



## The Use of L1 In Teaching English

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### Abstract

This research aims at finding the functions of the use of L1 in teaching English. It is descriptive research. Purposive sampling technique was used to choose the sample. There were two samples in this research. The researcher used tape recorder to collect the data. It is found that the core functions of the use L1 is higher than the social function of the use L1. The core functions are record keeping; language analysis; presenting the rules of grammar, phonology, morphology, and grammar; checking comprehension; translating L1; explaining new vocabulary or material; brain storming; eliciting; testing; highlight the recent item of material and checking for sense of the students' language and social functions are classroom management; instruction or prompts; giving advice, asking the students' conditions; checking attendance; joking; and threaten the students to maintain discipline. As long as the lecturers or teacher use L1 appropriately it can support the teaching process.

**Keywords:** English teaching, L1 and L2, the use of L1, the functions of L1

### Introduction

Teaching English as foreign language is a challenge for a teacher. Technique, method, and approach should be varied to create interactive class. But, sometimes teacher faces a problem how to transfer meaning of target language implicitly. Some utterances are sometimes hard to enumerate in target language. In this case, the teacher are back to use source language (L1) in teaching English as foreign language. On the other side, using L1 in teaching English is debatable as Kaanzadeh et al (2013) stated that over use of L1 in L2 classes might lead to students' dissatisfaction. But if it used appropriately, it can have positive effect on the English language teaching and learning process

(Scrivener, 2005 in Hanakova and Metruk). Briefly, the use of L1 in EFL class should be proportional.

English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Of course, the students very rarely expose it in spite of in the class room. So it seems that the use of full English class must be considerable. Somehow, using of L1 (Bahasa) is sometimes needed. Even the students in English department may rarely use and expose English. Besides that, the students' conditions also become the reason for the lectures or teachers to use L1. Not all the students are competent in English, some may have low command so to make the students feel comfortable in English class, the lecturers or the teacher use mother tongue. But it is needed to be an information that Bahasa is not mother tongue as it is official language. But to avoid confusion, the researcher uses L1 as term of Bahasa.

Nation in Bakhtiarvand (2013) advocated that the use of L1 as an efficient way to make it easy for the students to understand L2. It avoids the student's misunderstanding of teachers' instructions. Kerr (2019) divided the use of L1 in two categories: core function and social function. Core function concerns with the teaching of Language such as explaining grammar and vocabulary and checking understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and text. While social function concerns with the management of the classroom such as managing personal relationship (building rapport, maintaining discipline), giving instructions, and dealing with administrative matters. Of course in the classroom the teachers should use L1 based on core function more than the social one. Schweers (1999) suggested uses for the L1 in the EFL classroom as follows:

1. Eliciting language "how do you say 'x' in English?"
2. Checking comprehension "how do you say "I've been waiting for ten minutes in Spanish?" (also used for comprehension of a reading or listening text).
3. Giving complex instruction to basic levels
4. Co-operating in group
5. Explaining classroom methodology at basic levels
6. Using translation to highlight a recently taught language item
7. Checking for sense
8. Testing (translation items can be useful in testing mastery of forms and meanings)
9. Developing circumlocution strategies

It is more detailed but they can be categorized into social and core function. Burden in Kadhim (2016) indicated that the important of L1 use and role in many task such as:

1. Explaining the new vocabulary
2. Giving instructions
3. Talking about the test
4. Grammar instructions

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#### 5. Checking the students' understanding and relaxing

Both Schweers and Burden had shared ideas of the use L1 in the classroom, although Burden suggested using LI to explain new vocabulary and grammar instructions. Atkinson in Schweers (1999) added that the appropriate uses of LI in the L2 classroom are negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson: record keeping: classroom management: scene setting: language analysis: presentation of rule grammar, phonology, morphology, and grammar; discussion of cross-cultural issues; instructions or prompts; explanations of errors; and assessment of comprehensions. The use of L1 can help the learning process; Vera et al compiled the advantages of using L1 in the foreign language classroom by some experts such as:

1. The students do not get lost Students and teachers are less likely to become discouraged and frustrated
2. It saves time
3. It is easier to explain grammar in the mother tongue
4. It is more comfortable for the students
5. Students do not have to work so hard to pay attention
6. Teachers who are not confident of their skills in the target Language can still teach

Turnbull (2018) suggested that the cultural and educational background in which FL teachers were themselves educated may have an influential effect on their teacher code-switching practices and pedagogical approach. It is closely related to the use of L1 in the classrooms. He also found that Asians teachers use L1 to translate and explain difficult grammar and vocabulary to assist the students' comprehensions. Tajgozari (2017) found that students in all language level in institutions had positive perception toward L1 in L2 classes, teacher indicated their eagerness toward using L1 in high schools more than in institutes, and furthermore his study has more implication for EFL teachers. It supported that teachers need to use L1 in classroom to make the students feel comfortable and do not get lost. Miles (2004) evaluated the use of L1 and found that possible support for monolingual and bilingual class. First theory is that using L1 in the classroom does not hinder learning and secondly that L1 has a facilitating role to play in the classroom and can actually help learning. Then Othman and Abdulla (2011) found that L1 is used by the teachers and students arbitrary. So it sometimes used based on random choices and not dependent on certain circumstances. Furthermore, Carson and Kashihara (2011) stated that the use of L2 should be maximized; occasional strategic use of L1 would be beneficial. Students need exposure to L2 but L1 can assist when L2 examples and explanation cannot alleviate confusion. Even though the use of L1 is allowed in English class but it does not mean that the teacher should use L1 in each utterances because the students also need exposure to English.

This research investigated about" what are the use of L1 in teaching English in the classroom?" that may become an information to the lecturers and

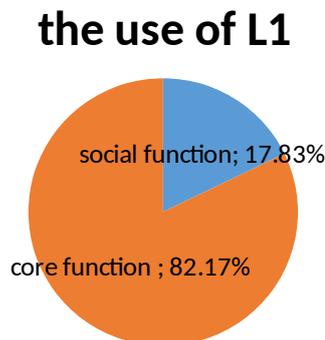
teacher in using L1. So they can consider how to use L1 in English class. Indeed, it is used to invite the students in playing role in the classroom.

### Research Method

This research is descriptive. It aims to describe what the use of L1 are in teaching English. To obtain the data, the tape recorder was used to record the teaching process. The data were transcript, reduced, displayed, and concluded. The data are categorized into core functions and social function. Somehow, the use of L1 may be extended based on category that needed to be explained in this research into another category.

### Findings and Discussion

The finding of the research is described as follows:



The pie chart above shows that the core function of L1 use is higher than the social function. Core functions concerns with the teaching of Language such as explaining grammar and vocabulary and checking understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and text. While social function concerns with the management of the classroom such as managing personal relationship (building rapport, maintaining discipline), giving instructions, and dealing with administrative matters. Besides that in core function it is also found that the lectures use L1 to translate English. the researcher outlined the core functions used by the lecturers such as : record keeping; language analysis; presenting the rules of grammar, phonology, morphology, and grammar; checking comprehension; translating L1; explaining new vocabulary or material; brain storming; eliciting; testing; highlight the recent item of material and checking for sense of the students' language. Social functions of the L1 use are related to management of classroom. In this research, it is also found that social function are classroom management; instruction or prompts; giving advice, asking the students' conditions; checking attendance; joking; and threaten. Here are the examples of the utterances:

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No	core functions	utterances	social functions	utterances
1	record keeping	Ok, who is very kind dependent, <b>kemudian</b> this one independent clause. Ok, <b>contoh yang lain</b> .....then .....other example	classroom management	<b>tolong semuanya duduk di depan</b> please sit on the first row
2	language analysis	Ok <b>nda ada lagi ya</b> . Ok, <b>sekarang karna sudah ada wordnya, sudah ada clausenya eh sudah ada phrasenya sekarang clausenya. Berapa clause yang ada disini?</b> I will study although I'm sick No more ok now because there have been word, clause eh phrase, now clause, how many clauses here?	instruction or prompt	<b> baca kalimatnya kemudian identifikasi</b> read the sentence then identify
3	presenting the rules of language	<b>Engri bukan angry</b> (it is <i>engri</i> not <i>angry</i> )	giving advice	<b>Usahakan bisa beli mantel ya. Kalau kamu naik motor, usahakan selalu siapkan mantel ya. Supaya kalau hujan kamu tidak terhalang untuk ke kampus. R....? A...? Mana A..? Kenapa ini A...?</b> (you should buy a rain coat. If you ride a motorcycle, you should prepare it. So you can go to campus even it rains R..? A..? where is A? what's the matter with A?)
4	checking comprehension	<b>Kenapa bisa dikatakan</b> dependent? (why is it called dependent?)	asking the students' condition	<b>terus kamu kesini naik apa?</b> How did you come here?
5	translating L1	Speak louder please <b>kasi keras suaranya</b> Who can mention? <b>Siapa yang bisa sebutkan?</b>	checking attendance	<b>Ok, ada yang belum saya sebut namanya?</b> Have I called all of

				your names?
6	explaining new material or vocabulary	Travel essay <b>sama halnya dengan</b> travel writing. It will focus on the object of place. Oh here, but maybe I explain in bahasa ya. Travel essay <b>sebuah perjalanan yang dialami dan dihayati penulis yang ditulis dengan menerapkan gaya hingga menyentuh emosi pembaca</b> (travel essay is similar to travel writing. It will focus on the object of place. Oh here, but maybe I explain in bahasa ya. Travel essay is a trip that is passed and visualized by the writer, it is written with a style which touched the readers' emotions.)	Joking	<b>Saya lebih suka kalau liat kamu langsung daripada ada yang menghalangi saya, jadi jangan ada jarak diantara kita</b> I prefer seeing you closely instead of something between us, so no distance between us
7	brain storming	, <b>kira-kira apa yang muncul dibenaknya kalian kalau mendengarkan kata klausa? Ok, misalnya kalau saya dengar kata klausa saya ingat teman saya, nda yah. Apa yang muncul dibenaknya adek-adek kalau mendengar kata clause atau klausa?</b> What is in your mind after hearing a word "klausa"? ok for example, if I hear "klausa" I remember my friend, don't I? what is in your mind I you hear it?	threaten	<b>Jangan main-main ya. Karena</b> because a lot of observer's here Don't play because .....
8	Eliciting	<b>Biasa dengar ya, Hari kemerdekaan Indonesia apa bahasa Inggrisnya? atau hari kemerdekaan</b> Do you always hear, hari kemerdekaan Indonesia what is in English? or hari kemerdekaan		
9	Testing	Palopo is the village <b>bisa nda berdiri sendiri?</b> Palopo is my village, can it stand alone?		
10	highlight the recent item of	<b>ingat kalau dependent clausenya didepan maka dia harus digunakan?</b>		

	material	Remember that If dependent clause is before the main clause so it should use?		
11	checking for sense	You must breakfast before going to school. <b>Yak, coba yang lain dengarkan ya</b> Please listen it		

From the table, the core functions of the use of L1 are categorized in eleven categories while social function of L1 can be group in seven categories. Compared with others research, it seems that the use of L1 in English class are almost similar for the category testing, checking the students' comprehension, explain the difficult material, analyzing the language, eliciting, checking for the sense, and record keeping, and highlight the recent item of the material. But it is interesting that the use of L1 is to translate the target language even it is simple utterances such as "Speak louder please **kasi keras suaranya** and "Who can mention? **Siapa yang bisa sebutkan?** "It seems that is kind of habit of the Indonesian lectures because English is foreign language. They do it immediately to make the students understand even it is undoubted that they already know the meaning. But it is rather different from the findings of Turnbull (2018) that Asians teachers use L1 to translate and explain difficult grammar and vocabulary to assist the students' comprehensions. The lectures tend to use L1 to translate the recent utterances.

The lectures may use L1 to make the students easy to understand the material as shown in the part of explaining material. Vera has compiled that using L1 can save the time. For difficult material it is ok for the lecturers or teachers use L1. It is easier to explain grammar in the mother tongue. But it cannot be limited on grammar only as "Travel essay **sama halnya dengan** travel writing. It will focus on the object of place. Oh here, but maybe I explain in bahasa ya. Travel essay **sebuah perjalanan yang dialami dan dihayati penulis yang ditulis dengan menerapkan gaya hingga menyentuh emosi pembaca** " it is obvious that the lecturer switch the language into Bahasa . of course it is rather difficult to explain in English. As Bakhtiarvand (2013) advocated that the use of L1 as an efficient way to make it easy for the students to understand L2. It is also supported by Miles (2004) who evaluated the use of L1 and found that possible support for monolingual and bilingual class. Kerr (2019) stated social function concerns with the management of the classroom such as managing personal relationship (building rapport, maintaining discipline), giving instructions, and dealing with administrative matters. Compared with the finding such as giving advice, asking the students' conditions, joking are included in building rapport. Joking is similar to Kadhim (2016) that the use of L1 is also for relaxing. Management of the classroom such as checking attendance, giving instructions, and classroom management

are also found in this research. Besides that, the use of L1 is also to threaten the students such as ***Jangan main-main ya. Karena*** because a lot of observer's here. In this case the lecturer tried to make the class disciplined and included in social function. Somehow, the utterance is kind of threatening the students. Othman and Abdulla (2011) found that L1 is used by the teachers and students arbitrary. It does not mean that certain circumstances can make the lecturers use L1. It is more detailed that the uses of L1 are core function that related to teaching language and social function that related to class management.

## Conclusion

Based on the discussion, there are some claims that have been found in this research. First, the core function of the use L1 is higher than the social function of the use L1. The core functions are record keeping; language analysis; presenting the rules of grammar, phonology, morphology, and grammar; checking comprehension; translating L1; explaining new vocabulary or material; brain storming; eliciting; testing; highlight the recent item of material and checking for sense of the students' language and social functions are classroom management; instruction or prompts; giving advice, asking the students' conditions; checking attendance; joking; and threaten the students to maintain discipline. As long as the lecturers or teacher use L1 appropriately it can support the teaching process.

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