Teachers' purposes and beliefs about using the L1 in the foreign language classroom in a Primary school in Andalusia

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1. INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of the first language (henceforth L1) into foreign language (henceforth FL) teaching has always been a controversial topic in educational contexts. In fact, researchers have found that even approaches in which the FL is used as the medium of instruction, such as EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction), have been found to be interfered by a judicious use of the L1 (e.g. Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018). In this sense, even though followers of exclusive FL use have rejected the fact that the L1 can function as a pedagogical tool in FL teaching (e.g. Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Genesee, 1994, in Macmillan and Turnbull, 2009), other researchers are staring to consider its implementation (e.g. Atkinson, 1987; Harbord, 1992, in Yenice, 2018; Cook 2010, in Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018), as they are now deeply exploring the advantages and disadvantages that the L1 can provide as a new role in the FL classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to ask ourselves whether or not the L1 should be used in FL teaching, and whether its use can boost or hamper learners' FL acquisition.

For many years, learning a language different from our mother tongue has not always been considered as important as it is nowadays. However, the positive impact that learning a new language can have into our personal and academic lives, has made researchers and educators be concerned about its development and the ways it can be improved. Therefore, different procedures and approaches have been put into practice in order to adapt the FL teaching to the students' needs. On the one hand, the exclusion of the L1 use in FL teaching was thought to be fundamental for acquiring the new language meaningfully, as there is little opportunity for being immersed in an FL context outside the classroom (Macmillan and Turnbull, 2009). On the other hand, the implementation of the L1 in FL teaching was also considered to be useful, as it seemed impossible for individuals not to draw upon their L1 to master the FL acquisition (Butzkamm, 1998, in De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009). In addition, as Rodríguez and Oxbrow (2008) pointed out, it could also be a potential tool used in the FL classroom with pedagogical purposes.

In this way, whether to incorporate approaches that sustain or ban the implementation of the L1 in FL teaching has always been a controversial topic in educational contexts. However, even though the L1 use has always been considered a "skeleton in the closet" because not many have deeply explored its role in the classroom (Prodromou, 2002, in He, 2012, p.2), researchers are now examining its advantages and disadvantages towards FL teaching. In fact, official authorities such as the UK National Curriculum document or The Ministry of Education of Mainland China, which stated that languages should be taught among the exclusive use of the FL, are considering the appearance of a "gradual shift in policy to measure the inclusion of the mother tongue in FL teaching" (Meiring and Norman, 2002; Ministry of Education of the PRC, 2000, in Littlewood

and Yu, 2011, p.66). Nonetheless, exclusive FL use approaches are still supported, as it provides a rich exposure to an FL environment (Littlewood and Yu, 2011).

Therefore, the reason why this research is being developed is because studies on whether the incorporation of the L1 can boost or affect the FL acquisition are necessary for proving or rejecting this consideration. In addition, due to the lack of researchers that have covered the study of this topic, this investigation can be useful for providing a deeply understanding on whether the exclusive use of the FL or the implementation of the L1 in FL teaching is better for learning the target language. In order to do so, this project will cover a study of the amount of L1 used by the teacher in the FL teaching analysed. The number of L1 interventions, the purposes in which the L1 is used, and the way in which the practice of the four skills can influence the use of the L1, are also aspects analysed in this investigation. Thus, readers will also find a contrast between the results obtained and the teachers' beliefs and personal observations, and they will also see a comparison between this investigation and other studies carried by authors that have covered this same topic too. Finally, the investigation will be evaluated, and conclusions and recommendations will be made in order to come up with an alternative that can improve a better teaching of the FL.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The use of the L1 in L2 teaching has always been a controversial topic that has been rejected or supported by many different authors during a long period of time. Therefore, this section shows different perspectives about the L1 being considered as an effective or useless tool in the FL classroom from previous years to these days.

2.1. The use of the L1 in foreign language teaching over time

Being able to speak different languages has not always been considered a paramount skill to be developed. In fact, neither competent authorities, nor society, and nor even the student community, have always defended the importance of teaching new languages in Andalusia, Spain (Bejano, 2006). Not many realised about the positive impact that learning a foreign language could have in our personal, intellectual, and professional development at that time. It was not until the late 90s when changes started to take place in the development of this educational area, a crucial time when the improvement of new career opportunities was a real necessity (Bejano, 2006).

From a general perspective, the Grammar-Translation Method, which was the principal pedagogical procedure for learning a new language (Rodríguez and Oxbrow, 2008) started to be re-evaluated in the late 90s. Based on a detailed study of grammar and repetitive translations from original texts into learners' L1 (Mora, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford and Goodwin, 2011), the Grammar-Translation Method was rejected by many followers of exclusive FL use approaches. When researchers witnessed the detrimental effects that this method was causing to the acquisition of new languages, they started to consider it an "authoritarian" and "dull" way of teaching, which hampered the acquisition of the FL (Hall and Cook, 2014, p.8). In this sense, it was considered a method that poor-trained teachers would put in practice (Harbord, 1992, in De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009).

Therefore, as students were obliged to focus on the development of accuracy and written skills, instead of on the communicative part of the language (Hall and Cook, 2014), a new monolingual principle appeared, which brought new alternatives based on the exclusive use of the FL and the total avoidance of any methodology that included the L1. In this sense, approaches such as the Direct Method totally changed the perspectives in which teaching new languages used to be seen at the beginning, as the exclusive use of the FL led to a situation in which students' communicative needs were covered (Littlewood, 1981, in Littlewood and Yu, 2011).

The Direct Method, on the contrary, was based on the acquisition of "speech habits" (Howatt, 2004, in Brooks-Lewis, 2009, p.218) and it was "a response to the need for more effective oral skills" (Abu-Melhim, 2009, p.39). Basically, this method defended the idea that the FL should be acquired in the same way as the students' L1: by only using the target language in the FL classroom, so students could use a useful everyday language (Liu and Shi, 2007). Therefore, as Lasagabaster (2013) expressed, new strategies, such as actions, mime, gestures, realia, and inductively grammar learning, were used in order to make new languages be taught by the exclusive use of the FL.

After that, the avoidance of the L1 also provoked the appearance of other new approaches based on learning to communicate in the foreign language, rather than learning the language itself (Mora, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford and Goodwin, 2011). Therefore, "providing a training that could make learners be more comfortable, confident and encouraged, with a visible purpose for FL learning", was fundamental to make students use the FL with a communicative end (Kamiya, 2006, p.75). One of these approaches was Content Language Teaching (CLT). CLT, as Cook (2001, in Parry, 2011, p.2) expressed, "became so widely accepted, that the use of the L1 or its existence was no longer even considered". Therefore, this new approach's aim was to achieve the creation of an atmosphere where the target language could be the principal vehicle of

communication, so students could totally be immersed in an FL context (Mora, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford and Goodwin, 2011).

Moreover, other new approaches that defended the communicative use of the FL and banned the use of the L1 started to rise in popularity too. For example, the Natural Approach, by Krashen and Terrel (1983), became crucial in FL teaching. As these authors defended, "to acquire the ability to communicate in another language, one must use that language in a communicative situation" (Krashen and Terrel, 1983, p.58), where the "exposure to a natural, comprehensible and communicative input" can help students to develop the linguistic competence by "natural order" (Krashen, 1987, p.7). Immersion programs, on the other hand, also gained a huge importance. As Genesee (1994, in Macmillan and Turnbull, 2009, p.16) expressed, "this is one of the most effective available second language teaching in school settings", as communicative language teaching is also the main objective of this type of approach.

Overall, the use of different approaches that defended the exclusive use of the FL prevailed over the ones that still concern the L1 use. In this respect, the latter was seen as an interference or a "source of embarrassment" (Prodromou, 2002, in He, 2012, p.2). Nonetheless, what literature defends does not always reflects the reality (Hall and Cook, 2014) and, even though the exclusive use of the target language is still accepted by many teachers, researchers realised that foreign language teachers' "stated behaviours" were different to their "actual behaviours" (Copland and Neokleous, 2011, p.7).

2.2.   L1-Foreign language confrontation

After what has just been explained, a judicious use of the L1 in FL teaching started to emerge again as a controversial topic in educational contexts (Macmillan and Turnbull, 2009). In addition, authors started to examine its implementation: Atkinson (1987) suggested a more valued and positioned view of the L1 use in FL teaching; Harbord (1992, in Yenice, 2018, p.3) stated that the use of the L1 as a "constructive element" could be used as a base for learning the FL; and Cook (2010, in Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018) defended how potential a judicious use of the L1 can result in the FL classroom.

As a consequence, a very varied use of the L1 and the FL was also found to be happening in the FL classroom. On the one hand, former investigations such as Duff and Polio's (1990, in Parry, 2011) found that the FL was being used in the classroom with very different degrees: from 0% to 90% of the time. In addition, Kaneko's survey (1992, in De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009), in which EFL classes from different Japanese Secondary schools were analysed, found that the L1 was

being used from 64% to 83% of the time in junior classes. In addition, Doyle's (1997, in Xhemaili, 2016) analysis expressed that the L1 was being used by the teachers as much as 90% of the time.

Moreover, researches such as Liu's (2004, in Littlewood and Yu, 2011), in which 13 EFL teachers in Secondary Korean schools were analysed, showed that the L1 was being used 40% of the time. Similar to this, an observational study of EFL lessons carried in Hungarian Primary Schools also stated that the L1 was being used 72% of the time in one of the classes analysed (Nagy and Robertson, 2009). De la Campa and Nassaji's research (2009) recollected a number of 526 L1 interventions in 60 lessons analysed, and Levine's (2003) survey also found that students usually make less use of the FL than the teachers themselves.

On the other hand, current investigations have shown a decrease of the L1 use in University EFL lessons, but not the same has happened in Elementary schools. For example, although an observational study of five foreign language teachers in a Chinese University stated that the FL was usually used all the time (an average of 99.37%) (Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018), an analysis of 28 EFL teachers from 55 Turkey Elementary schools, showed that 67.9% of the teachers confirmed that they normally use the L1 in FL teaching (Yenice, 2018).

Therefore, it is confirmed that nowadays teachers do not perceive the FL as the only language of interaction in the classroom (Hall and Cook, 2014). As Lasagabaster (2013, p.3) stated, "there has been a shift in the pendulum and more importance is once again attached to the mother tongue". Moreover, as Wach and Monroy (2019, p.4) said, "teachers are becoming more pragmatic and less dogmatic" about the use of the L1 in FL teaching. They started to believe that the FL should be learnt in relation to the presence of the L1 (Cook 2001), as a new language would always be confronted with an already existing L1 (Butzkamm, 2003). In addition, the L1 is being defined as a "natural instinct" that would always work as a facilitator for acquiring the FL (Cook, 2001, in Chavez, 2003, p.166).

In this way, the monolingual approach that has been defended for many years, started to be questioned, and authors such as Widdowson (2003, in Brooks-Lewis, 2009, p.221) stated that: "As the very subject we teach is, by definition, bilingual, how then can you teach a bilingual subject by means of a monolingual pedagogy?" In addition, Phillipson (1992, in Higareda, López and Mugford, 2009, p.44) also doubts about what he calls "monolingual fallacy", as it ignores the previous strategies and experiences that students already internalised during the acquisition of the L1. In fact, a reconceptualization of the foreign language classroom is thought to be fundamental, as (a) students need to accept their way of thinking, feeling and living as a person rooted to their mother tongue (Piasecka, 1986, in Auerbach, 1993); and (b) establishing a bilingual environment

is crucial for making students get immersed in the actual multilingual society (Macmillan and Turnbull, 2009).

2.3.   Purposes of the L1 use in foreign language teaching

Moreover, researchers have also found that this amount of L1 use have been generally employed with social and pedagogical purposes. As Kim and Elder (2005, in Littlewood and Yu, 2011, p.70) said, there is a difference between using the L1 with a "framework goal" (for classroom control and management) or with a "core goal" (for teaching the target language itself). On the one hand, many authors and other publishers (e.g. Higareda, López and Mugford, 2009; Cambridge University Press, 2019; Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Mora, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford and Goodwin, 2011) have expressed that using the L1 usually leads to teachers *giving tasks' instructions*. As Higareda, López and Mugford (2009) stated, many teachers make use of the L1 as a tool for giving unnecessary explanations that can save time for accomplishing other more crucial tasks. Littlewood and Yu's (2011) survey concluded that 64% of EFL teachers from a high school located in Mainland China used the L1 with this purpose. Using the L1 for *eliciting students' FL responses* is also a way of using the L1, as it is thought to be necessary for teachers that need to maintain the "flow of the lesson" (Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.10). What is more, a former Villamil and Guerrero's (1996, in Moore, 2013, p.241) survey stated that, more than half of the 40 L1 interventions recollected in an EFL classroom, was based on "guiding the teacher-student interaction and maintaining the dialogue".

Own-language use has also been considered a useful tool in FL teaching, as it foments the establishment of *intra-class social tasks* (Hall and Cook, 2014). In fact, an already mentioned study carried by Yenice (2018) showed that, while 21.8% of the time the L1 was used by the teachers for managerial or discipline processes, the L1 was used with affective functions (building rapports, solving personal problems…) 21.2% of the time. In addition, De la Campa and Nassaji's (2009) research has also stated that the L1 is also used as a way of informing about classroom equipment problems, although it is very uncommon (0.2%).

Moreover, authors and other publishers have also expressed that the L1 can be used as a way of *confronting students' anxiety* while they are making use of the FL in the classroom (e.g. Young, 1990, in Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2000, in Cambridge University Press, 2019; Hall and Cook, 2014). In fact, a study of the L1 used in ESP lessons carried by Xhemaili (2016, p.194) in a South East European University, shows that "bringing the L1 into English classes made learning the language more comfortable and motivated".

Furthermore, *evaluation* has also been found to be an L1 function used in FL teaching. However, using the L1 with this specific purpose has been considered to be the less L1 function used in the FL classroom. If you look at the already mentioned De la Campa and Nassaji's study (2009), there is a big difference between how much *translation* was used in comparison to *evaluation*, as the latter was used 1.7% of the time. Nonetheless, there seems not to be a specific pedagogical reason for evaluating students, rather than giving them feedback.

On the other hand, some other authors (e.g. Atkinson, 1987; Polio and Duff, 1994, in Chavez, 2003; Liu, 2004, in Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Yenice, 2018) have expressed that using the L1 usually leads to teachers *translating L1-FL words*. In this sense, translation has been found to be one of the most L1 function used by teachers in FL teaching. Studies as Butzkamm's (2003), has shown that translation is usually used as a way of avoiding misconception. In fact, the study carried by De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) showed that translation was used a 32.3% of the time.

Furthermore, *checking comprehension* is also known to be another of the L1 functions more used in FL teaching. Rodríguez Juárez and Oxbrow's (2008) study shows that 48% of the students, who signed up for an elementary English level class at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, agreed on the fact that using the L1 for checking understanding is very beneficial. Therefore, comprehension check is seen as an L1 function that makes FL learning easier and meaningful (Brooks-Lewis, 2009).

Contrasting L1-FL structures seems to be also an L1 function commonly used in FL teaching. Schweers (1999, in Brooks-Lewis, 2009, p.233) once said that, *contrasting L1-FL structures* "can raise awareness not only of differences, but similarities between the L1 and the FL, promoting a positive attitude towards learning a new language". An already mentioned study, which consisted in how the L1 was used according to prior experiences of two Polish and Spanish teachers-trainees groups, has stated that 54.1% and 44.4% of the teachers agreed on the fact that this L1 function was used in the FL lessons they experienced (Wach and Monroy, 2019).

2.4.   L1 use for confronting cognitive and language issues

Apart from the social and pedagogical purposes in which the L1 has usually been used in the FL classroom, its use has also been thought to depend on students' FL proficiency and cognitive levels. On the one hand, Yenice's (2018) investigation stated that teachers found crucial to adapt the FL teaching to every student participating in the FL classroom. Therefore, teachers tended to make a greater use of the L1 with the ones that had a lower proficiency FL level. In fact, Crawford

(2004) found that teachers usually tend to use the L1 with the younger learners than with the older ones, as the latter's FL proficiency levels are usually considered to be higher.

On the other hand, researchers, such as Anton and DiCamilla (1998, in Chavez, 2003, p.170), found that using the L1 in FL teaching with a cognitively purpose is useful for providing scaffolding to students when solving a task, as "the L1 becomes here the voice of the expert". In addition, Blyth (1995, p.103) expressed that the L1 use is always going to emerge from people's minds as a "private inner speech" (Vygotsky 1986).

2.5.   The four skills and the implementation of the L1

On the contrary, the development of activities related to the acquisition of the four language skills has also been found to get interfered by the use of the L1. In this sense, before changes were made on the way teachers managed to make their students acquire the language skills, learning the FL was based on developing accuracy and written abilities, making a great use of the L1 (Mora, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford and Goodwin, 2011). However, in 1980, with the re-evaluation of the already mentioned Grammar-Translation Method, there was a shift on how the acquisition of the four skills were viewed.

In this case, the development of the students' communicative competence (Hyme, 1972) started to be the main objective of learning a new language. In fact, an exclusive use of the FL and a conjointly view of the four language skills was seen as a way of making learners interact in the way they would do in real life (Usó and Martínez, 2008). However, communicative skills (listening and speaking) still had more weight than the written abilities (reading and writing), as the acquisition of the first ones would progressively activate the development of the last ones (Hinkel, 2006).

Nonetheless, it was perceived that acquiring some skills earlier than others would depend on individuals' learning goals towards the acquisition of the new language. In fact, EFL contexts, which are usually focused on preparing students for entrance exams or tests (Hinkel, 2006), changed teachers' attitudes on whether to focus on activities that could improve some skills or others. Therefore, a careful use of the L1 also started to be implemented during the development of these activities in FL teaching.

In this way, even though the exclusive FL use and the integration of the four skills was still defended, and the use of the L1 during the development of the tasks was still rejected, teachers are still making use of both techniques, as this was thought to help students with lower proficiency

levels to gain "self-motivation, metacognitive awareness-raising, self-assessment task and training in learning strategies" (Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.6-7). However, as Krashen (1983) expressed, this totally rejects the internalising process where students are able to comprehend the language once this has already been acquired.

Overall, it can be seen that the implementation of the L1 in FL teaching has always been a very debated and controversial topic in educational contexts. Therefore, the current study's aim is to reflect whether the incorporation of the L1 in the FL classroom promotes or affects the acquisition of the new language, according to the results obtained and the analyses presented in the following sections.

3. OBJECTIVES

The general aim of this research is to explore the ways in which the use of the L1 supports or affects the acquisition of the FL in a Primary Education school's EFL learning context. Moreover, the specific objectives in which this investigation was carried are the following ones:

- To measure the amount of English (FL) and Spanish (L1) produced by both the teacher and the students participating in this study.

- To specify the number of L1 interventions done by the teacher in the 15 EFL lessons analysed.

- To identify the different purposes in which the L1 was used in FL teaching as a pedagogical tool, according to the coding scheme of L1 utterances established in De la Campa and Nassaji's research (2009).

- To recognize how activities, based on the development of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are fulfilled in FL teaching, as well as the way in which the L1 is influenced by the accomplishment of these types of exercises.

4. METHOD

This investigation based on teachers' purposes and beliefs about using the L1 (Spanish) in EFL teaching is a quantitative and qualitative research developed mainly by classroom observation and teachers' interviews. In this way, many adaptations and procedures were used, and paramount aspects related to the context and the participants, the tools used for collecting the data, and the

limitations experienced during the investigation, are included in this chapter in order to explain how this study was fully developed.

4.1.   Context and participants

This investigation took place in a public non-bilingual Primary school located in Cádiz, a city in Andalusia in the south of Spain. The reason why this school was chosen for developing the current research was because of my previous knowledge about the methodology carried out, as it was the place where I undertook my fourth-year University internship. The school is reasonably large considering that there are almost 650 students and 38 teachers. Moreover, this educational institution is immersed in a medium-high socioeconomical and sociocultural context. Therefore, families do not often suffer from economic difficulties and the school is surrounded by a pluricultural environment.

In this way, while a total of 30 EFL classes and a sample of 4 teachers and 230 students were firstly considered to be analysed in this investigation, there is only an amount of 15 EFL lessons to observe and a sample of 1 teacher and 85 students to analyse. The reason has to do with the limitations experienced during the quarantine period established due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic. As a consequence, the investigation that was being developed at the beginning of March, could not be finished. Therefore, after realising about the pandemic and the later lock-down, it was needed to find an alternative to continue with the study. In this case, a previous investigation[1] carried out during my internship in this school was used to proceed with the development of the research.

The former investigation's main objective was to study the amount of FL produced by both the teacher and the students in their EFL lessons. However, because the L1 produced by them was also measured, it was easy to replicate the model into the current research. So, the former investigation was adapted to the current study in order to establish the base of the analysis. In this way, and, as it was previously pointed out, only 15 classes and a sample of one teacher and 85 students were observed during the analysis. On the one hand, the teacher analysed was a Spanish woman of advanced age specialised in English teaching for Primary school students. She took a University degree in Spain in English Philology and then she majored in Primary school English teaching. On the other hand, the sample of students belonged to four different groups: three classes of First Year (6-7 years old) and one class of Fifth Year (10-11 years old). Moreover, while three

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[1]This former study was one of the tasks I needed to accomplish during my University internship, according to my University internship's tutor-advisor.

of these four groups had three sessions of one hour each per week, the remaining class only had two sessions of one hour and a half each per week.[2]

4.2.   Tools for data collection

Due to the difficulties experienced during the quarantine period, many procedures were taken into account to accomplish this study and, therefore, different tools were used in order to collect the data: a former study completed during my University internship, an Excel template for the classroom observation, De la Campa and Nassaji's coding scheme of L1 utterances for establishing the seven categories of L1 functions more used in class, and WhatsApp Videoconference App for interviewing the two teachers analysed.

4.2.1.   Former internship's investigation

A previous investigation already completed during my University internship was the main instrument to develop the current analysis, as it was the only suitable alternative to continue with the research during the confinement. In this case, the goal of the former study was to measure the amount of FL used by the teacher and the students in 15 EFL classes. Therefore, in order to facilitate the collection of every FL interference, these interventions were gathered and analysed every ten minutes for each hour or hour and a half these sessions usually lasted. Every time the FL interfered, its use was measured on time, so annotations on how long the teacher made use of English (FL) in every of the ten minutes a session was divided into, were included in the analysis. This allowed the study to calculate how much time the FL was used in these classes by representing the results with percentages.

Even though the former study was more focused on the analysis of the FL use, rather than on the analysis of the L1 use, the results obtained were easily adapted to the current research. On the one hand, the amount of L1 produced by the teacher and the students was successfully calculated, as the remaining part of each FL percentage gathered in the research made reference to the total time in which the L1 was produced in these lessons. On the other hand, because annotations on how lessons were developed and with what purposes the teacher made use of the language (whether she made use of the FL or not) were also gathered in the former investigation, the way in which the L1 was used by the teacher could also be interpreted and adapted to the study.

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[2]A confidentiality agreement was also signed with the teacher analysed in order to ensure that the participation of the different figures (the school, the teacher, and the students) was kept anonymous.

4.2.2. Classroom observation

Once the amount of time in which the L1 was used was finally calculated, it was found that the results were slightly inexact due to the limitations experienced while measuring the amount of L1 use. Therefore, changes were made in order to facilitate a more accurate representation of the amount of L1 produced in these lessons. In this case, instead of measuring the amount of time in which the L1 was used in each of the ten minutes for hour or hour and a half a session lasted, it was decided that L1 interventions were going to be counted during each of the activities done per session attended, so the collection of the data could be more reliable. In fact, because the way in which the L1 interfered in each type of activity done was also an aspect to study in this research, this was a more suitable way of carrying out the analysis.

Thus, an Excel template was designed in order to facilitate the collection and interpretation of these L1 interventions. In this respect, seven aspects were thought essential to be included in the data gathering process: time per session assisted; group of students; number and types of activities done per lesson; number of L1 interventions done per activity; L1 functions in which the L1 was used per exercise accomplished; and examples that could clarify these functions in which the L1 was used (see in Table 1):

Table 1

Excel template designed for collecting the data

Session	Grade	Activities	Types of activities	L1 interventions	L1 functions	Examples

4.2.3. L1 functions coding scheme

Before starting to apply the previous Excel template to the collection of information regarding L1 interventions, it was firstly crucial to specify the functions in which the L1 was frequently used by the teacher during the 15 classes observed. Although annotations on the way in which the L1 was used by the teacher were collected in the former investigation, it was necessary to determine the specific L1 purposes in which the teacher frequently made use of the L1 in the different classes. In order to facilitate the identification of these L1 functions, De la Campa and Nassaji's (2009) research was a useful study employed as a tool for determining the purposes in which the teacher used Spanish (L1) in her English (FL) lessons.[3] Thus, only seven of the fourteen L1

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[3]De la Campa and Nassaji's research studies the amount, purposes, and teachers' beliefs about the L1 being implemented in the FL teaching. However, the study was carried in a two second-year German course at a Canadian University, where the L1 and the L2 analysed was English and German, respectively. Nonetheless, although different

utterances gathered in the coding scheme of this article were identified to be the L1 functions most employed by the teacher during the 15 lessons analysed: *activity objective*, *translation*, *evaluation*, *elicitation of student contribution*, *comprehension check*, *L1-FL contrast* and *classroom equipment*. Table 2 shows the original fourteen L1 utterances found in De la Campa and Nassaji's coding scheme and the seven L1 functions implemented in the current research, which are indicated in bold by the word 'included'.

Table 2

Purposes of the L1 use according to De la Campa and Nassaji's (2009) L1 functions

Functional Categories of L1 utterances	Definitions
Translation (included)	L1 utterances that translated a previous FL utterance.
L1-FL contrast (included)	L1 utterances used to contrast FL forms or cultural concepts with L1 forms or concepts.
Evaluation (included)	L1 utterances used to evaluate students' contributions.
Activity objective (included)	L1 utterances that described the objective of an activity.
Elicitation of student contribution (included)	L1 utterances that elicited student contributions.
Personal comment	L1 utterances that expressed the instructor's personal take on events.
Comprehension check (included)	L1 utterances that checked students' comprehension.
Classroom equipment (included)	L1 utterances the dealt with classroom equipment.

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educational stages and languages were studied in comparison to the current research, its coding scheme of L1 utterances seemed to be very useful and adaptable for the development of this study.

Administrative issues	L1 utterances related to administrative issues (e.g. exam announcements).
Reception student	L1 utterances spoken by a student and repeated by the instructor.
Reaction to student question	L1 utterances the instructor produced in response to a student question.
Humour	L1 utterances in which the instructor made a joke intended to make the students laugh.
Instructor as bilingual	Instances of code-switching.
Arbitrary code-mixing	L1 utterances containing instances of the instructor mixing L1 and FL words randomly, including false starts.
L1 words from L1 culture	L1 words from L1 cultural context that the instructor incorporated into FL speech.

4.2.4. Teachers' interviews

Finally, two structured interviews were arranged with the teacher analysed and another EFL teacher that was working at the same school. The reason why these two interviews took place was because, on the one hand, it was necessary to have a stronger justification of the L1 use analysed in this investigation and, on the other hand, other opinions on whether the L1 should be used in EFL classes was fundamental to contrast different beliefs. These interviews needed to be developed online due to the quarantine period, so WhatsApp was the tool that the two teachers chose as the most practical technological resource to arrange these videoconferences. Also, interviews were completely recorded for its further analysis.

In this way, ten questions were asked in Spanish due to the teachers' language preferences. The questions were divided into five general matters based on the use of the L1 in EFL classes, while the remaining five questions were more specific matters related to their personal experiences as

professionals EFL teachers. These ten questions, however, were designed before the interviews took place. Therefore, while the five general questions were equally formulated for both interviewees, specific questions varied depending on the answers obtained from each of the two teachers. In addition, specific questions asked to the teacher analysed in this investigation were more related to the way in which she made use of the L1 in the lessons observed. Table 3 shows the different questions that were designed before the interviews took place. However, as it has been said, it is important to mention that not all the specific questions turned out to be the same for both teachers.

Table 3

Teachers interview

General questions	Specific questions
¿Hasta qué punto cree que es necesario el uso del español en clases de inglés?	¿Por qué se encuentra el español muy presente en las clases de inglés?
¿Cómo cree que debería el profesor tratar el uso del español en las clases de inglés tanto en cursos bajos como altos?	¿Por qué hay veces en las que se ha observado que el español se usa más en cursos altos que en bajos?
¿Con qué objetivo suele emplear el español en clases de inglés?	Hay ocasiones en las que el español se ha utilizado con el propósito de evaluar o contrastar estructuras gramaticales en ambos idiomas. ¿Ha sido consciente de estos u otros usos del español que haya realizado en clase?
En relación con las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas, ¿con qué frecuencia pone usted en práctica unas y otras en los cursos más bajos y altos?	Se ha observado que en cursos más altos se realizan más actividades relacionadas con la lengua escrita que con la oral, ¿por qué cree que ocurre esto?
¿Cómo cree que influye el uso del español en las actividades relacionadas con el trabajo de las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas?	¿Por qué el español se utiliza más durante las actividades orales que durante las escritas?

4.3.   Limitations

Many limitations were faced during the development of this investigation, most of them related to the actual pandemic. Therefore, all obstacles found during the study will be explained in this section. First of all, the first barrier found during the development of this research was the impossibility of continuing with its development, as there was not any chance to develop an investigation during the confinement. However, as it has already been explained, a former study based on a similar topic was used as an alternative to proceed with the investigation.

Moreover, due to the fact that the former study was arranged during my University internship, there was a lower number of participants included in the research (one teacher and 85 students) as it was expected to be at the beginning of the investigation (4 teachers and 230 students). In addition, due to my work schedule as a trainee student, it was impossible to observe an equal number of different students' groups. That is the reason why there were a higher number of classes observed in the First Year than in the Fifth.

Furthermore, due to the different tasks I needed to attend as a student trainee, measuring the amount of time in which the FL and the L1 were used by the teacher was very complicated because results turned out to be very inexact. Nonetheless, as different annotations were developed and collected during the former research, the amount of FL and L1 use was decided to be gathered by counting the interventions done (using both languages) in each of the activities accomplished in class.

Another limitation experienced was related to the identification of the purposes in which the teacher made use of the L1 in FL teaching. Even though the way in which the L1 was used in class was collected in the former study, it was needed to determine the specific functions in which the L1 was being frequently used at that moment. However, De la Campa and Nassaji's (2009) coding scheme of L1 utterances was a useful study that helped to determine these L1 purposes.

Finally, another barrier needed to be faced during the development of the current investigation was the arrangement of the two different interviews that could not be developed at first. However, thanks to the different technological resources available nowadays, teachers could be interviewed among videoconferences.

5. RESULTS

Overall, it has been observed that the L1 takes a very significant part of the FL teaching analysed in this investigation. In this respect, the results collected have been interpreted and divided into four different sections in order to explain the different aspects of the L1 use. These sections are referred to as the average amount of L1 produced; the number of L1 interventions; the purposes of L1 use; and the way the L1 use is influenced by the types of activities accomplished by the students.

5.1. Amount of L1 use

During the development of this research it has been observed that the amount of L1 use is considerably high as compared to the FL use. The average amount of L1 produced by the teacher during the analyses of 15 classes has been measured to be an 85.4%, which has consequently led to only a 14.6% of FL use. It was observed that the amount of L1 produced by the teacher in the FL teaching was highly perceptible. As a result, students were also encouraged to produce a lower amount of FL, which, even though this is not the main objective of this study, it is equally important to consider that a 86.6% of L1 was used by them and only a 13.4% was destined to the FL use (see Table 4):

Table 4

Average amount of L1 and FL used in all classes attended

Languages	Teacher	Students
L1	85.4%	86.6%
FL	14.6%	13.4%

Furthermore, it seemed that the amount of L1 produced by the teacher was higher when it focused on early years. Nonetheless, even though different groups of students were investigated and, therefore, different FL proficiency levels were observed in those classes, the difference between the amount of L1 produced by the teacher in both early and advanced years was not very significant (87.5% and 79.1%, respectively). In addition, although a difference between the amount of L1 produced by the students in early and advanced groups was not that relevant either, it was clear that younger students made more use of the L1 (90.3% and 76.0%, respectively). However, while young learners made a greater use of the L1 than the teacher herself (90.3% and 87.5%, respectively), advanced students surprisingly produced less amount of Spanish (L1) as compared to the teacher (76.0% and 79.1%, respectively) (see Table 5).

Table 5

Average amount of L1 produced in the First and the Fifth Years

Students' groups	L1 produced by the teacher	L1 prouced by the students
First Year	87.5%	90.3%
Fifth Year	79.1%	76.0%

5.2.   Number of interventions using the L1

The number of interventions in which this great amount of L1 use (85.4%) was employed by the teacher was also an aspect to be studied in this research, finding out that the L1 always interfered in each of the 15 classes observed. Therefore, 82 L1 interventions were collected during the analysis of the FL teaching. In fact, the average number of L1 interferences observed in all classes assisted is about 6 interventions per class, being the lowest number of interferences two and the highest nine (see Table 6).

Table 6

L1 interventions

L1 interventions	Average amount of L1 interventions/session	Highest and lowest amount of L1 interventions/session
82	6	(2-9)

Although there is a higher number of classes observed in the First Year (10) than in the Fifth Year (5), it is true that a bigger amount of L1 interventions was perceived to be happening in the early group (63) than in the advanced one (19). Moreover, the number of L1 interventions collected from First Year usually overtook five interventions per class, whereas in the Fifth Year, L1 interventions did not often exceed that many. In fact, while the average amount of L1 interferences in the First Year is about 6 interventions per class, in the Fifth Year is only 4 (see Table 7).

Table 7

L1 interventions done in the First and the Fifth Years

Students' groups	L1 interventions	Average amount of L1 interventions/session	Highest and lowest amount of L1 interventions/session
First Year	63	6	(4-9)
Fifth Year	19	4	(2-7)

5.3.   Purposes of L1 use

In order to analyse in which way the L1 was used in these FL lessons as if the teacher was using it as a pedagogical tool, a variety of purposes that could describe the different functions in which the L1 was employed in FL teaching were also studied. In this way, the functions in which the L1 was employed by the teacher in FL classes were categorised in seven groups: *activity objective*, *translation*, *evaluation*, *elicitation of student contribution*, *comprehension check*, *L1-FL contrast,* and *classroom equipment*. These groups, as it has already been said, were based on the functional categories already established in the coding scheme of L1 utterances used in the research of de la Campa and Nassaji (2009), whose aim was to analyse the purposes in which teachers needed to use the L1 in FL teaching as well.

Therefore, after the data was collected, it was observed that there were significant differences in the frequency in which the teacher made use of the L1 functions abovementioned, being *activity objective* the one most used by the educator (35.3%). In addition, this function was also the most repeated one in the First Year. In fact, the difference between the way in which the L1 was used with this purpose in both early and advanced groups was relevant (44.4% and 26.3%, respectively).

Moreover, the second L1 function most repeated in these FL lessons was *translation* (19.2%). Surprisingly, there was not a very significant difference between the frequency in which translation was used in the early and advanced years (17.5% and 21,0%, respectively). However, it is true that the teacher used to call upon translation with different purposes when it came to older or younger students. *Evaluation* was the third L1 function most used by the teacher in FL teaching (16.8%), as she would usually make students be aware of their errors and right answers using the L1. Nonetheless, this L1 function was more frequently used with advanced students (21,0%) than with younger learners (12.7%). *Elicitation of student contribution* is the following L1 function most used by the teacher in EFL lessons (13.6%). However, this was again more repeated in the advanced group (21,0%) than in the early one (6.3%). The next most repeated L1 function was *comprehension check* (9,0%), being this utterance more used in the First Year (12.7%) than in the Fifth Year (5.3%). Nevertheless, this L1 function was employed with different purposes in each group, focusing on the explanation of grammar when it came to the advanced group, and on vocabulary in the early group. Finally, the L1 functions less employed by the teacher in FL teaching were *L1-FL contrast* (2.6%) and *classroom equipment* (1.6%). While the first was used once in the advanced year to clarify a particular grammar aspect, the later was also employed once to explain that some technological difficulties needed to be solved out at that moment.

Table 8

Average amount of the L1 functions used by the teacher

Functional Categories	General use	First Year	Fifth Year
Activity objective	35.3%	44.4%	26.3%
Translation	19.2%	17.5%	21.0%
Evaluation	16.8%	12.7%	21.0%
Elicitation of student contribution	13.6%	6.3%	21.0%
Comprehension check	9.0%	12.7%	5.3%
L1-FL contrast	2.6%	0.0%	5.3%
Classroom equipment	0.8%	1.6%	0.0%

Due to the need of specifying in which way these L1 utterances were used by the teacher in each of the two groups observed, examples that could explain the way in which these L1 functions were used in FL teaching by the teacher were also collected (see Table 9).

Table 9

Examples of the L1 use

Functional Categories	First Year	Fifth Year
Translation	*"Is it sunny? ¿Está soleado?"*	*"She is taller than me, ella es más alta que yo"*
L1-FL contrast	-	*"En inglés, dentro del adjetivo terminado en -er, así como taller o bigger, ya estaría incluido lo que en español diríamos como más alto o más bajo"*
Evaluation	*"No, eso no es legs, ¿qué es eso?" ("no, those are not legs, what are those?").*	*"Muy bien, siguiente"*
Activity objective	*"Abrir vuestro libro por la página 15, vamos a escuchar y señalar y repetir el nombre de estas partes del cuerpo"*	*"Hoy vamos a trabajar las actividades de la ficha que os di el otro día para repasar el comparativo"*

Elicitation of student contribution	*"Si mezclo red y blue, ¿Qué color saldrá?"*	*"¿Cuál sería la frase correcta?"*
Comprehension check	*"Legs, con ellas puedo caminar"*	*"Para utilizar el adjetivo sunny en una frase comparativa debemos cambiar la -y por una -i y añadir después la terminación -er"*
Classroom equipment	*"Como el proyector no funciona no podemos ver la historia, solo escucharla"*	-

5.4. The L1 use in the acquisition of the four language skills

Once the data compilation was fully completed, it was observed that the analysis of the activities done in each lesson was also an important issue to include in this investigation because the L1 use was in fact also influenced by the sort of exercises done in each students' groups. Therefore, due to the large variety of activities done, the exercises were given the name of the four language skills students tended to perform in each activity: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Many differences were found in the frequency in which some of these activities were more practised than others in each year. For example, even though listening and speaking were the two most practised exercises in the First Year, there is a significant difference between the frequency in which these two types of activities were developed (62.2% and 21.6%, respectively).

On the contrary, reading and writing, were the less practised activities in the First Year (2.7% and 13.5%, respectively). Nonetheless, even though the use of oral skills should take precedence over the use of written skills, there is not a relevant difference between their uses. In fact, there is not a big disparity between the use younger students made of writing and speaking activities (13.5% and 21.6%, respectively). On the other hand, listening and writing were the two most practised activities in the Fifth Year (40.0% and 30.0%, respectively), which dominate the use of speaking and reading exercises (20.0% and 10.0%, respectively).

Therefore, many differences were also found between how these activities were developed in the early and advanced years. For example, even though listening was the most practised exercise in both students' groups (62.2% and 40.0% in that order), speaking and writing were the second

most repeated activities in the First and the Fifth Years, respectively (21.6% and 30.0% in that order) (Table 10).

Table 10

Average amount of each type of activity done

Students' groups	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
First Year	62.2%	21.6%	2.7%	13.5%
Fifth Year	40.0%	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%

Furthermore, as the number of L1 interventions was measured in each of the activities developed by the students, it was observed that there was a relation between the exercises done and the amount of L1 used in each type of activity. It was found that listening and speaking were the two types of activities where the use of the L1 most interfered in the First Year, existing a significant difference between how this L1 interfered in these two types of exercises done (59.5% and 24.0%, respectively).

Reading and writing, were the two activities where the L1 interfered less in the First Year (2.5% and 13.9%, respectively). However, there was not a big difference between the amount of L1 interventions done in oral and written activities. In fact, while there were 13.9% of L1 interventions in writing activities, 24.0% of L1 interventions were done in speaking exercises. On the other hand, listening and writing were the two activities where the L1 most interfered in the Fifth Year, without existing a relevant difference between the frequency in which they were developed (39.3% and 28.6%, respectively).

Moreover, speaking and reading were the two activities where the L1 less interfered in the advanced group (14.3% and 17.9%, respectively). However, there was not a huge disparity between the amount of L1 interventions done in the development of the oral and written exercises. For example, while speaking activities were interfered by the use of the L1 14.3% of the time, writing was only interfered 28.6% of the same time, approximately.

Many differences were also found when both the early and the advanced groups were compared. While listening was the type of activity where more L1 interventions were done in both groups (59.5% and 39.3% in that order), speaking and writing were the second type of activities where the L1 interfered the most in the First and the Fifth Years, respectively (24.0% and 28.6% in that order).

Table 11

Amount of L1 interventions done in each type of activity

Students' groups	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
First Year	59.5%	24.0%	2.5%	13.9%
Fifth Year	39.3%	14.3%	17.9%	28.6%

6. DISCUSSION

Once the results have been shown, many reasons can now explain why a great amount of L1 was used in FL teaching. Therefore, throughout the following sections, all findings are going to be interpreted and justified according to the information provided in the theoretical framework, including teachers' beliefs and personal observations. In order to differentiate between the two teachers, both of them are going to be given the names of 'Teacher 1' and 'Teacher 2', respectively. Teacher 1 refers to the teacher whose FL teaching has been analysed in the current investigation; and Teacher 2 implies the name given to the second teacher interviewed, whose FL teaching was not observed in the study.

The following sections are going to discuss whether or not the amount of L1 use, the number of L1 interventions, the purposes in which the L1 was used in FL teaching, and the development of the L1 during the accomplishment of the four skills-based activities, were potentially boosting or hampering the FL acquisition.

6.1.   Excessive use of the L1

The analysis shows that the amount of L1 produced by the teacher during 15 EFL classes was exceedingly high (85.4%). In this way, it was observed that the L1 was not even used with a pedagogical objective sometimes.

This great amount of L1 seems to coincide with current investigations that show how EFL teachers in Elementary schools still make a high use of the first language (e.g. Yenice, 2018). However, as the amount of L1 found in this study was measured to be very high, the result obtained is considered to be more related to former investigations where the L1 was still being overused and employed without many pedagogical purposes (e.g. Duff and Polio, 1990; Kaneko, 1992; Doyle, 1997).

Despite this fact, and although Teacher 1 considers that the L1 is a very important pedagogical tool for EFL teachers, she was aware that she should use more amount of FL in order to make students be more immersed in an FL context: *"El español es bastante necesario en las clases de inglés [...] pero a veces me gustaría utilizar más la sengunda lengua al ser esta el principal vehículo de comunicación"*[4] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020). Therefore, confirming Prodromou's (2002, in He, 2012, p.2) thoughts, a feeling of guilt is perceived to be emerging from the teacher's mind, as she seems to be aware that using the L1 is kind of a "source of embarrassment". However, it is clear that this did not stop the teacher from still using the L1 in such high levels.

She tried to justify the use of the L1 by pointing out how limited the work of foreign language teachers sometimes is. She mentioned that the use of the L1 usually helps her to save time for teaching the main contents that students need to acquire at the end of each lesson: *"Los docentes de lenguas extranjeras tenemos un tiempo bastante limitado y muchas veces vamos con prisa por querer acabar todo a tiempo"*[5] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020). In this case, although several studies have shown that the L1 is usually used as a way of saving time for focusing on more crucial tasks (e.g. Higareda, López and Mugford, 2009; Littlewood and Yu, 2011), it can be seen that the teacher analysed was subconsciously abandoning the language in order to stick herself to an apparently unmodifiable content planification, which was mainly based on completing a number of activities from the course-book each day.

Moreover, she also pointed out the lack of control EFL teachers have over the students when they want to arrange more oral activities where the FL is expected to be more frequently used: *"No puedes llevarte todo el tiempo haciendo actividades orales usando el inglés porque los niños se descontrolan"*[6] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020). This statement, as well as the one commented before, seems to be very related to the concept of "framework goal" established by Kim and Elder (2005, in Littlewood and Yu, 2011), who mentioned the fact that the L1 is usually used for social purposes such as managing students' control and discipline (e.g. Cambridge University Press, 2019; Hall and Cook, 2014; Yenice, 2018). However, having control over students, in this case, seemed to be a way of having a 'silent environment', which does not coincide with how modern languages should be acquired by the learners.

Furthermore, she also pointed out the fact that the use of the L1 often helps her to get herself less exhausted and students less frustrated: *"Te encuentras con alumnos que se desmotivan cuando*

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[4]"Spanish is a very necessary tool in EFL lessons […] but I would like to use the FL more often as it is the main vehicle of communication."
[5]"EFL teachers have a very limited time and we usually are in a rush to finish everything on time."
[6]"You cannot always practice oral activities using the FL because students get out of control."

estás usando el inglés durante mucho tiempo [...] muchas veces viene también por el cansancio que los mismos docentes sufrimos a la hora de hablar inglés"[7] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020). This belief corresponds to the idea that the L1 is usually used as a way of establishing intra-class social tasks (e.g. Hall and Cook, 2014), especially when students are immersed in a frustrating situation where they cannot understand anything that is being said (e.g. Young, 1990, in Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2000, in Cambridge University Press, 2019). Nonetheless, making use of the L1 anytime students are in a struggle, only leads to a situation where learners are going to be comfortable when the L1 takes active part of the session. Therefore, alluding to Krashen's (1987) quote about second language acquisition, the FL can only be acquired when students are exposed to a comprehensible input in an environment where they can feel comfortable enough when using the language. So, interrupting the message with the interference of the L1 can never be beneficial.

On the other hand, even though Teacher 2 also agreed with the fact that the L1 works an important pedagogical tool in EFL classes, she made clear that it is not a resource to overuse, which totally corresponds to the idea that the L1 use is thought to be efficient only when it is used in a judicious way (e.g. Atkinson, 1987; Harbord, 1992, in Yenice, 2018; Cook, 2010, in Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018): *"Yo pienso que es un recurso más y totalmente válido en su justa medida y sin abusar"*[8] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020). Moreover, she also added that, as an English student herself, she understands the L1 as a useful tool while learning the FL, which confirms the fact that the use of the L1 in the FL classroom is always going to be very varied, as it depends on the teachers' beliefs about how the target language should be taught, which are usually based on teachers' prior FL experiences (e.g. Duff and Polio's, 1990, in Parry, 2011; Kaneko, 1992, in De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009): *"Por mi experiencia, no solo como docente, sino también como estudiante de inglés, me ha parecido más fácil estudiar el idioma cuando he tenido este referente a mano [(L1)]"*[9] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020).

In addition, she also thinks that EFL teachers do not usually feel comfortable saying that they use the L1 in FL teaching due to 'new' methodological approaches that defend the exclusive use of the FL in Spain:

> Yo creo que, por lo menos en España, ha habido diferentes corrientes que han hecho sentir
>
> a los profesores culpables por usar el español. Por eso entiendo que algunos docentes

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[7]"There are students who get demotivated when teachers use the FL all the time […] sometimes even teachers are tired from using the FL for a long time."
[8]"I think it is a valid resource to use in its right measure and without overusing it."
[9]"Regarding my experience as an English student as well, having the L1 as a learning reference is very useful."

dicen que defienden el uso exclusivo del inglés, pero, aun así, siguen usando español en

sus clases.[10] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020)

In this sense, alluding again to Prodromou's (2002, in He, 2012) comment about teachers feeling uncomfortable when using the L1, shows that educators usually feel guilty when they are aware that they are choosing the L1 as the easiest way of confronting students' language challenges, rather than being constantly adapting the FL teaching to the students' needs, and making use of methodologies that require an exclusive FL use.

The study also shows that Teacher 1 made a more frequent use of the L1 in the First Year than in the Fifth Year (87.5% and 79.1%, respectively), and that younger students used more Spanish (L1) than the older ones (90.3% and 76.0%, respectively). However, the difference between the amount of L1 produced by the teacher and the students was surprising, as advanced learners used less Spanish (L1) than the teacher herself (76.0% and 79.1%, respectively).

The several studies discussed in this project have reflected total opposite situations in relation to the amount of L1 produced by both the teachers and the students, expressing that the L1 has usually been more used by the learners than by the teachers themselves (e.g. Levine, 2003). However, the reason of this was thought to be because of the lack of interaction between the teacher and the advanced learners, as the teaching process implemented with older students was based on doing writing exercises where the FL was commonly used by learners when the activities needed to be corrected.

Overall, it can be appreciated that teachers give more importance to the L1 use than to the FL use in the classroom. Consequently, students are not exposed to a comprehensible input in the target language and, therefore, a lower amount of target language is also produced by them, resulting into learners being immersed in a very decontextualized FL context that affects language acquisition.

6.2.   Remarkable number of L1 interventions

During the analysis, it was also found that 82 L1 interventions were done by the teacher in 15 EFL classes, which, in comparison to De la Campa and Nassaji's (2009) research, where a number

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[10]"I think that the appearance of different approaches that support the exclusive use of FL in Spain have made teachers feel guilty about using the L1 in EFL lessons. That is why some teachers defend the exclusive use of the FL, but, then, they keep using the L1 for specific purposes."

of 526 L1 interventions were collected, it does not seem to be a significant number. However, considering that their study was based on the analysis of 60 lessons, it looks like 82 L1 interventions is, indeed, a considerable amount of L1 used in only 15 classes.

A greater amount of L1 interventions appeared in the First Year (63) than in the Fifth Year (19). In this sense, Teacher 1 believes that, depending on the students' proficiency levels, the use of the L1 would be higher or lower. Therefore, as young students were the ones who had a lower proficiency of EFL level, that could be the reason why the teacher made a greater use of the L1 in the First Year than in the Fifth:

> Creo que con los más pequeños uso más el español porque es algo nuevo para ellos. Si tú desde un principio te pones a explicar todo en inglés no se enteran de mucho. […] En cursos más mayores hay muchas cosas que ya entienden, entonces uso el español poco, solo para explicar la gramática.[11] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020)

This seems to coincide with many investigations where the L1 is found to be more used with younger students, as their FL proficiency levels are always considered the lower ones (e.g. Crawford 2004; Macmillan and Turnbull, 2009; Yenice, 2018). However, even though Teacher 1 thinks that the L1 is more used with younger students than with the advanced ones, when she was asked about why sometimes there was not a huge difference between the amount of L1 used in the First and the Fifth Years, she justified herself saying that the use of the L1 sometimes comes natural to her. Therefore, rather than using the L1 as a way of adapting the FL teaching to the students' proficiency levels, she was trying to make things easier for herself, as she also used to make use of the L1 when she did not know how to make the input comprehensible.

She also added that due to the amount of tasks foreign language teachers need to fulfil, she usually feels to be under pressure to develop more oral activities where she can make a greater use of the FL with younger students, which corresponds again to the idea that the L1 is seen as a 'useful tool' for saving time to focus on more crucial activities:

> Son muchos alumnos, poco tiempo, debes atender a la diversidad, los contenidos son bastante específicos, debes ceñirte a la ley… Son tantas cosas a la vez y tienes que ir tan

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[11]"I think I use the L1 with younger students more frequently because this is new for them [(English lessons)]. If you use the FL all the time, they will not understand much. […] In advanced years, students understand the FL better, so I do not need to use the L1 a lot, only to explain grammar."

rápido para poder darlo todo, que a veces se evita el uso de las actividades orales porque son más lentas de completar.[12] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020)

Nonetheless, the fact that foreign language teachers use the L1 as a way of saving time in order to focus on more crucial tasks, is not an excuse for avoiding the development of oral activities, as communicating through the target language is thought to be one of the most important skills students need to acquire while learning a language (e.g. Kamiya, 2006). Therefore, it seems that she did not usually make use of the L1 as a pedagogical tool, as many researchers have found in many investigations (e.g. Atkinson, 1987; Harbord, 1992, in Yenice, 2018; Chavez, 2003; Cook, 2010, in Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018). In this specific case, the L1 was basically used as a medium of instruction in FL teaching. Therefore, how can the L1 have more weight than the FL itself in a context where the foreign language should be the vehicle of communication?

Even though Teacher 2 also believes that the use of the L1 is higher when it comes to younger students, she also thinks that its use is highly conditioned. She mentioned that it all depends on the methodology you use and how motivated students are while learning the FL:

A medida que avanzan los cursos, puedes dejar más a un lado el español, aunque su uso es también muy relativo […] Pero también creo que influye mucho la metodología. El aprendizaje es mayor cuanta más motivación haya. Como con los niños pequeños utilizas una metodología más lúdica, se favorece más el uso del inglés que el del español. Si cambiara el tipo de metodología la situación sería distinta.[13] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020).

It is confirmed that teaching the FL by putting in practice approaches that only consider the exclusive use of the target language (e.g. Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Genesee, 1994, in Macmillan and Turnbull, 2009) is not impossible, it just depends on whether foreign language teachers are well-prepared for implementing these types of 'new' methodologies that are based on the

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[12]"Due to the great number of students, lack of time, class diversity, specific contents you need to teach, you must adhere to the law…, foreign language teachers feel to be in a rush for completing more oral activities with younger students."

[13]"As students improve their FL, you can live aside the L1 over time; however, its use is very relative […] Nonetheless, I also think methodologies influence the use of the L1. The more motivated students are, the better learning they can developed. As we tend to use a more ludic teaching method with younger learners, it is true that a lower amount of L1 can be used; however, if you change the teaching method, the amount of L1 use would be different."

exclusive use of the FL and are beneficial to the acquisition of the language (e.g. Harbord, 1992, in De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009)

Overall, the L1 is seen as a tool for helping teachers getting things done quicker and easier, rather than as a potential resource for helping students acquire the FL better. Therefore, teachers are not respecting the "natural order" in which the FL needs to be acquired by students (Krashen, 1987, p.7). Furthermore, learning a new foreign language is seen as another academic subject students must pass at the end of the school year.

6.3. The unmeaningful purpose of using the L1

This investigation shows seven different L1 functions that the teacher frequently used in FL teaching: *activity objective* (35.3%), *translation* (19.2%), *evaluation* (16.8%), *elicitation of student contribution* (13.6%), *comprehension check* (9.0%), *L1-FL contrast* (2.6%) and *classroom equipment* (0.8%), according to De la Campa and Nassaji's (2009) classification. In this way, the different purposes of L1 use, seem to coincide with the ones that authors have described to be the most L1 functions used in FL teaching (e.g. Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Mora, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford and Goodwin, 2011; Yenice, 2018; and Cambridge University Press, 2019). In addition, it also confirms the fact that the L1 is usually used with a "framework and core goal" (Kim and Elder, 2005, in Littlewood and Yu, 2011, p.70), as *activity objective*, *evaluation*, *elicitation of student contribution* and *classroom equipment* are used with a social objective; and *translation*, *comprehension check* and *L1-FL contrast* are used with a pedagogical purpose.

Activity objective was used as a way of enabling the teacher to finish the lessons at the time they were planned to be finished, saving time by giving the activities' instructions using the L1. As investigations have also expressed, this was also one of the purposes in which the L1 was more used in FL teaching (e.g. Littlewood and Yu's, 2011), which was more repeated in the First Year than in the Fifth Year (44.4% and 26.3%, respectively). However, the teachers' purpose for giving instructions using the L1 was a way of continuing completing the course-book's activities, rather than focusing on other crucial tasks that could have improved the FL acquisition. Therefore, as a consequence of this traditional way of teaching, students were more focused on "learning the language itself", rather than "learning to communicate in the foreign language" (Mora, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford and Goodwin, 2011).

Translation was also one of the most L1 functions used by the teacher in FL teaching. Nonetheless, there was a relevant difference between the frequency in which the L1 was used

with this purpose in other investigations, as *translation* was seemed to be more frequent in other FL teaching contexts (e.g. De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009). In addition, translation was usually used for acquiring new vocabulary. However, students hardly ever remember these new concepts already translated, so investigations assuring that this L1 function is beneficial for avoiding misconception (e.g. Butzkamm, 2003) does not seem to be happening here.

In addition, *translation* was more commonly used with older students than with younger ones (17.5% and 21,0%, respectively). The reason of this was because the teacher had enough material to avoid translation in the First Year, as learning new vocabulary through the support of visual materials was usually done with younger learners. Therefore, this confirms the fact that the FL can easily be taught through the exclusive use of the target language, if strategies such as actions, mime, gestures, and realia are implemented in the teaching process (Lasagabaster, 2013).

Moreover, *evaluation* was another of the L1 functions more used with advanced students than with the younger ones (21,0% and 12.7%, respectively). In this case, there was not a specific reason that could explain this situation apart from the fact that a poorly FL interaction was shared between the teacher and advanced students. Therefore, the L1 use was pointless and meaningful, and it was only 'useful' when the teacher tried to correct students' errors or mistakes quickly.

Furthermore, *elicitation of student contribution* was another of the L1 functions used in FL teaching, which coincides with the investigations covered in this study (e.g. Villamil and Guerrero, 1996, in Moore, 2013). In addition, this L1 function was more used in the Fifth Year than in the First (21% and 6.3%, respectively). Although teachers' aim of using the L1 with this purpose corresponds to the fact that eliciting students' FL responses is useful in order to maintain the "flow of the lesson" (Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.10), the reason why the teacher really made use of this L1 function with advanced students, seemed to be related to how frustrated it was for those learners to make use of the FL in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher usually had to insist in making students participate in class. In this sense, it seemed that, the way in which the FL was taught to these students in previous years, led to the development of negative attitudes towards the learning of the FL. It looks like a reconceptualization of the foreign language classroom, where the implementation of the L1 should be considered, making the students perceive the learning of a new language as an unmeaningful subject they are obliged to pass through.

Comprehension check was another of the L1 functions more frequently used by the teacher in FL teaching. However, although this L1 function has been found to be more used among FL teachers as compared to this analysis (e.g. Rodríguez Juárez and Oxbrow, 2008), it has to be considered

that the use of the L1 with this purpose is covered by an investigation that studies a different educational stage (tertiary education). That is why it is usual to find a disparity between the results obtained in both the current research and the commented one. In addition, *comprehension check* was more used in the First Year than in the Fifth (12.7% and 5.3%, respectively), as the teacher usually made use of this L1 function when younger students needed to understand specific concepts rather than grammar rules, for instance. The fact that using the L1 as a way of checking the students' comprehension is useful when you want to facilitate learners' FL acquisition (e.g. Brooks-Lewis, 2009) cannot be related to this situation. This is because checking the understanding of specific concepts usually led to students forgetting about the explanations given, as learners were obliged to memorise the things the teacher said. Therefore, this L1 function was not very beneficial in this FL context.

L1-FL contrast was one of the less L1 functions used in FL teaching. It was only used with advanced students (5.3%) as this L1 function was more used to explain grammar differences and similarities (e.g. Schweers, 1999, in Brooks-Lewis, 2009). However, in comparison to other researchers, this was very uncommon to see, as this L1 function has been found to be very used in FL teaching (e.g. Wach and Monroy, 2019). The reason of this was thought to be because of the teacher's necessity to make students 'understand' quicker the grammar structures by explaining them using the exclusive use of the L1. Therefore, once again, the language is being sacrificed and students cannot see the real objective of learning a new language.

Classroom equipment was also found to be one of the less L1 functions used by the teacher in FL teaching (e.g. De la Campa and Nassaji's, 2009). In addition, it was only used with younger students (1.6%). This L1 function was used as a way of informing learners about a specific equipment problem, rather than being used as a pedagogical tool. Perhaps, the reason was because the teacher did not consider that using the FL for giving such types of explanations would have been useful for boosting the FL acquisition. In this sense, when Teacher 1 was asked about the objectives in which she frequently made use of the L1 in FL teaching, she mentioned that she mostly uses the L1 for grammar and vocabulary explanations, for which she made use of the L1 functions abovementioned. It was seen that the FL teaching analysed totally rejected the statement that teaching a foreign language should be focused on learning the language in order to communicate through it, respecting the "natural order" in which students need to acquire the FL (Krashen, 1987, p.7).

Moreover, when some of the seven L1 functions she made use were mentioned to her in the interview, she realised that, even though she was aware of some of these uses, such as *L1-FL contrast*, she was not conscious about the use of the L1 for evaluating the students, which

confirms the lack of consciousness teachers often have when using the L1 in an unmeaningful way, instead of as a pedagogical tool (e.g. Wach and Monroy, 2019):

> Sí, soy consciente de que uso el español para contrastar estructuras gramaticales porque muchas veces los niños no tienen claro siquiera en español lo que es un adjetivo, un sustantivo…, entonces tienes que explicar cómo funciona eso en español para que luego lo entiendan en inglés. Pero es cierto que, por ejemplo, a la hora de evaluar, no me doy cuenta de que lo hago en español. Muchas veces sale de forma natural porque es tu lengua materna y no te das cuenta.[14] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020)

When Teacher 2 was asked about the purposes in which she uses the L1 in FL teaching, she said that she tended to use it in order to facilitate comprehension among her students:

> Suelo utilizar el español para facilitar la comprensión. Que el niño pueda tener un referente previo para poder entender ciertas cosas de la lengua inglesa es importante. Hay niños que van a academias y otros que no tienen esa posibilidad, por lo que los niveles son muy dispares. Un niño que no entiende nada se frustra muy fácilmente, entonces esto me ayuda a adaptarme a todos.[15] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020)

In this case, more than using the L1 as a way of providing scaffolding to their students (Anton and DiCamilla, 1998, in Chavez, 2003), it seemed that the teacher only wanted to confront these cognitively or language issues quicker, so she could have more time to finish the tasks that were meant to be completed at the end of the class. Moreover, when she was asked if she had ever been unaware about the use of some of the seven L1 functions collected in the study, she also confirmed that she was and that she usually felt guilty when that happened: *"Hay veces que no te das cuenta de que usas el español para esas cosa, y cuando lo haces, te arrepientes, pero como es tu lengua*

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[14]"Yes, I am aware that I sometimes use the L1 to make a contrast between some English [(FL)] and Spanish [(L1)] grammar structures. Sometimes students do not even know what a noun or an adjective is in Spanish, so you need to explain how these concepts work in Spanish in order to make learners understand the same in English. However, it is true that sometimes I do not realise I use the L1 for evaluating my students, for example. Usually, it comes natural to me because it is my mother tongue."

[15]"I usually use the L1 in order to facilitate comprehension. The fact that students can have a previous referent [(the L1)] for understanding concepts of the FL is very important. There are students who assist English classes outside the school, but others do not have this opportunity. When learners do not understand anything that it is being said [(in the FL)] they get very frustrated. Therefore, this helps me to adapt the lesson to everybody."

materna entiendo que te sale natural"[16] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020). Again, the fact that teachers and students are always going to be rooted to their mother tongue is used as an excuse to justified the high amount of L1 used in FL teaching (e.g. Piasecka, 1986, in Auerbach, 1993), where the FL stops being the principal vehicle of communication and, therefore, it negatively affects the acquisition of the language.

Furthermore, she also added the fact that this also has to do with foreign language teachers' proficiency levels in the FL: *"Depende también de la formación de inglés que tenga el profesorado. Como al principio solo se exigía tener un B1 de inglés, hay profesores que ahora utilizan más la lengua materna porque no han seguido estudiando la segunda lengua"*[17] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020). Therefore, how ironically is it to make use of the L1 in FL teaching, when the real problem lies in the lack of teachers' professional training?

Overall, thoughts such as Cook's (2001), which concerns that the FL is always confronted to an L1, has led to situations like these ones, where the teacher thinks that the FL acquisition cannot be achieved without the constant presence of the L1. However, we must take into consideration that our mother tongue was never acquired through the presence and use of another language, so trying to interrupt the FL teaching by making constant interventions using the L1, as if we were using it as a pedagogical tool, only hampers the acquisition of the new language.

6.4. Teaching the four language skills and its influence on the L1

This investigation shows that a higher amount of listening activities was developed during the 15 classes attended in both the First and the Fifth Years (62.2% and 40.0%, respectively). However, there were many disparities between the ways the remaining language skills were practiced in both groups, being writing the second most practiced skill in the Fifth Year (30.0%) and speaking in the First Year (21.6%). Meanwhile, reading was the less practised skill in both groups (2.7% and 10.0%, respectively).

Even though it can be observed that the results obtained coincide with the fact that oral activities should have more importance than the written ones (e.g. Hinkel, 2006), the way in which speaking skills were developed with older students was against the learners' real language needs, which principally consist on developing the communicative competence. Therefore, if students have not

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[16] "Sometimes I do not realise if I have used the L1 for some of those purposes, but when I do, I regret when I do it. However, because it is my mother tongue, it is something that comes very natural to me."
[17] "This also depends on teachers' FL proficiency levels. Because, at first, a B1 English proficiency level was demanded, teachers use the L1 more because they have not continued improving the FL."

acquired the communicative skills of the language, how are they supposed to internalise the written ones?

In this way, although Teacher 1 was asked about the way in which she usually practised these skills with both younger and advanced students, she said that oral activities should always prevail over the rest, but as students are more skilful in language terms, teachers can equilibrate the use of these four skills. Nonetheless, when she was aware about the fact that more writing activities than speaking ones were developed in the Fifth Year, she justified herself by saying that this helps students to consolidate what it was orally practised: *"Cuando escribimos en inglés, esto ayuda mucho a visualizar lo que estamos diciendo [...] sirve para afianzar mejor las cosas que aprendemos en las actividades de speaking"*[18] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020). In reality, it could be seen that, as the teaching process implemented with older students was totally based on completing the course-book's activities, speaking abilities were only practised when the book included an exercise that concerned its use, so consolidating the knowledge acquired by oral skills through the realisation of writing exercises was only an excuse for not innovating and adapting the teaching process to the students' needs in this specific class.

When Teacher 2 was asked the same question, she agreed with the fact that, the more well-trained students are, the more balanced the practice of the four skills will be. However, oral activities were mentioned to be the most important ones to develop in class. In this sense, when she was asked about the fact that sometimes writing activities are more often employed that the speaking ones in advanced years, she said that maybe the reason of this was because written activities facilitate foreign language teachers to have a better control of the group and catch students' attention: *"Cuando planteas una actividad de speaking es más difícil controlar la clase y la atención de los alumnos. Las actividades escritas te permiten tener la clase más relajada"*[19] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020). It is then observed that achieving some skills earlier than others do not only depends on the teachers' beliefs about what skills should be useful for students to be more focused on (e.g. Hinkel, 2006). In fact, it is also a way of benefiting teachers themselves, as writing activities provide an environment where students can be more controlled. However, what is the point of covering students' language needs, if teachers sacrifice the FL teaching for their own benefit?

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[18]"When we write using the FL, this helps to visualise what it is being said orally. It helps to consolidate the things we learn in the speaking activities."

[19]"When you design a speaking activity, it is more difficult to control the class and catch students' attention. Writing activities, however, let teachers to have a more relaxed environment."

Furthermore, the investigation also displays the relation between the way in which the four language skills were developed and how the L1 was used in each of the activities. First of all, it was found that listening exercises were the ones where the L1 was more used in both First and Fifth Years (59.5% and 39.3%, respectively), which coincide with the fact that the incorporation of the L1 in FL teaching is usually done throughout the development of the four skills' activities (e.g. Cambridge University Press, 2019). However, differences between how the rest of activities influenced the use of the L1 were also significant. While speaking activities were the ones where more L1 was used in the First Year (24.0%), writing activities were the ones where the teacher made more use of the L1 in the Fifth Year (28.6%). In this sense, a correlation between how language skills were developed and how the L1 use was influenced by the practice of these skills is found to be a higher one, as the more time a language skill is practised, the more amount of L1 is used. In this case, it can also be observed how a segregated use of the four skills and the continuous interference of the L1 can affect the learners' FL acquisition, as students are not using the language in the way they would employ it when communicating in real FL contexts, where the foreign language would be the only one forming part of the conversation (e.g. Usó and Martínez, 2008).

When Teacher 1 was asked about the way in which she made use of the L1 in each of the activities based on the practice of the four language skills, she answered that she thought she tended to use the L1 more in writing and reading activities, as they are the most complex ones to understand. However, when she was asked why she made more use of the L1 in speaking activities than in writing exercises in the First Year she said that it is hard sometimes to catch the students' attention, so using the L1 to guide them during the development of speaking activities is sometimes needed: *"Yo creo que es porque muchas veces no conseguimos captar la atención de los alumnos y necesitamos guiarlos para que no se frustren"*[20] (Teacher 1, personal communication, May 5, 2020). Once again, it can be observed how the L1 is seen as a tool for managing control over students, when the real problem lies in the lack of understanding students perceive when they need to use the language through activities where a communicative use of the FL cannot be practised. Therefore, instead of blaming students for not being under control in specific tasks that require a more talkative context, a better training that teachers can use as a way of being well-prepared for designing exercises were students can be immersed in a communicative FL context is needed.

On the other hand, when Teacher 2 was asked about how she made use of the L1 in each of the activities based on the practice of the four language skills, she answered that she did not think she

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[20]"I think it is because sometimes we cannot catch students' attention and they need to be guided during the development of speaking activities in order not to make them be frustrated."

tended to make a greater use of the L1 in oral or written activities. She just made use of the L1 for facilitating FL comprehension when needed, so as long as students were understanding the input, she would not make more use of the L1 in one or other activities:

> Como mi fin es que comprendan, cuando tienen una dificultad con la comprensión es cuando utilizo el español. Si están totalmente perdidos suelo recurrir al español. En actividades escritas lo utilizo para que comprendan qué significan ciertas palabras escritas; en actividades orales lo utilizo para facilitar la comprensión de lo que se escucha. Lo utilizó por igual en todas las actividades creo yo.[21] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020)

In this case, the use of the L1 in either oral or written activities is seemed to be used as a way of facilitating comprehension in the FL, while, in reality, it hampers the language acquisition. The reason of this is because it rejects the internalisation process learners need to get through for acquiring the FL. Therefore, the comprehension of the FL explanations is not going to be achieved until students have not acquired and automatised the use of the new language (Krashen, 1983).

In addition, when Teacher 2 was informed about the fact that more amount of L1 was used in speaking activities than in writing exercises, she said that maybe this has to do with the teachers' proficiency FL levels. This confirms that the use of the L1 is a result of teachers not being prepare for the design of more communicative activities where the FL can be used as the vehicle of communication:

> Yo creo que tiene que ver con la falta de competencia lingüística del docente. Tu lengua materna te sale de forma más natural, pero si tienes un dominio muy alto de la segunda lengua, eso se pueda paliar un poco.[22] (Teacher 2, personal communication, May 12, 2020)

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[21]"As my main objective is to make students understand what it is being explained, I only use the L1 to facilitate comprehension. In written activities, I use Spanish [(L1)] to make students understand specific written words; in oral activities I use the L1 to facilitate the comprehension of the things that are being said. I think I use the same amount of L1 in every activity."

[22]"I think it has to do with the teachers' poor linguistic competence. It is true that the L1 comes very natural to us, but if you have a high domain of the FL, it is easier to control this."

Overall, it can be seen that a segregated use of the four skills and the use of the L1 during the development of these activities can slow down the process of acquiring the FL. As a result, the natural order in which students need to be able to acquire the language skills is totally rejected and, therefore, they do not see the communicative goal of learning a new language.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current research concludes that the way in which the L1 was used in the EFL teaching context analysed has not been very useful for boosting the FL acquisition. In fact, many detrimental effects have been observed during its implementation in the FL teaching observed. In relation to objective 1 and 2 *(to measure the amount of English (FL) and Spanish (L1) produced by both the teacher and the students participating in this study and to specify the number of L1 interventions done by the teacher in the 15 EFL lessons analysed)*, the amount of L1 used and the L1 interventions done by the teacher in the FL classroom was exceedingly high, making a greater use of the FL in the Fifth Year than in the First one. Consequently, students also made use of a very high amount of L1. However, there have been situations in which students have made a greater use of the FL than the teacher herself. In this sense, the L1 has ironically been used as the medium of instruction in FL teaching, and the teaching process has become very traditional, as learning the new language was completely based on memorising concepts and accomplishing exercises from the course-book. Therefore, the language was seen as an obligatory subject to get through, rather than a useful tool for communicating with other individuals.

- In this way, the high use of the L1 in the FL classroom has produced detrimental effects on how the FL has been acquired by the students, resulting into learners being demotivated by learning a new language. Therefore, it is suggested that a balance between both languages can be made in order to prevail the use of the FL over the use of the L1. Nonetheless, although many authors recommend a moderate use of the L1 in order not to hamper the FL acquisition (e.g. Atkinson, 1987; Harbord, 1992, in Yenice, 2018; Cook 2010, in Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018), it has been observed that the classroom is the only opportunity where students can really get exposed to the target language (Littlewood and Yu, 2011). Therefore, the aim is to ensure that students can use the language with a communicative end, without hampering the FL acquisition by the constant interference of the L1, so learners can really see the importance of learning a new language. In this sense, it is crucial that teachers see the school as a globalising context where communication becomes effective, as schools are one of the few institutions that can facilitate students' immersion in the multilingual and multicultural society of these days (Bejano, 2006).

In relation to objective 3 (*to identify the different purposes in which the L1 was used in FL teaching as a pedagogical tool, according to the coding scheme of L1 utterances established in De la Campa and Nassaji's research, 2009*), even though the L1 was found to be used with specific purposes, these L1 functions were not found to be used with a social or pedagogical aim. On the contrary, the teacher made use of these L1 functions as a way of benefiting herself. Therefore, it was a way of getting things done easier and confronting language or cognitive FL challenges quicker, but not meaningfully. Moreover, in relation to objective 4 (*to recognize how activities, based on the development of the four language skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing-are fulfiled in FL teaching, as well as the way in which the L1 is influenced by the accomplishment of these types of exercises*) activities related to the acquisition of the four language skills were also developed in a segregated way, which, added to the great incorporation of the L1 into the development of the FL exercises, it hampered the acquisition of the four language skills. Then, the language was not used with a communicative end, and students could not get immersed in tasks that were contextualised in an FL environment. In addition, written skills were usually more developed and more interfered by the use of the L1 with older students in comparison to other oral skills such as speaking, which also affected the acquisition of the communicative competence required for using the language significantly.

- We must realise that using the L1 with specific purposes or for facilitating the acquisition of the four language skills is not useful for adapting the FL teaching to the students' necessities. Therefore, it is suggested seeing the FL acquisition as a process of internalisation where students need to get through without the interruption of the L1. This process may be seen as a long-term training where students are going to acquire different aspects and language skills of the FL following a natural process (Krashen, 1987).Therefore, using the L1 as a way of facilitating comprehension or as a tool for making students acquire the written skills before the oral ones, is like going against the natural order that is crucial for the better acquisition of the FL. Students are not going to acquire specific aspects of the language until they are not cognitively prepared for it, and neither are they going to acquire the written skills before the oral ones, even if you make use of the L1 or not. Even when authors express that students can benefit from the strategies and skills they have already automatised during the L1 acquisition (e.g. Phillipson (1992, in Higareda, López and Mugford, 2009), that does not mean that the FL should be acquired through the constant presence of the L1, as it hampers the natural order in which the FL should be acquired. In this way, teachers should adapt the FL teaching to the students' language and cognitively needs (Nation, 2003).

Overall, as Chomsky (1972, p.51) stated, "the role of the child is already equipped with biological LAD (Language Acquisition Device), so children are already born with an understanding of the

language rules". For this reason, the way in which the FL is taught has to be done in a meaningful way in order not to hamper the natural acquisition in which the FL should be learnt (Arias 1998). In this way, a re-evaluation on the incorporation of the L1 in FL teaching should be re-evaluated, as, in this case, the EFL lessons analysed in this investigation were mostly taught by the use of the L1, keeping the FL use aside.

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- **Annexes**

This section shows the two interviews developed with the two teachers who participated in this study. In order to differentiate between the two teachers' answers, 'Teacher 1' refers to the teacher whose FL teaching was analysed in this investigation; and 'Teacher 2' refers to the teacher whose FL teaching was not observed in the study. Letter 'I' refers to the 'Interviewer', who, in this case, refers to myself.

➢ **Interview: Teacher 1**

I: ¿Hasta qué punto cree que es necesario el uso del español en clases de inglés?

En mi caso creo que el español es bastante necesario en las clases de inglés, sobre todo para las explicaciones de los ejercicios. A veces, me gustaría hablar más en inglés porque es el vehículo principal para comunicarnos con los niños, pero los docentes de lenguas extranjeras tenemos un tiempo bastante limitado y, muchas veces, vamos con prisa por querer acabar todo a tiempo. Además, cuando hablas en inglés, muchas veces lo tienes que repetir en español porque los niños no se enteran. Sobre todo, también pasa que los cursos grandes crean rechazo y te encuentras con alumnos que se desmotivan cuando estás usando el inglés durante mucho tiempo. Muchas veces viene también por el cansancio que los mismos docentes sufrimos a la hora de hablar inglés, ya que es más fácil hablar en tu lengua materna. Por la mañana vas más 'fresca' pero luego acabas agotada de hablar inglés todo el día.

I: ¿Por qué se encuentra el español muy presente en sus clases de inglés?

Porque muchas veces sale de forma natural porque es tu lengua materna y no te das cuenta. Es verdad que aprender un idioma tiene que ser algo comunicativo y el niño tiene que utilizar menos su lengua materna y más la extranjera, pero no puedes llevarte todo el tiempo hablando en inglés porque los niños no te entienden. Además, aunque tú tengas la voluntad de usar el inglés, los padres también te piden un control, examen, ficha.... para ver el progreso de sus hijos.

I: ¿Cómo cree que debería el profesor tratar el uso del español en las clases de inglés tanto en cursos bajos como altos?

Cuanto más alto sea el curso, menos español usas; sin embargo, la prisa por acabar las cosas o el cansancio, tanto del profesor como del alumno, hace que utilices más el español. Intento usar todo lo que puedo el inglés. Creo que con los más pequeños uso más el español porque es algo nuevo para ellos. Si tú desde un principio te pones a explicar todo en inglés no se enteran de mucho. Tienes que ir muy despacio, introduciendo palabras en inglés poco a poco, pero el español aquí

es bastante importante. En cursos mayores hay muchas cosas que ya entienden, entonces uso el español poco, solo para explicar la gramática.

I: ¿Por qué hay veces en las que se ha observado que el español se usa más en cursos altos que en bajos?

Son muchos alumnos, poco tiempo, debes atender a la diversidad, los contenidos son bastante específicos, debes ceñirte a la ley… Son tantas cosas a la vez y tienes que ir tan rápido para poder darlo todo, que a veces se evita el uso de las actividades orales porque son más lentas de completar. Pero es cierto que eso es básicamente sacrificar el idioma que enseñas.

I: ¿Con qué objetivo suele emplear el español en clases de inglés?

Dar instrucciones y explicar la gramática.

I: Hay ocasiones en las que el español se ha utilizado con el propósito de evaluar o contrastar estructuras gramaticales en ambos idiomas. ¿Ha sido consciente de estos u otros usos del español que haya realizado en clase?

Sí, soy consciente de que uso el español para contrastar estructuras gramaticales porque a veces los niños no tienen claro siquiera en español lo que es un adjetivo, un sustantivo…, entonces tienes que explicar cómo funciona eso en español para que luego lo entiendan en inglés. Pero es cierto que, por ejemplo, a la hora de evaluar, no me doy cuenta de que lo hago en español. Muchas veces sale de forma natural porque es tu lengua materna y no te das cuenta.

I: En relación con las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas, ¿con qué frecuencia pone usted en práctica unas y otras en los cursos más bajos y altos?

En primero de primaria deben prevalecer las actividades orales, pero a medida que vas subiendo de curso debes ir equilibrando lo oral con lo escrito.

I: Se ha observado que en cursos más altos se realizan más actividades relacionadas con la lengua escrita que con la oral, ¿por qué cree que ocurre esto?

T1: Cuando escribimos en inglés, esto ayuda mucho a representar o visualizar lo que estamos diciendo de forma oral, y eso hace que todo se interiorice mejor. Sirve para afianzar mejor las cosas que aprendemos en las actividades de speaking.

I: ¿Cómo cree que influye el uso del español en las actividades relacionadas con el trabajo de las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas?

Yo creo que el español se usa más en el writing o el reading. Yo procuro no estar traduciendo del inglés al español todo el rato, sino que dejo que los alumnos interpreten la idea global de lo que

se escribe o se lee, para que así vayan entendiendo de lo que trata la actividad. En actividades orales, se usa más el inglés porque el alumno realiza actividades más lúdicas donde se le puede dar menos pie al español.

I: ¿Por qué el español se utiliza más durante las actividades orales que durante las escritas?
Yo creo que es porque muchas veces no conseguimos captar la atención de los alumnos y necesitamos guiarlos para que no se frustren. También pienso que influye mucho el bombardeo continuo de recursos visuales a los que el alumno ya está expuesto en casa, por lo que muchas veces te encuentras en situaciones donde los niños ya han visto ciertos vídeos o que no les gusta lo que estás poniendo.

➢ **Interview: Teacher 2**

I: ¿Hasta qué punto cree que es necesario el uso del español en clases de inglés?
Yo pienso que es un recurso más y totalmente válido en su justa medida y sin abusar. Por mi experiencia, no solo como docente, sino también como estudiante de inglés, me ha parecido más fácil estudiar el idioma cuando he tenido este referente a mano.

I: ¿Por qué se encuentra el español muy presente en las clases de inglés?
Yo creo que, por lo menos en España, ha habido diferentes corrientes que han hecho sentir a los profesores culpables por usar el español. Por eso entiendo que algunos docentes dicen que defienden el uso exclusivo del inglés, pero, aun así, siguen usando español en sus clases.

I: ¿Cómo cree que debería el profesor tratar el uso del español en las clases de inglés tanto en cursos bajos como altos?
A medida que avanzan los cursos, puedes dejar más a un lado el español, aunque su uso es también muy relativo, ya que dependerá de la clase que tengas, el nivel de los niños… Pero normalmente utilizas más el español con cursos más bajos que con altos, ya que cada vez la competencia lingüística es mayor.

I: ¿Por qué hay veces en las que el español se usa más en cursos altos que en bajos?
Influye mucho la metodología. El aprendizaje es mayor cuanta más motivación haya. Como con los niños pequeños utilizas una metodología más lúdica, los referentes son más sencillos y los contenidos a impartir también, por lo que eso favorece más el uso del inglés que el del español.

I: ¿Con qué objetivo suele emplear el español en clases de inglés?

Suelo utilizar el español para facilitar la comprensión. Que el niño pueda tener un referente previo para poder entender ciertas cosas de la lengua inglesa es importante. Hay niños que van a academias y otros que no tienen esa posibilidad, por lo que los niveles son muy dispares. Un niño que no entiende nada se frustra muy fácilmente, entonces esto me ayuda a adaptarme a todos. Que el niño pueda tener un referente previo para poder entender ciertas cosas de la lengua inglesa es importante. Un niño que no entiende nada se frustra muy fácilmente. Cuando trabajé en otro colegio, tuve a una nativa en clase. Los niños que eran buenos en inglés interactuaban con ella muy bien, pero los niños con nivel bajo desconectaban totalmente de la clase. Incluso con las metodologías más motivadoras no se les conseguía llamar la atención, por lo que se ve que el español ayuda a compensar esas desigualdades que hay entre el nivel de competencia lingüística de los niños y un poco también a evitar esa frustración. Los niños eran más participativos cuando se usaba el español. Algunos no querían ni que viniera la nativa.

I: Hay ocasiones en las que, sin ser consciente, el español se ha utilizado con diferentes propósitos. ¿Por qué cree que pasa esto?

Hay veces que no te das cuenta de que usas el español para ciertas cosas, y cuando lo haces, te arrepientes, pero como es tu lengua materna entiendo que te sale natural. A no ser que vengas de una inmersión muy grande o tengas un nivel alto de inglés, no te das cuentas de ese uso del español. Depende también de la formación de inglés que tenga el profesorado. Como al principio solo se exigía tener un B1 de inglés, hay profesores que ahora utilizan más la lengua materna porque no han seguido estudiando la segunda lengua.

I: En relación con las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas, ¿con qué frecuencia pone usted en práctica unas y otras en los cursos más bajos y altos?

En los cursos más bajos siempre trabajas más el oral que lo escrito. Siempre intento hacer un balance, aun así. En segundo ya introduje la parte escrita. Depende de la actividad, ese día se trabajaba una habilidad más que otra. Con ayuda de una plantilla siempre intentaba organizarme para ver qué habilidades trabajaba por cada actividad y así regularlo todo.

I: Se ha observado que en cursos más altos se realizan más actividades relacionadas con la lengua escrita que con la oral, ¿por qué cree que ocurre esto?

T2: Sí que es verdad que es más fácil. Cuando planteas una actividad de speaking es más difícil controlar la clase y la atención de los alumnos. Las actividades escritas te permiten tener la clase más relajada y, además, cuentas con más material escrito que oral a la hora de completar los libros de texto.

I: ¿Cómo cree que influye el uso del español en las actividades relacionadas con el trabajo de las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas?

La verdad es que no te sabría decir ahora mismo. Como mi fin es que comprendan, cuando tienen una dificultad con la comprensión es cuando utilizo el español. Si están totalmente perdidos suelo recurrir al español. En actividades escritas lo utilizo para que comprendan qué significan ciertas palabras escritas; en actividades orales lo utilizo para facilitar la comprensión de lo que se escucha. Lo utilizó por igual en todas las actividades creo yo.

I: ¿Por qué el español se utiliza más durante las actividades orales que durante las escritas?

Yo creo que tiene que ver con la falta de competencia lingüística del docente. Tu lengua materna te sale de forma más natural, pero si tienes un dominio muy alto de la segunda lengua, eso se pueda paliar un poco. A mí por ejemplo me pasa que me cuesta menos llamar la atención en español que en inglés, te hacen más caso en español.