CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Many researchers have conducted studies concerning the relation between L1 in L2 learning. Researchers and practitioners become concerned with the use of L1 in L2 learning context (Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014). Scholars have long argued whether it is appropriate or not to involve the L1 in EFL or English Language Classroom. Some believe that involving L1 in English language classrooms is the way to engage learner's attention when teaching materials are confusing and can lead to misinterpretation in EFL classroom. Through this way, learners can focus on the materials which are still being discussed without any internal distraction such as confusion and worries. Previous studies conducted by Schweers (1999), Auerbach (1993), Sali (2014), and Kelleher (2013) show that L1 furthers Second Language Classroom learning. L1 facilitates L2 learning by raising awareness of the similarities and differences between the L1 and the L2. In addition, L1 also helps teachers for some situations that cannot be avoided in the L2 classroom (Schweers, 1999). For example, when classroom learning is not enjoyable and students seem to give up in L2 then teachers switch into L1 to break the situation. Such studies conducted by Manara (2007) and Tang (2002) also indicate positive results if the use of L1 is limited to maximize the achievement of EFL classroom especially the basic skills. L1 can support linguistic areas such as vocabulary and grammar since it can make the lessons easier (Nakatsukasa & Loewen, 2015). Furthermore, Sali (2014) argues that using L1 in the EFL classroom can decrease learner's anxiety over learning English. Through the tendency of using L1, learners are aimed to give feedback during the Teenager 3 Classnd to perceive the achievement of learning English such as being brave to ask or give a response since there are some students who still feel ashamed to speak in English. Besides, using L1 in EFL classrooms can also make the classroom atmosphere enjoyable (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009).

Since English is a foreign language in Indonesia, it is important to know the role of L1 towards English learning. Researchers find that L1 gives positive impact to L2 comprehension as stated in the previous paragraph. Meanwhile, Nazary (2008) and Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz (2011) found different results. In their studies, participants ignored the use of L1 for better L2 exposure. Intermediate students even gave lower leaning and do not wait for their teachers for using L1 (Nazary, 2008). On other side, the majority of students in Persian pre-university schools support the exposure of L2 and they are very critical of the uncontrolled use of L1 in the classroom (Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011). Even though Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz (2011) added that Grammar Translation Method (GTM) plays the role in reading and translation, those results open our eyes about EFL student's attitude towards their use of L1 in EFL classroom, while a lot of research has shown us the big desire to include L1 in EFL classroom both for students and teachers for some purposes.

The contradiction of the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has been discussed for quite some time. Based on some previous studies, the results show that there are supports to use L1 in EFL classroom since it can maintain students' reading comprehension (Paker & Karaağaç, 2015) and for some academic or non-academic goals (Sali, 2014). Brooks & Donato (1994) as cited in Scott & de la Fuente (2008) suggested that using L1 is a normal psycholinguistic process to help L2 production and to start verbal interaction. Verbal interaction can be seen when students find themselves comfortable in taking L1 into their L2 learning that they might not feel afraid to get along with each other or no need to get confused to start a conversation. Otherwise, L1 is such a scaffolding tool to learn a new language which it helps to learn new concepts, grammar points, and some instructions (Bhooth, Azman, & Ismail, 2014). The use of L1 saves time and students increase their motivation to learn L2 (Cianflone, 2009). Furthermore, learning L2 will not feel as hard as many people imagine. L1 also maintains L2 proficiency in that students may use L1 first to do brainstorming. L1 is naturally and spontaneously used in cognitive strategy which possibly causes "language competition" if the use of L1 is not allowed (Scott & de la Fuente, 2008). In other words, L1 can make L2 exposure better. Shuchi & Islam (2016) found positive results that

L1 is useful for L2 learning with affective reasons and comprehensible lecture that it should be used wisely so that it will not hinder the L2 learning.

Instead of the contradiction of using L1 in the L2 classroom, there must be a reason why both teachers and students also agree to avoid the use of L1. One of the reasons is not many chances given to use English outside the class, therefore teachers and students agree for the maximum use of English (Manara, 2007). This may cause L1 is prohibited in L2 classroom related to students' motivation to achieve their L2 skills. Some speculate that using L1 in L2 classroom is not fair and can distract the development of English skills. It also shows students' lack of confidence in speaking English and students' loss of identity.

Previous related thesis has been conducted by Ritonga (2002) titled "The Use of Bahasa Indonesia in The Teaching of English as A Foreign Language". In her study, Ritonga (2002) analyzed the role of Bahasa Indonesia in EFL classroom, the purpose regarding its role, and the frequency it should be used in EFL teaching. The result showed teachers and students did not ignore the use of Bahasa Indonesia since it helped to enhance EFL learning, such as to translate difficult words and to explain particular information. The study was done in classes of Center for Language Training and classes of Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang. What differs between Ritonga's and this study is the writer's research focuses on the circumstances which students and teachers use L1 in L2 classroom and how teachers and students perceive the benefits and disadvantages.

1.2   Field of the Study

The research is related to the field of Linguistics, specifically Applied Linguistics.

1.3   Scope of the Study

This study focuses on how the first language plays its role in the L2 classroom. Significantly, this study examines the influence of the first language in the exposure of L2 by looking at the situations it is used in the classroom. Furthermore, this study will also focus on the impact of L1 on L2 learning.

1.4   Problem Formulation

1. In what circumstances do teachers and students use L1 in L2 classroom?

2. How do teachers and students perceive the benefits and the disadvantages of the use of L1 in L2 classroom?

1.5   Objectives of the Study

With regards to the problems mentioned, this research is conducted to achieve these following objectives:

1. To find out the circumstances when students and teachers use L1 in the L2 classroom

2. To see how teachers and students perceive the benefits and the disadvantages of the use of L1 in L2 classroom

1.6   Significance of the Study

This study intends to share other's perspective about the use of Indonesian language as the mother tongue in the L2 classroom especially in a language center in Semarang as many related studies have been conducted in schools/colleges. People commonly tend to assume that L2 learning should not relate to the mother tongue. Hence, this study will explore how L1 takes part in the L2 classroom, followed by its positive and negative effects and how it is used in the classroom.

1.7   Definition of Term

 1. First language: a child's native or a language that the child acquires first (Mizza, 2014)

2. Second language: any language that a person uses other than a first or native language (L1) (Ellis, 1994)

3. Foreign language: a language that plays no role in the community and it is primarily learned in the classroom (Ellis, 1994)