

**STUDENTS' PREFERENCES TOWARDS THE USE
OF MOTHER TONGUE IN EFL CLASSROOM OF
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

A THESIS

by

Louay Ma'mun Assabiq

06011181621016

English Education Study Program



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

INDRALAYA

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A Thesis by

Louay Ma'mun Assabiq

Student Number: 060111862106

English Education Study Program

Language and Arts Education Department

FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

2020

Approved by,

Advisor 1,

Advisor 2,



Dr. Margaretha Dinar Sitinjak, M.A

NIP.1965700419880320001



Hesti Wahyuni Aggraini, S. Pd., M. Pd.

NIP.198609282014042001

Certified by,

**Head of Language and
Arts Department**

**Coordinator of English
Education Study Program,**



Dr. Didi Suhendi, S.Pd., M. Hum.

NIP.196910221994031001

Hariswan Putra Java, S.Pd., M. Pd.





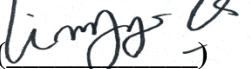
NIP. 197408022002121003

This thesis was defended by the writer in the final program examination and was approved by the examination committee on:

Day : Friday

Date : 26 June, 2020

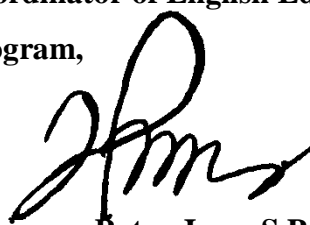
EXAMINATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1. Chairperson | : Dr. Mgrt. Dinar Sitinjak, M.A. |  |
| 2. Secretary | : Hesti Wahyuni Aggraini, S.Pd., M.Pd. |  |
| 3. Member | : Hariswan Putra Jaya, S.Pd., M. Pd. |  |
| 4. Member | :Drs. Muslih Hambali, MLIS. |  |
| 5. Member | : Lingga Agustina Sugandao S.Pd., M.Pd. |  |

Indralaya, 26 June 2020

Certified by,

**Coordinator of English Education Study
Program,**



Hariswan Putra Jaya, S.Pd., M. Pd.

NIP. 197408022002121003

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

Name : Louay Ma'mun Assabiq

Place, date of birth : Tanjung Pura, December 21th, 1998

Student's Number : 06011181621016

Study Program : English Education

Certify that thesis entitled "Students' Preferences towards the Used of Mother Tongue in EFL Classroom of Sriwijaya University" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or in appropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserved to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Indralaya, 26 June 2020



Louay Ma'Mun Assabiq

06011181621016

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

- **The Almighty God of Allah SWT and Prophet Muhammad SAW**
- **My beloved parent and sisters and brothers. Thanks for love, help, support, pray, and advice, so I am better than before.**
- **My beloved best mates, Ayu Vermila, Feren Dias Zetira, Salwa Damayanti, Oktalyana Syafitri, Shisi Octa Ruli, Adelin Ramadhini, Giratia. You are the best, thanks for giving me support, opinion and help me to finish my paper and thank you for our relationship.**

Motto:

“Never give up on something you really want it. It’s difficult to wait, but more difficult to regret” (Mario Teguh)

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Palembang, June 2020
The Writer,

Louay Ma'un Assabiq

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THE STUDENTS' PREFERENCES TOWARDS THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN EFL CLASSROOM OF SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, students often use their mother tongue (MT) of their first language (L1) as their needs to comprehend the lesson. Indeed, many studies have been argued to utilize mother tongue in the EFL classroom. This study aimed to find (1) the students' needs of the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom and (2) students' perceptions towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom. The total number of the sample was 75 students from the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth semester students in EFL classroom of English Education Study Program, Sriwijaya University in academic year 2019/2020. This study was designed in mix-method by collecting the data through questionnaire and FGD (Focus Group Discussion). The result in this study was presented descriptively. The result indicated that the students need mother tongue in EFL classroom especially to confirm classmates' responses that were stated in mother tongue. Then, the students have a positive perception towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom. The students believed that the use of mother tongue is useful to increase their comprehension in English of English Education Study Program, Sriwijaya University. In other hand, English is a must for students to be used in EFL classroom. To sum up, the students' goals during language classroom activities can be revealed when the use of English and mother tongue as medium of instruction is used proportionally.

Keywords: mother tongue, EFL classroom, mixed method, students

A Thesis by an English Education Study Program Student, Faculty of Teacher Training Education, Sriwijaya University.

Name : Louay Ma'mun Assabiq

NIM : 06011181621016

Approved by,

Advisor 1,



Dr. Margaretha DinarSitinjak, M.A
NIP 1965700419880320001

Advisor 2,



Hesti Wahyuni Aggraini, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP 198609282014042001

Certified by,

Coordinator of English Education Study Program,



Hariswan Putra Jaya, S.Pd., M. Pd.

NIP 197408022002121003

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer explains (1) background of the study, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significances of the study.

1.1 Background of The Study

Language is utilized as a function to communicate with people. In this world, there are various languages available. Goodwyn and Branson (2005) claim that language is a primary instrument for people in the community because language determines the individual. Every language presents a characteristic that differs from one to another as well as English. English is used as the additional language to the speaker that is known as the lingua franca (Mauranen and Ranta, 2009). Most people want to study English to maintain with other people and understand that English is the most popular and grow into a universal language. Crystal (2003) indicates that when language delivers a specific role, it would earn global prestige and obtain it in each society. For that reason, in this globalization era, we cannot refuse that English has an important role to guide the students capable of competing with others.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, students often use their mother tongue (MT) of their first language (L1) as their needs to comprehend the lesson. Indeed, many studies have been argued to utilize mother tongue in the EFL classroom. Several studies consider that using mother tongue as the students' needs in the EFL classroom would assist in conducting a beneficial contribution to the learning process. Smidt (2008) emphasizes that language learning would build a successful outcome if the students are allowed to acquire their mother tongue as their needs in the EFL classroom setting. This study used the Common Underlying Proficiency Theory also as known as Language Interdependency or bilingualism by Cummins (2009) as the theoretical background, that support the use of L1 in EFL classroom. Cummins stated that the use of first language as a cognitive basis for proficiency in the foreign or second language.

The writer, as one of the students in the English department of Sriwijaya University, discovered that many students had used Indonesian language in the EFL classroom. Several students use English, while others used Indonesian Language to assist them to learn and understand the lesson. Moreover, there are many students from diverse backgrounds, especially language. Therefore, it is impossible to use various local languages that students have as their mother tongue in the classroom as a medium of learning because they cannot be used effectively during learning process. Therefore, Indonesian Language as the language of unity in Indonesia is used to facilitate students learning in EFL classroom. In line with this, mother tongue, in this case is Indonesian language as the first language of the students, can be taking a role as the students' needs in learning English (Piter, Leoneto, and Jaya, 2018). Brookes-Lewis (2009) mentions that the use of mother tongue in the EFL classroom is unavoidable, and it may guide a positive impact on the learning of the target language. Moreover, Sawin (2008) informs that it is crucial for the students to apply foreign language in the EFL classroom to have better input. Accordingly, we cannot ignore the fact that both mother tongue and English are useful to be used in EFL classroom.

On the contrary, some other studies have stated a negative contribution by using the mother tongue in learning the target language. As claimed by Cristina (2012), a habit might occur when the student overuses the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom. Additionally, the inclusion of mother tongue is not strengthen students' understandings nevertheless may impact inappropriate input of unnecessary language habits from L1 to the target language in EFL classroom (Littlewood and Yu, 2011). Depend on the previous studies; these studies conclude that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom is still arguable. Therefore, this study is created from those arguments of mother tongue use in the EFL classroom.

These arguments cause the lecturers and the students to be flexible in using language(s) when EFL classroom activities happen. According to Resmini (2019) in the Indonesian context, where English has taught as a foreign language, mother tongue is still needed by some students and teachers. The use of mother tongue can only be applied when learning particular subjects such as vocabulary and grammar,

while the use of English only can be used when they learn several subjects (Haryanto, Sulistyono and Wulan, 2016). In addition, the only chance to apply English is in the EFL classroom because there are fewer opportunities to apply outside of the classroom (Haryanto et al., 2016). In line with this issue, it is a common way for EFL teachers to use mother tongue as a medium to deliver knowledge in the EFL classroom.

There have been some previous related studies refer to the use of mother tongue in the EFL classroom. The study has been done by Kovacic and Kirinic (2011) in Croatia that studied the students' and teachers' preference toward using Croatian in the EFL classroom. They found that students' and teachers' participation in the study has a positive perception of using Croatian in the English classroom. The conclusion shows that 56% of students and 45% of teachers figured the use of L1 is crucial and helpful in the EFL classroom. Another study conducted in three different universities in Central java by Manara (2007) examined the view of the students and the teachers in the use of mother tongue in the EFL classroom and also researched the choice of teachers and students of when to use their L1 in their activity of teaching and learning in the classroom by using observation checklist, questionnaires, and semi-structured interview. The study concluded that most of the participants accept that English should use in the EFL classroom.

Based on the issues of several studies above, the writer would like to conduct the research entitled “Students’ Preferences towards the Use of Mother Tongue in EFL classroom of Sriwijaya University.” The writer would choose the students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University to be the sample of this study. The writer focuses on the students’ needs and students’ perceptions towards the use of mother tongue in the EFL classroom.

1.2 The Problems of Study

The problems of the study are formulated in the following question:

- a) What are the students’ needs towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University?

- b) What is the student's perception towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University?

1.3 The Objectives of Study

The objectives of the study are:

- a) To point out the students' need of the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University.
- b) To describe the student's perception towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University.

1.4 Significances of the Study

The writer hopes that this study would provide benefit for the English lecturers which the lecturers could adjust the students' needs in the use of mother tongue in the EFL classroom setting. The lecturer perhaps would give the students the appropriate or suitable instruction towards the students' needs of using mother tongue in the EFL classroom.

For the students, this study enables the students to be aware of the use of their mother tongue in the EFL classroom. This study would also deliver the result of the student's perception of using mother tongue in the EFL classroom that could be the students' guider and the basis in using mother tongue as the medium of learning.

For the writer itself, this study can enlarge the writer's knowledge about the implementation of mother tongue in the EFL classroom that the use of mother tongue would give the way of producing their needs in the EFL classroom.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The study was focus to find out the students' needs and perceptions towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom which were limited to: First, on

students' needs towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom which have seven factors of theoretical studies that attached in the questionnaire:

Understanding of the students (Saricoban, 2010), items: 14, 17, 18, 19.

Checking the comprehension (Saricoban, 2010), items: 1, 3, 6, 11.

Explaining and checking meaning (Cook, 2001), item: 13.

Explaining and learning grammar (Cook, 2001), item: 10.

Explaining class activities and task (Cook, 2001), item: 9.

Cooperating with other learners (Cook, 2001), items: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 15.

This study also limited to find the students' demographic characteristics that impacted their needs towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom which were age, gender, and the length of learning English.

Second, on students' perceptions towards the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom which have four factors of theoretical studies that attached in FGD: Firstly, the mother tongue is learners' linguistic resources. Learners' linguistic resources can be useful for learners at all degree of proficiency (Auerbach, 1993). She informs that supporting the use of the mother tongue in EFL classroom helps the transition to English. Second, the use of mother tongue is a preferred learning strategy. Mother tongue use in the kind of translation method is a preferred learning strategy for most learners (Atkinson, 1987). Hence, the learners' activity of correlating any English structure or lexical item with the ones in their mother tongue is unavoidable. They will unconsciously do this activity with or without the lecturer's permission. Third, mother tongue reduces the affective barriers to English acquisition. Using mother tongue in EFL classroom admit for the language to be practiced as a meaning-making device and for language learning to become a benefit of communicating ideas rather than an end in itself (Auerbach, 1993). Fourth, mother tongue can be used as a tool for thought. Vygotsky (1986) asserts that "mother tongue would very naturally serve as a tool to support learners think about and make sense of (i.e., mediate their thinking about) the structures, content and meaning of the L2 texts that the learners read" (in Upton and Lee-Thompson, 2001).

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