**An Analysis of English Teacher’s L1 Use in EFL Classrroom**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this research are to find out (1) the occasions in which the teachers use L1 during teaching learning activites. (2) the factors that influence the teachers’ L1 use in teaching English and (3) students’ perceptions towards teachers’ L1 use in teaching English at MtsN 2 Biringkanaya.

This research employed qualitative research design.. The participants were 2 English teachers teaching in class IX and 60 students of class IX at MTsN 2 Biringkanaya Makassar. The formers were selected by administering preliminary study on 1st August 2016 whereas the latters were chosen through cluster random sampling. The data were collected by using audio recordings, interviews, observational checklists, and open ended questionnaires. The audio recordings were used to gain the information on occasions which the teachers use L1 while interviews were occupied to obtain information about the factors that influence the teachers using L1. Furthermore, open ended questionnaires were utilized to examine students’ perceptions towards teachers L1 use and observational checklists were supporting instruments on audio recordings.

The result of the current research suggested that there are 8 occasions in which the teachers use *Bahasa Indonesia* as L1 in the classroom. They include the occasions when teachers give an advice, check students’ understanding, explain grammar points, give classroom instructions, make jokes, give motivation, give a suggestion, give new vocabularies. Furthermore, lack of vocabulary and the complexity of materials are the main factors that influence teachers to use *Bahasa Indonesia* in the classroom. Lastly, most of the students feel comfortable and convenient on teachers using *Bahasa Indonesia*. They expect teachers to combine both English and *Bahasa Indonesia* in order to understand the material easily and encourage them to use English in the classroom.

Key words: *Analyzing*, *Teachers’ L1 use, students perceptions, and EFL classroom.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Interaction is one of the crucial aspects in teaching several lessons in the classroom as well as teaching English as a foreign language. Verbal and non-verbal interaction can be involved in teaching-learning activity nevertheless verbal interaction tends to be dominant in the classroom. In teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia, verbal interaction is possible in Indonesian language as a first language (L1), or English as a second language (L2) in the classroom. Many experts have their own opinion about the use of L1 in teaching English. In certain cases, using L1 in teaching English may decrease learners’ anxiety so that they will not be worried to express their feeling. Auerbach (1993:19) states that the use of L1 allows learners to express themselves and provides a sense of security. It cannot be denied that teachers in secondary school possibly use L1 in any cases. The teachers need to use L1 if the learners cannot response either verbally or non-verbally towards their utterances in English. Accordingly, Atkinson (1987:241) suggests that one of occasions in using L1 in the L2 classroom is checking comprehension. However, teachers attempt to use L2 before using L1 to check learners’ comprehension. Thus, L1 seems an ultimate optional verbal communication in order to comprehend the learners.

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This research was intended to answer the following questions; (1) In what occasion do the English teachers use L1 in the classroom?; (2) What factors influence the English teachers’ L1 use?; and (3) What is students’ perception towards teacher’ L1 use?

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Gass and Selinker (2008:7) defines that the first language is a language that a child learns. It is also known as the primary language, the mother tongue, or native language. The use of L1 in teaching another language in the classroom is one of profound discussions among the experts. Several prominent experts refer to monolingual approach in teaching another language in which briefly no L1 in classroom instruction. Moreover, they claim that teaching a target language is associated with first language acquisition, thus exposure of a target language determines the successful of teaching. Cook in Miles (2004) states that the strongest reasons of choosing Monolingual Approach are (1) The learning of an L2 should model the learning of an L1 (through maximum exposure to the L2); (2) Successful learning involves the separation and distinction of L1 and L2; and (3) Students should be shown the importance of the L2 through its continual use.

In contrast with previous arguments above, Brown (2000) states that the use of L1 in teaching a target language is a facilitating factor. In accordance with that, Cook (2001) identifies three main areas where L1 may be used positively in the classroom: teachers can use L1 to convey meaning, for example, checking the meaning of words or sentences or explaining grammar, teachers can use L1 for classroom organization purposes such as organizing tasks, maintaining discipline or communicating with individual students, students can use L1 in their group work or pair work learning activities to provide scaffolding for each other. Larsen-Freeman in Julianti (2015) state that students’ native language enhance security and less anxiety which can be followed by feeling comfortable to participate. In addition, Harbord in Julianti (2015) defines that using L1 is time-saving and the time saved by communicating in the mother tongue can be used for more productive activities.

**METHOD**

 This research applied descriptive qualitative model. Gay (2006:11) stated that a descriptive model determines and describes the way things are. It relates to collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive, narrative, and visual data in order to gain insight into particular phenomenon of interests. In this study, the researcher collected/recorded, analyzed, and interrelated the data to reveal the occasions in which the teachers’ L1 use, the factors influence the teachers in using L1 in the classroom and students’ perception towards teachers’ L1 use.

**Research Subject**

The researcher initially employed preliminary study to know the teachers’ language use in the classroom. Two English teachers teaching in class IX at MTsN 2 Biringkanaya, Makassar and 60 students taught by each teacher were selected as subject of the research.

**Data Collection**

 The data of the research were obtained from the result of audio recordings, interview, open ended questionnaire and observation. Audio recordings are used to find out the occasions in which the teachers’L1 use, the semi-structure interview was addressed to the EFL teachers to find out the factors influence the teachers in using L1, and open ended questionnaire was distributed to find out students’ perception towards teachers’ L1 use.

To justify the data gained in audio recordings, the researcher conducted classroom observation to check any possible occasions or to support occasions obtained by audio recordings.

**RESULT**

**The occasions in which the teachers’ L1 use**

a. Giving advice

Excerpt 1

Teacher : *Kalo gurunya menyuruh jangan menyuruh orang lain kalo saya suruh kamu berarti saya butuh kamu, kita dulu kalo disuruh sama guru kita senang beda dengan anak-anak sekarang, anak-anak sekarang kalo disuruh menjadi beban, sebagian tidak semua, lain kali jangan seperti itu yah, siapa namanya?*

Teacher : If the teacher asks you to do something you do not command others. if I asks to do something means I need you, we used to be commanded by teachers and we felt happy. It is contradicted with students nowdays, students recently feel uncomfortable if the teacher asks to do something , some of them but not all, next time do not do it again , What is your name?

b. Checking students’ understanding

Excerpt 2

Teacher : *Perlombaan apa?*

Students : *Antar kelas*

Teacher : *Cerita antar kelas? Bukan bercerita? Apa itu bahasa Inggrisnya pertandingan bercerita?*

Teacher : What competition?

Students : Between classes

Teacher : Story between classes? Instead of telling? What is the English *pertandingan bercerita?*

c. Explaining grammar points

Excerpt 3

Teacher : Simple present continuous t*ense karena ada to be dan verb ing yang mana to be? Am berarti sedang berlangsung,* [I’m reading a volleyball announcement] *ok lanjut* [Bobby a volleyball competition where and when is it? What the meaning?]

Teacher : Simple present continuous tense because there is to be verb-ing and where is to be? Am is being continuous, [I'm reading a volleyball announcement] ok next [Bobby a volleyball competition where and when is it? What the meaning?]

d. Giving classroom instruction

Excerpt 4

Teacher : *Apa yang diucapkan temannya Lina sama Lina?* *Tutup semua dulu bukunya,* [close your book! No body cheat]

Teacher : What does Lina’s friend say to Lina? Close all the first book, [close your book! No body cheat]

e. Making jokes

Excerpt 5

Student 12 : *Aku berharap suatu hari nanti saya akan pergi ke Japan*

Teacher : [Ok very good], *nah you, memang harus tinggi memangnya kau* (teacher appoints one student) *mauji pergi ke pasar daya.*

Students : (laughing)

Student 12 : I hope someday I'll go to Japan

Teacher : Ok very good, well you have to have a high wish even you just had to (teacher appoints one student) go to Daya market.

Students : (laughing)

f. Giving motivation

Exceprt 6

Teacher : ….*cita-cita dan harapan juga harus begitu supaya kita punya motivasi, kalo kau tidak pernah punya harapan, tidak pernah punya mimpi maka mulai sebentar malam bermimpilah, sesudah kau shalat isya bermimpilah supaya* *mimpi itu terwujud,…*

Teacher : …., ideals and expectations also have to be so that we have the motivation, if you never had a hope, never have a dream then began tonight you must have a dream, after you take Isha prayer, think about your dream so that your dream will come true,….

g. Giving suggestion

Excerpt 7

Teacher : J*adi biasakan, kita kan sudah kelas sembilan usahakan menjawab bahasa Inggris meskipun sepotong-potong.*

Teacher: So get into the habit, we've already been class nine, try to answer in English although piecemeal

h. Giving new vocabularies

Excerpt 8

Teacher : [Now I want to give you some vocabulary] *saya mau kasi beberapa kosakata* [this is about synonym so you write down and memorize for fifteen minutes] *menghafal lima belas menit kenapa? Karena saya mau menambah kosakatamu* (teacher writes vocabularies on the whiteboard) in synonym yah [aid-help] *artinya* *pertolongan*, [aim-purpose] *tujuan*, [amount-quantity] *jumlah.*

Teacher : [Now I want to give you some vocabulary] I want to give some of this vocabulary, [this is about synonyms so you write down and memorize for memorizing fifteen minutes] fifteen minutes why? Because I want to add your vocabulary (teacher writes vocabularies on the whiteboard) in synonym yah [help-aid] means aid, [aim-purpose] destination, [amount-quantity] amount.

**The factors influence teachers’ L1 use**

Based on interview session, both teachers claim that low level of vocabulary is the main factor to employ L1 in the classroom. Moreover, the second teacher add that materials’ difficulty such as grammar can also affect them in uttering L1 in the classroom.

**The students’ perception towards teachers’ L1 use**

Most of students perceive that teachers’ L1 use make them convenient and comfortable in learning English because they can understand the material easily. In addition, they also expect that teachers had better employ both L1 and English equally in order to comprehend and accustomed them with English.

**DISCUSSION**

The occasions in which teachers’ L1 use were obtained from audio recordings and classroom observation checklist including; (a) giving advice, (b) checking students’ understanding, (c) giving classroom instruction, (d) exlaining grammar points, (e) making a joke, (f) giving motivation, (g) giving suggestion, and (h) giving new vocabularies.

a. Giving advice

It is a pivotal role in order to enlighten and boost students’ awareness to be effective or succeessful learners. As Dunn and Taylor (1993) points out that advice was defined as: “a recommendation for a decision or course of action coming from the cooperating teacher and directed toward the student teacher.”

b. Checking students’ understanding

 English teachers need to examine their leaners every meeting in order to know their understanding towards teaching materials given. They had better use English to address some questions.

c. Giving classroom instruction

 This occasion is a basic classroom interaction in the classroom. The learners should have understood about it by using English. In fact, this research revealed that Indonesian was still used to give classroom instruction. The English teachers can initially give some classroom instructions which are accustomed and consistently used in the classroom by using English.

d. Explaining grammar points

 Explaining grammar points are set on the sillabus officially. Indonesian is a wise way in explaining them in order to ease the learners in understand them. Both English teachers in this research employed Indonesian in explaining them.

e. Making a joke

 Making a joke is an ideal strategy in decreasing learners’ anxiety in learning English. Moreover, it evolves their focus and attention. In order to deliver its meaning clearly, the teachers may speak Indonesian.

f. Giving motivation

 One of teacher’s roles in the classroom is giving motivation to the learners in order to achieve their learning goals. Motivation “energizes” human behavior and “gives it direction” (Dornyei, 1998; 117). Using Indonesian tends acceptable in delivering teachers’ motivational statements.

g. Giving suggestion

 Both English teachers in this research suggested their learners in the classroom. Giving suggestion gives positive impact in order to encourage the learners in deciding better thing.

h. Giving new vocabularies

 Introducing or giving new vocabularies can gradually improve the learners’ speaking ability. In this research, one of English teachers would give new vocabularies in every meeting. Nevertheless, it is suggested to use those vecabularies in sentences not just translate them into Indonesian.

By administering interview to both English teachers, it is found that the learners’ English comprehension particularly vocabulary contributes to the main factor of the teachers’ language interaction. In other words, they predominantly use Bahasa Indonesia in teaching English despite of low level students’ vocabulary. It is also supported by open ended questions divided to the learners that most of them claim that they are easy to understand the material by using Indonesian. Hence, it sounds reasonable that English is not taught excessively by using English as a target language. In addition, a complexity of English material is another factor that influence the teacher communicating with Bahasa Indonesia as the second teacher’s opinion. Grammar points and reading are possibly delivered by uttering Indonesian.

 Most of the learners either in class IX.6 and IX.4 perceive that the teachers use Indonesian in teaching English make them more comfortable and convenient because they can understand easily the materials given. They also admit that their English comprehension particularly in vocabulary is still low. Hence, they expect that both English and Indonesian are combined in the classroom. However, other group of learner needs to be taught by using Indonesian. And only a few perceives that English is a predominant language instruction. It is important that the English teachers can occupy Indonesian excessively after identifying the learners’ English comprehension and their perception towards Indonesian as a language instruction. As a matter of fact, the English teacher also should intend gradually to use English in the classroom.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher determines forward the following conclusions:

The occasions in which the teachers occupy Indonesian in teaching English in the classroom are giving an advice, checking students’ understanding, giving classroom instruction, explaining grammar points, making a joke, giving a suggestion, giving new vocabularies, and giving a motivation.

The main factor influences the teacher in using Indonesian is low level students’ comprehension particularly in vocabulary. In addition, the complexity of materials also contributes to teachers’ Indonesian utterances.

The students’ perception towards the teachers L1 use are mostly convenient and comfortable. Furthermore, they predominantly also expect the English teachers to actively combine Indonesian and English in the classroom.

**SUGGESTION**

Considering the conclusions above, the researcher further stated some suggestions as follows:

1. The teachers should judiciously use Indonesian in teaching English in order to convey comprehensible meaning for the learners.
2. The teachers should identify the learners’ English comprehension as a considerable factor to approach language instruction in teaching English.
3. The teachers should consider the learners’ suggestion to overcome their stuffs in learning English in the classroom.
4. It is necessary to English teachers in a school to have a deal in order to employ English excessively particularly in giving classroom instruction.

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