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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Problem

Grammar is the essential part in learning English, without having good knowledge about grammar, learners' language development will be constrained. According to Long and Richard (1987) grammar play a central role in the four language skills and vocabulary to establish communicative task. Whereas, Kane (2000, p. 13) states that grammar means the rules which structure our language. According to Harmer (2001, p. 12) grammar is the description of the way in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language. Thus, grammar is very important to be mastered by students in their English skills.

There are many parts of grammar, and it can not be ignored. They are articles, parts of speech, modal auxiliary, tenses, etc. According to Saadiyah (2009, p. 486) the learners face difficulties in learning grammatical aspects of the Target Language (TL), such as subject-verb agreement, the use of preposition, articles, and the use of correct tenses. Thus, part of grammar that is difficult to learn for the students is article. It is supported by Master (1990, p. 461), he said that the English article system is one of the most difficult parts of English grammar faced by EFL/ESL learners.

Therefore, Fry, et al (1993) states that English articles (a, an, the) are considered to be the most frequent words in English. Moreover, Master

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(2002,p. 2) said that the article ‘the’ is the most frequent word in English and ‘a’ is the fifth most frequent word. In addition, Berry (1993) states that nearly eight and half percent of the English text contains ‘the’ and ‘a. Depending on these statements, it is obvious that English articles are a significant part of English language.

SMA Cendana is one of school in Pekanbaru. The curriculum in this school is K13. As a formal institution, this school also provides English learning to the students in their learning activity, especially in grammar. Based on the basic competence the students must be able to understand and use the language features of the texts, and in the basic competence article is one of the language features aspect of the texts. Unfortunately, some of the students are not able to understand and use articles (a, an, the) correctly. It can be proven when some of the students still put incorrect articles (a, an, the). For example, ‘I have an unique thing’, instead of ‘I have a unique thing’ and ‘I went to the Batam’, instead of ‘I went to Batam’.

Based on preliminary study at SMA Cendana Pekanbaru on November 7<sup>th</sup> 2018, the researcher found some problems. The problems can be seen as the following symptoms:

1. The students are not able to differentiate the use of articles (a, an, the)
2. The students put article *the* in the name of place
3. The students are still inversed in using articles (a, an, the)

On the other hand, there is only a few research investigate about students’ understanding in using articles (a, an, the). Most of the previous

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studies only focused on the students' error in using articles, such as Kusumaningrum (2008), Putri (2007) and Barret and Chen (2011). Therefore, based on the problem and the previous studies above, the researcher is interested to do a research entitled **“An Analysis of Students' Ability in Using Articles (A, An, The) at SMA Cendana Pekanbaru”**.

## B. Problems

### 1. Identification of the Problem

Based on background above, the researcher identified some problems of this research as follows:

- a. Why are the students not able to differentiate the use of articles (a, an, the)?
- b. Why the students put article *the* in the name of place?
- c. Why are the students still inversed in using articles (a, an, the)?

### 2. Limitation of the problem

Related to identification of the problem above, many problems happened to the students. The researcher need to limit the problem of the research in order to focus on the topic. In this case, this research is limited to the students' ability in using articles (a, an, the) at eleventh grade at SMA Cendana Pekanbaru.

### 3. Formulation of the Problem

In accordance to the limitation of the problem above, the researcher formulates the formulation of the problem as follows:

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- a. How is the students' ability in using article *a* at the eleventh grade of SMA Cendana Pekanbaru?
- b. How is the students' ability in using article *an* at the eleventh grade of SMA Cendana Pekanbaru?
- c. How is the students' ability in using article *the* at the eleventh grade of SMA Cendana Pekanbaru?

## C. Objective and Significance of the Research

### 1. The objective of the research

- a. To describe the students' ability in using articles *a* at the eleventh grade of SMA Cendana Pekanbaru
- b. To describe the students' ability in using article *an* at the eleventh grade of SMA Cendana Pekanbaru
- c. To describe the students' ability in using article *the* at the eleventh grade of SMA Cendana Pekanbaru.

### 2. The significance of the research

- a. Hopefully, this research is able to benefit the writer as a novice researcher, especially in learning how to conduct a research
- b. These research findings are expected to be useful and valuable, especially for the students and teachers of English at the eleventh grade of SMA Cendana Pekanbaru to be a further teaching and learning process

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- c. Besides, these research findings are also expected to be positive and valuable information, especially for those who are concerned in the world of teaching and learning English as a foreign/second language
- d. Finally, these research findings are also expected to be practical and theoretical information to development of theories on language teaching in general.

**D. Reason for choosing the title**

There are some reasons why the researcher is interested in carrying out this research. The reasons are as follows:

1. The title of this research is relevant with the researcher status as a student of EED
2. There is only a few research investigate this title
3. The location of the research facilitates the researcher in conducting the research.

**E. Definition of the Term**

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpreting in writing this proposal, it is necessary for the researcher to explain the term used in the study. It is defined as follow:

1. Article

According to Richard & Schmidt (2002, p. 32) article is a word that use with a noun, and shows whether the noun refers to something definite or something indefinite. English has two articles, they are definite

article and indefinite article. The definite article is *the*, and the indefinite article is *a* and *an*. Meanwhile, *A* or *An* is used when an unidentified specimen is introduced. While *The* is used when an identified specimen is introduced, that is when it is believed that the hearer knows which person, place, or thing.



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