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## “L1 AS A SCAFFOLDING TOOL FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE SECOND YEAR OF BACHILLERATO AT CUMBE HIGH SCHOOL”

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## RESUMEN

Translanguaging y code-switching son áreas que actualmente están siendo consideradas en el campo del aprendizaje de un segundo idioma. Estas dos prácticas educativas implican el uso de la lengua materna de los estudiantes como un medio para aprender una lengua extranjera. Es por esto que esta investigación tiene como principal objetivo el determinar la efectividad del idioma español como una herramienta de apoyo en la clase de Inglés como lengua extranjera basada en el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades a saber: lectura, escritura, escucha y habla. Este presente estudio fue llevado a cabo en el colegio Cumbe el cual está ubicado en un área rural de la provincia del Azuay. Se empleó el método de investigación mixto. La recolección de datos se hizo a través de los siguientes instrumentos: una prueba antes y otra prueba después de la intervención, dos cuestionarios y el diario del investigador.

Los datos cuantitativos fueron analizados a través de estadística descriptiva y la información cualitativa a través de codificaciones. Las técnicas en Español propuestas en la investigación tuvieron como base la combinación del Inglés y el Español. Los resultados más sobresalientes tienen que ver con un progreso medio alto de las habilidades de escucha y lectura. Asimismo, el estudio reporta que la actitud de los estudiantes con relación al uso del Español en la clase de Inglés como lengua extranjera fue positiva. El estudio revela que las habilidades receptivas presentaron un progreso significativo comparado con las habilidades de producción. A pesar de que las habilidades de producción no alcanzaron el puntaje requerido se evidenció una cierta mejora en la prueba rendida después de la intervención. Finalmente, durante el proceso de aprendizaje se dio la oportunidad de enlazar algunas materias en Español tales como Historia con Inglés.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Scaffolding Translanguaging Code-switching Glosses Postponing Alternation Concurrent method



## **ABSTRACT**

Translanguaging and code-switching are areas that are currently being considered in the second language acquisition field. These two classroom practices mainly involve the use of the learners' first language as a means of learning a foreign language. This investigation aims to determine the practicality of the Spanish language as a scaffolding tool in the EFL classroom in regard to the development of the four skills of the language namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking in Cumbe High School, which is located in the rural area of Azuay province. A mixed methods sequential explanatory research design was employed. In order to collect the corresponding data, a pre-test, a post-test, two questionnaires, and a researcher's journal were used. The quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, and the qualitative information was examined through codification. The most significant results showed a high moderate improvement of the listening and reading skills. Likewise, the study reported that students' attitude towards the use of Spanish in the L2 class was positive. The study revealed that the receptive skills presented a significant progress compared to the productive ones. Although the latter skills did not reach the average score required, they performed certain betterment in the post-test. Finally, during the learning process there was the opportunity to link English with some L1 subjects such as History.

## **KEY WORDS**

Scaffolding Translanguaging Code-switching Glosses Postponing Alternation Concurrent method



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PORTADA</b>	1
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	2
<b>RESUMEN</b>	3
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	5-9
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	10-12
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER	
1.1 Background and justification	13-14
1.2 Problem statement	14-15
1.3 Research questions	15-16
1.4 Objectives	16
1.4.1 General Objectives	16
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	16
1.5 Research methodology	16-17
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	
2.1 Theories of Language Learning	18-22
2.2 Second Language Learning Approaches	22
2.2.1 Grammatical Approach	22-23



2.2.2	Communicative Approach	23
2.2.3	Cognitive Approach	23-24
2.3 L1	Language Learning Theories	24
2.3.1	Interdependence Theory	24-26
2.3.2	Translanguaging	26-28
2.3.3	The New Concurrent Method	28-29
2.3.4	Community Language Learning	29-30
2.3.5	Dodson Method	30-31
2.3.6	Glosses and Postponing	31-32
2.3.7	Code-switching	32-33

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1	English as a Sole Resource in the EFL Class	34
3.1.1	L2 Different Approaches and their Limitations	34-38
3.2	Hearing students' voices about using L1 in the EFL class	38
3.2.1	Students' language, cultural, and social background	38-40
3.2.2	Students' expectations and stances on L1	40-42
3.3 L1	Techniques in the EFL class and their advantages	42
3.3.1	Translanguaging approach and the Code-switching strategy in the EFL class	42-46
3.3.2	L1 Techniques: Glosses in Reading, Postponing in Writing, Concurrent method in Listening, Alternation in Speaking	46-52
3.3.3	General differences and similarities between English and	



Spanish and their benefits: True and False Cognates, Syntax, Morphology	52-54
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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

4.1 Study Design	55
4.2 Participants	56-57
4.3 Instruments	57-58
4.3.1 Pre-test	58-60
4.3.2 First open-ended questionnaire	60-61
4.3.3 Post-test	61-64
4.3.4 Second open-ended questionnaire	64
4.3.5 Research journal	65
4.4 Procedure	65
4.4.1 Phase of Intervention	66-71

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

5.1 Quantitative Results	72-73
5.1.1 Pre-test results	73-76
5.1.2 Post-test results	77-79
5.1.3 Pre-test and post-test results comparison	80-81



5.2 Qualitative Results	82
5.2.1 First questionnaire	82-84
5.2.2 Second questionnaire	84-87
5.3 Discussion	87-92
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
6.1 Conclusions	93-95
6.2 Recommendations	96-98
<b>REFERENCES</b>	99-112
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	
Appendix 1: Principal's authorization	113
Appendix 2: Consent	114
Appendix 3: Planning by skills	115-130
Appendix 4: Pre-test	131-134
Appendix 5: First open-ended questionnaire	135-136
Appendix 6: Post-test	137-139
Appendix 7: Second open-ended questionnaire	140



Appendix 8: Speaking Rubric 141-142

Appendix 9: Writing Rubric 143

### **LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES**

1. Table 1: Measuring system for public schools in Ecuador	72
2. Figure 1: Pre-test	75
3. Figure 2: Pre-test comparison between skills	76
4. Table 2: Pre-test correlation between skills	76
5. Figure 3: Post-test	78
6. Figure 4: Post-test comparison between skills	79
7. Table 3: Post-test relationship between skills	79
8. Table 4: Comparison between pre-test and post-test skills	81
9. Table 5: Relationship between pre-test and post-test skills	81





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## INTRODUCTION

Second language learning field has frequently considered students' native language as an interference factor during the L2 instruction. Many drawbacks have been listed with the main objective of avoiding the L1 in the L2 classroom, for instance, the literal translation from English to Spanish or vice versa. However, lately some authors such as Garcia and Wei (2014), Kharkhurin and Wei (2015), Canagarajah (2011), Herrera and Murry (2011), Jingxia (2010), Poplack (2001), have delved into the role that the mother tongue could play into the second language instruction environment and have come to the conclusion that students' L1 may be more beneficial than disadvantageous in the classroom. Some authors have stated that L1 particularly benefits L2 emergent learners. This is the case of Velasco and Garcia (2014) who state that beginners can make the most out of their native language.

The present study has as its background the issue that emergent Spanish-speaking students confront when learning English as a foreign language, so this investigation attempts to find out how useful students' native language can be when being employed as a scaffolding tool for learning the target language through the employment of four L1 techniques.

This study encompasses five chapters. The first chapter presents a general overview of this investigation. It introduces the background and the justification of the study as well as the main problem which poses three research questions that guide the study. In addition, in this chapter the general and the specific objectives of the research are stated. Finally, the methodology of the study is briefly explained.

The theoretical framework is addressed in the second chapter. In the first part, some language acquisition theories are exposed as well as their contributions to the second language



learning. These theories are mainly viewed as the way they support the use of the L1 inside the L2 classrooms. First, Chomsky (1986) with his Universal Grammar, then the constructivism theory is analyzed having as the main exponents Piaget (1985) and Vygotsky (1986). Likewise, Ausubel's (1960) meaningful learning theory is reviewed which gives relevance to learners' prior knowledge. The second part of the theoretical framework deals with second language learning approaches. In this section, the grammatical approach, the communicative approach and the cognitive approach are explained. In like manner, some L1 concepts, approaches, and techniques are appointed such as the Interdependence theory, the Translanguaging approach, the New Concurrent Method, the Community Language Learning, the Dodson Method, the Glosses and Postponing, and Code-switching.

The review of the literature constitutes the third chapter which has been divided into four parts. The first part mainly deals with the revision of some studies that favor the sole use of the target language within the L2 classroom. Here, some approaches and limitations are critiqued such as the natural and the communicative approaches when being used with English beginners. The second part has to do with some research done on students' voices and expectations about the use of L1 in the EFL class. Issues related to learners' language, cultural, and social background are also analyzed. The third part digs into the purpose, advantages, adequate use and the functions of translanguaging and code-switching. Likewise, it addresses four L1 techniques, *glosses* for reading, *postponing* for writing, *concurrent method* for listening, and *alternation* for speaking. An explanation of how to employ each technique as well as some studies that evidence the effectiveness of those techniques are also included. A fourth component of this chapter examines linguistic similarities and differences that both English and Spanish languages share. This is, true and false cognates, syntax, and morphology.



Chapter four addresses the methodology of the investigation. It primarily describes six phases that were developed during this stage. The first one concerns the participants, the instruments and the consents obtained from people involved during investigation. The second and the third part deal with the quantitative and qualitative data collection and its analysis. The fourth component of this chapter describes the practices employed during the intervention. The fifth and the sixth parts explain the quantitative and the qualitative collection of the data and their analysis. This chapter also gives details of the results of the study by means of charts and graphics explaining how the four L2 skills, namely, reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills improved.

Chapter 5 conveys the discussion and the conclusions that the results of the study produced.

In the end, the appendix component of the thesis shows samples of the documents and formats used during the investigation. It includes the pre-test, the post-test, the consent form, questionnaires, intervention material, and others.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

#### 1.1 Background and justification

Learning the English language has become a necessity in order to live in a more global society. This is the reason why many scholars have focused their research on the way a person learns a second language in order to make the process more pleasant, less distressing, and meaningful. Different approaches have been posed, but most of these approaches hardly include students' L1 as a tool. On the contrary, the learners' native language has been considered as an obstacle when acquiring the L2, and the notion of employing the L1 in the class has caused rejection and a negative attitude in L2 instructors.

Lately, many Spanish-speaking learners in schools of the United States have received special attention from the authorities regarding the issue of Spanish language being avoided in the class. Some authors such as Herrera and Murry (2011) have focused their study on how valuable Latin American students' cultural background might be at being brought into the class. This idea of making students' L1 a resource when learning a second or a foreign language has been seriously considered by some instructors in countries different from the United States. Some instructors, among them, Velasco and Garcia (2014) have claimed that the employment of students' native language is an approach that may be resourceful in the English as a second or foreign language classrooms in different educational institutions where English is being taught.

L1 use in the language classroom is a quite new pedagogical issue that has recently begun to be discussed within the L2 acquisition field. Most of the existent studies are focused on the use of L1 in bilingual classrooms in the United States due to the increasing number of



immigrants living in that country, but these studies have been adjusted and gradually implemented in some English as a foreign language classrooms in some non-English speaking countries. The idea of using the students' L1 in the EFL classroom is based on the use and not on the abuse of the students' mother tongue. This is, in other words, the systematic and organized use of the L1 in the class. The employment of the L1 technique has been in some way standardized. Therefore, an approach concerning the use of L1 has been established and is called Translanguaging. This approach advocates the combination of the L1 and L2 in the class. L1 is seen as an innovative and excellent educational resource that additionally takes into consideration the students' own culture (Velasco & Garcia, 2014).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Students' lack of proficiency in English has been the focus problem in Ecuadorian public institutions specifically in high schools in Cuenca and its surroundings. The issue has to do with the fact that learners' L2 performance does not match the standard required by the Ministry of Education according to a report emitted in 2009. The EFL curriculum for the Bachillerato General Unificado (BGU) sublevel is aligned to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) standards, and according to this alignment, the curriculum intends to develop learners who can progress from level A2.2 to the B1.2 level. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages standards, students who possess a B1.2 level are capable of interacting in the society and thinking critically and creatively.

In 2009, the Ministry of Education of Ecuador reported that the level of English of the students was below 7 out of 10 (El Telégrafo, 2014) which is the average score in order to be promoted to the next school year. From then up to now, it is still noticeable that the learners' L2 ability has not improved yet despite the efforts of the English teachers when trying to increase



the level of English of their students by employing different teaching methods which have solely been aimed at the use of L2 in the classroom according to the Cumbe high school English teachers. This fact raises the question whether teachers should employ a different strategy or keep the same way of teaching.

Therefore, an alternative of improving learners' English proficiency in public high schools is proposed. This resource comprises the use of the students' mother tongue and cultural background as a learning resource in the L2 beginner classroom. That is why the current proposal points out the various benefits that the L1 might bring into the English classroom.

This research project is carried out in a public secondary institution of Ecuador where L2 learners are characterized by lack of proficiency in the four English skills according to the authorities of the school. The study will deal with the following independent and dependent variables respectively: the use of the learners' L1 as a scaffolding tool in the EFL class and the improvement of the L2 four skills.

It is worth mentioning that many educators do not support the controversial idea of employing learners' L1 in the L2 class, and this may be the reason why no studies regarding this topic has been carried out in our context. Thus, through this research, it is expected to contribute with more alternative teaching techniques for the EFL Ecuadorian educators of the secondary institutions.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Three questions have been proposed:

- To what extent does Spanish scaffolding benefit the learning of the L2 in the EFL class?





- Which of the translanguaging strategies proposed for this study will have the greatest impact on students' understanding of L2?
- To what extent can the use of translanguaging be useful in the EFL class?

## **1.4 Objectives**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The main goal of this study is:

- To determine to what extent the use of Spanish as a scaffolding tool helps the improvement of students' English competence in the EFL class.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

To find out about the benefits that learner's mother tongue provides when acquiring the target language, the following specific objectives were established:

- To identify which L1 technique helps students the most while learning EFL.
- To evaluate the impact of the use of L1 techniques in EFL classes.
- To analyze students' opinions about the use of sole English in their classes vs. translanguaging.

## **1.5 Research Methodology**

In order to answer the research questions, a mixed methods sequential explanatory research design was implemented. A first phase was basically focused on a pre-test applied to the group of study in order to measure their L2 knowledge of the four skills. The next phase collected the students' opinions about the use of L2 and L1 in the class by using an open-ended questionnaire. After these two phases, an intervention process was carried out with the target group where four



L1 techniques were applied, an L1 technique for each one of the four English skills. After finishing the intervention, a post-test was applied in order to measure the extent to which each of the techniques worked. Finally, the last phase was applied by means of another open-ended questionnaire in order to get the students' opinions and experiences about the use of the L1 in the class. The study mainly digs into the scores of each skill of the pre-test and post-test. It is sought to see if there is any difference before and after the intervention process. Apart from establishing if there was any progress at acquiring the second language, it was also established existent relationships between the four skills. Different statistical tools were used in order to determine the improvement and the relationship of the four skills. On the other hand, the qualitative data helped to describe and complement the results of the pre-test and post-test. The analysis was done by organizing the answers according to their frequency and creating categories and subcategories which allowed expanding the information regarding the quantitative phase.

The study itself brought back some L1 techniques that are currently not used in the class, as well as the idea of building a bridge between the L1 and the L2. Also, this study poses the necessity for English teachers to have a good command of both the students' native language and the foreign language.



## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Theories of language learning

Second language acquisition is a phenomenon that has its grounds on different learning theories. Many scholars have concentrated their efforts on developing those theories whose contributions have been substantial and have been of service to the instructors of a second language. Next, some relevant theories about human language learning will be reviewed in order to elaborate on the acquisition of a second language. One of the theories that has had great significance is related to the Innateness concept by Noam Chomsky (1986). He stated that Innateness is based on the fact that human beings are born with an innate ability to learn languages. This capacity progresses over time due to the social interaction with the immediate environment. Within society, children acquire experience. Likewise, Chomsky assures that language acquisition is not based on pure imitation or behaviorism, but it depends on various factors found in the social and cultural settings. Chomsky's arguments against imitation are mainly based on the fact that children language would be accurate and correct by only following the model of adult language. In fact, Chomsky claims children language is original. He said that if language had its grounds on imitation, the singularity of individuals might be seized. Therefore, for Chomsky language acquisition comprises a developmental process. The way it is acquired has a starting and a final point. Therefore, in order to get to the desired results, it has to go through different experiences supplied by the environment. Malone (2012) claims that Chomsky's theory has been the foundations for a new linguistic approach: generative phonology and transformational grammar. At the same time, Chomsky suggested that all languages share a universal grammar whose finite rules may be employed for forming or combining an infinite



number of sentences. He assured that a human being is born with a device that contains a set of rules which is considered the starting point for building a language. Chomsky's theory about the Universal Grammar has played a significant role when talking about the second language acquisition. The similarities that languages share may be an advantage when learning a second language since some grammar foundations of the target language may already exist in the brain of the L2 learner.

In like manner, Piaget and Vygotsky based their research on the Cognitive Development theory and the main subjects of their studies were children. No labs were used for proving their assumptions. This cognitive theory in the educational field according to Clark (2009) was mainly focused on the recognition of objects, comparing things, actions, etc. Also, it is explained that knowledge acquired by human beings is located in their surroundings. Piaget and Vygotsky through their constructivism theory elaborate on how a person learns. Palincsar (1998) reports that according to Piaget, the mutual dependence of society and the individual in order to build knowledge is paramount. Piaget's (1985) constructivism lies on the idea that human beings get higher thinking skills through social interaction. When facing new things, learners are challenged to cross-examine their previous learning. This questioning about their ideas and perceptions will make them adopt new concepts and interpretations (Palincsar, 1998). Additionally, constructivism in conformity with Piaget (1985) tackled the notion that if children interact each other, the cognitive enrichment will be significant. On the contrary, he stated that if children interact with adults, the same positive results about learning will not be the same as children interrelating with their peers. Some studies about proving Piaget's affirmation showed the opposite. In the same manner, Malone (2012) acknowledged what Vygotsky's social constructivism theory emphasized. This was that learning basically had to do with the way



people cope with their fellows in the social environment. Vygotsky (1986) argued that what a human being has learned is the result of the experiences that he or she has undergone in different social instances. The social constructivism theory applied to the second language acquisition accounts for how useful interaction is when learning a second language, especially when individuals interact with more capable peers. Vygotsky (1980) identifies two areas of student learning: The Zone of Actual Development (ZAD) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In the ZAD students count on their knowledge of L1, and in the ZPD, students have to deal with their well-grounded knowledge about L1 and associate it with the L2 in order to build the new knowledge (L2).

Another significant notion about language acquisition involves Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning developed in the 1960's. Biser (1984) emphasized that Ausubel "believes that complex intellectual processes (thinking, language, problem-solving, concept formation) are the major aspects of learning, and that primary emphasis should be placed on organization of experiences" (p. 1). The main objective of education according to Ausubel (1960) is to get students think critically which results in a significant learning. This type of learning endeavors to make students more independent and critical learners. Similarly, meaningful learning remarks the implication of organization of knowledge whose permanency grants effective learning. Additionally, the author asserts that students introduce and retain more information when some concepts are already stored in the cognitive structure. Biser (1984) argues that when recent knowledge and previous concepts are related, it can be assured that learning takes place. On the contrary, if fresh information has no links to existing concepts, new knowledge is disregarded. That is why an important fact for Ausubel to be considered in instruction or teaching is first, to discover what the learner already knows. In this way, recognizing students' prior knowledge



would strengthen significant learning. In short, the theory of meaningful learning encompasses curriculum, learning and teaching. That is, the organization, the processing and the presentation of new information (Biser, 1984).

Currently, learners' prior knowledge has been considered as a resourceful foundation for the acquisition of the second language. This is the reason why the present study explains the importance of students' native language as follows. First of all, the universality of grammar among languages, stated by Chomsky (1986), becomes an advantage when learning a second language due to the fact that previous knowledge about grammar is already stored in the learner's brain. This existent knowledge could be the starting point when beginning the process of the learning of the target language. The background of the L1 knowledge might ease the acquisition of the L2. Secondly, Piaget's (1985) theory about learners looking back to knowledge already acquired in order to make sense out of new knowledge supports the use of L1 seen as prior knowledge. Piaget's assertions support the process that encompasses the development of a consciousness based on comparisons between the native and the second language which might make learners aware of the two languages linguistic features. Likewise, Vygotsky (1986) values social interaction in order to get knowledge. This theory asserts the productivity of L1 in the classroom when it allows learners to use their native language inside the L2 classroom in order to exchange ideas and develop a community of learning using L1 to solve doubts, questions, and to establish relationships between learners with their peers and with their instructors. Vygotsky's contributions have been meaningful to the second language acquisition field. That is why the Zone of Actual Development (ZAD), and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) developed by Vygotsky (1980) have shed some light on the consideration of the student's mother tongue as a scaffolding tool for acquiring L2. In other words, L1 would be the middle point between the



ZAD and the ZPD. The ZAD and the ZPD theory advocates the notion of this study which is built on the idea that L1 scaffolding is to help the dependent L2 learners to become independent users of L2. All of this is possible by means of encouraging students to become not only learners, but also leaders during instruction time. Finally, regarding Ausubel's (1960) theory, significant learning helps to elaborate on the use of L1 in order to learn the L2 in a critical rather than in an imitative way. A metalinguistic awareness is raised by means of the interaction of the first and second language in the student's mind. The theory describes the relationship between the prior and the new knowledge for learning supporting in this way the importance of linking L1 and L2 which might result in significant acquisition of the target language.

## **2.2 Second language learning approaches**

Once theories about learning were posed, some second language learning approaches appeared. According to Herrera and Murry (2011), three second language instruction approaches can be considered as the predominant ones in the L2 learning field, namely, the grammatical approach which involves deductive instruction; the communicative approach, and the cognitive approach which are tied up with inductive instruction.

### **2.2.1 Grammatical approach**

The grammatical approach had its origins in the nineteenth century. Herrera and Murry (2011) claimed that this approach is mainly focused on rules and structures. The methods derived from this approach are the grammar translation, the direct and the audiolingual method. The grammar translation method did not pay attention to the speaking skill. On the contrary, it was focused on the advancement of writing, reading and grammar. Similarly, Malone (2012) stated that this method lacked meaningfulness; however, it was used in China until 1960's. Regarding



the direct method, it preferred the target language rather than the native language for instruction. The audiolingual method used the L1 to the minimum. It had as a priority the correction of errors and the repetition practice (Herrera & Murry, 2011).

### **2.2.2 Communicative approach**

Another well-known approach is the Communicative one. Malone (2012) claims that the aim of the communicative approach is to help students to communicate effectively when experiencing real situations, and points out a group of principles of this approach in order to fulfill learning. These principles concern interaction, use of authentic texts, and students' personal experiences. Herrera and Murry (2011) stated that this method appeared in the 1960's and 1970's. It has its grounds on communication, constructivism, and social interaction. The methods related to this approach are the silent way with strategies such as the teacher modeling, the natural way that emphasizes the instruction on comprehensible input and on minimal error correction, suggestopedia that highlights a comfortable physical environment where L1 use is accepted, integrated content-based which underlines the teaching of language through content, and the sheltered instruction that points out a scaffolded instruction with the use of visuals and cooperative learning (Herrera & Murry, 2011).

### **2.2.3 Cognitive approach**

The third widespread approach is the Cognitive one. It made its appearance during the 1980' and 1990's. The foundations for this approach rely on memory and cognition. The method related to this approach is the cognitive academic language learning. It conveys the development of L1 and L2. At present, it has been stated that L1 provides students a conscious learning of the target language. Therefore, students' prior knowledge is taken into account and constitutes the





foundations for building a second language (Herrera & Murry, 2011). On the other hand, it is worthwhile mentioning that some authors such as Akdeniz et al. (2016) have come to the conclusion that the cognitive approach is related to behaviorism and constructivism. They think that it would be inappropriate to treat cognition isolated from the other approaches since behaviorism, constructivism, and cognitivism complement one another.

Undoubtedly, all the existent second language teaching approaches contribute and offer quite a few alternatives for the learning of the target language. However, it can be considered that the grammatical, the communicative and the cognitive approaches are consistent with this present study because of the following reasons. First, the grammatical approach involves some translation which at present has been considered as a function of translanguaging (Malik, 2010) besides the fact that translation is the base of the glosses technique (Chen, 2016). On the other hand, the communicative approach focuses on interaction and communication (Malone, 2012) which goes hand in hand with code-switching. Code-switching primary objective according to Canagarajah (2011), is to get students to express and to exchange their ideas in the classroom. Likewise, the cognitive approach, which encompasses complex mental processes, higher order thinking skills (Clark, 2009), and overall the linkage between prior and new knowledge for significant learning, (Biser, 1984) has become the grounds for translanguaging considering the first language as a resourceful tool in order to acquire a second language (Herrera & Murphy, 2011).

## **2.3 L1 Language Learning Theories**

### **2.3.1 Interdependence theory**

Cummins (1981) Interdependence theory suggests that students' L1 is a valuable tool for learning the L2. L1 improves the learner's capacity to work a second language out. Therefore,



the tendency is that L1 and L2 go hand in hand. It is not convenient to treat them independently; they build upon one another. Learners have an inherent proficiency in L1. This is the cognitive knowledge that is transferred from one language to another. Cummins (2007) recognizes five types of cross-lingual transfer, namely, the transfer of phonological awareness, pragmatic aspects of language use, metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies, specific linguistic elements, and conceptual elements. Setting up comparisons between the first and the second language would raise students' cognitive awareness which might strengthen learning across languages. Laufer and Girsai (2008) claim that noticing and paying attention to certain similarities in some L1 and L2 terms, students may be capable of predicting meanings more easily than those L1 and L2 words which are not alike or related.

Additionally, when instructors take into account previous knowledge in the class, they are valuing students' identity as well (Herrera & Murry, 2011). Brooks-Lewis (2009) referred to her experience about how adult learners were motivated in the L2 class when their L1 was respected and taken into consideration as a significant foundation for the acquisition of the second language. Hall and Cook (2012) pointed out that the sociocultural approach is mainly based on the use of the L2 learner's native language as a resource to acquire a second or foreign language. The authors pointed out the interrelation between the native and the second languages which was shown by means of some words and structures that English and Spanish share. Moreover, they complement each other for supporting students' development and progress during the L2 process of learning. As a matter of fact, the students' home language is considered as a scaffolding tool that helps to build the acquisition of a second language (Hall & Cook, 2012). Valkenburg (2010) pointed out that the term scaffolding may have its origins in Vygotsky's ideas that concentrate on the permanent searching of ways to help students learn through collaborative work between



teachers and students. In other words, scaffolding helps the learner to link ideas in order to produce student's understanding. Valkenburg and Dzubak (2009) stated that the connection between previous and new knowledge may lead to intentional learning. Intentional learning will take place when L2 is associated to L1. In like manner, Anton and DiCamilla (1999) mentioned that L1 is used in a collaborative talk when students try to help each other dealing with problems or assuring their comprehension regarding tasks. Thus, this would be the way learners scaffold their L2 learning. For example, if we talk about Spanish-speaking people who are learning English, the use of Spanish in the class will decrease as students become capable of using English. In other words, Spanish will be the means to acquire the second language, and it will support learners' independence as L2 users.

### **2.3.2 Translanguaging**

The theory around the use of L1 in the L2 classroom is known as translanguaging which according to Garcia and Wei (2014) is defined as:

An approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages (p. 13).

The term of translanguaging was first used by Cen Williams who took the Welsh word *trawsieithu* and translated into English as translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Originally, translanguaging played a pedagogical role through which students put in use two languages (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Baker (2011) explained that it mainly consisted of learners receiving



information in one language and reproducing the same information in another language.

Likewise, based on the Welsh word, translanguaging is defined by Baker as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages” (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 31). At present, some authors use the term to refer to the phenomenon that takes place among people who speak different languages, and it has become one of the alternatives for a pedagogical practice (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Regarding to the term itself, the prefix trans- is associated to transculturation which appeared in the 1940’s. According to Collins dictionary, transculturation is “the introduction of foreign elements into an established culture.” Mignolo (2012) defined translanguaging as a new language, thus discarding the conception of fusion of two languages. Another relevant definition of translanguaging is provided by Canagarajah (2011) who described translanguaging as “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (p.401).

Garcia and Wei (2014) illustrated translanguaging as an instructional approach that emphasizes on the building and deepening of students’ background knowledge in an engaging form in which they can develop the ability of thinking critically. It is said that those thoughts should be communicated in a competent way within the society where all languages are treated equally. The translanguaging approach is considered a complex procedure that encompasses work-sharing of both teacher and students, and whose native languages are welcomed to be utilized for developing a new language without discarding the first one (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Likewise, the strategies of translanguaging should address some factors such as, meaning making of the subject matter being taught; material and disposal of the classroom; and the design of the curriculum. Meaning making is fulfilled when students and teachers make sense out of the



information being conveyed (Garcia & Wei, 2014). The second factor has to do with the arrangement of the classroom with resources regarding translanguaging. For instance, multilingual texts and multimedia resources should not only be produced, but also be available for students. Regarding the physical setting, the walls of the classroom should have visuals, multilingual sentences and cognates (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Finally, the third factor, the curriculum design, should enclose collaborative group work among learners with the same native language, task-based learning, and research which demands students to translanguague in order to come across with new information (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Also, the units' components should merge with language knowledge in order to be achieved at the end of the course (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Lastly, a very important part of translanguaging in the class should be the tasks that demand students to make comparisons and recognition of cognates in order to raise their metalinguistic awareness (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

### **2.3.3 The new concurrent method**

Some L1 teaching methods have been developed and employed in the EFL classroom. Jacobson (1976a), for instance, suggested the New Concurrent Method which has to do with a viable distribution of the two languages inside the class. He suggested teachers to resort to the use of intersentential switches during L2 instruction. This is to alternate between the L1 and the target language by respecting the boundaries of the statements. Jacobson (1983) did not recommend switching intrasententially because this type of code-switching requires knowledge of English and Spanish rules of syntax whose characteristic belongs only to the most fluent bilingual speakers. In other words, he established the way that the concurrent method should be used. That is, teachers should use both languages concurrently in an equal amount of time, meaningfully, in an organized way, and always having an objective for its employment. For



example, this method may be used when teachers want to keep discipline in the classroom. Faltis (1989) claimed that the concurrent method is usually brought into the classroom when learners are not proficient enough in the second language. Williams expands the way this method is used. He acknowledges that the concurrent strategy deals with translation, balanced code-switching, and the agreement between learners and teachers about what language (L1 or L2) will be used and for how long (as cited in Thomas & Mennen, 2014).

### **2.3.4 Community language learning**

Another strategy is set forth by Charles Curran around the 1980's. As said by Nagaraj (2009), Curran himself did not expand this learning method, but his student Paul La Forge did.

Curran (1976) explained the community language learning as a strategy that primarily considers the learner as a whole. That is, learner's personal and academic aspects are both important inside the class, which gives the student the freedom of using his or her own way of learning. Some pedagogical tasks inside the classroom contemplate translation where the teacher gives a student's L1 translated sentence, and the learner reproduces this translated sentence. Moreover, other activities are developed as part of the community language learning. These are group work, recordings in the target language, transcription, analysis of the transcriptions paying attention to vocabulary and grammar structures, reflection of students' experiences in the classroom, listening to teacher's monologue, and free discussion. Curran compares the progress of the second language with psychological stages namely. First, birth, this facet has to do with students possessing zero knowledge of the target language. Second, self, students start using the language, but are still dependent on the teacher. Third, separate existence, learners become independent since they begin to use the language without the assistance of the teacher. Fourth, adolescence, they keep their independency, but they know that they are still making some



mistakes when using the language. Fifth, independence, learners get their total freedom at being users of the second language. They dispense with the help of instructors (Curran, 1976).

### **2.3.5 Dodson method**

This bilingual method was developed by Dr. C.J. Dodson around the years 1967 and 1972. Pym and Ayvazyan (2016) claim that one of the practices related to Dodson's method is translation, and in 1980 this approach was put into practice by Butzkamm who used the name "sandwich technique" for Dodson's method. For Cook (2001) the method mainly consists of providing the learner with L2 sentences and their meaning in L1. After that, teachers do the action backwards. They say the sentence in L1 while the students repeat it in L2. In other words, the process starts with the L2 and then it is translated into the L1. The purpose of using translation is for expressing meaning. Translation of single words is not provided but of complete sentences. On the other hand, Dodson (1967) claimed that a method should not be complicated but as simple as possible, and it should be equal at developing the writing and the speaking skills in an accurate and fluent way. A method should permanently check what has been taught, should provide a way of using translation during instruction, should encourage communication in the classroom particularly between the instructor and the learners, and should be adjustable taking into consideration the class setting conditions and the learners' abilities. This practice that focuses on meaning rather than on the form may be considered as a mixture of the direct method and the grammar-translation method (Pym & Ayvazyan, 2016).

When working in the class, comprehension is tested through the use of images or flashcards. The teacher shows his or her students flashcards and the learners are required to recognize what the graphic representation is by using L2 (Cook, 2001). Dodson (1967) stated that the most significant part of learning a second language is to make sense out of the unknown



words by understanding their meanings. According to Dodson, the L2 learner should be aware of the essence of the message before producing the target language.

### **2.3.6 Glosses and postponing**

Glosses and postponing are L1 techniques used in order to assist the development of the reading and writing skills respectively. Velasco and Garcia (2014) defined the technique of glosses as “marginal or interlinear annotations of texts” (p. 15) that increases learners’ understanding when reading passages. This technique advocates the acquisition of vocabulary since the learner comes across with the same glossed word several times. On the other hand, postponing is described as “putting down the word in the ‘other’ language and continuing to write only to come back to that word at the end” (Velasco & Garcia, 2014). This technique is used by the L2 learner when not being able to bring about a target language word while writing.

The use of any of the L1 methods earlier approached in regard to second language has not been accepted by many instructors. However, it should be stated that L1 use in the class must be organized and employed in a systematic way and for specific purposes. Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez Jiménez (2004) claimed that students’ native language should not be utilized for every single activity carried out in the class. It has to be used when the situation calls for it since it could interfere with the development of the second language.

Researchers such as Cook (2001), Herrera and Murry (2011), and Velasco and Garcia (2014) recognize the value of including the learners’ home language in the L2 class. This new vision of L2 teaching has its foundations on different approaches and theories such as the concurrent approach, the bilingual approach, and the sociocultural approach to own language use. Jacobson (1976b) defined bilingual education as a type of instruction aimed to children who





were not native speakers of English and were living in the United States. However, nowadays bilingualism having its ground on Jacobson' bilingual conception, offers alternatives for learning a second language through the students' mother tongue. Jacobson (1976b) affirmed that the bilingual instruction should be based on the equal and concurrent use of the two languages. Also, he made the difference between the teacher who is bilingual, from the teacher who teaches bilingually since some bilingual instructors may prefer to teach by means of the second language due to the bad reputation that L1 has in some teaching environments, denying multilingualism in the classroom. Hornberger and Link (2012) affirmed that Obama's policies in favor of bilingualism encourage language diversity in the classrooms. Likewise, Velasco and Garcia (2014) have found out that many bilingual learners are already using some L1 techniques in the class which have been very useful when learning a second language, particularly regarding the writing skill. Those techniques are related to multilingual text selection, text negotiation, postponing, back translations, rehearsing, code meshing, glosses, etc.

### **2.3.7 Code-switching**

Canagarajah (2011) defines code-switching as a communicative strategy. Kharkhurin and Wei (2015) define the term code-switching as a creative act and as "a learned skill" that is "the result of competence in two or more languages" (p. 154). Code-switching is also depicted as the alternation of two languages (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Jacobson (1976a) encouraged the use of intersentential code-switching pointing out that bilingual interplay between sentences is true code-switching. He explained code-switching as a mixing of languages and acknowledged some examples regarding this alternation process. For instance, "I don't need to be called anything else. Ahora, ser americano no me ha quitado sino que me ha agregado mucho más [Now, being an American has not diminished me but improved me much more]" (p. 6). Regarding the code-



switching pros, Macaro (2005) affirms that code-switching apart from being a resourceful strategy in the class is a tool that eases communication inside the L2 classroom. In other words, code-switching smooths information processing received by the L1 student, and facilitates interaction among emergent learners with the more advanced ones.

As a final consideration, it has been necessary to tackle the aspect regarding teachers' feelings towards L1. It should be stated that many EFL teachers are aware that in an EFL class L1 cannot be ignored. Cook (2001) states that L1 can only be avoided in a classroom where the teacher cannot speak his or her students' L1, otherwise it would be impossible not to use the native language while teaching the target language. In addition, it is worth mentioning that a mistaken idea about the acquisition of L2 has been developed assuring that the stages of acquisition of L1 in native speakers serve as foundations for learning a second language. Both situations notably differ one from another because becoming a native speaker is different from being proficient in L2 (Cook, 2001). Also, he asserts that a native speaker is an expert in one language and the L2 user is proficient in more than one language. As a matter of fact, L2 users' brains are very different from monolinguals. L2 users possess the knowledge of their own language and process the information of a new language. This ability of managing two or more languages at the same time and interrelating their vocabulary, syntax, phonology, and pragmatics is referred by Grosjean (1989) as a skilled and demanding activity.

Studies about instruction of a second language by means of learners' native language are scarce. Perhaps, this may be due to the fact that the use of L1 in the classroom is still controversial for some teachers. However, lately students' native language has called the attention of many researchers such as Velasco and García (2014), García and Wei (2014), and Canagarajah (2011), who see the L1 as an opportunity that instructors can take advantage of.



## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 English as a sole resource in the EFL class

##### 3.1.1 L2 Different approaches and their limitations

The field related to foreign language teaching offers a wide range of different approaches for teachers to choose from. Many authors according to their preferences or tendencies suggest instructors different teaching strategies to be employed in the classroom. In fact, the most recommended language teaching pedagogy according to Inbar-Lourie (2010) is related to the solely use of the foreign or second language in the class whose justification is that if teachers are teaching a second language, they should emphasize its use in the class. Besides, Horst, White and Bell (2010) mentioned that “teachers have become convinced that referring to the first language in the second language classroom is somehow detrimental” (p. 347). However, according to personal experiences of English teachers working with Spanish speaking L2 beginners, the solely use of the L2 in the classroom may not result productive. Arshad, Abdolrahimpour and Reza Najafi (2015) pointed out the L1 may affect negatively the progress of our students when acquiring the L2. In their findings these authors emphasize that L2 exclusive use may be very fruitful when learning the foreign language. However, they also mentioned that when dealing with beginners, the use of the first language as a supportive tool in the classroom may help students to improve their L2 performance particularly in the grammar area. Therefore, it will be paramount for teachers to consider which approach would be worth practicing in the classroom by taking into account our students' motivations and L2 level of proficiency. Next, some of the limitations of the sole use of L2 inside the beginners' class will be addressed



One approach that has been promoted by L2 teaching experts is the Communicative Approach. This approach regards the exclusive use of L2 in the class and assures that staying away from the L1 will benefit L2 students in order to acquire the language. However, there is a limitation that has not been taken into account by instructors and experts who advise the use of the Communicative Approach or CA. L2 students perform different levels of proficiency starting from beginners to advanced learners. That is, when students just start to learn the L2, it becomes difficult for them to fully understand the second language. Besides that, the lack of L2 competence of some teachers is another restriction. According to Andrews (2003) teachers have a great impact on what is learnt. Therefore, the teacher should be proficient in L1 and L2. In other words, if English teachers do not possess a high proficiency in the second language, they will hardly teach the L2 efficiently (Horst, White & Bell, 2010). It is also worth mentioning that beginners do not feel confident when facing a deeply L2 involved class where their own culture is totally avoided (Herrera & Murry, 2011). According to Bahumaid (2012), when implementing the Communicative Language Teaching Approach in the class, all the elements that are part of the teaching process ignore the students' own cultural background and instructors blindly employ resources that immerse students in the L2 culture. Jadallah (2010) stated that learning, many times, takes place by associating prior and new knowledge which leads to significant and long-term learning. Therefore, L1 would be good foundations in order to build L2.

Many English teachers in schools are aware of the limitations of L2 purely use approaches, but it is clear that instructors have been schooled to avoid L1 in the class or use it as little as possible since L1 has been seen as an interference factor rather than a supportive one. For instance, the Natural Approach is a method that suggests that the second language may be acquired as the mother tongue was, and affirms that learning the L2 does not rely on the first



language. However, it is undeniable that an L2 learner's brain already possesses prior knowledge about the first language which although we like it or not will influence on the acquisition of the L2. Jingxia (2010) claimed that a learner who possesses a solid knowledge of the L1 will be more likely to learn the L2 without too much difficulty, and also more probable to become a competent user of the L2. The Natural Approach encourages L2 instructors to use comprehensible L2 input in the class. This input should provide learners knowledge that goes slightly beyond their L2 current proficiency. However, Chomsky (1971) pointed out that languages share similar roots and their features are not isolated one from another. In other words, teacher and students may benefit from the linguistic similarities between L2 and L1 by using them in the classroom for teaching and learning activities.

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that a language is inherently tied to culture, so it is hard to break them apart. They come together as a whole package. Therefore, when a language is being taught, the features of a culture are also being shown. It is agreed that culture comes implicit in the language or viceversa. However, according to the new considerations and necessities of students' identity, some trends that include the L2 as a sole tool in the classroom do not fulfill the demands of students (Jingxia, 2010). According to Bahumaid (2012) the most salient deficiency has to do with "the cultural inappropriateness." Students, when beginning the long route of learning a new language, are exposed to something new, so they experience a sort of anxiety. For L2 beginners, the target language is novelty. That is why students' confidence and meaningfulness during the learning process are priorities.

A well-known approach in order to acquire the second language without the use of L1 is the Interaction Approach. Interaction among students, sometimes including the teacher, is prompted to acquire the second language. It is said that practice makes perfect. However, human



beings practice what they have already learned. A human cannot put into practice something that has never been heard or seen. Interaction in accordance with Philp, Walter and Basturkmen (2010) involves input, comprehension, repetition as a part of negotiation, output, feedback, and attention. In order to put into practice the previously mentioned tools, students should at least possess some L2 background such as vocabulary knowledge, basic grammar, some pronunciation and a specific level of listening proficiency. In summary, learners should show some sort of accuracy of the target language before they interact one another by means of the L2.

Likewise, Marian and Spivey (2003) assured that even advanced learners make use of L1 while associating it with the L2. This association takes places while learners process L2 input. L1 is hardly set apart when acquiring the second language. It is important to mention that, to some extent, English teachers had to endure the issues that the sole use of L2 has brought to our lives as English learners. In some classrooms, the use of L1 means points off or a penalty that students have to pay. Therefore, the main idea about presenting the advantages of the use of L1 in the class consists on telling teachers that L1 is not as evil as they used to believe but a resourceful tool in the L2 class. Shahnaz (2015) suggests that the use of L1 should be moderate. Lázaro and Azpilicueta (2015) pointed out that when negotiating meanings, L1 has positive effects in peer-peer interaction. They cite an example about two children coming to an agreement about meanings, "how many años do you have?" Anyone who speaks Spanish as a first language knows what the question means. The main word in the sentence is delivered in Spanish which clears the meaning of the whole question.

Ha Nam (2010) in one of his case studies about solely utilizing the target language in the class, pointed out that the native English teacher did not get any improvement in learners, but it proved that the use of L1 made L2 input more powerful by means of a productive strategy based



on the combination of L1 and L2 while learning the target language. Also, this study mentions the benefits that we can get when developing the different L2 skills and subskills when using the students' home language. For example, reading and grammar are perfected by using L1. When working with speaking, if the level of students of English is very low, the class will become a monologue by just applying the second language.

In brief, when students are asked to use only the L2 inside the classroom, it may lead them to get stuck during the process of acquisition which may deviate their attention and may result in lowering motivation to learn the second language. Also, a total immersion in the L2 might not match the linguistic reality of the English beginners.

### **3.2 Hearing students' voices about using L1 in the EFL class**

#### **3.2.1 Students' language, cultural, and social background**

Nowadays, the tendency in the educational field is the student-centered model where the interest is focused on the learner. In other words, it can be assured that education apart from dealing with curriculum and instruction also involves social and cultural aspects. This is the reason why elements of the external environment should not be disregarded when it is about improving instruction. According to Herrera and Murry (2011) "the sociopolitical context of the community, state, and country in which the school is located" (p. 155) may strongly influence the success of the educator in practice. That is, instructors do not carry out the activity of teaching isolated from the society because students are part of it and are affected by the different episodes aroused in time and space.

Likewise, it is indirectly suggested in schools to avoid the first language during the English class. At denying the first language, learners' cultural and social background is being



refused as well (Herrera & Murry, 2011). This fact unintentionally strengthens the currently existing student's poor self-esteem and creates a natural reluctance to learning the foreign language. As mentioned before, learners' feelings and welfare should be a prime consideration.

This rejection of the first language goes beyond learners. In a like manner, teachers may also suffer from the rejection of L1 when native speaker instructors are preferred over the Spanish speaking ones. Agudo and Robinson (2014) claimed that the fact that teachers and students have things in common may be a great advantage. That is why some instructors state that with beginners a bilingual teacher may be the best option. On the other hand, the intention is not to disregard the great contribution that native speakers may bring to the development of the L2 in the class, but to acknowledge the fact that when working with beginners the native speaker would not be an appropriate choice as a teacher. Problems of communication might arise between the native speaker teacher and the student since there will be two different cultures trying to understand one another having as the main hindrance the pragmatics of each culture.

Likewise, the English didactic material in the Ecuadorian public schools mostly encompasses information of the North American or British culture meanwhile students' own culture is ignored. In other words, learners' cultural background is not being valued and utilized in the L2 class as it must be (Herrera & Murry, 2011). The predicament is that students usually start to get to know a different culture without knowing who they are. It is agreed that learning a foreign language is certainly an excellent tool to become successful in life as long as the L2 has students' native language as its foundation. It is believed that students being proficient in the first language and knowledgeable about their own culture might guarantee their success as users of the L2. Here, it would be pertinent to say valuing ourselves is the first step to value the rest. Bringing about the students' cultural background into the classroom may signify to establish a





cognitive support for acquiring the L2. According to Meyer (2008) L1's first task is to provide the learner with comprehension of the L2; besides the fact that, L1 ratifies and values learner's lived experiences as Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014) asserted.

### **3.2.2 Students' expectations and stances on L1**

In Ecuador, according to the resolution number MINEDUC-ME-2016-00020-A of February 2016, a new curriculum is issued by the Minister of Education and came into effect in the same year. This curriculum demands English subject as mandatory and encompasses changes for the different levels of elementary and high school. Some of these changes were oriented to implement English as a foreign language in elementary school and to improve it in the high school level. In other words, English comes to be prominent in the academic preparation of Ecuadorian students. However, the new curriculum changes have become an issue in high school level. Calle, Calle, Argudo, Moscoso, Smith and Cabrera (2012) stated that the reason has to do with the fact that the demands of the new curriculum do not match with the students' current L2 proficiency. This inconsistency is a sign of an evident disagreement between the professionals who designed the curriculum, the teachers and the students to whom the curriculum is addressed. In other words, knowing that taking into account teachers' beliefs and points of view when designing a curriculum is important, Borg (2011) claimed that teachers' beliefs play a vital role during the educational practice.

A consequence of the mismatch of the curriculum between teachers and students' needs is that both instructors and L2 learners are put under too much pressure and stress in order to fulfill the Ministry of Education expectations whose consequences are discharged in an apathetic panorama towards L2, according to Calle, Argudo, Cabrera, Calle and León (2015).



Additionally, students' L2 low proficiency does not allow them to be part of the English class (Calle et al., 2012). This uncertainty about how to communicate inside the classroom has made learners feel very unconfident about trying to use the L2 in the class (Calle et al., 2012).

Students' fear of their failure or embarrassment in front of their classmates has been a situation that constitutes a noticeable obstacle to overcome by the Ecuadorian English teachers.

It has happened that in a regular English class when learners run out of L2 words, they resort to their L1. This alternation of the two languages has at present been called Code-Switching (Hornberger and Link, 2012). In fact, bilingual learners make use of this strategy all the time. It has been proved that alternating L2 and L1 causes positive effects on the learning of L2 (Jingxia, 2010). That is why limiting the communication of our students only to the L2 inside the classroom may not be considered as a humanist act in accord to Cook's (2001) opinion.

Therefore, it would be better to let our students express what they want to say, so they might feel a certain relief when they get to express their necessities. Nobody likes to be ignored or discriminated in their own classroom.

Insightful teachers should account for their students' welfare by supporting their learning, alleviating their anxiety when learning the L2, and using all the available resources to facilitate the acquisition of the target language. The students' native language might be a resourceful tool when starting the long journey that carries them to being L2 proficient users. Chou (2016) assures that the use of the mother tongue eases communication inside the L2 classroom. By saying this, it is understood that the L2 should not be a tool of anxiety-provoking that interferes with the capacity of learning, but a sought-after goal wished by the learner.



In short, it is an obvious conception that more knowledge should go hand in hand with more self-confidence and self-esteem. Students are longing for that to happen. They need their cultural and social identity to be founded on solid grounds so then to appreciate the richness of the L2 culture where its language is comprised.

### **3.3 L1 techniques in the EFL class and their advantages**

#### **3.3.1 Translanguaging approach and the Code-switching strategy in the EFL class**

When talking about learning a second language, it might be difficult to disregard the L1. The use of the mother tongue in the L2 class is an inevitable event when acquiring the target language (Jingxia, 2010). Translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy appeared in the 1980's. Since then, some L2 instructors have taken it into consideration as an instructional tool inside the classroom in order to scaffold the acquisition of the L2. Translanguaging consists on alternating the target language with vernacular or formal language for varied purposes in different contexts (Hornberger & Link, 2012). The lack of proficiency in the L2 has made students and teachers to resort to this resourceful tool in order to become knowledgeable in the L2. Sometime translanguaging was seen as an interference tool. However, Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) affirm that it has already overcome that negative view. In fact, the use of translanguaging is becoming popular in the current L2 classrooms. This two-language use trend in the class has appeared to meet the necessities of the L2 students, particularly of the L2 beginners. Al-Wossabi (2016) stated that our practice should be based on the learner's needs in order to get some positive results in the classroom. Consequently, the use of the mother tongue in the classroom would not be as harmful as it is thought. Furthermore, with the employment of translanguaging in the class, students' previous knowledge is being valued. It is not seen as a hindrance, but as an opportunity to acquire the L2. Velasco and Garcia (2014) pointed out that this mother tongue and



second language combination brings about the student's cultural background as a foundation for learning the L2.

Translanguaging and code-switching are very related since both use L1 as a scaffolding tool for learning the L2; however, the only difference is the fact that Code-switching is mainly based on the alternation of L1 of L2 through separated structures such as intersentential and intrasentential sentences meanwhile Translanguaging does not separate the structures of the two languages into sentences nor phrases but work with them at the same time. Both usually take place particularly in the emergent L2 learners' classrooms. Kharkhurin and Wei (2015) in their investigation about code-switching in the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates have proved that code-switchers developed greater capacity than those who do not alternate languages in the L2 classroom. Code-switching main purpose has to do with comprehension. Malik (2010) explained that Code-switching inside the classroom facilitates the transmission of the message which certainly facilitates learning. Now, inside this interesting phenomenon called code-switching, it may be found different types of alternation. Regarding this, Poplack (2001) mentioned three forms of alternating mainly: Tag, Inter-sentential, and Intra-sentential. The Tag alternation refers to the free inclusion of a tag phrase from one language into an utterance from another language with a very low syntactic risk. "Pasame el bolso, please." The inter-sentential is the mixture of two clauses from different languages forming a whole sentence. "No te preocupes, I'll let you know". The Intra-sentential occurs when elements of two languages are confined in just one clause or sentence. "Tu bebe es so cute que me lo como a besos." In this intra-sentential category, there is a certain syntactic risk because the structures of the two languages have to respect the grammatical rules of each other otherwise the intra-sentential category should not take place. These three types of code-switching



are expected to be used inside the L2 classroom with the intention of developing them into full L2 sentences. These types of code-switching may be used with the four skills. In regard to Speaking and Listening, it is basically translating from the L2 to L1 in order to express an idea where the main advantage is the fact that the whole group shares the same mother tongue, so comprehension is guaranteed (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012). Related to Reading and Writing, the learner may read in the L2 and understand the message of the text, but he or she does not know how to transmit or report it on his or her own words, so the learners for writing the idea turn to the usage of their L1 when running out of L2 words.

At suggesting the strategy of code-switching, its advantages must be stated in order to justify their utility. Williams (as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012) lists four main benefits when employing the alternation strategy. The first impact caused by the code-switching strategy has to do with a better comprehension of what is being taught. Secondly, it contributes to the improvement of the less developed language. In third place, it encourages the cooperation inside the educational community. Finally, translanguaging helps to build a bridge of communication between the early and the advanced L2 learners. In a study carried out by Samani and Narafshan (2016), it is mentioned that students approve the use of translanguaging in the classroom stating that the main uses relate to the decrease of the students' anxiety, to a better class management, and to the teaching of grammar, writing, reading and vocabulary.

Then again, a precise use of code-switching is required. The mother tongue should never be taken as a tool of comfort to suit students' convenience or laziness. In a study carried out with EFL Yemeni students, it is recognized the utility of the code-switching but at the same time it is recommended teachers to form students who do not heavily rely on their L1 as it might be unhealthy (Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014). Educators should be knowledgeable and careful



about the correct use of translanguaging in the classroom. Keeping in mind that students' needs go first, we should not forget that the mother tongue is seen as a supportive tool in order to progress in the acquisition of the L2. That is, the L1 may be considered as a ladder that helps learners climb to the top which is the L2. On the other hand, translanguaging strategy should not be used to solve the teachers' L2 lack of competence. It could hurt the instructors' academic reputation in front of their students (Malik, 2010).

Malik (2010) determined eleven functions of code-switching inside the classroom namely: Clarification, Giving Instructions Effectively, Translation, Socializing Function, Linguistic Competence, Topic Shift, Ease of Expression, Emphasis, Checking Understanding, Repetitive Function, and Create a Sense of Belonging. Clarification on the whole clears doubts with extra L1 explanations about L2 unknown vocabulary. The function about Giving Instructions Effectively has to do with the delivery of orders to students by means of the mother tongue. The Translation function interprets key concepts by using the L1 in order to elaborate on new vocabulary and grammar. In regard to the Socializing Function, the L1 is used by the teacher to socially interact with the students. The other role of code-switching has to do with the Linguistic Competence. It mostly occurs with the non-native teachers, who when ignoring the meaning of a needed L2 word during class, makes use of code-switching in order to compensate the lack of knowledge of the L2. Likewise, many educators use the Topic Shift function which is to change from one topic to another one subtly for getting students' attention because the idea to be conveyed is relevant. The next purpose of code-switching is the Ease of Expression which comes about when the L1 is being used and is turned to the L2 for the L1 equivalent word or phrase. Emphasis, in like manner, plays the role of focusing the attention on a L2 word or phrase. A different function relates to Checking Understanding. The code-switching is used to assure the



learners' comprehension. The Repetitive Function comprises the partial or full repetition of the exact L2 expression in the L1. Finally, another function of code-switching is to Create a Sense of Belonging. It is put to use by the instructor for showing empathy to his or her students. It gives rise to a positive environment in the classroom.

Given that this present study focuses on techniques related to translation, some details about this subject matter will be addressed. First of all, it is worth mentioning that translation has hardly been considered inside the L2 class because it has been pondered as a hindrance rather than an advantage. Asgarian and Musayeva Vefali (2014) asserted that this situation has taken place because Translation as a strategy has not received enough attention by researchers. However, some have defied the stereotype about translation and have established some benefits about this practice. For instance, Cook (2001) affirmed that translation might support the understanding and acquisition of complex grammar and vocabulary and defines it as “transfer of meaning from one language to another” (p. 55). Positive views are held by students towards translation (Asgarian and Musayeva Vefali, 2014). Bagheri and Fazel (2011) also claimed that learners look at translation as a resourceful tool in the L2 classroom. Likewise, Turnbull, Cormier and Bourque (2011) in their study about L1 use in Science class, determined that translation had a leading role in this course.

### **3.3.2 L1 Techniques: Glosses in Reading, Postponing in Writing, Concurrent method in Listening, Alternation in Speaking**

The main purpose of glossed words is to make the reading or passage intelligible. Chen (2016) affirms that glosses technique is an adequate support when dealing with reading tasks and defines it as “definitions or translations of unknown words provided in the text” (p. 413). L1 glosses help to gain knowledge in the meaning of new words which is vital for comprehending



the main idea of a text. Ying-Hsueh and Good (2009) described three types of glosses, first-language glosses plus second-language example sentences, first language in-text glosses, and first language marginal glosses. The first type of gloss provides the L1 translation of the L2 unknown word complemented with a L2 sentence. The second form of gloss has to do with the only use of the L1 notes embedded within the text. It is the ordinary annotation that bilingual learners make when dealing with L2 new words. Likewise, the third kind of gloss comprises the use of L1 but the annotations are done in the margins of the text.

Some studies have proved the in-text glosses have resulted more productive for learners when grasping the content of a passage and for acquiring new vocabulary. In-text glosses are more effective than the other types because of their closeness of the glosses to the L2 words which prompt learners to keep their attention in the text and not to deviate from it (AbuSeileek, 2011; Chen, 2016). When students are reading a passage where many words are unknown, they tend to lose their motivation. This situation may be avoided when working with glosses. Therefore, students have the alternative of building their own notes in the reading section. Students can make use of the bilingual dictionary in order to gloss the L2 unknown vocabulary. Customarily, students build their glosses by means of writing the L1 word equivalent next to the L2 term. After finishing the word search, they read the passage using the glosses that they previously worked on. This work is done by the students with the help of the instructor in order to guarantee an accurate meaning of the word. This way of glossing words is found in the study done by (Ying-Hsueh & Good, 2009). This labor can be time consuming. Nevertheless, it eventually saves students' time considering that learners can always refer back to the annotations instead of recurring over and over to the bilingual dictionary. That is why readings which do not provide glosses should be designed taking into account this particular necessity of the students.





The glosses used in the text mostly involve translation. Students have stated that translation helps them to be precise when inferring or understanding the passage.

Referring to Postponing, this technique has its grounds on translanguaging. Canagarajah (2011) affirmed that shuttling between two languages is a frequent instrument among students in order to negotiate meanings. In his study, he examined how a college student uses a combination of languages including her mother tongue in her writings as a part of her L2 development in order to improve her academic writing. Therefore, the practicality of translanguaging to a certain extent makes the acquisition of the L2 happen not only in the emergent stage, but also in the advanced phase with college students. Translanguaging seems to be a quite constructive device, in particular when attending to the writing skill development. There is consistent evidence about the significance of translanguaging when planning, drafting and producing a text (Velasco & Garcia, 2014).

During the planning stage, students made use of glosses. That is, L1 words are used when the L2 terms meanings are unknown. For instance, the learner while writing something about a dog being run over by a car, he resorted to the word *tripas* for referring that he could see the dog guts all over the street. However, in the second diary entry he used the word *guts*. In other words, the learner postponed some L2 words by using his L1 as a strategy to keep writing his diary. Otherwise, he could have found himself stuck due to his obliviousness of the word in the L2. As the next step, the student worked in the drafting by trying to use a less spontaneous and more academic sentences but still availing himself of translanguaging in order to get to the final product. During this writing process, translanguaging enabled vocabulary acquisition and the fusion of student's new and prior linguistic information (Velasco & Garcia, 2014).



Michael Luna and Canagarajah (as cited in Velasco & Garcia, 2014) described six translanguaging practices that a teacher used in her first-grade bilingual class: use of bilingual books, acceptance of students' L1 answers when the teacher asks using the target language, valuing utterances where L1 and L2 are combined, use of translation with contextual support when speaking, acceptance of L1 and L2 combined utterances, and text negotiation to comprehend a text. Inside a regular class, these six strategies may very effective when working with beginners.

It is worthwhile drawing attention to the fact that translanguaging may be a great support even for tertiary level. Motlhaka and Makalela (2016) in their study carried out about academic writing in an urban university of South Africa noticed that L2 learners did their planning, brainstorming, and drafting in their home language concluding that L1 and L2 rely on one another. On the other hand, Adamson and Coulson (2015) found that the academic writing preparation for college students admitted L1 as a resource inside the class through the adoption of CLIL (teaching subjects through a foreign language) as a methodology. Apart from using L2 books, learners used L1 texts as references as well. Therefore, in order to carry out a written assignment in L2, it demanded some translation from L1 into the target language. The L1 information in the texts complemented and strengthened the content of L2. This strategy resulted favorable expressly for the lower proficiency learners, who apart from gaining L2 competence decreased their anxiety to a great extent. It is worth mentioning that the L1 and L2 alternation method has also acknowledged the autonomy of learners when using their mother tongue. Griva and Chostelidou (2013) express that instructors should encourage less-skilled L2 students to expand on their own writing techniques which may include L1.



In short, postponing in writing gives students the opportunity to check words that are unfamiliar to them after they finish their writing. Postponing is particularly employed during the production of a paper. It is mainly used for writing drafts. This technique involves L1 as an aid. If a specific L2 word is hard to remember or is completely unknown, students use their first language to write the idea for later to replace the word or the phrase with the target language term. By means of this technique students do not get stuck when they are writing. On the contrary, students' ideas keep moving. It helps students to stay focused on the topic rather than on the vocabulary itself. This postponing allows students and teachers to obtain better results when writing. Furthermore, it may be noted that writing is a complex process, so translanguaging in writing might just be one strategy among others to gain knowledge of the target language, and it does not pretend to cover the full process that the intricate writing practice entails.

The alternation technique is based on Dodson's Bilingual Method (Hall & Cook, 2012). Pym and Ayvazyan (2016) claimed that bilingualism values and accepts L1 and L2 methods supporting to a great extent the idea that no method is better than the other one, but both are equally important. The authors also reported that the bilingual method is sustained by experience. This is, the learner is fed in with several inputs of L1 and L2 which results in a faster learning. This evidence is supported by a set of control-group studies carried out by Walatara (1973). Two moments take place during alternation. This is, through the alternation technique, some students will play the role of L2 users, and some will use their L1, and then the students who were employing their L1 will be using the L2 (Cook, 2001). A good way of taking advantage of this strategy may be inviting L2 native speakers to the EFL class. This practice is mainly based on groups of conversation. Another variation of this technique may be as follows. L1 and L2 are brought into play at the same time during the class. Firstly, sentences are orally



delivered in L1 and their corresponding translation in the L2 by the teacher. Later, the instructor just gives the L1 phrase, and the students provide the respective sentence in the L2 (Cook, 2001). It is prudent to work only with phrases or sentences since the objective of speaking is expressing ideas and not isolated words. It is known that emergent learners hardly speak because of their shyness or natural apprehension about their low proficiency in the L2. However, when the whole class including instructors and classmates are involved in the process, learners feel more confident and accompanied when speaking.

Referring to listening, the concurrent method is based on a bilingual approach where the L1 and L2 are linked for enhancing the development of the target language. This technique is used mainly for making students understand the instructor's message. The instructor may switch to the L1 for several reasons such as recalling information about concepts, settling discipline inside the classroom, or praising learners (Cook, 2001). Otherwise stated, there are specific moments inside the classroom when teachers should resort to the L1. For instance, Azkarai (2015) recommends a reasonable use of the native language in the class, but at the same time affirms that it supports learners' performance of tasks successfully. It is reasonable to say that these code-switching techniques are not stationary, but they evolve as students' progress. Moreover, due to the fact that instructions and other phrases are repetitive inside the classroom, the student assimilates them easily because of the constant repetition. In a study carried out about reintroducing some indigenous languages in Taiwan, the Concurrent Approach was used as one of the strategies showing, in this way, an attitude of flexible bilingualism (Chou, 2016).

In summary, L1 may play different significant roles while building on the construction of knowledge of the second language. The idea of translanguaging may be present during the acquisition of the four skills as previously mentioned. L1 functions presented by different



authors are alike. However, the main uses have to do with task management when giving instructions, grammar explanation, vocabulary, and phatic conversations (Azkarai, 2015).

### **3.3.3 General differences and similarities between English and Spanish and their benefits: True and False Cognates, Syntax, Morphology**

It is commonsense that both English and Spanish languages share some linguistic features. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) affirmed that there are common linguistic peculiarities between English and Spanish because of their Latin legacy. Likewise, Nash (1997) affirmed the resemblance between English and Spanish and also claims that as a result English and Spanish words meaning and orthographic features are alike. This is an advantage that instructors could employ in the L2 class. For instance, a cross-linguistic study carried out by Nakamoto, Lindsey and Manis (2008) got to the conclusion that Spanish speaking children who were learning the English language may comprehend a L2 text more easily if they have strong L1 foundations. This knowledge allows the student to predict the L2 text meaning. The main associations that were evident on this study concerned vocabulary. Cognates constitute the linguistic feature that accounts for the previously mentioned relation. The similarities may bring some advantages to the L2 class. Lubliner and Hiebert (2011) in their investigation about English-Spanish cognates as a source of general academic language demonstrated that there is a high recurrence of Latin-rooted words in English academic vocabulary. Therefore, Spanish-speaking people who are English learners could make the most of it. Conversely, even though some cognates are identical in orthography, they can differ in meaning because both English and Spanish have evolved. However, Granger (1993) affirmed that studies have demonstrated that more than 90% cognates are true cognates meaning that they share form and meaning. So, cognate awareness may be a great resource in the EFL classroom.



Ramirez, Chen, Pasquarella (2013) claimed that knowledge about cognates has a relation with morphological awareness. In their study, English – Spanish cognate awareness allows the transference of the Spanish derivational awareness to English vocabulary. In the same manner, Kuo, Ramirez, de Marin, Kim and Unal-Gezer (2017) asserted that Spanish and English enclose to a great extent resembling derivational processes. They claim that L2 learners already possess a certain L1 morphological awareness which helps to interpret the sense or meaning of a L2 word. Kuo and Anderson (2006) define morphological awareness as “the ability to reflect upon and manipulate morphemes and employ word formation rules in one’s language” (p. 161). Spanish in comparison to English shows a certain degree of strength. That is, Spanish performs a more complex derivational system which makes easier for Spanish-speaking learners of English as second language to decipher and learn English-Spanish cognate words (Ramirez et al., 2013). Cognate awareness enables the assimilation of new vocabulary (Kuo et al., 2017), so at possessing morphological awareness, the syntactic consciousness is also built up (Kuo & Anderson, 2006) which is crucial for word, sentence and text understanding. Additionally, it should not be forgotten that Chomsky (1981) stated that the Universal Grammar whose principles are common to individuals who speak various languages. This situation might help instructors to take advantage of the similarities inside the class. Ardila et al. (2000) argued that a similar syntax in English and Spanish empowers a better comprehension.

Montelongo, Hernandez, Herter and Cuello (2011) assured that cognates may contribute to meaning-making strategies backed up by students’ knowledge of Spanish. According to the authors, cognates constitute a resource which is beneficial for reading comprehension. A significant tool when working with cognates is NTC’S Dictionary of Spanish Cognates by Nash which provides a great organization of true cognates divided into themes and subtopics



(Montelongo et al., 2011). On the other hand, it is advisable to avoid generalization since students may assume that all cognates are true cognates (Montelongo et al., 2011).

At present, in Ecuador particularly in Cuenca, the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has not been studied. No research regarding the topic has been found. Therefore, the necessity for studying the topic is vital due to the fact that students' L1 is used to a great extent in EFL classroom by many instructors. In this way, the present study seeks to fill out some gaps concerning this issue with the main intention of assisting teachers in their needs when using Spanish inside their classrooms. The support offered through this investigation mainly has to do with an organized and systematic use of learner's L1 by means of different methods and techniques.



## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a description of the methodology used during the research. It encompasses the description of the method selected for carrying out the investigation as well as the participants, the instruments and the procedure.

#### 4.1 Study Design

The present study focused on the use of L1 in the EFL class as a resourceful tool in order to acquire the L2. A mixed methods sequential explanatory research design was implemented. This method according to Creswell (2013) is based on the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data complemented the interpretation and explanation of quantitative results. Both quantitative and qualitative information provided a broader understanding about the phenomenon of the research. The independent variable was the L1 as a scaffolding learning and teaching tool in the EFL class while the dependent variable consisted of the improvement of the English language four skills, specifically reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The investigation sought to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent does Spanish scaffolding benefit the learning of the L2 in the EFL class?
- Which of the translanguaging strategies proposed for this study will have the greatest impact on students' understanding of L2?
- To what extent can the use of translanguaging be useful in the EFL class?

The description below refers to three important aspects of the study: participants, instruments, and procedure.





## 4.2 Participants

Cumbe high school is located in a rural area, approximately 35 minutes from Cuenca city. This high school is the only secondary institution in the parish. The school has a population of six hundred seventy students. A sixty percent of the total number of students corresponds to male learners and a forty percent to female students. Concerning the English area of the school, there are four English teachers in the institution. The teachers' level of English proficiency according to their own point of view ranges between intermediate to advanced. The students' English proficiency in the school, according to the English teachers belongs to the beginner level.

The group of participants in this study consisted of twenty-eight students of second of Bachillerato of Cumbe Public High School. Twenty-one were female, and seven were male students whose age ranged from 15 to 16 years old. They start their school journey at 7 am and finish at 1:30 pm. About the English subject, the number of hours of teaching of the foreign language in the second of Bachillerato is five hours per week. Each class session lasts forty minutes. The material used by students mainly consists of a coursebook called Level 4 English by Ministerio de Educacion. This is divided into two parts. The first part contains vocabulary and grammar, and the second part basically constitutes the workbook where listening, writing, reading, and writing exercises are included. The coursebook fosters the development of the four skills. Regarding the classroom environment, the physical setting is quite small and some walls are made of wood which lets noise break in easily.

Regarding the students' biographical data, it is worth mentioning that Cumbe is a place where the social phenomenon of migration is high. This migration is mostly related to an external migration that is out of the country according to the information provided by Cumbe authorities. This results in a great number of children and teenagers living with close relatives or



living by themselves. Many problems arise due to the absence of parents at home. One of them is purely academic and relates to students' lack of motivation in school. According to Cumbe high school authorities, many students culminate the third of Bachillerato and then try to move to the United States illegally. It is worth mentioning that from the graduated students from the 2016 – 2017 promotion, 1 out of 150 students got into the university, according to the authorities of the Cumbe High School.

For the study, a convenience sampling was chosen due to the availability of the group of participants and their closeness to the researcher. Regarding ethical considerations, the identity of the participants was respected during the investigation. In order to collect the corresponding quantitative and qualitative data from the participants, a consent was signed by the following people, the principal of the institution (Appendix 1) where the research was carried out and by the students' legal guardians (Appendix 2). Moreover, before starting to work on the study, the students knew their rights as participants in the study. The protection of their identities was guaranteed regarding their free will of disclosing specific information as well as their liberty of withdrawing from the study at any time.

### **4.3 Instruments**

This part of the chapter refers to a description of the instruments that were used in the research.

Four instruments were used to collect the respective information: a pre-test (Appendix 4), a first open-ended questionnaire (Appendix 5), a post-test (Appendix 6), and a second open-ended questionnaire (Appendix 7). Additionally, a journal written by the researcher drew up relevant



information about the impressions of the classes that included students' reactions, opinions, and attitudes.

Regarding the application of the pre-test and post-test, an operationalization of the variables was carried out. According to Hernandez, Fernandez, and Baptista (2003) the dependent and the independent variables should be analyzed and then determined how they will be treated during the study. The independent variable consisted of using students' L1 as a scaffolding tool in the EFL classroom. The four dependent variables included listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The measurement was established through the use of rubrics which guaranteed consistency when applying the same measurement process at any time. The tests were taken from the same book that is used by students of the different public high schools. In order to use the pre-test and post-test instruments, they were piloted first. This work was done in another second of Bachillerato with the main purpose of determining the efficacy of the instruments. Therefore, after piloting the tests, some rectifications concerning structure and time allotted for the tests were made.

#### **4.3.1 Pre-test**

The instrument applied during the quantitative first strand was a pre-test. This standardized pre-test was taken from the Level 4 English for second of Bachillerato book. This book is the guide coursebook for all the second of Bachillerato levels of the public high schools all over Ecuador. The test comprised the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. This instrument was used at the beginning of the investigation with the main purpose of measuring the learners' English proficiency level.



The test was piloted in another second of Bachillerato. The main limitations regarding the test was the time allotted for the test, the lack of knowledge about the structure of the test, and the length of the test which demotivated students since they had never taken a test that includes four skills, according to the students and teachers of the institution. Therefore, those cons were taken into account for the application of the real pre-test with the focus group. Since the regular classes in an Ecuadorian high school last forty minutes, the test was carried out in parts. This is, a skill for each forty-minute class so that the full test was solved in approximately three hours. This division helped students to keep their interest in the test. On the other hand, before the test, students were explained about how each part of the test had to be solved. There were some questions and doubts that were solved. In high schools, tasks and exams are graded over ten points so that each skill was graded taking into account the ten points. Each skill was scored separately. The rubrics for grading the speaking and writing skills were taken and adapted from the rubrics used by the area of English of Sagrados Corazones High School.

The reading section included a short passage of one hundred fifty-eight words about frequent accidents people are facing now. It was composed of two sections. The first part demanded students to complete the text with the correct word. It was a multiple-choice task. At filling the blanks, misspellings were not accepted and were considered as incorrect answers. There was no place for ambiguity, so just one answer was the correct one. In the second section, students had to answer some comprehension questions about the reading. The activity comprised ten difficulties regarding the text. As mentioned before the time allotted for doing this activity was 40 minutes.

The writing section basically demanded students to write a text giving recommendations for people to become smarter tech users. Students had to write an introduction,



recommendations, and a conclusion. In order to grade the writing part, the rubric previously mentioned was used (Appendix 8). The parameters to be taken into account were grammar, vocabulary, organization, and length. Each parameter was graded over 2.5 points. Points were taken off when students committed errors related to the four parameters.

The listening component of the test was about hearing a journalist reporting on a disaster. During the test of this skill, students had to demonstrate their ability to focus, to understand general facts, and listen for details. They listened to the recording two times. They had to select the correct option on a multiple-choice task. The answers had to be accurate. Students did not have to write anything but just to underline or circle the correct word or phrase. Each correct response was counted as one point. Finally, the speaking was evaluated as an interview. The students were required to become tech-store owners and talk with a journalist about the features of an electronic device. Follow-up questions were used to get the information. The rubric formerly cited was used in order to grade this skill (Appendix 8).

#### **4.3.2 First open-ended questionnaire**

This instrument was employed with the main intention of collecting students' opinions about English, the methodology used by their English teachers during class, and learners' study techniques. This research instrument was composed of twenty questions.

The questionnaire was designed in Spanish in order to get accurate and true information from the students. Learners were told to take their time in order to answer each one of the questions. As mentioned before, the learners belonged to the beginning level, so it was not applicable to do the test in English. However, for adding in the information in this present study, all the questions and answers were translated into English.



In order to tabulate the answers, an open coded analysis was utilized. It was taken into account the frequency of words or phrases in the learners' answers. Based on the frequency of words or terms, five categories with ten subcategories were created. Once the categories were obtained, the data was represented in percentages in different charts. The five categories concern the students' perceptions about English language, the strategies that students used to learn English, the methodology used by the instructor, the L2 and L1 used in teacher talk, and the development of activities regarding the improvement of the four skills in the class.

### **4.3.3 Post-test**

The post-test was piloted in another second year of Bachillerato in order to correct or prevent some potential issues. Some changes were made. The first consideration had to do with the time allotted for solving the test. It was not enough the forty minutes that a regular class lasts, but two sessions of forty minutes each. This is eighty minutes in total. It is worth mentioning that the pre-test took longer than the post-test due to the fact that students had to be carefully explained about what to do with each part of the test since they were not used to take tests that include all four skills. The topics of the pre-test and the post-test met the requirements of the curriculum 2016. The content of the pre-test and post-test varied since it was sought to avoid memorization and to include students' cultural background which was the focus of this investigation; however, the level complexity was the same and attached to the profile of students of second of Bachillerato. Therefore, the topics mainly dealt with cultural themes namely legends and biographies which were tested by means of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

The objective of the post-test was to assess the effectiveness of the methodology proposed by this study. The evaluation criterion was the same as the pre-test. This instrument



also comprised the four language skills. Every skill was assessed over ten points. The first part of the test concerned the writing skill. This part of the test demanded a short composition about students' best friend. The same rubric that was used to grade the pre-test was applied for grading the post-test (Appendix 6). The four aspects taken into account were grammar, vocabulary, organization, and length, each graded over 2.5. The scale went from very poor 0.5 up to excellent 2.5. The grammar criterion considered the structure and the correct use of the tenses of the verbs. Since the writing demanded the use of simple present, the exact use of the form of the verbs in the third person was essential. The guidelines for vocabulary demanded a varied use of vocabulary, specially, synonyms for avoiding redundancy as well as the correct spelling and punctuation within each sentence. The organization required the writing to contain an introduction, body and conclusion. Finally, the length was graded considering the minimum number of words required. In this case, the minimum requested was 100 words. It is worth mentioning once again that the criteria previously stated was applied for the pre-test and post-test.

The reading part included passages about short stories and legends. These readings were related to the contents worked in class. This skill mainly measured the ability of the readers to recognize important ideas and details as well as to establish some connections with their background or prior knowledge. It was also considered how skillful were the students to identify the theme, make inferences, and interpret vocabulary. This segment of the test contained two short passages. The first text consisted of ninety-five words. The students had to read five statements regarding the passage and decide if they were true or false. The statements were rephrased with different vocabulary and structure but expressing the same idea of the original text. The second piece comprised a number of ninety-four words. This time the learners were



asked to answer some comprehension questions regarding the text. The questions were designed to be responded with yes, no, or by using just one word. One point was granted for each correct answer out of eight. In order to get a value over ten, a rule of three was applied.

The listening skill required students to demonstrate an understanding of the information in order to provide the correct answers. The first part of the listening was about putting some sentences in the correct order. In other words, learners were requested to complete the task in a logical and sequential manner. The audiotape was played two times. In the second part, learners had to complete some blanks with the correct word. Students had to discriminate sounds in order to write the word with the correct spelling. This time the audio was played two times. This section of the text included twenty items and each was graded over 0.5.

The speaking part focused on five aspects, namely, comprehension, fluency, grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, content and preparation, each assessed over 2 points. The speaking part in the post-test was carried out as an interview. The first element regarding comprehension focused on how much the student understood the questions and answered them correctly. Fluency was graded based on naturalness and lack of hesitation. Grammar and vocabulary emphasized on students making a correct use of structures and using the vocabulary covered during the intervention. Then, pronunciation was evaluated based on how comprehensible was the student's input. The last element to be considered for grading the speaking part was content and preparation. In this part, the learner had to demonstrate a full preparation and understanding of the topic requested. The scale used for grading went from 0.0 completely unintelligible up to 2.00 excellent.





The post-test was similar to the pre-test taken by learners at the beginning of the study. The tests were not same in order to prevent memorization of the answers. Also, since the study involved students' cultural background as a means of learning, some contents of history and geography were included in the post-test. Likewise, through the pre-test and post-test, it was sought to compare learners' L2 gain of knowledge. That is, the scores of the pre-test and the post-test allowed to appreciate if there were benefits when using the L1 in the L2 class. It is worthwhile mentioning that to a certain extent the post-test could have been easier to solve due to the fact that students already possessed knowledge of history and geography in their L1.

#### **4.3.4 Second open-ended questionnaire**

The second questionnaire had the same structure as the first one. The questions concerned students' opinions about the L1 methodology employed. The information collected for this phase was obtained at the end of the intervention. Sixteen questions were asked to the students. The inquiry of the data was conducted by using an open coding analysis which was very alike as the one used for the first questionnaire. Based on the repetition of words and phrases some categories were created. Once the grouping was finished, the count was made. Four categories were recognized. The four main groups corresponded to students' perceptions towards the English language, the researcher's methodology, L2 and L1 used in the researcher's talk, students' perceptions towards Spanish language as a resource in the classroom.

Students' home language was used for the questionnaire. It was with the main purpose of getting authentic information about students' opinions regarding the intervention and the post-test. The time allotted for doing this survey was forty minutes, so students could read and reread the questions and answer them the most genuinely.



#### **4.3.5 Researcher journal**

This journal allowed to organize the different activities and actions during the investigation and record the most important ones. It included all the details that participants did not mention verbally but were noticed or observed by the researcher during the process of the investigation which could have influenced the results of the study such as students' attendance, their motivation, nervousness, social context of the school and the community. It was written by the researcher in order to have the maximum amount of information before, during and after the process.

In the same manner, the journal described all the process about the collection and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, learners' reactions during the intervention phase and their progress in the learning of the L2.

The annotations of the journal helped the researcher to come out with some conclusions stated at the end of this study.

#### **4.4 Procedure**

This present investigation took place during the 2016-2017 school year in the months of September, October, November and part of December of 2016 during the time of regular classes. Each session lasted forty minutes each day from Monday through Friday. Some classes were missed because of some holidays, so students attended extra classes in order to complete the timeline proposed for this study. A total of 47 hours of intervention was carried out.



#### 4.4.1 Phase of Intervention

The intervention consisted of applying L1 strategies in order to enhance students' L2 proficiency. For reading, the *glosses* technique was applied; for writing, *postponing*; for listening, the *concurrent method*; and for speaking, *alternation* of Spanish and English. The intervention had three moments regarding the use of L1 as a scaffolding tool in the English class. At the beginning of this phase, there was a high percentage of use of Spanish. During the second moment, some L1 use techniques were applied such as: giving instructions in Spanish in order to ensure comprehension. Meanwhile the rest of the class was taught in English. Also, there were moments where Spanish was very useful. For example, when settling discipline or when students did not understand some terms in English, the last resource was to translate into Spanish. During the last moment, English was used in a 70%, but the speaking was at slow pace for students to grasp what was being said during the class.

All the lessons (Appendix 3) were designed taking as a base the five threads of the new English curriculum of the Ministry of Education, namely, communication and cultural awareness, oral communication, reading, writing, and language through the arts. It is worth mentioning that some students were eager, and some were a little anxious about the project. Explicit grammatical explanations were very scarce during the whole intervention. Grammar was mainly explained in context since the focus was on vocabulary. The intention was to avoid grammar rules and technical explanations and show the L2 language more naturally.

The reading skill was the first to be intervened. The initial reading was about an Ecuadorian legend called Cantuña which is very popular and told and taught by teachers in the elementary level. All students had heard about this legend at least once in their lives. There was already some background knowledge about the content of the reading which raised students'



interest. The first activity that students had to do was to recognize words that were similar to Spanish. The learners found a quite handful of words of this type. Most of the words' meanings were easy to predict. Then, we proceeded with the rest of the words. These words did not have any resemblance with Spanish, so the glossing technique was used for those cases. It is worthwhile remembering that glossing is defined as “marginal or interlinear annotations of texts” (Velasco & Garcia, 2014, p. 15) that increases learners' understanding when reading passages. Then, students were told that they could build their own list of new words. This means that the glosses were not incorporated into the text, but the students had to work on the glosses by themselves. This double and long work eventually resulted very productive since it demanded that students deal with the unknown vocabulary more than once out. Of the three types of glosses, they used the in-text glosses which consisted of writing the meaning of the word in Spanish closer to the word in English. Apart from doing this task, they had to make a list of all the words by classifying them into three main categories, namely, nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Some of the students used different color pencils for each category. The words that did not fit into any of the three categories were classified as others. After finishing this task, they could read and understand the passage with not difficulty. For carrying out this task, the bilingual dictionary was useful when looking up the meanings of the new words. However, when the reading was checked again, the dictionary was no longer essential in order to comprehend the content of the passage because the learners already had their in-text glosses and their own list of new words. After finishing this activity, the students were evaluated the next day about this same reading. The test was a True or False quiz and had ten items. The results were satisfactory. 80% of the class obtained the full ten statements correct. It was clear to see that they had assimilated the gist and the details of the reading. False cognates were very scarce in this reading, but even so,



students were explained about its concept. The next reading that was used for the intervention encompassed the topic about cultural shocks all over the world. The intention was to go into detail about some practices that are appropriate in other countries, and how those same ones in the Ecuadorian context would be unacceptable. For this lesson, students already knew how to gloss the unknown vocabulary, and after finishing glossing the different terms, the learners made a list of different countries most shocking situations. That list was read out loud by some learners. The third reading was a review of a typical Ecuadorian restaurant. The learners dealt with some Spanish dishes names which made them feel so identified with the reading itself. It helped to make students become aware how Spanish and English can be mixed in a reading and that the two languages complement each other in various scenarios. Apart from strengthening the reading skill as itself, the intention was to give value to students' culture. In general, they felt identified with the content of the readings. In this study, having students' culture as the primary resource inside the classroom has been productive to learning and teaching.

The writing skill was next. First, it was necessary to set some basic knowledge about grammar in Spanish and the basic structure of a composition. It is worth highlighting that students were very limited about their home language basic grammar knowledge. The starting point was the formation of basic sentences with simple vocabulary. Then, the sentences were more complex until getting to the construction of a paragraph. The tense that was worked the most was the simple present. The first paragraph was about students' personal information. Some structure aspects, comparisons between L2 and L1 structure sentences were necessary and useful. There was a focus on the similarities rather than focusing on the differences. Once the first paragraph was finished, a volunteer female student wrote her paragraph on the board with the objective of showing a model of the paragraph and for correcting mistakes. For writing a second



draft, it demanded the use of new words. Then, the technique of postponing was applied. Postponing consists of “putting down the word in the ‘other’ language and continuing to write only to come back to that word at the end” (Velasco & Garcia, 2014). Therefore, students were told to use L1 words if they ignored any L2 term or phrase. After they finished writing the paragraph, they resorted to the bilingual dictionary in order to replace the Spanish words for their equivalent in English. During this activity, they were assisted by the instructor for doubts regarding word choice or position of the word in the sentence. Then, they ended up by writing a brief conclusion about their personal introduction. As a second step, learners were asked to write their best friend’s personal information. For carrying out this activity, they had to use the third person construction. However, no grammar explanation was done before, but after they were ready with the composition. One more time we worked with the technique of correction of mistakes and postponing. A sample was randomly taken among students. The correction of this writing task was collectively done on the board where everybody in the class participated. The topic was focused on the third person singular in the simple present. It should be mentioned the students had previously studied this part of the grammar in former school years. Therefore, it was not new to them. After finishing the mistake-correction activity, the learners had the chance to rewrite their composition using the correct form of the verbs. Another draft was done. This time, the learners were told to avoid repetition of certain terms, so they had the option to use a synonym. During that task, the instructor’s support was vital for helping out with different alternatives for words or terms that were redundant. Two phases of postponing were accomplished. The first deferred the use of L2 by using L1 words, and the second focused just on L2 in order to have a more varied vocabulary (Velasco & Garcia, 2014). It took several classes for carrying out this activity.



The speaking and the listening skills were intervened together. Before developing the activities of the lesson plans, instructions and common phrases inside the classroom were first worked. The concurrent method was put into practice. L1 instructions with their equivalent in L2 were provided. The recurrence of instructions helped students to start assimilating the L2 so that L2 instructions were later fully employed with no L1 words (Jacobson, 1976b). A similar situation happened when setting discipline or when praising students. Likewise, for speaking inside the class, the instructor and students alternated between L1 and L2. When students ignored how to express some phrases in L2, they used Spanish. Given this situation, the instructor provided the equivalent of that phrase in L2 and asked learners to repeat them. Some improvement was noticed on students when they started using basic classroom vocabulary and short phrases. After working with instructions and common phrases used inside the classroom, some content lessons were delivered.

The lesson plans for speaking and listening provided input, and students had to accommodate the information in order to supply output. At that point, several sessions were fixed in order to promote interaction inside the classroom. The first one consisted of establishing comparison between schooling in Ecuador and the United States. A Power Point presentation and a video were used for introducing North American schooling. A process of prediction, connection, and affirmation was implemented (Herrera & Murry, 2011). First, students were asked just to listen, observe, and comment on the presentation and the video. Later, learners had to take notes of what they heard. Of course, they were allowed to use L1 words if necessary. After that, they worked on a Venn diagram in order to set the differences and similarities that they found about the topic. Next, they shared the details of what they had in their diagrams orally. Before they talked about the topic, some modelling was provided by the teacher about the



way they should present their ideas. Alternation of L1 and L2 was constantly employed during this first lesson (Canagarajah, 2011).

The writing activity about students' best friend's personal information was recycled for speaking. Learners were requested to talk about their best friends' personal information. They had the possibility of doing the presentation in the front or in the back of the classroom in order to reduce their affective filter (Krashen, 1982). So, twenty-six students did the lesson in the back of the classroom. In the same manner, a reading passage was re-used for practicing listening. The exercise included the filling of blanks and ordering sentences according to what the speaker said. Most of them did well with the exercises. In order to keep practicing the listening skill, a piece of reading was handed out to students. The reading was about the Incas. This text contained a great number of cognates which made comprehension easier. After reading and checking new vocabulary, learners were given another piece of paper with the same reading. This time the reading had some spaces to be filled out. They had to complete the blanks while they were listening the audio about the Incas. Another activity concerning listening was dictation. It is worth emphasizing that a great amount of the vocabulary used for listening and speaking activities was retaken from the reading and writing contents reviewed previously in the intervention.

Seventy sessions with students took place during three months and a half. Approximately ten hours were allotted for each skill, and different activities took part for working each skill. See Appendix 3. It was necessary to carry out a conversation about the importance of learning English before starting the intervention because of the demotivation that learners showed before the intervention phase.





## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### 5.1 Quantitative results

This chapter contains the analysis and discussion of the data collected during the research. It includes the results obtained in the pre-test and post-test, and the data gathered from the two open-ended questionnaires and the researcher's journal.

In order to identify the most resourceful L1 technique in the L2 classroom and to evaluate the impact of the use of L1 strategies in the EFL class, it was necessary to start by having a clear scenario about the learners' proficiency in the L2. So, the students took a test before the intervention phase and a test once the intervention work was finished. This was done with the purpose of determining at the end of the study the progress that students had in each skill. The results of the pre-test and the post-test have as reference the guidelines for the assessment of the Ecuadorian Minister of Education. Following, a chart shows a scale of scores to be considered in all public high schools throughout Ecuador.

*Table 1.*  
*Measuring system for public schools in Ecuador*

<b>Qualitative Measuring System</b>	<b>Quantitative Measuring System</b>
Student dominates the required learning.	9,00 – 10,00
Student achieves the required learning.	7,00 – 8,99
Student is about to achieve the required learning.	4,01 – 6,99
Student does not achieve the required learning.	< 4

Source: Decreto Ejecutivo No. 366, publicado en el Registro Oficial No. 286 de 10 de Julio de 2004



It is necessary to mention that in order to be promoted to the next level, students have to reach a score of seven out of ten points.

Before digging into the results of the pre-test and the post-test, it is necessary to mention that the Shapiro-Wilk test demonstrated that the data of the two tests was dispersed and did not have a normal distribution. In addition, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used due to the fact that the sample for the entire study was less than 50. In order to compare the obtained grades of each skill of the pre-test a non-parametric statistical comparison tool called Kruskal Wallis was used. Likewise, the test of Wilcoxon for comparing the results between the pre-test and post-test was used.

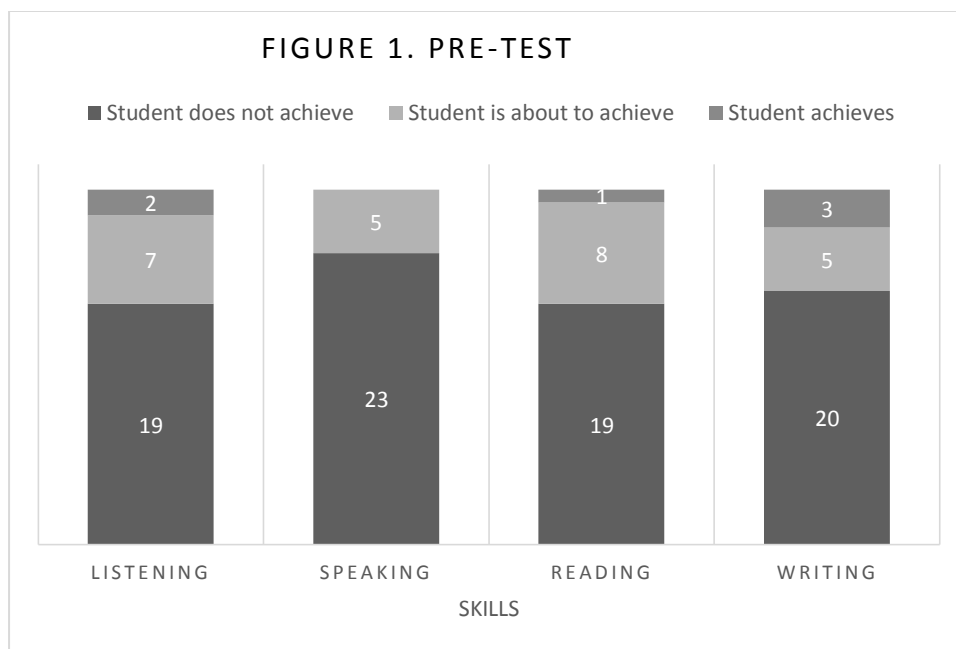
### **5.1.1 Pre-test results**

After obtaining the scores of the four skills out of 10 points, a statistical analysis was carried out. For testing the normal distribution of the data, the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p < 0.05$ ) was used. This tool is used for small samples that contain less than 50 ( $n < 50$ ) which guarantees a reliable analysis. The scores of the four skills allowed a comparison among them. For comparing the performance of the skills of the pre-test, the Kruskal Wallis test was employed. In order to establish correlations among the skills of the pre-test, the Spearman's Rho test was applied. Also, the test of Wilcoxon was used for comparing the results of the skills between the pre-test and the post-test. Box-and-whisker plots and stacked bar charts allowed to display the information clearly. The editing of the charts and graphs was done by means of Excel 2016 program, and the processing of the information by SPSS 23.

The results of the pre-test showed the performance of the learners by skill. First, regarding the listening skill, there were no students that dominated the required learning outcomes. Only

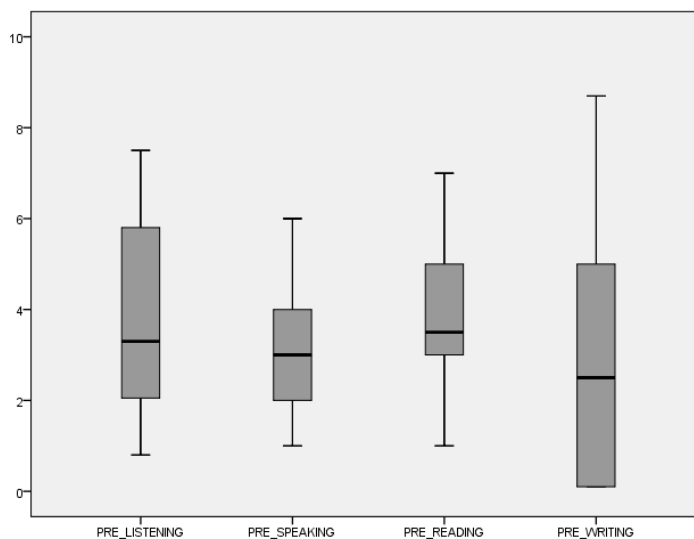


two achieved the required learning. Seven students were about to achieve the required learning outcomes. And nineteen students did not achieve the required learning outcomes. On the other hand, the results demonstrated that speaking had the greatest degree of difficulty since five students were about to achieve the required learning outcomes, and twenty-three out of twenty-eight students obtained the lowest score. That is, the learners did not achieve the required learning outcomes. Their grades were below 4 points. Regarding the reading skill, one student achieved the required learning outcome; eight students were about to reach the required learning outcomes, and nineteen participants did not achieve the required learning outcomes. As to the writing skill, there were no students that dominated the required learning outcomes. Three achieved the required learning outcomes, five students were about to reach the required learning outcomes, and twenty did not achieve the required learning outcomes. In general terms, the results of the pre-test revealed that none of the students dominated the required learning outcomes in any of the skills. There were two students that achieved the required learning outcomes in at least 1 of the 4 skills, and two students who achieved the required learning outcomes in 2 out of the 4 skills.



None of the skills presented an average greater than 4. However, the reading skill displayed the highest average score which was 3.9 ( $\bar{x}= 3.9$ ;  $SD=1.6$ ). These variations fluctuated between 1 and 7 points. The median was of 3.5. On the other hand, the writing skill presented the greatest data dispersion which was 2.7 ( $SD=2.7$ ). Likewise, this skill reflected the lowest average score which was 2.9 ( $\bar{x}= 2.9$ ). The variations fluctuated between 0.1 and 8.7. The median was 2.5. The listening skill revealed scores between 0.8 and 7.5. The average score was 3.8 ( $\bar{x}= 3.8$ ;  $SD=2.1$ ). The median was 3.3. Finally, the speaking skill reported scores between 1 and 6 with an average score of 3.0 ( $\bar{x}= 3.0$ ;  $SD=1.5$ ). The median was 3. The two or more groups non-parametric statistical comparison tool, Kruskal Wallis, did not exhibit a significant difference between the grades of the four assessed skills of the pre-test.

Figure 2. Comparison between skills (Pre-test)



It was found a direct high-moderate correlation between writing and listening ( $R_s=0.527$ ), writing and reading ( $R_s=0.478$ ), and reading and listening ( $R_s=0.479$ ). See table 2. In a study focused particularly on the postponing technique, it is mentioned that students apart from using postponing at the same time glossed some new words in order to recall their meaning when it was necessary (Velasco & Garcia, 2014). Therefore, it is seen that the correlation between writing and reading is continual. Regarding the other correlations, so far there are not studies that have paid their attention to the listening skill development by using students' L1.

Table 2.  
Correlation between skills (Pre-test)

		Speaking	Reading	Writing
Listening	Rho	-.093	<b>.479*</b>	<b>.527*</b>
	p	.639	<b>.010</b>	<b>.004</b>
Speaking	Rho		-.226	.005
	p		.248	.980
Reading	Rho			<b>.478*</b>
	p			<b>.010</b>

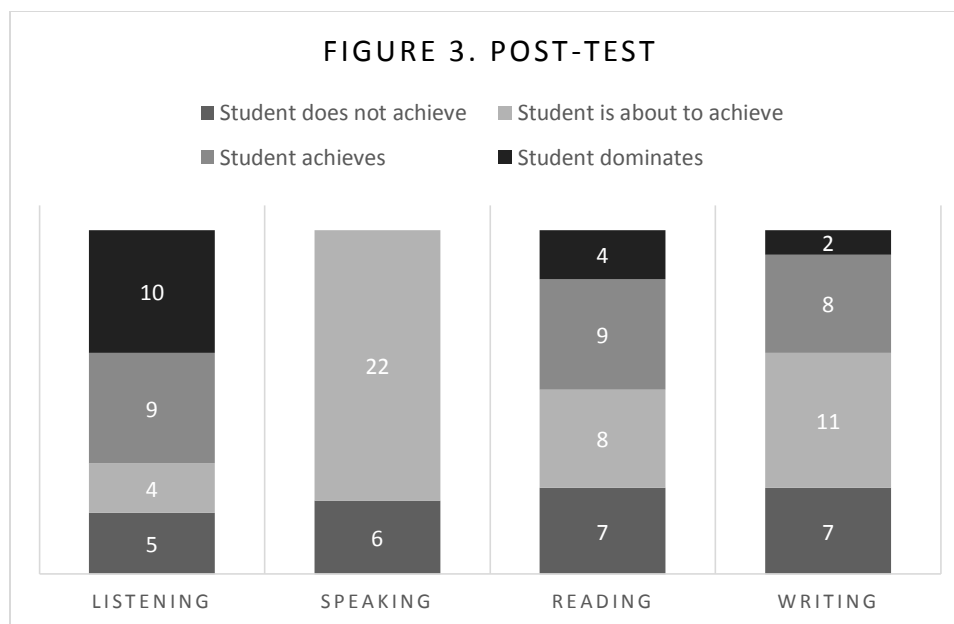
\* Correlated variables



### 5.1.2 Post-test results

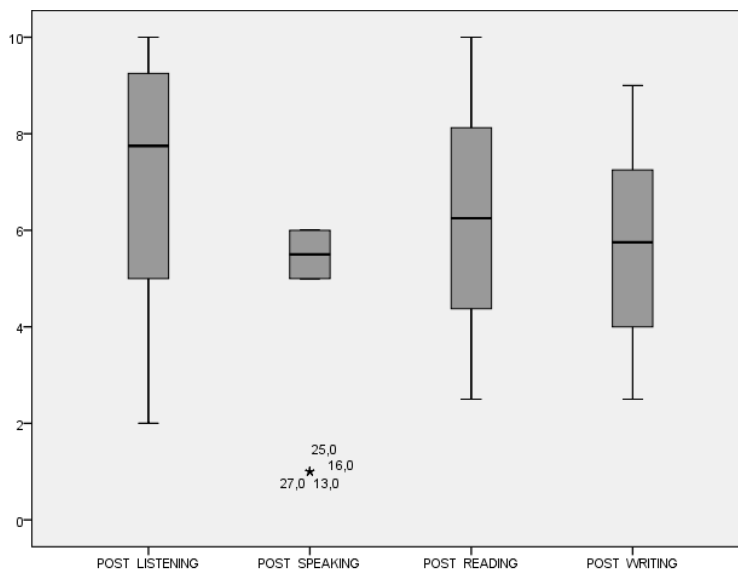
Once the grades out of 10 points were obtained, the analysis proceeded by using some statistical tools. Since the sample of this research was less than 50, the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p < 0.05$ ) was used for testing if the data had a normal distribution. Moreover, as it was done with the pre-test, the scores of the four skills of the post-test were compared by using the Kruskal Wallis test. For establishing the correlations among the skills, the Spearman's Rho test was applied. Also, the test of Wilcoxon was used for comparing the results of the skills between the pre-test and the post-test. Box-and-whisker plots and stacked bar charts displayed the information distinctly. Excel 2016 and SPSS 23 programs made possible the edition of the charts and graphs.

After the intervention, the results revealed that thirteen out of twenty-eight students dominated or achieved the required learning in at least one of the four skills. There were ten students who dominated the required learning in regards to the listening skill. None of the students dominated the speaking skill. Regarding, the writing skill, there were seven students who did not achieve the required learning outcome and eleven who were about to reach the required learning. The information is displayed in the figure 3. Few researchers have concentrated their interest in the listening and the speaking skills. However, the writing and the reading skills have been deepened studied by some authors such as Canagarajah (2011) whose findings reported that L2 students resort to their L1 when writing proving that their background knowledge contributes to their writing development.



After the intervention, the speaking skill presented the lowest average score which was 4.6 ( $\bar{x}= 4.6$ ;  $SD=2.0$ ). The grades fluctuated between 1 and 6 points. Then, the writing skill with an average score of 5.7 ( $\bar{x}= 5.7$ ;  $SD=2.0$ ) was in second place. The scores went from 2.5 to 9. The listening and reading skills revealed high scores. Also, it was noticed a concentration of data in the speaking skill. This concentration was between 5 and 6 points. It is worth mentioning that 4 out of 28 students obtained scores of 1 in the speaking skill. An important difference was found among the four skills ( $p = .000$ ).

Figure 4. Comparison between skills (Post-test)



No connections or relations were registered among the performance of the skills in the post-test ( $p > 0.05$ ). Perhaps the lack of relationship has to do with the level of complexity that each skill involves. This lack of relation among the skills has not been reported by any other study.

Table 3.  
Relationship between skills (Post-test)

		Speaking	Reading	Writing
Listening	Rho	.347	.297	-.029
	p	.071	.125	.884
Speaking	Rho		-.022	-.251
	p		.912	.198
Reading	Rho			.109
	p			.582





### 5.1.3 Pre-test and post-test results comparison

The comparison of the data between the pre-test and the post-test showed significant positive differences with reference to the four assessed skills ( $p < 0.01$ ). The listening skill was the ability that portrayed a considerable improvement. The difference was of 3.3 points in the average score. There were reported 24 positive changes and 4 negative ones. Following, the reading skill displayed improvement as well. The scores enhanced with a difference of 2,8 points in the average score. There were 18 positive changes, 4 negative ones, and 6 that did not vary. In third place, the results of the writing skill registered a difference of 2.7 points in the average score. There were 22 positive changes and 6 negative ones. Finally, the speaking skill had a certain progress; however, this was not meaningful. There were 21 positive changes, 5 negative ones and 2 that did not show any alteration. The improvement of receptive skills namely listening and reading has not been reported by any other investigation. The assumption has to do with the fact that when learning another language, the receptive skills do not demand as much effort as the productive skills. If we discard the receptive skills and concentrate on the productive ones such as writing and speaking, then we can claim that the results coincide with the study carried out by Motlhaka and Makalela (2016) who assure that at using students' L1 in the foreign language classroom can lead to a substantial improvement in the writing skill.



Table 4.

Comparison between pre-test and post-test skills

		Minimum	Maximum	Average	SD	Difference among averages	p
Listening	Pre-test	0.8	7.5	3.8	2.1	3.3	.000*
	Post-test	2.0	10.0	7.1	2.5		
Speaking	Pre-test	1.0	6.0	3.0	1.5	1.6	.002*
	Post-test	1.0	6.0	4.6	2.0		
Reading	Pre-test	1.0	7.0	3.9	1.6	2.8	.000*
	Post-test	2.5	10.00	6.61	2.23		
Writing	Pre-test	0.1	8.7	2.9	2.7	2.7	.001*
	Post-test	2.5	9.0	5.7	2.0		

\* Significant difference (p < .01)

It was determined that there was a direct high-moderate relationship ( $R_s = .478$ ;  $p = .01$ ) between the scores of the writing skill of the pre-test and the reading skill of the post-test. This is, at increasing the reading, the writing improves. According to Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) there is a relationship between reading and writing since both are mentally processed in a homogeneous way.

Table 5.

Relationship between pre-test and post-test skills

		POST LISTENING	POST SPEAKING	POST READING	POST WRITING
PRE LISTENING	$R_s$	.080	.234	-.088	.160
	p	.685	.231	.655	.416
PRE SPEAKING	$R_s$	-.175	.109	-.017	-.124
	p	.373	.581	.930	.528
PRE READING	$R_s$	.180	-.226	-.076	-.111
	p	.358	.248	.699	.576
PRE WRITING	$R_s$	.161	.266	<b>.478*</b>	.081
	p	.414	.171	<b>.010</b>	.683

\* Significant difference



## 5.2 Qualitative results

In relation to the third objective which was to analyze students' opinions about the use of sole English in their classes vs. translanguaging, the two open-ended questionnaires produced the following results. It is worth mentioning that some questions were reformulated since students were not willing to provide complete answers but quite short ones such as yes or no.

### 5.2.1 First questionnaire

The first questionnaire mainly focused on students' feelings towards English, students' opinions about the current approach that is being used in the class, use of the L2 during the class, and the development and training that they received in each one of the four skills during the class. A big part of students of the second A of Bachillerato think that learning a foreign language is important for their academic preparation, but they consider that learning English is hard.

“English is a very difficult language, but perhaps we could improve if we were more attentive in class”.

Student C

They think that this difficulty is derived from the six tests that are applied throughout the whole school year.

“I do not like tests. I really feel confused during a test. Also, I am lazy. I feel rejection towards English”

Student D



Regarding the strategy used by their current English teacher which was mainly focus on the solely use of L2, their opinions were divided. Half of the course stated that the method was not productive, and it impeded their learning and contributed to their demotivation. The other half expressed that the methodology is good, and some of them believed that learning depends more on them than on their teacher. There were two general answers.

“Method, no”

Student H

or

“I like the method”

Student E

Moreover, they were asked about the strategies that they usually use for learning the foreign language. Most of them coincided that translation by means of a bilingual dictionary was a good way of learning English.

“In class, the dictionary is not allowed. However, I think that the dictionary is needed in the class”

Student I

Some of them stated that listening to music in English was enough for getting familiar with the foreign language, and just a few said that they always resort to their more proficient classmates or teachers asking for help, and other students acknowledged other strategies.

“I listen to music in English and I also talk to my sister in English”



Student L

Regarding the use of the L2 in the class, students affirmed that English was not consistently used during classes. On the contrary, they asserted that Spanish was used inside the class to a great extent.

“The teacher usually uses Spanish when teaching”

Student M

On the other hand, when students were asked about the development of activities aimed to the improvement of the four skills, they stated that the speaking skill was rarely practiced during the class. The same was for writing since they stated that it was hardly rehearsed in the class.

“Speaking is never practiced, and writing is rarely exercised”

Student M

The listening and the reading skills according to the students were frequently practiced.

“We frequently practice listening and reading is always practiced”

Student M

### **5.2.2 Second questionnaire**

The second questionnaire was applied after the intervention, students were asked about four specific topics, namely, the complication of learning English, the L1 techniques applied during the intervention, the understanding of L2 during the intervention, feelings of students towards their native language. A half of the group agreed that learning English is not too



complicated meanwhile the other half still thought that English performs a certain degree of difficulty when learning it.

“I think learning English is easy because you have a teacher that guides you, and it makes English easier”

Student D

“English is difficult”

Student R

On the other hand, a significant part of students claimed that the researcher’s methodology was effective.

“I think the method is very interesting because during these months we have learned”

Student E

“The researcher’s method is good and helps us learn English easily”

Student D

They expressed their preference for L1 techniques when learning English. Most of them stated that they felt comfortable when instructions were given in Spanish because they knew with certainty what to do.

“Spanish helps us a lot when learning”

Student F

“It (Spanish) helps a lot in order to improve our performance in English”



Likewise, some students assured that their confidence rose because they could use their native language to clear doubts or to ask for explanations about some complex concepts. It is worth mentioning that the use of English increased from the beginning to the end of the intervention. Therefore, regarding their comprehension of English a small group of students stated that their understanding of English improved a lot.

“I feel relaxed because I can understand what the teacher says”

Student I

A great number of students said that their understanding improved in an average level, and a few students said that their understanding did not make any progress.

“I consider that I did not learn that much. We need to learn more English”

Student S

On the other hand, students expressed their feelings towards the use of Spanish inside the L2 class. Their opinion was unanimous when expressing their agreement that their native language helped them when acquiring the second language.

“Spanish helps because there are Spanish words that are similar to English”

Student T

Also, approximately a ninety percent of the class pointed out that the use of Spanish in the L2 classroom should not be penalized. They stated that their lack of knowledge about the L2 hinders communication in their class being Spanish the only means that they have for expressing themselves during the instruction sessions.

“Spanish should not be penalized because we are not masters in English”



Student V

Similarly, students expressed their opinion about their preferences for their English teachers. They were asked if they would rather have a native speaker as their L2 teacher, and a big part of students claimed that they would prefer a teacher that shares their native language.

“It may be interesting, but I think it is not the time yet”

Student K

“I would not like a native speaker because they speak faster, and we would not understand what the teacher says”

Student O

### **5.3 Discussion**

The objectives of this study were mainly focused on the identification of which of the L1 techniques proposed during this study had the major impact when learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, according to the results that this investigation yielded, the concurrent method and the glosses techniques were the techniques that helped students to improve their skills to a great extent. On a lesser extent, the alternation and the postponing techniques contributed to a better performance of their speaking and writing skills correspondingly. All the four techniques caused a certain degree of improvement. Even though students did not get the minimum score in reading, speaking and writing for succeeding the course, they reached the score of seven in the listening skill. Other studies about the effectiveness of L1 in the L2 class report that students' mother tongue might account for a greater production of the target language. Such is the case of Chou (2016) who reported that the use of L1 in the L2 class was an essential





tool for acquiring the second language. L1 was considered as a bridge that assisted students during L2 learning. In the study, the researcher did not report which skill was improved, but he stated that code-switching or alternation, translation and the concurrent method were successful in the class. Likewise, Türk and Ercetin (2014) showed that the use of glosses allowed lower proficient students to use text resources to a greater extent. In particular, the glosses that are presented simultaneously with a L1 word or with a L2 synonym helped learners to acquire new vocabulary. Referring to glosses, Türk and Ercetin's study coincides with the success that this technique had on this present research. In both studies, reading comprehension and acquisition of vocabulary were the most benefited aspects of L2 learning. Additionally, it is worthwhile remembering that this study is focused on L2 emergent learners in order to demonstrate how productive the L1 could be during the early stages of L2 acquisition. Therefore, the results of this investigation are consistent with Yun (2011) who assures that glosses promote low proficient learners' L2 proficiency at acquiring the target language through the assimilation of new vocabulary.

Regarding the writing skill, during the intervention process up to the post-test, there were some learners that used the postponing technique from their planning until their final drafts. This practice helped students not to interrupt their flowing when writing. On the contrary, they could finish their ideas and replace the L1 words for the target language at the end of the writing task. This practice helped students to become faster when writing and to acquire new vocabulary in the foreign language. These findings are quite similar with the study done by Velasco and Garcia (2014) who reported that when writing, bilingual learners made use of translanguaging during the phases of planning, editing, and production. It is mentioned that bilingual learners, even the emergent ones, employed all their L1 and L2 linguistic repertoire in order to give



meaning to their paragraphs. On the other hand, the influence of true cognates and comparison between grammar features between the two languages made possible the positive results of the post-test. These two factors helped the reading and the writing skills. According to the results of the post-test, the reading and the writing skill were the most developed after the listening skill. As a significant aspect, it must be mentioned that the results of this study produced a clear relationship between the writing and the reading skills. Reading and writing support one another when learning the foreign language. These test results on the whole corroborate those reported in the research carried out by Horst, White, and Bell (2010) whose findings indicated that L2 learners made connections between L1 and L2 leading to a successful cross linguistic awareness. The development of the second language was mainly related to the reading and writing skills. Some students surprisingly established similarities and differences between the L1 and the L2. Although the present study reports that the effects of using L1 through different strategies and techniques have been to a great extent positive, there are some authors such as Shahnaz (2015) who does not see alternation of L1 and L2 as an advantageous fact. His results contradict the general tendency found in this study where alternation is considered positive. Shahnaz, after implementing code-switching as a teaching strategy, came to the conclusion that the immoderate use of alternation of English and Spanish in the EFL class might be contradictory since it could affect the process of acquisition of the second language. He recommends that teachers should be discreet when using alternation. This is, to use code-switching when it is really needed.

Another important consideration to bring about has to do with an aspect that was not included in this investigation, but it is worth mentioning for future studies. It has been stated that L1 is an asset that learners of a second language possess when acquiring the target language. In other words, this study mainly focuses on L1 supporting the learning of the L2 but not vice



versa. That is, the second language contributing to the development of students' mother tongue. Kecskes (1998) claimed that there is a mutual dependency. It is not just that L2 depends on L1 or vice versa, but both depend on one another. His study suggested that the development of learners' second language had a beneficial effect on the progress of their L1.

On the other hand, in the interviews carried out for this study, students reported that their current teachers demand the use of English in the class, but because of learners' low performance in English, the teachers end using Spanish whenever they think it is necessary. During intervention, L1 was used through the employment of the four techniques proposed. Those techniques were used in an organized and systematic way with the main intention of having students comfortable and eager to learn. This manner of teaching English by utilizing L1 is backed up by the investigation carried out by Manara (2007) who dug into teachers' and students' opinion about the use of L1. The study determined that teachers and students agreed that English should be extensively used in the EFL classroom since students considered that being exposed to the target language would be better. Nevertheless, teachers reported that L1 support was essential for specific moments during class. Those moments involved comprehension, giving feedback, explanation of some grammatical points, error corrections and L1 and L2 differences. In addition, it was mentioned that L1 use depends on the level of proficiency of the learners. In like manner, Al Sharaeai (2012) assured that students also use their L1 in order to keep in touch with their cultures. The author claimed that L2 learners employed L1 in order to come out with a message when the intended word in English is not reached. Additionally, other consistent results between Al Sharaeai's investigation and this present study have to do with the fact that students with a lower level of English rely more on their mother tongue during the process of acquisition of the second language. The students who



took part of Al Sharaeai's study stated that their L1 was a factor in their growth of level of proficiency in English. Finally, the assumption of considering the L1 as a link for acquiring the second language is confirmed by Nyika (2015) whose findings indicated that "a bilingual system that starts with the mother tongue as the main medium of instruction while an international second language is gradually introduced using the mother tongue is recommended" (p. 4). On the other hand, in a research carried out by Viáfara (2011), where teachers faced the challenge of using sole L2 in the English classroom, came to the conclusion that due to the L2 low proficiency of the participants, the teachers adopted the strategy of letting students use their L1 in the class when it was necessary. The study also mentions that teachers had to be careful about not imposing the foreign language at all costs since it could produce reluctance coming from learners. The previous conclusions fully endorse the focal point of this investigation which is the efficacy of using learners' L1 as a scaffolding tool in the EFL classroom.

Concerning the value of students' culture, during the interviews learners answered positively when referring to the use of L1 in the class. Many of them appreciated the fact of taking into account their L1 in the L2 class. This favorable L1 environment concurs with the supportive conclusions of the multicultural class experiment carried out by Lopez-Gopar (2014) where indigenous students' different vernacular languages are embraced while teaching English. The hospitality offered in the English class to the L1 according to Lopez-Gopar led to harmonious relationships among students and gave them confidence.

In conclusion, students' native language during this study played a very important role at unifying two languages, the L1 and the L2; and at preparing students when facing social issues. The research showed the closeness that exists between the two, L1 and L2, languages. The languages were not treated as antagonists in a play competing with each other in order to get the



leadership in the class. On the contrary, they were seen as a complement for each other. The results demonstrated that L1 might be an asset inside the classroom when used in an organized way. Most students found attractive the use of their mother tongue as a medium to acquire English as a foreign language. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to try out the techniques and strategies proposed in this study. Perhaps, L1 may help to solve some current learning and teaching issues in the EFL classroom.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Conclusions

The fusion of Spanish and English might be an effective tool inside the L2 classroom. Although some instructors still believe that the students' mother tongue may produce a negative interference, this study has presented some favorable outcomes about using Spanish as a scaffolding tool in the EFL class. The main skills that were improved during this research were listening and reading. It calls the attention that the best performed skills are the receptive skills. However, it cannot be said that the productive skills were not enhanced during this study. They did gain a certain kind of strength. The writing and the speaking skills did not reach the average required, but they got better in the post-test. It may be due to the fact that the post-test included topics related to the learners' L1 which might have made the post-test easier to solve than the pre-test. The pre-test not including L1 topics helped to make a contrast between the avoidance and the use of the L1 in the daily practice of the English class. Therefore, learners' L2 gain of knowledge was to some extent significant when using the translanguaging strategy than the other L2 solely use methods. Some authors such as Velasco and Garcia (2014) consider translanguaging as the way through which learners are able to self-regulate and advance on their own learning. In this study, it was observed that the Spanish language gave learners independence while learning the L2. They knew when and how to use their mother tongue while being in the L2 classroom.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the results of the pre-test to a certain extent match with the results of the post-test. That is, in the pre-test as in the post-test the reading and listening



skills were the abilities that presented the highest scores. This may mean that learners' main difficulty is to convey information in the L2. Perhaps, learners understand the core of the message, but they do not know how to communicate an idea. On the other hand, the writing skill is the ability that shows the most significant progress. This outcome may be due to the effectiveness of the postponing technique applied during the intervention. In other words, the L1 strategy that caused a great impact in the EFL class was postponing. This is based on the fact that students showed more confidence when producing information in a written way than orally. On the whole, the four skills improved, but only the listening skill reached the score required by the Ministry of Education.

Glossing was easily assimilated by students since most of them were already using the technique without being aware that this practice was fairly accepted and legitimate inside the EFL classroom. Glosses were specially used for retaining vocabulary. However, it was not proven that students stored vocabulary in a long term since the post-test took place as soon as the intervention was finished.

The material used during the intervention was related to Ecuadorian history, so it suggests that English as a subject could be linked to other subjects. Horst, White, and Bell (2010) stated that it might be a good idea to coordinate L1 and L2 curricula. When having two subjects focused on one topic, students might have the possibility to associate the contents and vocabulary and therefore to offer better results at the end of the school year. Those better results might trigger in reducing learners' affective filter and increasing motivation. Further studies should be carried out about motivation when using L1 content in the L2 classroom.

After finishing this study, it was assumed that the principal reason why teachers may avoid the use of L1 in the L2 classrooms is because instructors do not know how to use L1



effectively, systematically, and precisely in the L2 class. Additionally, another challenge for teachers who want to use L1 in the class has to do with being knowledgeable in the first and second languages. Being educated in the first and second languages is not just a matter of understanding the two tongues but being skillful enough in grammar, semantics, and pragmatics in both L1 and L2. A wrong idea has been conceived about using L1. It is believed that the employment of students' L1 is done by EFL teachers who are not proficient in the L2. Also, we should mention that while working with L1 and L2, it was noticed that learners were not aware that English and Spanish are very related. A great majority of students who took part of this study believed that the two languages were totally isolated until they were taught about true cognates.

Likewise, another interesting conclusion is that learners resort to L1 resources anyway. This is natural and L1 cannot be removed from L2 learners' brains. Even before the intervention, most of the students used L1. For instance, some learners always took out their English-Spanish dictionaries in order to look up meanings of new words.

Based on what students responded on the questionnaires, it was concluded that they agreed with teachers' code-switching from L2 to L1 in the class. Students thought that this practice kept them engaged and motivated. Also, it was stated that the use of L1 contributed to ease communication between students and the teacher.

One of the drawbacks about the use of L1 may be that some students think that for each L2 word there is an exact L1 equivalent. Also, if teachers want to use students' L1, in this case Spanish, they should be attentive with false cognates since students are predisposed to think that all are true cognates and that they mean exactly the same in the two languages.





## 6.2 Recommendations

After working two years in a row in a public Ecuadorian high school, it can be stated that education is highly influenced by politics and laws that are passed with the intention of helping students to become more competent L2 users. However, the effort has been worthless because students' L2 performance have not improved. The issue might be related to decisions in education which are made overlooking serious social issues such as poverty which leads to migration and ending in dysfunctional families. It is commonsense for teachers that these circumstances create unexpected problems such as lack of motivation and concentration in the classroom on a regular basis. Therefore, laws should not be overgeneralized and applied similarly to urban and rural schools since students' reality differs from one place to another.

On the other hand, the approach that authorities give to the foreign language is often inadequate. The concept is based on the superiority of the L2 over the L1. It happens when English teachers are told to avoid Spanish during class time. Some translanguaging users believed that L1 used as a strategy is not detrimental as long as it is used accurately inside the classroom. In other words, L1 should not be used to cover up the L2 lack of proficiency of some English teachers. Therefore, further studies about the use of L1 should be carried out in order to provide teachers ways of using the L1 appropriately.

Likewise, it is worth mentioning that in this study, the use of L1 is recommended for the beginner level. It is advisable to use the learners' native language as a support to acquire the foreign language. The L2 should not be replaced by the L1, but they should complement each other.



On the other hand, using learners' L1 demands instructors get to know their students' cultural background. This immersion might constitute the foundations when considering the use of the native language in the L2 class. Therefore, the employment of L1 is a complex task that calls for holding knowledge about the students' identity. In other words, teachers should be well-read and eager to promote the value of the students' first language in the class.

Moreover, in this study, four uses of L1 were suggested for each of the four language skills. However, they are not the only ones which could be employed. Some authors have presented different L1 options such as the sandwich technique. Therefore, teachers and students may choose other L1 techniques based on their necessities.

Similarly, learners' L1 should be used in a class where students and their instructor share the same native language. Otherwise, it would not be possible to apply the L1 techniques suggested. That is why the findings of the present study are suitable for educational environments which are alike to the Ecuadorian school context.

In the same manner, L1 strategies should be meticulously put into practice in the L2 class. Some considerations such as learners' English level of proficiency, their preferences, motivation, etc., might be taken into account before applying any L1 strategy. On the whole, teachers' preferences will influence on what approach will be employed in the class. However, it would be constructive to give thought to students' wants and needs, so the development and planning of the class will not be an exclusive right of instructors only.

Finally, regarding limitations, there were some that were faced during this study. They were mainly concerned with the fact that some valuable information regarding students' opinions about their current English teachers was not fully provided. This could have happened due to the



outsider condition of the researcher. Since there was not a straight relationship between the investigator and the participants, it could have triggered certain distrust about revealing some important data which could have influenced the results of the study. On the other hand, another restriction has to do with the availability of the class hours in order to carry out the study. The course teacher had the pressure of fulfilling the units of the course book, and as a result the hours of class were limited for the researcher which demanded to work extra hours out of the regular schedule which in several occasions made the students feel a bit forced at the end of the study.



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