

# First Language Interfere in EFL Classes: Revealing Students' Perspectives and Teachers' Reasons in ELL

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## ABSTRACT

Multilingualism is a common phenomenon among Indonesian students who are proficient in both national and local languages. However, the use of the first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has been a subject of ongoing debate. This study explores the use of the first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms by investigating the perspectives of Indonesian students and teachers' reasons. The study used a qualitative approach with a in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers, and questionnaire for the students, convenience sampling was used to select 105 participants from grade 12 of IPA, IPS, and Bahasa. Results showed that the majority of students had a positive perspective on the use of L1 by their English teachers during lessons. However, there was no significant difference in the students' perspectives based on gender and major classes. Teachers' reasons for using L1 included bridging students' knowledge, motivating students, and creating an active learning atmosphere. However, the overuse of L1 was found to be a potential problem, as it could lead to a lack of mastery of the target language. The findings suggest that the use of L1 in EFL classrooms can be beneficial but should be used in moderation to avoid students becoming too reliant on it. Teachers should use L1 as a means to facilitate learning, not as a substitute for the target language. This study provides important insights into the use of L1 in EFL classrooms from the perspectives of both students and teachers. These findings have important implications for language teaching practices and policies, not only in Indonesia but also in other multilingual contexts worldwide. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of L1 use on language acquisition and to develop effective strategies to minimize its negative impact.

## 1. Introduction

Combining the first language (L1) in English language learning (ELL) has been found to be helpful and can facilitate the teaching and learning process for both teachers and students (Liando & Tatipang, 2022). However, despite this benefit, the use of L1 in ELL remains a controversial topic. As mentioned by Resmini (2019) if the teacher wants to discuss a topic with the students, they can use first language in order to help the students struggle with English. In contrast to what has mentioned above, Kadhim et al., (2022) argued that the use of the first language in foreign language learning is currently considered taboo, because many educational institutions are trying to prohibit the use of the first language in foreign language classes.

The use of L1 in ELL have many benefits, for example: reducing barriers to learning and increasing self-confidence in the learning process is one of the benefits of using L1, so that students can understand the target language being taught (Liando & Tatipang, 2022). Some students are lower proficiency, so they have difficulties in expressing their thoughts accurately and confidently, so they use their first language to translate it into the target language or in this case is, English.

Galali & Cinkara (2017) claimed that the students prefer when the process of teaching a foreign language the teachers use their first language because by using the first language the students can learn new foreign language vocabulary. Yaghobian et al. (2018) stated that the amount and purpose of using a first

language in teaching a foreign language is to improve understanding and provide relevant insights into L2 or EFL. In addition, [Sinaga \(2018\)](#) emphasized that the students will feel confused with the teacher who teaches and speaks full English during the learning process so that sometimes students misinterpret the meaning of the lesson. According to [Fitriani et al., \(2017\)](#), making it easier to capture ideas and concepts of learning material is an advantage of the inclusion of the use of the first language.

In presents, there are arguments regarding pros and cons of using the first language during the English lesson. [Çelik and Aydin \(2018\)](#) claimed that too much use and dependence on the first language will result in and make interlanguage fossilization and students' awareness will automatically decrease and make students stay away from interest in learning foreign languages. [Çelik and Aydin \(2018\)](#) added that the role of first language during the English lesson is negative one. This means that the L1 can interference of the second language learning. On the other hand, [Hawa et al. \(2021\)](#) mentioned that the use of the first language cannot be prohibited in foreign language classes but also cannot be used continuously, because if it is used continuously the mother tongue or first language can replace the target language rather than support it.

In Indonesia, there are hundreds of tribes with their own different languages ([Tatipang et al., 2022](#)). In formal occasions, places like churches, mosques, government offices, even in schools and universities, for example in Sulawesi Utara Province, it is a common phenomenon to see and hear the lecturers mix between Bahasa Indonesia and Manado ([Liando & Tatipang, 2022](#)). When facing difficulties in learning English, students will then use or switch into their mother tongue (Bahasa Manado), or Bahasa Indonesia if they do not know the words in English, or when they lack of confidence in speaking English.

Throughout the history of ELT in multilingual classrooms (Indonesian), there has been much debate about the use of the first language as an introduction. In fact, most of Indonesian students are students who can communicate in more than one languages (Multilingual) both national and regional languages. ([Liando, Tatipang, & Lengkoan, 2022](#)). This of course affects the English language skills of students in Indonesia when communicating, because [Resmini \(2019\)](#) in her research found that there will be a tendency to use the first language when they try to communicate in English. In this case, the first language will indirectly have positive and negative effects on the target language learning process.

The impact of L1 used in ELL is very diverse. As found by [Khairunnisa and Lukmana \(2020\)](#) where the use of the first language during English learning can create a conducive atmosphere for the student learning

process. In addition, [Liando & Tatipang \(2022\)](#) also reveal the same thing, where the use of first language can motivate students to learn and bridge students' knowledge. Moreover, [Çelik and Aydin, \(2018\)](#) suggest that teachers use first language as an alternative to strengthen students' mastery of English content. However, [Kusuma \(2018\)](#) argue that excessive use of first language will affect students' low knowledge of using English (oral and written) and insensitivity to English usage errors. In addition, [Gusti et al. \(2020\)](#); [Wahyuningsih and Afandi \(2020\)](#); [Zein \(2019\)](#) also have the same opinion, which is the use of the first language is encouraged, but it should not be overused. Based on those statements above, this study aims to examine the students' perspective and teachers' reasons of L1 used in ELL. In addition, it is hoped that the result of the study will shed a great benefit to the body of English education in general and to the students and teachers in specific. The findings are hoped to broaden the knowledge and science of teaching English to the learners of English as foreign language. To the students, the results are hoped to provide basic knowledge for them to be able to understand more about the reason why English teachers use first language during the lesson. As for the teachers, the results are hoped to provide insight to the teacher that using both the L1/Bahasa Indonesia as well as English language in teaching English lesson are both of the same importance. By realizing students own justifications, English teachers may have a better chance to develop their' teaching strategy, including preferences on where and when to use first language in English class.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Use of First Language during English Lesson

Students may experience cognitive processes of language-learning by activating their prior knowledge in L1 as an invisible tool to learn the new language ([Paranduk & Karisi, 2020](#)). A relational nature of L1 use relative to L2 learning, the value of L1 use needs to take into account connections with a pedagogical focus to support L2 learning ([Yusuf et al 2022](#)). The amount of L1 use should be judged by its purpose and content when considering how to support L2 learning ([Lumentut & Lengkoan, 2021](#)). [Liando and Tatipang \(2022\)](#) pointed out that when the mother tongue is used appropriately, it could help the students and the teacher learn English.

As [Kadhim et al., \(2022\)](#) claimed that the mother tongue has a significant role in improving the students' English ability. In addition, the mother tongue provides a good role to clarify instruction, pronunciation and express their frustration or difficulties ([Khasawneh, 2021](#)). [Blair \(2019\)](#) on his

study pointed out that mother tongue also benefits the teacher in certain conditions, such as giving instruction, explaining grammar points or complex concepts, defining new vocabularies, checking students' comprehension, and keeping the classroom atmosphere.

## 2.2 Students Perspectives of English Teachers Using First Language

Liando and Lumettu (2017) mentioned that In Indonesia proposed that most students also give positive perceptions and attitudes toward the mother tongue used by the teacher in an English classroom. Koşar (2022) showed that both views supported the opinions that using L1 in English classrooms should not be avoided because it was undeniable the benefits of its use in English classes for better efficiency and productivity.

Hasrina et al., (2018) revealed a strong tendency among the participants toward L1 used and its positive effects on language learning if used limited only in certain conditions. According to Resmini (2019) a judicious, occasional, and limited use of L1 is a better way to take and manage EFL classes rather than include or exclude them. The overall findings show that students' responses to the use of L1 in ELL are quite positive. However, students also recognized the disadvantages of using too much L1 in EFL classrooms, such as ignoring the target language. The students were accustomed to using L1 and tended to wait for the translation from the teacher or friends.

## 3. Method

This is a quantitative study. Retnawati (2016) stated that, "one way of looking at quantitative methods is a collection of techniques for organizing, presenting, summarizing, communicating, and drawing conclusions from data, so that it becomes informative. Descriptive design used to measure the students' perspectives of English teachers using first language during the lesson. Comparative design used to find out the differences students' perspectives of English teachers using first language during the lesson based on gender (49 Female and 41 Male). In addition to that, Spatioti et al., (2022) mentioned that comparative study is used to identify the differences between two or more variables. The designs are the most suitable designs for this study because those can help the researcher to observe and disclose the research questions.

In selecting the sample subject from the population, the researchers applied convenience sampling method. Lines et al., (2022) believed that the sample elements were selected because the researchers believe that the chosen respondents are representative of the population of interest in this sampling method.

It was used because that study offered many advantages, such as fast to do, not expensive, and the subjects are readily. The researcher took the data from the students and teacher who attended the class at that time. The respondents of this study were 89 students from SMA X Manado grades 12 from IPS, IPA, and Bahasa, also with 2 English teachers. The reason of choosing the respondents were because the respondents are qualified enough to respond the study, and the number of the students were sufficient to support the study.

In collecting the data, the questionnaire adapted from Mohebbi and Alavi (2014) applied in this study and consisted of 22 questions. The questionnaire was then translated and modified into Bahasa Indonesia and validated by three English Teachers. The questionnaire consisted of 22 items, about the First language functions in EFL Classes instruction. The 22 items are ranged using the scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Never, 2 = Seldom, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Usually, and 5 = Always). The researchers used all the items in the questionnaire. Moreover, to find out whether the questionnaire was valid or invalid, the researcher analyzed the items of the questionnaire using statistical tool, which is correlations statistic. Henceforward, to reveal EFL Teachers reasons of using the L1 during in EFL classes, the researchers applied semi-structured interview to get in-depth data. The application of semi-structured interviews is based on the availability of informants (English teachers) to provide sensitive information regarding their use of L1 in class, also considerations regarding the closeness of researchers to informants.

In addition, Retnawati (2016) argued that the items can categorize, if the index  $\leq 0.4$  it means the validation is low. 0.4-0.8 are moderate, but if the items  $\geq 0.8$  is highly validation. The total 18 valid items had passed the reliability test that were analyzed using Cronbach alpha scale, and the result was 0.85 which means that the 18 items were reliable. The total 18 items were used to get the data for the real study. To protect the privacy of the respondents, the questionnaire filled by the respondents without writing their name. Before the questionnaire is going to be distributed, the respondents had been informed that their answers are needed only for current study and their answers will not affect their grade or their relationship with the teachers. The name of the school also be named SMA X in order to keep the privacy of the school.

### 3.1 Data Analysis Techniques

To analyze and interpret the quantitative data of the questionnaire, the researcher used SPSS statistical tools, to be more specific, they are:

- 1) MEAN was used to find out the level of the Students perspectives of English teacher first language usage in the classroom for research question number 1.
- 2) Sample T-test table used to find out the differences in students perspectives English teacher first language usage in the classroom based on their major classes and gender for research question number 2 and number 3.

Moreover, to measure the results analysis of the questionnaires, interpretation scale was used to measure the result of the analyzed items. The interpretation scale adapted from [Cavalheiro et al. \(2022\)](#), there are five class intervals to measure the level of students perspectives of English teachers' used of first language, they are:

- a) 4.50 – 5.00 = Always = Very highly used of L1 use by teacher
- b) 3.50 – 4.49 = Usually = Highly used of L1 use by teacher
- c) 2.50 – 3.49 = Sometimes = Moderate used of L1 use by teacher
- d) 1.50 – 2.49 = Seldom = Low used of L1 use by teacher
- e) 1.00 – 1.49 = Never = Very low used L1 use by teacher

While for the analysis technique for semi-structure interview, the researchers applied descriptive analysis

through scripting the interview. Actually, the interviews were conducted after the class was over and recorded, then transcribed to be analyzed. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews were coded into IRA-IRB: (for Interviewee A-B).

## 4. Result

This part presents the results, the interpretation of data, and the discussions of this topic. It covers the students perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson as well as teachers' reason in using it in ELL. As previously mentioned, where the pros and cons of using L1 still occur frequently, the consideration of the success of the learning process of students and teachers in learning is the main factor that is important to be responded to. Therefore, this study aimed to reveal students' perspectives and teachers' reasons toward L1 used in EFL classes. Moreover, in getting the results from the students' perspective regarding the use of L1 in ELL, a comparative study was applied to compare the opinions of male and female students. The data related to this research is then presented based on the results that have been obtained from the field.

### 4.1 What are students' perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson?

**Table 4.1** Mean score of the students (both female and male) perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean	89	2.89	5.00	<b>4.02</b>	.41992
Valid (listwise)	N 89				

The fact that first language is used in English classes is definitely not a new thing for English language learners in Indonesia. This occurs due to the strong influence of the first language for each student in every learning process. English learning activities do make teachers in Indonesia have to use various ways to be able to make students learn English as a foreign language. In the context of this research, the first language used by teachers in teaching English is the students' local language (Manado). The use of students' first language (Manado) as a bridge in English in [Liando et al., \(2022\)](#) is responded positively by students, because this L1 can bridge and can create a conducive learning atmosphere for

students. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that each student must have different opinions in certain cases. Therefore, in the context of this study, the research subject was expanded to find out how students' opinions related to the use of the first language during the English learning process. Thus, in this first part, mean score of descriptive statistics has been used to answer the research questions number one about the students' perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson.

The result of [Table 4.1](#) showed that the mean level of students perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson was found to be

4.02 (table 4.1). The findings showed that the mean score was in the range 3.50 – 4.49. It indicated that the students of SMA X perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson was found to be *usually (highly used of L1 use by teacher)* based on the interpretation scale. It means that the English teacher use L1 mostly in teaching English. [Khairunnisa and Lukmana \(2020\)](#) believe that the use of first language in learning is inevitable and commonplace in classroom interactions. In general, the use of first language in English class is to bridge the gap between students and teachers during interaction, for example, a teacher translates into their first language when they do not understand the instructions given. However, the use of first language in English learning should be considered as well as possible to avoid mistakes in students' second language acquisition.

The reason why in this study the students perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson was high, because of their expectation of their English teachers, for example, first language help the students to learn more and enjoyable. It also could help teacher to make students more understand the lesson because by using first language the students can understand and save time in explanations. This statement was made based on the high mean result of the items in the questionnaire chose by the respondents and the interview with the teacher: “The use of L1 in teaching definitely helpful to bridge students’ knowledge in English Learning. It could help us a teachers as well in delivering the knowledge so that the students could understand the lesson better”, (IR:A). Also, “We actually used the L1 in order to make the students comfort in learning English. Because some students tent to be quiet in learning, no responds and no answer. L1 in EFL learning help them not only to deliver their idea but also to ask something to us. Also L1 make them learn English better”, (IR:B).

In line with the statement of an English teacher above, [Pardede \(2018\)](#) states that the use of first language is also done to explain difficult grammar, ambiguous words, long instructions, to provide feedback and to check students' understanding. [Hasrina et al. \(2018\)](#) argue that in learning English as a foreign language teachers have difficulty facilitating student learning unless there is interference or the use of first language. It is also believed that the use of the first language can help students acquire the required knowledge and to provide solutions to their incomprehension in learning English.

Hence, some students find learning English difficult and they have problems expressing their ideas, opinions, and comments using English, by using English in learning, so they prefer to use their

first language to interact with the teacher and their friends in class. However, the use of first language in English learning must consider by teachers in term of “usage” which should not be too excessive. [Hawa et al. \(2021\)](#) argued that excessive use of the first language in the process of learning English students will have an impact on the lack of exposure to the target language in students, this will result in students' ability in English will not increase. [Hasrina et al. \(2018\)](#) add that L1 will make students confused and misunderstood when they use English, this is because there are use English, this is because there is a mismatch of selection of words that come from the first language to English, and vice versa.

#### 4.2 Is there any significance difference on students perspectives of English teachers in using first language during the lesson based on gender?

**Table 4.2** The difference of students perspective based on gender

	Gender	N	Mean
MEAN	FEMALE	47	<b>3.99</b>
	MALE	42	<b>4.06</b>

In this part, one sample t-test statistics has been used to answer the research questions number two about the students perspectives of English teachers in using first language during the lesson based on their gender. At the first step, the mean score of the 48 female respondents was 3.99, and the mean score of the 41 male respondents was 4.06. Based on the result, it indicated that both were at the range level 3.50 – 4.49 (table 4.2). It meant that the result of both perspectives of the characteristics of the effective English teachers was found to be usually (High Level of L1 use by teacher).

The result showed that  $p = .350$  which grater than alpha scale 0.05 (table 4.3), it meant that there no significant difference in students perspectives of English teachers in using first language during the lesson based on the gender. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis which stated that “there is a significant difference in the students perspectives of English teachers in using first language during the lesson based on the gender” was *rejected*. The reason of the result found out that there no significant difference based on gender because both men and women respondents have the difference perspectives of English teachers in using first language during the lesson. This is due to the differences in opinion

between male and female students are sometimes different, this is because there are differences in the perspectives, ways of learning and ways of expressing from male and female students (Blair, 2019). Gusti et al., (2020) also argued about the different significance of each student which can affect how they perceive things. Because in general, perception is related to the interpretation, judgement, or opinion of students about

an object that occurs around them. If a student has a good perception of an object, it will affect the student's perception and attitude toward favouring that object. However, the result of present study that showed there no significant difference because the male and female students of SMA X Manado have the same perspectives of the using of first language during the lesson.

**Table 4.3** The mean score of the students perspectives based on gender

		<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
MEAN	Equal variances assumed	11.719	.001	-.940	87	<b>.350</b>
	Equal variances not assumed			-.918	68.201	<b>.362</b>

The result of present study that showed no significant difference might be because the male and female students of SMA X Manado have the same perspectives of using the first language during the lesson. Based on this result, it shows the similarity between this present study and the study of Yusuf et al. (2022) which found that there was no significant difference between male and female students. This is because the use of the teacher's first language is applied equally to each student. It provides equal focus and opportunity for all students with the aim of achieving English language learning in the classroom. Basically, the use of first language in learning is unavoidable and is commonplace in classroom interactions. In general, the use of first language in English classes is to bridge the gap between students and teachers during interaction, for example, a teacher

translates into their first language when they do not understand the instructions given. Therefore, the distribution of first language use for each student was the same, thus it was found that there was no significant difference in its use based on gender.

#### **4.3 Is there any significance difference on students perspectives of English teachers in using first language during the lesson based on major classes?**

The third research question in this study was to know whether there was a significant difference in the students' perception of English teacher first language usage in the classroom based on the classes.

**Table 4.4** The mean score of the students perspectives based on major classes

	Major Classes	N	Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Students Perspectives	Social	44	<b>4.07</b>	1.361	<b>.177</b>
	Science	45	<b>3.97</b>	1.361	<b>.177</b>

Table 4.4 showed the mean score and the difference on students perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson. The finding was those who study in Social were higher (M=4.07) than those who study in Science (M=3.97). By using

Independent Sample T-test showed the difference is no significant. As shown in Table 4.4 the significance value  $p = .177$  which was greater than the significance level  $\alpha = .05$ . It meant that the hypothesis that says there was significance difference in students'

perspectives of English teacher in using first language during the lesson was *rejected*. The reason of the result found out that there were no significant differences might be because both social and science respondents had the perspectives of the using of the first language during the lesson by the teacher there different classes had no problems of teacher using L1. This is because the teaching of English using the first language in each class is carried out with the same concept, and refers to the same material and planning, therefore the majority of students get the same treatment in learning. In line with the study from [Resmini \(2019\)](#) mentioned that the use of first language in each class, can be adjusted to the lesson plan used, this is to minimize the lag and the response of each student to the teaching process.

## 5. Discussion

In Indonesia, as a country that has many cultures and languages, it influences students in Indonesia, because most Indonesian students are students who can communicate in more than one language (Multilingual), both the national language and regional languages. According to [Cavalheiro et al. \(2022\)](#) a multilingual speaker is a person who lives in a country that has a diversity of languages or people who grow up with a variety of different languages. The definition of bilingualism is also almost the same as multilingualism, which means the ability to use two or more languages that are used for everyday conversations. This of course affects the English skills of Indonesian students when communicating because there will be a tendency to use first language when they try to communicate in English. In this case, the first language will indirectly have positive and negative effects on the learning process of the target language. In this study, researchers examined the use of L1 in EFL Classes.

In learning a language, the language learning process can be said to be successful if the language learner uses the target language as a means of communication properly and correctly. This is also stated and supported by the statement of [Tatipang et al. \(2022\)](#) the best language learning is when learning is designed to communicate with the target language. Reflecting on the results of research data conducted by researchers, if the English learning process carried out is indeed designed, so that the subject can communicate in the target language as often as possible. However, the problem is that the subject does not use English in accordance with British, American and Australian standard English. Subjects put more emphasis on the target language they use, which is more adapted to Indonesian and the regional languages they speak. Most of the subjects tend to do interlingual interference in their target language communication. Interlingual interference is defined

when a person speaks or writes the target language but is still influenced by their mother tongue ([Liando & Tatipang, 2022](#)). This is evidenced by the habit of subjects using their first language as an alternative language to express their ideas when they have difficulty communicating in the target language ([Koşar, 2022](#)). It supported by the statement of an English teacher, where: “We sometimes used students’ mother tongue because of the students cannot deliver their idea, or ask something even feel shy and nervous using English. Not only that, we use Manado to explain certain difficult material to students so they can understand it better. But sometimes we used English so that they can expose a bit about English”, (IR:B).

The perception of the use of mother tongue/first language by teachers, which falls into this high category, is applied by English teachers in the classroom with the aim of explaining difficult grammar, ambiguous words, long instructions, to provide feedback and to check students' understanding, as well as to provide students with the opportunity to express their ideas. In line with this, [Gusti et al. \(2020\)](#); [Hakim and Suharto \(2020\)](#) also argue that in learning English as a foreign language teachers have difficulty facilitating student learning unless there is interference or use of the first language. In addition, [Budiharto \(2019\)](#) also support the results of this study, where they argue that students can improve their understanding of English effectively if they use the first language. In this context, the use of first language is also believed to help students acquire the required knowledge and to provide solutions to their incomprehension in learning English.

In addition, a study from [Sibarani \(2019\)](#) also supports the findings in this study, where in addition to being responded positively by students, the use of first language to explain knowledge about English (target language) will make it easier for students to absorb the knowledge. Furthermore, research from [Çelik and Aydın \(2018\)](#); [Nufus and Nufus \(2021\)](#) also proved the same thing as the findings of this present study, that the first language or mother tongue is used to explain vocabulary, clarify unclear meanings, and build interaction and cooperation with students. This present study is also in line with research conducted by [Debreli and Oyman, \(2016\)](#); [Hasrina et al. \(2018\)](#) which showed that the use of first language by teachers helps when generating safety, conveying words, checking for understanding, and explaining grammatical patterns. They also found some students who felt shy, afraid of making mistakes and anxious in using a foreign language.

However, [Wahyuningsih & Afandi \(2020\)](#) has a view that teachers should have a view to maximise the use of foreign language (English) in EFL classes, they

also believe that English should be the main language in the learning process, as well as teachers being a model for students in using English. In addition, Kusuma (2018) rejects the excessive use of the first language, where the use of L1/mother tongue will create a bad atmosphere for teachers and students. Liando et al. (2022) also add that the excessive use of the first language results in bad habits for teachers and students in the learning process, interaction in class using the first language will be felt comfortable by students so they don't want to get used to English as the target language. The first language will make students confused and misunderstood when they use English, this is because there is a mismatch in the choice of words from the first language to English, and vice versa (Fithriani et al., 2019). When the teacher uses the first language in learning English, it will cause incorrect sentence patterns (Pardede, 2018).

Resmini (2019) also examines the influence of first language on English learning. The results of his research show that students' habits in using their mother tongue are carried over into learning English, for example in using punctuation in writing, making sentences that are structurally incorrect (mother tongue translated directly into English), and in pronouncing words with the intonation, stress, and even dialect of their mother tongue. In line with this, Zein et al. (2020) assert that in contrast to first language acquisition, a person acquires a second language through a learning process and is consciously learnt both in the classroom and outside the classroom. First language acquisition can be a good comparison as a starting point to explain second language acquisition, so that second language acquisition also requires learning activities for the internalisation process.

Several causes were found that hampered the learning of the target language (English). As expressed by Patrick (2019) lack of Comprehensible Input in English. Comprehensible input is described if a person acquires language and develops language literacy when that person understands the message conveyed both orally and in writing. In this case, Comprehensible Input greatly influences the amount of vocabulary students have. In addition, the lack of a culture of reading literacy in English among students is another factor in the lack of input into the language learning process. In fact, these findings are the same as this study, where most of the students are less interested in reading in English so that the written input they need is lacking. Even though exposure to the target language is very important to increase the input of the target language in language learning (Liando & Tatipang, 2022). In fact that the writing in English did not match their pronunciation, even though when the subject had sufficient input of the language over time they would understand English

patterns well. In addition, the attitude of students who tend to be closed and shy so that in practice students do not practice much of the input they get. Most of them prefer silence for fear of making mistakes. In line with that, Kansil et al. (2022) mentioned that this is due to the reason why many students have limited pronunciation skills because they rarely practice the target language. Furthermore, English teacher is a model that provides intelligible input for students where good pronunciation will make a good contribution to teaching, while bad pronunciation will create difficulties in the process of learning the target language (Rido & Sari, 2018). In fact, the use of the first language in English classes has its own reasons, in addition to facilitating learning, the use of the first language can change the learning situation in English classes, this was revealed by one of the teachers: "Honestly, English not only make the students felt bad in the classroom, English also made them to be quite during the lesson, this is even bad when we as a teacher trying to explain with English. Fear of making mistakes from their pronunciation, writing or reading. This is why we used Manado sometimes or even often in teaching, and sometimes use both Manado and English in the same goes. This is to be one of the alternative to manage the classroom, motivating, explaining, directing, so many more, it is so useful", (IR:A).

In connection with the results of this study regarding the use of the first language by the teacher, in which this use has its own goals by the teacher. The use of L1 is to provide comfort to students so that they are brave and active in class, the teacher invites students to use the students' first language. The teacher really understands the condition of their students, with an environment that is far from urban areas, the need for students to learn English is very low, so when the teacher uses English in class the students look confused, tense, and sometimes the learning objectives are not achieved properly. Therefore, to provide a sense of comfort for students to learn English, the teacher also uses mother tongue/first language in the teaching and learning process.

In addition, because students lack confidence in using English in class so that when the teacher gives orders to appear in front of the class, ask questions, or even respond to the teacher, students become passive and even they just stay silent without making an active contribution in class. Vice versa, when students are given the opportunity to perform in two languages (English and mother tongue (L1) students are excited and want to be actively involved in teaching and learning activities. This present study also found that the reason for using the first language provides comfort for students to be brave and active in class. This happens because the teacher is very familiar with



the condition of his students to learn English is very low, so when the teacher uses English in class students look confused, tense, and sometimes the learning objectives are not achieved properly. Therefore, to give students a sense of comfort to learn English, the teacher also uses Manado language in the teaching and learning process.

Another reason is because the use of mother/first language is a habit used in students' daily lives, the use of first language is used as an excuse to make it easier to understand English. Teachers at the school revealed that students were very foreign to English, environmental conditions and parents' background influenced students not to be interested in learning a foreign language. Thus, the teacher chooses to explain the material directly to the point by using the students' first language. The teacher also feels that the teaching and learning process becomes less effective when using full English, the students do not understand and the teacher has to translate into their native language. This is in line with the findings from [Liando & Tatipang \(2022\)](#) where when learning English and the teacher uses full English, learning will make students less interested and less motivated in learning.

Also, the use of this first language is to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of English, so teachers and students use the first language as an English translation tool. Where this is in line with the findings from [Liando et al. \(2022\)](#) where the first language can be a bridge for teachers to translate or make students more understand English. In the implementation of teaching and learning activities it is not uncommon for the teacher to translate English into Manadonese. This is because students do not have an English-Indonesian dictionary that they can use to look up the meaning of words that are difficult to understand. The teacher also believes that gestures are less able to help students understand words or sentences in English. Give examples using pronouns or synonyms have also been done by the teacher, but still students understand more about the word that the teacher translated into mother tongue (Manadonese).

The language development of language students must be properly monitored by the teacher by adjusting the stages of student learning. Meanwhile, when students make mistakes in speaking the target language, it is part of language development (Interlanguage). This was also stated by [Liando et al. \(2022\)](#) making mistakes in practicing the target language can be a medium for learning the target language. In this context, interlanguage has several characteristics, such as the influence of the previously learned language, the characteristics of a second language, and the characteristics of the loss of word functions and grammatical morphemes, these are often encountered in interlanguage systems. As for the

language learning process to run well to help the development of target language learning for students, the researcher provides several learning recommendations, namely the teacher is required to provide appropriate scaffolding and is appropriate to students' language abilities, provide entertaining means in learning to add comprehensible input to students, such as games, music, watching movies with English subtitles.

In addition, due to the students' lack of confidence in using English in class, when the teacher gave orders to perform in front of the class, ask questions, or respond to the teacher, the students became passive and even stayed silent without making an active contribution to the class. On the other hand, when students were given the opportunity to perform using two languages (English and Manadonese) they were excited and willing to be actively involved in teaching and learning activities. Also, the use of Manadonese is a habit used in students' daily lives, so the use of Manadonese is used as an excuse to make it easier to understand English. Teachers at the school revealed that students are very afraid of English, thus, teachers choose to explain the material directly to the point using Manadonese or sometimes mixed with English. The teacher also felt that the teaching and learning process became less effective when using full English, the students did not understand and the teacher had to translate into Manadonese. Also, to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of English, teachers and students use Bahasa Manado as a means of bridging English knowledge. Specifically, there were some contradictory perspective toward previous studies, where [Budiharto, \(2019\)](#); [Hakim and Suharto, \(2020\)](#); [Galali & Cinkara, \(2017\)](#) indicated a negative response toward their preference when the teachers used their mother tongue in ELT. Meanwhile, [Debreli and Oyman, \(2016\)](#); [Liando and Tatipang, \(2022\)](#); [Liando et al. \(2022\)](#) indicated a positive response toward the L1 used including this present study. Some students preferred the teachers to use L1 in the EFL classroom, and it indicated that all students felt comfortable when the teachers used the mother tongue in the classroom. In addition, students believed that the use of L1 could not be denied and difficult to be banned in the English classroom because it is their daily language, but to be limited to the minimum use. There were some recommendations to reduce the excessive use of mother tongue in English classrooms, such as maximizing English functions in EFL classrooms and giving students more opportunities to practice their English orally. Using English as the target language, assisted by the appropriate use of mother tongue on certain occasions, could support language learning and enhanced students' English mastery.

## 6. Conclusions

The present study found that students had positive perceptions towards the use of the first language (L1) in English language learning, as it facilitated their understanding, motivation, and participation in the learning process. However, some previous studies have shown that the excessive use of L1 could hinder the creation of an English-only atmosphere in the classroom. Despite this, the present study suggests that the appropriate use of L1 can be tolerated in some contexts, such as bridging knowledge and clarifying meanings. Teachers' reasons for using L1 included providing knowledge, motivation, creating an active and conducive learning atmosphere, and avoiding misunderstandings. While the use of L1 can provide comfort and clarity to students, it may also result in a low level of mastery of the target language. To reduce the overuse of L1 in English classrooms, teachers should maximize English functions in EFL classrooms and provide more opportunities for students to practice their English orally. Using English as the target language, with the appropriate use of L1 on certain occasions, can enhance students' English mastery. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of L1 use on language acquisition and to develop effective strategies to minimize its negative impact. By promoting a balanced approach to L1 use, language teaching and learning can become more effective and inclusive, ultimately contributing to the development of multilingualism and intercultural communication in a global context.

## 7. Recommendation

There are several recommendations for this research based on the findings and discussion. The first recommendation is that to improve the quality and the effectiveness in learning English the teacher use the first language to make the students more comfortable to learn English as the foreign language. For examples the teacher must use the first language to explain grammar, new words, provide clarification when students do not understand the language, provide bait behind repairs and explain their mistakes. Next, for the teachers him/herself to make their students more understand about the material, the teacher must facilitate the use of first language in the classroom during the lesson, for example explain the difficult words or the new vocabulary with the first language or to explain about the material use the first language. To help the students to express what are they feel about the lesson, the use of native language/first language is important. However, the male students perceived is more than the female students about the use of L1 during the lesson. Then, the researcher suggested for the future studies who will conduct similar study to conduct the study in another schools in North Sulawesi, and even abroad since study are still few conducted in Indonesia. Last

but not least, future researchers can also conducting such research to find out the advantages and disadvantages of the use of L1 in the classroom.

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