CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this chapter of the study, conclusion and recommendation are elaborated clearly based on the data presentation and analysis of the previous chapter.

5.1 Conclusion

By referring to the results of the analysis of the data from the semi-structured interview, the information regarding positive vocational teachers’ perceptions toward L1 use in the EFL classroom can be suggested. In line with studies conducted by Duff & Polio (1990) and Macaro (2001) in Hawkins (2015), this present study basically also suggested that vocational English teachers in Indonesia use L1 in the EFL classroom teaching practice; the extent of its use varied in each context. According to the data from the interview, at least, L1 had been used for over 30% of the lesson. In the EFL classroom in vocational high school context, it can be said that there has been extensive use of L1 in the teaching learning process. The ‘over-use’ of the L1 indeed can be found in this study based on the data from classroom observations. The over-use of L1 by both teachers in vocational context in this study, rejects what have been suggested in other studies conducted by De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Duff & Polio, 1994; Grim, 2010; Macaro, 2001 and Thompson, 2006 in higher educational context; which stated that teachers rarely over-rely on the L1 to teach English as the target language. In this present study, vocational teachers totally over-rely on the L1 to be able to teach English effectively.

Moreover, based on the data from the classroom observations, it can also be found that L1 was not randomly used by the participant teachers of the study; teachers implemented L1 in the EFL classroom for specific functions. This results in line with what have been suggested by Liao (2006), Careless (2008), Mahadeo (2013), Akkaya & Atar (2015) and Debreli & Oyman (2015) regarding the role of L1 in the language classroom (see also Alvarez, 2014; Yataganbaba & Yildrim,
Based on the data from the interview and the classroom observations, L1 has been used for both language and non-language purposes by participant teachers (Grim, 2012; Polio & Duff, 1994 in Blackman, 2014). Although they stated in the interview that they tend to use L1 mostly for language purposes, according to the data from classroom observations, it could be seen how both teachers still use L1 for non-language purposes such as building rapport with students, making jokes, and etc. Blackman (2014) states that the tendency for the teacher to use L1 for non-language purposes might be triggered by the need to build good relations with students as one of the social aspects of teaching.

In this study, beside elaborating the use of L1 based on its function in the EFL classroom, it is also important to discuss any discrepancy that might be found regarding teachers’ perceptions of L1 use and their actual teaching performances. Regarding the ideal percentage of L1 use in the EFL classroom, as suggested by Atkinson (1987: 242), the approximate ratio of 95% L2 and 5% L1 should be seen as the ideal percentage of the use of L1 in the classroom at lower level. Duff & Polio (1990) and Tang (2002) in a similar fashion also argue that the use of L1 should not be higher than 10% even when teaching lower level; the use of it even need to be reduced when learners improve their proficiency. As in the present study, we can not only find the discrepancy between teachers’ perceptions of L1 use and their classroom teaching performances. More than that, we can also highlight the fact how the actual use of L1 by both teachers in the classroom exceeded the ideal percentage of L1 suggested by the experts. Contrast to what have been suggested by Atkinson, Duff & Polio, and also Tang regarding the ideal percentage of L1 use, in this present study we could find how L1 had been used very often by both teachers; in general, more than 35% of L1 utterances spoken by both teachers in the EFL classroom teaching practice.

Especially in Mrs. Yanti case, we could find in many situations, Mrs. Yanti intentionally used L1 almost all the time during the lesson. Although at that time she was being observed while teaching English, it did not make her feel motivated to show her best in providing high English exposure to her students. As
far as the researcher concerns, Mrs. Yanti during classroom observation seemed quite confident to use very high amount of L1. She might justify her action as something common to be found in the EFL teaching practice in Indonesian school context. Not quite different from Mrs. Yanti, in Mrs. Susri case, although she did not use as much unreasonable amount of L1 as Mrs. Yanti, findings from classroom observation still reveal the fact that the Mrs. Susri also unable to avoid using high amount of L1 in her teaching practice. Findings from ten classroom observations reveal undeniable fact related to things; the discrepancy of teachers’ perceptions and their actual teaching performances, and also the discrepancy between the actual use of L1 by vocational teachers in the classroom teaching practices compared to the ideal percentages of L1 suggested by Atkinson (1987), Duff & Polio (1990) and Tang (2002).

Meanwhile, regarding the length of teaching experience, the analysis of the data from present study find no evidence that this matter can also influence both participants’ perceptions toward the use of L1. The length of teaching experiences does not really affect the way the teacher use L1 in the classroom teaching practice. In fact, based on the data collected from the interview and the classroom observation, longer teaching experience could not really guarantee the lower reliance on the students’ L1. As we can find in Mrs. Yanti case, she still depended heavily on the use of L1 to teach English as the target language even after she has more than 30 years English teaching experiences. What is suggested in this study regarding the length of teaching experience, does not support what has been previously mentioned in other similar studies. In this present study, the length of teaching experience does not really influence the degree of teacher’s reliance on L1.

Overall, what have been elaborated so far provide valuable insight of how vocational teachers in Indonesian context perceive the use of L1 in the EFL classroom teaching practice. Since none of them support the idea of the importance of implementing English-only policy in the classroom in vocational high school, they have positive perceptions toward L1 use in the EFL classroom. Some factors namely limited amount of time to teach the materials, low learners’
proficiency, the difficulty of the task and materials, teachers’ teaching experiences and beliefs about the teaching of English as a foreign language could be identified as five biggest reasons for the use of L1 in the classroom in the present study; in line with what have been suggested by Debreli & Oyman (2015). Based on what have been elaborated above, as a matter of fact, judicious L1 use need to be highly promoted in the EFL classroom especially in vocational high school context to help students learn the target language effectively.

5.2 Recommendation

After elaborating thoroughly teachers’ perceptions toward the use of L1 in the EFL classroom in vocational high school context, some suggestions can be proposed in this study. First, since vocational teachers still depend heavily on the use of L1 in their EFL teaching practices, there is a need to remind the teacher to use L1 judiciously in the classroom so that it does not hinder the exposure of English as the target language. The teacher, for instance, can be reminded regularly through the teacher training or other professional developments regarding the importance of avoiding the situation where L1 is ‘over-used’ in the EFL classroom for whatever reasons and functions. The teacher basically need to be reminded that they are not allowed to constantly depend on the use of L1 to teach English as a foreign language. As a professional teacher, they need to be very creative in finding other teaching strategies for teaching English effectively instead of totally depending on the use of L1 to solve various classroom problems.

Secondly, although the use of L1 is quite a subjective issue and its use can be varied in each context, it is still important for vocational teachers in Indonesia to have a fixed standard regarding the use of L1 in the classroom. In the interview, both teachers stated that up until now, the issue related to the use of L1 in the EFL classroom is still not common to be discussed in MGMP (English teacher training forum). With the situation elaborated in the study, it is very urgent to pay more attention to the L1 related issue for example by discussing it regularly in the MGMP. MGMP really need to be used as a platform that can raise teacher’s
awareness about the disadvantage of over-relying on the use of L1 to solve any EFL classroom problems. As none of participant teachers suggest that the issue related to the use of L1 is common to be discussed in the English teacher forum, it is important to share to EFL teachers the importance of discussing the issue related to the use of L1 in the MGMP. Teacher, whether she is a senior or novice one need to really realize how far the ideal percentage of the use of L1 is already implemented in their classroom teaching practice. As English educators, they needs to participate in any English teacher forum including professional development administered by the government. Through their involvement in various teacher forums or other professional development, they might be able to increase their awareness about any issue related to EFL teaching in Indonesian educational context.

Third, before designing or implementing new curriculum in the future, issue related to the use of students’ L1 in the EFL classroom should be taken into consideration by either the government or other policy makers in Indonesian educational context. It is really expected that the implementation of the new curriculum will not be used by the teacher as an excuse to ‘over-rely’ on the use of L1 in the EFL classroom.

So far, what have been elaborated in this study provide some insights related to vocational teachers’ perceptions and practices regarding L1 use in the EFL classroom context. However, vocational students’ perceptions regarding L1 use in the EFL classroom still have not been investigated in this present study. As the attempt to fill in this gap, it is important for future researchers to conduct other studies which focus on elaborating how vocational students in Indonesian EFL context perceive the use of L1 in the classroom; do they share the same attitudes regarding the use of L1 with their teacher or not. Comparative study in some other vocational high schools regarding the use of L1 can also be conducted. By conducting more studies regarding L1 use in vocational school context, it might give us more insights of how actually EFL teachers in Indonesia in general perceive and implement L1 in their classroom teaching practices.
To sum up, since the issue related L1 use is still debatable, it is very crucial to investigate further how L1 is actually perceived and used by other educators in different contexts. Although the use of L1 is quite common to be found in the EFL classroom in Indonesia, unfortunately, not many educators or students realize the importance of discussing this issue in the classroom teaching practice. By conducting the study, hopefully students and teachers can be more aware about this issue so that later on they can come up with some suggestions on how to promote judicious use of L1 in the classroom without hindering the exposure of English as the target language.