

UCUENCA

Universidad de Cuenca

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Effects and Perceptions Regarding the Use of L1 for EFL Teaching

Trabajo de titulación previo a la
obtención del título de Licenciado
en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés

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2024-09-11

Resumen

El uso de la lengua materna (L1) en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) sigue siendo un tema polémico, con opiniones divididas entre docentes que optan por no usar la lengua nativa durante sus clases de inglés y docentes que sí la incorporan. Este estudio tiene como objetivo investigar y analizar las diferentes percepciones tanto de estudiantes como de profesores con respecto a la inclusión de la L1 en entornos de inglés como lengua extranjera, así como los efectos del uso de esta en la enseñanza del inglés. Esta síntesis de investigación revisó 22 estudios diferentes con diseños cualitativos y cuantitativos y concluyó que el uso de la lengua materna tiene efectos tanto positivos como negativos en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la lengua de destino. El análisis reveló que las percepciones de los profesores se documentaron con más frecuencia que las de los estudiantes. A pesar de ello, existe un equilibrio en las creencias a favor y en contra del uso de L1 entre ambos grupos. El análisis también identificó los propósitos que tienen tanto los maestros como los estudiantes para emplear la L1 en las clases de inglés.

Palabras clave del autor: primera lengua (L1), inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), uso de la L1 en las aulas de EFL, creencias de los profesores, creencias de los estudiantes, y ventajas y desventajas del uso de la L1.



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Abstract

The use of the first language (L1) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom remains a contentious issue, with opinions divided between teachers who prefer not to utilize the mother tongue during English classes and those who do. This study aims to investigate and analyze the effects and purposes of L1 use on English teaching and the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the inclusion of L1 in EFL settings. Through the analysis of 22 studies with quantitative and qualitative designs, this work found that utilizing students' native language yields both positive and negative effects in the teaching-learning process of the target language. The analysis revealed that educators' perceptions were more frequently documented than those of learners. Despite this, there is a balance in the beliefs for and against L1 use between both groups. The exploration also identified the purposes behind teachers and pupils choosing to include L1 in English classes.

Author keywords: first language (L1), English as a foreign language (EFL), L1 usage in EFL classrooms, teachers' beliefs, students' beliefs, advantages and disadvantages of L1 use



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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am grateful to God for giving me the insight and guidance I needed to complete my university studies. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my parents for their everlasting support and drive. I am grateful to my thesis partner, Viviana Ureña, who has provided invaluable support and companionship. Finally, I'd like to thank my friends, teachers, and everyone who has supported me throughout these years of study. Without all of their backing and encouragement, our goal would not have been attainable.

Bryan Cordova

In the first place, I thank God for giving me the wisdom and inspiration to write my thesis and complete my university career. I'd also like to thank my grandparents Manuel y Rosario, for their unconditional affection, constant support and faith in my skills. Their advice, patience, and love have helped shape me into the person I am today. I'd like to thank Bryan Cordova, my thesis partner and close friend, for his companionship and support, which have been crucial. I'm delighted to have had him beside me during this academic adventure. Finally, I am thankful to my teachers for their instruction and guidance during this learning process.

Viviana Ureña

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mom Blanca, my dad Gilberto, and my sisters Valeria and Coraly, whose support, encouragement, motivation, and love have greatly inspired me throughout this project. They have been the best examples of perseverance and discipline that have shaped me into the person I am now.

Bryan Cordova

This research paper is dedicated to my family, particularly my mom Carmen, my brothers Sebas and Victitor, and my grandparents. Their affection, moral assistance, and enthusiasm have greatly inspired me to keep going on this journey. My family has been the fundamental pillar in my life and my great emotional support to not give up and achieve my goals.

Viviana Ureña

Introduction

For some years now, the issue of whether or not to employ students' L1 in EFL classes has been highly debated. While some educators see L1 as a useful tool that facilitates learning, others argue that it should be restricted or eliminated because it is a barrier to learning the target language (Hoang et al., 2010). In a similar vein, while some students express support for using L1, others say they would rather not use their native tongue in English classrooms to improve their language proficiency (Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015). Furthermore, further exploration is required to reach an agreement regarding the usage of L1 in EFL classes and determine whether students' native language should be used or banned in English classes (Tekin & Garton, 2020). Thus, this study aims to analyze the reported effects of using L1 to teach English in EFL classrooms.

For this research synthesis, the following research questions were formulated.

1. What are the reported effects of using L1 to teach English in EFL classrooms?
2. What perceptions do EFL teachers and students have toward the use of L1?

In this research, investigations that used qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods designs were analyzed in order to obtain essential data to fulfill the objective of the study and answer the research questions.

This work is organized into five chapters. The first one summarizes the research, including the background, problem statement, rationale, research questions, and objectives. Subsequently, the second segment delves into the theoretical framework and literature review, explaining essential concepts about L1 use in EFL classrooms and summarizing the articles chosen for study. The third part outlines the methodology, detailing how the research synthesis was developed and the criteria used to select studies. After that, results and discussion are presented in the fourth chapter, organizing the 22 articles into six tables that emphasize the positive and negative effects, perspectives, and purposes of both teachers and students. Finally, the conclusions of the study and recommendations for further research are presented in the fifth chapter.

Chapter I

Description of the Research

Background

Research on English teaching and learning shows considerable debate over whether or not the learners' first language (L1) should be allowed or if its use should be completely restricted. There are different perspectives on the effectiveness of L1 use for learning a second language (L2). From one angle, L1 is considered a valuable tool that can be optimized to improve English learning; on the other hand, there is the consideration that exposure to only the target language should be prioritized (Littlewood & Yu, 2011, as cited in Debreli & Oyman, 2015).

Throughout the history of language learning, various methods have been used to teach English as a foreign language, each with specific features, benefits, and drawbacks, and it is possible to find varied perceptions toward the use of L1 based on what every teaching method suggests. For instance, according to Galali and Cinkara (2017), the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) suggests that teachers' instructions presented in L1 are simple to understand and guard against communication breakdowns. In the same vein, explaining concepts and lexical parallels in the original language is quite straightforward. On the contrary, the Direct Method, which was later developed, forbids the use of L1 in interactions between learners and their teachers. Other teaching methodologies such as the Audio-Lingual method, Communicative Language Teaching, and the Silent Method permit the use of L1 only to facilitate language learning on an as-needed basis (Galali & Cinkara, 2017). All of these different perspectives on the influence of L1 in English as foreign language (EFL) classes create more discussion than agreement on a common point.

Current studies have analyzed how L1 can be included to foster English learning in EFL contexts (Shabir, 2017). Research has shown that there is a direct relationship between the use of L1 in EFL classrooms and the learners' performance throughout the teaching-learning process (Sah, 2017).

From some points of view, the inclusion of L1 in the classroom is unavoidable and can contribute in a positive way to the process of learning the target language (Brookes-Lewis, 2009, as cited in Debreli & Oyman, 2015). For instance, L1 usage by both teachers and students in the classroom can increase comprehension and learning of the target language (Bhooth et al., 2014). Teachers can also use L1 to explain the meaning of difficult words, to

explain grammar points, or to give instructions (Tang, 2002, as cited in Shabir, 2017). Thus, the use of L1 facilitates teacher-student communication and helps teachers establish a good relationship with students by knowing their backgrounds and making students feel free to express their ideas at any time (Harbors, 1992, as cited in Awad et al., 2020).

On the other hand, some authors support their point of view regarding the exclusion of L1 in the EFL classroom since they consider that L1 use leads to negative effects on the learning process. For example, when using L1, students tend to translate words instead of looking for alternative words or trying to discover the meaning according to the context in which the words are being used (Atkinson, 1987, as cited in Awad et al., 2020). Besides, the overuse of L1 leads students to always think in L1 without forcing themselves to use the target language for communicating; therefore, teachers must be conscious of the amount of L1 used in the classroom (Awad et al., 2020). However, it is very difficult to exclude the use of L1 completely because even when teachers prohibit the use of L1 in the classroom, students use their L1 in different situations. Furthermore, the authors stated that the use of L1 in the classroom in an organized and controlled way by teachers greatly helps to improve the acquisition of a foreign language and the learning process in general.

Problem Statement

A large degree of interest in the effects of using L1 in EFL teaching has aroused lately (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). According to Debreli and Oyman (2015), such an upsurge in discussion in the literature on bilingual education has created a demand for research that conveys multiple viewpoints for and against the use of the native language under certain circumstances. Research results are inconclusive since some researchers have found that L1 is a useful tool for language teaching and learning while others have found the opposite. Paker and Karaagac (2015) stated that the use of L1 may contribute to language learning, but excessive use of L1 can result in students' dependence on that language. This dependence may also lead learners to avoid using English in communicative tasks or activities, which stops them from trying and employing the English language as the primary means of communication.

Since learning becomes very difficult for students if they are not exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013), it seems that L1 use plays an essential role in EFL learning because learners might not be able to understand the lesson if it is explained only in the target language. Accordingly, the linguistic barrier that learners face in the target language classroom is the issue of eliminating L1 from the EFL classroom. In this regard, Mangubhai (2005, as cited in Nilubol, 2020) stated that when learning occurs in an English-delivered classroom, the language barrier will continue to aggravate students' learning

difficulties. On the other hand, when L1 is allowed in the classroom, the problem lies in the fact that L1 tends to be used excessively. Galali and Cinkara (2017) argued that when the L1 is excessively used, learners tend to believe that they cannot cope with learning the target language; therefore, learners should be exposed to the target language as much as possible.

Another problem is that teachers are in a state of confusion and do not know whether to opt for the English-only policy or if they can appeal to L1 use (Shuchi & Islam, 2016). As it has been stated, the proper use of L1 in EFL classes is an area that still needs to be explored in order to address this debate and attempt to establish a core point of consensus on whether L1 should be encouraged or vanished in EFL classrooms (Tekin & Garton, 2020).

Rationale

As stated above, L1 can be a useful and important scaffolding tool in EFL teaching and learning since it facilitates teacher-student communication in terms of the explanation of grammar, vocabulary items, difficult concepts, and general comprehension points (Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020). Controlled and well-organized use of L1 in EFL classrooms can help improve EFL learners' acquisition and can also speed up the learning process (Awad et al., 2020). At the same time, L1 use can have negative consequences, such as learners' inability to think in the target language, reliance on translation, lack of effort to understand the target language, and lack of opportunities to learn English profoundly, among others. Therefore, EFL teachers must be knowledgeable about the positive and negative effects of L1 on learning so that they can use this tool with caution since what seems to be a facilitative tool for language learning can, when applied inaccurately and inappropriately, become a counterproductive factor, leading to the learners' over-reliance on it (Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015).

Since research on the use of L1 in EFL classrooms is inconclusive (Ong & Tajuddin, 2020), it seems imperative to keep researching this topic to contribute to the literature and help EFL teachers make informed decisions regarding the use of L1 in their classes. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine studies about the effects of using L1 in EFL courses in various educational settings in various countries throughout the world to gain deeper understanding of the ways and contexts in which L1 has been used for EFL teaching, as well as the advantages and disadvantages involved.

Research Questions

1. What are the reported effects of using L1 to teach English in EFL classrooms?
2. What perceptions do EFL teachers and students have toward the use of L1?

Objectives

General Objective:

To analyze the reported effects of using L1 to teach English in EFL classrooms.

Specific Objectives:

- To determine the purposes that teachers and students have for using L1 in EFL classrooms.
- To examine the advantages and disadvantages of using L1 in EFL classrooms.
- To analyze the perceptions that EFL teachers and students have towards the use of L1.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

A division in pedagogical perspectives exists due to many educators opposing the use of L1 in EFL contexts (Debreli & Oyman, 2015). Because of this dispute, it is necessary to look into the opinions of EFL teachers and students on the benefits and drawbacks of utilizing L1 in the English classroom. To provide a theoretical foundation for achieving the stated aim, this chapter will first compare the terms methods and approaches, and then explore a variety of methods and approaches that influence EFL instructors' L1 usage. Similar to studying the primary ideas and theories that permit the use of L1 or concentrate only on the use of the target language, an introduction outlining the technical terms and methods to be studied will be provided.

Methods and Approaches—Comparing the Terms

English teaching methods and approaches are fundamental in shaping the learning environment and guiding instructional practices in classrooms (Anthony, 2018). It is crucial to clarify the distinction between these terms to avoid confusion. Hasanova et al. (2021) define an approach as a philosophical stance that guides teaching, providing direction and setting expectations. In contrast, a method is described as a systematic and organized procedure with principles that enhance classroom instruction, aiming to facilitate and optimize learning processes.

Nevertheless, in the educational field, both definitions are not considered separate areas but rather similar interpretations (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Because of this, this study will refrain from drawing distinctions between these categories and instead treat them as synonyms, particularly when comparing and contrasting the range of instructional approaches that fall under the umbrella of English teaching. An understanding that approaches and techniques should be viewed as equal instructional perspectives gets a greater theoretical basis since EFL instructors' thoughts on this similarity are likewise significant (Alshehri, 2017).

Teaching Approaches in EFL Contexts

It's critical to recognize that the use of learners' native tongues has been a longstanding component of language teaching. While it was strictly prohibited in methods like the Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Approach, and Monolingual Approach, other approaches such as the

Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-Based Language Learning allowed its use (Paker & Karaagac, 2015). These approaches are crucial to understanding how teachers and students utilize L1, or English, in EFL classrooms. They can be categorized into those that advocate for the exclusive use of English in teaching and those that support including learners' first language in EFL settings. The distinctive features of each group will be explored further.

EFL Teaching Approaches That Promote an English-Only Environment

According to Hoang et al. (2010), the Direct Method, the Audio-lingual Approach, and the Monolingual Approach follow an English-only policy, pointing to the exclusion of the mother tongue from the classroom. This policy is based on the assumption that by maximizing the amount of time the target language is used, learning can be improved. The idea that English should be the exclusive language of teaching because using a language other than the target language might obstruct successful learning is also held by a number of instructors (Hoang et al., 2010).

The Direct Method

The Direct Method is widely recognized in EFL classrooms for its strict English-only approach and emphasis on developing reading, writing, listening comprehension, and speaking skills (Iskandarova, 2022). This method immerses students in dialogues and short stories entirely in the target language from the beginning, aligning with Voicu's (2012) perspective that foreign language learning should mirror natural language acquisition processes, discouraging reliance on the mother tongue to prevent transfer errors and ensure sufficient exposure to English. Elmayantie (2015) further underscored that the Direct Method's foundation lies in facilitating comprehensive oral interaction and natural usage of the target language, without resorting to L1 for translation or grammatical explanations, thereby promoting a more intuitive learning experience.

The Audio-Lingual Approach

Regarding the Audio-Lingual Approach, it focuses on developing listening and speaking skills while ensuring that students master the target language by constantly listening, memorizing, and repeating expressions or vocabulary given by the teacher (Djauhar, 2021). Furthermore, in the Audio-Lingual Approach, structures and vocabulary are taught using the target language without involving L1. In this regard, Voicu (2012) argued that students' mother tongue should not be used in EFL classrooms since it can interfere and negatively affect the student's attempts to master the target language.

From the point of view of Iskandarova (2022), while this method aims for an English-only policy, an exception can be made to use the mother tongue when an explanation needs to be given using this language. Although the presence of L1 in this particular situation may alter the classification of the Audio-Lingual Approach, its overall interpretation and teaching history have always viewed it as a strategy that supports English-only instruction. When discussing traditional EFL teaching techniques more broadly, this is really the teaching stance that the majority of instructors hold.

The Monolingual Approach

The monolingual approach aims to avoid the L1 use, either by completely prohibiting its use, minimizing its use, or maximizing the use of the target language (Cook, 2001, as cited in Alshehri, 2017). This method focuses on maximizing English learning since its success is achieved by keeping the mother tongue separate from English. This is because each language forms a different system, and it is believed that the interference of several systems can have a negative effect or even prevent mastering the English language (Lado, 1957, as cited in Alshehri, 2017). In line with Tekin and Garton (2020), the best method for teaching English as a foreign language is to expose students to L2, meaning that monolingual language instruction practically never uses L1.

EFL Teaching Approaches that Promote Using the Learners' Mother Tongue

The integration of learners' mother tongue in EFL contexts is advocated by several teaching approaches and methods, which adopt a balanced approach using L1 to enhance English language learning more effectively (Sah, 2017). By exploring the benefits of L1 use in EFL classrooms, the following paragraphs will delve into three prominent teaching approaches that utilize L1 as a valuable tool for improving English language acquisition (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). These approaches share common characteristics in leveraging L1 to facilitate language learning processes.

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

The grammar translation method integrates the use of L1 as a fundamental tool in English language learning, emphasizing the translation of texts and memorization of grammatical structures and vocabulary lists (Elmayantie, 2015). This approach, considered a derivative of traditional methods, begins with L1 translations and aims for comprehensive comprehension of literature in the target language. Elmayantie (2015) highlighted key aspects of GTM, such as conducting classes primarily in the mother tongue, focusing on vocabulary lists and

grammar accuracy rather than fluency, and using L1 extensively for instructional purposes. While GTM employs L1 to facilitate English learning, it lacks emphasis on active communication in various contexts using the target language.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach

Another teaching approach that leads to English learning by means of the mother tongue is the communicative language teaching approach. CLT is based on the innovative theory of language learning, which states that L1 can mainly serve as a communicative tool (Elmayantie, 2015). The role of CLT in education has been clearly evidenced, especially because of the presence it has in most schools with EFL classes around the world. According to this author, some of the language activities that CLT incorporates are information gaps, choice, feedback, and authentic material, among others. These activities primarily give students tasks in authentic communicative situations where they are able to share authentic information while having the opportunity to develop and utilize language appropriately (Toro et al., 2019).

The Silent Method

The silent method, introduced by Caleb Gattegno in 1972, advocates for the use of the mother tongue in EFL classes. This approach places the student at the center of learning, emphasizing extensive language production while minimizing the teacher's verbal intervention (Renau Renau, 2016). It aims to foster fluency in the target language, aiming for native-like proficiency in speaking. Voicu (2012) argues that L1 supports pronunciation development by helping students recognize crucial components and generate language accordingly. The author suggests that L1 use is particularly beneficial at lower levels for giving instructions and feedback. Implementing the Silent Method encourages students to learn autonomously, think critically, and freely express their ideas, as the teacher's silence prompts them to take charge of their own learning process.

Influence of Teachers' Perceptions Regarding L1 Inclusion in EFL Classrooms

Before describing teachers' perceptions about L1 use, it is important to establish what a perception is. This term involves interpreting and organizing sensations to create a meaningful understanding of the world (Lindsay & Norman, 1977, as cited in Pickens, 2005). When individuals encounter stimuli, they interpret them based on their past experiences, although these interpretations may differ from reality (Pickens, 2005). L1 use in EFL classrooms has sparked considerable debate among teachers, who play a pivotal role in the English teaching

process. Understanding teachers' perceptions in these settings is crucial for shaping pedagogical practices and methodologies (Debreli, 2016). By exploring this, educators can make informed decisions that enhance the teaching-learning process

In line with Kaymakamoglu and Yiltanlilar (2019), teachers hold varied perceptions regarding the use of L1 in English language teaching. Some educators advocate for an exclusive use of the target language, while others opt to incorporate L1. They argue that an "English-only policy" helps students acclimatize to the language, yet prolonged exposure to English can pose challenges with grammatical concepts. Additionally, Debreli (2016) found that many teachers believe L1 use in EFL classrooms is inevitable. They suggest using L1 selectively during certain moments but emphasize that students generally benefit more from consistent exposure to English.

In addition, Debreli (2016) stated that there are some teachers who believe that by following an English-only policy, they as well as their students feel demotivated and even believe that the quality of teaching decreases. In this regard, these educators believe that there should be policies that include their opinions, as they are the ones who spend most of the time with pupils. Notably, this author highlighted a remarkable point: classroom instructors prefer to work in their own way, following their own style, and not feeling pleasure in what they do; otherwise, they would only teach for administrators' pleasure.

Literature Review

Deciding to what extent the EFL classroom includes the mother tongue plays a vital role in the transmission of knowledge by teachers. Thus, there is a clear need to be aware that language choice in teacher talk influences the students' success or failure to construct or obstruct the learner's English learning (Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020). Hence, it is quite relevant to describe the specific EFL teachers' decisions about the inclusion or exclusion of the mother tongue when considering learning objectives. In this section, the choice of language in EFL classrooms will be deeply analyzed along with the reasons and purposes for whether or not L1 should be used in English classes and to what extent. All the reasons to be reviewed will be supported by the studies that are related to every specific reason.

Reasons and Purposes of Using L1 by Teachers and Learners in English Classes

Understanding the meaning of unknown words (vocabulary)

For a long time, several researchers have carried out studies to determine the reasons and purposes why both educators and learners use the mother tongue in EFL classrooms. For

example, Sah (2017) conducted research following a mixed-method with survey questionnaires to explore the purposes to use the first language in the discourse of English language teaching and learning. The results showed that pupils and teachers considered L1 as an effective strategy which helped the students' understanding. Similar conclusions were stated by Debreli and Oyman (2015). These authors conducted their study in a Turkish EFL Preparatory School and found that almost half of the participants mentioned that L1 makes it easier to understand new vocabulary items.

Employing L1 for communication purposes in English teaching

Some scholars (Ong & Tajuddin, 2020; Nilubol, 2020; Elmayantie, 2015; Awad et al., 2020) contended that instead of being a barrier to learning English, L1 is a helpful linguistic tool that may assist L2 learners acquire a variety of linguistic units, from simple letters and words to more complex phrases and sentences. The various linguistic components, each providing distinct academic uses for L1, require knowledge of the conditions under when and how the mother tongue integrates into L2 learning (Ong & Tajuddin, 2020; Elmayantie, 2015; Bhooth et al., 2014). In addition, as stated by Ahmad and Jusoff (2009, as cited in Ong & Tajuddin, 2020), the primary uses of L1 by teachers include checking comprehension, defining new words, teaching grammar, assimilation, and clarifying complex concepts.

In accordance with Ong and Tajuddin (2020), Awad et al. (2020), and Paker and Karaagac (2015), L1 in academic contexts serves to clarify English elements through tasks like error correction, providing examples, eliciting responses, and translating. These writers also highlighted its role in establishing rapport through cultural expressions, managing tasks, and facilitating non-academic conversations. Ong and Tajuddin (2020) concluded that L1's primary roles are instruction and management, emphasizing its utility for academic purposes.

Nilubol (2020) and Bhooth et al. (2014) offered further noteworthy remarks on the usage of L1 for instructional objectives, supporting the idea that an English-only strategy in EFL contexts is unproductive. They emphasized how education includes instruction in a foreign language, which prevents students from understanding the target language since their English ability is insufficient to handle the particular message. The integration of learners' mother tongues into their learning process was highlighted in some conclusions by Nilubol (2020), with the primary benefits stemming from the freedom to use their mother tongues for academic objectives.

Drawbacks of Using L1 to Teach English in the EFL Classroom

Low Exposure to the Target Language (English Input)

An English-only policy is common in many educational centers, where L1 use is avoided in EFL classrooms. Debreli and Oyman (2016) argued that this approach stems from the belief that English proficiency is best achieved through maximum exposure to the language, thus L1 should not be permitted. Shabir (2017) supported this by noting that students who rely on L1 miss opportunities for meaning-negotiation in the target language, which can result in learning about L2 rather than practicing it communicatively. Opponents of L1 emphasize the need to maximize exposure to the target language for effective learning. To strike a balance, teachers should plan and decide how and when to utilize L1, establishing a policy on its use by both students and teachers (Debreli & Oyman, 2015).

Deterioration of Listening and Speaking Skills

Another reason against the use of L1 in EFL classrooms is that it does not contribute to improving students' listening and speaking skills. Instead, it can cause a progressive deterioration of these two crucial skills. Due to this concern, Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015) suggested that L1 use should be limited to specific situations, as students may become accustomed to relying on L1 early in their English learning journey. They found that some students prefer using L1, while others recognize the benefits of using the target language. Students who avoided L1 saw improvements in their speaking and listening skills. Additionally, participants noted that English class is their only chance to practice English, and using L1 deprives them of this opportunity.

The previous results are supported by Sah (2017) who showed similar findings when exploring the purposes established by teachers and students to use L1. One of the main findings was that learners considered that they should minimize the use of their native language to enhance fluency and practice L2 during class. Furthermore, there were some teachers who disfavored L1 use in EFL classrooms, and they stated that L1 use might negatively affect the learning process. Therefore, the teachers considered that L1 should be prohibited in order to force students to listen and speak in English.

Excessive Reliance on the Mother Tongue

Excessive use of L1 in teaching English can lead to dependency, as suggested by Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015), causing laziness and hindering target language development. This diminishes learners' enthusiasm for learning and negatively impacts their overall English

proficiency. These findings align with those of Galali and Cinkara (2017) and Voicu (2012), who explored the consequences of excessive L1 use in EFL classrooms. Their research identified common reasons for L1 usage among learners, highlighting its potential to distract from learning the target language, limit exposure to English, and foster dependency on the native tongue. Consequently, maximizing exposure to the target language is crucial for effective English learning, as emphasized by Galali and Cinkara (2017) and Voicu (2012).

Surjowati and Siswahjudioko (2020) also asserted that L1 use should be avoided in EFL classrooms since when learners use L1 they tend to rely on it and do not appreciate meaningful target language exchange. Furthermore, students become reluctant to respond to the teacher using the target language as they are afraid of making mistakes. On the other hand, students consider that English is very difficult to learn and believe that there is no reason to use this language outside the classroom. That is why the authors do not suggest greater use of L1 in EFL classrooms but consider that teachers should use L1 only in instances that require it.

EFL Teachers' Perceptions Regarding L1 Use

Understanding teachers' perceptions of L1 use in EFL classrooms is essential to grasp why they choose to incorporate it. A study by Debreli (2016) revealed that all participating teachers viewed L1 use as inevitable. They believed that an English-only policy discourages students and diminishes teaching quality. Teachers felt that L1 should be used in specific situations, such as giving directions, teaching vocabulary, or socializing with students. They also agreed to use L1 with students of low proficiency and avoid it with those of high proficiency, who have already developed skills in L2. Supporting these findings, Shuchi and Islam (2016) found that teachers believe the target language should be used as much as possible, with L1 employed sparingly and in a controlled manner.

In a similar vein, Alshehri (2017) and Kaymakamoglu and Yiltanlilar (2019) searched for teachers' perceptions about the use of L1 in EFL classes. These researchers concluded that while some teachers prefer to use L1, others oppose it and would rather stick to an English-only approach. Following the major findings, teachers who follow an English-only approach believe that when using L1, students will expect the teacher to use L1 frequently. Also, they believe that the use of L1 reduces students' opportunities to practice essential skills in the target language such as listening and speaking. Above all, educators feel that through the use of L1, they can create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, clarify grammatical rules, and foster a pleasant atmosphere for learning in the classroom.

EFL Students' Perceptions Towards L1 Usage

Learners' perceptions of L1 use in EFL classes are crucial and require deeper understanding, as their views have not been sufficiently studied (Galali & Cinkara, 2017). To address this, Galali and Cinkara (2017) conducted a study with EFL students at Salahaddin University to gather data on their perceptions of L1 use. The findings revealed that students had a positive view of L1 use in facilitating their English language learning. For instance, many participants believed that “speaking only English in class is not extremely important as long as they are completing the course tasks” (p. 58). Additionally, the study found that all participants frequently used their L1 during English classes, regardless of their grades and proficiency levels.

Tekin and Garton (2020) studied the impact of L1 on students' perceptions, finding that many were aware of their L1 usage and occasionally preferred it over L2. Despite this, students often felt guilty about using their native language. Similarly, Hoang et al. (2010) explored attitudes towards the English-only policy, noting that low-proficiency students favored bilingual approaches, while more advanced learners saw L1 as hindering English mastery. Intermediate-level students preferred regular L1 use in class, indicating varied preferences. Many students underestimated the importance of L2 exposure for academic success. These studies emphasize the importance of judicious L1 use in enhancing students' English proficiency.

Chapter III

Methodology

This study falls into the category of research synthesis. A research synthesis entails connecting important data from numerous sources to generalize knowledge (Weng et al., 2019). To collect relevant and reliable sources on the use of L1 in EFL classrooms, the following internet databases were used: Mendeley, Google Scholar, Redalyc, and ERIC. Moreover, the keywords and phrases employed to carry out this research were: First Language (L1), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), L1 usage in EFL classrooms, teachers' beliefs, and advantages and disadvantages of L1 use.

In this research synthesis, the following criteria were employed for the selection of studies. First, there were no restrictions on research design; therefore, studies that used qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods designs were included. Second, all studies were searched for and found online owing to their ease of accessibility. Third, given the emphasis of this research synthesis on English learning, all studies were written in English. Fourth, in an attempt to gather reliable results from original sources, the articles embraced empirical studies. Fifth, the studies focused on the influence of L1 and the advantages and disadvantages of using L1 to teach and learn EFL. Finally, all the data was collected from current studies that were published within the last 15 years.

Furthermore, a number of journals were chosen to compile the research; these include *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *English Language Teaching*, *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity, and Change*, *Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, and *Journal of NELTA*, among others. These sources provide accurate information that helped in the achievement of the study's aim. Once the data was collected, the analysis focused on classifying the studies based on the themes or categories that emerged throughout the investigation.

Chapter IV

Results and Discussion

To answer the research questions and achieve the various objectives of this synthesis research, 22 studies were gathered and thoroughly analyzed. For a comprehensive overview of the various aspects of using L1 for EFL teaching, these studies were categorized as follows: positive and negative effects of using L1 to teach English; teachers' and students' perceptions for and against L1 use; and teachers' and students' purposes for employing L1. Each of these categories is studied in combination with its corresponding subcategory of analysis (i.e., the particular effect, perception, and purpose). The current section presents data structured in tables, along with the related analysis, results, and discussion.

Positive Effects

The first aspect of the analysis focuses on the major positive effects of using L1 to teach English, addressing the main research question: What are the reported effects of the mother tongue language in EFL classrooms? A total of fourteen articles from different years were examined in response to this question, beginning with the most cited and progressing to the least. Table 1 offers a clear picture of three main beneficial effects of L1 use stemming from the inclusion of the mother tongue within EFL classrooms. Notably, this table shows scholars who agree on different positive effects.

Table 1*Positive Effects*

Subcategory	Author/Year	Nº of Studies
Increase students' motivation	Awad et al., 2020; Paker & Karaagac, 2015; Nilubol, 2020; Sah, 2017; Tekin & Garton, 2020; Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020	6
Better understanding of the meaning of unknown words	Sah, 2017; Debreli & Oyman, 2015; Hoang et al., 2010; Ong	6

& Tajuddin, 2020; Elmayantie, 2015; Awad et al., 2020

Time-saving method	Awad et al. 2020; Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020	2
Total		14

As it is shown in table 1, the initial effect is that L1 use increases students' motivation, as demonstrated by six authors' investigations that yielded this conclusion. As shown by Nilubol (2020), Surjowati and Siswahjudioko (2020), Awad et al. (2020), and Paker and Karaagac (2015), motivation is a key factor for language learning, and teachers can use L1 in EFL classes to enhance students' motivation so that they do not lose their interest in studying. Furthermore, the usage of L1 leads to a good classroom atmosphere, reduces students' discomfort, lowers their anxiety levels, and boosts their desire to study English. Tekin and Garton (2020) and Sah (2017) discovered in a similar way that using L1 develops learners' enthusiasm and pleasure to continue learning, especially when they want to employ it for expression in their mother tongue but are unsure of how to manage it.

Continuing with the positive effects, research has reported a second effect, which entails a better understanding of the meaning of unknown words (i.e., learning vocabulary) by utilizing L1. As a case in point, Hoang et al. (2010) and Awad et al. (2020) concluded the employment of the first language as an effective means for students to learn new vocabulary. Teachers, in this case, may explain difficult words to their pupils in their native language, allowing them to compare the terms with their L1 background and make familiar associations. Thus, by using students' native language, teachers are able to ensure their understanding of the meaning and use of new vocabulary terms (Ong & Tajuddin, 2020; Elmayantie, 2015). In the same vein, Sah (2017) and Debreli and Oyman (2015) claimed that when students hear explanations in their mother tongue rather than the target language, they can comprehend unfamiliar terms or difficult concepts more efficiently.

Regarding the third positive effect, two studies agreed that L1 is a time-saving method. Surjowati and Siswahjudioko (2020) pointed out L1 as a time-saving tool with an advantageous impact on teaching, particularly because teachers may use it to shorten longer instructions or explanations that are difficult for pupils to understand. Equally important,

teachers can avoid wasting time attempting to apply the intended language in circumstances where L1 can be used. Moreover, Awad et al. (2020) ascertained that a prevalent rationale for educators resorting to L1 is the optimization of time utilization. This suggests that instructors leverage L1 as a means to economize significant time during interactions with students, whether to foster rapport or convey intricate directives.

Negative Effects

This category outlines how using students' native language in the context of EFL classes can result in negative effects. These effects have been addressed and discussed in nine studies carried out by various authors.

Table 2

Negative Effects

Subcategory	Author/Year	Nº of Studies
Students' excessive reliance on L1	Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020; Awad et al., 2020	4
Students overusing L1 translation	Shabir, 2017; Kaymakamoglu & Yiltanlilar, 2019; Awad et al., 2020	3
Deterioration of students' listening and speaking skills	Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015; Sah, 2017	2
Total		9

As revealed in the table, four studies identified students' excessive reliance on the first language as a negative effect. Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015); Galali and Cinkara (2017); Surjowati and Siswahjudioko (2020); and Awad et al. (2020) stated that as a result of the L1 use in EFL classes, students become overly reliant on it, failing to comprehend words in light of context or explanation and even finding it challenging to express themselves in the target

language. Furthermore, all these authors agreed with the fact that when students grow dependent on L1, they divert their focus from the target language and believe that they cannot cope with it. Previous research also highlights that students lose sight of the relevance of the target language when the mother tongue is overused. Therefore, teachers need to be mindful of how much L1 is employed in EFL classes.

Embarking on the linguistic journey, students often find themselves navigating the delicate balance between the comfort of their mother tongue and the challenge of mastering a new language. Yet, an alarming effect emerges: students overusing L1 translation. In fact, Shabir (2017) noted that excessive use of L1 can lead to negative effects on students' performance since they tend to translate everything. Similarly, Kaymakamoglu and Yiltanilar (2019) contended that students have L1 as a reference and frequently employ it, even when it is unnecessary. These data highlighted a critical issue in language learning pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of balanced language use. Comparably, Awad et al. (2020) asserted that excessive use of L1 leads students to think in this language more than in English. Hence, overreliance on L1 translation can impede the development of learners' target language skills, inhibiting their ability to think and communicate directly in the intended language. Therefore, teachers should use strategies to promote students' active use of L2 while supporting them to mitigate their reliance on L1 translation.

The deterioration of students' listening and speaking skills is another unfavorable effect. According to research conducted in this area by Sah (2017) as well as Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015), using L1 hinders students from improving their speaking and listening skills, which is a barrier to learning English. That is why these authors call for greater exposure to the target language. Furthermore, they pointed out that to succeed in their learning process, students need to take risks when speaking and even understanding the language they are studying. Sah (2017) and Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015) also emphasized the transformative potential of pushing beyond linguistic comfort zones in their appeal for risk-taking in language use, which is essential for gaining proficiency and communicative competence. These results point out how vital it is to design environments that value authentic interaction and active participation to support language learning.

Teachers' Perceptions About L1 Use

The table below shows an exploration of the diverse teachers' perceptions of L1 use in EFL classes that have been found in 21 research papers. The data presented in this table summarize perceptions for and against L1 use.

Table 3

Teachers' perceptions about L1 use

Subcategory	Author /Year	N° of Studies
L1 inclusion for contrasting and comparing it with the target language	Voicu, 2012; Alshehri, 2017; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Kaymakamoglu & Yiltanlilar, 2019; Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015	5
Use L1 with students of low proficiency levels	Voicu, 2012; Elmayantie, 2015; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Debreli & Oyman, 2015	4
EFL students' appreciation of cultural differences between L1 and L2	Voicu, 2012; Alshehri, 2017; Shuchi & Islam, 2016	3
Minimizing the native language boosts fluency, practice and proficiency in the target language	Sah, 2017; Kaymakamoglu & Yiltanlilar, 2019; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Shuchi & Islam, 2016; Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015	5
L1 use negatively affects students' performance	Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015; Awad et al., 2020; Shabir, 2017	3
Avoid L1 usage with students of high proficiency level	Debreli, 2016	1
Total		21

Note. Some studies are counted in more than one category.

As detailed in the table, the first perception is the use of L1 for contrasting and comparing it with the target language. In this regard, Voicu (2012), Alshehri (2017), Galali and Cinkara (2017), Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015), and Kaymakamoglu and Yiltanlilar (2019) exhibits

consistently similar outcomes in their studies. The authors who were just cited all concurred that teachers consider L1 as a beneficial means to compare and contrast the native language with English, particularly grammatical elements, which contribute to students' deeper comprehension of the target language. Thus, by contextualizing grammar points, educators could foster a greater appreciation for linguistic diversity, enriching students' language acquisition, optimizing instructional practices, and maximizing learning outcomes.

Similarly, the next perception presented in the table is the use of L1 with students of low proficiency levels. Debreli and Oyman (2015) explored the intricacies of language learning to illustrate this point. They claimed that learners at lower proficiency levels encounter greater difficulty in understanding the target language, and as a result, they need more support from L1. Expanding on this viewpoint, Voicu (2012), Elmayantie (2015), and Galali and Cinkara (2017) echoed similar views, highlighting the crucial role that L1 plays in EFL classes, particularly for those who are less proficient in the language. They went into detail about how L1 is a powerful instrument that improves learning experiences overall, assists in comprehension, and makes the teaching process easier. Therefore, teachers may efficiently overcome comprehension gaps and enhance the learning process by making use of students' L1 and creating a supportive learning environment.

Likewise, other authors concluded that appreciation of cultural differences between L1 and L2 by EFL students is another teachers' perception for L1 use. Alshehri (2017) exemplified this, showing that teachers believe that L1 allows pupils to share their language and cultural references. Additionally, since language serves as a medium for cultural exchange, it is critical to use L1 to emphasize both differences and similarities in culture in order to help students accept and tolerate these differences while maintaining their own cultural identity (Voicu, 2012). In essence, incorporating L1 helps to preserve students' cultural identities and advance intercultural awareness while encouraging a more general respect for cultural diversity in the classroom. In addition, Shuchi and Islam (2016) reported that respecting and acknowledging EFL learners' culture and language is essential to fostering a friendly and favorable environment for them.

Addressing the teachers' perceptions against L1 use, the most notable insight is that minimizing the native language can contribute to practice, fluency, and improved skills in the target language. This impression was discovered in the studies by Sah (2017), Kaymakamoglu and Yiltanlilar (2019), Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015), and Shuchi and Islam (2016). The previous researchers revealed that some educators strongly favor the notion that extensive exposure to the target language is crucial for its acquisition, leading them to advocate for

minimizing or even eradicating the native language in EFL classrooms to enhance fluency and practice English. However, while advocating for reduced L1 reliance, educators must consider individual learner needs and balance immersion with necessary scaffolding to support comprehension and language development effectively. Furthermore, a study conducted by Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015) stated that when students avoided the use of L1, they were able to improve their language skills.

On to the following perception: L1 use negatively affects students' performance. In accordance with Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015) and Awad et al. (2020), when the native language is used in EFL classes, it leads to negative outcomes, such as the fact that students become accustomed to it. Even pupils learn an inadequate amount of English vocabulary as they tend to translate words and think in L1 most of the time. Besides, Shabir (2017) reported that when L1 is used, students' effort to understand the target language and improve their performance decreases. Thus, the integration of L1 in EFL instruction should be guided by a nuanced understanding of its potential benefits and drawbacks, with a focus on optimizing language learning outcomes for students.

The last finding highlights teachers' view on avoiding L1 usage with students of high proficiency levels. In this regard, some teachers consider that L1 should be banned or minimized from EFL classes, as they believe that students with a higher proficiency level have already acquired the skills of the target language and, at the same time, are capable of understanding it (Debreli, 2016). This implies that teachers should push students to employ English and go further, diminishing the use of L1 in EFL classrooms while fostering successful learning.

Students' Perceptions About L1 Use

Following the analysis of the data, the table below displays perceptions of L1 use from the perspective of pupils. In this detailed examination, 7 research articles evaluate viewpoints for and against native language integration, there are two perceptions in favor and two perceptions against L1 use.

Table 4

Students' perceptions about L1 use

Subcategory	Author/Year	N° of Studies
Speaking only in English doesn't ensure academic success	Hong et al., 2010; Galali & Cinkara, 2017	2
Disinterest and anxiety from constant English use	Galali & Cinkara, 2017	1
L1 usage when not allowed leads to guilt and reduces interest in meaningful L2 use	Tekin & Garton, 2020; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015	2
Reduce opportunities to practice and communicate in the target language	Alshehri, 2017; Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015	2
Total		7

As Table 4 exemplifies, the first perception in favor of L1 considered by students is that speaking only in English does not ensure academic success. In this sense, students undervalue the importance of exposure to the target language since they believe that speaking more English in class will not always result in better outcomes, as noted by Hoang et al. (2010) in the study they conducted. In a similar vein, Galali and Cinkara (2017) encountered that students acknowledge that English is useful, but they do not believe that it should be the only language used in the classroom. Despite recognizing the usefulness of English, students expressed a lack of conviction in the necessity of exclusively using the target language in the classroom. They perceive their L1 as a practical tool, indicating a preference for a balanced approach that incorporates both languages.

Moreover, learners believe that they become disinterested and anxious when English is constantly used. Research by Galali and Cinkara (2017) indicated that when students are required to talk only in English during class, some of them experience anxiety and lose motivation. For this reason, regardless of their level of proficiency, students think L1 should be employed in the class, and they even suggest that having teachers who are able to speak in their mother tongue is beneficial. Therefore, constant exposure to a language in which students may feel less confident can lead to feelings of frustration and inadequacy, ultimately hindering their learning progress.

Regarding students' perceptions against L1 use, the first insight is that using L1 when it's not allowed generates a sense of guilt and increases students' indifference toward the meaningful use of L2. A study developed by Tekin and Garton (2020) determined that although students were aware that they were using L1 even when it was not allowed, they were not satisfied with doing so and admitted their culpability. They even expressed a preference to reduce L1 use or move to an only-English class, resulting in a non-beneficial use of L1 to improve L2 learning. In fact, when students are constantly using the mother tongue as a bad habit, their indifference toward the meaningful and purposeful use of L2 for the majority of the class is increasing (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). In other words, students are ignoring certain class moments to employ the target language entirely, as their own awareness is not sufficient to stop using L1.

Another belief is that L1 reduces opportunities to practice and communicate in the target language. As stated by Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015) and Alshehri (2017), many English learners argued that the classroom is the only place where they can practice the target language and foster their skills. In contexts where L1 is randomly introduced in the class, some of them may feel affected since the amount of time exposed to the target language is decreasing along with the chances to communicate in that language. To illustrate this idea, in a different environment, for example, when students are at home talking to their relatives, L1 is the main means of communication. At the playground, they still continue to use their mother tongue for social interaction with friends, and the presence of a foreign language is 0%. Thus, using their native language deprives them of that valuable opportunity.

Teachers' Purposes to Use L1

Table 5 outlines the four primary teachers' purposes for using L1 in EFL classes, ranging from providing complex instructions to teaching vocabulary and grammar to fostering social interaction and motivation among students. This table's data was collected from 18 research studies.

Table 5

Teachers' purposes for using L1

Subcategory	Author/Year	N° of Studies
Socializing with students and motivating them	Alshehri, 2017; Ong & Tajuddin, 2020; Paker & Karaagac, 2015; Nilubol, 2020; Tekin & Garton, 2020	5
Teaching grammar	Ong & Tajuddin, 2020; Shabir, 2017; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Bhooth et al., 2014; Kaymakamoglu & Yiltanlilar, 2019	5
Giving complex instructions	Ong & Tajuddin, 2020; Nilubol, 2020; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Paker & Karaagac, 2015	4
Teaching vocabulary	Alshehri, 2017; Sah, 2017; Elmayantie, 2015; Shabir, 2017	4
Total		18

Note. Some studies are counted in more than one category.

The use of L1 for socializing with students and motivating them is the first purpose listed in Table 5. Notably, research by Alshehri (2017), Ong and Tajuddin (2020), and Paker and Karaagac (2015) was remarkably similar. These authors concluded that teachers use L1 to socialize with learners and build rapport to create a warm classroom environment and thus reduce social distance. Besides, deliberate use of L1 in socialization not only facilitates smoother communication but also plays a pivotal role in enhancing student motivation and overall engagement with the learning process, diminishing social barriers, and enhancing student engagement.

In this regard, Nilubol (2020) and Tekin and Garton (2020) stated that students become unmotivated when they are exclusively exposed to English in the classroom. Consequently, teachers choose to communicate with their students in their mother tongue in order to support their learning and increase their motivation. This conscious use of the mother tongue not only improves the learning process but also boosts students' enthusiasm, which results in more fulfilling and successful learning opportunities and educational experiences.

The subsequent teachers' purpose in using L1 is to teach grammar. Ong and Tajuddin (2020), Shabir (2017), and Bhooth et al. (2014) research revealed that teachers use students' native language to teach complex grammatical concepts or grammar rules. Besides this, Kaymakamoglu and Yiltanlilar (2019) and Galali and Cinkara (2017) pointed out that teachers compare English grammar with students' native language grammar, employing L1. Instructors believe this can be highly beneficial for learners since it helps them comprehend grammar points. This suggests that using L1 may facilitate comprehension and aid in conveying intricate grammar structures to learners by providing a familiar framework for understanding. As a result, pupils can better grasp English grammar concepts by making connections with structures they are already familiar with.

Another purpose of using L1 by teachers is to effectively deliver complex instructions. As indicated by the data collected by Ong and Tajuddin (2020), Nilubol (2020), Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015), and Paker and Karaagac (2015), teachers use L1 to give complex instructions and manage the classroom to help students understand better. In this sense, previous authors discovered that complex tasks and instructions often include intricate language structures, technical terminology, or nuanced concepts. Students may find these challenging to grasp solely through English. Therefore, judiciously integrating L1 into instructional delivery allows teachers to create supportive learning environments. These environments cater to diverse linguistic needs while also promoting the development and proficiency of English language skills.

Teaching vocabulary represents the last purpose of teachers' use of students' native language. For instance, Alshehri (2017), Sah (2017), and Shabir (2017) revealed that teachers use students' native language to teach vocabulary, especially abstract words that are difficult to draw on the board or show in pictures, in order to explain their meanings. Similarly, Elmayantie (2015) evidenced that teachers used the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to teach vocabulary since the nature of this method is to translate from vocabulary lists or isolated words to complete texts and it helps learners to improve their vocabulary. This strategic integration not only enhances comprehension but also fosters a deeper connection between pupils and the intricacies of language, thereby facilitating a more profound and enduring mastery of vocabulary.

Students' Purposes to Use L1

The last category provides valuable information about students' purposes for using L1, emphasizing the importance of understanding and adapting to students' linguistic preferences

to foster an inclusive and effective learning environment. The details contained in the table were taken from 13 articles and will be developed below.

Table 6

Students' purposes for using L1

Subcategory	Author/Year	N° of Studies
Freedom of expression and identity	Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020; Bhooth et al., 2014; Toro et al., 2015; Galali & Cinkara, 2017	4
Understanding new vocabulary	Debreli & Oyman, 2015; Shabir, 2017; Sah, 2017	3
Sharing personal experiences between classmates	Bhooth et al., 2014; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015	3
Asking classmates for clarification	Bhooth et al., 2014; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Alshehri, 2017	3
Total		13

Note. Some studies are counted in more than one category.

To begin with, the first purpose for L1 use is freedom of expression and identity. In this regard, Toro et al. (2015) and Surjowati and Siswahjudioko (2020) stated that L1 offers a sense of security, which is essential for learners to express their ideas and thoughts freely. Similarly, Bhooth et al. (2014) argued that a combination of security and self-expression, including L1, may even lead to a maximization of students' and educators' engagement in the classroom. Thus, by embracing their native language as a vehicle for self-expression, learners can express themselves without being afraid of making mistakes. As a result, L1 inclusion enhances the educational process and helps pupils become more proficient in language. Furthermore, Galali and Cinkara (2017) revealed that learners prefer to use their mother

tongue to express themselves properly when they find it challenging to communicate in the target language.

In the same vein, the second students' purpose for using L1 is to understand new vocabulary. In this case, research studies carried out by Debreli and Oyman (2015), Shabir (2017), and Sah (2017) discovered that students use their native tongue to comprehend new vocabulary. In addition, pupils reported that they feel comfortable and less stressed when they learn complex vocabulary items using L1 rather than English. Therefore, given that L1 usage is preferred for vocabulary acquisition, teachers should consider the varied needs and preferences of their students in order to support efficient teaching and learning. Teachers can also help students gradually move from their L1 to the target language while using it as a scaffold to understand new terminology. This gradual transition preserves native language resources while assisting learners in gaining comfort and confidence in the target language.

Going on with the analysis of the table, the following motive for L1 use is: sharing personal experiences between classmates. As stated by Bhooth et al. (2014), Galali and Cinkara (2017), and Sa'd and Qadermazi (2015), talking to classmates about one's background and personal experiences is one of the most common uses of L1. By utilizing their native language to share personal anecdotes, students are able to contribute to the cultural diversity of the classroom. This exchange of experiences creates a dynamic learning environment where students can engage with each other on a more personal level, forging stronger connections and mutual understanding (Galali & Cinkara, 2017).

As detailed in the table, learners also use L1 to ask classmates for clarification. In accordance with Bhooth et al. (2014) and Alshehri (2017), students use L1 in classes to seek clarification either from their classmates or friends. Additionally, when students work in pairs or groups, they use L1 to clarify their interactions and, at the same time, finish class activities faster (Galali & Cinkara, 2017). This collaborative spirit enhances the learning experience, as students feel empowered to actively engage with their peers in overcoming linguistic obstacles. Besides, by recognizing and embracing the role of L1 in facilitating peer-to-peer communication, educators can create a more inclusive and student-centered environment that allows learners to actively participate and collaborate (Bhooth et al. 2014).

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The objective of this study was to analyze the reported effects of using L1 to teach English in EFL classrooms. Through a review of 22 studies, encompassing various perspectives from both teachers and students, this work sheds light on the positive and negative effects, perceptions, and purposes associated with L1 use in EFL instruction. The methodology employed facilitated the collection and analysis of relevant data from diverse sources, including studies collected from academic databases and journals specializing in language education. Thus, based on the data analysis of the reported studies, three main conclusions were drawn that answered the research questions proposed at the beginning of the study.

Regarding the first research question, which relates to the reported effects regarding the use of L1 in English as a foreign language instruction, the findings of this study reveal the positive and negative ones. The positive effects of using L1 included the potential benefits of judicious integration of the students' native tongue, while the negative effects included the overuse of L1, which resulted in reduced English proficiency and communication skills. Therefore, it could be concluded that to achieve positive results and succeed in learning a language, it is essential to use the learners' mother tongue moderately and prioritize improving the linguistic skills of the target language (Debreli, 2016).

Taking into account the second research question, which focuses on teachers' and students' perceptions toward L1 use, the analysis revealed that some educators and learners are in favor of as well as against the use of students' mother tongue. While some educators advocated for strategic L1 integration to facilitate comprehension and scaffold learning, others emphasized the importance of minimizing L1 reliance to promote fluency and target language practice (Kaymakamoglu & Yiltanlilar, 2019). Similarly, while some students valued L1 as a tool for comprehension, socialization, and self-expression, others expressed concerns about its potential to hinder target language acquisition and communication skills. It is evident that studies on teachers' perceptions are greater in number than those about students'; however, it is crucial to consider both viewpoints in order to make informed decisions on whether to include or not include L1 to teach the target language.

The last conclusion focuses on teachers' and students' purposes for using L1 in EFL classes. Teachers strategically employ L1 for diverse purposes, ranging from delivering complex instructions and teaching vocabulary and grammar to socializing with students and boosting motivation. Likewise, students take advantage of their L1 to understand new vocabulary, share personal experiences, seek clarification, and express their identity and ideas freely (Voicu, 2012). These aspects lead us to the conclusion that the link between L1 and the target language not only satisfies a range of learning demands but also promotes a lively, inclusive learning environment that values cross-cultural and linguistic exchanges. Besides, we consider that by recognizing and valuing L1, teachers may empower their pupils to navigate the obstacles of language acquisition with assurance and skills.

Overall, this research has highlighted specific moments when teachers can effectively use L1 in the classroom to achieve certain teaching objectives. It also identified instances where students find L1 helpful in enhancing their English learning experience. Additionally, this study has contributed to the ongoing debate among educators by clarifying how and when the inclusion of the mother tongue in English classes can be a valuable tool. Remarkably, it's also shown the various detrimental effects of over-reliance on L1, which can hinder the development and practice of the target language.

Recommendations

After analyzing the results of L1 use in EFL classes, it's essential to offer some recommendations for teachers in service and future research.

The first recommendation relates to how English teachers should or should not include L1 in EFL classrooms. Therefore, we could suggest that instructors employ L1 with their pupils at specific moments in the classroom, for example, when delivering complex instructions, clarifying vocabulary and grammatical terms, or developing social interactions. However, it is also emphasized that there should not be overuse of L1, as this can lead to negative results such as reduced proficiency in linguistic skills. Additionally, it is crucial to train teachers on when and how to use L1 effectively without hindering the acquisition of the target language.

In regards to research, further studies could examine code-switching, translanguaging, the use of L1 by non-native English teachers and native English teachers, and the issue of motivation in teaching English. This research could help develop more effective language teaching strategies and pedagogical interventions and could contribute to the professional development and support of language educators. Furthermore, research studies into these

areas would help advance our understanding of the complex interplay between language, culture, and pedagogy in EFL classrooms.

Finally, another suggestion for future research involves focusing exclusively on the Ecuadorian educational context by observing classroom practices to examine the use of Spanish in EFL teaching. This is particularly relevant because limited research has been conducted on this topic in the country. The debate over whether to employ L1 in English instruction remains unresolved, highlighting the need for further research.

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