



# **EFL Teachers' Perceptions on the Use of L1 in EFL Classroom: A Case Study of Junior High School Level**

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## **Abstract**

Since its independence, the Indonesian government has recognized English as one of the most important international languages for communication. As a result, the government has suggested that English become a mandatory subject in Junior High School. According to Nurkamto (2003), English is taught and utilized as a foreign language in Indonesia (FL). Bahasa Indonesia is our native or first language (L1). As a result, the teachers' perceptions of using L1 in the classroom are more appealing to discuss. The qualitative case study approach was employed in this study to evaluate teachers' perceptions about the use of LI in the EFL classroom. The researcher employed interviews to collect data for this study. The interview was conducted once in order to obtain information on the teachers' perceptions about the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. Because they had been teaching for several years, the researcher selected three English teachers from SMP NEGERI 3 Muncar to participate in this study. They also have a lot of experience attending workshops and seminars to further their professional growth. In assessing the data, the researcher used Creswell's (2012) model.

**Keywords:** English as Foreign Language; teachers' perceptions; EFL classroom

## **Introduction**

Since the English language becomes the dominant international language, the importance of learning English has become more evident and hence teaching English becomes more important. Controversies on incorporating English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom have been a longstanding discussion in the current literature. Many arguments which are for and against the use of first language (L1) were made by a significant number of professionals; some have considered L1 to be beneficial in EFL classrooms, whereas some have considered it to be a hindrance (Auerbach 1993; Krashen, 1987). Despite the changing condition of teaching and learning features throughout the years, the idea that L1 should not be employed in the EFL classroom for a long period of time has been unable to achieve a meaningful conclusion over the previous four decades. Nevertheless, many studies have recently started to put this belief under question and to give the effectiveness of L1 use the benefit of doubt. In (EFL) classrooms, teacher commonly use combination of mother tongue (MT) or first language (L1) and English (FL) to teach students (Al-Amir, 2017), in case to make students get advantage both the target language exposure and understanding the material, teacher use combination of mother tongue and English. In fact, the use of mother tongue or first language in foreign language classroom has been disputed by scholars. Students' of English in EFL classroom might not understand many things when they learn English. This is the teacher's responsibility to handle the class and maintain the atmosphere of the class well.

The pivotal thing of teaching English in EFL classes is to adjust the needs and the right portions for students. Consequently, using L1 in EFL Classroom is required to help student increase the ability of learning English in teaching learning process. According to Meyer (2008) and Norman (2008), the use of L1 in L2 classrooms is viewed as an effective tool to decrease students' anxiety and effective concerns. Norman (2008, p. 692) states that "students are often unresponsive, inattentive, and unwilling to speak in class", but when L1 is used, the opposite is true. Therefore, teachers' role is needed to encourage and motivate students to be active in English class. Most of the studies previously conducted seem to focus on what the impact of L1 use in the class. Debreli (2016) revealed that most of the teachers' use of L1 in EFL classroom to facilitate the students in learning English, especially in defining the difficult or unfamiliar word for students, there have been a lot of studies taking into consideration the use of L1 in English communities or the ones in which English is supposed to be used in perfection.

The studies varied in regard with main point of the research, purposes, and even the

result and discussions. In addition, the studies are conducted in countries with different L1's. Fitriani et. al (2017) stated that most of the students agreed the teacher includes the first language in their English classroom as it positively helped them in learning the target language. In addition, the teacher supported the students' view because the inclusion of the first language in EFL classroom is considered a way to solve the students' problem in learning the target language. Another case study from Mahmoudi (2011) revealed that the pre-university students of different proficiency levels (high-achieving & low-achieving) were supportive of L2 domination in their English classes and were critical of an excessive use of L1 in the context of Iranian schools. Moreover, Hashemi (2013) in his study reported that Iranian EFL learners were willing to use their mother tongue. Iranian EFL teachers had a positive tendency to use more English than Persian in the General English classes. Teachers had to consider that the major medium of instruction must be English. They should use L1 judiciously in FL classrooms whenever possible and beneficial to relieve anxious, nervous, frightened, and reluctant students as well as learners with low self-esteem.

For the last four decades, the discussion on whether to use L1 (first language) when teaching English in foreign language classroom has been unable to reach a substantial conclusion, several countries such as: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Japan are still concerned with the issue.

First, Mahmoudi (2011) analyzed about The Use of Persian in EFL Classroom in Senior High School Level. The participants in this study were randomly selected from two states pre-university schools (A&B) located in Ahvaz, Iran. Both schools were located at affluent and privileged parts of the city. Normally the most well-known teachers were selected to teach at the schools of these parts of the city. In school A, with three English classrooms and in school B with four English classrooms were randomly selected. The two instruments used to collect data were classroom observations and interviews. Classroom observations were intended to reflect the quantity of L1 and L2 use in the classes, and the interviews were opted for as they provide the researchers with an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' perceptions, attitudes and feelings. The interviews with both teachers and students were carried out in L1 (Persian) and each interview lasted around 15 minutes. The study revealed that the pre-university students of different proficiency levels (high-achieving & low-achieving) were supportive of L2 domination in their English classes and were critical of an excessive use of L1 in the context of Iranian schools.

Hashemi (2013) discussed about the Iranian EFL students' and teachers' perception using Persia in general English classes. This study was a case study which investigated teachers' and students' perception toward effective use of L1 and L2 in General English classes at university level. The participants were 345 students and 25 teachers at the University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran. Two research tools were used for gathering data: questionnaires and interviews. Analysis of the qualitative case study and comparing the mean scores of two groups via Mann-whitny revealed that the perceptions of the teachers and the students differ from each other. Iranian EFL

learners were willing to use their mother tongue. Iranian EFL teachers had a positive tendency to use more English than Persian in the General English classes. Teachers have to consider that the major medium of instruction must be English. They should use L1 judiciously in FL classrooms whenever possible and beneficial to relieve anxious, nervous, frightened, and reluctant students as well as learners with low self-esteem.

Hosseini and Sedighi (2015) found that the EFL teachers used a limited amount of L1 in the EFL classrooms though they still used it as an aid for a variety of purposes in order to improve their teaching purposes and the students' learning. Their findings also indicated that using L1 facilitates students' learning in EFL classrooms, and it should not be excluded from the classroom syllabi or considered an evil in EFL classrooms.

Debreli Emre (2016) investigated the perceptions of non-native EFL teachers on L1 use in FL Classrooms by using qualitative design. A total of fifty-four non-native teachers of English working in English preparatory schools of four universities in Northern Cyprus participated in the study. The instruments used in this study are interviews. Based on his research, most of the teachers' used the L1 in FL classroom to facilitate the students in learning English, especially in defining the difficult or unfamiliar word for students, there had been a lot of studies taking into consideration the use of L1 in English communities or the ones in which English is supposed to be used in perfection. The studies varied in regard with main point of the research, purposes, and even the result and discussions. In addition, the studies are conducted in countries with different L1's.

Poedjiasuti et.al (2020) investigated about the local language allowed in EFL classroom. This study found that although educators and linguistics experts keep debating the role of Bahasa Indonesia in the EFL setting, several schools allowed teachers and students to use the language for instruction. Nevertheless, overuse should be avoided considering the primary target of language learning is to acquire the L2. The students should only use the first language with the teachers' permission and with proper monitoring and adequate restrictions when necessary. Moreover, the L2 should be implemented as a medium of communication on a daily basis. It is also essential for teachers to realize that translingual practice is normal in L2 learning even though it is mostly observed with adults having proficiency in more than one language mainly to stress utterances or demonstrate cultural identities.

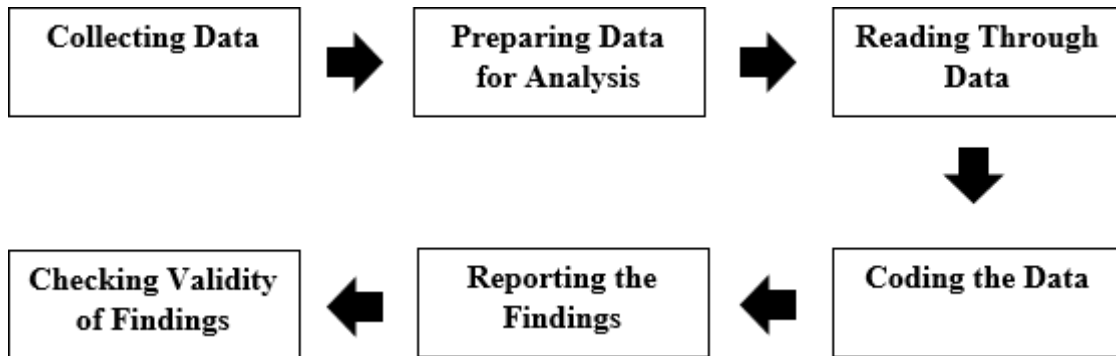
Based on the previous studies discussed, L1 could be a useful and important element to help EFL learners to learn the foreign language during the learning process. If L1

use in their class is good, the result of the study will become an affirmation to the existing fact of learning method that takes place in that school was appropriate. Otherwise, if they perceive something different, it will be beneficial to be taken into consideration how a better method of EFL learning should be formulated.

## **Method**

To reveal the teachers' perceptions of L1 use in EFL classroom, this study decided to use qualitative case study as research method because the research focused on understanding social events from the perspective of the participant. As this research discussed about the English teachers' perception on the use of L1 in EFL classroom, the qualitative research was appropriate to discuss further about the phenomena related to this present study about English teachers' perception on the use of L1 in EFL classroom. The data collection instrument for this study is interview. According to McNamara (1999), interviews are very useful in order to obtain the story behind a participant's experience. This Expert also states that by using an interview, the researcher can obtain the deepest information from the participants. The interview can be an effective tool to collect information dealing with the objectives of the research from the participant. This research used the interview in order to collect the data about the educators' perceptions on the use of L1 in EFL classroom. In this research, the researcher used semi-structured interview to find out the teachers' perceptions toward using L1 in EFL class. Three participants took around 120 minutes, in conducting the interview the researcher provided a list of questions that must be answered by the participants. The guide questions were adapted from Kawamura, M. (2011).

The data from the interview were analyzed by using thematic analysis model of Creswell. According to Creswell (2012), there are six steps that can be used to analyze the data in qualitative research. They are collecting the data, preparing data for analysis, reading through data, coding the data, reporting findings, and checking validity of findings. The detailed explanation of the data analysis method by using Creswell model can be seen in the following diagram:



**Results**

The EFL Teachers’ Perception towards Using First Language in EFL Classroom Based on the interview that had been conducted with the three EFL teachers, the researcher found all the teachers in the study clearly stated in the interviews that L1 should be used in EFL classrooms. The EFL teachers’ perception was explained by classifying them into the four themes, as follows: when giving instructions, when explaining difficult topics, when defining new vocabulary, and when socializing in the classroom.

**Giving Instructions**

In this part all the EFL teachers in the study stated that instructions were crucial in terms of guiding students in the classroom, and once the students misunderstood instructions it was difficult to clarify them later. All the teachers’ statements are presented below.

Table 1. The teachers’ statements about giving instructions in L1

Participants	Participants’ statements
<b>Teacher 1</b>	“The situation in the classroom when I taught, as usual, when giving instructions I usually use Bahasa Indonesia first and then use English.”

<b>Teacher 2</b>	“When giving instructions, sometimes I use Bahasa Indonesia more. For example, I ask them to read the questions in the <i>LKS</i> (Students Worksheet) book, frequently there are still some students who can't understand if I give instructions in English that is why I mostly choose to use Bahasa Indonesia because it is easier and effective to make students understand the instruction immediately.”
<b>Teacher 3</b>	“When I give an instruction to them, I usually use Bahasa Indonesia.”
<b>Teacher 3</b>	“When I ask them to do something I usually use Bahasa Indonesia to make everything clear and easy. For example, when I ask them to read a question in task book, I just use Bahasa Indonesia, because not many of them understand the instruction in English as I told before even for the basics English it still hard for most of them to understand. As simple as when I said “okay student number 24 (presence list) please read the third paragraph of this text loudly” it is the simple instructionright? But the one that I call just showing a confused face means it is unclear for him. That is why I choose touse Bahasa Indonesia to give an instruction it is just for students need because they still lack in English, I just try to understand my students feeling I know they will feel uninterested in English anymore if I just using my ego here.”

The extracts above revealed that all the EFL teachers agreed that giving instruction in L1 or Bahasa Indonesia to students was the main concern to make the material easy to understand. For teacher 1 although in the end he used L2 or English but the L1 or Bahasa Indonesia has important role as a tool to build a communication. Then, teacher 2 has similar main point with teacher 1 both of them used L1/ Bahasa Indonesia to make the students understand the instructions rapidly. He also mentioned that using L1/Bahasa Indonesia was effective and easier for students to accept the instructions. Moreover, teacher 3 stated that L1/Bahasa Indonesia was the best way to make the students understanding the questions, because they had already been in final grade, so they must study hard to do all the English tasks. Teacher 3 also stated that he had applied L1/Bahasa Indonesia as a language instruction for his students for years. According to the all EFL Teachers, it seems that L1 use should be allowed because the instruction need be clearly understood.

Based on the students' needs, instruction in L1 is the best way to make it easier for them to understand the instruction given by teachers. This is especially important for students in the final grade, as it is important for them to drill their skills to do all of the tasks, and the teachers' lead was made easier by using L1/Bahasa Indonesia.

**Explaining Difficult Topics**

A popular idea emerging from the data indicated that all the EFL teachers preferred using of L1 when defining difficult topics or addressing grammatical faults. This originated mostly from a concern that rather than allowing students to learn something improperly, which may lead to a problem, they would rather help them utilizing their L1/Bahasa Indonesia. The excerpts of EFL teachers' perceptions are shown below.

Table 2. The teachers' statements for explaining difficult topics in L1

Participants	Participants' statements
<p><b>Teacher 1</b></p>	<p>“Using Bahasa Indonesia in the classroom is necessary hence the material that being rescued is straightforward for students to understand and learn”</p> <p>“I use Bahasa Indonesia to make everything clear, and actually I use full Bahasa Indonesia to explain the difficult material to students because I need to transfer knowledge, right? It is important for me to make my students understand the material that I gave and using Bahasa Indonesia is easier and effective. I ever used English to explain and it is not really full English but they just ask me again what does it mean by A or B, from there I know that just using Bahasa Indonesia to explain is the best way for my students.”</p>



<b>Teacher 2</b>	“For example when suddenly reading a question, eventually, there is a process called understanding the meaning of the question. Maybe in one question, there are one or two words that cannot be understood, that's the right time to use Bahasa Indonesia so that students can understand the meaning of the questions given. It also happen when there is a difficult topic in learning process, for example when I have to explain about “some expressions” to apply in daily activity I have to use Bahasa Indonesia to make student easier to
	understand, because not many of them understand about English so that is why I use Bahasa Indonesia when I have to explain something difficult.”

<b>Teacher 3</b>	<p>“From Bahasa Indonesia, teachers can transfer knowledge, with an emphasis on the English material that we provide. For example, I ask them, “<i>Ayo apa Bahasa Indonesianya "saya"?</i>” And they will answer “I” for example, if it is not explained like that, the students will not understand and I have to explain it using Bahasa Indonesia. The point is to strengthen the basics first, in Junior High School teachers still teach the basics.”</p> <p>“Another case when I give an instruction to them, I usually use Bahasa Indonesia, as you know sometimes as 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, I have to drill them with many tasks in their book (Students Worksheet Book) I use Bahasa Indonesia to make them understand the questions. Let us imagine the situation first, at the first when I ask them to read the question, I am not asking them to read in English term, I ask them to read the meaning of the question. I used to do that because to answer the question they need to understand the meaning of the question, right? I lead them to translate and interpret the meaning of the question and I ask them to read loudly to increase their confidence in English and I use Bahasa Indonesia as long as questions activity to make them comfortable and confident. I have been using that way for years and I think it is effective to make the material easy to understand. The teachers not only explain but also should guide and educate students.”</p>
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All of these excerpts seem to focus on the thought that the students might learn some aspects of the language incorrectly. The primary concern of the EFL teachers here in preferring L1/Bahasa Indonesia appears to be ensuring that students receive the given input correctly. All of the EFL teachers concur that using L1/Bahasa Indonesia was effective and easier for students’ understanding, leading to an improvement learning outcomes in the future.

### Defining New Vocabulary

The use of L1/Bahasa Indonesia when defining new vocabulary was the importance topic to be discussed. During the interviews, all of the EFL teachers emphasized the need to use L1/Bahasa Indonesia and emphasized that it was very difficult to define some vocabulary by only relying on the target language. The excerpts of the EFL teachers' perceptions are presented below.

Table 3. The teachers' statements for defining new vocabulary in L1

Participants	Participants' statements
<b>Teacher 1</b>	"Relates to the material learned in class to make it easier to understand. Another example is that there are foreign or new words for them, so Bahasa Indonesia plays a meaningful role as an interpreter for their vocabulary. Defining a new word in Bahasa Indonesia is better for the students because they just want to know the meaning, when I use English to explain you can imagine how confused they will be."
<b>Teacher 2</b>	"For learning English especially related to vocabulary that has never been heard an example that is where the role of Bahasa Indonesia is needed to be the language of instruction so that all students can understand."  "For example, when reading a question, eventually, there is a process called understanding the meaning of the question. Maybe in one question, there are one or two words that cannot be understood, that's the right time to use Bahasa Indonesia so that students can understand the meaning of the questions given."
<b>Teacher 3</b>	"As you know sometimes as 9 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher, I have to drill them with many tasks in their book (Students Worksheet Book) I use Bahasa Indonesia to make they understand the questions. Let us imagine the situation first, at the first when I ask them to read the question, I am not asking them to read in English term, I ask them to read the meaning of the question. I used to do that because to answer the question they need to understand the meaning of the question, right? I lead them to translate and interpret the meaning of the question and I ask them to read loudly to increase their confidence in English and I use Bahasa Indonesia as long as questions activity to make them comfortable

	and confident and it can be increasing their capability in Vocabulary too.”
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According to all of the EFL teachers, if the students still seem to have problems in understanding after giving them clues, L1/Bahasa Indonesia should be used, as Chung (2016) stated that students in English as a foreign language context are limited by their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the target language and have to struggle to comprehend the content. The main reason for all the EFL teachers preferring the use of L1/Bahasa Indonesia was related to the concern that the students may misunderstand the new vocabulary items or the input provided to them, sometimes it would be more difficult for the teachers if they used English to define a new vocabulary for the students. The solution to this obstacle is to acquire new vocabulary in Bahasa Indonesia, which makes it easier and faster to understand.

**Socializing in the Classroom**

One of the rarely discussed issues in the literature emerging from the data was that socialization in the classroom as an important aspect of learning process, and the EFL teachers mentioned that such socialization can only be done by “telling jokes” or “talking about the trending news” that happened in school. The excerpts of the EFL teachers’ statements will be presented below.

Table 4. The teachers’ statements for socializing in the classroom by using L1

Participants	Participants' statements
<b>Teacher 1</b>	"I want to disclaim first that the icebreaking that I gave in class was just a kind of interlude for a bit joke to the students so that the lesson would not feel boring and I used Bahasa Indonesia because if I use English they will not be able to get funny moments."
<b>Teacher 2</b>	"Maybe besides that when I want to have intermezzo bit by throwing some jokes at the students, I use Bahasa Indonesia so that my jokes can be relatable, if I use English, they might be silent without a reaction that is not what I expected of course."
<b>Teacher 3</b>	"As a teacher who has taught for a long time at Junior High School, I understand how students feel when they are tiresome in class. At that time, I usually lighten up the atmosphere by inviting them to joke or discuss some funny and trending things at school, and to be able to communicate related to the students, I use Bahasa Indonesia. If I use English, I'm afraid that instead of feeling a little entertained, I'm even more stressed because I don't get the moment to be able to discuss exciting things together."

According to the excerpts above, the reason for implementing L1/Bahasa Indonesia to interact in class was that students infrequently recognized jokes in English and it was possible that they would miss out on the amusing and interesting times together. Another reason for EFL teachers utilizing L1/Bahasa Indonesia in classroom to make jokes or mingle was to develop excellent relationships between teachers and students and to make the learning process less tiring.

#### The Reasons of EFL Teachers on the Use of L1 in EFL Classroom

For the data that represented the reasons for EFL teachers' use L1 in the classroom, four sub-themes emerged, as follows: The background of the school and the students and the main instrument to communicate with the students, the excerpts will be presented below.

#### The Background of the School and the Students

Language is the dominant aspect of our daily lives, as a source of communication with everyone, the language we use is also related to the environment in which we live. The environment in which we live affects the language we use, especially our ability in English. To find out more about the reasons why EFL teachers use L1/Bahasa Indonesia in the classroom, it is related to the background of the students, the excerpts will be presented below.

Table 5. The teachers' statements for using L1 because of students' background

Participants	Participants' statements
<b>Teacher 1</b>	"The social environment affects the process of learning English for them, especially since the location of this school is rural areas. The students mostly use local languages for their daily conversation while in the class they use Bahasa Indonesia, it seems almost no one has an English background at home."
<b>Teacher 2</b>	"Actually, the background of the students can be another reason why I use Bahasa Indonesia more because you can see the location of this school in rural areas, I am sure that the students did not have any special background in English. In their daily activity they usually using "Bahasa Jawa, Osing or Madura" to communicate with their family and when they in school they usually Bahasa Indonesia to communicate with others, it will be so hard if we do not use Bahasa Indonesia at all in the classroom activity."
<b>Teacher 3</b>	"In terms of association peculiarly in rural areas like this school, the environment does not use English. The background of the students becomes the fundamental foundation for students to understand English or maybe other foreign languages, for example, there is a student whose family at home often uses English or usually communicating using English is certainly not too much of a problem because it is like having already prepared
	compared to the others."

From the excerpts above, we know that all the EFL teachers agreed that the background of the school and the students affected whether or not students were good in English. Hossain (2016) stated that in most rural areas, life has a totally different focus and it is not based only on education, he also mentioned that students in rural areas have low performance compared to students in urban areas because it is related to their parents' education, on the other hand, some other aspects are the financial factor, logistic support, less qualified teachers, and not adequate books.

The distance from SMP NEGERI 3 MUNCAR to the district/city of Muncar is 11.9 KM with a travel time of approximately 21 minutes by a motorcycle, while the distance to Banyuwangi Regency/city is 30 KM with a travel time of approximately 60 minutes using a motorcycle. Therefore, the school located in the rural areas. Because of that the language used by students in daily communication is Bahasa Indonesia and their vernacular language that is why students have lack of vocabulary. Therefore, the EFL teachers used Bahasa Indonesia at certain moments to make students understand the material or information provided.

#### The Main Instrument to Communicate with Students

Communication is critical in teaching English because it allows the teacher to transfer the lesson to the students. To attain goals in English learning, students must accept the content that is given or presented correctly. It is impossible to ignore the importance of effective communication between teachers and students.

Based on some of the arguments raised above, we may conclude that Bahasa Indonesia was the most effective communication tool for transferring information to students. According to the issues raised above, EFL teachers frequently said that Bahasa Indonesia was the sole communication tool that was most successful for students learning English, such as the comment made by Teacher 1, an excerpt of which is shown below:

"Bahasa Indonesia is here as the only most effective tool of communication between me as a Teacher and them as students."

According to one of the EFL teachers mentioned above, students were more comfortable and faster to understand the material, if they used Bahasa Indonesia as the primary language to convey the material in learning English and as the main instrument for developing good communication between teachers and students. Teachers could not explain difficult topics or define new vocabulary to students if they did not speak Bahasa Indonesia.

The findings of the research showed that all the EFL teachers agreed that giving instructions in L1 to students is the main concern to make the material easy to understand. This is in line with the study conducted by Debreli Emre (2016) who found that EFL teachers prefer to use L1 in particular instance such as when giving instructions to the students.

Yildiz, M., &Yesilyurt, S. (2016) also found that most the participants on that study advocated the use of L1/Turkish in English classes particularly for giving instructions to students. In this study, as stated by the participants/EFL Teachers, giving instruction in L1/Bahasa Indonesia was easier and more effective for students to understand the teachers' instruction, especially when the teachers asked them to read the question. As the Teacher 3 stated sometimes the students did not get the point when the teacher asked them to read the question in English, hence, the teachers decided to use L1 for giving instructions. The teachers need to explain it in simple way and the use of L1 here is important in order to ensure that students get the point of the teachers' instruction.

The findings of the research also indicated that all the EFL teachers used L1 for explaining difficult topics for students, since the students have lack of ability in English all the Teachers tent to use L1/Bahasa Indonesia to lead better learning outcomes. The primary factor that all EFL teachers prefer using L1/Bahasa Indonesia is the possibility that the students would misinterpret the new vocabulary items or the input presented to them. It would also be more difficult for the teachers if they used English to define a new vocabulary for the students. Moreover, teachers utilized L1 in the classroom to socialize with students. All of teachers used the L1 for increasing students' motivation to study. The EFL teachers realized that the learning process might be tiresome sometimes, therefore they used L1 to build a good communication with students, they used jokes around together and talking about the trending topic in school, etc. As Teacher 3 mentioned, if teachers are forced to use English in gags, the students may still not understand the context, causing them to be even more stressed than before. Those things were in line with the study conducted by Debreli Emre (2016) who discovered that in order to brighten the environment in the classroom, the teacher employed L1 for socializing in the classroom, defining new words and explaining difficult topics. Yildiz, M., & Yesilyurt, S. (2016) who also found that the teachers used Turkish in English classes when explaining new words and checked for students' understanding.

In addition, when being asked about the reasons why the EFL teachers used L1 in class, they mentioned some points. The first was because of the background of the school and the students. Since the location of the school was in rural areas it affected the background of the students who did not have an adequate proficiency in English. The students usually used their vernacular language in their home and used Bahasa Indonesia at school and this was the second reason of why EFL teachers used L1/Bahasa Indonesia to communicate with the students. These were in line with the research conducted by Hossain (2016) who found that in most rural areas, life has a total different focus and it is not based only on education, he also mentioned that students in rural areas have low performance compared to students in urban areas because it is related to their parents' education, on the other hand, some other aspects are the financial factor, logistic support, less qualified teachers, and not adequate books. Mumary Songbatumis, A. (2017) also found that the challenges in teaching English in rural areas come from students as well, these challenges were students' lack of vocabulary mastery, students' low concentration, lack of parents' support, lack of discipline, boredom, speaking problem, and because of these



reasons teachers' decided to use L1/Bahasa Indonesia as the main tool to communicate with students.

To conclude, all the EFL teachers in this study believed that using L1/ Bahasa Indonesia is necessary to improve students' English abilities. For instance, for defining new words, explaining difficult topics, etc. Furthermore, all EFL teachers used L1/Bahasa Indonesia because of the schools and students' backgrounds, and lastly, Bahasa Indonesia was the primary tool for communicating with the students.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis and discussion of this study, it is concluded that the EFL teachers' perception was explained by classifying them into the four themes, as follows: when giving instructions, when explaining difficult topics, when defining vocabulary, and when socializing in the classroom. All the EFL teachers agreed that giving instruction in L1 or Bahasa Indonesia to students was the main concern to make the material easy to understand. In explaining difficult topics all EFL teachers also still need to use Bahasa Indonesia to ensure the material given is understandable, it goes the same way for defining new vocabulary and socializing in the classroom. All EFL teachers use L1/ Bahasa Indonesia in order to make students stress-less in learning English, because when they still use English in explaining new vocabulary or telling a joke, the students will feel the class monotonous and unmotivated to continue in learning.

There were two main reasons why the EFL teachers used L1/Bahasa Indonesia in the classroom: the students' rural backgrounds and the main instruments used to communicate with the students. The major concern of EFL teachers here in choosing L1/Bahasa Indonesia appears to be ensuring that students adequately receive the given input. To transmit the information effectively, it is necessary for the teachers and students to establish strong communication. All EFL teachers believe that utilizing L1/Bahasa Indonesia is effective and easier for students to absorb, leading to improved learning results in the future. Furthermore, because L1/Bahasa Indonesia is the main means of communication with the students, all of the EFL teachers believed that the usage of Bahasa Indonesia is essential due to the students' needs in comprehending the material.

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