wants a bike for Christmas, but I am not sure a bike is a good idea". Berry (1991:256) suggests some learning principles. They are among others the need to concentrate on the, make varied exercises, not to rely on rules but use them only as back up activities, give exercises focusing not only on production, but also comprehension. In the Indonesian context, the suggestion proposed by Berry would be suitable, especially in the making of varied exercises and including both production and comprehension aspects in the exercises. By following the above principles, it would be possible for the Indonesian learners to use articles in the varied exercises with better understanding.

6. CONCLUSION

The articles in Indonesian and English differ in form, positio(1991:256) suggests some learning principles. They are among others the need to concentrate on

the, make varied exercises, not to rely on rules but use them only as back up activities, give exercises focusing not only on production, but also comprehension. In the Indonesian context, the suggestion proposed by Berry would be suitable, especialn and meaning. There is to a large extent similarity in the function of the articles, especially in the notions of indefiniteness and definiteness. The rules concerning the use of articles in English seem easier and clearer to understand, and the forms are simpler.

The differences in use and rules create problems for learners. The Indonesian indefinite articles especially the ones employing noun classifiers for certain nouns, and the fact that they can be used with uncountable nouns might cause a particular learning burden to Indonesian learners learning English. The problems are related not only to the efforts in determining whether a noun is countable or not, but also whether the words start with vowels or consonants. NonIndonesian speakers may find it difficult to use the *se + noun classifier*. A native speaker of English beginning to learn Indonesian may wrongly use *sebuah* as in *Dia sebuah dokter* (He is a doctor), instead of *Dia seorang dokter*. This is due to the fact that the English indefinite article a and an can be used with thing (as in This is a table) and person (as in He is a doctor).

There will be a tendency to leave out the definite article when it should really be used, because in Indonesian, a noun in a sentence may be definite without being introduced with a definite article. The typical problem for Indonesian learners is the tendency to put the because , firstly, they think it is safer to use it, and secondly, they feel hesitant. This hesitancy is caused by the absence of definite articles in Indonesian written discourse, where the English equivalents require the use of definite articles.

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