

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information about the background of the study which describes a brief overview of the issue of the L1 use in EFL classroom, the research questions, the purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The issue of the use of mother tongue (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has been debated for years (Erton, 2009). L1 is one of several sources of error in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1981), and using L1 too much could deprive the learners of the target language or second language (L2) valuable input (Ellis, 1984 as cited in Primary, 2012). Thus, Turnbull and Dailey-O’Cain (2009) argue that the use of L1 should be avoided in teaching target language to make effective instruction and not to interfere learners’ target language development (as cited in Primary, 2012). Moreover, Auerbach (1993) states that a number of teachers hold the belief that utilizing L1 in the class will impede progress in the acquisition of English, devising games, signal, and penalty system to prevent the students from utilizing their L1. It is supported by Weinberg’s (1990) article in which it is written that one teacher in an observed class said “This is an English-only classroom. If you speak Cantonese

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or Spanish or Mandarin or Vietnamese or Russian or Farsi, you pay me 25 cents. I can be rich.” (as cited in Bouangeune, 2009, p.1).

In contrast to the arguments above, a research conducted by Schweers (1999) reported that most of the EFL students want to utilize L1 in the classroom because they believe L1 could facilitate learning. Moreover, Atkinson (1987) suggests that there are also several uses of L1 in the classroom: elicit language, checking comprehension, giving instructions, enhancing co-operation among learners, promoting discussions of classroom methodology, improving presentation and reinforcement of language, checking for sense, testing, and development of useful learning strategies (as cited in Nitiswari, 2012).

According to Atkinson (1987), Schweers (1999), and Nation (2003) there are seven reasons why L1 should be employed as a tool in the language classroom. First, communicating in L1 in a classroom is more natural especially for those who have the same L1. Second, utilizing L1 is easier and more communicatively effective to use. Third, L1 can help to move the task along by establishing joint understanding of the text and to manage the task. Fourth, L1 may assist teacher to facilitate classroom activities, particularly for low proficiency students and complex tasks. Fifth, L1 allows students to focus their attention on vocabulary and grammatical items. Sixth, L1 can provide a foundation for learners on which to build L2 structures, especially during collective activities in the classroom. The last, L1 provides a sense of security and

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validates the student's live experiences, allowing them to express themselves (as cited in Bouangeune, 2009).

In Indonesian context, where English is used as a foreign language, students have less opportunity to practice English outside the class, so the main exposure they get is only in the English classroom. In one hand, students should maximize to practice English in the classroom, but in the other hand bahasa Indonesia is still excessively used in the classroom.

Considering the above-mentioned situation and also the fact that the use of L1 in EFL classroom has not been excessively observed, therefore, this study tries to investigate the realization of the use of bahasa Indonesia in EFL classroom and teachers and students' perspectives on the use of bahasa Indonesia in EFL classroom. The findings hopefully will give benefits to the enlightenment of the use of bahasa Indonesia in teaching English and help English teachers with useful information about a proper way in utilizing L1 in teaching process.

1.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the realization of the use of L1 in EFL classroom?
2. What are the perspectives of teachers and students on the use of L1 in EFL classroom?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

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In relation to the background above, this study is intended to meet the following purposes:

1. To explore the realization of the use of L1 in EFL classroom
2. To investigate teachers and students' perspectives on the use of L1 in EFL classroom

1.4 Scope of the Study

This is a case study which concerns about the realization of L1 use in EFL classroom as well as the teachers and students' perspectives.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is intended to fill the gap of related studies which are dominated by studies about L1 to EFL learners who are adult and higher level students. This study attempts to be more specifically investigates the use of L1 in teaching English to junior high school students. The recent research about L1 in teaching English to junior high school students was conducted by Tsukimi (2012) in Japanese context. Inspired by that study, the researcher attempts to investigate the same topic, but in different context which is Indonesia. This study is also expected to enrich the literature of the use of L1 in teaching English. Furthermore, practically the finding will be beneficial for teachers to utilize L1 properly to teach English in the classroom.

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1.6 Organization of the Study

This paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides background of the research, research questions, purposes of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two presents literature review of the research. Chapter three discusses the research methodology of the study which involves methodology, data collection, data analysis and clarification of terms. Meanwhile, findings and discussions are presented in chapter four. At the last, this paper is concluded in chapter five which also involves recommendations for the further research.

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