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PUJILÍ CAMPUS**

**DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY
ENGLISH MAJOR**

RESEARCH PROJECT

**“PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS ABOUT L1
IN L2 CLASSROOMS”**

Research project before obtaining the bachelor degree in National and
Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major

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**PUJILÍ - ECUADOR
FEBRUARY - 2025**

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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Furthermore, we certify that the ideas, concepts, procedures and results expressed in this research work are our exclusive responsibility.

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RESEARCH PROJECT TUTOR'S ENDORSEMENT

As Tutor of the Research Project on the title:

“PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS ABOUT L1 IN L2 CLASSROOMS”, by Chocho Campues Alison Wendy; Lemache Silva David Alexander, from the career of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages, I consider that said Research Report is worthy of approval as it complies with the technical standards, translation and formats provided, as well as having incorporated the observations and recommendations proposed in the pre-defense.

Pujilí, February 24, 2025


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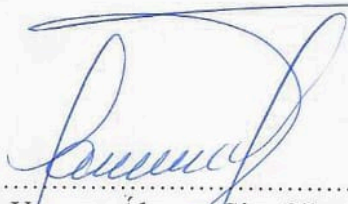


APPROVAL BY THE TITLE COURT


As a Court of Readers, approve this Research Report in accordance with the regulatory provisions issued by the Technical University of Cotopaxi, and the Pujilí Extension; because, the applicants: Alison Wendy Chocho Campues and David Alexander Lemache Silva with the title of Research Project: **“PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS ABOUT L1 IN L2 CLASSROOMS”** have considered the recommendations issued in a timely manner and it meets sufficient merits to be submitted to the act of defense of the Research Project.

For the reasons stated above, it is authorized to record the corresponding files on a CD, according to institutional regulations.

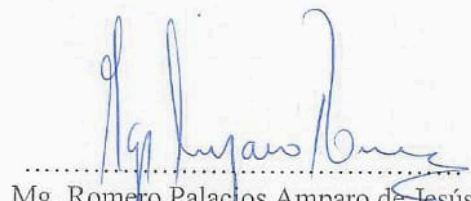
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GRATEFULNESS

We would like to express our most sincere thanks to our beloved Technical University of Cotopaxi for giving us the opportunity to train and grow professionally. To our teachers, who with their patience and dedication gave us valuable knowledge for our future.

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Lastly, we are deeply grateful to our families, for being our pillar and giving us their unconditional love. To our friends, for their company and words of encouragement in difficult times. To all those who, in some way, were part of this process.

Alison and David.

DEDICATION

With love and gratitude, I dedicate this work to my mother, Beatriz Campues, for her unconditional love and endless support, to my father, Jaime Usiña, whose words of encouragement has been my strength, to my sisters, for their love and joy, to my life partner Jairo, for his love, patience and constant motivation. Thank you for every word of encouragement and for being by my side in this process.

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Alison.

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David.

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI
PUJILÍ CAMPUS

PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

**THEME: “PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS ABOUT L1
IN L2 CLASSROOMS”**

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ABSTRACT

The use of the mother tongue (L1) in English as a foreign language (L2) classroom has been a controversial topic of debate among educators and researchers. The research problem arising due to the use of L1 in EFL classrooms is considered taboo since it is believed to hinder students’ L2 development, while others support it due to its benefits in facilitating students’ access to L2. The aim of this research is to analyze the use of L1 (Spanish) in L2 (EFL) classrooms through the UTC pre-service English teachers’ perceptions. To accomplish this study a mixed approach was selected. This involves collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. The participants for the data collection process were students from the eighth semester of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign languages career who made their pre-service activities in some private educational schools in Cotopaxi province. Ten students participated in two focus group sessions (five participants in each group) and 63 filled a 5-point Likert questionnaire where they had to mark always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never according to the frequency of L1 use in L2 classrooms. According to UTC pre-service English perceptions, L1 can be a valuable tool when used strategically to enhance comprehension, reduce anxiety, and support students. On the other hand, most UTC pre-service English teachers frequently use students’ L1 in L2 classrooms, particularly to explain complex grammar topics, provide feedback, clarify doubts, and give instructions. Therefore, it is concluded that the frequency and purpose of using Spanish in English classrooms depend on various factors, such as content complexity, students’ proficiency levels, and their specific needs.

Keywords: English, Language Acquisition, Language Learning, Mother Tongue, Perceptions.

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI

EXTENSIÓN PUJILÍ

PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

TEMA: “PERCEPCIONES DE LOS PROFESORES DE INGLÉS EN FORMACIÓN SOBRE L1 EN LAS AULAS DE L2”

Autores:
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Lemache Silva David Alexander

RESUMEN

El uso de la lengua materna (L1) en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera (L2) ha sido un tema de debate entre educadores e investigadores. El problema de esta investigación surge debido a que el uso de la L1 en las aulas de EFL se considera tabú ya que se cree que dificulta el desarrollo de la L2 de los estudiantes, mientras que otros lo apoyan debido a sus beneficios para facilitar el acceso de los estudiantes a la L2. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar el uso de L1 (español) en las aulas de L2 (EFL) a través de las percepciones de los futuros profesores de inglés de UTC. Para llevar a cabo este estudio se seleccionó un enfoque mixto. Esto implica recoger y analizar datos cuantitativos y cualitativos en un solo estudio. Los participantes del proceso de recolección de datos fueron estudiantes del octavo semestre de la carrera de Pedagogía de Lenguas Nacionales y Extranjeras que realizaron sus actividades de pregrado en algunos establecimientos educativos privados de la provincia de Cotopaxi. Diez estudiantes participaron en dos sesiones de grupos focales (cinco participantes en cada grupo) y 63 llenaron un cuestionario Likert de 5 puntos donde debían marcar siempre, usualmente, a veces, raramente y nunca de acuerdo con la frecuencia de uso de la L1 en las aulas de L2. De acuerdo a las percepciones de los estudiantes de inglés en formación de UTC, la L1 puede ser una herramienta valiosa cuando se utiliza estratégicamente para mejorar la comprensión, reducir la ansiedad y apoyar a los estudiantes. Por otro lado, la mayoría de los profesores de inglés en formación de UTC utilizan con frecuencia la L1 de los estudiantes en las aulas de L2, particularmente para explicar temas gramaticales complejos, brindar retroalimentación, aclarar dudas y dar instrucciones. Por lo tanto, se concluye que la frecuencia y el propósito del uso del español en las clases de inglés dependen de varios factores, como la complejidad del contenido, los niveles de competencia de los estudiantes y sus necesidades específicas.

Palabras clave: Inglés, Adquisición de Lenguas, Aprendizaje de Lenguas, Lengua Materna, Percepciones.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme:

Pre-service English teachers' perceptions about L1 in L2 classrooms

Starting Date:

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Ending Date:

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Place of Research:

Technical University of Cotopaxi

Sponsoring Faculty:

Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí extension

Sponsoring Career:

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Work team:

- PhD. González Ortíz Olga Lorena

Students:

- Chocho Campues Alison Wendy
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Knowledge area:

Education

Research line:

Education, communication and design for human and social development.

Research sub-line:

Pedagogical, didactic, curricular and inclusive practices in the areas of knowledge.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The use of L1 in L2 classrooms has been a topic of discussion for many years around the world due to the advantages and disadvantages it has in the process of learning a new language, in fact, many teachers consider that L1 can play several functions to aid language learning in classrooms. “A myriad of researchers and teachers agree that students' first language is an aid, while others object believing it to be a problem in certain cases” (Lopez, 2019, p. 21). The use of the L1 (Spanish) can be an aid in learning L2 (English as a foreign language) but its constant use can lead to dependency and limit student's ability to think in the target language and it would also delay the development of the four skills of L2.

According to Ministerio de Educación (2016), in the Ecuadorian English Language Curriculum, it is mentioned that the initial literacy in L2 is largely influenced by the knowledge and literacy level of the student in L1 since the brain tries to apply what it knows about L1 in the learning process of L2. Little is known about the perceptions of UTC pre-service English teachers of using L1 (Spanish) in L2 (EFL) classrooms in private educational institutions in Cotopaxi.

The research problem arises due to the use of L1 in L2 classrooms is considered taboo since it is believed to hinder students' foreign language development, while others support it due to its benefits in facilitating students' access to L2. According to Taner & Balıkcı (2022) the opinions and attitudes of English teachers towards the use of the L1 in L2 classrooms vary depending on the context and change according to the experience that the teacher gains. Teachers' acceptance of L1 use is limited since they strongly believe that the use of L1 definitely hinders the learning of the L2.

The research problem of this study focus on knowing:

- What are the UTC pre-service English teachers' opinions towards the use of L1 in L2 classrooms?
- In what situations and how often do the UTC pre-service English teachers use the L1 to teach English?

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. General objective

- To analyze the use of L1 (Spanish) in L2 (EFL) classrooms through the UTC pre-service English teachers' perceptions.

3.2. Specific objectives

- To explore the literature on the use of L1 in L2 classrooms.
- To identify the UTC pre-service English teachers' perceptions about the use of L1 in L2 classrooms, including when and how often they use L1 to teach English.
- To describe the main findings and results from data collected.

4. ACTIVITIES AND TASK SYSTEM IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED

Table 1

Activities and task system in relation to the objectives proposed

Specific objective	Activities	Verification Means
To explore the literature on the use of L1 in L2 classrooms.	Find previous studies Outline the topics and sub-topics Search information Develop theoretical framework	Theoretical framework
To identify the UTC pre-service English teachers' perceptions about the use of L1 in L2 classrooms, including when and how often they use L1 to teach English.	Select data collection instruments Select participants Apply the instruments Analysis of the results	Open questions Questionnaire Analysis and discussion of results
To describe the main findings and results from data collected.	Establish conclusions and recommendations.	Conclusions and recommendations

5. JUSTIFICATION

English language learning is the process of acquiring proficiency in the language mentioned since in the modern world it is one of the most widely spoken languages and helps to connect people from different cultures. A good command of the English language provides many benefits both in personal and professional life. The process of acquiring English as a second language involves multiple factors including age, motivation, exposure, and the learners' native language.

Differences between L1 and L2 can lead to errors like incorrect word order and pronunciation. From the point of view of Cheng (2023), "the impact of L1 in L2 acquisition differs in various aspects, not only in different types of languages but also in different components of language such as phonology, morphology, and syntax" (p. 1236). Learners often unconsciously apply the grammatical, phonological, and syntactic rules of their native language in their attempt to communicate in the L2.

It has been argued that L1 in L2 classrooms play the role of facilitator since learners can connect the knowledge they have of their native language to acquire the different elements of the target language. Alonso (2016) claims that "the influence of one language on the learning of another has been a relevant object of study in the field of second language acquisition and is currently a key issue in the understanding of how languages are acquired" (p. 135). The students' L1 in the process of second language acquisition is a critical area of study. There is a dire need for educators to recognize the role of the L1 in L2 learning as the L1 can be a resource that shapes L2 acquisition in positive or negative ways.

Exploring pre-service English teachers' perceptions is crucial as this provides valuable insights into current attitudes and practices in language teaching. It helps to determine whether pre-service English teachers view the use of the L1 as a facilitating tool or a barrier to achieving proficiency in the target language and whether the L1 is being used effectively. This research contributes to the growing literature on the use of L1 in L2 classrooms and based on this, teachers will be able to use L1 in EFL classrooms in a moderate way to support their students without harming or delaying their learning.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

6.1. Research Background

Donoso (2020) conducted a quantitative research with a descriptive, non-experimental, and cross sectional to explore perceptions of Chilean future teachers of English as a foreign language regarding the usage of Spanish as L1 in English lessons. This research involved 229 students from four Chilean universities, using Mohebbi and Alavi's (2014) Likert questionnaire and 3 open questions. Main findings showed that the participants would use Spanish in the English class for pedagogical didactic purposes and to maintain the student-teacher relationship, the results also showed that the 229 participants would use L1 when teaching English. The study concluded that there are no statistically significant differences in regard to the course-level year the subjects are enrolled in or regarding the university with which they are affiliated.

Cadena et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative multiple case study design to analyze the Ecuadorian instructors and learners' perceptions about the use of Spanish during the English classes. This research took place in a public and a private university (ESPOCH and Universidad Catolica) where 60 instructors and 75 students participated in observations and 2 different surveys. The main findings showed that depending on the progress of the students at each level, the use of the L1 may be reduced, that is, during the adaptation stage at the contact or initial levels, the use of the L1 is necessary, but unfortunately, sometimes, students and instructors abuse its use. While the students' performance increases, the use of the L1 decreases. The researcher concluded that the higher the level reached by the student, the use of the L1 decreases.

Çetin & Özbek-Gürbüz (2022) conducted a qualitative research focused on a case study to explore the views and actual use of L1 among first-year pre-service English teachers at a Turkish university. The participants of this study were 8, five females and three male with ages from 18 to 20. In collecting data semi-structured interviews and research field notes were used. Main findings showed that the participants think that L2 should be used as much as possible in teaching grammar and vocabulary, giving instructions or having classroom interactions. Although the participants' considerations stated that L1 could be used in the classroom, none of the participants prioritized its use. Most of them mentioned that it is best if L2 was the medium of instruction whereas the other participants stated that L1 could be used for lower-proficiency classrooms. The researcher concluded that ELT students mostly favored the use of L2 (target language)

in the classroom and stated that it must be used as much as possible, some participants also declared that L1 could be used depending on the proficiency of students.

Estrella & Gutiérrez (2023) conducted a qualitative multiple case study design to analyze the use of the Spanish language (L1) in EFL classrooms, based on the criteria and perspectives of teachers and students, determining the role played by the L1 in the teaching-learning process of the English language (L2). This research took place at two educational centers from Pujilí involving 10 English teachers and 37 students. Data was collected using surveys and classroom observations. The main finding showed that the role of Spanish (L1) in English classrooms (L2) is to provide permanent assistance to the adequate understanding of the language, and on occasions, it serves as a referential guide to deduce certain aspects of L2. The researchers concluded that there are serious difficulties in the foreign language (L2) production, making that the interaction becomes a challenge that teachers and students face in each class.

Turnbull (2018) conducted a qualitative research focus on a descriptive study to investigate the perspectives of pre-service ESL teachers regarding the use of the L1 in L2 learning. This research took place at New Zealand University. The participants were 30 undergraduate students, 25 of the participants were native English speakers. To collect data a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale. The main findings showed that many of the participants agreed with the students' use of the L1 than by the teacher. The participants considered that the teachers have to limitate the use of the L1. The researcher concluded that the pre-service teachers who participated in the present study had varied opinions. It is possible that some were influenced by traditionally negative views on the use of L1 in L2 learning, while others were in favor of and supported some use of L1 in the L2 classroom.

6.2. Theoretical Framework

6.2.1. Pre-service English teachers

Pre-service English teachers are individuals who are training to become English language teachers but have not yet completed their teacher preparation program or officially started teaching in schools. During university or college programs pre-service English teachers learn the theories, methodologies, and skills needed for effective language teaching. This period involves coursework, teaching practice, and other activities that help them develop their teaching competencies before becoming licensed or certified teachers.

“Teaching practice courses enable pre-service teachers to practice in teaching processes in real school settings under the supervision of a mentor teacher to prepare for the teaching profession” (Quintana et al., 2023, p. 53). Teaching practice allows future English teachers to gain experience and take responsibility for guiding the learning process of a group of students in a classroom.

6.2.2. Language learning

Learning a language can be a difficult challenge for students as it requires a lot of effort and, above all, patience since this process does not happen overnight. Language learning is a process that begins at birth and continues throughout the life of humans. Language learning is the process of acquiring the ability to communicate in a new language and it is a crucial skill that fosters understanding, and opens opportunities for personal and professional growth. Moeller & Catalano (2015) argue that:

Learning another language provides access into a perspective other than one’s own, increases the ability to see connections across content areas, and promotes an interdisciplinary perspective while gaining intercultural understandings. Language is the vehicle required for effective human-to-human interactions and yields a better understanding of one’s own language and culture. Studying a language provides the learner with the opportunity to gain linguistic and social knowledge and to know when, how, and why to say what to whom. (p. 327)

Learning a new language is an essential skill that impacts in a meaningful way the personal, academic, and professional development of a person. It allows communication with people from different cultures and countries facilitating cultural understanding and exchange. Learning a new language opens the doors to new experiences and opportunities.

6.2.3. Mother tongue as a first language (L1)

“Mother tongue is the language that people have grown up speaking since their early childhood. It is the form of communication that a person is most accustomed to” (Rauf, 2023, p. 1421). Mother tongue (L1) is the first language that humans acquire from birth and it is the primary means of communication. If a baby hears his/her parents speaking Spanish from the time he/she is born, that is his/her mother tongue since the baby learns the language that hears for the first time. Nishanthi (2020) claims that:

Mother tongue is vital in framing the thinking and emotions of people. Learning to speak in the mother tongue is very necessary for a child's comprehensive development. Being fluent in the mother tongue, which is also known as the native language, benefits the child in numerous ways. It associates him to his culture, ensures enhanced cognitive development, and supports in the learning of other languages. A child first comprehends what is around them through the language they hear their mother communicating in from before they are born and thought their lives. (p. 77)

The first language helps humans to understand and interact with the world. It is not just a tool of communication but also a component of identity since it helps to maintain connection to the roots, values, customs, and more. In the same way, the mother tongue plays an important role when learning a second language (L2), since it helps us to understand some meanings that are difficult to learn. According to Savage & Owen (2019), "... a strong mother tongue foundation equips children with the skills they need to learn additional languages, allowing them to transfer their understanding of the structure of language to several new languages" (par. 20).

6.2.4. First language acquisition process

First language acquisition process refers to the way humans acquired their mother tongue without any instruction since this process occurs in an unconscious way. Cruz-Ferreira (2011) mentions that first language acquisition "... commonly means the acquisition of a single language in childhood, regardless of the number of languages in a child's natural environment. Language acquisition is variously viewed as predetermined, wondrous, a source of concern, and as developing through formal processes" (p. 78). It is necessary to go through a process to acquire the mother tongue. Whitlock (n.d.) describes the process of acquiring the first language in the following way:

- The prelinguistic stage (from child's birth to around 6 months of age): at this stage children don't have language skills yet but they communicate through crying, cooing, and other non-verbal means such as facial expressions and body language. Babies are able to communicate different types of discomfort by using sounds.

Example of crying: When a baby has a stomachache, the baby doesn't say any words but cries and this transmits significant linguistic communication since it is possible to predict that something is happening to the child. On the other hand,

Example of cooing: “ooh” and “aah”

- Babbling stage (from 6 to 9 months of age): children start to produce repetitive syllables like “ba-ba”, “ma-ma”.
- Holophrastic stage also known as one-word stage: occurs between the ages of 9 and 18 months of age. In this stage, children start to use individual words like “mama”, “dada”, etc.
- Two-word stage (from 18 to 24 months of age): children start to use more than one word (e.g. daddy home, no milk, etc.).
- Telegraphic stage (from around 24 to 30 months of age): children try to communicate by using very short sentences (e.g. Daddy go work).
- Multi-word stage (after 30 months of age): children begin to use more complex sentences that allow them to communicate their ideas better.

The description presented above allows us to notice that the first efforts at speech are not necessarily words. The first attempt at communication occurs from the moment we come into the world through the use of sounds and body movements. Humans go through a wonderful path to finally learn how to communicate.

6.2.5. Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second language acquisition happens when a person at any age decides consciously to acquire a second language from the environment. “Second language acquisition can be defined as language that is acquired after a completion of first language acquisition” (Al-Takhayinh et al., 2015, p. 46). In other words, SLA is the process of learning an additional language after learners have developed proficiency in their mother tongue. This process occurs in different contexts and conditions where learners are exposed to the new language. There is a difference between second language acquisition and second language learning where language acquisition is a subconscious process and language learning refers to a person who is aware of his/her learning (Roa, 2022). Language acquisition takes place in a natural way without the necessity of instructions whereas language learning requires the help of a teacher as a means of instruction.

Saville-Troike (2012) claims that “a second language is typically an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes” (p. 4). Due to the modern world, second language acquisition is not just an option, but a necessity to excel successfully. According to (de Biaggi et al., 2016) SLA generates teaching and learning strategies to better meet the needs of L2 learners and contributes greatly to the success of globalization. A child starts learning a new language when he/she goes to school, in fact, young children can learn a second language faster than adults.

6.2.6. English as a Foreign Language (L2)

“English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the term used to describe the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the dominant language” (Nordquist, 2020, par. 1). English is an additional language used by users with different native languages. Learning this language is necessary to face today's world since it is the key to access to a variety of exclusive entertainment like music, movies, books, etc. Quimosing (2022) mentions that “learning the English language is seen as vital for it is becoming the most important language that keeps everyone in the globe connected. It is a first language to some countries, while it is a second or a foreign language to others” (p. 13). By mastering this language, people will be able to enjoy a unique cultural and artistic diversity as well as having better employment opportunities.

Incorporating English education into schools provides students with the tools for success in the modern world. Tomlinson, 2005 (as cited in Darma & Widiastuty, 2023) claims that English as a foreign language means that it is only used and positioned as a learning tool in institutions of higher learning, both formal and informal, and that it is not used as a language in social interactions and day-to-day life. It also means that English is not a nation's primary language.

English as a foreign language is learned as an academic subject in formal or informal educational settings and is not commonly used in daily social interactions. Its main aim is to provide students with the skills necessary to communicate in English for purposes such as education, business, travel or cultural exchange.

6.2.7. English learning

English learning refers to the process of acquiring the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in the English language. This process involves gaining proficiency in several

skills like listening, speaking, reading, writing, mastering vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in order to be able to communicate successfully in that language. Lundquist (n.d.) mentions that:

Speech is controlled in your mind by feedback from your hearing and mouth position as much as it is from your memory. If you want to speak fluent English, it is just as important to retrain your tongue as it is to train your memory. To be effective, however, you must retrain your mind, tongue, and hearing at exactly the same time because they must work together when you speak English”. (p. 1)

It is important to train all skills equally as this will provide us with a fluent way of speaking the new language. “Learning how to read in English is the best way to acquire a new vocabulary, as it improves your grammatical understanding and, therefore, the grammar itself” (Moreno et al., 2022, p. 16). Learning grammar completely improves reading comprehension, which leads to a higher level of vocabulary when reading any type of text. English learning is useful in several areas such as: work, accessing information and knowledge, traveling, communicating and improving cognitive and communication skills. Said in words of Panggabean (2018):

Learning English is one object that still requires improvements in the learning process. Because English is a second language after their mother-tongue, then the learning process should be paid attention very much. In English language teaching, an aspect that is very aware of in terms of the method. Because the success or failure of a program of English language teaching is often assessed in terms of the method used, the method determines the content and how to teach the language. (p. 27)

When English teachers use effective methods, provide structure, motivation, and cover the needs of students ensuring the development of the essential language skills.

6.2.8. The influence of the mother tongue in second language acquisition

The use of L1 in the L2 classroom enables teachers and students to overcome the challenges of teaching and learning and can serve many essential functions in the L2 classroom, such as translating and explaining the main points of the lesson. The mother tongue is important when learning a second language, since it helps us to understand some meanings that are difficult to learn. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) say that “the purpose of using the native language is to provide a bridge from the

familiar to the unfamiliar” (p. 130). The influence of the mother tongue (L1) on the acquisition of a second language (L2) is a widely studied topic in psychology and language teaching.

The way in which L1 impacts L2 learning can be both positive and negative, depending on external factors, such as the similarities and differences between the two languages, the learning context, and the learner's level of proficiency in L2. Khon, 1986 (as cited in Swam, 2017) says that as a learning process, transfer supports the learner's selection and remodelling of input structures as he progresses in the development of his interlanguage knowledge. As a production process, transfer is involved in the learner's retrieval of this knowledge and in his efforts to bridge linguistically those gaps in his knowledge which cannot be side-stepped by avoidance.

The influence of the mother tongue on the acquisition of a second language is a difficult process. While the L1 can facilitate certain aspects of learning, it can also be a source of errors and obstacles due to structural and phonological differences between the languages. Phindane (2020) mentions that:

English should be learned through English, just as you learn your mother tongue using your mother tongue. On the other side, the idea that the learner should learn English like a native speaker does, or tries to 'think in English', is an inappropriate and unachievable thought. (p. 380)

6.2.9. Principal reasons for using L1 in L2 classrooms

According to Bozorgian & Fallahpour (2015), the L1 should be used in an L2 classroom for specific purposes such as conveying meaning, facilitating communication and relationships between students and teachers and supporting the students in the construction of new learning. Using the first language (L1) as a tool for learning a second language (L2) can be very effective if applied only at strategic points in the classroom rather than being relied upon exclusively. Many teaching methodologies advocate the use of L1 in L2 classrooms as it facilitates the understanding of complex concepts, reduces student anxiety, saves time in explaining grammar, and helps provide clear instructions and connect new vocabulary with familiar concepts.

Dujmović, 2014 (as cited in Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018) gives some arguments for using L1 in L2 classrooms, one of those arguments is that using L1 in L2 classrooms can save teachers' time when explaining and giving instructions. Using the L1 to

explain instructions benefits both teachers and students as it helps minimize confusion and allows more time to be devoted to language practice. If English teachers make full use of the target language, students may become demotivated as this will cause stress and hinder their participation in class, negatively affecting the classroom environment. However, it is advisable to make moderate use of the L1 as excessive use will prevent EFL students from successfully developing their language skills. Strategic use of the L1 can improve comprehension and foster a positive learning environment. Wang (2022) points out that:

L1 is the most powerful intermediary thought that students have, which can help them explore the knowledge of L2. Students can use L1 to communicate with each other in the classroom, not only to convey information, but also to express their thoughts, emotions. (p. 46)

The essential role of the first language (L1) is to be a bridge to learning a second language (L2). While the L1 is a valuable resource, its use should be geared towards optimizing the acquisition of the L2. According to Sanako (2023), using the L1 can be an efficient and effective method for teaching vocabulary as using the L1 in L2 classrooms ensures that simple translations save time and avoid student distress. By using the first language of students, teachers can avoid using other strategies for teaching vocabulary like flashcards or videos.

It has been said that L1 is most useful for teaching languages at lower levels since, regardless of whether students have a little knowledge of the target language or not, by using L1, it is possible to introduce the principal differences between L1 and L2. On the other hand, Algazo (2023) claims that the functions of using L1 in L2 classrooms are: explaining grammar, defining new vocabulary items, explaining difficult concepts or ideas, giving instructions, praising and motivating students, translating written texts, and explaining the similarities and differences between the mother tongue (L1) and English as a foreign language (L2).

6.2.10. Teaching methods that involve the use of L1 in L2 classrooms

In second language (L2) classrooms, the use of the native language (L1) has been a topic of debate in pedagogical approaches. Although many methods favor total immersion in L2, some recognize that the use of L1, in a strategic way, can be beneficial to facilitate comprehension and enhance the learning process, as there are easy learning methods to apply with students. Taner & Balıkcı (2022) claim that “Although the

English only approach has been advocated and approaches that avoid L1 have still been presented as the appropriate methods (e.g., Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching), there have also been voices arguing against this understanding and welcoming L1 use” (p. 75).

Bilingual teaching can be a good pedagogical approach and method. According to Piasecka, 1986 (as cited in Jason, 2011) teaching bilingually does not mean a return to the Grammar Translation method, but rather a standpoint which accepts that the thinking, feeling, and artistic life of a person is very much rooted in their mother tongue. If the communicative approach is to live up to its name, then there are many occasions in which the original impulse to speak can only be found in the mother tongue.

Teaching methods that involve the use of the mother tongue (L1) in foreign language (L2) classrooms are pedagogical approaches that recognize the usefulness of the L1 as a support tool in the L2 learning process.

6.2.11. Teachers’ Beliefs & Attitudes on L1 use in L2 classes

First of all, it is important to define the terms of beliefs and attitudes. Heberlein 2012 (as cited in Krasny, 2020) said that a belief is an acceptance that something is true, and which may or may not be based on fact. On the other hand, “an attitude is the way a person expresses or applies their beliefs and values, and is expressed through words and behaviors” (Anderson & De Silva, n.d., p. 1). Therefore, beliefs influence attitudes and decision making, a clear example being that believing that L1 is favorable for learning a new language can lead to a positive attitude toward using it to teach L2.

According to Al Balushi (2020), “teachers’ beliefs are to some extent responsible for their practices in the classrooms and determine whether L1 is used in the L2 classroom by the teacher. As beliefs are one of the key factors affecting L1 use” (p. 58). Gallagter, 2020 (as cited in Taner & Balıkçı, 2022) points out that the experience and the context where teachers work definitely influence the opinions and attitudes of English teachers towards the role of L1 use in L2 classrooms.

Teachers' beliefs and attitudes about the use of the L1 in L2 classrooms vary, with some seeing the L1 as a valuable tool that facilitates the second language acquisition process and helps to reduce the anxiety that students may feel due to poor understanding in class. On the contrary, other teachers argue that the use of the L1 reduces students'

exposure to the target language and that prevents them from developing the 4 basic skills of the language. Some researchers claim that the use of the L1 in L2 classrooms have detrimental effects, such as Krashen (1981) who strongly opposed to the use of the mother tongue in the process of teaching a second language, arguing that L2 learners must have maximum exposure to the target language in order to acquire it successfully (Shimray & Wangdi, 2023).

Students' and teachers' attitudes greatly influence L1 and L2 use, as different teachers' opinions, perceptions, and approaches to L2 use can be seen. These beliefs and attitudes influence how teachers decide to use the L1 during L2 instruction, how frequently they do so, and in what situations they believe it is appropriate or beneficial. Shimray & Wangdi (2023) point out that the benefits and drawbacks of using L1 in L2 classrooms are well known. Using L1 in the L2 classroom can benefit students and help them learn a language better. Attitudes can be both positive and negative and reflect learners' and teachers' beliefs about the role that the first language should play in the context of second language learning (English).

6.2.12. Perceptions

“Perception relies on the cognitive functions we use to process information, such as utilizing memory to recognize the face of a friend or detect a familiar scent” (Cherry, 2022, par. 2). Perceptions refer to the way people interpret, understand, or make sense of something based on their experiences, knowledge, and beliefs. According to Schultz & Davis (n.d.) claim that “perception is the process by which the brain interprets and organizes sensory information from the environment to produce a meaningful experience of the world” (par. 5). In the context of education and research, perceptions describe how people see or feel about a particular topic, such as teaching methods, language use, or learning experiences.

Perceptions influence how individuals engage with learning, teaching, and assessment, shaping their motivation, behavior, and decision-making. For example, in language learning research "pre-service teachers' perceptions about using L1 in L2 classrooms" helps determine whether pre-service English teachers view L1 use as a helpful tool or a barrier to language acquisition. These insights can inform curriculum development and teacher training programs.

7. METHODOLOGY

Research approach

To accomplish this study a mixed approach was selected. This involves collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. “A mixed methodology will be used for the empirical data collection, using numerical and verbal data, in order to gather rounded, reliable data” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 96).

This research used a mixed method in order to know what are the UTC pre-service English teachers' perceptions about the use of Spanish to teach English and in what situations and how often they use L1 in EFL classrooms.

Research method or level

This research is descriptive because it details and describes deeply the perceptions of UTC pre-service English teachers about the use of Spanish to teach English. The descriptive method aims to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics and places more emphasis on why than on how or why something happened (Nassaji, 2015).

Research context and participants

This study was accomplished at the Technical University of Cotopaxi. The participants for the data collection process were students from the eighth semester of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign languages career who made their pre-service activities in some private educational schools in Cotopaxi province. There were two eighth-semester groups: eighth “A” and eighth “B”. Ten pre-service English teachers only from eighth “B” participated in two focus group sessions (five participants in each group). According to (Bornstein et al., 2018), “A focus group is an investigative tool for social research based on a structured and focused discussion with a small group of people, run by a facilitator (moderator) to generate qualitative data through a set of open-ended questions” (p. 2). Additionally, 29 students from eighth “A” and 34 from eighth “B” (a total of 63 pre-service English teachers) were surveyed.

To select the participants, a purposive sampling was used, this is a non probability method which involves researchers relying on their own criteria to choose the population that participated in the data collection process. According to Etikan et al. (2015), the intentional sampling technique is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities he or she possesses and which a certain number of participants does not

need, in other words, the researcher decides what he or she needs to know and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the required information.

The participants of the focus group sessions signed an informed consent accepting their voluntary participation (See annex 1). Similarly, the participants of the questionnaire approved their participation before filling it out.

Data collection process

The instruments used in the two focus group sessions were 3 open-ended questions that were asked to the participants, while the survey used a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale with 22 statements where the 63 participants had to mark always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never according to the frequency of L1 use in L2 classrooms. This questionnaire was applied by using Google forms.

The instruments to collect data were taken from (Donoso, 2020) who adapted the Mohebbi and Alavi's (2014) questionnaire and who added 3 open questions to the questionnaire (See annex 2). To answer the first research question two focus group sessions were carried out. Then, to answer the second research question a Likert questionnaire was applied.

Data analysis process

The qualitative data obtained from the focus group sessions was analyzed by using a thematic analysis. "Thematic analysis enables scholars to define and describe what a participant's reality is using their own written or spoken account" (Lochmiller, 2021, p. 2031). By using a table for focus group A and another for focus group B, the responses of each participant were transcribed. In the data analysis, each question was first analyzed based on the responses of the five participants in each group. Then, an overall analysis was conducted for each focus group. Finally, a comparative analysis of the two focus groups was presented.

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire was organized into tables and pie charts, showing the percentage of responses for each variable in each statement. After that, each table and pie chart was analyzed individually. Finally, a general analysis of the entire questionnaire was conducted to determine how often future English teachers use their mother tongue to teach English

8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

8.1. Analysis of the focus group sessions

Two focus group sessions were carried out in order to know the UTC pre-service English teachers' perceptions about using the mother tongue (L1) in English as a foreign language (L2) classrooms. The information collected from both focus groups was recorded and transcribed.

Group A

Table 2

Analysis of group A

	1. Do you think it is convenient to use Spanish while teaching English?	2. In what situations would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English lessons?	3. How often would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English lessons?
<i>Participant 1</i>	In some cases it is convenient, for example I currently work with the youngest students, starting from second until seventh year of basic general education. In the case of them the vocabulary is too limited, especially the vocabulary of the little ones who are just learning, so with them the use of Spanish is necessary, but with the older ones like the sixth and seventh year of basic general education it is advisable to reduce the use of Spanish in English classes since they need to become more familiar with the	Well, in my case, I use Spanish when students don't understand after it has been explained to them on the board, even though they have been given several examples, shown videos, and used many teaching materials, but they still don't understand. I don't know if these problems are the result of poor education in previous years, because there are children who have no foundation in English, or if it is because they don't like English itself, there are children who apparently get frustrated. For example, I have	With the younger children I have used 100% Spanish since they are in the first steps of learning basic things like colors, numbers, animals, etc. So with them I always use Spanish but for seventh grade, which is the highest level in school, I use 50% Spanish and 50% English because of the children who, as I said before, do not like English, do not have a good knowledge of the language, or have learning problems such as ADHD, autism, among others. So for those reasons I sometimes have to use Spanish more often because part of

	<p>grammatical structures and vocabulary.</p> <p>In the place where I do pre-service activities, the topics taught are very strong for the level of English the students have and that is why when I speak only in English to teach, the students start to say “teacher, I don't understand” or “teacher, what should I do? Therefore, from my point of view, Spanish can be used, but it would be 50% English and 50% Spanish or it can also be 75% English and 25% Spanish.</p> <p>Spanish should be used with younger students, but not too much. With the higher levels, such as high school, Spanish should not be used as much, since they need more English because they are about to finish high school, obviously they need a base to enter university. Now, with the eighth, ninth and tenth years of basic general education, only English should also be used exclusively for teaching.</p> <p>In conclusion, with the younger students it is convenient to use Spanish but not with the older ones because they should already</p>	<p>students who are asked to do an activity on the board, but they copy two letters and are already distracted. So, in that aspect, I have to keep telling them “copy” or “do this,” and they start to say “teacher, I don't understand.” So, that's where I use Spanish.</p> <p>In my case, when I start to explain in Spanish, the students start to say “Ay profe, ya entendi”.</p> <p>Sometimes, no matter how many explanations are given in English, the children do not understand, so that is when I start to explain in Spanish. I also use Spanish more to give instructions. For example, I have 18 students in sixth grade, and of the 18, 3 pay attention, 3 like it, 3 are attentive, but the rest are annoying and then they do not understand what they have to do later. So, when they are given the instruction in Spanish for the activity, the students say “Ay profe, ahora sí entendi”.</p> <p>If you start explaining only in English and the students are annoying, then they will not understand.</p>	<p>education is inclusive and students with certain learning problems cannot be left out. Of course, adaptations can be made. For example, a girl in seventh grade does not understand at the same rate as the rest of her classmates, so an adaptation is made and with it, Spanish is used more frequently in teaching English.</p>
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	<p>have a good level of English since they have been learning the language from the beginning. In the case that the lower level students do not understand the meaning of something, the teacher should make use of mimicry or examples so that they can decipher what he/she is trying to make them understand or teach.</p>		
<p><i>Participant 2</i></p>	<p>As my colleague has already mentioned, it is very convenient to use Spanish to teach English depending on the level of the student.</p> <p>For example, when children are just learning, they need the teacher to speak in Spanish so that they can understand. Also according to how the students go up in level it is important to use Spanish so that they can understand when the grammar is explained, this way the students will understand the meaning of the sentence they are learning to form.</p> <p>And the same with the high school, it is also important to speak in Spanish because some of the students do not have a good level of English and therefore do not understand anything when the teacher speaks only</p>	<p>In my case, I use it to give instructions or when I explain grammar. When I explain grammar, I give them examples and then I translate everything I have explained because there are students who do not understand what I am saying to them. In this case, not all of them have the same level of English and that is why there are little parts that they do not understand. To teach vocabulary, I also use Spanish, but very rarely because I mostly use flashcards with the objective of not translating for them but rather for the students to intuit the meaning. But in the case of words that they do not understand, I already translate them.</p>	<p>Let's say that from the tenth year of basic general education until the first year of high school I have used 50% Spanish and 50% English, but from the second and third year of high school it would be 20 or 15% Spanish and the rest in English because they do understand, but the use of Spanish to teach learners who have learning problems or who come from poor teaching in previous years is considered a little.</p>

	English. That is why for me it is important to use Spanish in English classrooms.		
<i>Participant 3</i>	<p>On the one hand, I believe that English should not be taught using Spanish. The excessive use of Spanish in teaching English depends on whether the school is public or private. In public schools more Spanish is used to teach English but in private schools only English is used from kindergarten through high school. It should be considered to leave aside the use of Spanish in English classes because by using two languages in the classrooms the students get confused. On the other hand, I can say that I also agree with the opinion of my colleagues. It should be used 50% Spanish and 50% English because in some cases it is extremely necessary to use the native language. However, by using Spanish, one learns but also delays the development of skills that should be developed in the target language.</p>	<p>I use Spanish when I am going to give instructions, that is, to give information that the authority of the educational institution asks me to share with the students. Another is to give instructions for homework, because sometimes the teacher told in English to do one thing, but sometimes the students do not understand the instructions given in English and get confused and do something else. I also use Spanish to teach vocabulary.</p>	<p>In my case, in the tenth year of general education, there is a group of two or three children with learning problems. So with that group of children I only use Spanish to teach my classes, but with the rest of the class I use 75% English and 25% Spanish. In this case, I use Spanish to take attendance, to give them instructions, and to maintain the discipline of the children, since they are very annoying and restless. On the other hand, with the children in the first, second, and third year of high school, I always use English.</p>
<i>Participant 4</i>	<p>The use of Spanish in English classes depends on the student's level of English. As my</p>	<p>When working with children, it is necessary to repeat what is said so that the students do the task as</p>	<p>In my case, as I said before, with small children I use 70% Spanish and 30% English. I have</p>

	<p>colleague mentioned earlier, there is quite a difference between private and public schools. In private schools, which is where we have been doing our pre-service activities, the use of Spanish to teach English is almost non-existent. In English classes with children, Spanish is used a lot, since sometimes they are told to “Read” and sometimes the children do not understand and get nervous. That is why in these cases it is necessary to use grammar translation, which is a method that helps students learn a second language with the foundations that they have in their native language, so I consider that Spanish is a good resource to facilitate the process of learning English. So according to the opinion of my colleagues and what I just mentioned, the ideal would be to use 70% English and 30% Spanish. It is beneficial to use more English than Spanish since the students are learning English, it must be worked on appropriately.</p>	<p>it should be and according to what the teacher asks. When teaching vocabulary, as my colleague said, the use of flashcards is a very appropriate resource since they have the opportunity to visualize and intuit the meaning without having to do a complete translation. In addition, with the use of flashcards, students also have the opportunity to practice and improve their pronunciation. When teaching grammar, I also use Spanish. First, I explain to them in English, I have them practice pronunciation and then if they don't understand a word, I explain it in Spanish.</p>	<p>children with ADHD problems and when I tell them something in English they say “I don't like it”, so with children with that type of problems I use Spanish completely. Leaving aside the cases of children with learning problems, I can tell you that I use 70% Spanish and 30% English with small children. I would like to lower the percentage of Spanish used but I can't because they are children and I have to keep up with them.</p>
<p><i>Participant 5</i></p>	<p>To conclude, I totally agree with my colleagues, as they have talked about the</p>	<p>In my case, I have used Spanish to give classroom rules. Since I work with very</p>	<p>Spanish was used occasionally at the beginning of the academic period,</p>

	<p>advantages and disadvantages of using Spanish in English classes. However, from my experience I can say that it is correct to limit the use of Spanish. By limiting the use of Spanish, we try to make the students understand the language itself. In my case, I try to use Spanish as a last resort. For example, if the child does not understand after so many explanations, that is where we resort to translation. But based on my experience, I always try to work almost 100% in English. Children are like sponges, they absorb everything that is explained to them or what they are trying to learn.</p> <p>And yes, I totally agree that the use of Spanish depends a lot on the level of English that the students have. But, as I already mentioned, it would be quite good to start limiting the use of Spanish in English classes.</p>	<p>young children, I still have to explain to them in Spanish how to say things like: “¿Puede ir al baño?” which in English would be “May I go to the bathroom, please?”. I try to teach them this by using dynamics like clapping. I also use Spanish to teach vocabulary, but this very rarely because I try to use videos or flashcards.</p>	<p>because we were in the children's adaptation weeks, forming routines, working on classroom rules, but now I would say that the use of English is almost non-existent because the children already understand the classroom rules and therefore they are spoken to purely in English. Spanish is rarely used to teach vocabulary and I almost always use English in the classrooms I am currently working in.</p>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The pre-service teachers see both benefits and drawbacks in using Spanish in English classrooms. Participants noted that its frequency varies by school type, being</p>	<p>Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 use Spanish to teach vocabulary, but participants 2, 4, and 5 try to minimize it by using flashcards or videos. However, for abstract words like then, so, and already,</p>	<p>Participants 1 and 4 stated that they use Spanish in about 70% of their English classes with young children since they are just learning basic concepts like numbers and colors. Participant</p>

	<p>more common in public institutions, while private schools focus on English-only instruction. They agreed that Spanish is necessary for beginners due to their limited vocabulary, but excessive use should be avoided. Some suggested using Spanish only as a last resort after multiple English explanations, aiming to use 95% English in their classes. They also emphasized that the use of Spanish depends on students' proficiency, as advanced learners should be taught in English, though occasional L1 support may prevent frustration. Overall, they believe Spanish can aid understanding at key moments but may also interfere with English acquisition.</p>	<p>they rely on Spanish due to the difficulty of illustrating their meanings visually. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 use Spanish to give task instructions and share institutional messages. For grammar, participants 1, 2, and 4 encourage students to translate sentences according to the verb tense being learned. Participant 5 is the only one who uses English to explain classroom rules and teach basic commands like <i>May I go to the bathroom, please?</i>, incorporating Spanish and interactive techniques such as applause.</p>	<p>2 mentioned using Spanish and English equally (50%) with eighth to tenth-year students, while both participants 2 and 3 reported using at least 75% English in high school courses, showing a significant decrease in Spanish usage. Participant 5 said they only used Spanish at the beginning of the academic term to help students adapt but now rarely use it. Additionally, participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 use Spanish only for students with learning difficulties, such as ADHD or autism. Participant 1 stressed the importance of inclusive education.</p>
<p>General analysis</p>	<p>Most participants believe that using Spanish in English classes is sometimes necessary but should be a last resort. They agree that Spanish is useful for beginners, as young students with limited vocabulary struggle to understand lessons entirely in English. The use of the mother tongue also depends on students' proficiency, as even high school students may feel frustrated if only English is used. Additionally, some participants noted that Spanish is used more in public schools than in private institutions. Regarding specific situations, several participants use Spanish to teach vocabulary, especially complex words that are hard to illustrate with flashcards or videos. Most also use Spanish for giving instructions and explaining grammar, while some encourage sentence translation exercises. Only one participant stated that they use English exclusively for classroom rules and commands. In terms of frequency, usage varies: some use 70% Spanish at lower levels, others maintain a 50-50 balance in high school, while one participant uses Spanish only 5% of the time. Despite differing opinions, all agreed that Spanish is essential when working with students who have learning difficulties.</p>		

Group B**Table 3***Analysis of group B*

	1. Do you think it is convenient to use Spanish while teaching English?	2. In what situations would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English lessons?	3. How often would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English lessons?
<i>Participant 1</i>	I think so, because I have used Spanish, especially when teaching vocabulary, in some other parts too, when they understand the words, that is why I think it is also important to use the base language to teach English. I also think that it is used in Spanish more in the lower levels than in the higher levels, because in the higher levels they already understand more, they already know what the structures and all the things are.	I use it in vocabulary because it is what the little ones do not understand. It has to be said first in English and then in Spanish for them to understand. I also use it to give them instructions and also to teach them certain grammatical points that are difficult for them to understand.	I could say that I have used 50% English and 50% Spanish.
<i>Participant 2</i>	I think it is necessary because I had an internship situation and I think it is not dependent on the level because I teach at lower levels and the children do not understand English very well, and that is why I use English practically all the time and I only use Spanish to let them know what I want to say, what I want them to do and	I even use it in situations of teaching a subject that is in English. For example, practically in the structures I don't use Spanish, I only speak in English. To explain to them what it is used for, for example, the simple past and the whole subject of each structure, when and how should we think?	I use practically 50% with elementary school students and 100%, one could say, with high school students.

	<p>what we are talking about, and that is why I think it is necessary at almost all levels. That's why I think it's convenient to use Spanish, but you also have to use less Spanish because you also need to use more English so that the kids can also adapt and acquire the language.</p>		
<p><i>Participant 3</i></p>	<p>I think that it depends on special cases, as it is that all total to explain and make the words using Spanish in this case because as we say the student is asking for knowledge or hearing certain words in English there are moments of situations in which they do not understand, then I think this has gone mostly in lower levels, because the children of higher levels and so to speak, already have a large vocabulary in their head and so they can understand a lot.</p>	<p>In my case, mostly when it relates to an English subject, I use that in basic concepts of teaching as something that should always be used in the English language.</p>	<p>The ideal would be to use a percentage of 70% English and 30% Spanish, effectively to reinforce in this matter of instruction, I mostly use this percentage with a basic level and with baccalaureate it would be 50% of each.</p>
<p><i>Participant 4</i></p>	<p>I think it is quite convenient to use the Spanish language so that the child can relate his environment with the learning of the language and at the same time relate in both languages, since they can have a similarity and can be explained in Spanish, but they can also have</p>	<p>She used the Spanish language mostly at the time of the instructions to do some activity in class, mostly so that the students, in this case the children, could understand much better what they should do in that activity.</p>	<p>In my case, in the lower levels, I have mostly used 50%, because there are always situations that you need to explain to them in Spanish. From there, in the higher levels it could be 75% English and 25% in Spanish.</p>

	<p>their cons. By using a lot in the native language we do not develop critical thinking in the language we are learning, that is why we have those situations in which we mechanically translate what we wanted to say at the moment of expressing ourselves in the other language.</p>		
<p><i>Participant 5</i></p>	<p>From my point of view, it depends on the languages we are taught, whether it is in middle, basic or higher education, because if we work in the small ones, obviously you are going to have more knowledge of Spanish than English. And if we are talking about higher education, it is generally Spanish and English.</p>	<p>I use Spanish when there are readings and when they do not understand words, since they are difficult to understand or in audios that sometimes they do not understand, Spanish is used so that they can relate to the language.</p>	<p>For me it depends on the level. If it is a higher education level, generally Spanish, it would be 80% English and 20% Spanish and if it is a basic level, it would be 80% Spanish and 20% English in that case.</p>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Participants 1, 2, 4 said that they agree to teach the class with a mixture of Spanish or base language and English, they also said that this depends mainly on the courses that are taught, since at school the class should always be taught in Spanish, but instead in high school, depending on the cases, the base language can be implemented. In contrast, participants 3 and 5 said that it is very situational, since</p>	<p>Participants 1, 2, 3 mentioned that they use Spanish to teach vocabulary, also participants 4, 5 mentioned that they use Spanish to give instructions or to say words that the students do not understand, only at that moment they use the Spanish language in their classes, since they think that using Spanish prevents the students from learning the second language that is being taught.</p>	<p>Participants 1 and 2 mentioned that in the basic grades they use 50% in Spanish and 50% in English, but on the other hand students 3, 4, 5 said different percentages, since they mentioned that they use English depending on the levels where they teach and they are close to the barrier of 75% English and 25% Spanish, participants 3, 4, 5 mentioned that because they have students who understand the class</p>

	<p>the base language should only be used when the students do not really understand the subject given in class.</p>		<p>quickly. For the same reason participant 3 thinks it would be better to use 70% English and 30% Spanish for all students.</p>
<p>General analysis</p>	<p>The participants' responses to the question "Do you think it is convenient to use Spanish to teach English?" revealed different perspectives. Participants 1, 2, and 4 agreed that Spanish should be used in English classrooms, especially for students from second to seventh grade in general basic education, while they felt its use should be reduced in high school. In contrast, participants 3 and 5 believed Spanish should only be used when students struggle to understand the class. Regarding the question "In what situations would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English classes?", participants 1, 2, and 3 mentioned using Spanish for teaching vocabulary, while participants 4 and 5 used it to give instructions or clarify meanings of unfamiliar words. Lastly, in response to "How often would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English classes?", participants 1 and 2 reported using 50% Spanish and 50% English with basic education students. However, participants 3, 4, and 5 did not provide specific percentages, explaining that the use of Spanish varies depending on the school level they teach at—whether in elementary, upper elementary, or high school</p>		

8.1.1. Analysis of both focus groups

In both focus group sessions, valuable insights were gathered, with the first group providing more detailed responses to each question. Most participants from the first focus group agreed that using Spanish in English classes is necessary but should be a last resort. They emphasized that for younger students with limited vocabulary, Spanish is essential to ensure they understand the lesson. They argued that for high school students, only English should be used, as they are nearing higher education and need to immerse themselves in the target language. However, they noted that "English only" might not always be feasible, as some high school students may lack sufficient language proficiency, and using only English could lead to frustration. In such cases, Spanish helps alleviate anxiety and aids comprehension.

Regarding the situations in which the participants use Spanish in the classroom, those in the first focus group mostly use Spanish for vocabulary instruction. Participants 2, 4, and 5, however, try to limit their use of Spanish by incorporating flashcards or videos, which help students deduce word meanings visually without relying on translations. For more complex words, like "then" or "already," the participants mentioned that Spanish is necessary for clarity, as visual aids may not suffice. Additionally, participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 use Spanish to give instructions and teach grammar. Participants 1, 2, and 4 also have students translate sentences from Spanish to English, while participant 5 only uses Spanish for rules and basic commands, avoiding it for other aspects of language instruction.

The frequency of Spanish use in English classrooms varies according to both focus groups. It was noted that the amount of Spanish used depends largely on the students' level of education. All participants from both groups agreed that Spanish is used more frequently with younger students and less so with high school students. Participants in focus group 1 mentioned that Spanish should be used more frequently for students with learning challenges, such as ADHD or autism. This was not discussed by focus group 2, as they did not specifically address learning difficulties. Overall, both groups emphasized that the level of Spanish use in teaching English should adapt to the students' age and needs.

8.2. Analysis of the survey

The questionnaire applied to the UTC pre-service English teachers had the purpose to know in what situations and how often they use the mother tongue (L1) in English as a foreign language (L2) classrooms. This questionnaire was developed in Google Forms.

Table 4

Statement 1

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
1	I use the students' L1 to teach new vocabulary.	Always	3	4,8%
		Normally	22	34,9%
		Sometimes	29	46%
		Rarely	8	12,7%
		Never	1	1,6%
Total			63	100%

The answers collected in this first statement show that 3 participants, representing 4.8%, always use the learners' L1 to teach new vocabulary, 22 participants, representing 34.9%, normally use it, 29 participants, representing 46%, sometimes use it, 8 participants, representing 12.7%, rarely consider using the mother tongue (L1) to teach new vocabulary. Finally, only 1 person, representing 1.6% of all participants, never uses the students' L1 to teach new vocabulary. Almost half of the pre-service teachers sometimes use the L1 to teach new vocabulary of English as a foreign language (L2) so it is possible to deduce that most UTC pre-service English teachers find it as a good strategy to use the L1 in order to facilitate the acquisition process of new vocabulary.

Table 5

Statement 2

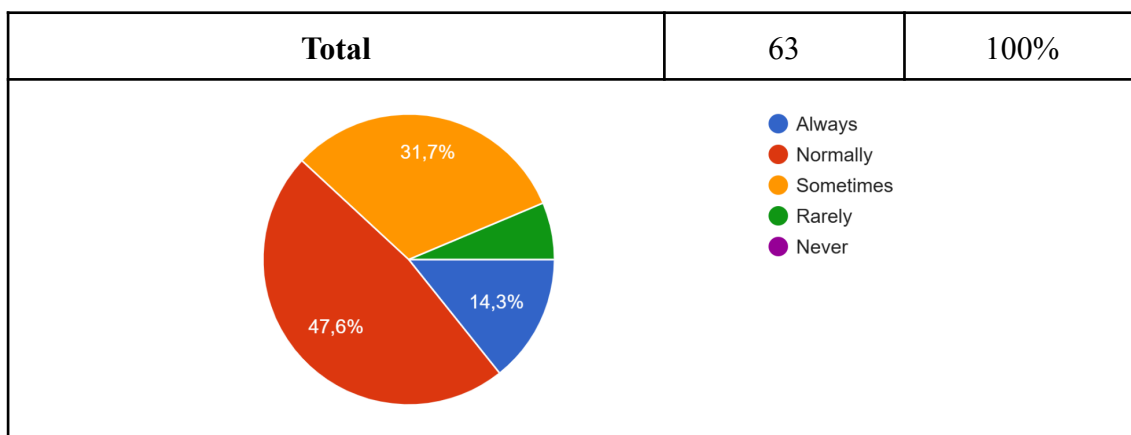
	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
2	I use the students' L1 to explain grammar.	Always	7	11,1%
		Normally	27	42,9%
		Sometimes	21	33,3%
		Rarely	7	11,1%
		Never	1	1,6%
Total			63	100%

The results of statement 2 show that 7 participants, representing 11,1% of pre-service English teachers who participated in the questionnaire, always use the students' L1 to explain grammar of the English as a foreign language (L2). 27 participants, representing 42,9%, normally use the L1 to explain grammar, 21 participants, representing 33,3%, sometimes use it, 7 participants, representing 11,1%, rarely use it, and only 1 participant, representing 1,6% never uses the L1 of students. These results suggest that it is easy for pre-service English teachers to teach the grammatical structures of English using the students' native language, and it is easy for students to understand the grammar since they make a direct translation from Spanish to English.

Table 6

Statement 3

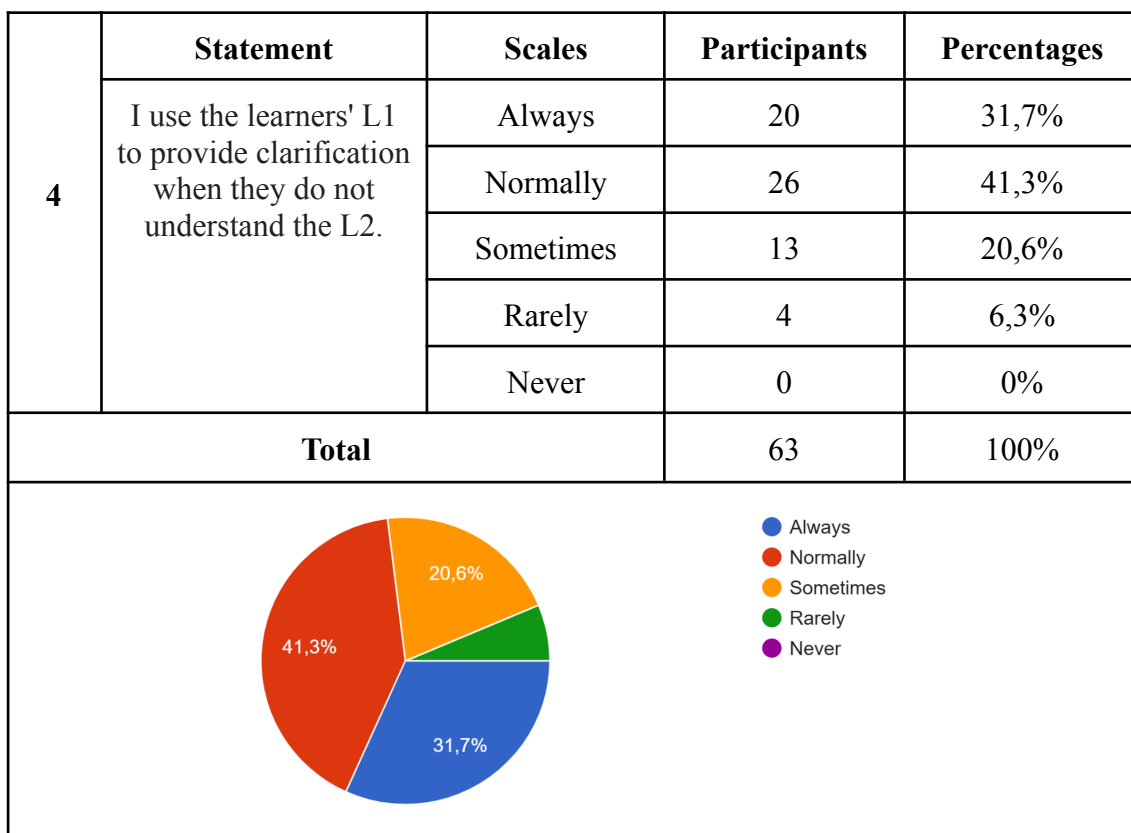
	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
3	I use students' L1 to provide feedback and explain their mistakes.	Always	9	14,3%
		Normally	30	47,6%
		Sometimes	20	31,7%
		Rarely	4	6,3%
		Never	0	0%



In statement 3, 9 participants, representing 14,3%, always use the students' L1 to provide feedback and explain mistakes made by students while 30 participants, representing 47,6%, normally use it, 20 participants, representing 31,7%, sometimes use the L1 for that purpose, 4 participants, representing 6,3%, rarely gives feedback and explain mistakes by using the mother tongue (L1) of students. Finally, 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

Table 7

Statement 4



The results of statement 4 show that 20 participants, representing 31,7%, always use the learners' L1 to provide clarification when students don't understand the L2. 26 participants, representing 41,3%, normally use it for this purpose, 13 participants,

representing 20,6%, sometimes use the L1 to provide clarification, 4 participants, representing 6,3%, rarely use it. Finally, 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

Table 8

Statement 5

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
5	I use students' L1 to give corrective feedback on students' compositions.	Always	7	11,1%
		Normally	31	49,2%
		Sometimes	21	33,3%
		Rarely	4	6,3%
		Never	0	0%
Total			63	100%

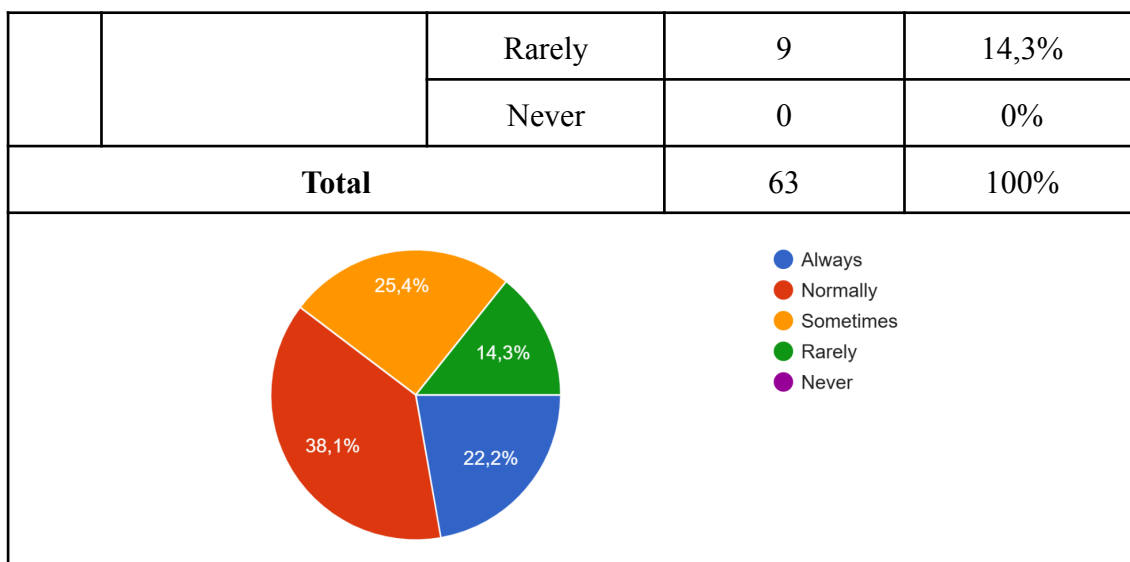
A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses for Statement 5. The chart is divided into five segments: 'Always' (11.1%, blue), 'Normally' (49.2%, red), 'Sometimes' (33.3%, orange), 'Rarely' (6.3%, green), and 'Never' (0%, purple). A legend to the right of the chart identifies each scale with a colored circle.

The results collected for the statement 5 reflect that 7 participants, representing 11,1%, always use the students' L1 to give corrective feedback on students' compositions while 31 participants, representing 49,2%, normally use the L1 to give corrective feedback, 21 participants, representing 33,3%, sometimes use it, 4 participants, representing 6,3%, rarely use it and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

Table 9

Statement 6

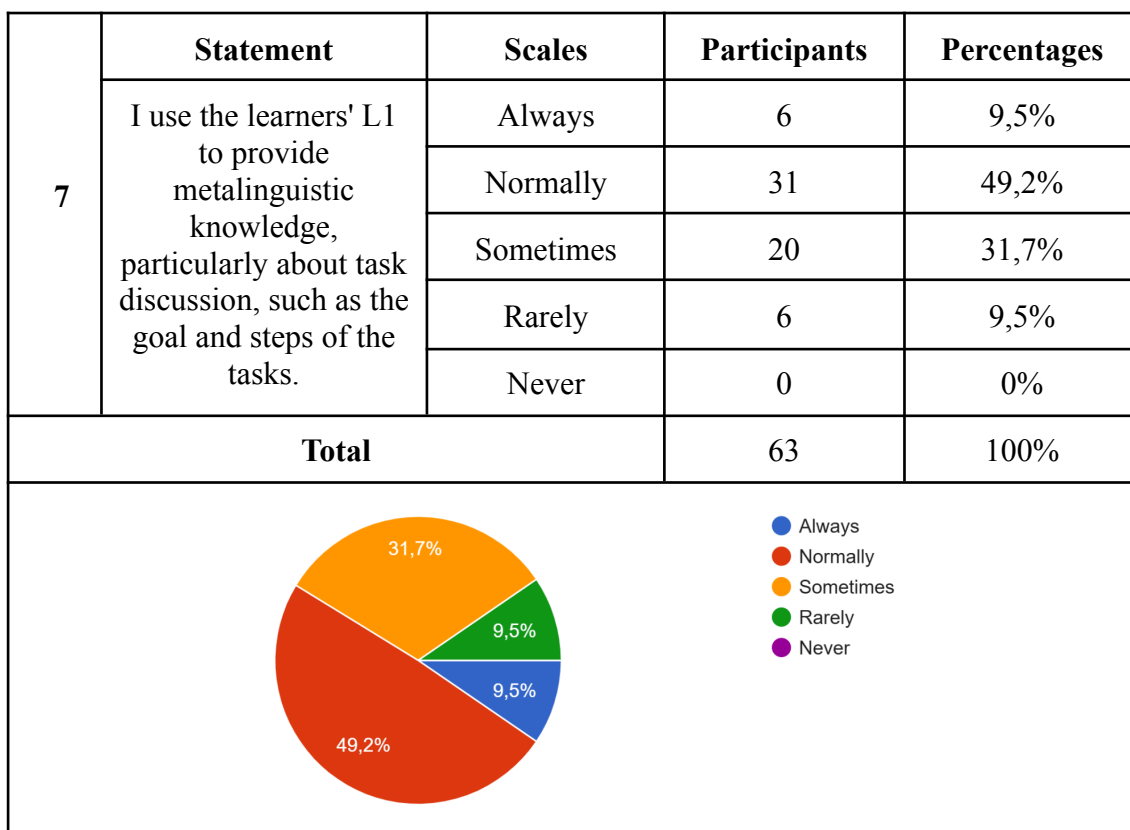
	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
6	I use students' L1 to explain instructions for assignments or projects.	Always	14	22,2%
		Normally	24	38,1%
		Sometimes	16	25,4%



According to the answers of the participants for the statement 6, 14 participants, representing 22,2%, always use the students' L1 to explain instructions for assignments and projects, 24 participants, representing 38,1%, normally use students' L1 to explain instructions, 16 participants, representing 25,4%, sometimes use it, 9 participants, representing 14,3%, rarely use it, and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

Table 10

Statement 7



The results of the statement 7 show that 6 participants, representing 9,5%, always use the students' L1 to provide metalinguistic knowledge, particularly about task discussions. According to Alipour (2014), "Metalinguistic awareness can be defined as the awareness of the features of the language that gives the speakers of that language the ability of not only comprehending or producing utterances, but also checking the linguistic form and structure underlying the meaning of the utterances" (p. 2640).

31 participants, representing 49,2%, normally provide metalinguistic knowledge using the students' L1, 20 participants, representing 31,7%, sometimes use it, 6 participants, representing 9,5%, rarely use it, and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

Table 11

Statement 8

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
8	I use the students' L1 to negotiate the syllabus and lesson.	Always	11	17,5%
		Normally	22	34,9%
		Sometimes	18	28,6%
		Rarely	9	14,3%
		Never	3	4,8%
Total			63	100%

A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses for Statement 8. The chart is divided into five segments, each representing a different frequency scale. The segments are: 'Always' (17.5%, blue), 'Normally' (34.9%, red), 'Sometimes' (28.6%, orange), 'Rarely' (14.3%, green), and 'Never' (4.8%, purple). A legend to the right of the chart maps these colors to their respective frequency scales.

In statement 8, 11 participants, representing 17,5%, always use the students' L1 to negotiate the syllabus and lesson while 22 participants, representing 34,9%, normally negotiate the syllabus and lesson using the students' L1, 18 participants, representing 28,6%, sometimes use it, 9 participants, representing 14,3%, rarely use it and 3 participants, representing 4,8%, never negotiate the syllabus and lesson using the mother tongue (L1) of students.

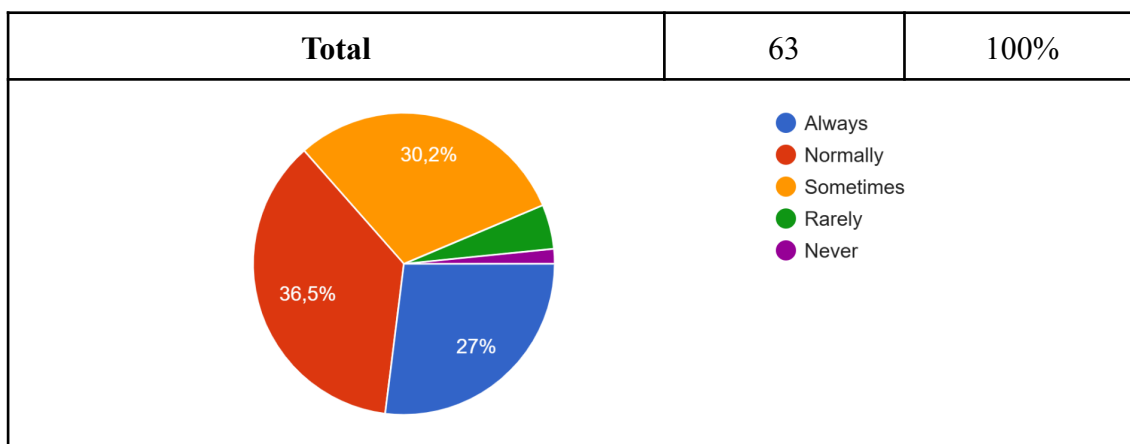
Table 12*Statement 9*

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
9	I use the students' L1 for administrative matters such as exams and announcements.	Always	10	15,9%
		Normally	24	38,1%
		Sometimes	20	31,7%
		Rarely	6	9,5%
		Never	3	4,8%
Total			63	100%

The results for statement 9 show that 10 participants, representing 15,9% of the UTC pre-service English teachers who participated in this questionnaire, always use the students' L1 for administrative matters such as exams and announcements. 24 participants, representing 38,1%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose, 20 participants, representing 31,7%, sometimes use it, 6 participants, representing 9,5%, rarely use it, and 3 participants, representing 4,8%, never use the students' L1 for administrative matters.

Table 13*Statement 10*

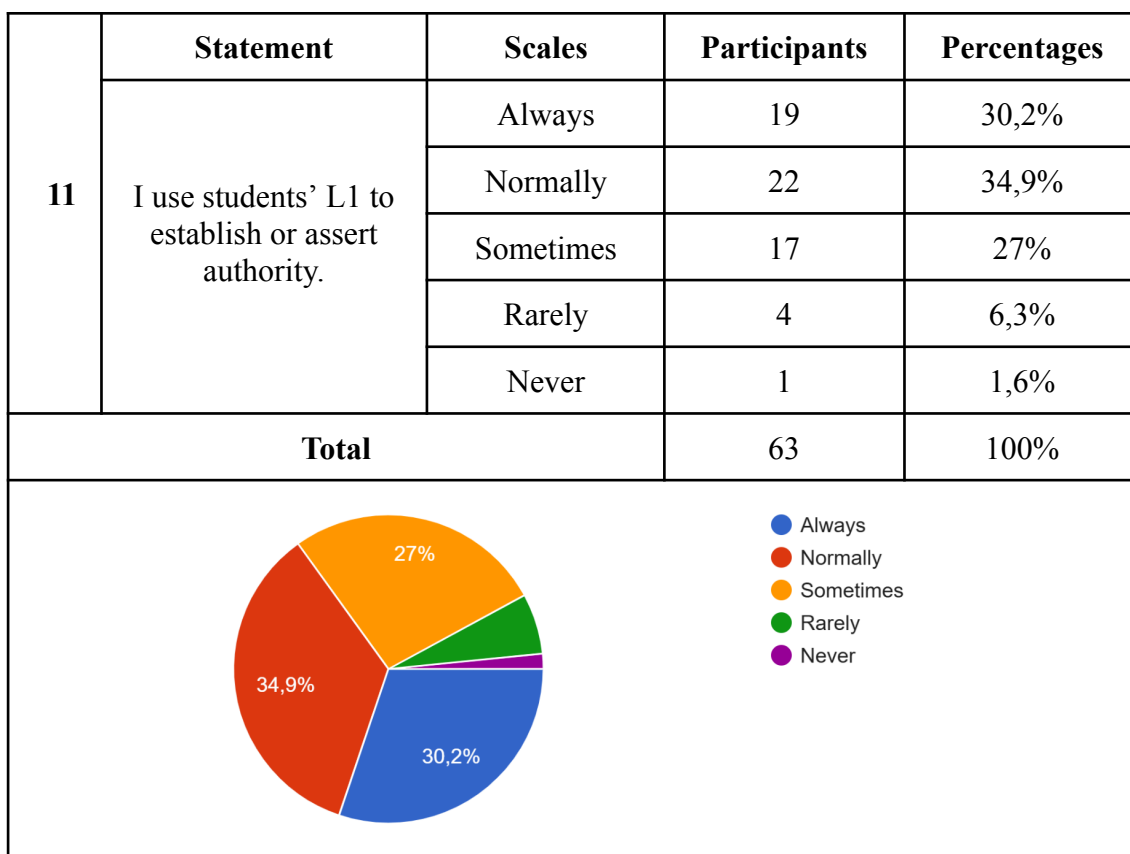
	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
10	I use students' L1 to address discipline problems in class.	Always	17	27%
		Normally	23	36,6%
		Sometimes	19	30,2%
		Rarely	3	4,8%
		Never	1	1,6%



In statement 10, the results reflect that 17 participants, representing 27% of the UTC pre-service English teachers who participated in the questionnaire, always use the students' L1 to address discipline problems in class. 23 participants, representing 36,6%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose, 19 participants, representing 30,2%, sometimes address discipline problems in class by using the students' L1, 3 participants, representing 4,8%, rarely use it, and only 1 participant, representing 1,6%, never uses the students' L1.

Table 14

Statement 11



The results collected show that 19 participants, representing 30,2%, always use the students' L1 to establish or assert authority in the classroom. 22 participants, representing 34,9%, normally establish authority using the mother tongue (L1) of students, 17 participants, representing 27%, sometimes use it, 4 participants, representing 6,3%, rarely use the students' L1, and only 1 participant, representing 1,6%, never uses the students' L1 for this purpose. The results are presented in figure 11.

Table 15*Statement 12*

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
12	I use the students' L1 to encourage and comfort them.	Always	8	12,7%
		Normally	28	44,4%
		Sometimes	23	36,5%
		Rarely	2	3,2%
		Never	2	3,2%
Total			63	100%

The answers collected in this statement show that 8 participants, representing 12,7%, always use the students' L1 to encourage and comfort the students. 28 participants, representing 44,4%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose, 23 participants, representing 36,5%, sometimes use it, 2 participants, representing 3,2%, rarely use it, and 2 participants, representing 3,2% of the UTC pre-service English teachers who participated in the questionnaire never encourage and comfort the students by using the students' L1.

Table 16*Statement 13*

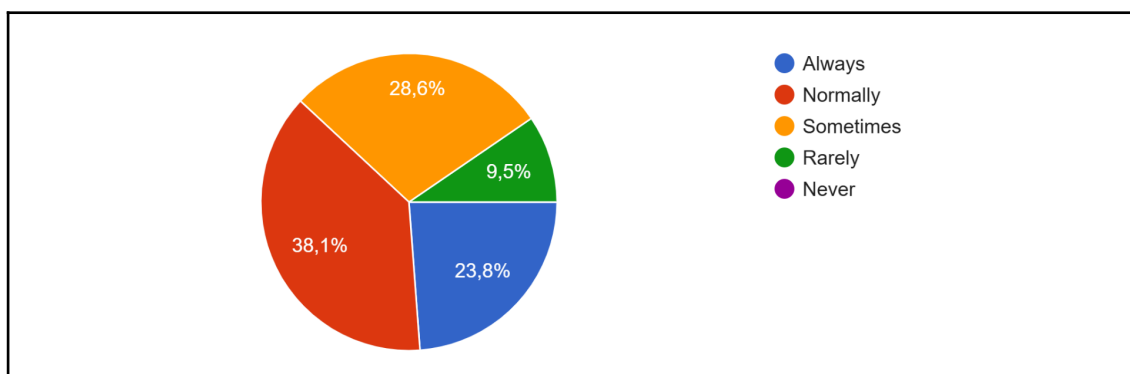
	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
13	I use the students' L1 at the end of class to answer possible questions.	Always	13	20,6%
		Normally	22	34,9%
		Sometimes	22	34,9%
		Rarely	4	6,3%
		Never	2	3,2%
Total			63	100%

A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses for Statement 13. The chart is divided into five segments: 'Always' (20.6%, blue), 'Normally' (34.9%, red), 'Sometimes' (34.9%, orange), 'Rarely' (6.3%, green), and 'Never' (3.2%, purple). A legend to the right of the chart identifies each scale with a corresponding colored circle.

In the statement 13 the results collected show that 13 participants, representing 20,6%, always use the students' L1 to answer possible questions at the end of the class, 22 participants, representing 34,9%, normally answer questions using the mother tongue (L1) of the students, 22 participants, representing 34,9%, sometimes use the students' L1 for this purpose, 4 participants, representing 6,3%, rarely use it, and 2 participants, representing 3,2%, never answer questions using the students' L1.

Table 17*Statement 14*

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
14	I use the students' L1 to establish a good relationship with them.	Always	15	23,8%
		Normally	24	38,1%
		Sometimes	18	28,8%
		Rarely	6	9,5%
		Never	0	0%
Total			63	100%



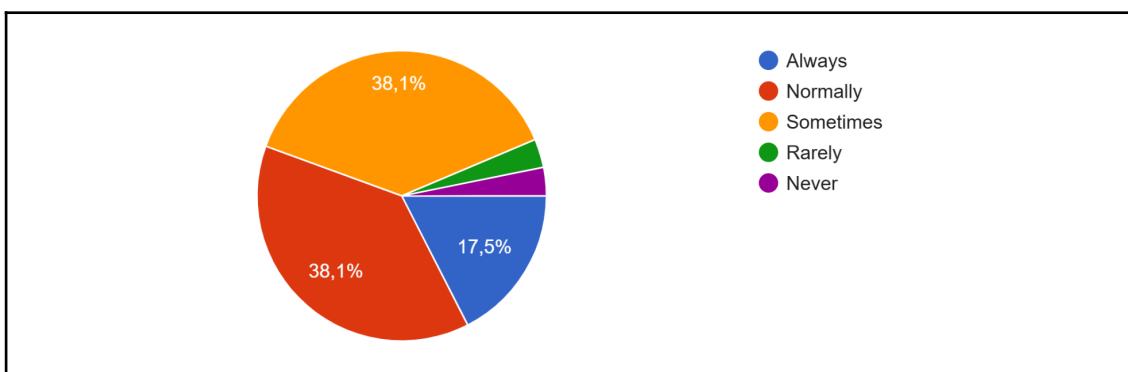
The data collected in statement 14 show that 15 participants, representing 23,8% of the UTC pre-service English teachers who participated in the questionnaire, always use the students' L1 to establish a good relationship with their students. 24 participants, representing 38,1%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose, 18 participants, representing 28,8%, sometimes use the students' L1, 6 participants, representing 9,5%, rarely use it, and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

According to these results it is possible to deduce that it may be easier for students to communicate with their English teacher using their native language and not just the target language. This may be due to the fact that students are still developing their language skills in the L2 and therefore do not have the ability to communicate everything they feel or think accurately using only the L2. They necessarily resort to using the L1 to facilitate communication. By using the students' L1, a good relationship can be established between teachers and students since communication is not limited.

Table 18

Statement 15

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
15	I use students' L1 to make personal comments.	Always	11	17,5%
		Normally	24	38,1%
		Sometimes	24	38,1%
		Rarely	2	3,2%
		Never	2	3,2%
Total			63	100%



The data collected from statement 15 reflect that 11 participants, representing 17,5%, always use the students' L1 to make personal comments in the class. 24 participants, representing 38,1%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose, 24 participants, representing 38,1%, sometimes use the students' L1, 2 participants, representing 3,2%, rarely use it, and 2 participants, representing 3,2%, never make personal comments by using the students' L1.

Table 19

Statement 16

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
16	I use the students' L1 to make humorous comments.	Always	13	20,6%
		Normally	23	36,5%
		Sometimes	24	38,1%
		Rarely	3	4,8%
		Never	0	0%
Total			63	100%

Frequency	Percentage
Always	20,6%
Normally	36,5%
Sometimes	38,1%
Rarely	4,8%
Never	0%

In statement 16, 13 participants, representing 20,6%, always use the students' L1 to make humorous comments, 23 participants, representing 36,5%, normally make humorous comments using the mother tongue (L1) of students, 24 participants, representing 38,1%, sometimes use the students' L1, 3 participants, representing 4,8%, rarely use it, and 0 participants, representing 0%, never make humorous comments by using the students' L1.

rarely use it, and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

Most pre-service English teachers sometimes make humorous comments using the students' L1. This may be because it is easier for students to understand humorous comments if they are made in the L1, since if the teacher only made them using the students' target language, the students would not fully understand them because they do not yet have an advanced vocabulary.

Table 20

Statement 17

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
17	I use the learners' L1 to present information about the target culture, particularly when discussing cross-cultural issues.	Always	7	11,1%
		Normally	28	44,4%
		Sometimes	22	34,9%
		Rarely	5	7,9%
		Never	1	1,6%
Total			63	100%

The pie chart visualizes the data from the table above. The largest segment is 'Normally' at 44.4%, followed by 'Sometimes' at 34.9%, 'Always' at 11.1%, 'Rarely' at 7.9%, and 'Never' at 1.6%.

In statement 17, the data collected show that 7 participants, representing 11,1%, always use the students' L1 to present information about the target culture, particularly when discussing cross-cultural issues. 28 participants, representing 44,4%, normally use the students' L1 to discuss cross-cultural issues, 22 participants, representing 34,9%, sometimes use the students' L1 for this purpose, 5 participants, representing 7,9%, rarely use it, and only 1 participant 1,6% never uses the mother tongue (L1) of students to present information of the target culture.

Most participants usually use the students' L1 to exchange this type of information because it is extremely necessary to have an advanced level of the target language to successfully understand the exchange of information.

Table 21

Statement 18

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
18	I use the students' L1 to supervise and guide them when they perform a task collaboratively.	Always	9	14,3%
		Normally	22	34,9%
		Sometimes	25	39,7%
		Rarely	5	7,9%
		Never	2	3,2%
Total			63	100%

Legend:

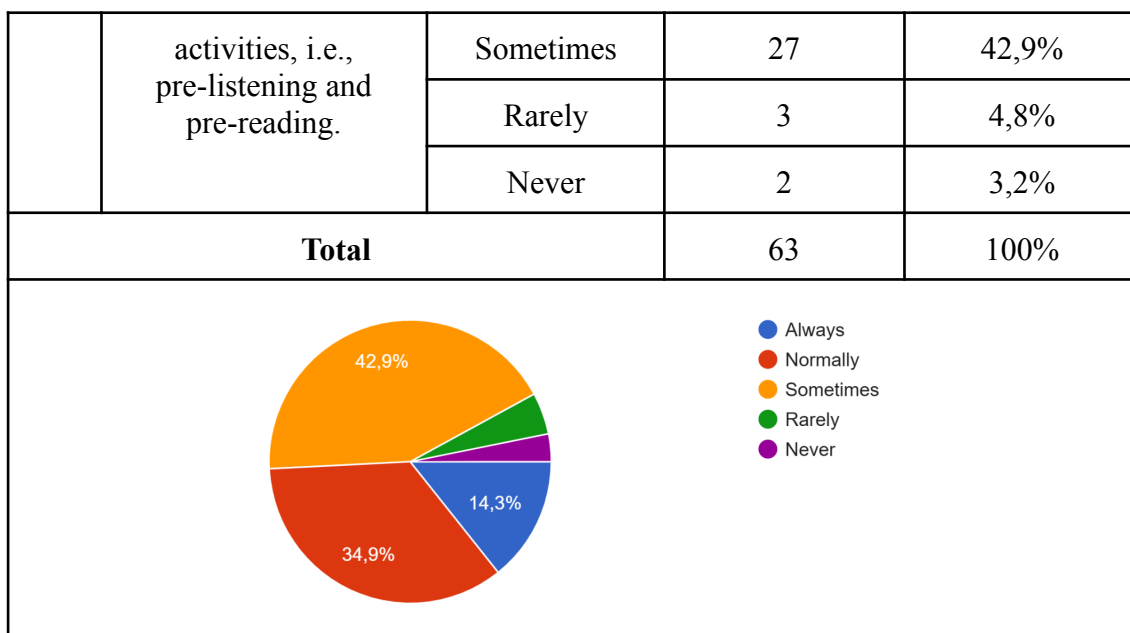
- Always
- Normally
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

The data collected show that 9 participants, representing 14,3% of the UTC pre-service English teachers who participated in the questionnaire, always use the students' L1 to supervise and guide the students when they perform a task collaboratively. 22 participants, representing 34,9%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose, 25 participants, representing 39,7%, sometimes use the students' L1, 5 participants, representing 7,9%, rarely use it, and 2 participants, representing 3,2%, never use the mother tongue (L1) of students to supervise and guide the students in the class.

Table 22

Statement 19

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
19	I use the students' L1 to perform pre-task	Always	9	14,3%
		Normally	22	34,9%

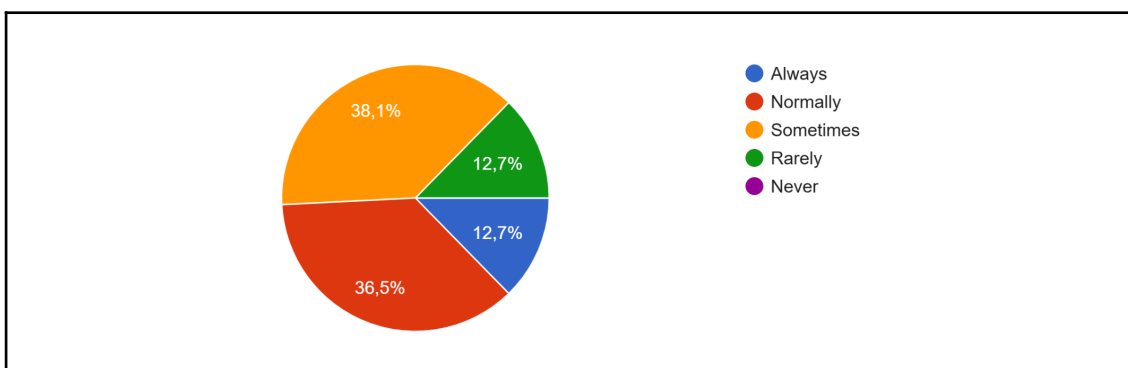


The results of statement 19 reflect that 9 participants, representing 14,3%, always use the students' L1 to perform pre-task activities. 22 participants, representing 34,9%, normally use the students' L1, 27 participants, representing 42,9%, sometimes use it, 3 participants, representing 4,8%, rarely use it, and 2 participants, representing 3,2%, never perform pre-task activities using the mother tongue (L1) of students. In figure 19 is presented the data collected where it is possible to see that most participants sometimes perform pre-task activities using the students' L1. Pre-service English teachers can use L1 to give a brief summary of what the activities, audios, or readings are about before the class starts with the aim that while the class is developing, students already associate what it is about with the previous summary given by the teacher and with the linguistic skills that students already have.

Table 23

Statement 20

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
20	I use the students' L1 to provide them with individual help.	Always	8	12,7%
		Normally	23	36,5%
		Sometimes	24	38,1%
		Rarely	8	12,7%
		Never	0	0%
Total			63	100%



In statement 20 the results show that 8 participants, representing 12,7% of the UTC pre-service English teachers who participate in the questionnaire, always use the students' L1 to provide them individual help. 23 participants, representing 36,5%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose, 24 participants, representing 38,1%, sometimes use it, 8 participants, representing 12,7%, rarely use it, and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement. It can deduce that if teachers or pre-service teachers sometimes use the students' L1 to provide individual help, the teacher can facilitate the student's understanding.

Table 24

Statement 21

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
21	I use the students' L1 to save time in long explanations of assignments.	Always	5	7,9%
		Normally	22	34,9%
		Sometimes	32	50,8%
		Rarely	4	6,3%
		Never	0	0%
Total			63	100%

Response	Percentage
Always	7,9%
Normally	34,9%
Sometimes	50,8%
Rarely	6,3%
Never	0%

The data collected of statement 21 show that only 5 participants, representing 7,9%, always use the students' L1 to save time in long explanations of assignments, 22

participants, representing 34,9%, normally use the students' L1 for this purpose while more than half of the participants, that is, 32 participants, representing 50,8%, sometimes use the L1 to save time in English classes. On the other hand, 4 participants, representing 6,3%, rarely use it, and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

Table 25

Statement 22

	Statement	Scales	Participants	Percentages
22	I use the learners' L1 to contrast between L1 and L2.	Always	9	14,3%
		Normally	29	46%
		Sometimes	20	31,7%
		Rarely	5	7,9%
		Never	0	0%
Total			63	100%

A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses for Statement 22. The chart is divided into five segments: 'Always' (14.3%, blue), 'Normally' (46%, red), 'Sometimes' (31.7%, orange), 'Rarely' (7.9%, green), and 'Never' (0%, purple). A legend to the right of the chart identifies each category with a colored dot.

The results collected from statement 22 show that 9 participants, representing 14,3%, always use the students' L1 to contrast between mother tongue (L1) and English as a foreign language (L2). 29 participants, representing 46% of pre-service English teachers who participated in the data collection process, normally use the students' L1, 20 participants, representing 31,7%, sometimes use it, 5 participants, representing 7,9%, rarely use the students' L1, and 0% of participants didn't choose the option "never" to answer this statement.

8.2.1. General analysis of questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire applied to 63 pre-service English teachers indicate that most of them frequently use students' L1 in L2 classrooms. Their use ranges from "normally" to "sometimes" in order to save time in explanations, provide feedback,

clarify doubts, and teach grammar or vocabulary. Spanish is also used to contrast L1 and L2, encourage students, guide collaborative tasks, address discipline issues, and manage administrative matters like exams or announcements. Only a small number of participants reported that they rarely or never use Spanish in their English classes. This suggests that the majority of pre-service teachers find L1 a useful tool in their teaching practices.

Based on these findings, it is evident that most pre-service teachers believe that using students' L1 helps them handle classroom challenges more effectively. Since students are still developing their English skills, understanding everything in L2 can be difficult, leading to frustration and anxiety. The strategic use of Spanish allows students to feel more comfortable and reduces stress, as they know they have a resource to rely on when needed. This sense of security encourages them to take more risks in using English, promoting fluency development. When L1 is integrated wisely, it serves as a bridge rather than a barrier, helping students gradually transition into full English immersion.

However, some pre-service teachers prefer to avoid using students' L1 in English classrooms, believing that exclusive exposure to the target language simulates real-life communication. They argue that relying only on English pushes students to think in the language instead of translating from Spanish, which enhances fluency and comprehension. By being fully immersed in English, students develop their linguistic skills more naturally, improving their speaking and listening abilities. This method forces students to adapt to the language in an authentic way, making them more confident and independent in their communication skills over time.

9. RESEARCH IMPACTS

This research has a social and educational impact since it provides insights into how the strategic use of L1 can enhance learning outcomes in EFL contexts. In the social field, it addresses the emotional and cognitive needs of students by demonstrating how L1 reduces anxiety and fosters inclusion, particularly for students with diverse learning challenges, while in the educational field, it highlights pedagogical practices in which L1 serves as a tool to facilitate L2 learning and improve classroom management. According to the findings, it is necessary to maintain a balanced approach, taking into account that minimal but strategic use of L1 should be made to optimize L2 acquisition, while respecting the different competences of students.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. Conclusions

- The development of a theoretical framework on the use of the L1 "mother tongue" in L2 (English foreign language) classrooms provides valuable insights into the role that a learner's mother tongue plays in the second language acquisition process. The information reveals that over-reliance on the L1 can hinder immersion and natural acquisition of the L2. However, if used strategically and not excessively, it can be a powerful tool that helps complement L2 learning rather than obstruct it. Also, this examination highlights the importance of flexible and context-sensitive teaching strategies in promoting successful language learning.
- The frequency and purpose of using Spanish in English classrooms depend on various factors, such as content complexity, students' proficiency levels, and their specific needs. Most pre-service English teachers recognize that L1 can be a valuable tool when used strategically to enhance comprehension, reduce anxiety, and support students. The data also reveal that Spanish is primarily used to explain grammar, clarify doubts, provide feedback, and give instructions, particularly with younger learners or when dealing with challenging topics. However, as students' knowledge advances, the L1 use should be minimized to encourage immersion in English. Striking a balance between L1 and L2 is essential to fostering both understanding and fluency, ensuring that students gradually develop the skills needed for effective communication in the target language.
- The data collected from the open-questions reveal that appropriate and strategic use of the L1 in English classrooms can facilitate learning, improve students' confidence and support classroom management. However, its use needs to be adapted based on the needs of the students and the educational context. Future teachers should make balanced use of the L1 that allows students to benefit from it without hindering their development in the L2.

10.2. Recommendations

- It is recommended that educators receive training on how to strategically integrate the L1 into English classrooms without relying too heavily on it. Professional development programs should focus on best practices for using the L1 as a support tool while simultaneously promoting L2 immersion. In addition, further research should be conducted to explore different teaching methodologies that effectively balance the use of the L1 and L2 in language acquisition.
- Teachers should assess students' proficiency level and specific needs to determine when and how much L1 should be used in class. It is advisable to use L1 selectively for complex topics, grammatical explanations, and to provide feedback, especially with beginners and students with learning difficulties. As students progress, teachers should gradually reduce the use of L1 and encourage greater exposure to English through communicative activities and immersion techniques.
- Future English teachers should develop flexible teaching strategies that adapt to different classroom contexts and students' needs. They should implement a gradual transition approach, where the L1 serves as a support tool rather than a barrier. Finally, classroom activities should focus on maximizing exposure to the L2 while ensuring that students feel supported and safe in their learning process.

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