

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the basis of the current research, including why the research needs to be conducted, the research questions, the aims of the research, and the research's significance. Clarifications for several terms used throughout the research are also provided.

1.1 Background of the Study

The use of students' first language (L1) in second or foreign language (L2) classrooms has long been considered as a controversial issue. Debates on the topic mostly revolve around questioning whether the language has a place in L2 classrooms. Dismissals towards the use of learners' L1 mostly took their roots in the theory of monolingualism. The theory suggests that a second or foreign language is best learned without any interference from other languages (Littlewood & Yu, 2009; Hall & Cook, 2013). As a result, the L1 is viewed as a hindrance to L2 learning. Another common argument utilized against L1 use is that learners need maximum L2 exposure and to achieve that, teachers need to avoid using L1 in the classroom (Cook, 2001). Over the years, the theory of monolingualism and the maximum L2 input have presented themselves in many language learning methods. They can also be found in many EFL classes (Emilia & Hamied, 2022).

Today, debates surrounding L1's place in L2 classes are still prevalent among educators, students, and policymakers. A surge in research into L1 use and its role in L2 classes began in the early 1990s, with Duff and Polio's (1990) research being frequently cited as the trigger to the move. The increasing interest was likely caused by the adoption of the multilingual view that occurred around the time of the surge (Emilia & Hamied, 2022). Since then, scholars have begun to view the L1 as a resourceful tool after previously deeming it to be a nuisance for the classroom. Furthermore, recent publications on the issue have found that the public has become more welcoming of the use of L1. An example of this can be seen in Tanriseven and Kirkgorz's (2021) discovery,

where most of the teacher participants were found to acknowledge the importance of providing their students with as much L2 as possible. To do so, the teachers did not campaign for L1 exclusion. Rather, they chose to still use the L1, albeit in a systematic manner. A similar finding was reported in Blackman's (2014) study, which reported that Belarusian EFL teachers associate L1's role with delivering effective lessons. Blackman (2014) found instances of L1 use to fulfil academic, managerial, and social functions. At the same time, they encourage more English to be utilized during class.

The use of the Indonesian language as the L1 has also been noted to be positively received and practiced by teachers at varying education levels. One of the most recent studies that reported the use of the Indonesian language as the L1 in EFL classes is Marsella's (2020) study, which analysed teachers' use of L1 with the IRF (Initiation, Response, and Feedback) exchange framework. The findings from her study showed that the use of L1 is sometimes unavoidable. Thus, when teachers use the L1, it does not mean that they lack competence in the English language. Marsella (2020) also reported that the teachers were aware of the functions that the L1 performs for the class while still encouraging students to use English more often. Sundari and Febriyanti (2021) also investigated the perceptions of twenty EFL teachers about the Indonesian language as the L1 and what functions the teachers associate the L1 with. Their research was based on Cook's (2001) framework on the functions of L1. It was found that most of the teachers held positive views toward the L1, saying that its use is indispensable for the classroom.

As demonstrated by several previous studies, extensive investigations have been conducted on the issue of L1 use and teachers' perceptions of the language. The aims of most of these studies are often two-fold: to investigate teachers' perceptions about L1 and the way they utilized the L1 in their own practices. Research on these issues is grounded on the fact that teachers' beliefs possess some degree of influence on their practices (Pajares, 1992; Johnson, 1992). However, a large number of research on L1 use in the EFL context have only investigated the issue from the perspectives of in-service teachers, who have years or even decades of experience in teaching. There is only a small

number of studies that looked into what pre-service EFL teachers believe about the use of L1 (Pusparini et al, 2021), such as the studies done by Turnbull (2018) and Wach and Monroy (2019).

Turnbull (2018) examined the way 30 pre-service teachers who were also undergraduate English students in New Zealand viewed the use of L1 in the classroom. His study found that the pre-service teachers were generally welcoming of L1 instances made by their students. They were not fond of the use of L1 made by the class teachers. Some of them even argued that English, as the L2, should be used exclusively in the classroom, adopting a monolingual approach to teaching. Turnbull (2018) added that those who are against the use of L1 turned out to have no experience in learning a second language. Wach and Monroy (2019) viewed that negative learning experiences involving L1 overuse can also become a source of L1 dismissal, as found in the Spanish EFL pre-service teachers they investigated. Wach and Monroy (2019) looked into the beliefs of Spanish and Polish EFL pre-service teachers about L1 use and took into account the participants' prior experience as language learners. Tetiurka (2016) included the pre-service teachers' practices in their investigation of beliefs about L1. It was reported that their beliefs tend to not be reflected in their teaching practices, due to the fact that they were inexperienced teachers. Only Tetiurka (2016) factored in the pre-service teachers' practice in their investigation. By doing so, the study did not rely only on the participants' accounts of their practice, since their own accounts have a chance to be untrue to real practice.

The studies mentioned previously investigated different kinds of L1, such as Polish, Spanish, Japanese, etc. Unlike the studies that involved in-service teachers, most of the ones that focused on pre-service teachers had only focused on the investigation of beliefs about L1. It is necessary to point out that research into pre-service teachers' beliefs about L1 are still rare, and the ones with a two-fold aim on beliefs and practices are even rarer. Farrell and Bennis (2013) underlined that it is crucial to address the beliefs of pre-service teachers as they are often unaware of their own pedagogical beliefs and how they affect their teaching practices. Radwan (2019) also considers the investigation to be

of great importance because it allows for a better understanding of pre-service teachers' beliefs structure, which leads to the improvement of their teaching preparations and practices. Errors that are present in their beliefs can negatively affect their teaching practices and their student's learning process in the long run (Peacock, 2001).

To fill the addressed gaps in the literature, the current study aims to investigate both the beliefs and practices of EFL pre-service teachers about L1. How their beliefs transcend into their teaching practices becomes a focal point of the current study. Furthermore, the L1 investigated in the current study is the Indonesian language.

1.2 Research Questions

Given the addressed gap in the literature, this research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are EFL pre-service teachers' stated beliefs about using L1 in the classroom?
2. How are the beliefs manifested in the pre-service teachers' classroom practices?

1.3 Research Aims

This research aims to investigate the beliefs of EFL pre-service teachers regarding the use of the first language (L1) in the classroom. The research will also investigate how their beliefs about L1 are manifested in their classroom practices.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The current research is expected to bear significance both in theory and in practice. Theoretically, the findings from this research are expected to widen the understanding of pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices around the use of the first language (L1) in a foreign language classroom by adding to the existing academic literature. Practically, the findings from this research can serve as input for current pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and teacher

education programs in that the results can provide insight into what the pre-service teachers are still lacking in terms of their beliefs about using L1 and their practices. Moreover, the current research also bears significance in terms of educational policy in that the findings from this research can serve as input for policy-making, specifically in terms of promoting judicious use of L1 and determining the amount of such use, since policy regarding the matter is quite limited.

1.5 Clarification of Terms

- **First Language (L1)**

The term “first language” refers to the language that learners learn first or their native language. Similar terms that are often used in the research of L1 use are ‘mother tongue’ and ‘own language’. In the case of the current research, the term refers to the Indonesian language, as it is the shared language possessed by the pre-service teachers and their students.

- **Pre-Service Teachers**

The term “pre-service teachers” refers to students of the teacher education program who are currently undergoing a teaching practicum in selected schools. These individuals teach under the guidance of several teaching professionals, including the school’s teacher and their institution’s instructors.

1.6 Organization of the Paper

The current research paper is organized as follows:

- **Chapter I Introduction**

This chapter presents the background of the current research; touching on the burning issues and the research gap that will be filled. The research questions, their aims, significance, and scope are also highlighted. Clarification for terms related to the research is also provided.

- **Chapter II Literature Review**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the research. Since this research deals heavily with first language use and teachers’ beliefs, the

literature review will mainly focus on these two points. Several previous studies are also highlighted in this chapter.

- **Chapter III Methodology**

This chapter explains how the research is going to be conducted. The chapter elaborates on the type of research design that will be adopted, the research site and participant, the method of data collection, and how the data will be analysed.

- **Chapter IV Data Analysis and Findings**

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and elaborates on the findings drawn from the analysis. The findings are also discussed concerning the existing literature on teachers' beliefs about L1 use and their practices.

- **Chapter V Conclusion**

This chapter presents the conclusion drawn from the research findings and analysis. Recommendations for future research related to the investigation of pre-service teachers' beliefs about L1 use and their practices are also provided.