

Students' Perception on the Use of L1 in the English Language Classroom in SMA Taman Siswa Mojokerto

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Abstrak

Bahasa Inggris merupakan bahasa internasional yang menghubungkan semua orang di dunia. Berdasarkan alasan tersebut, Indonesia menetapkan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing yang wajib dipelajari. Siswa biasanya melibatkan bahasa pertama mereka, yaitu bahasa Indonesia di kelas EFL karena perbedaan level kemampuan. Namun, sebagian siswa menghindari penggunaan bahasa pertama. Dalam situasi ini, peneliti ingin mengetahui bagaimana sikap siswa terhadap penggunaan bahasa pertama dalam kelas EFL, dan untuk mengetahui apa alasan mereka untuk mendukung bahasa pertama dan apa alasan mereka menghindari bahasa pertama dalam kelas EFL. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian pertama dan metode kualitatif untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian kedua dan ketiga; dimana peneliti memperoleh data dari kuesioner dan juga interview yang diberikan kepada siswa. Subjek dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas XI IPA 1 SMA Taman Siswa Mojokerto. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa alasan siswa mendukung bahasa pertama dikarenakan untuk mengetahui arti kosa kata baru; mengerti tata bahasa; mengerti materi baru; mengerti instruksi; dan untuk merasa nyaman. Sedangkan alasan siswa menghindari penggunaan bahasa pertama dalam kelas EFL adalah; mereka harus meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dengan terus menggunakan bahasa Inggris, dan tidak ingin bergantung pada bahasa pertama. Jadi, masih terdapat beberapa siswa yang mendukung bahasa pertama dalam kelas EFL.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa Pertama dalam kelas EFL, Sikap Siswa, Alasan Siswa.

Abstract

English language is the international language that could connect people around the world. Based on that reason, Indonesia applies English as foreign language that must be learned. The students usually involve their L1, which is Bahasa Indonesia in the EFL classroom because the different-skill level of the students. However, the rest of the students choose to avoid the use of L1. In this situation, the researcher want to know how does the student's attitude toward Bahasa Indonesia in EFL classroom, and to find the students reasons; what are their reasons for supporting L1 and what are their reasons for avoiding L1 in the EFL classroom. This research used quantitative method to answer first research question and qualitative method to answer second and third research question; where the researcher got the data from questionnaire and interview given to the students. The subject of the research was the students from XI IPA 1 SMA Taman Siswa Mojokerto. The results of the research showed that the student's reasons for supporting L1 was that they need it to get the meaning of the new vocabularies; understand grammar; understand the new materials; understand the instruction; and to feel secure. Whereas the student's reasons for avoiding L1 was that they need to improve their skill with the maximum exposure of target language; and to make themselves not depend on L1. In conclusion, there are majority of the students who still supported L1 in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: First Language in The EFL Classroom, Student's Attitude, Student's Reasons.

INTRODUCTION

Some people in this world might be confused when communicate with foreigners who speak different language. Based on that problem, people need a language that can connect one and another and prevent

misunderstanding between each person. These days, English can be discovered all over the place. For instance; in the commercial and the government official's discourse in the TV (Crystal, 2003). English become international language that agreed by people in the world. Because of that reason, a few nations offer English as a subject at

school or their foreign language. English isn't only learned as an international language to speak with native speakers, but also as an international language among both native to nonnative and also non-native to non-native speakers (Acar, 2009). Acar and Robertson (2010) explain that for the country that does not use English, there is a belief among the people that learning English will bring them into higher education and give them economic beneficial.

Indonesia is one of the nations that offer English as foreign language (EFL). English is embraced as the first foreign language since science and innovation are the world culture so Indonesia need to know English to gain and stay aware of science improvement and innovation (Dardjowidjojo, 2003). So in order to make Indonesian people understand about English, the government applies English as one of the obligatory subject at school. The governments want Indonesia has educated people and want to make the communication with foreigner becomes easier. In Indonesia, the students learn English from their first year in junior high school.

English has important role for the student's future. If the students can speak English, it means that students become bilingual person. Madriñan (2014) clarify that being bilingual individual is advantageous, for example; bilingual individual will get great opportunities for better job than monolingual individual will. If the students learn English from their school, they will be able to communicate in English fluently. In fact, still there is an issue in the EFL classroom; the issue can be from the teacher and from the students. One of the problems is the use of the first language in the EFL classroom. First language (L1) in every country is different. The use of L1 in EFL classroom might influence the teaching and learning process. It is also can influence the motivation of the students to learn and focus on target language (English). In the other side, if the teacher avoids using L1 in the EFL classroom, students will be difficult to convey their thoughts or difficulties; for example, when they do not understand the instruction. The L1 use in the EFL classroom still become pro and cons among researchers; a few of them agree, and a few of them disagree.

In Indonesia, English lesson usually takes place in the English classroom where the teacher and the students have the same L1. L1 can be an effective source used to enhance EFL learning, but it should not be used excessively (Atkinson, 1993; Widdowson, 2003). It means that both can use L1 in the English classroom, however, there are limitations to use it. According to Al-Nofaie (2010), there are some teaching methods that use L1 as a helper in the English classroom. Yet, in the other side, Sharma (2006) conclude that if the students are always exposed to English, they will learn quickly; they also try to think in English because they are required to use it.

Therefore, the students need to be motivated to use English in English classroom to make them accustomed to English. The student's motivation could come from the teacher as a bridge and from the students itself as a learner.

Macaro (1997) identifies some factors to use the L1 in the L2 learning. First is giving the instruction using L1. Next is using L1 to translate and ensure the student's comprehension. L1 also used by the teacher to give individual comments and feedback to students. The last is using the L1 to maintain the student's discipline. Polio and Duff (1994) looked at the use of L1 in English classroom from different point of view. They looked at the teacher's usage of English as L1 in US at the university level. They listed a number of possible usages for English as L1 in the foreign language classroom, such as classroom management, grammar explaining, vocabulary checking, building rapport between students and teachers, and difficult concepts explaining. Atkinson (1987) believe that L1 can give positive resource for the teacher. There is strong evidence that students prefer the teacher using L1 because it can facilitate learning process. Schweers Jr (1999) found that students desired class time spent in L1 up to 39%.

Thus, in Indonesia, the students and the teacher have a possibility to share the L1 in the English language classroom. Moreover, this research focuses on the student's reasons of using Bahasa Indonesia in the English classroom. Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Language) has been introduced from the first year of school as an L1 and formal language in the school in Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia as L1 also used in the general student's book. Huri (2014) explain that Bahasa Indonesia makes Indonesian people united and there will be no misunderstanding with one another. It automatically makes the students use Bahasa Indonesia if they want to speak with their teacher and friends in the classroom because they know it is a formal language in school.

In East Java (where the researcher conducted the study), the teacher and students still using Bahasa Indonesia as a helper in English classroom. L1 use cannot be denied in English classroom, because the students use L1 to speak difficult thing or to ask something in classroom. In the other case, students use L1 because they have a limitation in vocabulary. They tend to choose the easy way to convey their thought.

The belief of 'English is the most important language' has strengthens the reason to avoid L1 in L2 classroom Pennycook (1994). Students should know if L1 can give impact for EFL classroom or can make them forget the target language. It is important to avoid the L1 use, because all students in EFL classroom should focus on the target language. The other option if the teacher cannot

avoid the use of L1, maybe the teacher can minimize the L1 and use it as little as possible (Cook, 2001). For addition, based on Nobert and Field (2001), teaching grammar using target language can be done through the using of physical or visual displays. The L1 avoidance is essential in EFL classroom, even if it reinforces the English dominance (Phillipson, 1992). While in the other side, Willis (1996) explain that the teacher should not ban the L1 use, but encourage the students to achieve the target language. Yet, the teacher should be careful when using it, because L1 may replace the target language, rather than support it (Madriñan, 2014).

In line with the background of study, the researcher writes research question, as follows:

1. What are the student's attitudes toward L1 use in the EFL classroom?
2. What are student's reasons for supporting L1 in EFL classroom?
3. What are student's reasons for avoiding L1 in EFL classroom?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was aimed to describe the student's attitude toward L1 use and the student's reason for supporting and avoiding L1 in English classroom, the researcher applied quantitative and qualitative research.. Quantitative research to answer first research question applied using close-ended questionnaire, whereas qualitative research to answer second and third research questions applied survey using open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview.

The subjects of this research were the students of XI IPA 1 that consists of 37 students. Researcher reduced them into six students to answer the interview section. Researcher chose the English classroom that allows L1 use. The data for this research was gained from student's answers for close-ended questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire, and interview while the source of data was gained from the students.

In this study, the researcher used Ms. Excel to analyze the quantitative data to get percentages. To analyzed qualitative data, the researcher used the steps from Ary et al. (2010). Those steps were 1) Familiarizing and organizing, 2) Coding and reducing, and 3) Interpreting and representing.

The first step allowed the researcher to be well-known about the data (Ary et al., 2010). Based on Creswell (2007), to do familiarizing and organizing the data, the steps were data managing and reading/memoing. The researcher managed the data from close-ended questionnaire by organized the numbers using Ms. Excel. Ms. Excel used to convert the data into percentages (table). Open-ended questionnaire managed by organized the answer using Ms. Word (excerpt). The data gained from interview managed by transcribing them using Ms.

Word file. The next step was reading/memoing the data. In this step, the researcher was read and reread the whole data include Excel and Word file to get overall meaning.

The second steps were coding and reducing. The researcher coded the data based on the similar type of statements from close-ended questionnaire and labeled the interviewed students into two different groups; 1) Group A which consists three students (Student A, B, C) was the students who support L1 use; 2) Group B which consists three students (Student X, Y, Z) was the students who avoid L1 use. The researcher was also reduced the same type of reasons from open-ended questionnaire's answers.

The final steps were interpreting and representing. This study presented the results in table and descriptive form. In order to answer first research question, the researcher presented the results in the table showed the percentages of the student's attitude toward L1 use in English classroom. The researcher presented the student's reasons for supporting and avoiding L1 in English classroom through description and narration to answer the second and third research question. The data presented gained from open-ended questionnaire and interview, the interview results presented in the form of excerpt.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of the study conducted using questionnaire based on first research question "What are the student's attitudes toward L1 use in the EFL classroom?" which showed as frequency will be elaborated below.

Table 1.1

Statements	SD		D		N		SA		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Bahasa Indonesia should always be used in the English Classroom.	3	8.1%	3	8.1 %	2 2	59. 5 %	4	10. 8 %	5	13. 5 %
I want my teacher using Bahasa Indonesia in the English classroom.	4	10.8 %	6	16. 2 %	1 8	48. 6 %	9	24. 3 %	-	-
I feel comfortable when my teacher using Bahasa Indonesia.	2	5.4%	3	8.1 %	2 2	59. 5 %	9	24. 3 %	1	2.7 %
I understand the subject better when the teacher using Bahasa Indonesia.	-	-	5	13. 5 %	1 6	43. 2 %	1 1	29. 7 %	5	13. 5 %

Using Bahasa Indonesia in the English classroom can help me in the English learning process.	3	8.1%	3	8.1%	7	18.9%	1	43.2%	8	21.6%
Using Bahasa Indonesia can help me to participate more in the English classroom.	-	-	7	18.9%	8	21.6%	1	40.5%	7	18.9%
Using Bahasa Indonesia in the English classroom can help me learn English better.	-	-	3	8.1%	1	48.6%	9	24.3%	7	18.9%
Students allowed using Bahasa Indonesia in the English classroom.	3	8.1%	4	10.8%	1	29.7%	1	43.2%	3	8.1%
I prefer to avoid using Bahasa Indonesia in English classroom.	-	-	14	37.8%	1	37.8%	7	18.9%	2	5.4%
The use of Bahasa Indonesia could prevent me in the English learning process.	4	10.8%	21	56.8%	5	13.5%	5	13.5%	2	5.4%
Using English – Indonesian dictionary can help me understand new vocabularies.	-	-	-	-	1	2.7%	1	48.6%	1	48.6%

The results showed on the table 1.1 above reveal that in the XI IPA I of SMA Taman Siswa Mojokerto, the majority of the student's attitude towards L1 is positive. As the data showed, most of them agree that Bahasa Indonesia can help them in the process of learning English. It was in line with Atkinson, 1993; Widdowson, 2003 which stated that L1 can be powerful resource for EFL learning. In addition, it makes the students participate more in English classroom activities.

The majority of the students also give positive attitude while the teacher using Bahasa Indonesia in the English classroom. Most of them feel secure and comfortable in the classroom because it can make them understand English better. It is similar to Hidayati (2012) findings. In her research conducted on EFL classes in Indonesia, she found that when the teachers used a higher amount of L1, the degree of student's interaction was higher than when the teachers used less of L1. It is because the students felt 'on track' during class, and they were able to understand, communicate, and participate during class. In addition, they can achieve their target language better with the help of the teacher's L1. The highest amount of the students agrees that Bahasa Indonesia should be used sometimes in the English classroom. It is similar with the study conducted by Kovacic and Kirinic (2011) in Croatia. They found that students and teachers agreed that to get certain learning purposes L1 should be used moderately in English classroom. In addition, about 56.1% of the students and 45% of the teachers reported that they sometimes preferred to use L1 (Croatian). Tang (2002) conducted a study in Chinese school about the attitudes of the teachers and students towards the use of L1 in English classrooms also found that most of the participants (over 70%) thought L1 (Chinese) should be used in the English classroom. In the other side, the minority of the students chose to avoid L1 use because it could prevent them achieve their target language (English). It is in line with Hawks (2001) which stated that L1 use can ruin the L2 learning because the students will not focus in their target language. In addition, Phillipson, 1992 argues that the avoidance of the L1 is a necessity in much EFL, even if it reinforces the dominance of English.

The result of the second research question; "What are the student's reasons for supporting L1 in EFL classroom?" which gained from open-ended questionnaire were:

1. Help Students Understand The New Vocabulary

Statement	N		Sd		St		O		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
In your opinion, how often Bahasa Indonesia could be used in the English classroom?	2	5.4%	8	21.6%	1	45.9%	10	27%	-	-

In this part, the researcher took three student's answers to explained. The researcher named them as Student A, Student B, and Student C.

Based on the open-ended questionnaire, Student A who learning English since he/she was in kindergarten was supporting L1 use in the classroom because he/she thinks that it can help students understand more quickly about what is being discussed in the classroom. He/she also added that Bahasa Indonesia should be used in English classroom in order to make the beginner can follow the learning process and understand the vocabulary.

"Karena jika diselingi dengan Bahasa Indonesia, maka membuat siswa menjadi lebih paham apa yang dibicarakan/dibahas dalam kelas itu."

"Sebaiknya Bahasa Indonesia tetap diizinkan dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris, supaya siswa yang belum bisa/mengerti Bahasa Inggris dapat mengikutinya. Sambil belajar sedikit demi sedikit, memudahkan siswa memahami kosa kata."

–Student A–

"Because if it is interspersed with Bahasa Indonesia, it will be easier for the students to understand about what is being discussed in the classroom."

"It is better if Bahasa Indonesia still allowed in EFL classroom, so that the students could understand the new vocabularies and can learn step by step."

–Student A–

2. The Difference of Student's Skill

Student B who learning English since he/she was in first grade gave the reason for supporting L1 use in English classroom was because the differences of student's English ability in English classroom. He/she added that student could not always use Bahasa Indonesia in English classroom. Bahasa Indonesia should be used neutrally.

"Karena kemampuan tiap siswa berbeda, ada yang mengerti Bahasa Inggris dan ada yang tidak. Dan lebih baik menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia dikurangi dan tidak sering-sering."

"Dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris, sebaiknya kita menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia netral saja, karena kebanyakan siswa kemampuan Berbahasa Inggrisnya rendah."

–Student B–

"Because the students have different level in English. Some of them understand, and some of them not. And it is better if the use of Bahasa Indonesia reduced and not too much."

"It will be better if we use bahasa Indonesia neutrally in the classroom, because lots of students still have low English level."

–Student B–

3. Help The Students Understand The New Material Quickly.

Student C who learning English before he/she was in the kindergarten gave the reason for supporting L1 use in English classroom was because Bahasa Indonesia could help beginner understand the material better. He/she also added that Bahasa Indonesia should used when the students lack of understand the material, it can help the students understand the material quickly.

"Karena untuk membantu siswa lebih memahami materi yang diberikan dan untuk siswa yang baru belajar Bahasa Inggris."

"Lebih mengurangi menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia dan lebih memperbanyak menggunakan Bahasa Inggris. Bahasa Indonesia cukup digunakan jika para siswa kurang paham agar lebih cepat paham pelajaran Bahasa Inggris."

–Student C–

"Because to help the students understand the material better and for the new beginner in English."

"Minimized the use of Bahasa Indonesia and maximized the use of English. Bahasa Indonesia only used to make the students understand faster."

–Student C–

The findings above showed the first reason is that they find difficulties on the new vocabulary are in line with Cook's argument. He has pointed out some ways that L1 can include into L2 learning positively, e.g. teaching new vocabulary use L1 and checking the meaning of the new vocabulary use L1. In addition, Tang (2002) who conducted a study in Chinese school found that the highest amount of L1 used was to explain the meaning of the words. The next reasons are that the difficulties on grammar materials and the new materials are in line with the result of Kovacic and Kirinic (2011) study in Croatia. They found that most participants agreed that the use of L1 is more important for explaining grammar points, difficult concepts, and ideas. The last reason is that they find some difficulties on tasks (instruction) is in line with Bouangeune (2009) who conducted the study in Laos. He found that the participants, who receive L1 as a resource of instruction, translate new words, and vocabularies have higher improvement in English rather than those who did not receive L1 translation.

The finding for last research question; "What are student's reasons for avoiding L1 in EFL classroom?"

which taken from the student's answers in the open-ended questionnaire were:

1. The Students Need to Improve Their Speaking Skill And Their Vocabulary

In this part the resource taken from the answer of three students. Those are the answer of Student X, Y, and Z.

Based on the open-ended questionnaire, Student X who learning English since he/she was in the first grade was avoiding L1 use in the English classroom because he/she thinks that it is clear that in the English classroom students should not use other language but English. He/she also added that using only English in the English classroom could improve their speaking skill and their new vocabulary.

"Seharusnya di kelas Bahasa Inggris itu tidak dibolehkan menggunakan bahasa lain selain Bahasa Inggris. Jadi, setiap percakapan harus menggunakan Bahasa Inggris."

"Sebaiknya menggunakan Bahasa Inggris di kelas Bahasa Inggris karena kita juga bisa mendapatkan kosa kata yang baru dan memperlancar conversation dalam Bahasa Inggris."
–Student X–

"EFL classroom should not allowed the students use other language but English. So, everyone should use English in every conversation."

"It will be better if we use only English in EFL classroom because we can get the new vocabularies and enhance our English conversation skill."
–Student X–

2. The Students Will be Lazy to Learn English in The EFL Classroom

Student Y who learning English since he/she was in the kindergarten was avoiding L1 use because he/she thinks that the students will be lazy to learn English if they use Bahasa Indonesia in English classroom. If there are different levels of English, Bahasa Indonesia still have to be minimized, and the use of English should be dominant in the English classroom.

"Karena jika siswa/guru menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris, maka akan membuat siswa memiliki rasa malas untuk belajar Bahasa Inggris sebab mereka berfikir bahwa guru memperbolehkan mereka menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia."

"Sebaiknya penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia harus di kurangi dan Bahasa Inggrisnya harus dominan."

–Student Y–

"Because if the students/teacher is using Bahasa Indonesia in EFL classroom, it will make the students feel lazy to learn English because they think that the teacher allows them to use Bahasa Indonesia."
"It will be better if Bahasa Indonesia is minimized and English become the dominance in the classroom."

–Student Y–

3. The Students Need to Improve Their English Skill

Student Z who learning English since he/she was in the kindergarten was avoiding L1 use because he/she thinks that the students should improve their skill in English, if they use Bahasa Indonesia, they could not improve their English skill. He/she also added that Bahasa Indonesia should be minimized, it could only be used when it is necessary.

"Siswa harus sering mengasah kemampuan cakap mereka, karena dengan terbiasa melakukan percakapan Bahasa Inggris maka kemampuan siswa akan selalu terasah. Dan juga penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia boleh digunakan saat diperlukan saja."

–Student Z–

"Students should enhance their English skill, because if they are used to it, their English skill will enhance. And also Bahasa Indonesia can be used only in need."

–Student Z–

The result from open-ended questionnaire above showed the students chose to avoid L1 use because it could prevent them achieves their target language (English). It is in line with Hawks (2001) which stated that L1 use could ruin the L2 learning because the students will not focus in their target language. In addition, Phillipson (1992) argues that the avoidance of the L1 is a necessity in much EFL, even if it reinforces the dominance of English. The results reveal some student's reasons for avoiding L1. The first is that they need to acquire the target language faster to improve their skill. This reason is in line with Ellis's argument, which said "students will acquire the language faster if they get the big amount of L2 input". In addition, avoid L1 can help the students improve their skill faster. The second reason is that the students will be lazy to develop their English ability if always exposed with L1. It is in line with Cook's argument. He pointed that in order to acquire the target language (English), students need as much exposure as possible to English which is requires them to use it as much as possible. In addition, if they are

exposed with English every learning, they will be able to acquire it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results on the previous chapter, there are three conclusions that can be drawn. First, most of the students give positive attitude toward L1 (in this case; Bahasa Indonesia) use in the English language classroom in XI IPA 1 SMA Taman Siswa Mojokerto.

Second, there are five major reasons why the students support L1 use in EFL classroom. Those reasons are; they need it to get the meaning of the new vocabularies; they need to understand grammar; they need to get the idea of the new materials; they need to understand the instruction on the tasks; and they need to feel secure in teaching and learning process. They added that L1 could be use only in need because there are different levels of student's skill in the classroom.

The last, there are minority of the students chose to avoid L1 use. Their reasons are; they need to improve their skill with the maximum exposure of target language; and they did not want to depend on L1 because L1 can make them forget the target language. They also added that the allowance of L1 use could decrease their will or feel lazy to achieve English as the target language.

SUGGESTIONS

Considering the student's target language, which is English, it is suggested that the teacher should make better decision while applying L1 in the English classroom. The teacher should focus on developing the student's skill in English, so they will be able to think in English. It is important to make the strict rules regarding L1 use in the English classroom. It will be better if the teacher and the students did not use L1, except in the certain situation. Besides that, it is expected that the students also put the maximum effort in the English learning so that they aware about advantages and disadvantages of using L1 in the English learning process. Although it is time consuming because the students should put maximum effort and the teacher should find the way to make the students understand, it will always give positive effect for the students skill.

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