

EXPLORING THE USE OF LEARNERS' FIRST LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The use of learners' first language has been debated for years. Some of the researchers think that using learners' first language can be a help for foreign language learning, while others argue that it can be hindrance. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating students' and teachers' perceptions of the use of learners' first language (L1) and the problems they encountered in using English in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom context. The study involved 150 students of grade ten and grade eleven and two English teachers in a high school in rural Karawang, West Java. The data were collected through questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observation and were analyzed using mixed methods approach. The results of the study reveal that the participants showed various responses related to the use of L1. Most of the participants perceived L1 as a facilitating learning tool that can help both teachers and students in learning process. Thus, it is suggested that teachers should be able to not only use L1 wisely but also encourage their students to use more English in the classroom.

Keywords: EFL classroom, learners' L1, perception, use of L1

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INTRODUCTION

The use of students' first language (L1) and the use of target language in English classroom have been debated for years. The proponents of the L1 use argue that L1 can help students in many ways to acquire competences in English as the target language. Meanwhile, those who are against the use of L1 in the classroom argue that the use of L1 can retain the acquisition of English since students should be exposed to English as much as possible (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Ford, 2009; Inbar-lourie, 2010).

Language experts and researchers have debated and investigated whether or not learners' L1 is effective to use in English class. Some researchers believe that using L1 can reduce the effectiveness of English learning process and hinder students in using the target language in the classroom (McDonald (1993) and Miles (2004) in Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). They argue that the use of L1 will make students stop trying to practice and communicate in English because they can switch to L1 whenever they want. Moreover, students will likely to keep thinking in L1 and do not work hard in acquiring English because they know their teacher will use L1 and can always explain the lesson or answer students' question in their L1 (Ford, 2009).

Some researchers also believe that L1 should be banned in English classroom because they think that the target language should be learned through maximum exposure and the only use of English as the

target language provides students the experience of closely real English context in which they think and communicate in the target language. Therefore, they think that the use of L1 and code switching in English classroom can diminish students' exposure to the target language and lengthen delays in English learning in the classroom (Cook (1991) and Macaro (2001) in Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015).

On the other hand, perceptions of the role of using L1 in English classroom have undergone changes. Many researchers believe that instead of ignoring learners' L1, L1 should be utilized as a resource in language learning (Inbar-lourie, 2010). Willis (1996) in Mart (2013) argues that L1 should not be banned in English classroom. However, he adds that teachers should engage students in activities which allow them to use the target language. Although there have been many debates about the use of L1, whether it hinders or helps learners in learning English, whether the teachers are native or non-native speakers, or whether the learners are in beginner or advanced level, learners' L1 can be considered as a natural resource in L2 learning and it cannot be avoided (Mart, 2013).

The benefits of using L1 have been emphasized by the researchers who support the notion of L1 use in English classroom. Harbord (1992) believes that L1 can be used to facilitate communication in the classroom as well as to facilitate student-teacher relationship. Tang (2002) in Mart (2013) mentions that learners' L1 can be used in language teaching to

manage classroom, analyze language, present grammar rules, discuss cross-cultural issues, give instructions or prompts, and check learners' understanding on the lesson. Using L1 may help students in identifying connections and difference between the L1 and the target language. Teachers also may use L1 to help students in understanding things that are likely to be difficult for students (Harmer, 2007a). Furthermore, Harmer (2007b) suggests some points that should be considered by teachers in using L1. Language teachers, whether or not they share the same L1 with the students, should be aware of the importance of L1. Thus, teachers have to design appropriate activities involving L1 and the target language. The activities may include translating or comparing the two languages in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, or discourse. Teachers should also be aware that the use of L1 related to students' proficiency level. The better the students' comprehension in English, the less L1 may be used in the classroom. Both teachers and students have to agree clear guidelines in using L1. Students need to know when the use of L1 can be beneficial or not and they have to aware of the appropriate condition in which they can use their L1. Finally, in learning English, teachers have to encourage and persuade students to speak more English as the target language learned.

Several studies related to the use of L1 have been conducted by many researchers (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Carson & Kasihara, 2012; Ford, 2009; Inbar-lourie, 2010; Manara, 2007; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Varshney & Lanziti, 2006). To find out the use of L1 in the classroom, Mohebbi and Alavi (2014) conducted research by distributing a questionnaire to more than 150 L2 teachers in various private language schools in different cities in Iran. The result of the research shows that learners' L1 is an invaluable asset and needs to be employed effectively. Teachers use learners' L1 to teach new lexical items, provide feedback, and explain learners' errors, and explain grammar. Teachers also use learners' L1 to build rapport with them. It shows that learners' L1 is quite important in enhancing L2 learning. However it does not mean that L1 should be used comprehensively. L2 teachers should be encouraged to maintain a balance between L1 and L2 use. Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015) conducted similar research by observing some pre-intermediate classes. The study, which involved six male and female EFL teachers and 155 pre-intermediate students in Iran, reveals that teachers and students used a small amount of L1 in the classroom, but it was used when they thought it was needed. Teachers and students use L1 as a facilitative tool for achieving a wide range of their purposes. L1 can be used as an aid to convey meaning, manage classroom, make a friendly environment, reduce students' anxiety, elaborate on the course objectives and clarify ambiguous points in the pre-intermediate level. Inbar-lourie (2010) who conducted a study which involved six teachers teaching EFL to young learners in Hebrew and Arabic medium school in Israel reported that the use of L1 in the L2 classroom is influenced by teachers' pedagogical beliefs and assumptions regarding the

teaching objectives in young learners program. Similarly, the previous study conducted by Ford (2009) in a university in Japan showed that although the English teachers participated in the study used English as much as possible, they consciously used learners' L1 to create a friendlier atmosphere during teaching and learning process.

Regarding students' preference in the classroom, Varshney and Lanziti (2006) conducted a study to figure out whether students see the use of L1 as help or hindrance. The study reveals that students are aware of the use of L1 and see it as a double-edged sword. L1 can help students in comprehending grammatical items, but they think it is also necessary to learn structure in a natural context. The use of L1 can also reduce students' anxiety during the learning process, but on the other hand, they think it could lead to the absence of challenge and motivation to use the target language. Likewise, Carson and Kasihara (2012) conducted a study focuses on students' view on the use of L1 in their English classes. The result of the study reveals that the majority of the students think that L1 should be used less than 40% during the learning process. Students believe that the use of L1 can be beneficial in explaining difficult materials or summarizing materials. It is also stated that students' proficiency in English influences their preference on the use of L1 since beginner students tend to rely on L1 support than advanced students. In Indonesian context, Manara (2007) conducted a study which involved teachers and students in three universities in Central Java. The result of the study indicated that the majority of students and teachers agreed that maximum use of English should be used during teaching and learning process in the classroom. However, L1 can be utilized as a supporting tool in providing comprehensible input, explaining vocabulary and grammar, giving feedback, and asking for clarification.

Although the theories and the results of the studies mentioned above indicate that L1 is permitted to use in English classroom, Atkinson (1993) in Manara (2007) suggests that learners' L1 should not be overused in the classroom. He thinks that L1 should be used to create meaningful communication as well as to encourage learners to speak in target language. Nonetheless, little research has been done on teachers' and students' perception of the use of learners' L1 in the rural school context where the majority of the students acquire English only at their school. Thus, the study seeks to investigate students' and teachers' perceptions on the use of L1 in EFL classroom in a rural area and obstacles they encountered in using English as the target language. To achieve aforementioned purposes, the issue to be discussed in this paper will be summarized in the following research questions:

1. How do students perceive the use of L1 in the EFL classroom?
2. How do teachers perceive the use of L1 in the EFL classroom?
3. What obstacles do students and teachers encounter in using the target language in EFL classroom?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employs a mixed methods approach to put quantitative and qualitative data together. The paradigm of the research involves the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to provide better understanding in answering research questions investigated in the study (Malik & Hamied, 2016). It is in line with Creswell (2009) who states that mixed methods utilizes the strength of both qualitative and quantitative research. The concurrent triangulation design was adopted in the study. The design allowed the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and to compare the data to figure out if there is convergence, differences, or some combination (Creswell, 2009).

Data Collection

The study was conducted in April 2017. It involved 150 students in four classes of grade ten and eleven and two English teachers in a senior high school located in rural Karawang, West Java. Many students of the schools tend to have low comprehension in English and some participants of the study get a little exposure both in and out of the school. The English instruction was mostly conducted in either Indonesian language or Sundanese. Therefore, these participants were ideal for this study for several reasons in terms of motivation, achievement, and L1 use in English classroom.

Questionnaire, interview, and observation rubrics were used to collect the data in the research. The questionnaires for the teacher and student versions was adapted from Ma (2016), Manara (2007), and Mohebbi and Alavi (2014). The questionnaires were administered to the research participants to investigate students' and teachers' perceptions on the use of L1 in the classroom. The teacher's questionnaire consists of 18 closed-ended questions using a five-Likert scale, divided into three parts. The questionnaire is intended to find out teachers' opinion about using English, the condition when they use L1, and the condition when students use L1 in the classroom. Meanwhile, the students' questionnaire consists of 21 closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions which are divided into two sections are intended to figure out the real use of English and students' opinion on the use of English in the classroom.

Teachers' interview and observation were conducted to gain in-depth explanation and description on the use of learners' L1 in the classroom. Two female teachers who have been teaching English for five and ten years participated in the interview session. The seven questions proposed in the

interview attempted to investigate teachers' opinion on the benefits and drawbacks of the use of L1 as well as obstacles they encountered when they use English in the classroom. Furthermore, the classroom observation was conducted to provide better description of L1 use in the classroom. The observation was organized two times in one tenth grade class and one eleventh grade class.

Data Analysis

The data from students' closed-ended questionnaire were statistically computed to find out the percentage of each statement and then was interpreted descriptively. Meanwhile, the teacher's questionnaire and students' open-ended questionnaire were analyzed descriptively to support the data gained from the closed-ended questions. The interview data were all transcribed and analyzed for repeating key features which were related to the use of L1 and the obstacles faced by teachers. The reappearing of particular opinion can be assumed as the participants' concern on the issue. The classroom observation data was collected through the use of observation checklist. The frequency of L1 use in the classroom was tallied and quantified in terms of percentages out of overall amount of language used by the teachers. The data from the questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation were used to provide description of students' and teachers' perception on the use of L1 in the classroom and the obstacles they experienced in using English as the target language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results related to the research questions on students' and teachers' perception on the use of students' L1 in English classroom. The discussion is shown through the interpretation of the results shown in the tables elaborated with the findings from the open-ended questions and interviews.

The results and discussion section is divided into three subsections that describe each research questions.

Students' Perception of the Use of L1 in the EFL Classroom

The first subsection will display the result of the questionnaire administered to the students to find out their perception of the use of L1 in during English learning process.

The Use of English in the Classroom

The following Table 1 is about the use of English in the classroom based on the students' point of view.

Table 1. The Use of English in the Classroom

Questions	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1 The teacher uses English during the learning process		55.3%	43.3%	1.3%	
2 I feel confused when my teacher uses English in explaining learning materials.	9.3%	30%	54.7%	5.3%	
3 I speak English in my English Class.		2.7%	38.7%	54.7%	4%
4 I use English when I propose a question in English Class.	1.3%	2.7%	14%	48%	34%

Table 1 shows what the students think and feel towards the use of English in the classroom. The percentage shows that students thought their teacher used English quite often (Often = 55.3%, Sometimes = 43.3%). It also shows that most of the respondents felt confused when their teacher used English in explaining the lesson. The table shows that half of the

students chose rarely for question 3. The response indicates that the students used only limited English in the classroom. Moreover, it is also shown that most students did not use English when they asked questions to their teacher (Rarely = 48%, Never = 34%)

Table 2. The use of English in the Classroom

Questions	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
5 I answer my teacher's questions in English.	0.7%	5.3%	34.7%	39.3%	20%
6 I use English to interact with my friends in the class.		2%	27.3%	38.7%	32%
7 I am shy and uncomfortable when I have to speak English in the class.	8%	9.3%	47.3%	12%	23.3%
8 I am afraid my friends will laugh at me when I speak English.	12.7%	10.7%	35.3%	9.3%	32%

Questions 5 and 6 in table 2 show how the students used English in the class. The table shows that students' frequency in using English when they answered their teacher's question was still low (Sometimes = 34.7%, Rarely = 39.3%) and 20% of the respondents stated that they never used English in answering teacher's questions. Questions 7 and 8 show the students' feeling when they used English in the classroom. In question 7, although there was only 8% of students who chose *always* and 9.3% who chose *often*, a big number of students (47.3%) chose *sometimes*, indicating that they were usually shy and

uncomfortable to speak English in the class. For question 8, almost half of the students (Always = 12.7%, Often = 10.7%, Sometimes 35.3%) stated that they were afraid of making mistakes in front of their friends because their friends would laugh at them.

Students' Opinion on the Use of English and L1 in the Classroom

The second part of the questionnaire deals with how students think about the use of English and L1 during English learning process.

Table 3. Students' Opinion on the Use of English and L1 in the Classroom

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9 English teacher should only use English in the class.	4%	12.7%	62%	21.3%	
10 Students should always use English during the learning process.	2.7%	14%	62.7%	20%	
11 The more the teacher use English, the better students master English.	19.3%	62%	16%	2.7%	
12 English materials should be explained only in students' L1.	8%	25.3%	38%	27.3%	1.3%

Table 3 shows the students' opinion on the use of English and L1 in the classroom. 62% of the students chose *neutral* to the statements whether or not the teachers and the students use English as the only language in the classroom. There was only 16.7% of the students who agreed that both teachers and students should always use English and about 20% of

them disagreed if English is used as the only language in the classroom. Meanwhile, the students realized the importance of using English in helping them to master English better. It is shown by 62% of the students who chose *agree* to the statement "the more the teacher use English, the better they will master English." Furthermore, in question 12, students

chose more various answers. 38% of them could not decide whether or not English materials should be

explained only in students' L1. However, 27.3% and 1.3% of them disagreed with the statement.

Table 4. Students' Opinion on the Use of English and L1 in the Classroom

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13 The use of students' L1 can help students in understanding the materials.	16%	63.3%	17.3%	3.3%	
14 The teacher should use students' L1 in explaining difficult materials, such as grammar.	23.3%	64%	11.3%	1.3%	
15 The teacher should use students' L1 when he/she gives information about test, homework, etc.	14.7%	63.3%	20%	2%	
16 The teacher should use students' L1 when he/she proposes questions.	9.3%	38%	46.7%	6%	

Table 4 shows the students' opinion on the use of L1 in English classroom. From the table, it can be seen that there were many students who chose *agree* to the statement. The students thought that the use of L1 can help them in understanding the lesson (SA = 16%. A = 63.3%). They also agreed that teachers should use L1 in explaining difficult materials such as grammar and the teacher should L1 in giving

information related to test and homework. Question 16 shows that 46.7% of the students cannot decide whether or not teacher should L1 in proposing questions. On the other hand, 47.3% (SA = 9.3%, A = 38%) of them agreed that the teacher should use L1 in proposing question.

Table 5. Students' Opinion on the Use of English and L1 in the Classroom

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17 The teacher should use students' L1 when he/she gives compliment related to students' achievement.	2.7%	34%	51.3%	12%	
18 The teacher should use students' L1 when he/ she corrects students' answer.	10%	35.3%	50%	4.7%	
19 I should try to use English more when I learn English.	22%	58.7%	16.7%	2.7%	

Table 5 shows the students' opinion on the use of L1 in English classroom. Half of the students could not decide whether or not teacher should use L1 in giving compliment related to students' achievement and in correcting students' answer. However, more than 30% of them agreed that L1 should be used in giving compliment and correcting students' answer. Moreover, from question 19, it can be assumed that the students realized the importance of trying to use English. 80.7% (SA = 22%, A = 58.7%) agreed that they should try to use English more when they learn English.

The data show that the students gave various responses towards the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. Cognitively, the students think that the use of L1 can help them in understanding the lesson better. They think that teachers should use L1 in explaining difficult parts of the lesson such as grammar. Affectively, students feel that using L1 can help them to be more comfortable in foreign language class. Because many students tend to be embarrassed to speak in English

and some of them are shy and afraid of doing mistakes, L1 can help them to reduce their anxiety (Brook-Lewis, 2009). Since using target language can be a source of embarrassment, especially for shy students, allowing students to use their L1 can help them to speak in the classroom (Nation, 2003; Shimizu, 2007). Furthermore, since students tend to be more comfortable when they use L1, L1 can increase students' self-esteem (Gaebler, 2014; Murray & Wigglesworth, 2005). However, by stating that English should be used more in the classroom, students have already realized the importance of using the target language during the learning process.

Teachers' Perception on the Use of English and L1 in the EFL Classroom

The second part deals with the teachers' perception on the use of English and L1 in EFL classroom. The data was obtained from the questionnaire given to the teachers.

Table 6. Teachers' Opinion on the Use of English and L1 in the Classroom

No.	Teachers' opinion on the use of English and L1 in the classroom	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
1	Teachers should use more English during teaching and learning process.	Agree	Disagree
2	Students should try to use more English in the classroom.	Strongly Agree	Agree
3	The use of students' L1 in the classroom can hinder English acquisition.	Disagree	Disagree
4	Comparing the use of language in English and students' L1 can help students to understand English.	Agree	Agree

Table 6 shows teachers' perception on the use of English and L1 in EFL classroom. The data was gained from two teachers. Teacher 1 has taught English for 10 years and teacher 2 has taught English for five years. The table shows that the two teachers had similar opinions on the use of English in the classroom, except for statement no. 1. Teacher 1 agreed that more English should be used during teaching and learning process while teacher 2

disagreed to the statement. Moreover, the teachers agreed that the students should try to use more English during the lesson. They also agreed that comparing the use of language in English and L1 can help students in understanding English. Therefore, they disagreed to the statement that the use of L1 can hinder students' English acquisition.

Table 7. Teachers' Use of L1 in the Classroom

Teacher: The Use of L1 in the classroom		Teacher 1	Teacher 2
5	Giving instruction	Sometimes	Often
6	Giving feedback	Sometimes	Often
7	Explaining new vocabularies	Sometimes	Often
8	Explaining grammar	Often	Often
9	Explaining the differences between English and students' L1 in terms of the use of words and grammar.	Often	Often
10	Giving information about test and assignment	Sometimes	Often
11	Giving announcement	Sometimes	Often
12	Encouraging students to be braver and confident in the classroom	Often	Always

Table 7 shows the frequency of the use of L1 based on teachers' perception. From the table, it can be seen that teacher 1 often use L1 in explaining new vocabularies, explaining grammar, and encouraging students to be braver and confident in the classroom. Teacher 1 occasionally use L1 in other aspects such as giving instruction, giving feedback, explaining new vocabularies, giving information, and giving

announcement. On the other hand, the table shows that teacher 2 used L1 more than teacher 1. She stated that she used L1 frequently to give instruction, give feedback, explain new vocabularies, explain grammar, explain the differences between English and L1, give information, and give announcement. Moreover, she used L1 to encourage her students to be braver and confident.

Table 8. Students' Use of L1 in the Classroom

Students: The use of L1 in the classroom		Teacher 1	Teacher 2
13	Asking questions to the teacher	Often	Often
14	Asking for clarification	Often	Sometimes
15	Answering teachers' questions	Sometimes	Often
16	Asking questions to their friends	Often	Often
17	Discussing the lesson with their friends	Often	Often
18	Having interaction with their friends	Often	Often

Table 8 shows the teachers' perception of the use of L1 by the students during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Teacher 1 stated that the students occasionally used L1 to answer teachers' questions, and they often used L1 to ask questions to

the teacher, ask for clarification, ask questions to their friends, discuss the lesson, and have interaction with their friends. Meanwhile, teacher 2 stated that students occasionally used L1 to ask for clarification and they used L1 for other activities.

Table 9. Classroom Language

Classroom Observation Checklist					
TEACHER					
Purposes		Teacher 1		Teacher 2	
		L1	English	L1	English
Pedagogical	Eliciting answer	67%	33%	78%	22%
	Explaining meaning of new words	61.5%	38.5%	71.43%	28.57%
	Giving feedback	75%	25%	57.14%	42.86%
	Teaching pronunciation	28.57%	71.42%	37.5%	62.5%
	Checking understanding	62.5%	37.5%	78.57%	21.43%
Classroom environment control	Explaining grammar	67%	33%	70.83%	29.17%
	Giving instruction	52.94%	47.06%	62.5%	37.5%
Establishing social relationship	Explaining administrative information	67%	33%	78%	22%
	Giving encouragement	71.43%	28.57%	75%	25%
	Making jokes	100%	-	100%	
Average		75%	31%	83%	23%
STUDENTS					
Functions of L1 Use		Teacher 1		Teacher 2	
Asking teacher questions		Often		Often	
Asking teacher clarification		Often		Often	
Answering teacher's questions		Often		Often	
Asking peer questions		Always		Always	
Discussing with peers		Always		Always	
Interacting with peers		Always		Always	

To explore the use of L1 and English during the learning process, the classroom observation was conducted. Table 9 shows the result of the class observation. From the average, we can see that the teachers tended to use more L1 than English. To establish social relationship between teachers and students, the two teachers made jokes in students' L1 because it is totally understandable by students. Teacher 1 used L1 especially for giving feedback, explaining grammar, explaining administrative information, and giving encouragement. Meanwhile, teacher 2 used L1 mostly for eliciting answer, explaining new words, checking students' understanding, explaining grammar, explaining administrative information, and giving encouragement. However, it can be seen that both teachers used more English when they have to teach pronunciation during the lesson. Based on the class observation checklist, it also can be seen that the students participated in the study rarely use English in the classroom. They often used L1 to ask questions and clarification and to answer teachers' question. Moreover, during the lesson, they always used L1 to interact, ask questions, and discuss with their friends.

The data above show teachers' perception of the use of L1 in the classroom. Both teachers use L1 mostly for explaining grammar, giving instructions, giving feedback, and giving encouragement. It is in line with the result of the previous studies mentioned that L1 is used frequently as a facilitating tool in managing classroom. Teachers usually use L1 to clarify meanings, clarify the differences between L1 and L2, translate difficult concept of the lesson, give instructions, increase students' comprehension, create

friendlier atmosphere in the classroom, and facilitate the learning process (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Bhooth, Azman, & Ismail, 2014; De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Jan, Li, & Lin, 2014; Ozaki, 2011). It also means that teacher use L1 to build rapport with their students. From the data presented before, it can be seen that teacher used L1 for giving encouragement, making jokes, and giving compliments related to students' achievement. The use of L1 can be effective in managing students' behavior, giving compliments or confirmation, and having personal talk (Liu, An, Baek, & Ahn, 2004; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014).

Obstacles in Using English in the Classroom

Based on the open-ended questions and teachers' interview, it was found that there were several reasons underlying the use of students L1 in the school. The reasons are also related to obstacles encountered by both teachers and students. 61.3% percent of the students think that L1 sometimes should be used during English lessons to help the students in understanding the materials. Besides, because they thought that not all students in the classroom can understand English, they stated that it is better for the teacher to use 30% to 50% L1. Furthermore, the students felt not comfortable enough to use more English in the classroom because they thought their English pronunciation was not good and they were afraid of mispronouncing the words. They were also shy and afraid of making mistake and being laughed at by their friends. Few of them also mentioned that because their English was not fluent yet, they were afraid if their friends thought that they were trying to act cool by speaking English.

On the other hand, the teachers mentioned that although ideally teachers should use English in the classroom and they expect to use about 70% English, they could not use the target language because of the students' input. Many students seemed to have low ability in English and they got English lessons only from school. They stated that from all students in the school, only 10% of them joined English course to support their English learning. They also added that the students got little exposure to English.

The high percentage of L1 use as shown in the study needs more attention. L1 may be beneficial in rapport building and it can also help teachers to explain difficult materials. However, teachers should be aware of the L1 frequency used in the classroom because if teachers depend too much on using the L1, students may get discouraged to acquire English (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Mart (2013) also argues that because students' L1 will make the lesson easier, it does not mean that teachers are allowed to use too much L1. Teachers play a crucial role in creating a friendly classroom environment in which students feel safe and free from humiliation that possibly happens during learning process. Teachers should also make sure that students will not laugh at each other's mistake.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study indicate that both students and teachers think the use of L1 can help them during teaching and learning process. The students participated in the study think the use of L1 can improve their understanding about the lesson. Meanwhile, the teachers perceive students' L1 as a learning tool that can facilitate them in explaining grammar, translating new vocabularies, giving instruction or announcement, and building rapport with the students. Some problems in using English mentioned by the students are related to students' confidence and anxiety. Some of the students were afraid of doing mistakes or being laughed at by their friends. Furthermore, the teachers added that students' input and achievement were some of the problems they encountered in using English. They thought the use of L1 would make students understand the lesson better.

Therefore, due to its benefits, we can conclude that students L1 can be utilized as a learning tool in EFL classroom. However, as the main objective of language teaching is to be able to use the language in the real context of communication, teachers should be aware of the frequency in using L1 and encourage students to use more English.

Based on the results of the study, some recommendations are drawn. For teachers, since students' L1 can be used as mediating tool, they have to use L1 wisely. Teachers should be able to find learning methods that encourage students to use more English. The learning methods should also meet the students need as well as suitable for students' development and cognitive skills. For other researchers, since this study has several limitations, further studies involving more participants or different areas such as urban area are suggested to be

conducted to explore more findings related to the use of students' L1 in EFL classroom.

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