

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION USED BY ENGLISH TEACHER AT SMKN 1 GOWA

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ABSTRACT

A study on the language of instruction by an English teacher at SMKN 1 Gowa revealed the use of three languages Makassarese, Indonesian, and English to accommodate students diverse linguistic abilities. The qualitative research, involving interviews and observations, found that Makassarese was used to help students with limited proficiency in Indonesian and English better understand the material. The main reason for using multiple languages was to bridge the understanding gap among students from different linguistic backgrounds. To support this trilingual approach, teachers received training in multilingual teaching methods, developed teaching materials in all three languages, and implemented mentoring programs to improve language integration in the classroom.

Keywords: *Language of Instruction, English Teacher, Student Linguistic Diversity, Multilingual Teaching Methods*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language teaching plays an important role in education, influencing students' decisions to study abroad, cognitive skills and literacy outcomes. According to Depdiknas (2005), language is basically the expression of human thoughts and feelings in an organized manner using sound as a tool.

The language used when teaching courses and subject matter is referred to as "Language of Instruction". It includes the language that teachers use to teach students new material, as well as the intentional and methodical use of language to improve learning outcomes for students.

In general, language teaching is an important component of education, and many things must be considered. These include specific contexts, stakeholder participation, and clear policies and practices. It aims to ensure that students receive appropriate instruction to develop strong reading skills. It is crucial for educators to be aware of how the use of language as a medium of instruction affects student achievement, so that they can make informed decisions about language policies and programs. Students may find it challenging to comprehend and retain the material if the language of instruction is not employed when teaching. For instance, studies reveal that prior to learning using particular instructional modalities, students struggle with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. In this context, the teacher becomes a key element that directly contributes to students' learning experience, especially when it comes to language of instruction. This aligns with the two objectives of the research, which are to identify the languages of instruction used by the English teacher in the teaching process at SMKN 1 Gowa and to investigate the reasons the teacher chose to use these languages in the English Language Teaching (ELT) process.

The importance of the teacher's role in the learning process cannot be ignored. Teachers are not only teaching facilitators, but also influential role models and educational leaders. One of the main tasks of teachers is to thoroughly understand the diversity of their students, which allows

them to customize teaching methods to meet the needs and language ability levels of individual students. It can be concluded that the importance of language of instruction in an educational context is immense. The appropriate use of teaching language can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes, especially in terms of comprehension of the material. For example, research shows that the whole language approach is more effective in improving students' reading comprehension learning outcomes. The use of a suitable language of instruction can also provide students more authority, freedom to think and create, and incentive to learn. Therefore, the selection and application of an appropriate language of instruction is a key factor in improving the quality of education and student learning outcomes.

2. METHOD

This study aims to explore the language of instruction employed by English teachers and the rationale behind their choice. Employing qualitative methodology, the researcher focuses on the language of instruction used during English lessons in the classroom, specifically examining the practices at SMKN 1 Gowa. Qualitative research is utilized to assess and elucidate the nuances and effectiveness of teachers' language use in instruction.

The study seeks to provide insights into how English teachers at SMKN 1 Gowa employ different languages, including Indonesian, Makassar, and English itself, during their instructional practices. By focusing on these practices, the research aims to uncover the motivations behind their language choices and the impact of these choices on student comprehension and engagement. Qualitative methodology enables a detailed exploration of the complexities and effectiveness of language use in educational settings, offering a deeper understanding of instructional strategies employed by teachers in diverse linguistic environments.

3. RESULTS

The findings of this study are based on the results of the data analysis obtained. Data analysis was conducted to collect information regarding the use of language of instruction by English teachers at SMKN 1 Gowa. This data was collected through observation and interview. Observations were conducted to find out how the use of language of instruction in English teaching affects students' responses in the learning process. Interviews were conducted to explore teachers' reasons for choosing a particular language of instruction and to understand their views on its effectiveness. The results of these observations and interviews were then analyzed to understand the effect of language of instruction on students' engagement and learning ability in English language learning.

Table 1. Language Instruction Used by English Teacher

No	Language Used by English Teacher
1	Local language (Makassar Language)
2	Indonesian Language
3	English

In the table above, it is presented the use of the three languages of instruction in teaching English at SMKN 1 Gowa. The English teacher at SMKN 1 Gowa employs three languages as the language of instruction during the teaching process: the students' local language (Makassar language), Indonesian language, and English language. From the observation, it was found that the Makassar language is more dominantly used as the primary language of instruction. This is largely due to the fact that many students at SMKN 1 Gowa do not fully comprehend Indonesian and English, making the use of their local language more effective for communication and understanding. Furthermore, the teacher incorporates Indonesian approximately 30 percent of the time, particularly at the beginning of the lesson or when introducing new material. When providing examples or clarifications, the teacher switches to Makassar language, using it for around 45 percent of the instructional time. English is utilized about 25 percent of the time, mainly when asking questions or reinforcing/re-explaining the material that has already been covered, to ensure students grasp the content being taught.

4. DISCUSSION

The Overview of the Languages of Instruction Used by the English Teacher and the Reasons for Their Use at SMKN 1 Gowa. The researcher interviewed an English teacher from SMKN 1 Gowa, who is 38 years old. The teacher has extensive teaching experience and has been teaching at SMKN 1 Gowa for more than six years. In the interview, the teacher provided an in-depth insight into the use of language of instruction in the English learning process. She explains the rationale behind using Makassarese, Indonesian, and English as the language of instruction and how this approach helps students to understand the subject matter.

The use of multiple languages in instruction is essential for ensuring all students can follow along and understand the material. The teacher finds that students comprehend lessons more effectively when she combines Makassar and Indonesian with English. This approach helps to accommodate the varied language proficiencies within the classroom and ensures that all students can engage with the content. This is based on the teacher's response to the second interview question.

As Nurpahmi (2018) highlights, the language used by teachers and students serves not just as a medium of instruction but also as a source of language acquisition. The teacher's use of the target language provides students with valuable input that they can imitate and internalize. By blending languages, the teacher creates a more inclusive and effective learning environment, where students can better understand and acquire English through the familiar context of their native languages. Surayatika (2019) in her research entitled "Students' Perception of Teachers' Bilingual Language Use in EFL Classroom" examines students' perceptions of teachers' use of bilingual language in EFL classes. The research involved collecting data through questionnaires given to students, then the data was analyzed to draw conclusions about students' perceptions of bilingual language use in their English classes.

Based on the teacher's response to the third interview question, most of the students taught by the teacher can only understand English lessons when she uses Makassar and Indonesian as the language of instruction. Therefore, the use of these three languages is essential to ensure all students can follow the lessons well and understand the material being taught. This elaboration shows that the use of bilingual and multilingual language in teaching has a significant impact on student understanding and engagement. The results of Surayatika's (2019) research support the approach used by the teacher, where the use of Makassarese, Indonesian and English not only facilitates the understanding of diverse students but also reflects their needs and language background. This is in line with Surayatika's finding that students have a positive perception of their teachers' use of bilingual language, as this helps them understand the lessons better and feel more involved in the learning process.

Therefore, an approach that integrates Indonesian, English and Makassarese to ensure a thorough and inclusive understanding of the material being taught, suits the diverse linguistic abilities of the class. This is in line with the conceptual framework on pedagogy, psychology and contextual factors, where the teacher considers these three aspects in her efforts to improve students' understanding of the subject matter. In terms of pedagogy, teachers adjust teaching methods by using the language that is most easily understood by students, such as Makassarese, when explaining difficult concepts. In terms of psychology, teacher pay attention to students' comfort and confidence, using language that is familiar to them to create a supportive learning environment. As for contextual factors, the teacher realizes that students' language and cultural backgrounds affect how they learn, so she adapts the teaching to be relevant to their daily lives. By considering these three aspects, the teacher ensures that her teaching approach is academically, emotionally and contextually effective for all students.

On the fourth interview question, the teacher explained that he uses a strategy in the form of sparking questions to students. The purpose of these triggering questions is to find out the extent of students' understanding before entering the learning material. Quoting the definition of a teacher according to Hasan (2019), a teacher must have extensive knowledge and be able to have

a positive influence on their students. This means that a teacher is expected to have in-depth knowledge in their field to provide quality learning and be able to positively influence students' development. With adequate knowledge, they can provide clear and in-depth teaching, as well as provide positive examples and encouragement to students to achieve their best potential.

These two concepts are interrelated in the teacher's teaching context. The trigger question strategy used by the teacher allows her to gauge students' initial understanding and adjust her teaching approach according to their level of proficiency. This is in line with Hasan's view that a teacher should have extensive knowledge and the ability to positively influence students. By using trigger questions, the teacher not only assesses students' understanding but also encourages them to actively participate in learning. This creates a dynamic learning environment where students can feel supported and motivated to learn further.

Thus, the teacher's approach of customizing the language of instruction based on students' proficiency and the trigger question strategy she uses reflects the important role of a teacher as described by Hasan (2019). Teachers who are knowledgeable and strategic in their teaching can provide a better and more inclusive learning experience for all students, helping them to develop better understanding and achieve their potential. The teacher said that the challenge in multilingual teaching lies with the students themselves. Since what they are learning is not their mother tongue, it is a challenge for an English teacher to teach the language to students with different backgrounds of understanding. This is based on the teacher's response to the last interview question.

Furthermore, Asrial et al (2019) in their study entitled "Exploring Obstacles in Language Learning Among Prospective Primary School Teachers" also identified similar challenges in language learning. This study aims to analyze the obstacles faced by Primary School Teacher Education students in mastering Indonesian language competencies. The study collected data through interviews and documentation, and used a qualitative research approach to analyze the data. The results show that there are various obstacles that hinder the language learning process for prospective elementary school teachers, including lack of environmental support and limitations in teaching methods.

These two perspectives are interrelated in identifying challenges in language learning in different contexts but with similar problems. In multilingual teaching, the teacher faces the challenge of teaching English to students who have diverse language backgrounds. This reflects Asrial et al's (2019) findings that barriers to language learning are often related to a lack of environmental support and limitations of effective teaching methods.

In conclusion, this interview highlights the importance of adjusting the language of instruction based on the linguistic background of the students is key to overcoming the challenges of teaching English in a multilingual environment, this is based on Krashen's (1981) theory that language learners must receive intelligible input for language acquisition to occur.

And also the reason behind the teacher using three languages as the language of instruction: Makassarese, Indonesian, and English, to accommodate students' various language backgrounds and facilitate students' understanding. An important finding from this interview was that the teacher multilingual approach proved effective in improving students' understanding of the English subject matter. The strategy of using triggering questions helps teachers gauge students' initial understanding and adjust teaching methods according to their needs. Customizing the language of instruction based on students' linguistic background is key to overcoming the challenges of teaching English in a multilingual environment. The teacher's approach can serve as a model for other teachers facing similar challenges.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the use of several languages as the language of instruction is very important for students in learning English. This can be seen from the opinions of the interviewees who emphasized that understanding and using Makassarese, Indonesian and English are crucial to their understanding

and success in learning English. These languages serve as important communication media that facilitate better understanding and engagement with the subject matter. The need for multilingual instructional materials is also significant. This is evident from the research results, where teachers expressed a strong preference for materials in Makassar, Indonesian, and English to aid their teaching. This demonstrates that teachers have a desire to effectively teach English and require materials that accommodate their students' diverse linguistic backgrounds.

This study also shows that the reason why teachers use Makassar, Bahasa Indonesia and English as the language of instruction in teaching English at SMKN 1 Gowa is to facilitate better understanding for students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. The use of Makassar language helps teachers in explaining complex concepts to students who are more comfortable using their mother tongue, while Bahasa Indonesia and English are used to prepare students in the context of international communication. This multilingual approach not only allows adaptation of teaching methods according to students' needs, but also strengthens teaching as a bridge between local and global languages in the English learning process.

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