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The Use of English and Indonesian in the English Classroom

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Abstract—In the age of globalization, English mastery is indispensable and English instruction needs to be improved. However, while the full use of English is expected in the English classroom, code mixing may occur in a multilingual society, such as Indonesia. This study aimed to investigate the use of both languages at a junior secondary school in Bengkulu, Indonesia. Data collection included observation and recording. Some degree of code mixing was found, in which, overall, the use of English was 50.8% while the use of Indonesian was 49.2%. Furthermore, the use of English was 'rather high' in setting homework (68.4%) and commenting on work (61%), while the use of Indonesian was 'high' in disciplining pupils (87.7%) and explaining meaning (83.1%). It seemed that Indonesian was used to achieve a more effective instruction. However, to improve English instruction, there is a need to increase the use of English in all areas.

Keywords- Teacher's use of English, Indonesian

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, as English is becoming an international language, it becomes very important for Indonesian people to learn English in order to communicate with people from other countries. As a consequence, the Indonesian government requires Indonesian students to learn English at schools. In Indonesia English is a foreign language; thus Indonesian students learn English as a foreign language (EFL). As EFL students, they need to learn English through effective ways, one of which is through using English in daily activities. The problem is that students seldom speak English outside the classroom. They prefer speaking in the Indonesian language rather than speaking in English because the former is easier to be understood.

In learning English, the students need to be accustomed in using English, as to Chambers (1991) declares that the use of English is a good sign for learning the language. Because the students generally do not use it outside the classroom, they have to use English as much as possible inside the classroom. The students need to use English as an object of study as well as a tool for doing activities in the classroom.

In EFL classroom, the use of target language is essential for both the teacher and students. The teacher needs to use target language frequently to make the students accustomed. Clark, cited in Franklin, (1990) contends that the teacher should ask the students to use target language for real activities, for example, through using English when they do exercises, asking questions, and providing answers. The use of target language in the classroom is very crucial. In order to students to English, they need to use English continuously inside the classroom. They need to have good English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill.

In this respect, the English teachers' role is very important in helping the students developing their English skills. In English class, teachers require to use English in the classroom to make the students accustomed. Although sometimes the teachers need to translate some words or phrases into Indonesian, they have to make sure that they use English as much as possible. According to Dickson (1996), there are four aspects that make the teachers hesitate in using target language: large class, mixed ability classes, fatigue and stress, and less fluent teachers.

Dickson (1996) suggested nine aspects of teaching which are crucial to be applied with the target language, such as: asking questions, commenting on work, directing pupils, correcting mistakes, organizing activities, disciplining pupils, setting homework, explaining meanings, and teaching grammar. Besides that, Franklin (1990) explained that there are seven important aspects of teaching in the target language: organizing the classroom, giving activity instructions, chatting informally with pupils, disciplining pupils, correcting written work, explaining meanings, explaining grammar, and explaining lessons.

An informal observation in a junior secondary school in Bengkulu revealed that the teachers at the school seldom used English. They spoke in Indonesian a lot. In addition, the teachers often translated some materials in Indonesian when the students did not understand the materials. Moreover, the teachers seldom gave a chance to the students to speak in English so that the students did not feel accustomed to the language that they learned.
As this situation might not be beneficial for effective learning of English, the researcher wanted to find out the teacher's use of English in the seventh grade in teaching and learning process in the school. In particular, the researcher wanted to investigate the dominant language used by the teachers in the English class and the aspects of use by the teacher in the classroom.

II. METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was a descriptive research, a kind of research method used to describe real circumstance (Sukmadinata, in Tajri (2013)). This study investigated the teacher's use of English in an English class of the seventh grade at an SMP (Sekolah Menengah Pertama, or junior high school) in Bengkulu, Indonesia.

The subject of this research was an English teacher who taught the seventh grade students at the SMP. The school was selected because it was seldom researched. Furthermore, the teacher has been teaching English for 26 years so that she had a lot of experience in teaching English. She taught six classes in a week. She would be observed for seven times in one class.

Three kinds of instruments were employed in this study, namely, observation checklist, audio recorder, and interview. The observation checklist consists of some aspects that were adapted from Franklin (1990) and Dickson (1996) and was used to observe the teacher's use of English. The audio recorder was used to record the English teachers' and students' activities during the teaching and learning process, in order to acquire a record of the teacher's use of English. The interview was used to get additional information.

In data analysis, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The quantitative method consisted of two parts. The first part was to find the reliability of observation, through comparison between scores from two observers, through the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Riduwan, 2007; Anonymous, 201):

$$r_p = \frac{N \sum XY-(\sum X \sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2-(\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2-(\sum Y)^2]}}$$  

(1)

Note:
- $r_p$: Coefficient of correlation
- $X$: Score distribution of variable $X$
- $Y$: Score distribution of variable $Y$
- $N$: Number of subjects

After finding the reliability, the data was analyzed by using the percentage formula (Sudijono, 2012),

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

(2)

Note:
- $P$: Percentage of the teacher's use of the language
- $f$: Frequency of words of the language used by the teacher
- $N$: Total number of words of all languages used by the teacher

Meanwhile, some elementary qualitative method was used to analyze the data from observation checklist, audio recorder, and interview. Gay and Airasian (2000) stated there are five steps in analyzing the qualitative data: data managing, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, and interpreting.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the finding of this study and subsequent discussion, in separate sub-sections.

A. Finding

The result of this research shows comparative numbers of English and Indonesian words that were used by the teacher observed for seven meetings in class 7C at the junior high school in Bengkulu. The comparison is shown in table 1.

The table shows that the average frequency of English words used by the teacher was 50.8%, while the average frequency of Indonesian words was 49.2%. In addition, there are some interesting indicators. The highest frequencies of the use of English words are in the fifth meeting (69%), the first meeting (59.7%), and the fourth meeting (59%), while the highest frequencies of Indonesian words are in the second meeting (73.4%), the sixth meeting (58.2%), and the third meeting (56.8%). On the other hand, the lowest frequencies of the use of English words are in the second meeting (26.7%), the sixth meeting (41.9%), and the third meeting (43.3%), while the lowest frequencies of Indonesian words are in the fifth meeting (31.1%), the first meeting (40.3%), and the fourth meeting (41.1%).

There were some interesting factors that influenced the teacher's use of English and Indonesian. In the fifth, first, and fourth meeting, the teacher preferred using mostly in English to Indonesian because the students were excited in joining the learning process. In those meetings, the students studied new and interesting topic. One of the examples was in the fourth meeting, in which the students learned a procedure text about how to cook fried noodle. When the teacher asked some questions about cooking instructions, the students were excited to answer.

On the other hand, during the second, sixth, and third meeting, the teacher preferred using mostly in Indonesian to English. There were two reasons for this situation. Firstly, the students did not understand the materials so that the teacher needed to explain them in Indonesian. Secondly, the teacher had to discipline the students in Indonesian because sometimes they got bored and started to talk with their friends.

In order to find out the difference in the use of both languages on various aspects, a second analysis shows the frequencies of aspects used by the teacher in teaching process of seven meetings. The result is presented in table 2.

Table 2 shows that there are some interesting indicators in some aspects. The dominant average frequencies used in English by the teacher were SH/"setting homework" (68.4%) and CW/"commenting on work" (61%).
TABLE I. THE AVERAGE FREQUENCY OF THE TEACHER’S USE OF ENGLISH AND INDONESIAN WORDS TABLE TYPE STYLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE II. THE AVERAGE FREQUENCY OF THE TEACHER’S USE OF ENGLISH AND INDONESIAN WORDS TABLE TYPE STYLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>GIA</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>CIP</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>AQ</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>CM</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>SH</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>TG</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
GIA: Giving activity instruction
CIP: Chatting informally with pupils
AQ: Asking questions
CW: Commenting on works
CM: Correcting mistakes
DP: Disciplining pupils

Meanwhile, the dominant average frequencies in Indonesian were DP 'disciplining pupils' (87.7%) and EM 'explaining meaning' (83.1%). On the contrary, there was only one aspect as the lowest frequency in both languages. It was CIP 'chatting informally with pupils' (0%).

B. Discussion

Table 1 shows that the average of English use by the teacher for seven meetings was only slightly higher (1.7%) than the average use of Indonesian. It could be argued that the students get some practice in using English, in order to improve their skill. However, Crichton (2009) maintains that one of the successful keys for communication approach is to use English as much as possible to communicate in the classroom. Crichton (2009) also stated that if the students listen to spoken language as frequent as possible, they will improve their listening skill and speaking skill. In improving listening skill, they will be able to understand the spoken language well. In improving speaking skill, they will improve their pronunciation and intonation as well as producing their own sentences. In this respect, based on Crichton’s statement, it could be argued that the English instruction was successful.

highest frequencies of English use by the teacher were revealed in the first, fourth, and fifth meetings. Based on the observation and transcript, it seemed that during these sessions the teacher preferred using English to Indonesian because the students were excited in learning process. For example, when the teacher asked, “What is the girl doing?” student 2 answered, “playing piano.” Then, when the teacher asked, “Where is that?” and the students answered, “Bedroom”. Although sometimes the students did not answer the teacher’s questions by using English, the teacher kept using English to stimulate the students.

Another example was the teacher and students’ dialog in the fifth meeting.

Teacher: Ok. Ok look at here. Look at the picture. What is this picture?
Students: Chef Ma’am
Teacher: Ya (Yes). Where?
Students: Dapur Mam (in the kitchen, Ma’am)
Teacher: What is in the kitchen? What is the Man doing?
Student 13: Motong-motong Mam. (He’s slicing meat into some pieces, Ma’am)
Teacher: Nice.

In the dialog, the students answered in Indonesian for “dapur, Mam” (in the kitchen, Ma’am). Then, the teacher kept asking questions in English for “What is in the kitchen? What is the man doing?” Although the students still answered in
Indonesian for “Motong-motong Mami” (He’s slicing meat into some pieces, Ma’am),” the teacher gave positive reinforcement in English for “Nice.” The purpose was to stimulate the students to use English for next conversations. The example shows the benefit of questions to improve the use of English. Dickson (1996) stated that the proportion of effective target language use for asking questions is 90%. When the teachers ask questions mostly in English, the students can be accustomed with the use of English and develop their listening skill and then practice it into speaking skill.

There was another reason for the higher percentage of English use in this session. In the fourth meeting, there was ‘Listen to and Repeat after” activity. The teacher asked the students to listen to the words she pronounced and repeat after her. The teacher definitely had to pronounce English words clearly so that the students could improve their listening skill.

As shown in table 2, other high frequencies of English use were found on commenting on work and setting homework. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher needs to encourage the students’ work to make increase their motivation. Based on the observation and transcript, the teacher often said “That’s good,” “Very good,” and “Excellent”. Dickson (1996) contends that the teacher should give some comments for the students after the students finish doing their tasks, and that it is advisable to provide the comments in English in order to accustomed the students. The teacher can emphasize the points of the comments to make them understandable for the students.

Still another area in with high frequency use of English was setting homework. Homework is important for the students to make them stay at home because they never use English outside the classroom. In setting homework, the teacher needs to use understandable English words because the students often find some difficulties in understanding the teacher’s instructions. Dickson (1996) stated that difficulties happen because the students have the limited language competence. Based on the observation and transcript, the teacher set homework by using simple English words, for example, “Okay. Make it homework.”

By contrast, the highest frequencies of Indonesian use, and the lowest frequency of English use, by the teacher were in the second, sixth, and third meeting. Based on the observation and transcript, most of the students were silent in some conditions. It seemed that one of the reasons of the students’ silence was that they did not know the answer of the teacher’s question. When the teacher saw that her students did not answer anything, she explained the materials in Indonesia to make clarify the materials for the students. On the third meeting, the teacher used Indonesian to explain grammar. Here was an example of the teacher and students’ conversation.

Teacher : Very good, student 3. Ada yang tahu gimana rumus Simple Present Tense? (Is there anyone who knows the formula of Simple Present Tense?)

Students : (silent)

Teacher : (writing the formula of Simple Present Tense on the whiteboard) Sampai sini paham? Atau ada yang mau ditanyakan? (Do you understand this part? Is there anything you want to ask about?)

Student 10 : Kami, Mem. Mem, yang di verbal tu, yang ditambah s/es untuk orang ketiga. Orang ketiga tu yang cak mano, Mem? (Me, Ma’am. Ma’am, What is the meaning of the third person?)

Teacher : Ooo... Orang ketiga tu yang he, she, sama it. Paham sekarang? (Ooo... The third persons are he, she, and it. Do you understand?)

Student 15 : Trus, Mem, yang ditambah kek s/es tu cumo untuk he, she, it. Nah, trus yang I, we, they, ditambah samo apo, Mem? (Ma’am, if ‘he, she, it’ are added by ‘/es,’ how about ‘I, we, and they?’)

Teacher : Klu untuk subjek I, you, we, they, nggak ditambah sama apa-apa. (For subjects ‘I, you, we, and they’ no addition is required).

In the dialog, the students did not know formula of Simple Present Tense so that the teacher explained the formula in Indonesian. When the students asked the teacher parts of the formula that they did not understand, the teacher kept explaining them in Indonesian to make it clear for the students. In this respect, Dickson (1996) suggested that the good proportion of teaching grammar in English is 10%. It means that the teacher can teach grammar by using English (10%) and Indonesian (90%). The purpose is to make grammar materials understandable for the students.

Other areas in which the uses of Indonesian were high were in disciplining pupils and explaining meaning. In teaching and learning process, it is essential to make the students keep focused on the lesson. Based on the observation and transcript, the teacher often used Indonesian when the students were busy of talking to each other. The examples were “Heyy, jangan ribut!! Mentang – mentang mem nyuruh teman kalian, kalian ribut. Kalian harus bisa menghargaiorang lain. Paham?” (Hey, don’t be noisy!! You have to appreciate your friends. Understand?) “Heyy, kalian ini kebiasaan. Disuruh ngerjakan tugas, malah nggrobol. Ayo kerjakan. Nanti Mem suruh ngerjakan di luar, kalau masih nggrobol.” (Hey!!! I ask you to do the assignments, not to chat with your friends. If you’re still chatting, I will ask you to get out from the classroom).

The purpose of using Indonesian was to make the students stopped doing their own business and kept focusing on the lesson. Cook (2001) encourages teachers to use L1 when disciplining the students. On the other hand, Dickson (1996) explains that teachers can use target language when disciplining students. Franklin (1990) also contends that teachers can discipline students by using foreign language although there will be some difficulties.

Still another area with high frequency of Indonesia use was when the teacher needs to help the students to explain unfamiliar words. Based on the observation and transcript, the teacher explained the meanings of the words mostly in Indonesian. The examples are as follows. “Jadi, similiar meaning’ itu sama dengan sinonim” (So, ‘similar meaning’ is the same as ‘synonym’). “Artinya itu nak, ketapel itu terbuat dari kayu yang bentuknya Y” (It means that a slinghot is made from wooden Y). “Crack the egg berarti pecahkan
telur" (Crack the egg means 'pecahkan telur'). One good thing was that the teacher also asked the students to look for meanings of the words in the dictionary by themselves. In addition, based on the interview result, the students need to master vocabularies so that they can understand messages of the text. In this respect, Franklin (1990) states that the teacher can explain unfamiliar words by simplifying the words. Furthermore, Castellotti and Moore, in Turnbull and Arnett (2002) declare that teachers can use L1 to clarify unfamiliar vocabularies if it is useful to improve students' target language proficiency.

The other interesting aspect was chatting informally with pupils. Based on the observation, the teacher only focused on teaching and learning process formally. She never chatted with the students informally. Although she walked around the classroom, she only checked the students' work without saying anything. Actually, Franklin (1990) defines communication as an important tool to develop English listening and speaking skill. The teachers can talk with the students in English when they walk around the classroom to check what the students are doing. The students can also ask some questions in English if they have some difficulties or misunderstandings. If the students do not know what to say in English, they can combine it with Indonesian.

From previous discussion, it could be concluded that there were some particular aspects that were more suitable used in English or Indonesian. In addition, there were three other factors that could influence the teacher to use English in the classroom, namely the students' involvement, the source of the materials, and the students' different level of ability.

The first is the students' involvement. Teaching and learning process should be student-centered. It means that the students should participate actively in the classroom, through expressing ideas, asking some questions, and answering the teacher's questions. During the observation, when the students were active in joining learning process, the teacher was motivated to keep using English. The purpose was to give some practices of listening skill to the students. The students were also expected to improve their speaking skill.

The second is the source of materials. The source of material is essential because materials constitute the core of teaching and learning process. The teacher needs to have different sources so that the students can get various materials. When the teacher has various materials, she can be confident in delivering the materials because she can relate one material to another from different sources. During the observation, the teacher used four different sources of materials, namely, LKS/Lembar Kerja Siswa (Students' Worksheet), 'English on Sky Grade 7' Book, 'English Kangaroo Book for Year 7', and materials from internet. The use of different sources for some meetings may prevent boredom among the students.

The third is the students' different level of ability. In the classroom, the students have different level of ability. There Franklin, C. (1990) Teaching in the target language: Problems and prospects. The Language Learning Journal, 2(1), 20-24.


are high achieving students, medium achieving students, and low achieving students. Their ability to understand the materials will be different; low achieving students in particular has the greatest difficulty. Based on the observation and interview, sometimes the teacher translated what she was talking about into Indonesian to make it clear for all students.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result of the research, the researcher concluded that the total of average frequency of English used by the teacher for seven meetings was 50.8%, while the total of average frequency of Indonesian use was 49.2%. Comparatively, the average frequency of English use was only slightly higher (1.7%) than the average frequency of Indonesian.

There were situations in which the use of English were relatively higher, such as in 'giving activity instruction', 'asking question', 'commenting on works', and 'setting homework'. There were other situations in which the use of Indonesian were relatively higher, such as 'correcting mistakes', 'disciplining pupils', 'teaching grammar', 'explaining meaning', and 'explaining lesson'. There was no use for both languages in 'chatting informally with pupils'.

The use of Indonesian in the English class has some justification. However, in order to improve the effectiveness of the English instruction, the use of English needs to be increased substantially. As such, further studies need to be conducted in order to find ways to increase the use of English in the classroom.

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