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Exploring Indonesian senior high school teachers' perceptions of first language use in teaching English

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate Indonesian senior high school teachers' perceptions of using the first language (L1) when teaching English because Indonesian teachers tend to have negative perceptions toward the application of the L1, while the L1 is needed in a situation where Indonesian students have limited skills in English. The semi-structured interview was applied to collect data, while thematic analysis was used to analyse it. The result showed that the teachers have three different positions in perceiving the use of the L1: the virtual position, maximal, and optimal positions. Although they have different perceptions toward the application of the L1, a major insight can be concluded about the limited use of the L1 for specific reasons, such as considering teachers' and students' English abilities, learners' needs, and the type and the difficulty of the given task or assignment. The L1 can be functioned as scaffolding in three aspects: when teaching grammar, vocabulary, and when giving instructions. Teachers may consider this study's results as the information to use the L1 in classrooms. This may also be beneficial for Indonesian educational stakeholders and the government to specifically define what type of scaffolding that teachers can use the L1 to teach English.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study explores Indonesian senior high school teachers' perceptions of using the first language (L1) when teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Although there are many different local languages in Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) is considered the L1, as it is used in formal settings, like schools, as well as informal situations [1]. In contrast, English is treated as a foreign language in Indonesia: people use it in classrooms but not in their daily lives [2]. Accordingly, in a country where English is served as a foreign language, teachers inevitably use the L1 when they are teaching [2]. This is because Indonesian students are considered to be low proficiency learners of English, since they rarely use English in their daily routines [3].

The L1 is a valuable resource for teachers to help low proficiency learners of English in acquiring the language effectively [4]. It can be used as scaffolding to enhance students' understanding of difficult English words, which might be changeling to understand if it is only explained in English [4]. For example, teachers can use the Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) phrase *badai tropis* as scaffolding when students have difficulties in comprehending the meaning of 'tropical storm' in English. The use of the L1 as scaffolding to support teaching English is also underpinned by Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory, which states that students' abilities can be maximised effectively if they are assisted by more capable others, including their teachers [5]. Specifically, teachers can offer students with scaffolding to support students' understanding and knowledge of English and enable their skills development [6]. Therefore, learners' L1 can be functioned as scaffolding to help them in understanding various meanings in English, which is beneficial for students' English acquisition [7].

The notion of the L1 as scaffolding is also relevant to the principles of the new curriculum that has been implemented in the Indonesian senior high schools, called the Kurikulum Merdeka. This curriculum requires Indonesian teachers to employ scaffolding when students have difficulty in understanding learning materials [8]. Although the application of the L1 as scaffolding when teaching English seems appropriate within the tenets of Kurikulum Merdeka, a limited number of research studies have been explored within the use of the L1 in the Indonesian context, particularly the ways Indonesian senior high school teachers perceive its implementation [9]. This study consequently explores Indonesian senior high school teachers' perceptions of using the L1 and the ways in which these teachers perceive the function of the L1 as scaffolding when teaching English.

The theoretical framework of this research is derived from Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory. This theory argues that the process of students' improvement, in terms of their knowledge and skills, is affected by their sociocultural contexts [5]. That is to say, the establishment of students' knowledge occurs as the result of an ongoing process of communication and interaction with other people, including teachers [5]. Hence, it can be inferred that learners effectively improve their skills in the target language, English, when their teachers create suitable interactions with them [10]. This includes the effective use of the students' L1 in classroom activities, since the L1 functions as a social tool for teachers and students to communicate with each other in English classrooms [11]. For example, teachers can deliver information using the L1 when they instruct students to work in groups, while students can also discuss the given information with their teammates using the L1 to ease them into structuring vocabulary, grammar points, and their ideas before delivering them to teachers using English [12]. Consequently, the use of the L1 could be useful in terms of running English classrooms effectively.

Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory outlines an aspect named the zone of proximal development (ZPD) [6]. The ZPD is defined as the area in which students' abilities can be maximised effectively, if they are assisted by other people, including teachers [13]. For example, teachers can offer students scaffolding to support their understanding and knowledge of English, as well as their skill development in this area [6]. In this sense, learners' L1 can function as scaffolding in their ZPD to help them understand English learning materials, which is beneficial for their English acquisition [14]. The function of the L1 as scaffolding to teach English is generally applied in three main aspects: teaching and learning grammar and vocabulary, and giving classroom instructions [5]. However, previous studies fail to fully explore the function of teachers' use of L1 as scaffolding when teaching English, so further investigation is still needed [15].

2.   METHOD
2.1. Methodological framework and data-gathering tool

In terms of research philosophy, this study employed the epistemological stance within the constructivist paradigm. This is because meaning and knowledge are socially constructed by people, which is the principle of epistemological stance [16]. Therefore, as part of the epistemological stance, this research is framed within the constructivist paradigm because it relates to the research questions of this study. The research questions of this study aim to explore teachers' perceptions of using the L1 and how these perceptions affect their understanding of the function of the L1 as scaffolding when teaching English. In this sense, teachers' perceptions toward the application of the L1 are constructed by their previous knowledge, ideas, and experiences [17]. The research methodology used in this research was the qualitative study. It was selected due to its connection to the focus of this study, which aims to understand participants' perceptions [18]. This study applied purposive sampling to the selection of participants, which assigns researchers to select respondents strategically by referring to research questions [19]. Therefore, the study selected respondents from three Indonesian EFL senior high school teachers in West Sumatera, Indonesia, because the main research question aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions toward the use of the L1 in teaching English. For

the data gathering tool, this study employs a semi-structured interview since it allows detailed responses from the participants, utilising probes, and they can be asked to clarify what they have answers [20].

2.2. Data collection procedure

The qualitative case study, including its method, must be designed to align with the research questions and methodological framework of the study, in order to provide appropriate and high-quality data [21]. Therefore, the interview was selected as the study's single method because it utilises open response questions that yield high-quality data about participants' perceptions [11]. This also correlates with the main research question of the study, since it aimed to investigate senior high school teachers' perceptions of the application of the L1 when teaching English. Moreover, the interview was relevant to the constructivism and interpretivism of the research's methodological framework, since both views similarly see the interview as an analytic tool to understand how social actors establish their reality [16].

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview was employed as the interview structure for this study because of its characteristics in terms of allowing flexibility for the researcher to ask elaborative questions based on respondents' previous answers, which can help the researcher to grasp the given answers [22]. This study also used the telephone interview as the interview type, which was selected because participants were geographically far. However, participants were still able to answer research questions effectively because they had previously been given an overview of the study [23]. The process for conducting the interview is explained below:
a. Planning the interview

Planning the interview aimed to ensure the interview process ran effectively, and it was conducted as follows [24]; i) The researcher contacted each participant differently to arrange the interview that best suited their schedule, and ii) After an appropriate time was decided upon, the researcher sent the participant the overview of the study, to assist their understanding of the focus of the study.
b. Conducting the interview

The interview lasted 30–45 minutes for each participant, who were called individually at different times. The first participant, named Tina (pseudonym) was interviewed on 29 January 2023. The second participant, named Sandro (pseudonym) was interviewed on 30 January 2023. On 2 February 2023, Hany (pseudonym), the third participant, was interviewed. The interview was conducted using Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) in order to foster a safe space in the interview, where participants could comfortably describe their perceptions about the use of the L1 when teaching English [19]. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher guided participants to answer the key interview questions. Each subject was then deeply explored through a series of follow-up questions and probes [18]. Notes made during the interview and a recording of the interview were also used to scrutinise appropriate data, before it was translated and transcribed into English for the sake of data analysis [11].
c. Ending the interview

The last session of the interview was conducted as follows [24]; i) The researcher used phrases like "the final topic" and "in the last few minutes" to signal to participants that the interview session was about to finish, ii) The researcher summarised the interview and explained to participants how their data would be used, and iii) The researcher thanked participants warmly.

2.3. Participants

This study applied purposive sampling to the selection of participants, which assigns researchers to select respondents strategically by referring to research questions [19]. Therefore, the study selected respondents from three Indonesian EFL senior high school teachers in West Sumatera, Indonesia, because the main research question aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions toward the use of the L1 in teaching English in this context. However, only three teachers were chosen as participants because the study was categorised as a small-scale research project limited by cost and time. Fortunately, the use of the small-size sample is supported by the principle of purposive sampling in the qualitative case study, which views sampling as dynamic and ad hoc instead of static, allowing a small-size sample ranging from at least one to three respondents [11].

2.4. Data analysis

In the data analysis, teachers' responses toward the interview questions were recorded and transcribed, which were needed to elicit appropriate and useful data [11]. The interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis, which consisted of categorisation derived from the selected theoretical framework of this research, namely Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory regarding the function of the L1 as scaffolding when teaching English [19]. Therefore, the process of analysis involved coding and

displaying the data that presented teachers' perceptions of the L1's use in teaching English and how these teachers perceive the functions of the L1 as scaffolding, specifically when teaching grammar and vocabulary, and when giving instructions. Hence, the data analysis was divided into the following procedures [19]: i) the researcher read the samples of materials and transcriptions thoroughly, ii) the researcher started to code the materials, iii) the researcher elaborated the codes into categories, iv) the researcher named the categories, v) the researcher examined the variations of categories, and vi) the researcher elaborated on the insights gleaned from the categories to form a narrative conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from the closed-ended questions, interspersed with excerpts from the open-ended. Concerning this main research question, it was found that the three participants in this research had different perceptions toward the application of the L1 when teaching English. This can be categorised into three positions, which are the "virtual, maximal, and optimal positions" [25]. The notion and meaning of each position are separately discussed in each sub-heading below.

3.1. The virtual position

The first participant named Tina (pseudonym) held the virtual position in terms of perceiving the employment of the L1 when teaching English. The virtual position is defined as a situation where teachers perceive that using the L1 is not needed when delivering English materials [25]. This is because the use of English should be maximised in classrooms, offering students significant exposure to English and thus encouraging them to practise it [26]. This notion can be seen in Tina's comment below:

> "*I prefer using English to the fullest extent instead of applying the L1 in classrooms because it assists students to use English without the hindrance of the L1. It helps learners to adjust to English, which could increase their English abilities. Therefore, I prefer illustrating the given materials with its context rather than using the L1 when students do not understand learning materials, because I intend to provide more exposure to English in classrooms.*"

Tina's view is influenced by Krashen's second language acquisition (SLA) theory, which postulates that English can be well acquired by learners if teachers provide them with extensive exposure to English, without the hindrance of the L1 [14]. This is because when teachers apply the L1 in classrooms, it can decrease the quantity of English used, thus impeding students' ability to grasp the language effectively [26]. Therefore, Tina prefers illustrating the context of difficult learning materials rather than using the L1 in classrooms. For example, Tina said that "when students do not understand the meaning of 'timber' in English, I will illustrate its context by explaining its sizes, shapes, and functions in English". In alignment with Xiaoli [27] view, reinforces the usefulness of illustrating complicated materials with their contexts, rather than applying the L1. This is because explaining learning materials with their own contexts is beneficial in assisting learners to understand given materials, without the assistance of the L1, ensuring continuous significant exposure to English [27].

3.2. The maximal position

However, it seems that Tina mainly focuses on the quantity of the English given, not the quality. This means she tends to offer learners exposure to English, but she might not be aware of the possible benefits for students if they are assisted with the use of the L1 as scaffolding in the classroom [28]. The use of the L1 in teaching English provides advantages by helping low proficiency learners to understand difficult English vocabulary and materials [18]. This notion aligns with the tenets of the maximal position [25], which can be defined as teachers' maximisation of L1 use to support students' acquisition of English. This is because when learners are supported through the application of the L1, this can help them to absorb English materials easily [28].

The notion of the maximal position was reflected in the perceptions of the second participant, named Sandro (pseudonym) [25]. In the interview, Sandro noted:

> "*I think using the L1 in teaching English is mandatory because it is useful to help students, mainly low proficiency learners, to comprehend assigned materials easily. This is because the L1 can function as scaffolding to help learners effectively absorb given materials. For example, in assisting them to understand English vocabulary items, I usually use Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) as students' L1 to illustrate the context of difficult vocabulary items.*"

Sandro's view suggests that he applies the L1 as scaffolding to support low proficiency learners, in terms of grasping English concepts and vocabulary items. This is a positive teaching strategy as it is beneficial to enhance students' understanding of explained English vocabulary and concepts [29]. This is because when difficult English vocabulary is first explained and illustrated using learners' L1, it assists their understanding of the new vocabulary [30]. Moreover, the maximal position is also underpinned by the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) of Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory [5]. The ZPD can be defined as maximising students' abilities effectively through help from other people, including teachers, in order to absorb learning materials [13]. For example, teachers can use the L1 to assist students' grasp of given learning materials [6], leading students to acquire English effectively [14].

3.3. The optimal position

The third participant, named Hany (pseudonym), held the optimal position toward the use of the L1 when teaching English [25]. The optimal position is defined as teachers who perceive the application of the L1 to be effective when it is applied for specific reasons [25]. For example, Pathan [31] asserts that teachers' English proficiency level is one of the main reasons for using the L1 in classrooms. This is because it would be difficult for teachers to use English all the time if their own English skills are limited [14]. Consequently, teachers tend to use the L1 as a solution to deal with the issue of limited English language skills, in order to keep delivering learning materials effectively [14]. This condition can be seen in Hany's experiences when she noted, "I use the L1 to deliver learning materials because sometimes I also have difficulties in explaining it using English". Teaching this way optimises the use of the L1 and thus helps students understand learning materials, despite the teacher having limited English skills [32].

Moreover, from this optimal position, teachers also attempt to balance the use of both the L1 and English in classrooms [25]. The balanced use of the L1 when teaching English can be defined as teachers who only use the L1 when considering students' needs, learners' language proficiency levels, and the level of the difficulty of the given tasks [33]. This means that when students are still able to understand complicated tasks and materials effectively, it is a sensible idea for teachers to keep using English in classrooms. This notion is reflected in Hany's perceptions:

> "I use Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) as students' L1 only for specific reasons like considering their needs and referring to the difficulty of the given assignments and materials. As long as learners can understand assigned materials and tasks well without the assistance of the L1, I still keep using English in classrooms."

This is because it gives teachers a valuable chance to utilise the potentiality of the L1 and maximise the use of English in the classroom at the same time [34]. Consequently, it gives students significant exposure to practising English, helping them to acquire the language effectively [14].

3.4. How these teachers perceive the function of L1 as scaffolding in teaching English?

As explained in the literature, this notion of scaffolding is derived from Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory, which was selected as the theoretical framework for this research, postulating that the L1 can function as scaffolding when teaching English [11]. For example, for teaching grammar and vocabulary, and giving instructions [5]. Interestingly, these three functions were also consistent with the emerging themes found in this research, as the three interviewed teachers mainly discussed these three functions with regard to the topic of the function of the L1 as scaffolding when teaching English. Hence, the findings of these three functions, as the main themes, are summarised below, and each theme is then analysed and discussed separately to keep the content structured and easy to follow.

3.4.1. Teaching grammar

Based on the interview results, teaching grammar was perceived by the three interviewed teachers as the most favourable function of the L1 as scaffolding when teaching English. The three teachers significantly applied the L1 when delivering grammar concepts to their students. This is because using the L1 is beneficial to explain grammar concepts that are difficult for students to absorb when they are explained through English alone. Therefore, the three English teachers, as the participants in this study, revealed that Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language), as learners' L1, is useful to explain English grammar rules because the students tend to make grammatical mistakes, due to its complexity. A possible solution, to reduce the complicated manner of grammar concepts, is to scaffold the learning process by using the L1 [35]. For instance, Sandro explained the way he reduces the complexity of the grammar concept of 'word order' in English:

> "The 'word order' is a grammar concept, which is usually perceived as a complicated concept by

learners, due to its pattern. Students tend to make mistakes when they are required to position an 'adjective' in sentences or phrases. For instance, when they are asked to write 'small car' in English, they tend to misplace the word order by writing 'car small'. Therefore, in order to help them understand the related concept, I usually use the L1 to explain it."

Sandro's perception suggests that he relies on Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of ZPD [6]. The ZPD is an area of students' abilities that can be maximised if they are helped by other people, such as teachers [13]. In this sense, teachers can assist students' understanding of given materials by offering scaffolding, using the L1 to increase students' understanding of English materials. This is because L1 can function as a valuable social tool for teachers to deliver learning materials, as students' existing familiarity with the L1 can help them in understanding other languages, including English [11]. In terms of Sandro's experiences, that is why he used the L1 to reduce the complexity of grammar concepts, because the L1 can be applied as scaffolding to ease students' comprehension of complicated English materials, such as the concept of 'word order' in English grammar [6].

Reinforcing Sandro's opinion, the two other participants, Tina and Hany, also identified the complexity of English grammar concepts as the main factor for using the L1 in classrooms. In other words, both argued that delivering grammar materials only in English can be complicated for learners to understand, due to its complexity. This is consistent with research conducted by [2], in the Indonesian senior high school context, which found that teachers apply the L1 when delivering grammar materials because students tend to make mistakes, because of the complexity of English grammar. Implementing the L1 is thus an effective way to assist students that are trying to comprehend the complexity of grammar concepts Moreover, the use of the L1 when teaching complicated grammar rules also aligns with the principle of Vygotsky's cognitive and sociocultural theory, the selected theoretical framework of this research, which postulates that the application of the L1 as scaffolding can be used to decrease the difficulty of learning materials, such as complicated grammar concepts in English.

3.4.2. Teaching vocabulary

When teaching vocabulary, Sandro had different views toward the application of the L1 in classrooms, compared to the two other participants, Tina and Hany. Specifically, Sandro argued that when students do not understand English vocabulary, he directly uses the L1 as scaffolding to cope with the related issue. He needs the L1 as scaffolding because he wants to give students the precise meaning of the related vocabulary promptly. Otherwise, the limited English vocabularies may hinder students in understanding the meaning of English vocabulary [36]. Therefore, providing repetition is the kind of scaffolding that is usually used by Sandro when students have difficulty in understanding English vocabulary, which means he repeats the meaning of a piece of vocabulary using Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language), students' L1 [28]. Sandro gave an example of this kind of repetition:

"When students do not understand the meaning of 'jeopardy' in English vocabulary, I will repeat its meaning by using Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language), students' L1, to help them comprehend it."

The use of the L1 in the repetitious form, outlined by Sandro, is also underpinned by the principle of point-of-need scaffolding, which is defined as assistance offered to students in the form of repetition, when they do not understand complicated learning materials, such as applying repetition to help them comprehend difficult English vocabulary [28]. Consequently, the use of the L1 in the repetitious form not only eases students' grasp of given materials but also helps teachers to deliver learning materials efficiently [29]. In contrast to Sandro's perception, Tina and Hany commented that it is beneficial to teach vocabulary in English, instead of using the L1. This is because the employment of the L1 in teaching vocabulary decreases exposure to English [14]. As such, they explain the meaning of vocabulary using English rather than applying the L1, because they want to ensure students get significant exposure to English in their classrooms.

The difference between Sandro's and the other participants' views might be affected by differences in their teaching experiences. This notion is supported by Al-Nofaie [37], who notes that teachers who have more teaching experiences tend to minimally use the L1 when teaching English. This might explain why Tina and Hany, who have taught for 20 and 15 years, respectively, minimise the use of the L1 in classrooms, compared to Sandro, who has less teaching experience of roughly five years. Therefore, when teaching vocabulary, Tina and Hany decide to find other ways to assist their students' grasp of English vocabulary, instead of applying the L1 in classrooms. However, the ways selected by Tina and Hany to help their students in understanding complicated English vocabulary also vary slightly. This disparity is explained below. Tina

contended that when her students do not understand given English vocabulary, she tends to describe the meaning of the related vocabulary by providing its synonym. She gave an example of this method:

> "*In explaining the meaning of a word like 'hazard', I will use the synonym of its vocabulary like 'danger', in order to ease my students' comprehension of the meaning of the related vocabulary.*"

Using the synonym is beneficial to assist students' grasp of certain complicated vocabulary more easily [38]. Moreover, this can avoid teachers' use of the L1 in classrooms when students do not understand the meaning of the given English vocabulary, as teachers still have the opportunity to provide students with significant exposure to using English in classrooms [39]. Hany, conversely, proposed another way to minimise the use of the L1 when students do not comprehend English words. She explained that the use of gestures is useful to help students understand certain complicated vocabulary. This view is supported by a study conducted by Kaymakamoglu and Yiltanlilar [40], which revealed that, when students do not understand what exactly the teacher is trying to say in English, teachers can explain and express it using a gesture. This is useful assistance for learners trying to grasp the meaning of particular complicated English words, because the given gesture will prompt them to accurately guess the meaning [41].

3.4.3. Giving instructions

Tina noted that it is not necessary to use the L1 when giving instructions, arguing that banning the use of the L1 when giving classroom instructions helps learners become accustomed to real situations and English environments, with regard to the given instructions. In other words, students will adapt to expressing and understanding instructions in English effectively, since they are provided with significant exposure to the practice of giving and receiving instructions in English. This view adheres to the tenets of Krashen's second language acquisition (SLA) theory, which postulates that giving students significant exposure to practising English will result in their better understanding of the language [14]. Tina also gave another reason for avoiding the use of the L1 when giving instructions: she considered the related activity as a simple activity that is easy for learners to understand. This is because students are accustomed to English instructions, since they have been given such activities in either previous meetings or classes.

This notion is also supported by research conducted by Al-Nofaie [37], conducted in the context of EFL classrooms in Saudi public schools. The majority of English teachers in this study perceived that the use of the L1 should be avoided when giving instructions. This is because students are already acquainted with common English phrases that are used for giving instructions, from the beginning of the class [42]. Therefore, students reported that they could understand the given instructions well, even when they are not assisted with the use of Arabic (their L1) in classrooms [42]. Moreover, these findings also align with Hany's perception, who revealed that her choice for avoiding the L1 when giving instructions is affected by her intention to trigger learners' comprehension of the given instructions in English. This similarly relates to the finding delineated by Al-Nofaie [37], since some teachers in this study also intend to familiarise their students with given instructions in English, which can increase students' understanding.

These perceptions of Tina and Hany are different from the results found by Zou *et al.* [17], Nurhamidah [36], and Akan *et al.* [43], all of which assert that English teachers perceive the use of the L1 as necessary to help students comprehend English instructions. They argue that the employment of the L1 when giving instructions is beneficial for guiding students effectively, when they do not understand the given instructions in English. However, the different type of the given instructions might explain differences between the perceptions expressed by Tina and Hany and those of the teachers observed in the previously mentioned studies. In this sense, the use of the L1 or English when giving classroom instructions might depend on the type of instructions that teachers employ in classrooms. This situation is further explored in a study conducted by Zou *et al.* [17] in the Turkey university setting, in which some teachers classify when the L1 should be used in classrooms and when English should be applied. For instance, when the given instructions are critical and complex, it might be a sensible idea to employ the L1 [17]. This is because the employment of the L1 can help students comprehend complicated instructions, since they are familiar with the L1 [44]. Conversely, when teachers explain simple tasks, which only need simple instructions, teachers are required to use English [17]. This is because instructions for a simple activity might be easier for students to absorb, in which case teachers can ensure students have significant exposure to English and become accustomed to receiving instructions in English [42].

This condition is reinforced by Sandro's perceptions, who contended that the decision to either use the L1 or apply the use of English when giving classroom instructions is affected by the type of the given instructions. For example, Sandro tends to use English to instruct students to complete simple activities like erasing the whiteboard or expressing greetings. In contrast, he prefers to apply Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language), students' L1, when learners are required to conduct difficult activities, such as completing

complicated assignments and examinations. Sandro's choices also reflect the overall findings of a study conducted by Al-Nofaie [37] in the Saudi context, which reported that some teachers decide to use Arabic (learners' L1) when asking students to take an examination. In contrast, the use of Arabic is avoided by most teachers when giving simple instructions, such as requiring students to greet each other in English [42].

4.   CONCLUSION

The main conclusion is that the perceptions of the three participants in this research can be divided into three categories, concerning the application of the L1 when teaching English. First, the virtual position, which is defined as teachers who hold the opinion that the application of the L1 is not necessary when teaching English. This is because teachers provide students with significant exposure to English in their classrooms, in order to make them accustomed to the language. Consequently, this helps students to acquire English effectively, as it provides abundant opportunities to practise English. Second, the maximal position, which is defined as teachers who believe that the use of the L1 should be maximised effectively in classrooms. The reason for this maximal use is that the application of the L1 is beneficial to assist low proficiency learners in grasping English materials well. Otherwise, the learning process might not be effective, since the limited English abilities of students may prevent them from participating in the classroom. The third position, the optimal position, is defined as teachers who perceive that the application of the L1 should only be used for particular reasons, such as considering students' needs, teachers' and learners' language proficiency levels, and the type of task. The reason for taking this position is that teachers can balance their use of both the L1 and English in classrooms.

Some implications related to educational practice and policy can be derived from this study. The exploration of teachers' perceptions toward the application of the L1 when teaching English is still an under-examined aspect of the Indonesian senior high school context, so this research can fill the related gap and offer insights concerning the perceptions of teachers toward the use of the L1 when teaching English. Additionally, teachers may also consider the results of this study as information to apply Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language), as students' L1, when delivering English materials in classrooms, which may subsequently enhance teachers' awareness and understanding of the ways in which the L1 can function as scaffolding when teaching English, specifically in terms of teaching grammar and vocabulary, and when giving instructions. Hence, teachers' awareness and understanding of the potentiality of the L1 as scaffolding may also benefit students that are learning English. In this sense, as teachers realise the potential of the L1, they might consider using the L1 to deliver complicated materials, which may assist students' grasp of learning materials more effectively. The results of this study may also be beneficial for Indonesian educational stakeholders and the government, prompting them to revisit Indonesian educational policy regarding the position of the L1 when teaching English.

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