

The Use of L1 Support: Teachers' and Students' Opinions and Practices in an Indonesian Context

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This paper aims to find out teachers' and students' opinions of the use of the mother tongue in the EFL classroom as opposed to the monolingual method which has been adopted in educational institutions in Indonesia. The study also investigated the teachers' and students' decision making of when to use L1 in their teaching and learning activity in the classroom. The findings revealed that the majority of the teachers and students believe that English should be used to the fullest. Nonetheless, much as they desire to maintain the maximum use of English, the mother tongue is still present in their classroom practice in different settings.

INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, the monolingual approach has been questioned and re-examined, in consideration of the fact that it is more based on political grounds than on methodological ones (Auerbach, 1993; Cole, 1998; Lucas & Kantz, 1994). Since then, there has been a movement of promoting the use of the mother tongue (L1) in the language classroom. Several justifications for its use in the language classroom of adult EFL learners have been voiced by scholars.

Firstly, the mother tongue is learners' linguistic schemata. The mother tongue is a resource for the learners to draw their existing knowledge from and perceive the new language. L2 learners refer to their knowledge of L1 in

order to help them to learn the L2. Their L1 is the resource in understanding the target language. Auerbach (1993, p. 7) asserts that students' linguistic resources can be beneficial for learners at all levels of proficiency. She emphasizes that allowing the use of the L1 in early second language acquisition facilitates the transition to English. Nation (2001) also supports this argument concerning the L2 vocabulary acquisition through translation to be a very effective strategy for speeding up vocabulary growth.

Secondly, L1 use is a preferred learning strategy. Atkinson (1987, p. 42) states that the mother tongue use in the form of translation technique is a preferred learning strategy for most learners. This idea has been voiced earlier by Danchev (1982) who states that "translation is a natural phenomenon and an inevitable part of second language acquisition even where no formal classroom learning occurs" (in Harbord, 1992, p. 351). Hence, the learners' activity of correlating any L2 structure or lexical item with the ones in their L1 is unavoidable. They will spontaneously do this activity with or without the teachers' permission.

Thirdly, L1 use reduces the affective barriers to L2 acquisition. Studies by D'Annunzio (1991), Garcia (1991), Hemminger (1987), Shamash (1990), Strei (1992), and Strohmeyer and McGrail (1988) show that the use of L1 lowers students' language anxiety and enhances positive affective environment for the students to make a progress in their L2 learning. Moreover, it takes into account students' sociocultural factors, facilitates incorporation of learners' life experiences, and allows for learner centered curriculum development. The most important fact is that using the L1 in the classroom "allows for the language to be used as a meaning-making tool and for language learning to become a means of communicating ideas rather than an end in itself" (Auerbach, 1993, pp. 10-11).

Fourthly, L1 can be used as a tool for thought. Vygotsky (1986) asserts that "L1 would quite naturally serve as a tool to help students think about and make sense of (i.e., mediate their thinking about) the structures, content and meaning of the L2 texts they read" (in Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001, p. 491). Using the mother tongue while discussing with peers, learners provide

each other “scaffolded help.” Upton and Lee-Thompson’s study finds that L1 use to mediate L2 reading comprehension is not only a reading strategy (translation) but also a tool for creating a cognitive space in which the readers can facilitate their own understanding of the text (2001, p. 491). Anton and DiCamilla (1998) point out that collaborative learning using the L1, as seen from the new point of sociocultural theory, enables the learners to complete the meaning-based language tasks assigned to them by performing three important functions: construction of scaffolded help, establishment of intersubjectivity (students’ attempt to mutually define various elements of their task), and use of inner speech. They state that “language is the principle semiotic system that mediates our thinking, both within individuals and between individuals” (1998, p. 18). Therefore, to ban the use of L1 in the classrooms removes two important and powerful tools for learning, i.e. the L1 as a tool to mediate the learners’ thinking about a subject and effective collaboration among the learners.

The use of L1 in the teaching and learning is aimed to make second language learning more efficient. In the language classroom, L1 has been used for various purposes. Giving instructions in L1 has been considered to be effective in helping the learners achieving the goal of classroom activities (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001a; Lucas and Katz, 1994; Macaro, 1997). Atkinson (1987), and Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002) reported the use of L1 in checking comprehension, checking for sense and explaining grammar. Other studies point out the use of L1 in establishing good rapport with the students (Canagarajah, 1999; Cook, 2001b; Harbord, 1992), giving feedback to pupils (Macaro, 1997), accommodating co-operation among learners (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001a; Critchley, 2004; Deller & Rinvoluceri, 2002; Lucas and Katz, 1994; Shamash, 1990), and maintaining discipline in the classroom (Macaro, 1997).

However, these justifications of using L1 in the language classroom do not suggest, an extreme converse point, that the target language should be used in little proportion in the classroom. Most of the literature on this issue advises limited and controlled use of the mother tongue to achieve effective and efficient

English language teaching and learning (Atkinson, 1993; Cook, 2001b; Harbord, 1992; Prodomou, 2000; Nation, 2003). Atkinson (1993), Cook (2001), Nation (2001) and Turnbull (2001) all agree that the maximum use of the target language is necessary to serve as a good model and exposure for the students who have little opportunity to listen to and make use of the language.

In Indonesian English Language Teaching context, some educational institutions still prefers to adopt the monolingual approach. This act is probably motivated by the government' positive attitude towards the globalization era in which English plays an important role in the fields of science and technology, socio-political relations, and economical growth (Dardjowidjojo, 2002, pp. 50-51). The Ministry of Education and Culture issued the 1998 Official Policy. The policy allows English to be used as a medium of instruction especially at the tertiary level (2002, p. 51). Since then, many educational institutions, even at the primary level, have been competing in serving an English-only environment in their institutions. The policy, therefore, may have influenced and shaped teachers' and students' attitudes towards the use of English for the whole lesson in class. Another possible reason to keep the policy is that English, in Indonesia, is studied as a foreign language and there is very little opportunity to use English outside the classroom. Hence, the use of the mother tongue in the classroom may be seen as undermining opportunities for the students to use and be exposed to English.

Despite the fact that the monolingual approach is still being preserved by some institutions in Indonesia, I believe that teachers and students have their own individual beliefs and attitudes towards how the language of communication should be used in the classroom which, as Johnson (1995) points out, is a vital aspect that mediates teaching, learning, and second language acquisition. However, Atkinson (1993) cautions the danger of the overuse of the mother tongue in the classroom. He suggests that the mother tongue should be used to make meaningful communication and should also be used as a technique to encourage the learners to be able to find a way of expressing their meaning in the target language. However, it is still unclear

how much mother tongue can be used or allowed in the language classroom so as to draw the line between the use and overuse of the mother tongue.

To my knowledge, little research has been done on teachers' and students' perceptions towards and classroom practices of the use of the mother tongue support in the Indonesian context. Therefore, this study aims at answering the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of the mother tongue (*bahasa Indonesia*) in the classroom?
2. When (for what purposes) the mother tongue in written or oral form is used in the teaching and learning activity in the classroom?

THE STUDY

Classroom Observations

A number of classroom observations were conducted in three different universities in Central Java, Indonesia. The classroom observation paid attention to when and how much mother tongue is used during the lesson. I used a structured-checklist and field notes to record what happened in the classroom.

Participants: 9 Non-Native Speaker teachers (6 females and 3 males) and 216 students from three different universities in Central Java, Indonesia. They were selected on a voluntary basis. Among the nine teachers, there were five teachers with an MA degree. Only two teachers had taught English for more than 25 years and the rest of the teachers have experienced teaching English from two to 10 years. Each teacher was observed three times.

Observed classes:

Speaking	(90 min. 1 class)
Listening	(50 min. 1 class)

Reading	(90 min. 1 class)
Writing	(90 min. 3 classes)
Grammar and Integrated	(90 min. 2 classes)

Questionnaires

The aim of the questionnaire was to discover the teachers' and students' general perceptions of the use of the mother tongue in the EFL classroom. Several parts of the questionnaire were adapted from Levine's (2003) questionnaire. The questionnaire (available in the Appendix) inquired about their perceptions of the amount of L1 used by the teacher and students in the EFL classroom and the functions of using the L1 support. The questionnaire was designed using a four-point Likert scale instead of five. It excludes the 'undecided' category (neither agree nor disagree) to avoid the respondents from taking the easy option. There are two different sets of questionnaires filled out by the teachers and the students. The questionnaires were distributed to 50 teachers and 300 students from the three universities. There are 33 teachers and 270 students who returned the questionnaires. The student participants were mostly first and second year students. For practical reasons, the students were given translated questionnaire (using Bahasa Indonesia).

Interviews

The interviews were conducted to find out specific information on the teachers' and students' perceptions towards the practices of the use of the mother tongue. There were 26 teachers and 26 students who participated in the interview. The subjects were chosen on a voluntary basis. Among these subjects, nine teachers and 17 students were the participants whose classes I observed. Most of the teachers interviewed had teaching experience ranging from 2 - 8 years. Only 6 teachers had been teaching English for more than 20 years. All teachers were non-native speakers, except a Scottish teacher who happened to be a fluent speaker of Bahasa Indonesia. The interviews were

conducted in the language that they felt comfortable using, both in the participants' mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia) and English. The interview questions for the teachers and students were almost similar which worked on the institution policy, perceptions and feelings about the use of the mother tongue, and beliefs about language teaching and learning.

Data Collection

The data gathering was done firstly by conducting a classroom observation to find out the teachers' and students' practice of using the mother tongue in the EFL classroom. The observation data was collected through a structured-checklist and field notes. After the classroom observation sessions were accomplished, two sets of questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and the students to find out their general perceptions on the use of the mother tongue. Lastly, an interview session was conducted to find out what the teachers and students thought in particular about the use of the mother tongue. The interviews followed a semi-structured design. The teachers and students were interviewed separately after the third classroom observation. Each interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. These interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed for the analysis of this study. The transcripts were analyzed according to the categories mentioned in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program was used to find out the frequencies, percentages, and average scores of the questionnaire data. It was in particular aimed to discover teachers' and students' general opinion towards the use of the mother tongue and purposes of using the mother tongue in the classroom. The interview data were all transcribed and analyzed for recurring themes and key features which were related to teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of the mother tongue, feelings and experience of using the mother tongue, and types of L1 support the

teachers and students have in their classroom. Locating recurring themes was done by re-reading the transcripts several times and looking for explicit statements of teachers' and students' perceptions and functions of the use of L1 support and the English-only policy. The implicit statements of the participants were inferred from the frequencies of recurring issues or topics being repeatedly mentioned by the participants in the interview transcripts. This repetition of issues or opinions may reflect their importance for the participants. The classroom observation data was collected through the use of structured-checklist. The categories used in the structured-checklist were drawn from the literature on the role of L1 in the L2 classroom. The checklist recorded the frequency use of L1 and English using tallies. Then the total number of occurrences of L1 and L2 was converted into percentages. The field notes data were used as a complementary data to give the narrative explanation to the categories of the teachers' and students' attitudes towards L1 and L2 use and teachers' and students' practice of using L1. To give a detailed classroom interaction, the frequency of the use of L1 support will be reported in the number of occurrences as well.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

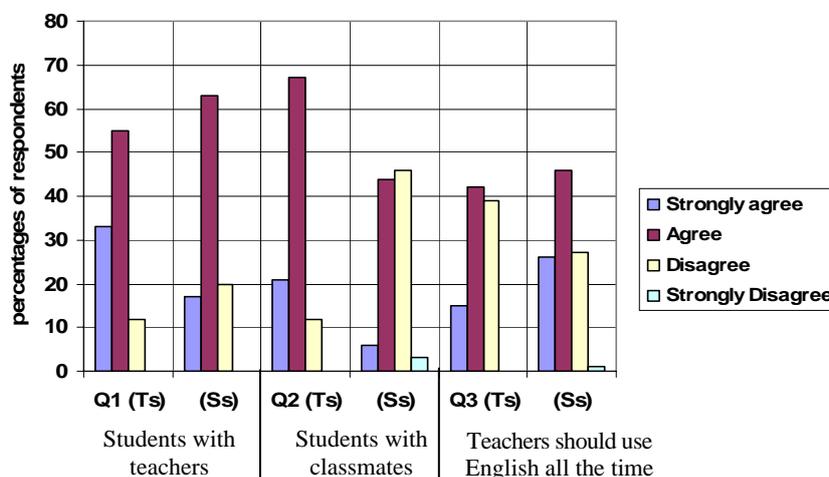
Teachers' and Students' Opinion of English Use in the Classroom

In this section, I will report the teachers' and students' opinion on English use in the classroom. The data shows that both the teachers and students desire the maximum use of English (see Figure 1). The majority of the teachers perceived that the communication among different interlocutors (Teachers - Students and Students - Students) should always be in English. About 88% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that students should use English with the teachers in the classroom all the time (item 1) and 88% agreed or strongly agreed that students should use English with their classmates in the classroom all the time (item 2). Yet, a slight majority of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed (57%) that English should be the only medium of

instruction in the classroom (item 3). These answers may indicate that most of the teachers have the tendency to lean towards monolingual teaching but there is still room for the use of the mother tongue in the classroom activities.

Different from the teachers, the students distinguished the frequency of using English while communicating with different interlocutors in the classroom. The majority of the students (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that they should use English with the teachers all the time (item 1), but half of the students (50%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they should use English with their classmates all the time (item 2). The students also perceived that it is necessary for the teachers to use English all the time (item 3), regardless of the students' use of the mother tongue in the classroom. This is probably due to their wish to have more exposure by listening to the teachers speaking English. It seems that students are of the opinion that it is the teachers' job to provide the maximum use of English in the classroom.

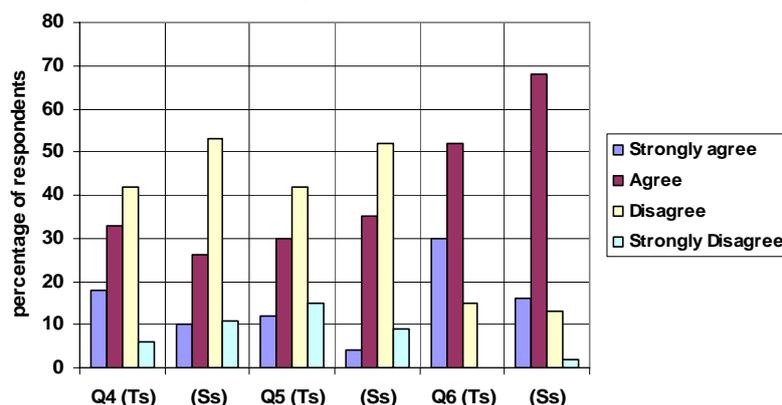
FIGURE 1
Teachers' and Students' Opinion of the Use of the MT Among Different Interlocutors



Teachers' and Students' Opinion of the Use of the Mother Tongue in the Classroom

Both teachers and students are aware of the existence of the mother tongue in the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Figure 2 shows that a slight majority of the teachers (51%) agreed or strongly agreed that the mother tongue slows down the process of acquiring the second language (item 4). In relation to questionnaire items no. 1 - 3 above, this may imply that although the majority of the teachers believed that English should be used all the time, some are of the opinion that the mother tongue still has some importance to the learning of English. In contrast to their teachers' response, the majority of the students (64%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the mother tongue hampers the process of acquiring the second language. Their awareness is also seen from their agreement to the use of L1 in teaching and learning the difference between L1 and L2. About 82% of the teachers and 84% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that comparing the students' mother tongue and English helps students to acquire English (item 6). Despite the awareness the teachers and students have about the use of the mother tongue in the classroom, there is an indication of avoiding dependency on the mother tongue. A slight majority of the teachers (57%) and 61% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed that once the teacher use the mother tongue, the students always expect the teachers to explain something in their mother tongue the next time (item 5). This could imply that both the teachers and students agree with the maximum use of English, but this does not mean that the mother tongue should be excluded from the classroom.

FIGURE 2
Teachers' and Students' Opinion of the Use of the MT in the Classroom



Questions No.:

4. MT slows down the process of acquiring English.
5. Once I use the MT students will always expect me to explain something in their MT the next time.
6. Comparing the MT and English helps students to acquire English.

The teachers' awareness of the presence of the mother tongue in the classroom was also further elaborated in the interview session. When asked about their opinion on the use of the mother tongue in the EFL classroom, all of the respondents (26 teachers) agreed that the mother tongue support is still useful in the classroom but to a very limited extent. Some of the considerations put forward by the respondents in the interview for using the mother tongue support are as follow.

- The type of courses they are teaching: skill-based and content courses (16 respondents): They stated that the mother tongue is most needed for content courses such as linguistics, English for Specific Purposes, teaching methodology, and others. It is assumed that skill-based courses are provided for the students to practice and improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Another reason most teachers

stated is that they usually use simple English when they teach in skill-based courses since the topics presented in the skill-based courses are not as difficult and complex as those in the content courses. As for the content courses, the teachers are more concerned with the students' ability to acquire information relating to concepts or ideas presented to the students.

- The difficulties and complexities of the materials (11 respondents): When the materials and the concepts discussed in the lesson are difficult and complex, the teachers pay attention to the comprehensibility of the input.
- Students' level of proficiency (9 respondents): The amount of mother tongue used in the classroom is adjusted to the students' level of proficiency. Most of the teachers have the opinion that only the beginning level students need the mother tongue help.
- The goal of the materials and tasks (4 respondents): These teachers considered that as long as the students managed to achieve the goal of the activities, it did not really matter which language the students chose to use while preparing for the activities. This issue is well presented by teacher K:

... If it's a situation where maybe the use of English in their speech is not so necessary... I don't know if they're discussing a project and... yeah... maybe they sometime find it easier to talk in Indonesian and I will not force them to use English as long as English is used in the project but how they discuss the project, it's sometimes... it's up to them. It's their kind of free time to discuss their project. (Teacher K)

This use of L1 was in accordance with Anton and DiCamilla's (1998) study which shows that the use of the L1 in collaborative interactions among students plays an important function in accomplishing a task. The use of the L1 enables students to construct effective collaborative dialogue in the completion of the tasks.

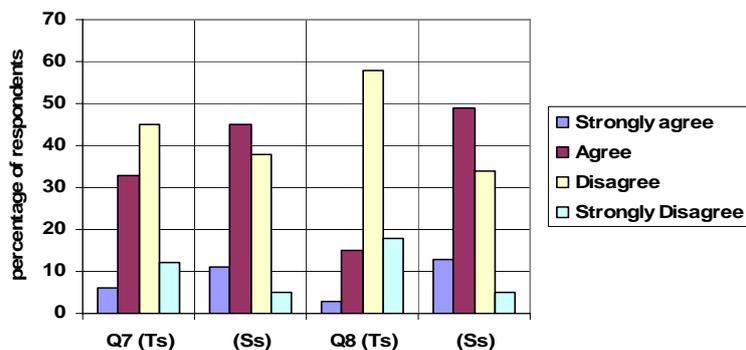
- Teachers' competence in using English (1 respondents): One teacher (F) described that if teachers are not yet able to communicate in English fluently and comfortably, it would be difficult for the teachers when they are forced to use English all the time without paying attention to whether

their English is understandable or not by the students. This could lead to incomprehensible input.

Bilingual Dictionary and Material

Besides the L1 support in the form of spoken input, this study also includes the printed or written form, i.e. the bilingual dictionary and bilingual material.

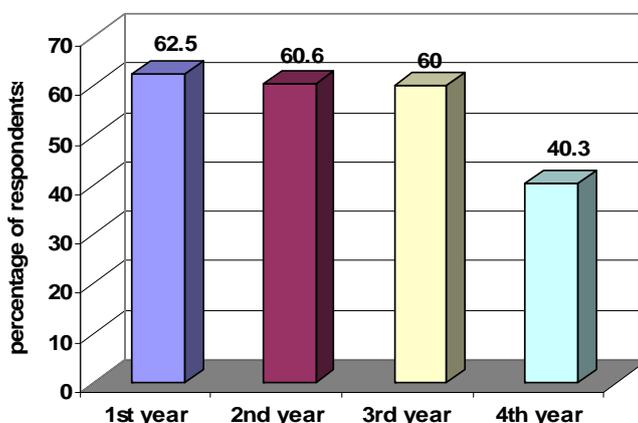
FIGURE 3
Teachers' and Students' Opinion of the Bilingual Dictionary and Bilingual Material



The Bilingual Dictionary. There is a slight difference found in the result of the questionnaire data between the teachers' and students' opinion about the bilingual dictionary. About 57% of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that students could learn better using the bilingual dictionary (see fig.3 item 7). On the other hand, 56% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they learn better using bilingual dictionary. Yet, an interesting finding was discovered when the response of the questionnaire from different years of the study was cross-tabulated (see Figure 4). The percentage rate of favoring the bilingual dictionary slightly decreases from the first to the fourth year students. This finding shows that the preference of which dictionary to use might also be based on the students' level of proficiency. If the students' level of proficiency becomes more advanced and more vocabulary has been

acquired, the students will have a greater tendency to use the monolingual dictionary.

FIGURE 4
Students' Opinion about the Usefulness of
the Bilingual Dictionary for Different Years of the Study



The gradual tendency of moving away from using the bilingual to monolingual dictionary is also captured in the interview data. The interview data shows that most teachers (18/26 teachers) and students (11/18 students) agreed that the information provided by the bilingual dictionary is incomplete. Fifteen (out of 26) teachers strongly recommended that students use the monolingual dictionary, whereas the other 11 teachers prefer for their students to use both dictionaries for different purposes. They considered that learning from both dictionaries would be more beneficial for the students rather than just using one. Both dictionaries in a sense complete each other. The bilingual dictionary is still needed to first find out what an English word means, and then, for further information on its senses and its use, the monolingual dictionary provides a more complete explanation. The majority of the students (11/18) also shared the opinion of these 11 teachers. The majority of the students pointed out that they use both dictionaries for

different purposes, which shows that the students manage to see how to use both dictionaries in their learning activity (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Different Uses of Monolingual and Bilingual
Dictionary stated by the Students (Interview Data)

Monolingual dictionary	Bilingual dictionary
- looking for synonyms (6 respondents)	- quick reference for unfamiliar words (12 respondents)
- looking for the use of the words or senses (5 respondents)	- technical terms equivalence (8 respondents)
- checking senses (5 respondents)	
- looking for collocations (2 respondents)	

The Bilingual Material. The bilingual material for the purposes of this study is printed teaching materials with little use of the mother tongue, e.g. textbook and handout. Most of the teachers (76%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that students learn better using bilingual materials (see Figure 3, item 8). Similar result is also reflected in the interview data, almost all the teachers (21/26 respondents) expressed their disagreement about the use of the bilingual materials in the EFL classroom. Several teachers stated that mother tongue support can only be given by teachers as an oral input; not by the textbook in a written form. This is best represented by teacher F and K:

...I'd prefer not to use that kind of material. For me, I like the mother tongue to come from the teachers not from the books because the books are ...I mean it's the teachers who know the context not the books. So if you use bilingual materials like that, we assume that all the students don't know the instructions. But if the teachers use the mother tongue the teachers can see the context, can see the students, can see the materials and through that we can evaluate when it is appropriate to use the mother tongue. (Teacher F)

Personally, because it is a university level, I'd prefer it should just be in English. I think they already had many years of school and so on. And there should be a level where they can either understand questions and

explanations, etc. in English or if they can't, they're at the level of thinking that they know. OK let's look in the dictionary. OK let's ask for help so they can ...they either know or they can find the answers. I think at the university level, the mother tongue shouldn't be used in an official way in handouts in books so on because in one sense again one of the quickest ways to learn is because you are forced to learn. ... it forces them to go and discover it themselves and they can learn vocabulary, structure and lots of different things just because it's in English and it forces them to find things that they don't know. (Teacher K)

Teachers F and K suggest that the students should first process the information in the materials and then ask for more input from the teachers if there were any unclear ideas found in the materials. If the mother tongue is used in the instruction of the materials, it is considered that there has been an early degrading assumption towards the students' ability in understanding English. University level students are already at a stage where they could think for themselves without always being spoon-fed all the time through L1 use. The English-only materials force the students to learn more English by themselves. It is considered that using English-only materials may contribute to a necessary use of the mother tongue support. In other words, the mother tongue was to be used only when it is most needed by the students.

In contrast to teachers' perceptions about the bilingual materials, the majority of the students (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that bilingual materials can be useful for their language learning. A different result is found in the interview data. Among the 15 respondents who answered this question, 13 students preferred to use the monolingual materials. Most of these students pointed out that it is important for them to try to understand the materials by themselves first. When there are parts of the materials that they do not understand, they would consult the teachers for further explanation:

In my opinion, it is better to use the monolingual materials than the bilingual ones. When there is unclear information in the materials, I would ask the teacher. (Student J, my translation)

So far, I have never seen that kind of material. But, if there is a book which uses Indonesian in its instruction, I think it is better to throw it away. I think if we don't know what the book is talking about, it is better to ask the teacher what it means so that when we reencounter that kind of instruction we don't need to ask the teacher again and again. I mean, if the material always provides the translation for every instruction, we would not improve our English. If we find out the meaning by ourselves, it will stick with us, and we could understand it better instead of accepting the translation like that. (Student L, my translation)

These students mentioned the importance of self-effort in understanding the monolingual material. Their response shows that they need challenges in learning English. The translated instruction spoiled their learning appetite to investigate and process the information given in the materials on their own. However, only two out of these 13 students (S and I) had experienced using the bilingual materials in certain courses. Therefore, very little information can be collected on what kind of written L1 support the students need (e.g. a vocabulary list of idioms or unfamiliar words accompanying a reading text, Indonesian version of the exercise instructions of the textbook, etc.) because they had no prior knowledge or experience with the bilingual material. Hence, this matter still needs further exploration.

Teachers' and Students' Classroom Practice

Teachers' Classroom Practice

The majority of the teachers stated that they rarely use the mother tongue (48.2%). The high frequency of "rarely" and "never" (19.9%) compared to often (27.3%) and always (2.4%) reflects the teachers' perception that English should be used to the fullest. Therefore, they feel that it is necessary to keep the use of the mother tongue to a very limited extent, for specific purposes only.

TABLE 2
Teachers' Use of the Mother Tongue (Questionnaire Data)

Functions	Always	Often	Rarely	Never	Average Score
Giving instructions	7.4%	19.3%	58.1%	15.2%	2.2
Giving feedback to the students	5.2%	40.7%	43.7%	10.4%	2.4
Checking comprehension	14.1%	52.6%	26.3%	5.9%	2.7
Explaining new (unfamiliar) words	21.5%	45.6%	24.4%	8.1%	2.8
Explaining grammar	10.7%	43.3%	33.7%	11.1%	2.5
Helping students feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom	12.6%	31.9%	34.1%	21.1%	2.35
Explaining differences between L1 and L2	12.2%	45.6%	31.5%	9.3%	2.6
Discussing assignments, tests, and quizzes	5.6%	24.1%	43.7%	25.2%	2.1
Explaining administrative information (syllabus, announcements, deadlines, etc.)	11.1%	26.7%	37.4%	24.8%	2.2
AVERAGE	11.16%	36.64%	36.99%	14.57%	

Most of the teachers stated that the mother tongue is often used for explaining L1 and L2 differences (see Table 2). Although the majority of the teachers wished to retain a maximum use of English in the classroom, the use of the mother tongue could not be avoided in their real practice.

From the nine teachers I observed, six of them rarely used the mother tongue about 0 - 25% (Teacher A, C, D, G, H, and I); two teachers used 26 - 50% (Teacher E and F); and one teacher used 51 - 75% of the time (Teacher B). Only teacher H did not use the mother tongue at all when she taught *writing 2* (writing course for 1st year students) even though her students sometimes asked her questions in the mother tongue. The description of the frequency of the use of the mother tongue can be seen in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Frequency Counting of the Teachers' Use of
the Mother Tongue in the Classroom

Teachers/ Course	A Speaking		B Writing4		C Listening		D Reading4		E Structure		F Writing4		G IC 2		H Writing		I IC2	
	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E
	Give instruction	0	15	0	6	0	16	0	27	1	29	9	18	0	31	0	19	1
Feedback	0	3	32	6	0	4	0	10	12	15	1	5	0	3	0	9	1	4
Check compre.	0	5	0	0	0	15	3	22	0	27	6	10	0	13	0	10	0	9
Vocab	6	8	0	0	0	3	1	10	4	5	0	0	1	7	0	0	3	5
grammar build good rapport	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	23	45	0	0	1	10	0	7	1	3
L1 and L2 differences	1	7	1	1	0	2	8	10	18	4	1	2	1	10	0	0	1	8
assignment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
administra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11	0	2	0	2	0	2
tive info	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	5
Error correction	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	8	25	0	2	0	9	0	5	0	3
Others	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	6	22	5	11	0	2	3	0	0	1	0
Total	8	44	33	17	2	46	12	91	91	161	34	49	5	89	0	56	10	52
Percentages	15.4	84.6	66	34	4.2	95.8	11.7	88.3	36.1	63.9	41	59	5.3	94.7	0	100	16.1	83.9

Notes:	MT = mother tongue	0 – 25 % (never)	51 – 75 % (often)
	E = English	26 – 50 % (rarely)	76 – 100 % (always)
	IC = Integrated Course		

* The percentages of the frequency is obtained by adding up the number of occurrences of all the functions done by the teachers in both languages (the mother tongue and English) and converting the results into percentages of the frequency. The converted version was then paralleled to the 4 categories of the questionnaire: 0 – 25% (never), 26 – 50% (rarely), 51 – 75 % (often), and 76 – 100% (always).

The frequency of the use of the mother tongue in particular depends on the difficulties of the subject matter (see Table 3). The degree of difficulty of the subjects gradually increases in the following term. In Structure 4 (Teacher E) and Writing 4 (Teacher B and F) courses, expectations with regard to acquiring the knowledge of grammar and writing skill become higher. They tended to focus on the comprehensibility of the input.

In the Structure 4 course, the mother tongue is often used for explaining grammatical points (23 occurrences), re-emphasizing important points (22

occurrences), establishing good rapport (18 occurrences), and giving feedback (12 occurrences). Teacher E seemed to perceive that it is important for the students to understand the rule of the English language. Sometimes she switched to Indonesian in her explanations in the classroom. She also re-emphasized some important aspects of the rules by translating most of the English technical terms of the grammatical rules. During the observation, I found that she seldom got any response from the students when she tried to elicit answers to the grammar exercises that she had designed. When she switched the questions to Indonesian, the students seemed to grasp the essence of her questions and gave responses. This may imply that her use of the mother tongue increased the comprehensibility of the grammatical points discussed and reduced students' language anxiety when dealing with learning the system of the English language.

In the Writing 4 course, teacher F also often used the mother tongue to re-emphasize important points relating to the tasks (11 occurrences). Since teacher F tried to combine the genre and process approach in her writing class, she had to explain some theoretical concepts and the process of writing which involved several tasks in every meeting. Hence, she often re-explained her points in Indonesian. Teacher B, on the other hand, focused on giving feedback to guide the students in producing an argumentative essay during her three sessions. At the beginning of each meeting, she provided general feedback to all the students in English. Later, she switched to Indonesian when giving feedback to individual student. For teacher B, it seemed that it is important for the students to know and develop their writing ability in a well-organized and analytical way. Therefore, the use of the mother tongue was felt necessary to achieve this goal. The choice of language used by teacher B also sometimes depended on the students' preference. Most of the time she started off by using English then switched to Indonesian when she found that the students had difficulty in expressing their idea. There was one occurrence in every meeting in which teacher B used English often because the student could manage to explain her essay in English quite well. Teacher B also reported that her use of the mother tongue is to smooth the flow of ideas and

discussion in order to enable the students to accomplish their writing assignments. She pointed out the importance of customizing the teacher's and student's perception on the topic of the writing that the students wished to write about so that the teacher could give guidance to the students. Using the students' mother tongue enabled this process to take place in order to help the students to achieve the goal of the assignment. Teacher B, therefore, used the mother tongue as, what Vygotsky (1986) points out, a tool for thought.

The frequent use of the mother tongue was rarely found in the listening and speaking classes. In the listening class, the activities involved mostly listening to the tape played by teacher C and answering the comprehension questions during the 50 minute period. The instructions for the tasks in the exercise sheets were presented in short and plain English. Little explanation was involved. Hence, the mother tongue was rarely used in this setting. Meanwhile, the focus in the speaking class is for the students to practice communicating in English. The use of the mother tongue is not negotiable for teacher A in this context. There were two occurrences in which he tried to avoid using the mother tongue to explain unfamiliar English words to his students. He paraphrased his question three times until finally he decided to translate the word into Indonesian and managed to get students' response. However, his firm avoidance of the use of the mother tongue resulted in a less efficient and effective way of eliciting response from the students.

In the (intensive) reading course, Teacher D used Indonesian mostly for telling jokes to make the students feel more comfortable in the classroom. The mother tongue was used to reduce the tension and brought a different atmosphere into the classroom since the activity consisted mostly of in-class reading and answering the comprehension questions. The teacher may use the mother tongue to prevent students from getting bored. However, he seldom used Indonesian to check students' comprehension of important points in the reading text (3 occurrences only). He probably considered that the text was not difficult.

Students' Classroom Practice

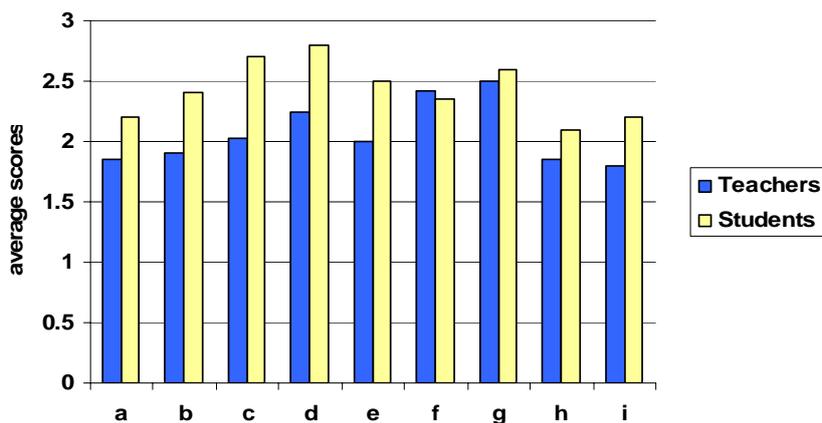
In contrast with their teachers', the result of the students' questionnaire came up with four functions instead of just one (explaining differences between L1 and L2). The majority of the students perceived that the four most needed functions (see Table 4) are checking comprehension, explaining unfamiliar words, explaining differences between L1 and L2, and explaining grammar.

TABLE 4
Frequency of Needs of the Use of the Mother Tongue as stated by the Students

Functions	Always	Often	Rarely	Never	Average Score
Giving instructions	7.4%	19.3%	58.1%	15.2%	2.2
Giving feedback to the students	5.2%	40.7%	43.7%	10.4%	2.4
Checking comprehension	14.1%	52.6%	26.3%	5.9%	2.7
Explaining new (unfamiliar) words	21.5%	45.6%	24.4%	8.1%	2.8
Explaining grammar	10.7%	43.3%	33.7%	11.1%	2.5
Helping students feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom	12.6%	31.9%	34.1%	21.1%	2.35
Explaining differences between L1 and L2	12.2%	45.6%	31.5%	9.3%	2.6
Discussing assignments, tests, and quizzes	5.6%	24.1%	43.7%	25.2%	2.1
Explaining administrative information (syllabus, announcements, deadlines, etc.)	11.1%	26.7%	37.4%	24.8%	2.2
AVERAGE	11.16%	36.64%	36.99%	14.57%	

Nonetheless, the difference range between the teachers' and students' response is not wide (see Figure 5). The difference between average scores of the two groups of respondents range from 0.1 (f = build good rapport) to 0.67 (c = check comprehension). It can be concluded that the teachers realize these functions of using the mother tongue in the classroom but they try to limit the frequency of its use.

FIGURE 5
Teachers' Use and Students' Need of the Mother Tongue (Questionnaire Data)



a = give instructions d = explain new words g = explain differences between L1 and L2
 b = give feedback e = explain grammar h = discuss assignments and tests
 c = check comprehension f = build good rapport i = explain administrative information

Students' Classroom Practice

The questionnaire data (see Table 5) reveals that the majority of the students often use the mother tongue with their classmates as compared to when communicating with their teachers. This may indicate that the students realized their need to practice their English with the teachers. However, in certain situations in completing a task or discussing topics in the lessons with their classmates, most of the students use their mother tongue.

TABLE 5
Frequency of Students' Use of the Mother Tongue (Questionnaire Data)

Functions	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
a. with my teacher to ask for clarification in the classroom	6%	30%	59%	5%
b. with my teacher to ask questions in the classroom	3%	17%	66%	13%
c. with my teacher to give me feedback in the classroom	4%	24%	62%	10%
d. <u>with my classmates</u> to discuss the instructions	25%	43%	24%	8%
e. <u>with my classmates</u> within the classroom activities	27%	39%	28%	6%
f. <u>with my partner or groups</u> after we have finished a classroom activity	31%	35%	27%	6%

The result of the questionnaire data is also in accordance with the observation data (see Table 6). From my observation, the students seemed to distinguish between formal and informal situations, i.e. it depends on who the interlocutors are. The students' interactions with the teachers are mostly considered to be a formal setting but their interactions with their own classmates are an informal one.

TABLE 6
Students' Actual Use of the Mother Tongue (Classroom Observation Data)

Functions	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
a. with teacher to ask for clarification in the classroom			✓	
b. with teacher to ask questions in the classroom			✓	
c. with my teacher to give me feedback in the classroom				✓
d. with my teacher to give excuses		✓		
e. routines response to teacher's questions			✓	
f. <u>with classmates</u> to discuss the instructions		✓		
g. <u>with classmates</u> within the classroom activities		✓		
h. <u>with classmates</u> after they had finished doing a classroom activity	✓			
i. <u>with classmates</u> to re-explain teacher's explanations	✓			
j. <u>with classmates</u> for vocabulary problems	✓			
k. <u>with classmates</u> to ask for clarification	✓			
m. <u>with classmates</u> to give feedback	✓			

In the classroom, the students often switch automatically to Indonesian when interacting with their classmates and back to English when interacting with the teachers. They seem to recognize the routines of the classroom. The teachers usually announce their expectations of having the students use English all the time at the beginning of their courses. When it concerns the topic of the lessons, students' interactions with the teachers are often considered to be a formal situation. However, it is interesting to see that whenever they give excuses, the students often use the mother tongue to communicate with the teachers. This function of the mother tongue, as Canagarajah points out (1999), signifies solidarity since the mother tongue is a more personal language. The students' use of the mother tongue, according to Canagarajah, can be interpreted as an act of pleading with the teachers to lay aside their power and role temporarily as to get their sympathy. In this case, the students ask for the teachers' willingness to step outside of the classroom routines and context by using Indonesian.

When asked about when they use the mother tongue, most of the students answered that they often use *Bahasa Indonesia* before and after the classroom activities. They also mentioned that sometimes they use it subconsciously. However, in their practice, the students tend to use *Bahasa Indonesia* when they are involved in the classroom discussion and activities with their peers. This could indicate that they perceived these routines as an informal setting where there is absence of authority and control among themselves. I noticed some occurrences in which the students would immediately switch to Indonesian as soon as the teachers moved away from them. Moreover, some of the students, in the interview session, said that the choice of which language to use in different activities in the classroom depends usually on the person they talked to. This issue is best reflected by student T:

I have tried several times. I want to encourage them to use English with me... in my group, for example, but sometimes they don't use English. So perhaps it is because they thought that we are with friends. We feel free, so sometimes they think, "Well, I'm talking with my friends, no need to use English. It is not a problem." So, this kind of thinking often makes us

switch back to *Bahasa Indonesia*. Just now I was sitting next to “X,” and we chatted. She always chats with me in English, so I guess my mind automatically switches to English. That’s why I think sometimes when we are discussing the tasks or activities, we often think “Well, I’m with my friends. We don’t need to be formal or anything, so why don’t we just use *Bahasa Indonesia*.” (Student T, my translation)

Student T described the reason for switching to Indonesian when he was discussing the tasks or activities in his group. A sense of relief and solidarity occurs among peers since Indonesian is considered to be a more personal code among them.

From the observation, most of the decision making and control of the use of the mother tongue in the classroom is still in the teachers’ hand. Students do not seem to mind this control when the teacher is present in their group discussion in the classroom, although most of the time they automatically switched to Bahasa Indonesia when the teacher stepped out of the group. Nonetheless, the students’ use of the mother tongue shown in Table 6 reflects what Atkinson (1987) identifies as a learner preferred strategy. The learners use the mother tongue almost all the time for the completion of classroom tasks and activities, although the teachers keep on reminding them to use English when they are talking with their peers. Their use of Indonesian happens naturally, with or without the teachers’ sanction. The students also use Indonesian for constructive purposes, namely, re-explaining the teachers’ explanations, giving feedback to their classmates’ work, explaining unfamiliar words to their classmates, discussing instructions given by the teachers, and discussing the tasks. These constructive purposes prepare them for a better understanding in accomplishing a task or activity before they present their ideas and tasks to the whole class. The use of the mother tongue is more like a staging area before the final product is presented.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Both the majority of teachers as well as students agreed that English should be used to the fullest. Students rarely have a chance to use English outside the classroom. Maximum use of English is perceived as a chance to give students maximum exposure to the target language. The teachers agreed that the L1 support should be used judiciously.

The teachers also reported important considerations in using L1 support. The first consideration is the nature and goal of the course. If the goal of the course is to grasp the content of the course, L1 is used to provide comprehensible input. In the writing 4 course, for example, comprehension check, re-emphasizing the main points of the lesson (Teacher F) and giving feedback (Teacher B) in L1 is necessary to help the learners follow the lesson and improve their writing skill. Grammar is still being taught explicitly in the Indonesian EFL classroom and considered a difficult subject to learn. Hence, L1 is often used to explain grammatical points, terms, error correction, and L1 and L2 differences. The mother tongue, in this case, is used to bridge the learners' L1 knowledge to L2 learning; or what Vygotsky (1986) points out L1 as a tool for thought.

The second consideration is to take into account the students' level of proficiency. Most of the teachers agreed that the use of L1 depends on the students' level of proficiency. They suggested that the use of L1 is allowed for the beginning level students. However, teachers need to encourage the learners to use English as often as possible in the classroom.

The third factor to consider is the goal of the task. Several teachers pointed out that L1 use depends on the goal of the task. If the goal of the task can be better achieved by the learners using L1 in their discussion in completing the task, L1 should be allowed for this matter. However, the presentation of the completed task has to be in English. L1, in this context, is used as a collaborative learning strategy. From the classroom observation, students also used L1 with their classmates for other constructive purposes such as re-explaining the teacher's explanation, explaining vocabulary definitions,

giving feedback, and asking for clarification.

Another important factor to take into account in using L1 support is the immediacy of response. During the observation session, there were times when teachers (A and H) tried to avoid using the mother tongue to an extreme point which led to inefficient teaching. Teacher A used the target language to explain some words several times, but received no response from the students. L1 use in this case is time saving and keeps the flow of the lesson running smoothly. The use of L1 is also advisable for explaining long and complex instructions.

However, this study has several limitations that should be kept in mind. The study was conducted in three private universities in Indonesia. The quantity and quality of L1 support cannot be generalized to all cases. There are factors that may influence the teachers and students' response such as the type of universities (private or public universities) institution policy, and teachers and students' level of proficiency. The need of L1 support may also be different in other levels (primary and secondary level). Therefore, it would be interesting to find out the need of L1 support and see the different purposes and applications in these two levels. An exploration to this topic may help discover the methodology of using L1 support in different levels and settings.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Section A

This section deals with your opinion about how English is learned. Please tick (✓) one for each of the following questions

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dis- agree	Strongly Disagree
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Section B

This section relates to the use of English and the mother tongue in the class that you are currently teaching (taking).

Please put a tick (✓) for each cell.

	always	often	rarely	never
9. I (the teacher should) use the mother tongue for:				
a. giving instructions				
b. giving feedback to the students				
c. checking comprehension				
d. Explaining new words				
e. Explaining grammar				
f. Helping students feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom				
g. Explaining differences between L1 and L2				
h. Discussing assignments, tests, and quizzes				
i. Explaining administrative information (syllabus, announcements, deadlines, etc.)				
j. others _____				
10. My students (I) use the Mother Tongue:				
a. with teacher to ask for clarification in the classroom				
b. with teacher to ask questions in the classroom				
c. with teacher to give feedback in the classroom				
d. with classmates to discuss the instructions				
e. with classmates within the classroom activities				
f. with partner or groups after they finish doing a classroom activity				
g. Others _____				

Appendix 2: Classroom Observation Checklist

Teacher: _____	University: _____
Subject: _____	Date: _____
Level: _____	Time: _____

Time	Events	Tallies	
		In MT	In English
	a. give instructions		
	b. give feedback to the students		
	c. Check comprehension (listening, reading)		
	d. Explain new words		
	e. Explain grammar		
	f. Help students feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom (jokes, praise, encouragement)		
	h. Explain differences between L1 and L2		
	i. Discuss assignments, tests, and quizzes		
	j. Explain administrative information (syllabus, announcements, deadlines, etc.)		
	k. error correction		
	l. others _____		

Students use the mother tongue:	always	often	rarely	never
a. with teacher to ask for clarification in the classroom				
b. with teacher to ask questions in the classroom				
c. with teacher to give feedback in the classroom				
d. with classmates to discuss the instructions				
e. with classmates within the classroom activities				
f. with partner or groups after they finish doing a classroom activity				
g. Others _____				

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

1. Do you have a kind of policy that tells you to use only English inside the classroom? Do you agree with it? Why?
2. Do you think using the MT is useful for teaching? (in what way?)
3. How do you feel when you use the MT? (Do you feel guilty or embarrassed or comfortable or anything else?) Why?
4. When do you usually use the MT? (When do you usually decide to use it? For what function?)
5. How do you think the students feel when you use the MT?
6. Do you think materials with little use of the MT (e.g. instructions or other information translated in MT) would be useful in learning English or should it be exclusively in English?
7. Do you think bilingual dictionary (English-Indonesian) is helpful for the students? (In what way?)
8. How did you learn English? (most of the time English-Only or sometimes bilingual?)