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Implications of Using the Students' First Language (L1) in the English Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom

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RESUMEN

Esta investigación explora las diferentes implicaciones de usar el primer idioma del aprendiz en un aula de inglés como lengua extranjera. Se utilizó una investigación bibliográfica exploratoria de 21 artículos científicos para la recopilación de datos. Los resultados revelaron que el uso del primer idioma es beneficioso para un nivel de principiantes cuando los estudiantes están apenas aprendiendo diferentes estructuras gramaticales. Además, se descubrió que el uso del primer idioma facilita la adquisición de nuevo vocabulario. Estos resultados sugirieron que las implicaciones del uso del primer idioma son casi todas beneficiosas para el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. También se discutieron recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones y algunas limitaciones.

Palabras claves: Implicaciones. Aprendizaje. Uso del primer idioma. Inglés como lengua extranjera.



ABSTRACT

This research explores the different implications of using the learner's L1 in an EFL classroom. Furthermore, it answers the questions regarding the possible implications of L1 use and the extent to which it can be used. An exploratory bibliographic research of 21 scientific papers was used for data collection. The results revealed that L1 use is remarkably beneficial at a beginner's level when students are just learning different grammatical structures. Moreover, L1 use was found to facilitate the acquisition of new vocabulary. These findings suggest that the implications of first language use are beneficial towards the EFL learning process. Thus, it provides information which can be used in any teaching context. Recommendations for future research and some limitations are also discussed.

Key words: Implications. Learning. L1 use. EFL



INDEX

RESUMEN	2
ABSTRACT	3
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	11
DEDICATION.....	12
INTRODUCTION	13
Chapter I	14
Description of the Research	14
1.1 Background.....	14
1.2 Statement of the Problem	15
1.3 Justification.....	16
1.4 Research Questions	17
Chapter II	17
Theoretical Framework	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Language Learning and Acquisition	17
2.3 Difference of First and Second Language Learning	18
2.4 Language Learning for L2	19
2.5 Difference of First and Second Language Acquisition.....	19
2.6 Second Language Acquisition.....	19
2.7 Strategies for Second Language Learning.....	20
2.8 Teaching English as a Foreign Language.....	22
2.8.1 Teaching English as a Foreign Language Strategies	23
2.9 Conclusion	23
Chapter III	24
Literature Review	24
3.1 Debate on L1 Use.....	24
3.2 Positive Effects of L1 Use in an EFL Classroom	25
3.2.1 Teachers' Perspectives	27
3.2.2 Students' Perspectives.....	29
3.2.3 Code-Switching Benefits.....	31
3.3 Translation as a Learning Strategy	32
3.4 Suggested Uses for L1	33
Chapter IV	35



Methodology..... 35

Chapter V 36

Results..... 36

 5.1 Analysis of the Results..... 36

 Table 1 36

 Table 2 37

 Table 3 38

 Table 4 38

 Table 5 39

 Table 6 40

 Figure 1..... 41

Chapter VI..... 43

Conclusions and Recommendations 43

 6.1 Conclusions..... 43

 6.2 Recommendations and Limitations 44

References 46

Appendix 1 51



List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Publication Dates of L1 use Primary Research Papers.....36

Table 2: L1 Suggested Uses that Serve as a Benefit for EFL Learning.....36

Table 3: Teachers’ and Students’ Attitudes Towards L1 Use in an EFL Classroom.....37

Table 4: Position of L1 Use by Teachers.....38

Table 5: Position of L1 Use by Students.....39

Table 6: The Benefits of L1 Use Perceived by Students and Teachers.....40

Figure 1: Adequate Usage of L1 in EFL classrooms.....41

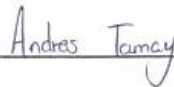


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DEDICATION

To my beloved parents, Silvia and Enrique, who have been an example of perseverance and hard work and have always given me their unconditional support.

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To God, to whom I owe everything. Dedicated to my parents, Reimundo and Rosa, whose courage, love, and hard work have inspired me to thrive.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of the first language in foreign language classrooms has been and still is a topic of debate among teachers and scholars. The point of debate is not the function that the mother tongue has, but the amount of use in English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) classrooms (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). There are two positions on this debate. One of the positions EFL teachers take is that the use of the L1 to teach EFL would considerably hinder the language learning and teaching process. The contrasting point of view is that English language instructors see the use of the first language as a pedagogical value (Butzkamm, 2003).

The debate of using or not using the first language in EFL classrooms could benefit researchers since it stimulates investigation, some studies lead to a possible debate settlement, but research should still be carried out since EFL classrooms worldwide are different (Macaro, 2001). This debate leaves an unfilled gap of whether L1 should or should not be used to either teach or learn English (Forman, 2012). The present study thus attempts to find the most relevant information which could help partially fill up the gap left by the debate of L1 use and addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the possible implications of using the native language (L1) as a tool to enhance the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL)?
2. To what extent can the L1 be used in an EFL classroom to serve as a benefit?

The answers to the above questions might help to ease the debate of using L1 in EFL classrooms. The compiled information might help raise awareness to current and future English teachers in Cuenca and other nationwide places on the use of the L1 in their classroom environments.

This paper consists of six chapters. The first chapter presents the description of the research which consists of the background, statement of the problem, justification and the research questions. Then the theoretical framework is the second chapter which engulfs various definitions and key terms. The third chapter, literature review, has all the relevant literary papers which aid on the goals of this project. The methodology used for this investigation is described in the fourth chapter. Moreover, the fifth chapter contains the analysis of the results obtained from the deep research. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations are both placed inside the sixth chapter.



Chapter I

Description of the Research

1.1 Background

The use of a foreign language learner's first language (L1) in the English foreign language (EFL) classroom has been examined for many decades (Wang & Wen, 2002). More than a hundred years ago, teaching a language, either second or foreign, was specifically seen as a task where the L1 was widely used. As time and society developed, the use of the L1 declined due to the growing migration towards the well-developed English speaking countries. Migration reduced the L1 use in language teaching since upon its arrival to the U.S. or England. Indeed, English teachers did not possess all the languages that came from the many different countries, hence, they only had to use the target language which was English (Auerbach, 1993).

The use of the L1 was not reduced for long. Over time EFL teachers started to use the students' native language again and it showed great success. The L1 had shown to be a tool which helped students improve greatly their understanding of the second or foreign language (Storch & Wigglesworth, 1999). However, the constant change that the native language was given as a means of language teaching created opposing views. For example, there were people who made it clear that for them the L1 should be eliminated from an EFL classroom (Schweers, 1999). On the other hand, according to Carson and Kashihara (2012), a great number of EFL instructors thought that a bilingual approach towards language acquisition was more efficient.

In the present time the debate over a monolingual or bilingual approach for EFL learning is still going on (Anton & DiCamila, 2000). According to previous observations conducted in some schools in Cuenca-Ecuador by pre-service teachers who study the English major at the University of Cuenca, the methodology for teaching English as a foreign language in these schools was mixed in relation to the use of L1 in the classroom. For instance, they reported that English was taught purely in the target language in some of those schools, and in others, the teachers used mostly the L1 in the EFL classroom. Therefore, this research pretends to evaluate the use of the L1 in the second or foreign language classroom in order to find out the implications that are confined within the native language use to teach EFL.



1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Ecuador, according to the government's decree and the national curriculum, every school should have English as a foreign language as a subject implemented in their curriculum. The national curriculum has as an objective to get students to acquire at a minimum a B1 level according to the Common European Framework when they graduate from high school. The truth of the matter is that once students get out of high school, they do not even seem to possess an A2 level. Similarly, as reported by Garzon (2018), in 2017, Ecuador ranked 55th place with a very low-performance level of English in high school graduates.

Additionally, according to the results obtained from an interview carried out by the researchers to 35 students in a public school in Cuenca-Ecuador, the majority of them reported a lack of comprehension of the English language. They said that it was because they were taught in a monolingual approach (English only). In fact, they stated that they generally do not understand when their English teachers speak to them or explain the subject only in English. They also indicated that the only reason they could get some English work done in their classes was that they copied off the words and grammar rules from the English textbook or dictionary. On the other hand, other students responded that teachers did not use a sufficient amount of the target language in the classroom for them to get used to it. Accordingly, Galali and Cinkara (2017) state that in order for a teacher to use the L1 in the L2 classroom, the level of the students' L2 must be considered. In Ecuador, English is taught not based on the students' level of the language, but rather by each student's age. Not bearing the L2 level which students' possess creates a considerable issue when it comes to language teaching (Galali & Cinkara, 2017).

There are numerous tools, methods, and approaches which support the process of L2 teaching and learning. In fact, the use of students' L1 has been considered to be as an important one of those tools. In order for the L1 to become a tool which helps L2 learning, the teacher or language instructor must know how and when to use it (Miles, 2004). Thus this research focuses on analyzing the implications of the use of L1 in an EFL class. According to Cook (2001), L1 use has provided with many benefits for foreign language learners over the past decades. However, not only benefits have been found as results of first language use in the L2 classroom, but also some hindrances have surged from its use (Galali & Cinkara, 2017).



1.3 Justification

Two main approaches exist regarding the impact of L1 use in the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language: the monolingual and the bilingual approaches. Some linguists assume that a bilingual approach, meaning that the L1 use should be implemented when teaching English, provides learners with an opportunity to boost their language acquisition (Galali & Cinkara, 2017). Additionally, as said by Rodriguez and Oxbrow (2008), students' L1 should be used in their EFL classes since it aids and enhances the students' ability to acquire a second language. According to Wang and Wen (2002), second language learners benefit from using their L1 since they become more proficient in writing, and at the same time acquire a better understanding of grammatical structures.

Despite the fact that researchers have found many benefits of the L1 use in a foreign language class, there are also some negative aspects. In fact, Yamasaki (2010) has argued that L1 use in EFL classes is not appropriate. He has stated that if the native language is used by the students or teachers, they may more likely be misguided on the path of language acquisition (Yamasaki, 2010). Additionally, L1 use is unsuitable because students may not feel motivated to use the L2, in other words, they may most easily stay in their comfort zone (Miles, 2004).

On the other hand, learning a second or foreign language can end up being hard for learners. When they want to learn a new language, they should know the grammar behind it first (Schweers, 1999). Therefore, if learners are taught such grammar with the L1 from the beginning, they will most likely comprehend everything and acquire a better understanding of the L2 (Auerbach, 1993). Additionally, Schweers (1999) stated that if the students can understand everything in the FL, it is because they might have learned it in their native language first.

Using L1 in an L2 classroom can have different implications. Finding the implications involved in the L1 usage is important for this research study since the field of study involved is language teaching. Thus, researching the advantages or disadvantages of L1 use in L2 classrooms may support the teaching process because it can help the researchers enlist all the *do's* and *don'ts* for EFL teacher and students. A teacher can have a brighter idea when it comes to help someone acquire a L2; hence the learner can identify why and when the teacher should use the L1. Auerbach (1993) published that once a language instructor knows how the L1 should



be used; only then the learners can have a simpler path towards becoming proficient in their L2. Therefore, the research questions of this paper resulted from the idea of trying to simplify second language teaching or second language learning.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the possible implications of using the native language (L1) as a tool to enhance the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL)?
2. To what extent can the L1 be used in an EFL classroom to serve as a benefit?

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

According to Mokgwathi and Webb (2013) many language teachers frequently ask the following questions: What should we teach first; grammar or speaking? Is there any ‘first step’ towards teaching a certain language? The questions are most likely answered with just the idea of knowing how to differentiate between language learning and acquisition (Sankar, Soundararajan, & Kumar, 2016). In the following paragraphs, the essence of learning and acquiring will be covered. Additionally, since it is utterly important, the distinction between learning and acquiring a first and second language will be mentioned as well.

2.2 Language Learning and Acquisition

“Language acquisition is one of the most impressive and fascinating aspects of human development (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).” Nevertheless, acquiring a language is not the same as learning a language. It is true that these two processes coexist, but they both have different outcomes (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Language learning, as stated by Hussain (2017), is the reception of related information brought together by the mental capacity, edification, and comprehension by means of rules and the storage inside the memory. On the other hand, Sankar, Soundararajan, and Kumar (2016) described that language acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language. The concern of the speakers is not the form of their utterances but the messages they are conveying and understanding.

Language learning is a changing and active process that begins at birth and goes on throughout life. The expression of thoughts, experiences, feelings, and the struggle to connect



real-world things all help build on language learning (Krashen, 1981). Additionally, this process engulfs the grammatical structure, the rules and the meaning of words. Also, language learning involves principal factors affecting learning which include age, aptitude, motivation, interest, attitude, personality, style, environment, and cognitive behavior (Hussain, 2017).

The process of language learning contains different strategies. As determined by Hussain (2017), the different language strategies are retrieval, rehearsal, cover, communication, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, compensatory, and memorization strategies. The above strategies all bind together to have a productive process and thus, learn a language.

To the contrary, in accordance to Chomsky (1972), language acquisition is derived from an innate process, meaning that it is already in the mind since birth. He, thus, proposed the famous language acquisition theory which stated that, “all children share the same internal constraints which characterize carefully the grammar they are going to construct.”

Language learning is focused on knowing the rules, having a conscious knowledge about acquiring grammar. In conscious learning, the speaker’s concern is the correctness of their language use. Nevertheless, “acquiring a language” is ‘picking it up’, developing ability in a language by using natural, communicative situations. In other words, language acquisition is putting into practice all of the learnt information in order to conclude that the language has been acquired (Sankar, Soundararajan, & Kumar, 2016). Similarly, Candlin (2010) observed that acquisition occurs during the formative years of one’s life - usually commencing in early childhood before age three. These authors also stated that it is learned as part of growing up among people who speak it fluently. Therefore, the different ways of developing language competence are most clearly portrayed in their outcomes: “the acquisition intext understanding of the language and through obtaining knowledge specifically about the language that is, reading, learning, acquiring and talking about the grammatical rules of the language (Krashen, 1982; Lightbown & Spada 2013).

2.3 Difference of First and Second Language Learning

Up to now, some authors such as Hussain (2017), and Sankar, et al. (2016) have presented language learning as the gathering of related information in order to understand grammar, syntax rules, and pronunciation, among other features. With this definition in mind,



Lightbown and Spada (2013) exposed that the definition just mentioned, which is language learning for a mother tongue, is not the same as second or target language learning. Although the process is similar, it also has some differences.

2.4 Language Learning for L2

Just as language learning for a first language, language learning for L2 is also a process which involves grammar and rules of a language. Furthermore, Cook (2007) stated that language learning for L2 is the appropriate analysis of the theory of a second or target language. Revising and learning mechanism from a different language other than the native one is not learned as part of the learners' cognitive development. Similarly, second language learning also represents the conscious knowledge of language that happens through formal instruction but does not necessarily lead to conversational fluency of language (Ghazali, 2016). Also, according to Tavakkoli, Rakhshandehroo, Izadpanah, and Moradi-Shad (2014), there are psychological factors that differentiate first and second language learners. These affect not just the learner's ability to acquire a language, but also attitudes to learning and the perception of one's self as a learner.

2.5 Difference of First and Second Language Acquisition

According to Chomsky (1972) and Lightbown and Spada (2013), it was already stated that first language acquisition is an impressive and innate process which a learner goes through to use a language; regardless of knowing or not its proper grammar rules or syntactic structure. Similarly, Hickey (2012) said that first language acquisition does not depend on intelligence or special ability for languages. Everyone acquires their native language fully and properly. On the other hand, second language acquisition means learning other languages in addition to their native language. For instance, a certain child who speaks Japanese as his first language starts learning English in school. English is learned by the process of second language acquisition (Haynes, 2015). Hence, first language acquisition and second language acquisition are two different phenomena (Ipek, 2009).

2.6 Second Language Acquisition

The acquisition of a second language is the study and comprehension of a language subsequent to the acquirement of the first one. The language acquired after the mother tongue is



the second language (L2), although this “second language” can be the third or fourth language acquired. It is very common to call the second language a target language (TL), in the process of learning it (Saville-Troike, 2006).

When children are in the process of first language acquisition, they undergo a listening period to get used to the exposed sounds. During this stage, the child tries to understand what a language is. In the case of second language acquisition, learners also pass by a period of listening and recognizing the language, but at the same time they imitate and recreate what they perceive (Ipek, 2009). Moreover, as said by Garibaldi (2013), there are many ways to acquire a second or target language. It can be in a formal way such as in a classroom environment, or an informal way when the learner picks up the language by being a culturally active participant of the society. Krashen (1981) hypothesized that, every person learning a language will acquire that language in a predictable order.

In other words, first language acquisition is an instinct, triggered by birth, very rapid, complete, and natural process. Acquiring a first language does not need any guide or precise steps (Hickey, 2012). This author, however, mentioned that second language acquisition is more of a personal choice, one that requires motivation. The speed of acquiring a second language is not as fast as the first one, only a good competence can be achieved, and a guide is required most of the time; although a natural acquisition can also occur.

2.7 Strategies for Second Language Learning

Montaño (2017), on the other hand, mentioned that second language learning can be achieved by a set of strategies. He also stated that learning strategies refer to a set of tactics that people use in order to gain control over their own learning process. Binte and Khairul (2016), on the contrary stated that there are five strategies that learners use when learning a language. The strategies include:

1. Memory
2. Cognitive
3. Comprehension
4. Metacognitive



5. Social

- Memory Strategies

These strategies are employed for storing and retrieving new information. The principle of memory strategies is meaning. In order for the strategies to work, these strategies must be meaningful to the learner. When the strategies are meaningful to the learner, they will be understood and acquired (Gholamali and Faryadres, 2011).

- Cognitive Strategies

The cognitive strategies for Hardan (2013) are the procedures used in learning which require direct analysis, transformation, or the proper synthesis of learning tools. According to Boghian (2016), some examples of this kind of strategy include reasoning, analyzing, summarizing; the learner interacts with the content to be learned by manipulating it mentally (e.g. creating mental images or relating new information to previously acquired concepts or skills) or physically (grouping items in meaningful categories, or taking notes, making summaries of relevant information to be remembered).

- Comprehension Strategies

People who achieve the comprehension strategy according to Binte and Khairul (2016), tend to guess unknown words in different contexts. This strategy also helps people replace unknown words with longer phrases or synonyms that might mean the same when they need to overcome gaps in written or spoken conversations.

- Metacognitive Strategies

These strategies are employed by the students to help them coordinate the learning process by centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating their learning. This helps learners to control their own learning. Students will also be able to plan what their learning strategies should be and change them if they are not suitable (Hardan, 2013).

- Social Strategies



As reported by Burešová (2007), social strategies are those that the students engage to face the opportunity to be exposed to the target language and practice his/her already gained knowledge. In social interactions, students deliberately seek for opportunities where they must use their target language in order for them to practice. Oxford (1990) separated these strategies into direct and indirect social strategies.

2.8 Teaching English as a Foreign Language

“The emergence of English as a global or international language has had a profound influence on language teaching” (Savignon, 1987, p. 675). Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, and Pincas (2003) exposed that of the 4,000 to 5,000 living languages, English is by far the most widely used. They also affirmed that English as foreign language is taught in schools, often widely, but it does not play an essential role in national or social life.

TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) is focused on the purposes or studies of English by teachers and English learners with a different mother tongue. An interpretation for TEFL is that it is used as an aid for communication instead of an official language or a primary teaching language (Lin and Chien, 2010). For these authors, the term TEFL is applied to emphasize that English language learning in nations where English is not the most important language. Furthermore, Nurhayati, Supriyanti, and Triastuti (2008) affirmed that English as a foreign language is part of the educational curriculum, particularly in state schools.

Teaching English to non-native speakers or to people not surrounded by English is a very challenging task for teachers. EFL instructors are entitled with providing their pupils with all the knowledge necessary to be competent to a certain extent in the target language. The teachers' planning should take into account different goals and their learners' levels and needs (Rani, 2016).

Richards and Renandya (2002) demonstrated that the last three decades have witnessed the development of the field of TEFL, which aims at improving the quality of teaching, as well as of learning by focusing on learners' needs, their expectations, their strategic methods, and the processes they feel most comfortable with; without overseeing the roles of language instructors as course developers, the methodological steps they take, and the tools they use to enhance understanding. When teachers become aware of those dimensions as Rani (2016) said, they can



easily cope with the problems they face in their teaching career and can find ways to help their learners overcome their learning obstacles in order to thrive and achieve their target language.

2.8.1 Teaching English as a Foreign Language Strategies

The teaching of English language has been subjected to tremendous changes during the past decades. The methodology for English language teaching is not the same as teaching other subjects such as Science or Mathematics. The way to teach English as a foreign language in a classroom has surpassed many adaptations all around the world (Jeya, 2007). Just as Waheed (2010) expressed, the adaptations that TEFL has gone through are all in benefit of the language learners and in order to facilitate the language instructors. Such changes being mentioned are variations in TEFL strategies. Among those strategies, according to Waheed (2010), the most popular ones are blended learning, skills teaching, back channeling, and using the mother tongue, which includes code-switching and translation.

2.9 Conclusion

Learning a language and acquiring a language are two different processes that are commonly mistaken for one another. It was shown that on top of their difference in meaning, these two terms also differ in the steps taken to achieve a target language. Learning a language as stated by many authors involves all the grammatical rules and structures. Acquisition on the other hand, has to do with the interaction. As seen in the previous information, the difference between L1 and L2 learning and acquiring leads into TEFL and all its strategies. Using L1 in the classroom where English is taught as a foreign language is one of the strategies and of this investigation's key purpose.



Chapter III

Literature Review

Teaching a foreign language can have many different paths. Hence, teaching English as a foreign language has many methods like grammar translation method, communicative language teaching, the silent way, and using the learners' L1. For the sole purpose of answering the research questions, the following chapter will talk about how L1 use is a method to help language learners and how controversial this topic is. Also, various studies will be analyzed to have a sense of what the benefits of L1 use are, what teachers and students think of this method, the implications of code-switching and translation, and finally the suggestions the researchers have come up with.

3.1 Debate on L1 Use

An experiment done by Miles (2004) at the University of Kent, England, to male Japanese students, who studied English for six years at secondary school, showed that students performed better when the use of the L1 was allowed in the classroom. The students took a placement test called Key English Test (KET), which tests reading, listening and writing skills, and also an oral test, as soon as they arrived at college. The students were divided into 3 groups; MG8, MG9 and MG10. The scores for the KET test were below 30% for the three groups and 7.50 over 20 for the oral part. Then after five months a second KET test, in a different version, and another oral test were taken in order to check if students showed any improvement. The overall scores for MG9 and MG10 were more than doubled (62 %); however, for MG8 the improvement was not as satisfactory as the other groups (33.5%). In the same way, the oral tests showed an increased result from 7.50 to 10.93. In other words, all the classes showed great improvement, and all the students scored higher in the second test. Surprisingly, these results related to the amount of the L1 used in the classroom. Teachers for MG9 and MG10 used and allowed their students to use their L1 in different situations, but neither students nor teacher for MG8 made use of the L1 at any time. These results supported the idea that using the learners' mother tongue while learning a second language does not hinder learning; actually, it seemed to facilitate it by giving students some kind of confidence since they could ask for help to teachers who also made use of the L1.



On the other hand, Storch and Wigglesworth (1999) conducted an investigation to twenty- four university ESL students with similar ages, educational backgrounds, and ESL proficiency levels. The report, however, focused on the data of 6 pairs with the shared L1. The participants completed a text reconstruction task and a joint composition task. Their talk was audiotaped while they were doing the tasks. The participants were told to use their L1 whenever they felt it would be useful to complete the task. After completing the tasks, the participants were individually interviewed in order to get information about their attitudes towards the use of their L1. The interviews were recorded. The recorded pair talk was transcribed and analyzed for students' attitudes toward the use of their L1. The results showed that students were reluctant to use their L1. The reasons were that (a) the use of their L1 would slow down the L2 activity because they first had to go through a translation state which takes additional time while completing an activity, and (b) they believed that they should maximize the L1 use in an ESL setting because that is the only place where they are completely exposed to the target language. The results helped the investigators to conclude that the use of the students' L1 pulled back the learning of the L2.

3.2 Positive Effects of L1 Use in an EFL Classroom

As it was previously mentioned by authors like Miles (2004), there has been a constant debate over the use of L1 in an EFL classroom. Storch and Wigglesworth (1999) stated that L1 use should be eliminated. Notwithstanding, Wang and Wen (2002) conducted a research on 16 English majors from Nanjing University in China. They were all female, ranging in age from 18 to 22 years. They were asked to compose two writing tasks where they would be monitored at all times. The researchers found that L1 use was present most of the times, especially during the brainstorming section where initial ideas were needed. Also, 92% of the students resorted to their native language to organize their ideas and give coherence to what they were writing. Wang and Wen (2002) concluded that the students' first language is beneficial at the beginning of a writing task and for organizing gathered information.

Additionally, Hidayati (2012) puts forth that the idea of a monolingual approach is just an old and unrealistic method that is not efficient for EFL classrooms. Hence, this author also conducted a research to gather information on benefits of the L1 when learning English as a foreign language. Hidayati projected a research in a polytechnic in Bandung, Indonesia. The



subjects she analyzed were 6 English teachers and 100 undergrad students in the last semester of a TOEFL preparation course. In the TOEFL course, the students' focus were all the four language skills, but to answer her research questions, Hidayati targeted on the two productive skills, speaking and writing. She wanted to see how the students used their L1 to compose short essays individually and in pairs; therefore, video recordings, questionnaires, and interviews were used on teachers and students. Hidayati analyzed and concluded that it is utterly important for teachers to use the native language as a source to explain a complex task. Also, the L1 use was found beneficial for students since they used to create and translate ideas for the writing compositions since it made it more fluent. When working in pairs, the students did not seem to use much of the first language. Nevertheless, they did some code-switching (verbally) to get more ideas when stuck on a certain writing part. Hidayati indeed found positive traits that countered argued the idea of target language use only.

The use of learners' native language in a classroom, where English is taught as a foreign language, can have its pros and cons. As it was mentioned before, using the L1 in the classroom by teachers or students can help with mostly the writing skills. However, Afzal (2012) presents other benefits of native language use. Afzal gathered information from 100 EFL learners from a Language Institute in Shiraz. The students were split in half to form two different groups, a control and experimental group. Both groups were taught EFL in the same manner and using the same techniques, with the small difference that the experimental group was going to use their L1. The project consisted of memorizing as many new English words as possible. The students were allowed to talk among themselves in this mixed-method approach research. As it was observed by video recordings, the control group had a really rough time comprehending new English words. The experimental group, on the other hand, asked among themselves for definitions or clues and learned more words. At the end, students were evaluated, and it was found that overall the experimental groups' grades were 23% higher than those who could not use their L1. This lead Afzal to sum up and state that using L1 helped students become more fluent in the target language, memorize better, and comprehend new definitions. Notwithstanding, Afzal did encounter one student over using the L1 and getting stuck on the activity. Anyhow, the benefits of using L1 in the EFL classroom are far greater, and it is pinpointed by Afzal (2012), Hidayati



(2012), and Wang and Wen (2002) that the benefits can surely revolutionize the misconception of a bilingual approach EFL learning process.

There are many methods, numerous strategies, and approaches that can be used to learn or teach EFL (Waheed, 2010; Jeya 2007). A controversial strategy is that of using the mother tongue in an EFL classroom either by teachers or by students. As stated in the previous paragraphs, there have been some researchers who seek to uncover L1 use benefits in order to outweigh the controversy. Still, finding benefits is not enough, the thoughts of teachers and learners themselves are something that also counts. In the following part, the teachers' and students' perspectives are of interest.

3.2.1 Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers widely avoid using the L1 or first language when teaching English as a foreign language (Cook 2001). Language teachers have had a misconception of a bilingual method. Even though there have not been many studies carried out, the ones that have been projected have been aimed to help teachers get a better understanding of why and how the students' L1 should be used. Since the teachers are the ones who have the power and information to bestow upon their students, their thoughts are extremely important. Hence, some researchers like Alshehri (2017) and Hall and Cook (2013) carried out similar investigations to find the teachers' attitudes towards L1 use in an EFL classroom. Alshehri ran a mixed-method study where questionnaires were used to collect data from 6 EFL teachers of a Saudi Arabia state university. Other questionnaires were used to collect information from 104 EFL teachers from countries like USA, India, and Pakistan. In parallel, Hall and Cook conducted a homogenous mixed-method research where 2785 students and 56 teachers of different universities from the UK, USA, and Australia were taken as subjects. They as well were asked to answer questionnaires. Both Alshehri and Hall and Cook after analyzing data came across similar conclusions. They concluded that teachers overall have a positive attitude to use L1 in their EFL classrooms. Teachers pointed out that L1 use is tremendously beneficial for: teaching grammar, new vocabulary, complex materials, and instructions.

Likewise, it was found by Al-nofaie (2010) that teachers like to use Arabic (L1) to teach EFL in many instances. L1 is mostly employed to clarify difficult elements for weak learners, thus preventing a pull back to others who are learning the language. Also, data from this research



exposed that using L1 for teaching grammar was one of the most common uses among the teachers. These results were a product from a qualitative and quantitative approach research. The three methods applied for data collection were: questionnaires, interviews and class observations. The subjects were three English teachers at an intermediate school in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The teachers had to go through an interview and fill out some questionnaires about how they feel on the matter of L1 use to teach English. The results to all the analysis done by Al-nofaie helped come up with the conclusions already stated. It is important to mention that, in this study, none of the teachers opposed the idea of using Arabic (L1) to teach EFL, hence enlarging the number of teachers who stand with the use of the first language as a tool which aids language learners.

Using the learners' native language to guide them towards a target language can be done in many ways. One way is as a strategy that teachers opt for when teaching a second language using L1, specifically by code-switching. It may be that code-switching creates different points of view, but as Ajmal (2010) uncovered with a research; teachers find it extremely helpful to code-switch in an EFL classroom. This qualitative research done to 3 EFL high school teachers and 6 college level one English teachers revealed that making the language learning scenario a bilingual one brought up many benefits. The benefits that were pointed out by the subjects were: clarification, ease of expression, giving instructions effectively, and repetitive functions. According to the questionnaires and interviews, when something is not understood by students, teachers immediately switch languages and things become clear. Similarly, code-switching gave teachers and students a sense of belonging and made it easier to learn English. Nevertheless, Ajmal does stress that code-switching should be used in accordance with the students' needs and requirements, it cannot be simply used whenever the teacher desires to do so.

The strategy of using L1 has many categories, as it was just mentioned, code-switching is one. Another category that is encompassed within L1 use is translation. Marinac and Baric (2018) made an excellent and well developed research to discover what teachers think of translating from English to Croatian (L1) or vice versa. For this paper, the researchers created online questionnaires in Croatian and English so different EFL teachers from the selected high schools can understand clearly and get it done efficiently. The selected subjects were 36 EFL senior teachers at different high schools in Croatia. In this strictly qualitative research, the subjects were asked: Do you use translation in your teaching process? How much translation do



you use? Are all students allowed to translate information in and out of the classroom? How beneficial do you consider the translation strategy to be? For the purpose of this research, only the last question will be addressed. The last question had 8 answers that stated that translating information was detrimental for students since they get accustomed to it. Despite the appreciated answers of opposing the use of translation, thus L1 use, the majority of teachers supported and used translation with their students to help them in the EFL learning process. With all the responses Ajmal concluded that translating material, may this be; vocabulary, grammar rules, or complex written instructions, is tremendously beneficial since students find a way to make sense of what they are writing or speaking.

Analyzing the previous researches have shown that using L1 in an EFL classroom have opposing views. There are some research results which show that L1 use to teach or learn English as a foreign language as a barrier in the process. Notwithstanding, the majority have proven that this strategy is full of advantages. Most of the teachers express that using the ‘L1 use strategy’ and its categories like code-switching and translation are helpful for both students and teachers involved in the language learning process. Since teachers are not the only implicated members, next we will examine the students’ thoughts on the L1 use.

3.2.2 Students’ Perspectives

In regard to students’ views, Sharma (2006) reported the use of the students’ mother tongue, Nepali, in an EFL classroom in a high school in Chitwan through both quantitative and descriptive methods. The study was conducted to 20 teachers and 100 students who responded to questionnaires about the frequency of first language use and about their perspectives towards L1 use. Classroom observation was also used. The author found that teachers preferred to use L1 to clarify meanings, to give instructions, to establish close relationships between teachers and students and, to explain grammar rules, new concepts, and vocabulary. Most importantly, students had a positive feeling towards using Nepali since its use increased their confidence. Sharma concluded that limited use of the L1 would be beneficial for students by helping them to learn in an easier and faster way.

Galali and Sinkara (2017) have also paid attention to learners’ attitudes towards the use of the L1 in English classrooms. They conducted a study at Salahaddin University, Erbil, to 258 EFL learners ranging from 17 to 31 years. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected



through questionnaires and interviews in order to reveal the students' reasons for switching from the target language to their mother tongue and to discover their attitudes concerning their teachers' L1 use in the classroom. The findings exposed that checking the meaning of new words and talking about personal things with classmates were the most common reasons for using the first language. Moreover, the results indicated that learners hold the idea that the use of the L1 by teachers is helpful and beneficial because they like to have teachers who can understand their L1. The authors concluded that the limited use of L1 exposes students to the target language. They also indicated that motivation in the classroom can be improved if teachers are able to understand their students' L1.

Similarly, a recent study done by Ibrahim (2019) explored the students' perspectives of the use of L1, Arabic, in L2 education. The participants were 159 university students studying English in Shaqra University. A questionnaire was adopted to collect data about the needs for using Arabic, its effectiveness and the problems of its overuse. The responses of the questionnaires were tabulated and computed resulting in interesting findings. Students, especially those from low levels, used their L1 to be aware of the similarities and differences between Arabic and English. Also, the mother tongue was used to explain difficult areas, such as new vocabulary. Students, however, stated that L1 should be carefully used in the classroom. After the analysis of the results, the researcher asserted that a large majority of the students were in favor of the employment of L1 in L2 learning. Further, the results revealed that increasing and improving Arabic vocabulary is closely related to L1 use.

Contradictory to the previous results, in the study conducted by Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz (2011) the findings presented a students' rejection about the use of Persian (L1), in English classes (L2). The goal of the study was to determine the quantity of L1 use as well as both teachers and students' perceptions towards the use of the students' L1 in L2 classes. For the investigation, a total of 64 students who ranged from 17 to 19 years and two teachers were selected from two state pre-university schools in Ahvaz, Iran. The participants were divided into two groups (class A and class B) to be observed in the classroom and then interviewed.

The researchers found that both low-achieving and high-achieving students did not agree with the excessive use of Persian in their English classes since it can be demotivating for their learning. They supported the idea that L2 should be the main tool for learning. The results



assisted the authors to conclude that students do not consider L1 use as the best resource for learning.

3.2.3 Code-Switching Benefits

Code-switching (CS) has been a topic of interest for many researchers. Opponents see this practice as an obstacle to achieve the target language which is the learning goal (Nurhamidah, Supriyadi, & Fauziati, 2018). Becker (2001), on the other hand, supported the use of code-switching in the classrooms since it presents benefits for both teachers and students. Becker looked at the Spanish-English code-switching of 60 elementary Mexican-American students from Wisconsin in a story-retelling activity. The participants first listened to a code-switched version of a story. Then they were requested to retell the story in the language they preferred, English, Spanish or in both English and Spanish. This process was recorded and then transcribed. The gathered information was later analyzed exposing relevant findings. It was discovered that CS was neither related to students' language proficiency nor their level. These findings allowed the researcher to conclude that code-switching gives extra help when it comes to providing multiple meanings for lexical elements which is advantageous for reading proficiency. Thus, Becker claimed that teachers should opt for code-switching to enhance students' verbal skills and reading development.

Mokgwathi and Webb (2013) carried out a study which highlighted additional benefits that code-switching provides for learning. They examined the role of CS in the classroom. Their research took place in Botswana, Southern Africa, at four senior secondary government schools. A total of 2893 (130 teachers and 2763 learners) participants out of a total population of 7092 for the four schools were selected. The selection of the participants was based on the language they spoke. Only people who spoke Setswana either as a mother tongue or as a second language were included. The instruments for collecting data consisted of lesson observations and questionnaire administration. The transcription of the data focused on the teachers and learners' formal and informal utterances. After data analysis, the researchers found that CS from English to Setswana tended to happen more during content subjects such as Biology, Home Economics, and History than during English lessons. It was because in English lessons teachers drew attention to the development of language proficiency not to content understanding. Data also revealed that although CS engulfed some negative effects, the majority of teachers and students showed a



positive attitude about it. They affirmed that CS does not harm the learning process. It actually enhanced lesson comprehension, class participation, and contributed to vocabulary expansion. Hence, Mokgwathi and Webb asserted that CS boosted students to be part of communicative actions and to be successful at subject content comprehension.

Likewise, Araya and Espinoza (2013) examined the benefits of code switching in bilingual settings. In their study, they demonstrated through a survey study applied to 20 students and ten professors from an EFL program carried out at the Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica that CS strengthens learning of the target language. The surveys included questions regarding the participants' habits for CS. Researchers interpreted the collected data and exposed diverse factors for CS from English to Spanish. The findings revealed that both professors and students mostly switched languages when talking about technology or fashion. Additionally, it was found that CS is often preferred to talk with peers in informal contexts. Filling gaps when there is vocabulary limitation and cultural untranslatability meaning two cultures do not share the same cultural understanding of something were highlighted as the main reasons for CS. The aforementioned findings served as evidence to prove that switching languages is useful for making communication easier. When students have the opportunity to rely on their L1, they break barriers and gain enough confidence to perform in the target language.

3.3 Translation as a Learning Strategy

Researchers like Olcer (2014) have exposed the negative effects of translation when it comes to learning a foreign language. In her study, Olcer conducted both a quantitative and qualitative research on 25 university students in Turkey to be aware of their views about their English language learning experiences. Data collection unfolded the dark side of the GMT. It was seen as a passive method based on memorization which does not equip students with practical aims for daily life. GMT was also qualified as a hindrance for learners since its use gets students stuck in certain grammar rules. Oppositely, "Translation, far from being useless, can be a great aid to foreign language learning," according to Fernandez' (2014, p. 153) study. In this study, Fernandez attested the effectiveness of translation as a learning strategy through questionnaire administration to 155 Spanish learners of English at the Universitat Jaume I, Spain. A total of 93 participants were students of a Computer Science Design (CS) and the other 62 remaining were undertaking a Degree in English Studies (ES). The average age of the participants was 19.9 years and they were mostly male in CS and mostly female in ES. For data



collection, students completed the questionnaires in two different stages. First, at the beginning of the course, and then at the end of the course. At the beginning, they were given a level test and a questionnaire on the usefulness of translation. Later, at the end of the semester, they took another level test and the second questionnaire. The researcher, after collecting the data, found that students see translation as the most motivating and effective classroom activity for learning a foreign language. Even though some feelings towards translation difficulties existed, both CS and ES students pointed out the benefits of using translation. CS students stated that translation helps improve the use of computer-aided translation tools; become better at re-expressing and enhance lexical knowledge. On the other hand, ES students claimed that translation allows them to improve their re-expression skills. Moreover, they affirmed that translation enlarges the understanding of the form and content of the language. These findings suggested that translation plays an important role in foreign learning by offering beneficial issues to learners and, if properly applied, it serves as the best classroom learning resource.

3.4 Suggested Uses for L1

The fact that L1 use has caused controversial points of view does not mean it should not be used. It is clear that there might be some counterarguments that indeed are important to look at. Nonetheless, with all the research done, L1 use in the EFL learning has surged with many benefits. The advantages of using the first language are obtained with the proper knowledge of how to use it. Next, the suggested uses that the different authors have stated will be presented.

In accordance with what has been stated so far, it can be projected that for L1 use in the English learning process there must be some guidelines. Hence, Afrin (2014) found some outrageous uses for L1 to help students learn English. In this study, Afrin cautiously selected 60 students from three different English medium schools in Dhaka City, Bangladesh. Additionally, five teachers who held a master's degree from the same schools were taken as subjects. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews for this qualitative approach. For the purpose of answering the research questions, the analysis of the teachers' point of view will be taken as a consideration. Hence, teachers in the questionnaires and on the face-to-face interviews stated that L1 should be applied to students who are beginners. According to the subjects, students seem to take advantage of their native language when learning English when there are difficult words. Also, the mother tongue is used when students need corrective feedback. Sometimes



students do not quite understand complex instructions and this research finds it necessary to use the first language to aid such students.

When learning English as a foreign language the L1 can be a boost towards its proper learning. Despite the advantages the use of the first language can present, there are some hindrances that come along with it. For example, in a study done by Shimizu (2006) 16% of the subjects reported that using translation may fossilize the students' learning process. Also, it was said that once students are allowed to use their mother tongue, they tend to over use it. The subjects mentioned were 98 first through fourth-year students from two different universities. 60 of them were in the English major, the others majoring in engineering. All of the students were Japanese learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) to whom the questionnaire in Japanese was distributed. 25 teachers also participated in this study by completing the questionnaire in English. Even though, a small part of the subjects was against L1 use, the majority ruled in favor of, especially the teachers. Similar to the last study, it was expressed that L1 should be used to help beginners. Additionally, it should be used to simplify grammar, make the students feel more secure, explain complex content, and talk about cultural threads. Keeping in mind the negative aspects, the advantages of first language use as a tool to teach English as a foreign language should be seriously pondered on.

As any topic, method, strategy, using the learners' mother tongue in an EFL classroom has also lead to major contradictions. There has been an ongoing debate on whether L1 use should be annihilated or should it be put to use as a learning mechanism. With the mentioned studies, the benefits of L1 use have been cleared and reinforced. Also, the thoughts, feelings, and points of view of teachers and students have been taken into consideration. Students and teachers have stated that using the first language either as code-switching or translation, it is of benefit for both. But in order for this strategy to properly work, it must be used wisely and efficiently. A misuse of this tool can harm and create barriers, so a deep analysis before applying it is utterly necessary.



Chapter IV

Methodology

The implications of using L1 in the second language classroom not only engulf benefits and drawbacks, but it also contains information on when, how and why the native language could be used by students and for students (Anton & DiCamila, 2000). Hence, this study will use an exploratory bibliographic research in order to analyze various research articles on the field. These articles date from 2000 to 2019. This analysis will help the researchers to answer the proposed research questions and contribute with a better understanding of the topic. The studies which are selected to attempt to answer the research questions have to be articles that have been reviewed and published in academic journals.

The articles which have been selected must be related to the use of the students' L1 in an EFL classroom (Annex 1). The approach used within the primary research papers will not matter; meaning quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches are all acceptable, unrelatedly of the context, country or ages on to which they were applied. Once the gathering process is finished, these articles will be clustered around similar emphases. For instance, they will be grouped by taking into account alike advantages, disadvantages, reasons, as well as the context in which the L1 has been used as a language teaching or learning tool. Afterwards, the compiled research papers will be compared and contrasted more in depth in order to analyze and inform their results. Finally, this comparison will help the researchers to draw up conclusions about the use of the students' L1 in EFL classrooms.



Chapter V

Results

5.1 Analysis of the Results

The 21 studies were categorized based on different aspects. Only empirical papers were selected for the analysis. Some of them were useful since they contained all the requirements needed for the investigation. The studies were coded according to several categories and were directed to respond to the research questions. The results were presented in the following tables classified by the research questions.

Table 1
Publication Dates of L1 Use Primary Research Papers

Year of Publication	Number of Publications	Percentages
2001-2005	4	19%
2006-2010	4	19%
2011-2015	9	43%
2016-2019	4	19%

N = 21

For categorization purposes, Table 1 shows a repeated pattern between the years 2001 through 2010 and 2016 to present time, showing 19% (4 of 21) of the research papers in each category. This suggests that L1 use in EFL classrooms is a topic of continuous research since every year there is at least one research project carried out. Also, 9 out of 21 L1 use primary studies were carried out between 2011-2015. This might lead to the belief that L1 use had a rise of inquiry, especially in the US since those papers were carried out in different North American states.



1. What are the possible implications of using the L1 in an EFL classroom?

In an attempt to answer the first research question, the following tables will be carefully analyzed in order to exploit their implications.

Table 2

L1 Suggested Uses that Serve as a Benefit for EFL Learning

L1 Suggested Uses	Number of Publications	Percentages
Initial grammar	9	47%
Corrective Feedback	3	16%
Complex Instructions	4	21%
Sense of Motivation	3	16%

N = 19

Table 2 presents the suggested uses for L1 in an EFL classroom. For the first category, it is perceived that 47% out of the 19 primary studies support Initial Grammar. This leads to the belief that L1 use has the most advantage if used to learn grammatical structures at a beginner's level. The use of the mother tongue aids more on the acquisition of Initial Grammar since, as stated by teachers, it saves time on the explanation (Alshammari, 2011). Furthermore, according to this author, Initial Grammar is benefited by using the first language because students feel less stressed when it comes to learning new and basic grammar of English as a Foreign Language. Following Initial Grammar, we have Complex Instructions with 4 out of the 19 studies. This might mean that L1 use can benefit teachers when they have to give instructions for exams or other complex tasks. As stated by Tang (2013), L1 use is important when complex instructions are given seeing that if students do not comprehend instructions, they will get lost and hence the whole learning process will be a failure.



Table 3
Teachers' and Students' Attitudes Towards L1 Use in an EFL Classroom

	Positive	Negative	Number of Publications
Teachers	100%	0	4
Students	75%	25%	4

N=8

An analysis of 8 studies in terms of teachers' and students' attitudes towards the use of L1 in an EFL classroom revealed that half of the studies regarding teachers exhibit that 100% show a positive attitude towards its use. It is relevant to mention that these results were obtained from the papers only used for our analysis there were more studies where teachers hold a different point of view about L1 use. The other half presents a flagrant discrepancy among students. 75% of the subjects see the use of L1 as positive while the 25% see it as negative. These results might give the idea that teachers and students who have already used the L1 as a tool in an EFL classroom have actually seen some of its benefits and have proved its effectiveness. Even though L1 use include some negative aspects, most of the aspects tend to be helpful and efficient.

Table 4

Teachers' Position of L1 Use

L1 category	Teachers' positions	Percentage of subjects	Number of studies	Percentage of studies
Code-Switching	Against use	0%	8	47%
	For Use	100%		
Translation	Against use	25%	9	53%
	For use	75%		

N=17



Table 4 shows teachers' positions of L1 use. Out of the 17 analyzed studies, 8 revealed that 100% of the subjects have adopted an optimistic position about the use of code-switching. There are no teachers who have rejected the use of code-switching. Code-switching, as Bensen and Cavusoglu (2013) stated, is used by teachers for different purposes since it serves as a tool for enhancing the learning of the target language. In the previous section (Literature Review) authors like Becker (2001) and Araya and Espinoza (2013) exposed some benefits of code-switching such as enhancing of reading development and verbal skills and the ease of communication. Also, Table 4 indicates the positions of teachers about the use of translation. The remaining 9 papers highlight two opposing positions, 75% of the subjects are in favor of its use and 25% are against it. Translation as well as code-switching possesses some benefits that make teachers opt for it. Mohamed (2014) revealed that teachers use translation because it saves time in the classroom, especially when students are weak in English. On the other hand, the negative views about translation may be related to its poor value in real situations. According to Olcer (2014), this method may be qualified as weak because it is based on memorization.

Table 5

Students' Position of L1 Use

L1 category	Students' position	Percentage of subjects	Number of studies	Percentage of studies
Code- switching	Against use	23%	8	47%
	For use	77%		
Translation	Against use	18%	9	53%
	For use	82%		

N=17 S=290

Table 5 indicates that there is a disagreement among students about the uses of L1. Translation appears to gain more positive positions than code-switching. 82% of the students



qualified translation as an optimal strategy that can be used as an intermediary tool in the classroom. In terms of code-switching, 77% of the subjects support its use. There is not a significant difference of percentages between these two strategies; however, the numbers are relevant to infer that there is a common reason behind the students' preferences towards one of them. Sharma (2006), Ibrahim (2019), and Galali and Sinkara (2017) found that translation not only helps students to learn easier and faster, but also increases their motivation. The table also shows that students make a distinction about their negative positions, 18% of the subjects are against translation while 23% are against code-switching. These percentages reflect what Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz (2011) stated about L1 use. At some point, students become critical about L1 use and support L2 domination in order to avoid confusion.

Table 6

The Benefits of L1 Use Perceived by Students and Teachers

	Benefits	Number of Studies	%
	Easier grammar comprehension	3	27%
Students	Complex instructions get across easier	2	18%
	Better self-confidence	18	18%
	More content is covered	1	9%
Teachers	Ease of clarification	2	18%
	Apprehension	1	9%

N= 11

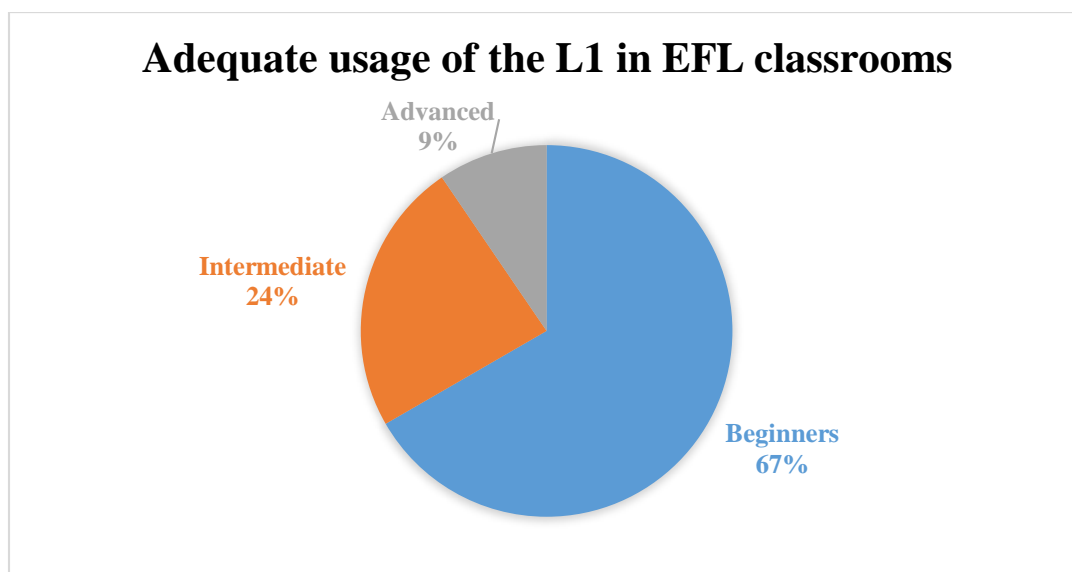
Table 6 enunciates the perceptions of the L1 use benefits by students and teachers. With a high 27% of the studies is the category Easier Grammar Comprehension which was exposed by the students. This quantity might lead to the belief that when it comes to teaching grammar, L1

use as a tool can be of immense help. Additionally, with the same percentage, 18%, are *complex instructions get across easier, and better self-confidence* which are lower because not in all instances are the given instructions considered as complex. Teachers' beliefs, on the other hand, are that the first language should be used but mainly for clarifying something. As Becker (2001) mentioned, when a language learner does not seem to understand any new information, L1 can always give the teacher a hand. The benefit of *ease of clarification* is also backed up by 18% of the 11 studies, which mainly express the benefits.

2. To what extent can the use of the L1 be beneficial for EFL learners?

The following figure was created based on all the information which was found potentially useful to answer the second research question.

Figure 1



N=21

The adequate usage of L1 in EFL classrooms is manifested on Figure 1. Out of the 21 empirical research studies, 14 express that L1 use is widely used for EFL learners in a beginner's level. Horasan (2014) disclosed that beginners in fact *need* their L1 in a language learning classroom for the reason being that they are just transitioning from one language structure to another. Also, beginners are far more confident if they are approached by their own language. Confidence is what gets students dragged into learning EFL and becoming better at it, according



to this same author. Contrastingly, Al-nofaie (2010) enunciated that students seemed to reject the use of L1 at an advanced level. That is why only 9% out of the 21 studies have found somewhat of a benefit of using L1 in EFL classrooms with advanced students. In parallel, 23% of the studies have found a positive use of the native language of EFL learners. This percentage is between that of the beginners and advanced since an intermediate level is a step from one to the other. Using the mother tongue for intermediate language learners is not as beneficial as for the beginners; however, it is useless for the advanced (Fernandez, 2014).



Chapter VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Wang & Wen (2002) mentioned that research about L1 use to teach or learn EFL has been around for some decades. This research has shown a continuous debate on the use of L1 in EFL classrooms (Miles 2004). The debate does not cease since in some instances the teachers see it as a bad strategy, but others find it useful; therefore, an agreement has not been reached, as it depends on the application of the different methodologies of teaching towards the pursuit of the objectives set by the teacher (Anton and DiCamila, 2000). The debate lies on whether teachers and students should or should not use their native language to teach or learn English as a foreign language (Auerbach, 1993). Consequently, the questions ‘What are the possible implications of using the native language (L1) as a tool to enhance the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL)?’ and ‘To what extent can the L1 be used in an EFL classroom to serve as a benefit?’ come into play. The revised articles give valid information on both monolingual and bilingual methods, which apply in the EFL environments. Additionally, this research shows evidence which supports the use of L1.

The studies used have provided enough information to assume that the implications of first language use are almost all beneficial towards the EFL learning process. This assumption is done because, as previously stated in the analysis, the use of L1 to enhance EFL learning is mostly implemented at a beginner’s level. Like Alshammari (2011) pinpointed, initial grammar is comprehended much easier if the students are exposed to their mother tongue. Also, according to the studies done to the teachers, the use of L1 makes it possible for the students to get used to L2 gradually (Tang, 2013). Students’ fear of making mistakes in classes diminishes with L1 application. Moreover, teaching EFL with the help of the L1 is beneficial at an early age, where children are still learning the grammatical prepositions, the phonemes, and other grammatical structures. L1 combined with the basic principles of L2 provide a greater absorption of the presented information and soon turns into knowledge, hence language acquirement (Bensen 2013).

Another conclusion that surges from this investigation is that L1 helps students acquire new vocabulary. Students seek for ways to improve their vocabulary and feel interested in



learning English as a foreign language (EFL), but they do not go directly to the L2 since they do not feel quite ready yet. That is why the principle of using L1 comes into play. Learners use their mother tongue to understand certain words or combination of L2 words, they sort of program their L1 use to understand the L2 system (Olcer, 2014).

To sum up, based on all the research findings and analysis drawn from the research articles, the conclusions can be synthesized as follows. This study aimed at investigating the two already mentioned research questions. The findings of this research suggest that teaching or learning EFL is enhanced by the use of L1. Likewise, the different articles advocate the fact that the first language should only be used to a mid-intermediate level of EFL learning. Using too much of the mother tongue after this period will result in a fossilization stage of language learning. The misuse of the L1, as stated by Fernandez (2014), could result in a language learning decline or hindrance. It was expected that the present research could aid teachers and students in the proper use of the L1 in the EFL learning process, despite the fact that all the revised articles were all from other countries.

6.2 Recommendations and Limitations

The aim of the study was to find the different implications of using the L1 in an EFL classroom. Although the number of studies related to this topic was considerably broad, the majority of them had been applied in Asia or Europe. Only a small number of studies were conducted in our continent, which was a limitation since the collected results were mostly a product of a different context than ours. Also, the complexity of this work was evident since this research was restricted only to the use of papers published since 2000. Most of the studies which talked about the negative aspects of L1 use were conducted in the 90's, which made the expansion of a broader debate about L1 use much arduous.

Another limitation is that the language skills used in the revised studies were 80% composed of Speaking and Writing. Taking for granted the Listening and Reading skills can influence on the debate's settlement since all four language skills are closely tied (Mokgwathi & Webb, 2013). Thus, making the inclusion of all the language skills utterly necessary for future research.

Future research should adopt an experimental design and consider residential context. Since the research articles used were not from local context, it is hard to tell how beneficial it



would be to use L1 in Ecuadorian EFL classrooms. Also, it makes it hard to tell how well the L1 use would turn out in the EFL classrooms if it is not experimented first.



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Appendix 1

List of Primary Studies for Analysis

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