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INDONESIAN OR ENGLISH? EFL STUDENT TEACHERS' PREFERENCE AND PERCEPTION ON THE LANGUAGE USE IN THE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to investigate learners' perception in teaching English using Bahasa and English, learners' preference for language use as the medium of instruction, and the subjects that can be taught by using Bahasa. The participants were 57 EFL learners in the fourth semester at a university in Jambi Province, Indonesia. This research was designed in mix method by distributing a questionnaire and conducting a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the data collection techniques. The findings showed that the students were excited to have English as the medium of instruction in their classroom. However, they also welcome the L1 (Bahasa Indonesia). In addition, the learners preferred to have English as the medium of instruction in their English classroom. In view of this, the use of both their L1 and L2 should be balanced. Moreover, concerning the subjects taught, the learners need the use of English especially in the Listening and Speaking classrooms.

Key Words: EFL student teachers; English teaching and learning; first language; foreign language

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa mengenai pengajaran Bahasa Inggris dengan menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Inggris, pilihan mahasiswa dalam penggunaan bahasa tersebut sebagai media pengajaran di dalam kelas, dan jenis – jenis pelajaran yang bisa diajarkan dengan menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia. Peserta dalam penelitian ini adalah 57 mahasiswa semester empat pada salah satu universitas di Provinsi Jambi, Sumatra, Indonesia yang diambil melalui purposive sampling. Penelitian ini didesain dalam metode campuran melalui angket dan Diskusi Kelompok Terarah (FGD). Hasil yang didapat menunjukkan bahwa siswa sangat senang menggunakan Bahasa Inggris dalam pengajaran di kelas. Namun, siswa juga tidak keberatan dengan penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia. Sebagai tambahan, siswa lebih memilih penggunaan Bahasa Inggris sebagai media pengajaran di dalam kelas. Oleh karena itu, penggunaan kedua Bahasa tersebut haruslah seimbang. Terkait dengan mata pelajaran, mahasiswa lebih memilih penggunaan Bahasa Inggris hanya dalam pengajaran "menyimak (listening)" dan "berbicara (speaking)"

Kata Kunci: mahasiswa jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris; proses pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, bahasa pertama; bahasa kedua

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INTRODUCTION

People communicate with each other by using language. There are many languages available in this world. Those languages have their own characteristics which make them different from one to another, including English. Although English is not a language which has numerous numbers of native speakers, English is seen as the lingua franca which acts as the additional language to the speakers (Mauranen & Ranta, 2009). According to Goodwyn and Branson (2005), language is a very essential tool for everyone in their society because it determines the individual. Additionally, Thompson and Evans (2005) stated that "language is the ability to understand and use a structured system of communication" (p. 1). Since there are many people who need to learn English to keep up with others, learning English has become a major activity among students, who realize that English is very popular and becomes a global language. Crystal (2003) said that a language will get global status when it gives particular role and is accepted in every country. Therefore, we cannot deny that English has a very crucial role in the globalization era to make the students able to compete with the others.

As one of the students (pre-service teachers) in English department, the researcher found many lecturers have used different language instruction in teaching. Some lecturers use English, while others used Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) even in the higher semesters where the students perhaps have gained enough literacy skills. English and Bahasa are the languages used in English classroom teaching. Therefore, we cannot deny that they both are important, but what will happen to the students if they are taught mostly in English only? Or mostly in Bahasa only? Of course this situation will likely affect students especially their ability.

As Krashen (as cited in Purnama, 2014) pointed out, in the second language acquisition's classroom, students use their comprehensible input to learn foreign language. According to Swain (2008), it is a good idea to give the chance to the students to use most L2 in second language classroom to have good written and spoken input. In other words, students need to use English in order to practice to build their language proficiency. Krashen (as cited in Purnama, 2014) and Cook (2008) stated that L2 will benefit the adult learners in learning process in the second language class to make them more active. Moreover,

Krashen (as cited in Purnama, *ibid*) pointed out that the input plays a crucial role in learning the second language. In line with this, a study conducted in Kenya and Uganda (Muthwii, as cited in Kioko, 2013) revealed that parents have high expectations in using English for their children to understand the subject matter better than using their mother tongue.

However, Krashen (as cited in Purnama, 2014) also argued that the learners will be able to acquire the language only when they understand the message delivered from the teachers. Students are taught only in English, they will have chance to develop their English proficiency. Yet, it is also likely that some students have difficulties to catch the ideas explained by their lecturers in the classroom. Furthermore, they may also have less confidence to deliver their opinion in front of the classroom. Moreover, for Indonesian learners, to overcome the difficulties in their learning and build their confidence, the use of Bahasa (L1) was considered necessary by some students and lecturers in their English classroom. The use of Bahasa (L1) in their English classroom is helpful in teaching – learning process, as long as it is not too much and it does not become a “habit” in the classroom. When the

students are taught only in Bahasa, they have no capability to use English, and have no chance to master English.

According to Christina and Georgiana (2012), there are some disadvantages when using L1 in the L2 classroom. First, the overuse of L1 might become a habit for both teachers and learners in teaching and learning process. If the lectures always rely on the use of L1, it is possible if the use of L1 would be the habit in the classroom. When lecturers are speaking the L1, the learners will feel comfortable to follow them. Apparently, the teacher’s language is the real model for the real communication happening in the second language classroom (Cook, 2008). Second, L1 may lead to misunderstanding when the learners try to get their target language. It happens because there are some words in the target language that do not have the appropriate meaning in the first language and vice versa. Third, when the teachers use L1 to teach foreign language to the students, it may cause the negative transfer to the target language. For certain cases, the form of their native language with their foreign language is different, so the negative transfer may happen more often.

This problem requires the lecturer to be flexible in using the language when they are teaching the students in

English classroom. For instance, the use of Bahasa can only be used when teaching certain subjects such as grammar and vocabulary, while the use of English only can be applied when the lecturer teaches some subject skills including pronunciation. Addressing this issue, this study is intended find students' perception and preference for language use as the medium of instruction in English classroom and to know what kind of subjects that can be delivered using Bahasa.

Some researchers such as Wong (2010), Al Sharaeai (2014), and Snorraddóttir (2014) have studied about learning a foreign language and language use in teaching foreign language in the classroom. Although many researchers believe that teaching through English gives better result and improvement to the students, research on Indonesian students whose English is their foreign language needs to be explored further. The purposes of this research were to investigate learners' perception in teaching English using Bahasa and English, learners' preference for language use as the medium of instruction, and the subjects that can be taught by using Bahasa. Furthermore, it was also expected to give more knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages in using Bahasa (L1) and foreign language (L2)

in L2 teaching process. To achieve the purposes of the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the students' perception toward teaching English using Bahasa or English in their English classroom?
2. What is the students' preference for language use in their English classroom?
3. What kind of subjects (listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar) can be taught by using Indonesian language?

METHOD

This study was a mixed methods design with the questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the techniques in collecting the data. A total of 57 students in the fourth semester from one of the universities in Jambi Province, Sumatra, Indonesia participated in this study. The rationale for choosing such participants is because they are EFL learners who have passed learning subject skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and grammar and vocabulary in the previous semesters. 16 participants (28.1%) were male, and 41 of them (71.9%) were female.

Concerning the data collection, the questionnaire was used to reveal the students' perception and their preference for language use as the medium of instruction in their English classroom. It was also intended to understand the kinds of subject that could be taught through Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language). Meanwhile, FGD was conducted to support the data gathered through the survey questionnaire and to reveal the advantages in using both L1 and L2 in second language learning process. The questionnaire was distributed in March, 2016 while the FGD was conducted subsequently with students in one classroom, which took about 40 – 45 minutes. All of the participants did not receive any compensation for their participation in this research. However, we provided the nibbles for those who joined in the FGD.

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed descriptively using the SPSS program, which included the frequency

of each item in the questionnaire, its percentage, and mean of each item. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured by using Cronbach Alpha, which coefficient was 0.7. It meant that the data were reliable and consistent. Finally the data from the FGD was presented descriptively to support the data from the questionnaire

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Demographic Profiles

The demographic profiles of the participants including total number of the students, gender and age are shown in Table 1. There were 23 students (40.4%) in class A, 16 students (28.1%) in class B, and only 18 students (31.6%) in class H. From all classes, there were 16 male students (28.1%) and 41 female students (71.9%). From the table below, class A has the most number of students, and from all classes the number of female students was more than male students.

Table 1. The percentage of Number of Students, Gender and Age of the Respondents

Classes	Number of Students	Gender		Age			
		Male	Female	18	19	20	21
A	23 (40.4%)	16 (28.1%)	41 (71.9%)	6 (10.5%)	38 (66.7%)	10 (17.5%)	3 (5.3%)
B	16 (28.1%)						
H	18 (31.6%)						
Total	57 students (100%)						

Learners' Perception toward English use in English classroom

In Q1 (I like when my English teacher only uses English as the medium of instruction), 1 student (1.8%) chose strongly disagree, 5 students (8.8%) chose disagree, 12 students (21.1%) chose tend to disagree, 19 students (33.3%) chose tend to agree, 17 students (29.8%) chose agree and 3 students (5.3%) chose strongly agree. In Q5 (English teachers are good examples if they only use English in English class), there were 2 students (3.5%) chose strongly disagree, 2 students (3.5%) chose disagree, 5 students (8.8%) chose tend to disagree, 15 students (26.3%) chose tend to agree, 26 students (45.6%) chose agree and 7 students (12.3%) chose strongly agree. Finally, in Q7 (It is fun to listen to my friends speaking English in the class), there were no students (0%) chose strongly disagree, 1 student (1.8%) chose disagree, 1 student (1.8%) chose tend to disagree, 10 students (17.5%) chose tend to agree, 25 students (43.9%) chose agree, and 20 students (35.1%) chose strongly agree.

We also found through FGD that some students (S1, S3, S4, S6, S8, S9, S10, S12, and S14) stated that English as the medium of instruction in the classroom was good to improve their skills, especially in speaking skills.

However, some considered hard because some students could catch the idea but some others could not understand the materials delivered by their teachers. Furthermore, they also could not learn fast when they were taught in English. Moreover, it was difficult for them to gain new words from their lectures. Yet, they liked when their lecturers spoke English in front of the classroom because it could improve their skills, and could add their vocabularies.

Meanwhile, there were also some students (S2, S5, S7, S11, and S13) saying that they were okay with English as the medium of instruction in the classroom. They felt comfortable in using English as the medium of instruction in their classroom. They could understand their teacher's explanation although they were passive learners. They stated that English was very important for them. By using English, they were able to produce new words, they could be active learners, and they had high self-confidence to speak with their teachers and friends.

Learners' Perception toward Bahasa use in English classroom

In Q2 (I like when my English teacher tend to use Bahasa as the medium of instruction), 2 students (3.5%) chose strongly disagree, 6

students (10.5%) chose disagree, 21 students (36.8%) chose tend to disagree, 16 students (28.1%) chose tend to agree, 10 students (17.5%) chose agree and 2 students (3.5%) chose strongly agree. Furthermore, in Q6 (English teachers are good to use Bahasa when they teach English), there were 2 students (3.5%) chose strongly disagree, 13 students (22.8%) chose disagree, 21 students (36.8%) chose tend to disagree, 15 students (26.3%) chose tend to agree, 5 students (8.8%) chose agree and only 1 student (1.8%) chose strongly agree. Finally, in Q8 (I will not be upset if my friends also speak Bahasa in the class), there were only 1 student (1.8%) chose strongly disagree, 7 students (12.3%) chose disagree, 2 students (3.5%) chose tend to disagree, 9 students (15.8%) chose tend to agree, 29 students (50.9%) chose agree, and 9 students (15.8%) chose strongly agree.

We found out about the learners' opinion when they were taught through Bahasa in their English classroom. There were seven students (S1, S2, S3, S10, S11, S12, and S13) who had similar opinions that Bahasa use as the medium of instruction in their English classroom was good because it could help them understand more the materials delivered by their lecturers. Furthermore, they also could learn faster compared to when they were

taught only in English. In other words, Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) enable them to learn and understand the materials easily.

Learners' Preference for English Use as the Medium of Instruction in the Classroom

In Q3 (the use of English-only in the classroom can improve my English standard), from all 57 students, no one chose strongly disagree (0%), only 1 student (1.8%) chose disagree, 8 students (14.0%) chose tend to disagree, 4 students (7.0%) chose tend to agree, 28 students (49.1%) chose agree and 16 students (28.1%) chose strongly agree. Furthermore, in Q9 (Given the choice, I prefer using English-only in English classes instead of mixing it with Bahasa), there were only 1 student (1.8%) chose strongly disagree, 5 students (8.8%) chose disagree, 8 students (14.0%) chose tend to disagree, 14 students (24.6%) chose tend to agree, 23 students (40.4%) chose agree and 6 students (10.5%) chose strongly agree. Finally, in Q11 (If my English teacher uses English to teach English, I will be excited), there were no students chose strongly disagree and disagree (0%), but 7 students (12.3%) chose tend to disagree, 17 students (29.8%) chose tend to agree, 24 students (42.1%) chose agree, and 9 students (15.8%) chose strongly agree.

Learners' Preference for Bahasa Use as the Medium of Instruction in the Classroom

Q4 (*The use of Bahasa can make me master English well*), from all 57 students, 8 students (14.0%) chose strongly disagree, 10 students (17.5%) chose disagree, 12 students (21.1%) chose tend to disagree, tend to agree, and agree and 3 students (5.3%) chose strongly agree. Furthermore, in Q10 (*Given the choice, i prefer using Bahasa in English classes instead of English -only*), there were only 2 students (3.5%) chose strongly disagree, 11 students (19.3%) chose disagree, 26 students (45.6%) chose tend to disagree, 15 students (26.3%) chose tend to agree, 2 students (3.5%) chose agree and 1 student (1.8%) chose strongly agree. Finally, in Q12 (*If my English teacher uses Bahasa to teach English, I will be excited*), there were 2 students (3.5%) chose both strongly disagree and disagree, 27 students (47.4%) chose tend to disagree, 18 students (31.6%) chose tend to agree, 5 students (8.8%) chose agree, and 3 students (5.3%) chose strongly agree. From the FGD, the learners had the same answer in that they preferred to have English in their classroom. Eventhough Bahasa was important, and it could help them to understand the materials better, English was much better since they were in an English

study program. Tsukamoto's study (2011) revealed that the EFL Japanese students also prefer to have English (L2) than their L1 (Japanese) in their classroom since the students want to practice and develop their speaking and listening skills. Therefore, they very welcome English in their classroom.

Certain Subjects Can be Taught through Bahasa

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire was provided on 5 scales from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The results revealed that the students tend to agree on the use of Bahasa when the lecturers teach Grammar ($M=3.63$), Vocabulary ($M=3.28$), Writing ($M=3.24$), and Reading ($M=3.14$) in their classroom. Meanwhile, they tend to disagree to the use Bahasa when the lecturers teach listening ($M=2.85$) and speaking ($M=2.03$). In other words, for two subject skills such as listening and speaking, the lecturers should teach them in English.

Through the FGD, some of the students stated that writing and reading should be taught through Bahasa although most of them preferred Grammar and Vocabulary to be taught in Bahasa. It seems that the students found hard to have better understanding about grammar and

vocabulary if those basic subjects are taught in English. In line with this, Ur (1991) suggested that the aspects that needs to be taught in vocabulary are aspects of meaning: denotations, connotation, and appropriateness. Furthermore, Ur (ibid) explained that denotation deal with the real meaning of a word that can be found easily in dictionary, while connotation is opposed with denotation meaning. In addition, appropriateness deals with the meaning of a word based on the context to know whether the use of certain word is very common or rare in the context.

Additionally, according to Richards and Renandya (2002), students may master the rules, pass the examination, create the illusion they know about the language. However, when it comes to the real word, they cannot use the grammar well in communicating because they lack of vocabulary and fluency. Richards and Renandya (ibid) further stated that "vocabulary is vast and untidy. We may attempt to systematize it by teaching the semantic fields, super ordinates and hyponyms, national or functional categories and the rest, but ultimately vocabulary remains to big muddle" (p. 149). In addition, reading has higher demand than writing activity. Meanwhile, students did not

choose both listening and speaking, which means that both listening and speaking should be taught by the lecturers in English.

The Demand of Language Use

The table below presents the research finding regarding the demand of language use between Class A, B, and H in their classroom.

Table 2. The Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Level (Interpretation) of the Demand of Language Use among Classes

Class	Mean	
	English Preferred	Bahasa Preferred
A	4.39 (Agree)	3.49 (Tend to Agree)
B	4.43 (Agree)	3.31 (Tend to Agree)
H	4.94 (Agree)	3.14 (Tend to Agree)
Total	4.57 (Agree)	3.33 (Tend to Agree)

Table 2 presents the findings on the demand of language use between Class A, B and H. From the table above, we can infer that both English and Bahasa are considered important to be the language of instruction. In this table, class H had the highest demand (4.94) compared to classes A and B in their demand to use English in their classroom. Consequently, it was not surprising to see that class H had the

lowest demand to the use of Bahasa as the medium of instruction. In general, this finding meant that the demand to use English as the medium of instruction was higher.

Advantages of Using English in the Class

Some students (S1, S2 S4, S5, S6, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, and S13) had similar opinions about the advantages of English use as the medium of instruction in their English classroom. They stated that English could help them improve their skills both in receptive and productive skills. It also could improve their vocabularies, sentence development and finally develop their English skills. The use of English as the medium of instruction also could expand their knowledge and experiences. By having English as the medium of instruction in their English classroom, they would be able to speak that language and made it as their habit. Furthermore, they would understand what their lecturers explain to them in teaching-learning process. They also stated that the aim of English study program was to enable students to master English. In other words, when they are taught by using English in their English classroom, they will be able to master it, and cultivate English as their habit. In addition, there were two students (S3 and S14) who stated

that English had other benefits for them. English helped them communicate with people surround them, such as their friends, parents, sisters, and so on. As cook (2008) stated, "teachers' can be the prime model for the communicative use of the second language" (p. 181). In other words, English is useful for them to communicate with other people in this global era.

The Advantages of Using Bahasa

Although the students believed that there were so many advantages in using English, they also could not deny that Bahasa Indonesia was still important in their English classroom for teaching "difficult" lesson or when the students had difficulties to understand the main point of the materials explained by the lecturers. S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S8, S10, S11, S13, and S14 stated that Bahasa helped them understand more about the materials explained to them. When they found difficulties in learning English, the lectures might re-explain the material in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure that the students could catch the idea of the topic discussed in their classroom. They also stated that Bahasa was also useful for them to master English because it is their first language.

Similarly, S5, S9 and S12 said that the use of Bahasa Indonesia in their classroom was good to improve their understanding about the issue discussed in the classroom. They could not deny that if they used Bahasa excessively in the classroom, they would have less improvement. Their skills would not develop well too as Bahasa is used more in the classroom. Therefore, they preferred to have English in the classroom rather than Bahasa Indonesia.

This finding indicates that the learners preferred to be taught by using their L2 (English) as has been suggested by previous research such as Krashen (as cited in Purnama, 2014) and Cook, 2008). However, when they found difficulties about the lessons explained by their lecturers in the classroom, Bahasa can be an alternative for them to facilitate better explanation. The use of L1 benefits them in comprehending some lessons, clarifying the materials delivered to the students, adding their vocabulary and giving them opportunities to master their L2 by using their L1. When they can understand the materials given, it will be easier for them to get the objectives of their learning in the classroom; they can learn fast and well.

Littlewood and Yu (cited in Mohebbi & Alevi, 2014) stated that

teachers use L1 in the classroom to build social relationship, emphasize the main points of lesson, ensure that students understand the lesson taught, and to save time in the classroom. Moreover, Haryanto and Mukminin (2012) propose that when the students do not understand the content explained by the teachers through English, the students prefer to have their L1 (Bahasa Indonesia) in their classroom. This finding is also similar with what Mohebbi and Alavi (2014) have obtained. In their study, they revealed that the second language teachers used L1 mainly to provide feedback, explain grammar, teach new vocabulary, help learners individually, and manage the classroom efficiently.

Although Bahasa benefits them in such a way, as English students, the learners said that it is better for them to have more English in their English classroom. The use of Bahasa may not facilitate their ability develop well. Most of the students commented that they needed to master English, improved their skills and ability, and expanded their knowledge and experiences about English. Therefore, they prefer to have English as the medium of instruction. In addition, Adnan, mohamad, Yusoff, and Ghazali (2014) conducted a research in Indonesian students about the use of

Bahasa in Arabic classroom. They revealed that the students prefer to use Arabic in Arabic teaching – learning process in the classroom. They also showed that teachers taught Arabic by emphasizing that language more. They use L1 only in desperate situation and allow the students to use Bahasa only in one word. The teachers inhibit the students to use Bahasa and challenge them to speak and communicate in Arabic to let the students master the target language.

Some students also reveal that English provides many advantages for them, such as helping them develop their knowledge and experiences in using English. It also helps them add their new vocabulary. Having English as the medium of instruction in their English classroom can be a good habit for them to practice speaking and communicating in English. Furthermore, they will be able to master English well. The use of L2 is best used to learn that language itself (Polio & Duf, as cited in Adnan, Mohamad, Yusoff, & Ghazali, 2014). English can help them improve their skills too and some of the learners noted that they wanted to be English teachers, and therefore the use of English in their English classroom can help them to be good English teachers.

The findings in this study are also in line with what Muhlisin (2015) find that both teachers and students have no idea about how much they should apply L1 in second language classroom, yet both have the same request that no one wants to have more L1 in an L2 classroom. Most of the students want to have both L1 and L2 in their English classroom. Moreover, the overuse of L1 might hinder the development of students' proficiency.

Thus, the lecturers are indeed required to be flexible and smart to use L1 in L2 classroom. They may still use L1, but do not overuse it. Christina and Gorgiana (2012) suggested that teachers should be proactive in their classroom. It means that the teachers should control and influence how and when to use L1 in the classroom. The teachers should be able to play with L1 and decide when the use of L1 may benefit the teaching – learning process. Even, the lecturers may explain to the students about her/his choices if s/he thinks it will be helpful. If a teacher can do this, a second language classroom can be a more authentic place to play with L1 and L2.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The purposes of this research were to investigate learners' perception

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