# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## Background of the Study

Learning a foreign language (FL) is complicated, especially in an unsupportive environment. An individual must spend a considerable amount of time learning a foreign language. However, some people can quickly and skillfully learn more than one language. In English as a second language (ESL), there is a lot of use of English beyond the classroom in many settings, whereas in English as a foreign language, there is no need to use English outside the classroom (EFL). To make studying a foreign language more accessible, most learners use their first language (L1). The first language (L1) can strategically impact his scenario and is considered a beneficial communication and instruction technique (Grim, 2010).

One of the most contentious issues in the field of foreign language (FL) education is whether a student's first language (L1) should be restricted or integrated with their second language (L2) during FL instruction (Young, Dixo, & Yunkyeong, 2019). Research suggests that using one's native language helps students acquire new languages better. When studying and teaching foreign languages, using the first language in the classroom does not limit learning and offers a range of reasons for both students and teachers (Zulfikar, 2018). This assumption is also followed by the responses of other researchers that the first language can help when the explanation of the second or foreign language cannot be understood, and the first language can reduce students' confusion (Carson, 2012). Teachers use their first language (L1) to communicate with pupils for classroom management objectives and interact with teachers (Anderson, 2018). In other words, under some circumstances, the first language is required to acquire a second or foreign language (Galali & Cinkara, 2017). It has been demonstrated that using L1 in the classroom facilitates teaching and learning (Hasrina, Aziz, & Fitriani, 2018). The first language is then seen to help enhance foreign language learning since it can help people understand the similarities and contrasts between the two languages (Ibrahim, 2019). This means that students and teachers can use the first language (L1) in a foreign language class, although there are some limitations. In the English classroom, a range of teaching methodologies the first language (L1) as a tool (Al Nofaie, 2010). Even though teachers must be cautious when employing it, the first language (L1) has the potential to supplant rather than complement the target language (Madriñan, 2014).

However, many researchers also argue that using the first language as a teaching tool for a second or foreign language is ineffective. On the one hand, some language instructors are hesitant to allow pupils to use their first language (L1) because they fear it will limit their exposure to foreign languages (Swain & Lapkin, 2013). Students should examine whether L1 affects EFL classes or makes them forget the target language. Because all students must focus on the target language in an EFL classroom, it is critical to avoid utilizing the first language (L1). In this situation, increased exposure to the target language is necessary because using the first language (L1) may have negative consequences such as transfer errors and dependency on the first language (Voicu, 2012).

Learning a foreign language enables students to interact with their teachers in that language, allowing them to gain as much practice as possible (Xhemaili, 2013). Moreover, the classroom is the only appropriate context in which students can be exposed to a foreign language; if the teacher uses the first language, students will not have the opportunity to experience the actual use of a foreign language (Almoayidi, 2018). Moreover, especially in out-of-school settings with limited foreign language (FL) exposure compared to second language (SL) settings, teachers must expose students to the Target Language during teaching hours (Chambless, 2012).

Considering these problems, This study intends to investigate students' perceptions of the use of their first language in EFL classrooms, as well as their attitudes about using their first language in EFL classrooms, in order to determine why they support their first language and why they avoid it in EFL classes. The outcomes of this study should help foreign language teachers improve their students' comprehension of the target language in the classroom.

## Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the students' perceptions about using their first language in the EFL classroom?
2. What are students' attitudes towards using the first language in the EFL classroom?

## Research Objective

Based on the research question, the objective of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the student's perception of using the first language in the EFL classroom.
2. To explore students' attitudes towards using the first language in the EFL classroom.

## Scope and Limitations of the Study

This case study focuses on analyzing the student's perceptions of L1 in the EFL classroom to determine why they support their first language in EFL classes and students' attitudes about using their first language in EFL classrooms. This study is the use of L1 in EFL classrooms that is conducted in senior high school in Garut.

## Research Significance

This research is expected to be able to contribute to foreign language students and teachers from both a theoretical and practical perspective. Theoretically, specific insights from this research will tend to theories about the use of L1 in general, especially the perception that the use of L1 in EFL classroom culture can affect learning English as a foreign language. Then how the same theory applies in different situations and can be used as an additional source for research.

Practically, this research may provide the student with clearer perceptions of the importance of using L1, the contribution and impact of the challenges, and the use of L1 based on the student's level of Education in the EFL classroom. Besides, this research may help a better understanding, especially for the learners who may have difficulty understanding the target language using L1 and what they are expected to do.

## Definition of Terminologies

Some words frequently appear; the following terms are defined:

1. First languages are learned three years in early life or childhood (Saville-Troike, 2006). In this case, the first language is Indonesian.
2. Perception is a person's point of view, and it can be a powerful drive for them to take action. To create a lens through which to comprehend the environment through the lens of socio-cultural elements, process sensory data, and connect it to previous experiences. Each person brings their personal life experiences to the workplace, which impacts how people think (Mcdonald, 2012).
3. English as a foreign language (EFL) refers to the Acquisition of a non-native language within the framework of one's tongue (Gass & Selinker, 2001).