

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information about the background, the research questions, the aims, the scope, the significances, the research method, the research site and participants, the clarification of terms, and also the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

The issue of first language (L1) use in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom has been investigated for many years. There are two beliefs, whether L1 could be as an aid or a distraction in learning a second language (L2) (Brown, 2000). Krashen (1980) has stated that L1 is one of several causes of error in second language acquisition. It can lead to negative transfers or interference errors while delivering L1 for reference to express something in L2. By adopting theory from SLA (Second Language Acquisition), there is a belief that the process of acquiring a new language should be treated like first language acquisition (Cook, 2001). This is in the sense that no other language should interfere with the acquisition of a new language. Therefore, the separation between L1 and L2 is a necessity.

Then, as Cummins (2007) says English is only applied and used in the classroom, exactly it should be the valuable moment for teachers and students to maximize it. It is because the more the students use the language the better the result of mastering it (Phillipson, 1992, as cited in Adnan, et al., 2014). If the first language (L1) becomes interference in English exposure, students will have limited opportunities in learning English. Furthermore, the frequent use of the first language (L1) by teachers can make students become dependent. They will always wait the translation of what is the teacher going to talk (Atkinson, 1987, as quoted in Miles 2014).

In contrast to the arguments above, it will be very useful, if the use of L1 is in appropriate portion. Schweers (1999) encourages teachers to use students' L1

with the purpose to motivate students in learning the target language. It also gives them a sense of security to freely express themselves. He also clearly states that L1 is needed as a help in explaining difficult concepts and vocabularies. This is in line with Atkinson's statements (1987). He says that L1 in the classroom has several uses, they are: eliciting language, checking comprehension, giving instructions, enhancing co-operation among learners, promoting discussions, and checking the development of useful learning strategies (see Nitisiwari, 2012).

In Indonesian context, English serves as a foreign language (EFL) so that students will rarely practice English language outside the class, which called immediate social context (Saville-troike, 2006). So, the role of English here is only as a subject for study purposes rather than as a living learning environment. Both teachers and students tend to use their first language (L1) whether Indonesian language or their local language in doing communication and interaction with others.

With that condition, it affects the language use by English teachers in conducting English Language Learning (ELL) classroom. In order to get clear information from the teacher during the learning process, the understandable language instruction by the teacher is truly needed. Undeniably, the teacher will tend to use first language (L1) in saying difficult words or phrases, to make it clear and comprehensible for the students. One condition teachers will lean on using students' L1 is when they teach beginners (Manara, 2007). It is because students at this level still have less knowledge about English. So as in this study, since Curriculum 2013 was enacted in Indonesia, English subject has been removed from state elementary schools. However, some elementary schools are still teach English but as a Local Content (*Muatan Lokal*), only from Grade 4 to Grade 6. As a result, the obligation to learn English is started from class 7 of junior high school. So, the role of their mother tongue here is as a tool or their prior knowledge, to help them to learn and understand the target language (English).

Thus, the use of mother tongue, in this case Indonesian language, in English language learning is unavoidable. The focus is how much L1 is used and in what condition it is used. Instead, the complete deletion of L1 in L2 is not appropriate (Scweers, 1990; Nation, 2003). Nation (2003) believes that the mixing of English and Indonesia during the lesson explanation can help teachers to strengthen students' comprehension. Just like studies conducted by Elmetwally (2012) in Arabic and Raj Khati (2011) in Nepal high school context, results shows that both students and teachers has slightly positive responses toward the use of the mother tongue in an English classroom. It says that L1 is the greatest asset to learn English. Preventing students to use it also prevents them from the great neural process of comprehension.

Afterwards, in Hidayati's study (2012), it comes up with a positive result that Indonesian language is helpful in EFL classes, only when it is used judiciously. She also investigates in terms of the benefits of Indonesian language, which has perceived by the teachers and the students, such as to explain grammar, to explain difficult vocabularies, to make jokes, etc. This study focuses on University students who are not in English major. Then, another result coming from Hartono's thesis (2013), it says "the use of Indonesian and English in the EFL classroom should be well balanced". There are particular occasions when Indonesian is needed to use, but also there are ways from the teachers to encourage them to give them English exposure, such as giving a 'reward' to students who often do not use English in any sessions. The reason is that they are senior high school students who must be brave to face the world using English.

Those studies are generally conducted at a high level of school. Students with a high level of school have already passed the English courses previously. Regarding to the condition mentioned above, the writer does a research to know further the students with beginning level of students who started study English formally (which in previous school level, English subject is omitted from the curriculum). However, many studies already found out about the perceptions, but in this study the focus is also about the realizations of to what contexts for using Indonesian language in the real activities of teaching and learning English.

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Regarding the type of words, the scope of L1 in this study is on sentences. The sentences are put from the teacher and students' interactions in communication.

Therefore, by those reasons, the current study is attempting to bridge this gap. Hopefully the findings would give a great contribution to the enrichment of the role of First Language (L1) in English language learning literature where English is applied as a foreign language (EFL).

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background, the purpose of the study is intended to answer these questions:

1. What is the realization of L1 use in EFL classroom?
2. What are the teacher and students' perceptions toward the use of students' L1 in EFL classroom?

1.3 Aims of the Study

Related to questions formulated, aims of this study are:

1. To explore the realization of L1 use in EFL classroom.
2. To investigate the teacher and students' perceptions toward the use of students' L1 in EFL classroom.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This is a case study in which the focus is on finding out the realization of L1 use in in EFL classroom; and the teacher and students' perceptions toward L1 use in EFL classroom. Also, this study is limited to VII grade students and an English teacher of a junior high school in Bandung regency.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give contributions in terms of theoretical and practical benefits.

a. Theoretical benefit

Theoretically, the result of the study is expected to be able to enrich the literature about English as a foreign language teaching in the Indonesian

context. So, researchers who conduct a research on the same field can take this a new insight as a reference for them to understand what the role of Indonesian language in the English language learning (ELL) classroom is.

b. Practical Benefit

Practically, this study hopefully can provide reference for English teachers or candidates of English teachers in Indonesia on how much the proportion of L1 can be used when they conduct English lesson. Also, it is for getting aware of teaching students at low / beginner level, which the context of English is as a foreign language.

1.6 Research Methods

This section is intended to include the methodology which is proposed to achieve the research purposes mentioned earlier. Research design, research site and participants, data collection, and data analysis are going to be presented.

1.6.1 Research Design

The proposed research uses a qualitative method and employs a case study approach in order to meet the objective of the research. To meet the reliable data, there should be triangulated instruments employed. So, the several instruments used were: classroom observation, teacher's interview, students' questionnaire and interview. Those three instruments are expected to successfully answer the each research questions employed. Moreover, the data from all instruments are transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted to get the data result in a qualitative way.

1.6.2 Research Site and Participants

1.6.2.1 Research Site

This study takes place in a public junior high school in Bandung city, West Java, Indonesia. The sample is drawn from 7th grade students of a junior high school where the teacher is not fully using English, but also Indonesian language in English classroom. The samples included are both the teacher and students in the class.

1.6.2.2 Participants

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The participants of this study are the teacher and the students of an English class that teach and learn English subject by using mix languages (English and Indonesia) for the classroom instruction.

1.6.3 Data Collection

Sets of data are obtained by employing several instruments: those are classroom observation, teacher's interview, and students' questionnaire & interview. Firstly, the researcher does a video recording of several times of the English class. This is for getting the realizations in the classroom by knowing in what occasions and how much proportion of the L1 use is. Secondly, the teacher is interviewed by the researcher using audio recording to get deeper reasons why she uses mix languages in the teaching and learning activities. Thirdly, each student gets a questionnaire as data of how the role of L1 is needed in the English classroom. The questionnaire is close-ended form with Likert-scale kind of option. Lastly, there are four chosen students done interview, in which to get deeper information about students' perceptions.

1.6.4 Data analysis

For getting the research finding, the ways of analyzing the data result are through exploring, understanding, analyzing, and then interpreting. The data from observation and interview are transcribed first, then analyzed, and interpreted. Whereas, the data from the questionnaire are analyzed by using Likert scale, those are scoring, calculating, and classifying. The complete description of the data analysis would be served in Chapter III.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misinterpretation in understanding some terms used in this study, the writer would like to clarify:

a. Perception

Kotler et al. (1999) defines that perception is the process of selecting, arranging, and interpreting information using five senses in creating or producing meaningful images. Then, according to Sidhu (2003), students'

perceptions are students' point of view toward something that happened in learning process class and produced it with a suggestion or opinion on it.

b. SLA (Second Language Acquisition)

L2 acquisition is the process by which people learn a second language. There is a popular belief that SLA is strongly influenced by the learners' first language (Khatai, 2011).

c. First Language (L1) / Native Language

Mizza (2014) indicates first language or called native language is a language which acquired and used naturally by the children since their early age. So, the L1 here is Indonesian language.

d. Second Language (L2) / Target Language

Second language or target language is not a native language in a certain region, but it is used locally as officially. Moreover, Second language as target language means that new language learned in a classroom situation (Brown, 2001).

e. Foreign Language

Foreign language is described as nonnative languages that is not spoken by the society (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). Also, it might be used for future cross-cultural business, such as education, travel, employment, etc. (Saville-Troike, 2006, p.4). In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters. The content of each chapter will be described below.

Chapter I

The first chapter briefly introduces the overview of the study. It contains the background of the study, the research questions, the aims, the scope, the

significances, the research method, the research site and participants, the clarification of terms, and also the organization of the paper.

Chapter II

The second chapter is literature review. It elaborates several theories related to the study: the definition of perception, the historical overview of the issue, the second language acquisition (SLA) framework, the pros of using L1, the cons of using L1, and the previous studies.

Chapter III

The third chapter discusses in detail the methodological aspects of this study. It covers complete information about the research design and site and participants, the steps and procedure in collecting the data, and the data analysis.

Chapter IV

The fourth chapter describes the result of the study. Besides that, the interpretation of the findings is also clearly drawn here.

Chapter V

The last chapter is the conclusion and recommendation section of this study. It proposes a summary of the findings and also suggestions for further research.

1.9 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the underlying principles of this study covering background, research questions, aims, scope, significances, research method, research site and participants, the clarification of terms, and organization of the paper. In the next chapter, the literatures relevant to this study will be elaborated.