

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts with the background of the study in which the reason for choosing the topic and significance of the research are included. The chapter also includes research questions and aims of the study. At last, the outline for the organization of this research is also highlighted.

1.1 Background

The debate on whether L1 is a help in teaching English to young learners has been going for decades. Second language acquisition (L2) in children is rarely used as in-depth research, as opposed to second language acquisition in adults. Due to the differences in results and attitude at both, L2 research in children is necessary to conduct (Cook et al., 1979, pp. 1-5). Paradis (2006, p. 387) even claimed that Second language (L2) acquisition in children has been seldom studied as a subfield with its own issues and questions and should be separated from bilingualism, educational outcomes, and adult L2 acquisition.

There has been an age old debate among teachers and educators on whether to use the student's first language in a foreign language classroom (Brown, 2000). L1 language could be a help or a bother for L2, especially in young learners' classroom. Cook (2001a, pp. 171-172) constantly asserts that getting students to be close to their native speaker will help them to learn and acquire a new language. Besides, using the students' mother tongue as a tool in learning L2 can boost up students' understanding. Some previous research showed that complete deletion of L1 in L2 classroom is not appropriate (Schweers, 1999, p. 76; Nation, 2003, p. 2).

When L1 is used appropriately, it can be very useful. Brown (2000, p. 68) claims that first language is not always an interfering factor. It can be facilitated factor if it is used wisely. In accordance with that statement, Schweers (1999, pp. 6-9) encourages teachers to incorporate the native language into lessons to

influence the classroom spirit and persuade teachers and educators to provide L1 as a sense of security and ratify the learners' lived experience, allowing them to express themselves openly. He clearly asserts that mother tongue or L1 should be used in the classroom to explain some difficult concepts, vocabulary or check student's comprehension. Excluding L1 in the classroom, especially in the young learner classroom is almost impossible. It is common for teacher or educators to use the students' mother tongue (L1) as a tool to convey meanings as one way of interacting (Nazary, 2008, p. 138). In another study, Tang (2002, pp. 36-44) found that the use of L1 does not reduce students' exposure to the target language; on the contrary, it aids the learning of the foreign language.

Negative transfer of L1 features is one of the interferences that often happen during the learning process. Negative transfer or interferences is considered errors that occur when an L1 structure or rule is used in an L2 utterances and such use is inappropriate (Seville-Troike, 2006, p. 19). Inappropriate transfers such as pronunciation, which leads to the wrong pronounces, or the interference at the grammatical level is one of the negative transfers which occurring while using L1 in L2 classroom.

Second language learners emerge to accumulate structural entities of the target language, but find difficulty in organizing this knowledge into an appropriate coherent structure. There is a significant gap between the accumulation and the organization of the knowledge. This view indicates that language learning is coordinated. Besides that, using L1 in the L2 learning session limits the maximum exposure that the children or students need to get. Bouangeune (2009) as cited in Nitiswari (2012: p. 2) stated that many EFL educators and professionals even wonder how students can appreciate and apply their target language if they continually using and relying on their L1. Therefore, Hawks (2001, pp. 41-55) added that the separation and distinction of L1 and L2 is necessary to conduct. A maximum exposure should be given to someone who wants to learn L2 appropriately, especially for children who do not have prior knowledge about their mother language. If it is not separated accordingly, then it will make certain interference when learners learn a second language.

So far L1 is seen as a help for children to learn L2, but there are some parts in L1 which cause negative transfer and also make the L2 learning process can not be a complete acquisition for children. Opitz (2011) even argues that since L2 learners often use their L1 for reference, it is impossible to avoid the interference errors. This two contradicting perspectives seem confusing for most of the teachers that have hard times in deciding whether the L1 use in the L2 EYL classroom will be helpful.

In the Indonesian context, English is taught as a foreign language. Kelilo (2012) states that being a foreign language, the place that the learners are expected to have access to the language is in the school. However, English has long been distanced from being a medium of instruction, particularly at schools in Indonesia. This was done without creating an alternative opportunity for students to help them enhance their English language ability. The situation badly affects students' ability to communicate in English. Because of their poor proficiency resulted from limited exposure and other factors, students undoubtedly experience problems in learning English through English. As a consequence, learners often show the need for mother tongue use in their English classes.

Many teachers believe that they should never use a single word from mother tongue in classroom activity. These teachers are using Monolingual Approach and others who are half-hearted about the use of L1 or using it appropriately in the classes are called the practitioner of Bilingual Approach.

Moreover, the debate of the role of L1 in the L2 classroom has been taken to a higher stage led by question 'how to minimize L1 language and maximize the L2 language especially in EYL classroom'. Macaro (2001, pp.531-548) is interested in how much L1 is used, why they claimed to use it, and what factors appeared to influence their decision to use it. He investigated how the decision for the use of the L1 was influenced by the beliefs of teacher and L1 use, pedagogical training, or government or institutional policy. Besides, the differences between the native language and English, as the language being learned, can be facilitating or interfering in the process of acquiring English language (Seville-troike, 2006: 35).

A study conducted by Burden (2001) in Japanese, Schewer (1999) in Spanish and Tang (2002) in Chinese context have come up with a positive attitude towards the role of L1 in the English classroom. However, these studies basically focus on adult and were conducted in the university context. In general, it is very difficult to quantify the possible amount of L1 required in the L2 classroom. It is important to note some points in the L1 role in L2 learning since it can be used with varying intensities for early learners to more advanced ones. Moreover, specifically speaking about young learners in elementary school in Bandung, there has been a confusion regarding what kind of L1 role should be carried due to the English-proficiency level of students.

In the middle of various positions and argumentations regarding the role and the use of first language in the EFL classroom, the question regarding how to minimize L1 and maximize the L2, especially in EYL classroom, seemed to be remained untouched. Thus, the present study focuses on examining the role of Bahasa Indonesia in the EYL classroom and examining to what extent Bahasa Indonesia is used in EYL classroom. The findings are hoping to be a great contribution to the enrichment of the role of Bahasa Indonesia in the EYL classroom.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In relation to the background above, the following leading questions are formulated

1. What is the role of Bahasa Indonesia in EYL classroom at an elementary school in Bandung?
2. What are the opinions of the teachers and students about the role of L1 in the EYL Classroom?

1.3 Aims of Study

This research will focus on knowing the role of L1 in EYL classroom specifically in English Young Learner classroom. The role that is intended to be found in this research focuses on English Classroom in the fifth grade of elementary school student level. An elementary school in Bandung will be chosen

for the research. The aim of the study is not to generalize the findings of the study, but to get a deeper understanding in events or phenomenon which occurs in the natural setting.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant from two perspectives. Theoretically, it would make at least one enriching contribution to the areas of English for young learners and the second language acquisition in the Indonesian context. So, teacher or teacher-to-be can fully know what the role of L1 in L2 classroom is, especially in the young learner classroom.

Practically, the study would provide reference on how much L1 can be used in L2 classroom and for the teacher-to-be to become aware of the role L1 plays in teaching and learning the target language, and in order to help teachers and educators to re-examine their foreign language teaching method. Instead of using a lot of theories from other research which settings are different and somehow irrelevant in the Indonesian context, the teacher-to-be could put their mind on another professional skill in order to be a good and professional teacher contributing to the development of education in Indonesia.

1.5 Research Methods

This section is intended to include on the methodology that is proposed to achieve the research purposes mentioned earlier. Research design, research sample, participant, data collection and data analysis are going to be included in this section.

1.5.1 Design

The proposed research would use qualitative method of data collection in order to meet the objectives of the research. Questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation would be used as instruments in order to acquire information regarding participants' background, participants' view regarding the importance of English, teachers' perception in using L1 in L2

classroom, and how much L1 can be used in L2 or English classroom.. Moreover, the interview and the encoded video recording will be used to gather and enrich the result data in a qualitative way.

1.5.2 Sample

The sample would be drawn from a 5th grade in an elementary school, which mainly uses the L1 and L2 in English classroom activity. The sample included both teacher and students in the class.

1.5.3 Participants

The proposed research would take place in one Elementary school in Bandung. For proposed study, the class would be labeled as a bilingual class (BL) which is used Bahasa Indonesia and English in the English Lesson.

1.5.4 Data collection

Sets of data would be gathered through several instruments. At the beginning, the participants, teacher and students will be given a questionnaire about the role of L1 in the L2 classroom activity. Following the schedule, video recording would be begun in the class. It will take about four meetings in English lesson. From the video recording, the data about how much L1 using in the L2 classroom would be counted, in what occasion L1 used in the L2 classroom, and how much support given in acquiring L2. Later, the data will be collected, coded, and classified into some categories to get a deeper and better understanding in role of L1 in EYL classroom. Following the two instruments before, the interview would be conducted to get teachers' perceptions in using L1 and L2 in the classroom. Moreover, through the interview, the reasons and basic information from video recording and questionnaire would be explored more.

1.5.6 Data Analysis

Perceptation and categorization would be used to differentiate and analyze the data. Each result from the data later will show how much L1 used and how L1 influences L2 classroom.

1.6 Organization of the paper

In this part, general presentations relating to the content of the chapters will be described briefly and clearly. Therefore, there will be a brief overview of the matters discussed in the research and what is the main point in each chapter.

1. Chapter I

This chapter briefly introduces the research content to the readers. It also includes the Background which contains a brief exposure to research topics related to the broad range of issues and theories or research findings underlying the problem under study, then the Problem Statement of the principal issues to be examined as well as the formulation of research problems in the form of questions, after that aims of study which consisting the general purpose and special purpose of the research, next is research methods that introduced briefly the outline of the research methodology, and the final organization of the paper which contains general explanation of the content in each of the chapters.

2. Chapter II

This chapter is a review of the theories and findings of previous studies that is relevant to the problems examined. In this chapter, the author describes what the young learner is, the characteristic of young learner, teaching English to young learner in Indonesia, and the role of first language in foreign language learning

3. Chapter III

This chapter discusses in detail the research methods that have been introduced briefly in Chapter 1. The chapter describes all the stages and

procedure of the study completely. In this chapter, there are several aspects such as the formulation of the problem, a description of the study design, the assumptions underlying the research, description or clarification of key terms used in the study, a description about the data collection plan, and a description of the data analysis plan and its interpretation.

4. Chapter IV

This chapter describes the data collection, analyzes, discusses and interprets the findings obtained by the authors. In this chapter, there are some aspects that will be encountered by the reader. Among them are a description of the data collection process, a description of the data collected, data analysis, presentation of research findings, as well as discussion or interpretation of these findings in relation to the objectives, research questions, theories and findings of the other studies that had been discussed in the literature review chapter.

5. Chapter V

This chapter includes two parts, the conclusions and suggestions. In the concluding section, the author will propose a summary of the answers to the research questions. Then it will put forward a unified interpretation or meaning of all the research results obtained. The next, on the suggestion part, the author will propose implications that can be drawn either from the process and research findings. The implication is addressed to the future researchers and those who may be able to take advantage of the research results.