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PUJILÍ EXTENSION

PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
RESEARCH REPORT

THE USE OF L1 IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Research report before obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

“We Ayala Albarrasin Mercy Marisol and Quishpe Soria Jhoana Estefania declare that we are the authors of the present research project: “**THE USE OF L1 IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**”, being Andrade Morán José Ignacio, MSc. tutor of the present work; and I expressly exempt the Technical University of Cotopaxi and its legal representatives from possible claims or legal actions.

I also certify that the ideas, concepts, procedures and results expressed in this research work are my exclusive responsibility.

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RESEARCH PROJECT TUTOR'S ENDORSEMENT

As Tutor of the Research Project titled: "THE USE OF L1 IN THE EFL CLASSROOM", of Ayala Albarrasin Mercy Marisol and Quishpe Soria Jhoana Estefania, of the National and Foreign Language Pedagogy, English Major, I consider that said Research Report complies with the methodological requirements and sufficient scientific-technical contributions to be submitted to the evaluation of the Project Validation Tribunal that the Board of Directors of the Pujilí Extension will designate, for its corresponding study and qualification.

Pujilí, February 25, 2025



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ENDORSEMENT OF APPROVAL OF THE DEGREE TRIBUNAL

As the Readers Tribunal, approved the Research Project according to the regulations issued by the Technical University of Cotopaxi, and by the Pujilí Extension; because the applicants: Ayala Albarrasin Mercy Marisol and Quishpe Soria Jhoana Estefania with the title of Research Project: **“THE USE OF L1 IN THE EFL CLASSROOM”** has considered the recommendations issued timely and meets the sufficient merits to be submitted to the act of Substantiation of the degree work.

For the above-mentioned, it is authorized to carry out the corresponding fillings, according to the institutional regulations.

Pujilí, February 25, 2025

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GRATEFULNESS

First, we thank God, whose guidance and blessings have given us the strength and wisdom to complete this project.

We sincerely thank the Technical University of Cotopaxi for providing us with the knowledge and resources to grow academically and professionally. Our deepest gratitude to our professors for their dedication, patience and support, which have been essential in our learning path. Special thanks to our tutor, MSc. José Ignacio Andrade, for his invaluable guidance, patience and encouragement throughout this process.

Finally, we want to express our most sincere gratitude to our families and loved ones, whose constant support and motivation have been our greatest source of strength. This project is a reflection of the faith, effort and knowledge we have acquired thanks to each one of you.

Mercy & Jhoana

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my son Alan Marcillo, who helped me not give up on my studies and be a better person every day. Thank you for everything since the first day he always has been there to help me in difficult moments. For this, I promised to care for him and become the best mom and friend. Also, I dedicate it to my family, who helped and supported me to continue and achieve my dream. For them, I never give up before any difficulty to fulfill my goal and go ahead for more in my life, either in my education or my personal life. Finally, I want to thank God and all my teachers for all things in my process as a student so I can become the person I am and do my best.

Mercy

DEDICATION

"Life can be full of challenges, but every fall is an opportunity to rise even stronger. No dream is too big if we face it with perseverance, love, and determination."

I dedicate this project with all my heart to my dear mommy, Blanca, whose strength, unconditional love and endless support have guided me every step of the way; to my daddy Angel, who lights my path and gives me courage to keep going; and to my beloved siblings, Melany and Mesias, who always remind me that I am never alone. Each one of you has been my support, my motivation and my inspiration to pursue my dreams. With all my love and gratitude, this achievement is for you.

Jhoana

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

PUJILI EXTENSION

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY ENGLISH MAJOR

THEME: “THE USE OF L1 IN THE EFL CLASSROOM”

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ABSTRACT

The use of the mother tongue (L1), in this case, Spanish, in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has been a widely debated topic in education. Therefore, this study tries to analyze L1 (Spanish) use in EFL classes taught by English career teachers at the Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí Extension, during the 2024-2025 academic period. In this context, certain deficiencies have been identified among both teachers and students. On the one hand, it has been observed that teachers rely excessively on Spanish in the EFL classroom, use L1 as a frequent tool in their lessons, and, in some cases, show a lack of motivation to actively integrate the target language (L2). On the other hand, students face challenges in learning English, feel insecure when speaking it, and experience confusion when they do not understand instructions given in the L2. This study follows a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. For data collection, a questionnaire was administered to eight teachers based on the instrument by Rodríguez and Oxbrow (2008). A descriptive analysis was then conducted to determine the frequency, perceptions, and attitudes toward the use of Spanish in the EFL classroom through three key dimensions. The results show that perceptions of L1 use vary depending on the context and the teachers' perspectives. While some avoid its use to promote immersion in the target language, others employ it strategically to clarify instructions, explain grammatical concepts, and manage classroom dynamics. In conclusion, although teachers prefer to use English as the primary language of instruction, they acknowledge that the strategic use of Spanish enhances comprehension, particularly for complex grammatical structures. Additionally, there is general agreement on its benefits for clarifying instructions, although direct translation remains a debated issue that requires further research.

Keywords: English influence, Foreign language, L1 uses, Methods and approaches, Mother tongue.

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI

EXTENSIÓN PUJILÍ

CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

TÍTULO: “EL USO DE LA L1 EN EL AULA DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA”

Autores:

Ayala Albarrasin Mercy Marisol
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RESUMEN

El uso de la lengua materna (L1), en este caso el español, dentro del aula de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) ha sido un tema ampliamente debatido en el ámbito educativo. Por ello, el presente estudio trata de analizar el uso del español en las clases de EFL impartidas por los docentes de la carrera de inglés en la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi, Extensión Pujilí, durante el período académico 2024-2025. En este contexto, se han identificado algunas deficiencias tanto en docentes como en estudiantes. Por un lado, se observa que los profesores recurren en exceso al español en el aula de EFL, utilizan la L1 como una herramienta recurrente en sus clases y, en algunos casos, muestran una falta de motivación para integrar activamente la lengua meta (L2). Por otro lado, los estudiantes presentan dificultades en el aprendizaje del inglés, se sienten inseguros al hablarlo y experimentan confusión cuando no comprenden las instrucciones en la L2. Este estudio adopta un enfoque cuantitativo con un método descriptivo. Para la recolección de datos, se aplicó un cuestionario a ocho docentes, basado en el instrumento de Rodríguez y Oxbrow (2008). Posteriormente, se realizó un análisis descriptivo con el objetivo de determinar la frecuencia, percepciones y actitudes en torno al uso del español en el aula de EFL, a través de clave de tres dimensiones. Los resultados evidencian que la percepción sobre el uso de la L1 varía según el contexto y la perspectiva de los docentes. Mientras algunos evitan su uso para promover la inmersión en la lengua meta, otros la emplean estratégicamente para clarificar instrucciones, explicar aspectos gramaticales y gestionar la dinámica del aula. En conclusión, si bien los profesores prefieren utilizar mayormente el inglés, reconocen que el uso estratégico del español puede mejorar la comprensión, especialmente en estructuras gramaticales complejas. Asimismo, existe consenso en que la L1 es útil para aclarar instrucciones, aunque la traducción directa sigue siendo un tema de debate que requiere mayor investigación.

Palabras claves: Influencia del inglés, Lengua extranjera, Uso de la L1, Métodos y enfoques, Lengua materna.

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UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE WORK STRUCTURE

1. General Information

Theme: The use of L1 in the EFL classroom.

Starting Date:

October 2024

Ending Date:

February 2025

Place of Research:

Pujilí – Cotopaxi - Technical University of Cotopaxi

Sponsoring Faculty:

Extension Pujili

Sponsoring career:

Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Undergraduate Program.

Linked Research Project (if applicable):

no if applicable

Macro project of the career:

Academic discourse: A transdisciplinary of education and linguistics in linguistic-communicative contexts for teaching English.

Work Team:

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Knowledge area:

Education

University Research line:

Education, communication, and design for human and social development.

Extension Subline:

Education, linguistics, literature, interculturality and society.

2. Problem Statement

Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in the English context, the use of L1 instated a subject of debate for decades. Even though in EFL classrooms, it is essentially the use of the target language to immerse students and familiarize them with L2. However, much research suggests that using L1 strategically can play an important role in the teaching process, for example, it helps in the understanding, support, and comfort of learning the best way a foreign language. The application of L1 in foreign language teaching is a controversial issue in the education field. Using the mother tongue serves several important functions in the classroom, including explaining the meaning of words and clarifying complex grammatical concepts, allowing teachers to use the native language to help students learn (Fatiha, 2021).

Likewise, English as a foreign language allows students to acquire additional communication skills and learn about other ways of life (Kerr, 2019). On the other hand, Mayni and Paramasivam (2021) mentioned that the mother tongue currently plays multiple roles that contribute to students' communicative competence and should not be neglected in the learning process. Even though the mother tongue should not replace the priority of the second language, using L1 should be allowed, when necessary, in teaching foreign languages. However, using L1 generates some deficiencies in teachers such as the teacher's use of too much mother tongue (Spanish) in the EFL classroom, teachers' use of L1 as a tool in English classes, and the lack of motivation for teachers to integrate L2 into the EFL classroom. On the other hand, lack of student level in the EFL classroom, students feel nervous about speaking the target language and confused when didn't understand the instructions.

According to Mendoza (2024), the findings suggest that not all professors use the first language in class, regarding the use of L1 as inappropriate because it does not foster L2 development in students, who thus do not receive sufficient practice. In contrast, most teachers who participated in this research support the use of L1 for explanations and time-saving, especially in large groups, particularly when the students are beginners (p.63). In the same way, it is important to point out that this study aims to analyze the use of L1 in the EFL classroom in the teaching process at the Technical University of Cotopaxi in the 2024 - 2025 academic period. Such a thing must be done since the excessive use of the mother tongue would hinder and weaken the abilities and skills of the students to acquire a second language, which is why this study will help to determine how productive it would be to use L1 in the classroom of English as a foreign language. In conclusion, learning a second language requires a lot of perseverance, since it is

important to take into account that the mother tongue does not interfere with English as a second language and that the two languages are stable L1 and L2. For this reason, the research question for this project is:

- How is L1 (Spanish) used in the EFL classroom for the teachers of English career at the Technical University of Cotopaxi “Pujilí Extension” in the 2024 - 2025 academic period?

3. Objectives

3.1. General Objective

- To analyze L1 (Spanish) use in EFL classes taught by English career teachers at the Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí Extension, during the 2024-2025 academic period.

3.2. Specific Objectives

- To establish the frequency of L1 (Spanish) use in the teaching process in an English classroom.
- To identify the perception of L1 (Spanish) use in English classes as a foreign language.
- To describe the teacher's attitudes about L1 (Spanish) use in teaching L2.

4. Activities and Task System in Relation to the Objectives Proposed.

Objectives and Activities

| Specific objective | Activities | Verification Means |
|---|---|---|
| To establish the frequency of L1 (Spanish) use in the teaching process in an English classroom. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look for information in papers and thesis. - Identify according to the context of the research topic. - Select the important and adequate information for the research. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research background • Theoretical framework • Folder with sources |
| To identify the perception of L1 (Spanish) use in English classes as a foreign language. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look for papers' instruments by the previous researchers. - Select the instrument. - Adap the instrument. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology • Appendix |
| To describe the teacher's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the participants. | |

attitudes about L1 - Apply the survey to teachers • Methodology
 (Spanish) use in teaching to get information.
 L2. - Obtain fake results.

5. Justification

English nowadays is an important tool for many things in our lives for this the present study is based on a review of the theory and cognitions of English teachers at the Technical University of Cotopaxi; it deals with theoretical insights from research on language acquisition in an analysis of the relationship between first and second language learning in the teaching process. For this reason, the purpose of this research is an analysis of L1 (Spanish) use in the EFL classroom for the teachers of English career at the Technical University of Cotopaxi Pujili Extension where the teachers describe some important aspects of the use of the mother tongue in the English teaching process. For example, this research provides EFL teachers perspective with evidence in the use of L1 to improve teaching and learning processes. The next research is carried out to lay clearer guidelines on how to use the first language effectively in the EFL classroom without hindering the second-language learning process.

Although the mother tongue plays a fundamental role in language learning, it contributes to developing linguistic skills that help to improve learning ability. However, the limited english exposure in the EFL classroom is generated by the lack of student level in the EFL classroom. So, teachers use L1 as a tool in English classes because of a lack of motivation for teachers to integrate L2 into the EFL classroom. Therefore, Hanif (2020) stated “The role of the use of learners’ first language in teaching a second language, and there is a common consensus among the researchers that it plays a significant role in language classrooms” (p.54). In this case, L1 can be particularly beneficial because it allows teachers to provide clear and concise explanations so that students can grasp concepts immediately without struggling to understand complex English terminology.

In the same way, the study will describe how the use of L1 in an EFL classroom helps and contributes to a satisfactory teaching and learning environment so students and teachers feel comfortable in the EFL classroom through the quantitative method using a questionnaire where describes the teachers’ perspectives on the use of Spanish in the EFL classroom with their experience and how they think is the best way to use L1 in the English teaching process as a foreign language. Finally, it points out the benefits of using the first language, such as

improving learners' comprehension and confidence in learning a second language and improving the learning outcomes by establishing meaningful learning.

6. Scientific and Technical Foundation

6.1. Background

Loja and Patiño (2024) conducted a quantitative descriptive study to explore EFL professors' motivations and intended outcomes for using Spanish in their classroom settings. The research took place at the Institute of Languages of the University of Cuenca, a public institution that offers free English courses as a graduation requirement. The study focused on PASLE program teachers, with a sample of 13 respondents from an initial group of 25 instructors. Data was collected through a survey questionnaire designed to analyze teachers' perspectives on L1 use. The survey included demographic questions and Likert-scale items on the frequency and purpose of L1 use. The results indicated that most A1-A2 level professors use Spanish to aid comprehension, particularly when clarifying concepts and translating complex vocabulary. However, opinions on whether L1 enhances or hinders English proficiency vary. Some instructors viewed it as beneficial for understanding, while others saw overuse as limiting students' English exposure. The study concluded that a balanced approach to L1 use is necessary, emphasizing the importance of professional development to optimize its implementation in EFL classrooms.

According to Kohi and Lakshmi (2020), the research explores global perspectives on L1 use in EFL/ESL classrooms, focusing on teachers' perceptions from twelve countries. The study aimed to understand how high-school and graduate-level teachers utilize L1 for various functions and the frequency of its use in teaching. Conducted in Hyderabad, India, data collection involved a questionnaire completed by 40 teachers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, India, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Palestine, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Yemen. The questionnaire had two sections: the first gathered demographic details and teaching experience, while the second included 15 statements rated on a five-point Likert scale, from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The responses were categorized into four functional uses: teaching, managerial, affective, and social. The questionnaire was piloted to ensure clarity, and statistical measures such as mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated for consistency. The findings indicated that 78% of teachers used L1 "sometimes," primarily for translation, explaining content, managing classrooms, and social interactions. The study concluded that L1

plays a significant role in EFL classrooms, facilitating learning and improving teaching effectiveness.

Following Shimray and Wangdi (2023), this study was conducted to investigate the beliefs of EFL language teachers in using L1 in the English classroom with the hope of providing new insights and evidence for the above theories of L1 use in L2 teaching. The participants were 47 foreign EFL teachers from Thai universities, colleges, and schools who were invited to participate in this study through various channels (e.g., mailing, messaging, and personal contact), researchers administered an electronic questionnaire (Google Forms) to collect the data where teachers were given an option not to participate if they were not comfortable. It used mixed methods with a modified five-level Likert scale questionnaire for quantitative and a semi-structured interview for qualitative as instruments to collect the data. Finally, the research reported benefits of using L1 in L2 classrooms included improving the classroom environment, improving the outcome of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, a deeper understanding of the lesson, and bringing a positive relationship between teachers and students. On the other hand, some participants felt that the use of L1 in L2 lessons should be discouraged as it limits students' opportunities to hear and speak the target language.

In line with Mendoza (2024), this research determines how and when higher education professors use the first language when teaching English as an L2. The descriptive study was conducted during the semester from August to December 2022. The participants were 22 teachers from university language centers that teach young adults and adults enrolled in a bachelor's degree program at the University of Science and Arts in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico. The instrument used is a survey that included a section with general information on age, gender, and time of teaching experience, as well as 5 questions (1 dichotomous and 4 multiple-choice) and was administered online. For questions 2, 3, and 5, participants can select more than one option. The results suggest that not all professors use the first language in class and think using the L1 is wrong because it does not promote the L2 among students and students do not have enough practice. On the other hand, most of the teachers who participated in this research agree with using the L1 for explanations and to save time, especially when the groups are large and the students are beginners.

Rodríguez and Oxbrow (2008) conducted a study using a questionnaire to explore the use of L1 and translation with first-year English Language students of 'English Philology' at the

University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. The participants were 25 students 4 who had received instruction over five hours a week as part of their university studies in ‘English Philology’ at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain, and who all have Spanish as their mother tongue apart from one Italian speaker. The questionnaire has 20 items presented. These data can be organized into 4 major blocks: (i) the use of translation in language learning (items 1-6), (ii) the use of the mother tongue in language learning (items 7-10), (iii) the use of contrastive analysis between the mother tongue and L2 (items 11-14) and (iv) awareness of language learning techniques (items 15-20). The findings concluded that the use of L1 and translation seems to enhance second language acquisition processes and learners in the study showed a favorable response to the translation activities and the judicious use of the mother tongue.

6.2. Theoretical Framework

6.2.1. Definition of L1 (Mother Tongue)

The notion of first language (L1) is a cornerstone in the fields of linguistics, language acquisition, and education. L1 refers to the language that an individual first learns in life, which is usually the one spoken within their family or community environment. L1 is defined as the language a person acquires during early childhood, serving as their primary mode of communication. Grosjean (2020) emphasizes that a person’s first language (L1) is not just a means of communication but also a crucial element of their identity and cultural heritage.

The significance of L1 extends to the process of acquiring additional languages (L2, L3, etc.). Cummins (2021) argues that a solid foundation in L1 can greatly support the learning of other languages by offering essential cognitive and linguistic resources. Furthermore, Sparks (2022) highlights the connection between L1 proficiency and cognitive development, noting that it can enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are transferable to the learning of new languages.

The use of L1 in language education has sparked considerable debate among educators. Moreover, Karafil and Ilbay (2023) suggest that strategically incorporating L1 in the classroom can improve comprehension and foster a more effective learning environment, particularly for beginners. Additionally, research suggests that L1 is closely linked to cultural identity and emotional expression. Lau and Shea (2024) stress that utilizing L1 in educational settings can help students feel more at ease and engaged, fostering a positive atmosphere for learning.

6.2.2. Definition of EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

The term "English as a Foreign Language" (EFL) refers to the instruction and acquisition of English in environments where it is not the primary mode of communication. Specifically, EFL involves the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the dominant language (Grosjean, 2020). As noted by Jansen (2024), EFL encompasses a variety of teaching and learning methods aimed at enhancing English proficiency for different objectives, including academic, professional, and social interactions.

English has emerged as a global lingua franca, enabling communication among diverse cultures and nations. Rao (2019) highlights that the extensive use of English in international business, science, and technology underscores its significance as a global communication tool. Proficiency in English as a foreign language is increasingly recognized as crucial for accessing information and resources in today's interconnected world. Hernández and Izquierdo (2023) assert that mastering English opens up educational and professional opportunities, making it an invaluable skill for non-native speakers.

One of the most commonly employed approaches in teaching English is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes real-life interaction and effective communication. CLT aims to enhance students' ability to use English fluently in various social situations (Riordan, 2024). Another notable methodology is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which prioritizes engaging students in meaningful tasks to facilitate language learning. Shomi (2022) argues that TBLT promotes active participation with the language, thereby improving both fluency and accuracy.

6.2.3. Importance of L1 Use in the EFL Classroom

The role of the first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has garnered significant attention in recent research and discussions. This theoretical framework underscores the importance of L1 utilization in EFL contexts, revealing its advantages for comprehension, classroom management, and enhancing learner confidence (Graham, 2023). One of the primary benefits of incorporating L1 in the EFL classroom is its ability to improve comprehension.

Hernandez (2021) argues that when teachers use L1 thoughtfully, they can aid students in grasping complex concepts and instructions, thereby alleviating cognitive overload.

By employing L1, educators can effectively manage cognitive load, enabling learners to assimilate new information more efficiently. This is particularly crucial for beginners who may find it challenging to navigate the target language (L2) independently (Nguyen, 2023). L1 also serves a vital function in classroom management. Utilizing L1 for instructions and guidelines fosters a more organized and efficient learning environment, as students are more likely to grasp expectations (Li, 2024). The use of L1 can help teachers establish a strong rapport with their students, creating a supportive classroom atmosphere. When educators incorporate L1, they promote a sense of belonging and comfort, both of which are essential for effective learning (Kasi, 2023).

Additionally, L1 can offer emotional support to students, especially during high-pressure situations like speaking activities. Ulum (2024) identifies that students who are permitted to use their L1 often feel more confident and experience less anxiety when engaging in class discussions. Permitting the use of L1 can further encourage student participation in classroom activities. When students have the opportunity to express themselves in their L1, they are more inclined to engage in collaborative discussions and tasks, ultimately leading to improved language outcomes (Hernandez, 2021). In conclusion, the strategic use of L1 in EFL classrooms not only enhances comprehension and classroom management but also builds a supportive environment that boosts learner confidence and encourages active participation.

6.2.4. Benefits of Using L1 in the EFL Classroom

The role of the first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has been a topic of considerable debate among educators and researchers. While some experts advocate for the exclusive use of the target language (L2), recent studies have shed light on the numerous advantages of integrating L1 into EFL instruction (Shomi, 2022). One of the most significant benefits of using L1 in the EFL classroom is its capacity to enhance comprehension. Research suggests that when teachers utilize L1 to clarify complex concepts, students are better equipped to grasp challenging material. For instance, Kasi (2023) posits that L1 functions as a cognitive tool that aids learners in connecting their prior knowledge with new information, an aspect particularly vital for low-proficiency students who may find abstract concepts in L2 difficult to navigate.

Moreover, incorporating L1 can greatly improve vocabulary retention. Students who receive explanations in their native language are more likely to remember newly introduced vocabulary and grammatical structures. This is because L1 provides a familiar context that facilitates the mental processing of unfamiliar language elements. When teachers enable students to understand the meanings of words and phrases in their L1, they create a more effective and engaging learning environment (Cummins, 2021).

Another significant advantage of using L1 in EFL classrooms is its ability to reduce learner anxiety. Many students experience language anxiety when attempting to learn a foreign language, which can lead to diminished engagement and motivation (ElJishi et al., 2022). By incorporating L1 into instruction, teachers can foster a more comfortable atmosphere, allowing students to express their thoughts and questions in a language they fully understand. Hasan et al. (2021) support this idea, noting that students permitted to use their L1 in the classroom report lower anxiety levels and greater engagement.

Lastly, effective classroom management is essential for cultivating a productive learning environment, and the use of L1 can enhance this aspect as well. By employing L1 to provide clear instructions and manage classroom dynamics, teachers can create a more organized and seamless learning experience. ElJishi et al. (2022) highlight that using L1 for classroom management tasks such as explaining rules, giving feedback, and addressing behavioral issues can lead to improved classroom experiences. When students comprehend instructions in their native language, they are more likely to follow them accurately, thereby minimizing misunderstandings and disruptions.

6.2.5. Disadvantages of Using L1

Although there are benefits to utilizing the first language (L1) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, several significant drawbacks can hinder language learning. One of the most concerning disadvantages of employing L1 in the classroom is that it restricts students' exposure to the target language (L2). Al-Ahdal and Aljabr (2023) point out that excessive reliance on L1 can decrease the time students spend listening to and speaking in English, an essential component for effective language acquisition. Minh et al. (2024) emphasize that immersion in the target language is critical for fluency development. When teachers frequently resort to using L1, students may miss valuable opportunities to practice their English skills in authentic situations.

Another issue arises when students become too dependent on their L1 for comprehension and communication, which can compromise their ability to think and articulate ideas in English. This dependency may lead to a lack of confidence in using the target language, as students might feel incapable of expressing themselves effectively without reverting to their L1 (Sparks, 2022). The use of L1 can also diminish interaction in the target language, which is vital for enhancing speaking and listening proficiency. Riordan (2024) notes that when students converse in their L1, they miss out on valuable chances to hone their English conversational skills, ultimately stifling their overall language development. While incorporating L1 in EFL classrooms can offer certain advantages, it is crucial to recognize the significant disadvantages that can impede effective language learning.

6.2.6. Methods and approaches in language teaching and the use of the L1

Research suggests that the integration of a learner's native language (L1) in language instruction can significantly enhance comprehension and create a more conducive learning environment. For instance, a recent study by Graham (2023) highlights the vital role of L1 in aiding learners' understanding of complex concepts. Additionally, the communicative approach, which often incorporates L1, has been demonstrated to boost learner engagement and motivation (Li, 2024). These insights point to the effectiveness of a balanced approach in utilizing both L1 and L2 for more successful language acquisition strategies.

According to Minh et al. (2024), this approach centers on interaction as the key component of language learning. Recent research indicates that including L1 can enhance comprehension and alleviate anxiety among learners. TBLT prioritizes the use of meaningful tasks in the language learning process. Studies have shown that permitting the use of L1 during tasks can increase engagement and foster a deeper understanding of the material (Fernández & Fonseca, 2022). Lekame et al. (2024), mention this method merges language learning with subject-content instruction. Evidence suggests that the strategic use of L1 can enhance cognitive processing and aid learners in grasping complex ideas.

6.2.7. Factors influencing the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom

The use of the first language (L1) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is shaped by various factors, including teachers' beliefs, learner characteristics, and the surrounding context. Bajri and Elmahdi (2024), indicates that educators often resort to L1 to

provide clarity, support vocabulary acquisition, and manage classroom dynamics effectively. The extent and manner of L1 usage in these environments are influenced by several key elements. The way teachers perceive the role of L1 significantly affects how it is integrated into their teaching practices. Studies show that educators who regard L1 as a valuable asset are more likely to utilize it within the classroom (Zahira et al., 2024).

For instance, Manzouri et al. (2024) found that teachers who recognize the advantages of using L1 for enhancing comprehension and classroom management tend to employ it more effectively. Additionally, learners' proficiency levels play a vital role in determining L1 usage. Students with lower proficiency often depend on their L1 to grasp complex concepts, while those with more advanced skills tend to use it less frequently. Fernandez and Fonseca (2022) emphasize the importance of L1 support for students with limited English proficiency, as it greatly aids vocabulary acquisition and overall comprehension.

6.2.8. Receptive and productive skills

In the realm of language learning, the differentiation between receptive and productive skills is a critical concept in applied linguistics and language education. Receptive skills pertain to the ability to understand language input, encompassing listening and reading, while productive skills relate to language output, including speaking and writing (Benkerma & Bensaada, 2023). Language learning is generally categorized into four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Grasping these skills is vital for effective teaching and learning of languages.

a) *Listening:* Listening refers to the ability to comprehend spoken language. This essential receptive skill allows learners to process auditory information. According to Dalman and Plonsky (2022), honing effective listening skills is crucial for successful communication and language acquisition, as it enables learners to interpret meaning and context. Active listening strategies, such as note-taking and summarizing, have been shown to significantly enhance comprehension and retention for English.

b) *Speaking:* Is the ability to produce spoken language and communicate verbally. It is a productive skill that demands a solid understanding of vocabulary and grammar, as well as fluency and proper pronunciation. Mastering speaking skills is crucial for effective interaction and social engagement, especially when learning a second language. A study conducted by Nguyen (2023) revealed that incorporating communicative activities, such as role-plays and

discussions, can significantly enhance speaking proficiency among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

c) Reading: Reading encompasses the ability to understand written texts. This receptive skill involves decoding symbols to derive meaning. As noted by Miller and Lewis (2022), reading is essential for vocabulary development and overall language proficiency, as it exposes students to diverse language structures and contexts.

d) Writing: Writing is the skill involved in producing written texts. As a productive skill, it requires a grasp of grammar, vocabulary, and text organization. Writing is critical for achieving academic success and facilitating professional communication, as it enables learners to articulate their thoughts and ideas with clarity. Research by Shen and Bai (2024) highlights that process-oriented writing approaches, which emphasize drafting and revising, result in improved writing quality and increased learner confidence.

6.2.9. The perspective of students and teachers on the use of the L1

Teachers' beliefs regarding the use of the first language (L1) in the classroom can greatly shape their teaching practices. As noted by Hernández (2022), educators who regard L1 as a valuable asset are more inclined to weave it into their instructional methods. This approach not only aids comprehension but also alleviates student anxiety. Many teachers argue that a thoughtful application of L1 can enhance classroom management and clarify complex ideas. Nevertheless, some express concerns regarding potential over-dependence on L1, apprehensive that it might impede the acquisition of the second language (L2).

Similarly, students' views on L1 utilization play a crucial role in their learning experiences. Fernández and Fonseca (2022) reveal that students often find comfort in using their L1, particularly during the initial phases of language learning, as it provides a sense of security and aids in understanding. They value the use of L1 for clarifying instructions and concepts. However, students also acknowledge the significance of engaging with the target language (L2) to enhance their proficiency. This dual perspective underscores the necessity for a balanced approach to L1 use in the classroom.

6.2.10. Influence of English as a foreign language in Ecuador

English's influence on Ecuador as a second language nowadays is highest. Many people learn English to have good opportunities in social, education, and daily life. So let's look for a little information about English as a foreign language in Ecuador where Barre-Parrales and

Villafuerte-Holguín (2021) manifested that the teaching of English as a foreign language in Ecuador began in 1950, during the government of Galo Plaza Lasso. At that time, only high school students received one hour of English weekly lessons. The teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) followed the Curriculum Reform Project for the Development of English Language Learning (CRADLE) for around 30 years.

Launched in 1992 in collaboration with the British Consulate and the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education, the CRADLE program aimed to improve the EFL acquisition of secondary school students with a local contextualization (pp. 101-102). Even though time has passed, the influence of English has increased in Ecuador as a foreign language, where anyone who can speak English nowadays has more opportunities in life, whether at work or in education. For this reason, all universities, schools (public and private), and institutions in Ecuador have given English classes due to the Ecuadorian curriculum since 2008 English classes are mandatory.

6.2.11. Importance of English as a foreign language in education

English as a foreign language in education nowadays is so important because the English language is useful for everything in life. After all, “English is widely spoken and taught in over 118 countries and is commonly used around the world like trade language or diplomatic language. It is the language of science, aviation, computers, diplomacy, and tourism” (Global, 2020). In the same way, the English language contributes to international communication through the Internet and social media.

However, social media gives access to music, shows, books, movies, and different apps in English for this a lot of people opt to learn English. According Rao (2019), mentioned that the English language is spread around the world in almost all fields such as science, engineering and technology, medicine, trade and commerce, scientific research, education, tourism, internet, banking, business, advertising, film industry, transportation, pharmacy and to name a few (p. 66).

6.2.12. Motivation for learning English as a foreign language

Motivation in the teaching and learning process is essential but as mentioned by Pacheco et al. (2022) Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is still a challenge for Latin American countries, where the EFL skills of the population are still a weakness. In the case of Ecuador, the government's education policy in 2016 included EFL subjects in the national elementary

school curriculum from the second grade onwards (p.288). For this reason, teachers implemented different methods and strategies to motivate and implement didactic classes to teach English interactively so students are not bored or do not like to learn a second language.

In Ecuador according to Soto et al. (2024), motivation and teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador from 2010 to November 2023 reveals a multifaceted landscape in different educational sectors. So, the results show that motivation remains an important but under-researched variable in Ecuador, especially in primary and secondary education (p.12). Furthermore, motivation is one of the most important factors in the enjoyment and success of learning a subject, especially a foreign language. Many students approach language learning because of academic requirements, family pressures, work demands, etc. These non-intrinsic motivations make learning a difficult, frustrating, and unpleasant experience for both students and teachers (Muñoz-Restrepo et al., 2020, p. 175).

6.2.13. Communicative competence

Firstly, let's talk about communicative competence It has various meanings but Hymes who is a distinguished linguist and anthropologist defines communicative competence as "a wide term including not only linguistic comprehension but also knowledge of a range of sociolinguistic codes and rules for their use. For this reason, Dara et al. (2024), "Communicative competence has become established in many areas of research and has continuously evolved from its linguistic foundations to functional considerations in both native and second language contexts as well as in different language communities" (p. 9). In the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language communicative competence is considered essential not only when learning foreign languages, but also in interpersonal and professional communication.

People with high communicative competence can adapt their discourse to the context, the interlocutor, and the communicative purpose, thus ensuring effective and successful interaction. Besides, communicative competence develops the oral and writing skills of learners to get the English language for this Patiño et al. (2024) mentioned that Oral communicative competence in English refers to a person's ability to express themselves effectively and comprehensibly in oral communication situations in English. This competence includes not only appropriate grammar and vocabulary, but also pronunciation, intonation, fluency, communication strategies, socio-cultural knowledge, and the ability to adapt to different contexts and target groups.

6.2.14. Learning English as a Foreign Language

The journey of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has garnered significant attention in recent years, encompassing various dimensions such as teaching methodologies, learner motivation, cultural influences, and the impact of technology. Rao (2019) highlights the essential role of English in global communication, particularly within the business, science, and technology sectors. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes interaction as the cornerstone of language acquisition. According to Hernández (2022), this approach nurtures real-life communication skills, making it a favored method in EFL classrooms.

Students who possess intrinsic motivation are more likely to engage in self-directed learning and sustain their commitment to language studies. Cultural backgrounds significantly influence students' language learning journeys. Rodriguez (2023) points out that an understanding of cultural nuances can enhance communication skills and foster a deeper appreciation for the language. The incorporation of technology into EFL education has revolutionized traditional teaching practices. Ulum (2024) discusses how online platforms, language learning applications, and multimedia resources enhance language acquisition and offer students a wealth of opportunities for diverse practice.

7. Methodology

Research Approach

This study employs a quantitative research approach to objectively measure and analyze the first language (L1) use in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Quantitative research allows for collecting numerical data and applying statistical methods to test hypotheses and examine relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Method or Level

A descriptive research method was utilized to observe, describe, and document aspects of the use of L1 in the EFL classroom without influencing or manipulating the study environment. Descriptive research provides an accurate portrayal of characteristics or functions within a particular group, offering a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Dörnyei, 2020). It is particularly useful in educational research, where it helps to identify patterns and trends in teacher behavior and student learning (Burns & Richards, 2018).

Research Context

The study was conducted within the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program at the Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí Extension, during the 2024-2025 academic year. Located in the urban area of Pujilí Canton, in the city of Latacunga, Cotopaxi province, Ecuador, the university's English career had 10 teachers, of whom eight voluntarily participated in the survey. These participants, aged between approximately 30 and 50 years, taught various English subjects at the institution.

A non-probabilistic sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling, was employed in this study, as it allowed the selection of readily accessible participants, facilitating data collection (Etikan & Bala, 2020). This sampling technique was chosen due to the limited number of English teachers available at the Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí Extension, making it practical to include all accessible participants. Convenience sampling is recognized as a practical and cost-effective method in educational research, particularly when the target population is small and specialized (Golzar et al., 2022). To ensure participant eligibility, the inclusion criteria required teachers to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience and prior experience teaching various English subjects at the university level (Ahmed, 2024), while those who had recently graduated with a degree in English and lacked substantial teaching experience were excluded from the study.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection instrument. Questionnaires are widely used in educational research due to their efficiency in gathering large amounts of data systematically (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2020). The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Rodríguez and Oxbrow (2008) and validated based on expert feedback. It was administered via Google Forms for ease of access and analysis.

The questionnaire consists of 18 questions, classified into the following three dimensions:

1. Frequency of L1 (Spanish) Usage:
 - Includes five questions assessing how often teachers use Spanish in the classroom.
 - Uses a Likert scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.
2. Perception of L1 (Spanish) Usefulness in Teaching:
 - Consists of ten questions evaluating teachers' beliefs about the usefulness of L1 in EFL instruction.

- Uses a Likert scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree.
3. Attitudes Toward L1 Use in Class:
- Contains three questions measuring teachers' attitudes toward using L1 in teaching English.
 - Uses the same Likert scale as the second dimension.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through the questionnaire, which was validated by a panel of three experts specializing in language teaching. Based on their feedback, dimensions were incorporated to facilitate data analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the collected data. The researchers calculated the percentage of responses for each question using the formula:

$$\text{Percent} = (\text{Total teachers who answered a specific option} / \text{Total teacher (8)} \times 100)$$

The analysis process involved:

- Constructing tables displaying each question alongside the corresponding percentage of responses.
- Creating bar graphs to visually represent the distribution of responses.
- Conducting item-by-item analysis for all 18 questions.
- Summarizing key findings and integrating insights from relevant literature.

Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Personal identifiers were omitted to protect participants' privacy, and data were reported in aggregate form to prevent individual identification (Cohen et al., 2018).

8. Analysis and Discussion of Results

The researchers analyzed the data from the questionnaire conducted with university teachers, to answer the research question about L1 (Spanish) use in the EFL classroom in the teaching process at the Technical University of Cotopaxi “Pujilí Extension”, in the 2024 - 2025 academic period. In this part, the results were divided into 3 dimensions, which allowed the researchers to better analyze the information that the survey takers provided. These dimensions are based on each of the questions used in the instrument to collect the information.

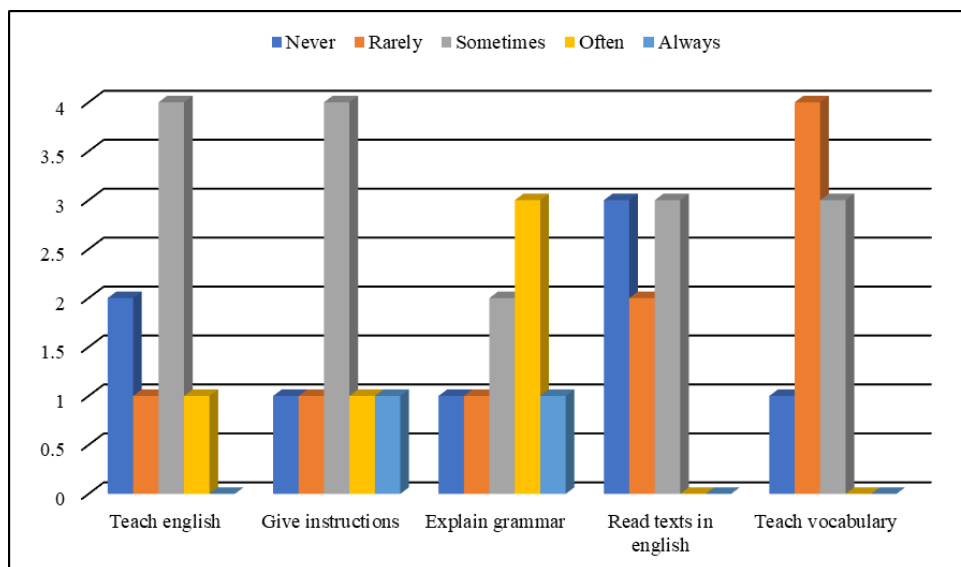
Table 1

Dimension A. Frequency of L1 (Spanish) Usage

| Situation | Never | Never % | Rarely | Rarely % | Sometimes | Sometimes % | Often | Often % | Always | Always % |
|-----------------------|-------|---------|--------|----------|-----------|-------------|-------|---------|--------|----------|
| Teach English | 2 | 25% | 1 | 12.5% | 4 | 50% | 1 | 12.5% | 0 | 0% |
| Give Instructions | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 4 | 50% | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% |
| Explain Grammar | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 2 | 25% | 3 | 37.5% | 1 | 12.5% |
| Read Texts in English | 3 | 37.5% | 2 | 25% | 3 | 37.5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Teach Vocabulary | 1 | 12.5% | 4 | 50% | 3 | 37.5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |

Figure 1

Frequency of L1 (Spanish) Usage



Analysis Dimension A. Frequency of L1 (Spanish) Usage

The results reveal significant patterns in teachers' use of Spanish (L1) for various classroom activities. The highest response for "Teach English" is "Sometimes," with four teachers (50%) indicating occasional use of Spanish. In contrast, no teacher reported "Always" using Spanish for this activity, and only two teachers (25%) stated they never used it. This suggests that while English is predominantly used in teaching, some reliance on Spanish still exists.

For "Giving Instructions," the most frequent response is also "Sometimes," with four teachers (50%) selecting this option. Unlike teaching English, however, one teacher (12.5%) reported "Always" using Spanish, which indicates that some teachers find L1 useful in ensuring students understand directions clearly. On the other hand, one teacher (12.5%) never uses Spanish for instructions, showing variation in teaching strategies.

In the case of "Explaining Grammar," the most common response is "Often," chosen by three teachers (37.5%), followed closely by "Sometimes" (25%). This suggests that grammar is an area where teachers rely on Spanish more frequently. Only one teacher (12.5%) reported "Never" using L1 for grammar explanations, indicating that the majority of teachers consider Spanish a helpful tool in clarifying complex grammatical concepts.

For "Reading Texts in English," the highest response is tied between "Never" (37.5%) and "Sometimes" (37.5%), showing a division in teaching approaches. Notably, no teacher reported using Spanish "Often" or "Always" for this activity, indicating a strong preference for maintaining English exposure when working with texts.

In "Teaching Vocabulary," the most frequent response is "Rarely," with four teachers (50%) selecting this option. This suggests that while Spanish is used occasionally, most teachers prefer to introduce vocabulary directly in English. No teacher reported using Spanish "Often" or "Always," reinforcing the idea that vocabulary instruction is typically conducted in the target language.

Overall, the results show that Spanish is used most frequently for grammar explanations and giving instructions, while it is least relied upon when reading texts and teaching vocabulary. The responses indicate that teachers generally adopt a balanced approach, using Spanish when necessary but maintaining an emphasis on English immersion. The presence of varied responses

across different activities suggests that individual teaching styles and student needs influence the degree to which Spanish is incorporated into instruction.

Discussion Dimension A. Frequency of L1 (Spanish) Usage

The findings indicate that teachers predominantly use English in the classroom, yet they strategically incorporate Spanish (L1) for specific instructional purposes. This balanced approach aligns with recent research emphasizing the benefits of judicious L1 use in foreign language instruction. In grammar instruction, a notable number of teachers frequently resort to Spanish. This practice is supported by Mason and Krashen's (2020), who argue that utilizing the mother tongue can facilitate comprehension of complex grammatical structures, thereby enhancing the learning process. Their study suggests that L1 serves as a valuable tool in clarifying intricate language rules, which can be particularly beneficial in online learning environments.

When it comes to giving instructions, the occasional use of Spanish by teachers reflects an understanding of its role in ensuring student comprehension. Cook (2022) highlights that strategic L1 use can aid in the acquisition of English, especially in virtual settings where immediate clarification is crucial. This approach helps in minimizing misunderstandings and keeps the instructional flow uninterrupted. Conversely, the minimal reliance on Spanish for reading texts and vocabulary teaching suggests a deliberate effort to maximize English exposure in these areas. This strategy aligns with the findings of Hanif (2020), who emphasizes that while L1 can be a supportive tool, excessive dependence may hinder immersion and the natural acquisition of the target language. Therefore, limiting L1 use in activities like reading and vocabulary instruction can promote a more immersive learning environment.

Overall, the varied use of Spanish across different classroom activities indicates that teachers are adapting their strategies to meet specific instructional goals and student needs. This flexible approach is crucial in addressing the diverse challenges that arise in language learning contexts, as noted (Sundari & Febriyanti, 2021). By thoughtfully integrating L1, teachers can enhance comprehension without compromising the immersive experience essential for language acquisition.

Table 2*Dimension B. Perception of L1 (Spanish) Usefulness in Teaching*

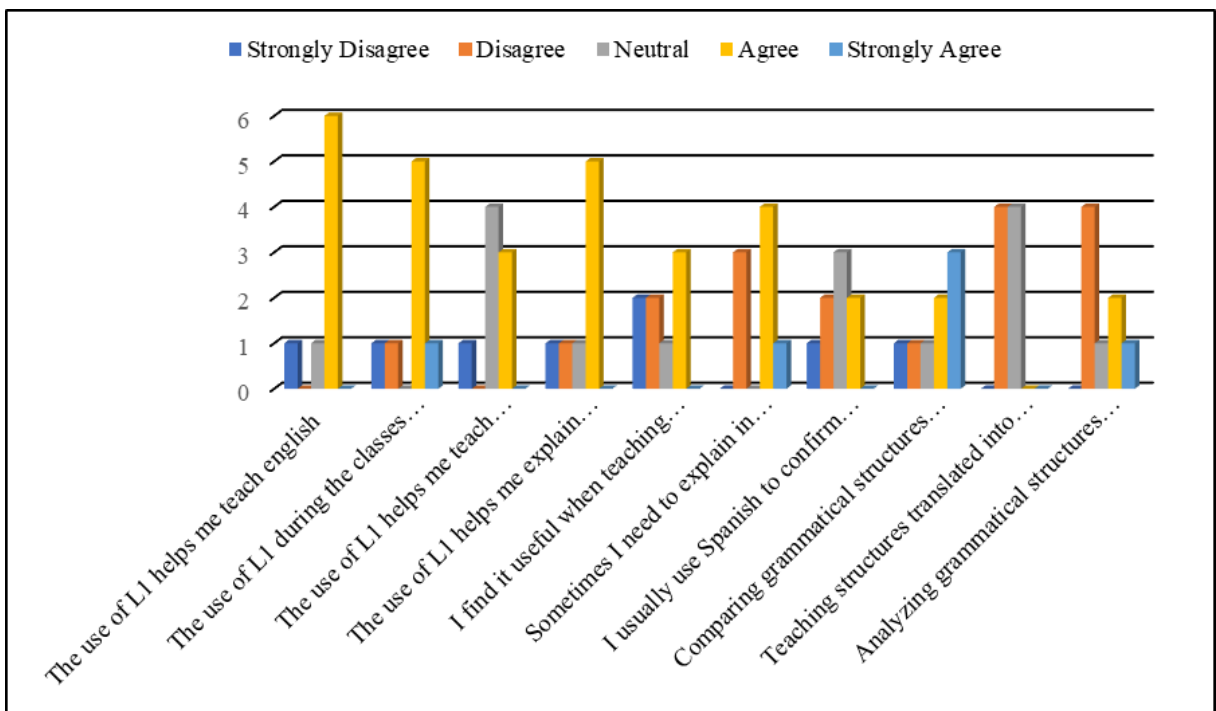
| Questions | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Disagree (%) | Disagree | Disagree (%) | Neutral | Neutral (%) | Agree | Agree (%) | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree (%) |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|----------|--------------|---------|-------------|-------|-----------|----------------|--------------------|
| The use of L1 helps me teach english | 1 | 12.5% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 12.5% | 6 | 75% | 0 | 0% |
| The use of L1 during the classes have been useful to me | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 62.5% | 1 | 12.5% |
| The use of L1 helps me teach vocabulary | 1 | 12.5% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 50% | 3 | 37.5% | 0 | 0% |
| The use of L1 helps me explain grammatical structure | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 5 | 62.5% | 0 | 0% |
| I find it useful when teaching words and structures translated from English to Spanish | 2 | 25% | 2 | 25% | 1 | 12.5% | 3 | 37.5% | 0 | 0% |
| Sometimes I need to explain in Spanish to the students about the activity to be done in the class | 0 | 0% | 3 | 37.5% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 50% | 1 | 12.5% |
| I usually use Spanish to confirm something I have explained or read in English | 1 | 12.5% | 2 | 25% | 3 | 37.5% | 2 | 25% | 0 | 0% |
| Comparing grammatical structures in Spanish and English helps me explain them better | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 2 | 25% | 3 | 37.5% |
| Teaching structures | 0 | 0% | 4 | 50% | 4 | 50% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| translated into | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spanish helps | | | | | | | | | | | |
| me explain | | | | | | | | | | | |
| English sentence | | | | | | | | | | | |
| construction | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|----|---|-----|---|-------|---|-----|---|-------|
| Analyzing | 0 | 0% | 4 | 50% | 1 | 12.5% | 2 | 25% | 1 | 12.5% |
|-----------|---|----|---|-----|---|-------|---|-----|---|-------|

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| grammatical | | | | | | | | | | |
| structures in | | | | | | | | | | |
| both languages | | | | | | | | | | |
| helps me not | | | | | | | | | | |
| make mistakes | | | | | | | | | | |
| derived from L1 | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 2
Perception of L1 (Spanish) Usefulness in Teaching



Analysis Dimension B. Perception of L1 (Spanish) Usefulness in Teaching

The analysis of the results obtained from the participating teachers provides insight into their perspectives on the use of the first language (L1) in teaching English. A total of eight teachers participated in this study, and their responses reflect varying opinions regarding the usefulness of L1 in different aspects of English instruction. The statement with the highest level of agreement was "The use of L1 helps me teach English," where six teachers (75%) agreed, and one (12.5%) remained neutral, while only one (12.5%) strongly disagreed. This indicates a strong consensus on the role of L1 as a facilitative tool in English instruction. Similarly, the

statement "The use of L1 during the classes has been useful to me" also received high agreement, with five teachers (62.5%) agreeing and one (12.5%) strongly agreeing, although two teachers (25%) expressed disagreement. This further supports the idea that L1 plays a valuable role in the classroom.

Conversely, the statement that received the highest disagreement was "Teaching structures translated into Spanish helps me explain English sentence construction." Four teachers (50%) disagreed, and four (50%) remained neutral, with no one agreeing or strongly agreeing. This suggests that while some teachers may see translation as a potential aid, it is not widely regarded as an effective strategy. Another statement with notable disagreement was "Analyzing grammatical structures in both languages helps me not make mistakes derived from L1," where four teachers (50%) disagreed, and only two teachers (25%) agreed, while one (12.5%) strongly agreed and another remained neutral. This indicates skepticism about the necessity of comparing grammatical structures to avoid mistakes.

Other significant responses include the statement "Sometimes I need to explain in Spanish to the students about the activity to be done in the class," where four teachers (50%) agreed, one (12.5%) strongly agreed, and three (37.5%) disagreed. This demonstrates that while many teachers find L1 necessary for giving instructions, there is still some resistance to this practice. Additionally, "Comparing grammatical structures in Spanish and English helps me explain them better" showed varied responses, with three teachers (37.5%) strongly agreeing, two (25%) agreeing, and two (25%) disagreeing, indicating a split opinion on this method's effectiveness.

In summary, the results show that most teachers acknowledge the usefulness of L1 in teaching English, particularly for explanations and managing classroom activities. However, translation and direct comparisons between Spanish and English remain contentious, with some teachers finding them beneficial while others prefer to minimize their use. This suggests that while L1 can be an effective tool, its application depends on individual teaching preferences and pedagogical beliefs.

Discussion Dimension B. Perception of L1 (Spanish) Usefulness in Teaching

The analysis of the participating teachers' perspectives on the use of the first language (L1) in English instruction reveals a nuanced understanding of its role in the classroom. A significant majority of teachers recognize the facilitative potential of L1 in teaching English. This aligns with recent findings by Zhang and Wei (2021), who suggests that the strategic use of L1 can support the teaching process when applied appropriately. However, the data also indicates a division among teachers regarding the effectiveness of translation methods, particularly in teaching English sentence construction. This ambivalence is echoed in the work of Muñoz and Cadierno (2021), who discuss the longstanding debate over L1 use in second language classrooms and reflects on the negative influence of the Grammar Translation Method on learners.

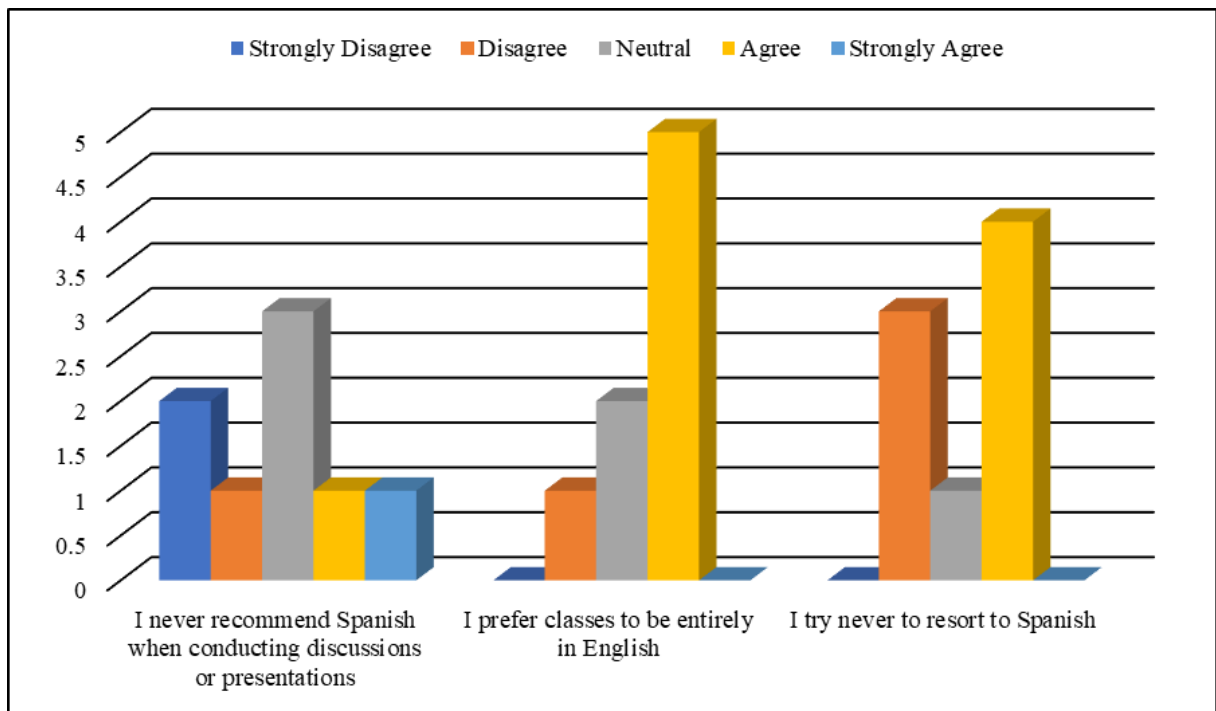
Furthermore, while some educators find value in comparing grammatical structures between L1 and English, others remain skeptical about this approach. This skepticism is consistent with observations by Cenoz and Gorter (2020), who note that monolingual approaches often lead to a sense of guilt among teachers when incorporating L1, despite its potential benefits.

In summary, the findings suggest that while L1 can serve as a valuable tool in English language teaching, its application varies based on individual teacher beliefs and experiences. The ongoing discourse among educators highlights the need for a balanced and context-sensitive approach to L1 use in the classroom.

Table 3

Dimension C. Attitudes Toward L1 Use in Class

| Questions | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Disagree % | Disagree | Disagree % | Neutral | Neutral % | Agree | Agree % | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree % |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|----------|------------|---------|-----------|-------|---------|----------------|------------------|
| I never recommend Spanish when conducting discussions or presentations. | 2 | 25% | 1 | 12.5% | 3 | 37.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 12.5% |
| I prefer classes to be entirely in English. | 0 | 0% | 1 | 12.5% | 2 | 25% | 5 | 62.5% | 0 | 0% |
| I try never to resort to Spanish. | 0 | 0% | 3 | 37.5% | 1 | 12.5% | 4 | 50% | 0 | 0% |

Figure 3*Attitudes Toward L1 Use in Class***Analysis Dimension C. Attitudes Toward L1 Use in Class**

The data reveals clear trends in the participants' responses, particularly when analyzing the highest and lowest percentages. For the statement *"I never recommend Spanish when conducting discussions or presentations,"* the highest response was neutral, with three professors (37.5%) choosing this option. This suggests that a significant portion of participants do not have a strong stance on whether to recommend Spanish or not. The lowest response was shared by agree and strongly agree, with only one professor (12.5%) selecting each. This indicates that very few participants strictly avoid recommending Spanish in discussions and presentations.

In the case of *"I prefer classes to be entirely in English,"* the most frequent response was *agreed*, with five professors (62.5%) supporting this idea. This shows a clear preference for conducting classes exclusively in English. On the other hand, the lowest response was strongly disagreed and strongly agree, both at 0%, meaning that while most participants favor English-only instruction, none feel strongly enough to completely reject or strongly insist on it. For the statement *"I try never to resort to Spanish,"* the highest response was *agreed*, with four professors (50%) stating that they actively avoid using Spanish. This suggests a general effort

to maintain English as the primary language of instruction. The lowest response was strongly disagreed and strongly agree, both at 0%, meaning that while many prefer to avoid Spanish, none are completely opposed to using it when necessary.

Overall, the data indicates that most professors prefer to use English as much as possible, but there is some flexibility regarding the use of Spanish. The strongest agreement was seen in the preference for English-only classes, while neutrality was most evident in the question about recommending Spanish in discussions or presentations. This suggests that while professors generally aim to minimize the use of Spanish, they recognize situations where it might be necessary.

Discussion Dimension C. Attitudes Toward L1 Use in Class

The data indicates that professors exhibit a nuanced approach toward Spanish use in English language instruction. A significant number of participants remain neutral on recommending Spanish during discussions or presentations, suggesting ambivalence or context-dependent attitudes. This neutrality aligns with findings by Rummel (2022), who observed that incorporating Spanish activities can enhance students' reading comprehension and oral production in English, while also improving their perception of their native language's role in learning English.

The preference for conducting classes entirely in English reflects a commitment to immersive language teaching. However, the absence of strong opposition to using Spanish indicates an openness to flexibility. This perspective is supported by De Wilde et al. (2020), who found that while negative transfer from the mother tongue can hinder fluency and accuracy in English, the native language can serve as a valuable pedagogical resource, facilitating comprehension and motivating students through the recognition of linguistic similarities between Spanish and English.

Professors' efforts to avoid resorting to Spanish underscore their dedication to maintaining English as the primary language of instruction. Yet, the lack of strong opposition to using Spanish, when necessary, points to a pragmatic approach. This is consistent with the study by Kerr (2019), which highlights that the use of Spanish in English teaching serves both pedagogical and socio-affective functions, and its strategic use does not interfere with constructivist actions necessary for meaningful learning.

Overall, the data suggests that while there is a general preference for English-only instruction, professors recognize the strategic use of Spanish to enhance comprehension and learning outcomes. This balanced approach aligns with contemporary research advocating for the judicious use of the native language as a pedagogical tool in multilingual classrooms.

9. Research Impacts

This research project is expected to have both an educational and a social impact due to its relevant findings at different levels. From an institutional perspective, it will help students become more aware of how the use of their first language (L1) affects their learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). It helps them to know when and how to use EFL usefully to support the English learning process. Teachers will have a lot of strategies to integrate English into their courses successfully with its advantages and disadvantages. At a national level, the study's result can be evaluated and applied in EFL classrooms at universities. Teachers will have some strategies to integrate English into their classroom successfully, with its advantages and disadvantages. In the same way, the study's result was evaluated and applied in EFL classrooms at universities. On another hand, English teachers can develop the use of L1 as the best way to immerse the English and improve students' skills. The strategic use of L1 improves comprehension, reduces anxiety, and facilitates the learning and teaching process of the target language is the achievement of this study.

Furthermore, the study describes the use of only L2 in classes could be useful but L1 promotes effective and flexible methodology. Another important impact of this study is its contribution to teacher training and professional development. The results will provide teachers with practical strategies to optimize the use of the L1 while maintaining a balance between comprehension and fluency in English. The results and recommendations of the study will be used in the future to help English teachers integrate L1 into their English lessons. In addition, the study should inspire new researchers to continue studying educational aspects in the field of second language acquisition and contribute to the creation of a more effective and inclusive English language teaching system in Ecuador and other countries.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1. Conclusions

- The findings indicate that while teachers primarily use English, the strategic incorporation of L1 (Spanish) enhances comprehension, especially in explaining complex grammatical structures. This supports the notion that L1 can serve as an effective tool in facilitating difficult concepts without undermining immersion in the target language.
- Teachers acknowledge the potential benefits of using L1 to clarify instructions and foster understanding in specific situations. However, opinions on the use of translation methods are divided, reflecting ongoing discussions about the best practices in language instruction. This ambivalence suggests the need for further research into optimal strategies for integrating L1 in the classroom.
- While there is a preference among teachers for maintaining an English-only environment, the occasional use of Spanish reflects a pragmatic approach to addressing students' needs. Teachers recognize the socio-affective benefits of L1, acknowledging that its judicious use can improve comprehension and student engagement without significantly disrupting the immersive learning experience.

10.2. Recommendations

- Teachers should continue to incorporate Spanish strategically, especially when explaining complex grammar or giving instructions. This can reduce misunderstandings and enhance the overall learning process, particularly in online or hybrid learning environments, where immediate clarification is often necessary.
- Institutions should provide professional development opportunities to raise awareness among teachers about the benefits of using L1 as a pedagogical tool. By fostering a deeper understanding of how L1 can support language acquisition without hindering immersion, teachers can adopt more effective instructional practices tailored to their student's needs in a traditional classroom setting.
- Future research should focus on exploring the varied attitudes of teachers toward L1 use, particularly concerning translation methods. This can provide insights into how teacher beliefs shape classroom practices and help develop more consistent and evidence-based approaches to L1 integration in the EFL classroom.

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