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**The impact of using the mother tongue in an English
as foreign language class on the learning process**

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Agosto, 2019

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(TFG E#07)

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Chapter I

Introduction

1. Introduction

In the world, learning a foreign language is a goal for people. Kenneth Beare states that “the British council argues around seven hundred and fifty million people learn English as a Foreign language” (Beare, 2018) making approximately ten percent of the world population of 2019. This is due to its international uses in business and tourism. Costa Rica is particularly interested in English as a foreign language (referred to from now on as EFL). Since a child is in kindergarten, they are taught the language all the way up to high school level. The teachers of this subject have focused in transmitting the language as effectively as they can; this in some cases means using the native tongue. When studying to become an English teacher, they are often told that the native language is forbidden in the English class; this because it would interrupt the acquisition of the target language for the learners and make the process slower and more difficult. However, is using only English in class an effective way of teaching this foreign language? Is it ok to use the native language in some aspects of English teaching?

The Institution in which this research is being done is Liceo Experimental Bilingüe Sarchi, located in Sarchi, Alajuela. It was founded in 2005 with 100 students that year. It has grown substantially since then. In 2019 it counts with approximately 350 students. The principal of this High school is Master Jeffrey Mejias Mesén. It is a bilingual high school, meaning it goes from seventh grade to eleventh grade. The students receive in total 14 lessons of English, divided in reading and writing, listening and speaking, and literature. This research will be focusing on a ninth grade group receiving the 14 lessons. The research will take place in the 5 lessons of reading and writing a week.

During the research topics such as methodologies and teaching theories were discussed. As well the current use of native language in an EFL class and what experts and other researchers recommend should be the use of the first language in these

classes. Finally some basic terminology related to the topic. Following this will be the results of the research charted and detailed.

1.2 Rationale

In Costa Rica students receive an approximate three to five English lessons per week. Even though these lessons are supposed to be given in the target language, and this is sometimes the case, in many occasions the teacher uses first language (referred to from now on as L1). This to have a better control of the group, to save time explaining topics or instructions, because of the lack of confidence in their knowledge of English, or many others reasons.

During many years teachers have been taught that the use of Spanish in the English class is a set back to the learning of the target language, and they should not use it. However this might not be the case. Maybe in some occasions it is useful or beneficial for the learner to use the native language when learning a second language. Or on the contraire, the use of L1 may not be a positive addition to an English class. It could be that Spanish, instead of helping, sets back the student in his or her learning process.

This research is worthy because it can determine the effects that L1 causes on the learning process of the second language (referred to from now on as L2).

1.3 Purpose

This research is to evaluate and understand the effects first language has on the learning process of English in an EFL environment in a ninth grade class in Liceo Experimental Bilingue Sarchi. This is meant to be achieved by initially identifying the weaknesses of the students when speaking. After this information is obtained, different drills and simulations are applied to test how the students' behavior and involvement in

the class improves or decreases, and how English only or the use of native language affects their learning process. The research then assesses the students' improvement in speaking skills to determine the effects that the drills had upon them.

1.3.1 General objective:

- To evaluate first language interference in English classes with ninth graders at Liceo Experimental Bilingue de Sarchi.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To identify First language interference when speaking English in different real life environments.
- To apply drills and simulations for students to get involved in the learning process using English only or combining with first language.
- To assess students' improvement in the language when adding or removing the native language.

1.3.3 Research question

- How does the native language interfere in the process of learning English as a Foreign Language?
- How can the use of native language improve or worsen the learning process in the classroom?

Chapter II

Literature Review

2.1 Historical background

In the history of teaching a second or foreign language, there have been many theories or methodologies applied. One that is very relevant to this research is the Grammar Translation Method. Used initially teaching Greek and Latin in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, however developed as a method until 1890. With this method, the students are asked to study the grammar of the target language and by translating the words, manage to understand the text. For more advanced students, it would be necessary to translate big text such as articles and books. Other methodologies such as the task based method and communicative approach allow the use of L1 in the classes if it meets specific rules or limitations.

In Costa Rica it is very common to see students graduating high school with a very low to no English level. During the years students receive this subject, they are asked to study different verb tenses and vocabulary, as well as try to create sentences in a language which they do not completely handle. Therefore learners never take interest in the language. This causes teachers to be forced to use L1 to try to win over or make the classes bearable so that students at least do the basic things without real acquisition of the target language.

When teaching EFL teachers can take one of two approaches; the monolingual approach and the bilingual approach. Mohammed Rhalmi in his document about these approaches states that the first approach (monolingual) is against the native tongue. It suggests that students acquire the target language following the same process that they did for L1. Part of the beliefs that monolingual teachers have are that L1 may become a habit in class, it can be misleading or create confusion between the two languages, or because it lowers the amount of target input for the learners.

For many years educators have taught English using this first method assuring that it is better, probably because of all the reasons mentioned before. However many other

teachers are leaning towards the use of the bilingual approach. In this approach Rhalmi quotes Vivian Cook “a door that has been firmly shut in language teaching for over a hundred years”. This alluding to the use of the L1 in an EFL class. Rhalmi argues that when students come in to an EFL class, they are full of their native language and culture. This cannot be refused or put aside in the English learning process. Instead a teacher should take advantage of L1 and culture to immerse them in the target language.

2.2 How is L1 used in EFL classes

Now knowing that Spanish is used in EFL classes in Costa Rica, it is important to determine in what scenarios it is used. Paker and Karaagaç state in their investigation that L1 is commonly used to make a topic clear (by giving examples and/or explaining), give feedback, teach new vocabulary, translate sentences that the teacher thinks no one understood, and to give instructions. In EFL classes in Costa Rica it is common to see the use of native language in similar scenarios. Teaching vocabulary is often translating words then to actually give examples and explain what the word is using the target language. Explaining topics in Spanish such as grammar is often the way to go for teachers because it will save time and the hassle of explaining multiple times. Giving instructions in L1 as well is a time saver for the same reason. The investigation conducted by Paker and Karaagaç as well stated that the percentage of L1 used in versus L2 was of fifty eight percent against forty two percent respectively. This meaning that L1 in many cases is predominant over the target language. Even with this information more than half of the teachers suggested that they should maintain the amount of English used in class and only thirty six percent of the teachers argued that there should be more of the target language. On the other hand, sixty percent of the students stated that there should be the same amount of L1 and thirty percent expect more English in their classes. This comes to show that maybe the use of L1 is not as negative as many believe. Paker and Karaagaç mention “the use of the native language should not be exaggerated because the more the students are exposed to the target language, the better they will learn it.” (Paker and Karaagaç, 2015). In other words even though their research shows a substantial amount of L1 in EFL classes, it is not the

route to go in many cases. It is important to have a balance between both native and target language, that way the learner can acquire English in the best way possible.

2.3 Positive and negative effects of the use of the L1 in and EFL classroom

When talking about L1 in an EFL environment, it is important to mention that it can have many effects upon the target language acquisition. These effects can be both positive and negative. Some teachers believe that there is no positive in L1, like those who follow the monolingual approach of EFL classes. On the other hand, other teachers believe that the native language plays an important role and it must be exploited. They argue that some of the positive effects can be:

- a) **Syntax:** When talking about syntax transfer, the Southwest University of Chongqing in China states that in many instances the syntax structure between L1 and L2 share many similarities. This can be very beneficial in understanding a verb tense or clause structure.
- b) **Stress:** In many cases a learner will feel pleased and uncomfortable in an environment that does not count with their native language. This will cause tension in the classroom and may prevent the class from going on smoothly.
- c) **Culture:** Cultural transfer is an important factor when learning a language. The student may be saying something that in their culture is correct, however in the target language, it is out of place. Comparing cultures, sayings, idioms and others, even if that is in Spanish can benefit the English level.
- d) **Words:** Word transfer can be seen negatively in some cases, however in other it can be beneficial. Students can compare words in the target language with one from their native language and infer what the meaning is. This helps to make cognitive connections and assist the learning process.

Even though these effects can bring positive to students, there are still many negative consequences of the use of L1 in an EFL classroom. The southwest University of Chongqing in China Argues that some negative effects are:

- a) **Pronunciation:** Sound transfer is a problem that is very difficult to solve. Learners will often bring out sounds from their native language, causing an incorrect pronunciation of the target language. Teachers argue that with more interaction of English, and less of L1, they can better this pronunciation issue. To this argument bilingual teachers reply that learners will never achieve a native like pronunciation, therefore it is not relevant. In Costa Rica this problem is very noticeable in English words where the sound /z/ or /v/ is used. This because Costa Ricans are not accustomed to utilizing these sounds in their language.
- b) **Words:** Word transfer is another roadblock in many cases. Students tend to assume the meaning of a word because of the fact that it looks or sounds similar to one in their native language. This causes a dilemma when reading a text, it can create a false or incorrect understanding of the piece of literature or message. This situation is known as a false cognate.
- c) **Syntax:** Syntax transfer as it was stated before can be beneficial in the structures in which L2 and L1 share. However, teachers argue that not all structures are the same in both languages. The use of L1 will only produce the mistake in that sentences because of the translation that students usually do. This is a common occurrence in Costa Rica when studying simple present and the use of the auxiliary do.

In her research, S Barrantes goes in to how L1 can affect the acquisition of L2. S. Barrantes states, "Learners of a second language use grammar structures, phonology, and vocabulary from their first language when they are acquiring the new language; however, premises from first language are not always accurate for second language learning due to the differences between the languages." (S. Barrantes, 2018). This

stating that the use of the native language in an EFL class is both beneficial and harmful.

S. Barrantes as well argues that students have three options regarding the second language learning:

- a) They can preserve their L1, but they cannot achieving native like L2 pronunciation.
- b) They lose their L1 and achieve native-like L2 pronunciation.
- c) They lose native-like pronunciation both in L1 and L2.

As mentioned before, learners cannot achieve a native-like pronunciation without losing their first language. Therefore the use of L1 in the classroom, if used correctly, does not interfere with the learning process and the end result.

2.4 In what scenarios is it recommended to use L1?

Understanding that the use of Spanish in EFL classes in Costa Rica is something almost impossible to eradicate, teachers should try to take advantage of L1 and use it where it can benefit the student and his or her learning process. An article written by Oxford University Press ELT mentions that the native language should have some guidelines for its use. And that these guidelines depend on the level of the student or group. This article states guidelines for three levels: functional, strategic, and discourse.

In level one L1 is oriented to help the class function more effectively. Students in this level can ask how something is said in their native language, or as permission to add to the class in L1. It as well can be implemented as a "time out", this being a space in which the students can use Spanish and then continue with their EFL class. This is particularly good after an explanation of a new topic.

In the second level (strategic) the teacher can use the previous guidelines and incorporate new ones, such as using the knowledge the students have of L1 and English,

and have them compare them both. This to develop some language learning strategies. For example, a teacher can ask, if a word is similar to one in L1, or to find patterns and similarities between L1 and the target language. Doing this will activate prior knowledge and create self-obtained knowledge.

The third level explained in the Oxford Article is of discourse. In this level the authors recommend to use L1 to create language awareness and a higher order of thinking; this to comprehend features of discourse and context. This can be done by having a phrase with a particular register or degree of formality and have students think of a comparison in their native language, leading to discussion about what level of formality is in that phrase. In a similar case translating to discover contexts of a text or discussion. Finally, all bilingual people use both languages for fun, so this is an option to relieve stress and tension in class.

With these guidelines, the use of L1 could be a very useful tool in an EFL class. However it is important to stay within said guidelines and not let Spanish take over the class. Oxford authors state “these ideas are designed to encourage teachers to make principal use of L1 in their classroom without feeling guilty about doing so, while at the same time avoiding the pitfalls that are often associated with its use” (Oxford University Press ELT, 2014). This comes to show that L1 in English classes is not always a negative thing. Teachers can exploit this tool and help their students have a better understanding and knowledge about the target language.

On the other hand Mohammed Rhalmi recommends to use L1 in specific scenarios and not for levels. He suggests that for beginners it is a useful tool to relieve the pressure of learning a new language. Furthermore he states that native language can be used for comparisons between vocabulary or grammar structures. To identify cultural aspects like proverbs or jokes. For classroom management and saving time on giving instructions. And finally states that for error correction of a recurring mistake, L1 can be used and very beneficial.

Chapter III

Procedures

3.1 Research method

The research is an Action Research because it focuses on a specific problem that happens in the day to day classroom in Costa Rica and in all the EFL classrooms. The use of L1 in a foreign language class has been debated for many years and is still being discussed. Some educators argue that its use should be banned and others state that it is a tool that can be exploited. This action research determines what the learners in the set context prefer and what works for them. This is done by observation and questionnaires, as well using L1 in some lessons and some ways and surveying the participants afterward. After determining the preference of the learners, it is put to action and test the results that they provide. Because of these characteristics the research is an action research.

3.2 Type of approach

This research has both qualitative and quantitative characteristics making this a mixed research. In the investigation tools there are questions that are answered with closed answer. This to have a better idea of the amount of participants and their opinion on the various subjects. Other tools are open answers, helping to have a better understanding of what goes through the mind of the participants. The research is made in this way to enrich the results and truly understand what is best for the participants in the research.

3.3 The context

The research is done in a public high school in Costa Rica. Liceo Experimental Bilingue is in the rural town of San Juan of Sarchi, located in the province of Alajuela. Many families of this area dedicate themselves to agriculture and small businesses; others commute to the capital. Because of this, there are many social classes starting from poor to high class families. Even though, it is a rural area, there are many companies investing in the area making it an up and coming urban area. The High school is relatively small with a student count of approximately three hundred fifty students enrolled in 2019. It is a

bilingual high school making five years of high school before advancing to the university, however focused on English teaching.

3.3.1 Describe the Chosen Setting

The high school is located the town of San Juan of Sarchi. It has three hallways and 18 classrooms for the three hundred and thirty students that study at this institution. The English department counts with nine teachers, audio and visual technology to make the classes more interactive, as well with a computer lab. The groups are made of about twenty eight students more or less divided in two half. Each lesson is of forty minutes. Students average between three to five lessons per week which is a normal amount for the type of high school it is.

3.3.2 Participants

The students that participate of the investigation are ninth graders of ages that average from fifteen to eighteen. They are from different social classes mainly middle class and the language domination is low to average. The group is of twenty seven students in which thirteen are men and fourteen women.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures and tools of initial research

3.4.1 Procedures of initial research

In Costa Rica it is very common to see the native language used in EFL classes. Because of this situation, this investigation is aimed to see the benefits or consequences that the use of L1 can bring to the students acquisition process. The group selected is a good test subject because of the characteristics. The use of the native language is present in the class and they are at an advanced level in high school, helping with the maturity of the students. In these classes it is observed that the students understand difficult topics when explained in L1 and can take advantage of the class time even more doing practice.

3.4.2 Instruments

The use of surveys, applied to teachers and students, at the start of the research as a diagnostic. As well the investigator observes a class before parting continuing with the research. To collect feedback after the activities are done in the class surveys will be given to the students and teacher. These are key to recovering the data that supports the research. As well the researcher observes the class and the students to gather more information to support the work piece. The activities referred to before are related to the topic that is being studied in class, with the variation that in these practices, the students and teacher will use from none to some English during the activity.

3.4.3 Diagnostic Data Analysis

The results of the observations and surveys is analyzed in a way that is more useful for the investigation. In total there are three observations and three sets of surveys applied to the teachers and students. One of each before the activities are done, and one after to see the results of the activities made.

3.5 Action plan

The plan of action is to observe a class and from there part to what activities can be made to test the investigation. Furthermore once the activities are done, resurvey the students and teachers and see how they feel and what was best for their language acquisition. The following chronogram demonstrate the process made to obtain the results. .

Chapter IV

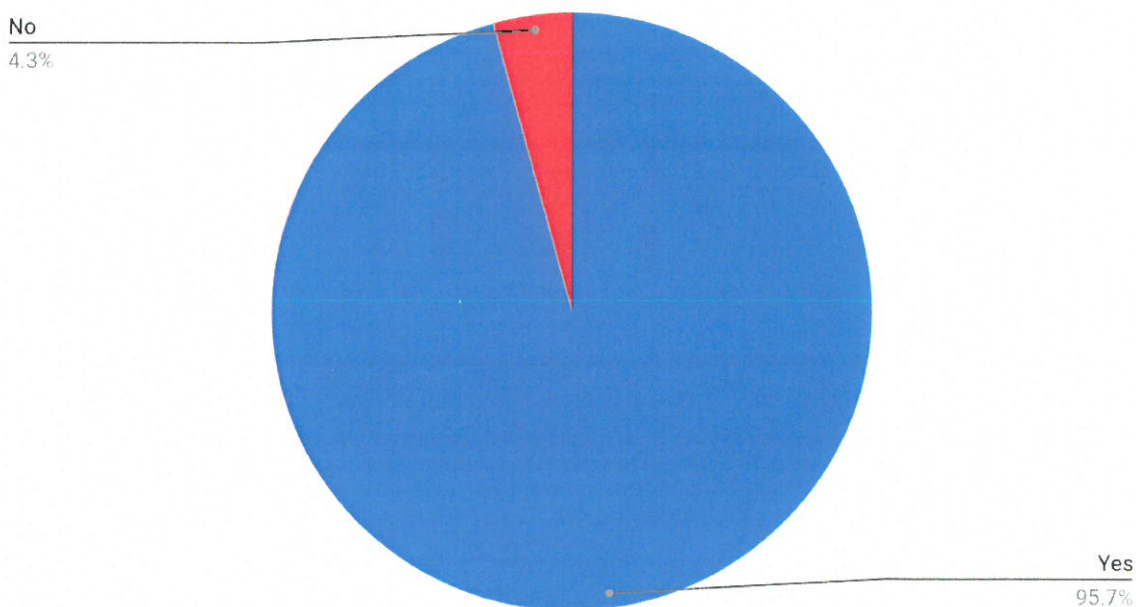
Findings

4.1 Data Analysis

In this research there were three different surveys as well as observations made by the investigator. The first survey that is analyzed, is made to the ninth grade students of the institution to have a better understanding of the use of native language in their EFL classes. This survey was applied to 23 students of the 26 in the group. The three missing students were absent that day. The result of these surveys are the following:

The first question is whether or not the teachers currently use L1 in the classroom.

Does the teacher use Spanish when giving the class?

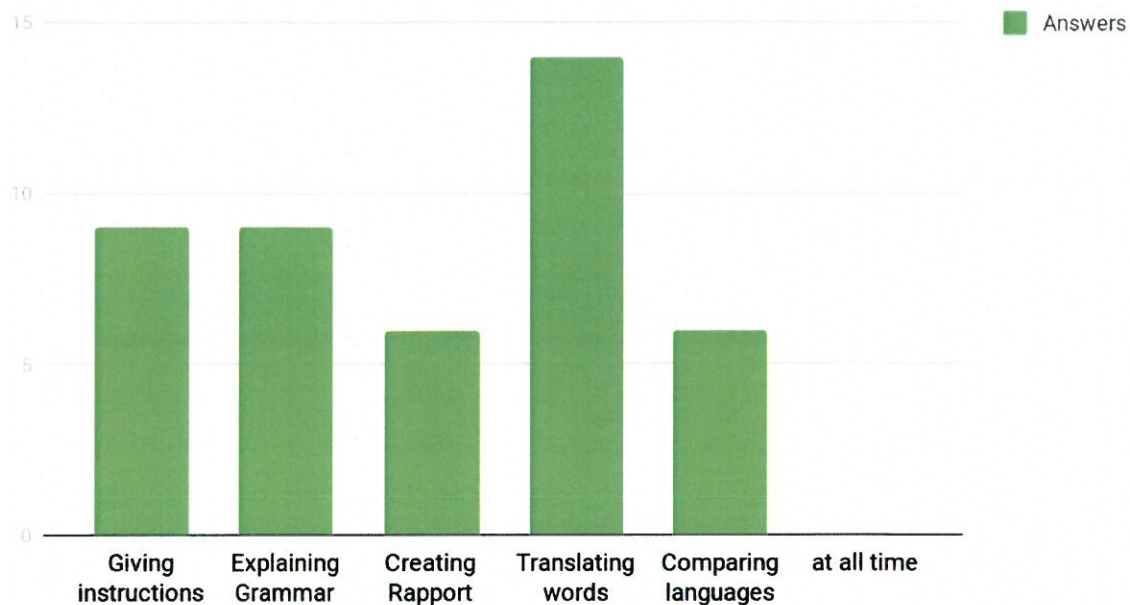


From this question it can be observed that indeed teachers in Costa Rica use Spanish in the classes. Therefore, the investigation must part from this point, understand that it is something that happens in the everyday classroom. However is it beneficial towards the students learning or not.

The following question in the survey is to identify how the teachers are currently using L1 in the EFL classroom. To this question, students can select multiple options of the ones

given. To this question 14 students selected “translating words and vocabulary”, 9 students selected “giving instructions” and 9 students selected “explaining grammar”. Furthermore 6 students marked the option of “creating rapport” and 6 marked “comparing the language”. The results are as shown in the graphic.

In what scenarios does your teacher use Spanish?

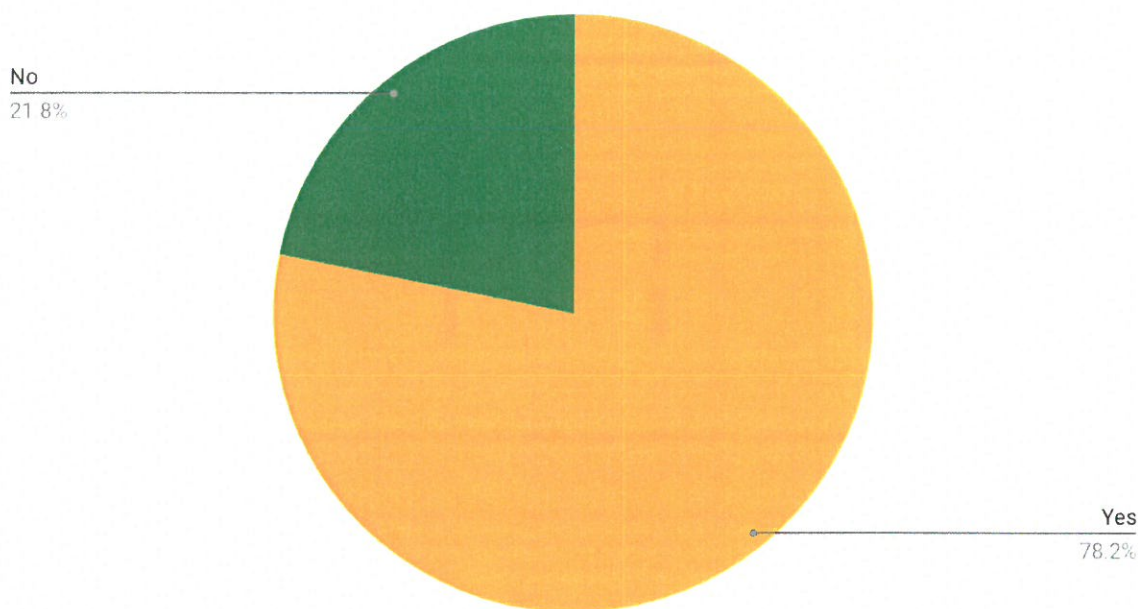


From this question it can be inferred that in most cases Teachers use Spanish to translate words or vocabulary to students. This can be due to the fact of how difficult it is to explain vocabulary to a student using other methods such as definitions charades or others. As well it is assumed that the students do not have the amount of vocabulary to understand a definition and prefer to simply just translate it. The consequence of this is that the students become accustomed to translating most of the words in English instead of looking for actual understanding. Furthermore teachers use L1 to give instructions or to explain grammar. This is to manage time and save on repeating the same instructions or explanations. Creating rapport or comparing languages, which interestingly are the ones that the specialist suggest above, are the least ways used in the EFL classroom. To which

it can be determined that the way teachers are using Spanish, is not the way they should use it.

The third question of the survey is if the students believe that Spanish should be used in the EFL classroom. This to determine their opinion and point of view on the use of L1. The results show that 18 out of the 23 suggest the use of Spanish and the remaining 5 are against the use of the native tongue as shown in the pie chart.

Do you think Spanish should be used in English class?

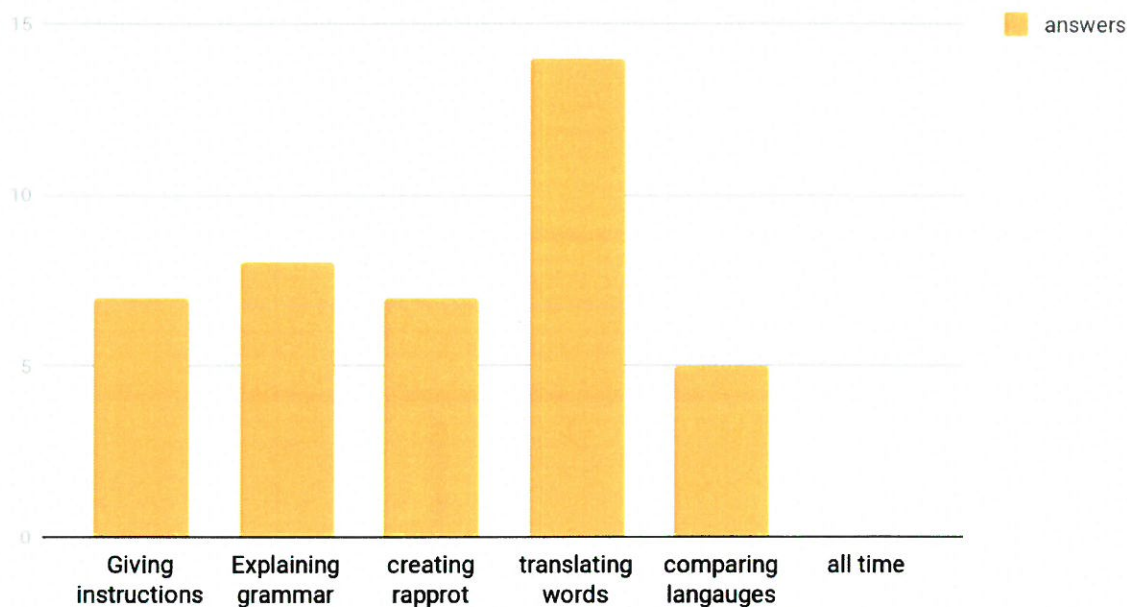


Analyzing these results it can be deduced that students in the most part do feel comfortable with the use of L1 in the English class. Only 21% of the students feel like the classes should be English only. To get more information related to this topic, it is necessary to apply the English only activities and survey the students once more.

The last question in the survey is related to how the students would like to see the use of L1 in their classes. In this question as well the students can select multiple options. The

answers were as follows: 14 students state that by “translating words and vocabulary”, 8 students by “explaining grammar”, 7 students by “giving instructions”, 7 students marked “creating rapport” and only 5 students selected “comparing the languages”.

In what scenarios should teachers use Spanish in the English class?



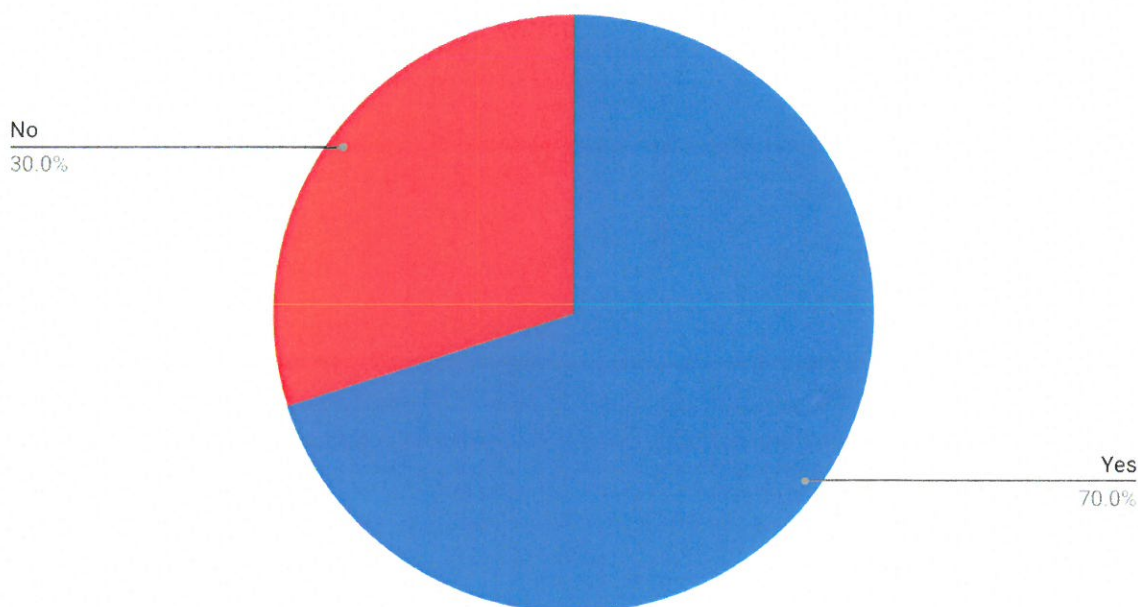
By analyzing this chart it can be summed up that students prefer to translate and have explanations in Spanish, instead of trying to achieve acquisition of a language. When comparing the results to how teachers use the L1 in class, it is seen that the educators have adapted to what the students want, and not necessarily what they need to achieve better learning.

This initial survey has created a solid diagnostic of the situation that is being lived in the EFL classrooms of Costa Rica. The teachers are working to fulfill the wants of the students and not necessarily their needs to learn a new language.

The second survey was made to the teachers of the high school to get their perspective on the use of L1 in the EFL class. The survey was answered by 10 teachers of the institution. The results are as follows:

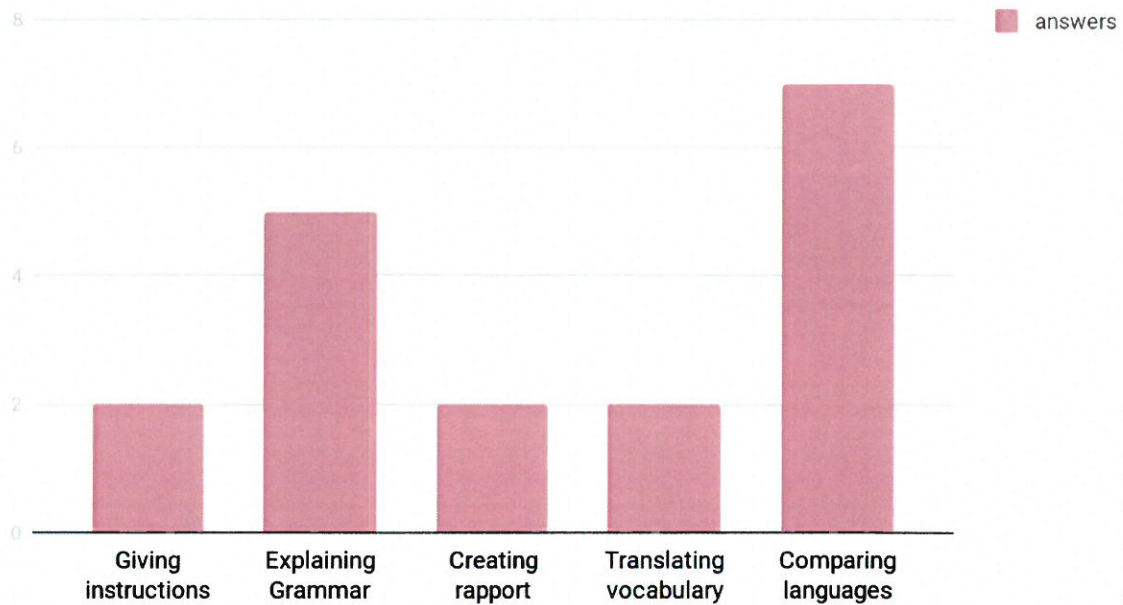
The first question asked on the teacher survey is whether or not they use L1 in their EFL classes. To this question, there are 7 who confirm the use of the native tongue in their classes, and 3 that state that they do not use Spanish in their classes.

Do you use Spanish in your EFL classes?



After determining how many teachers use L1 in their classes, it is important to understand how they do it. To this 2 teachers marked when “giving instructions”, 5 teachers that they used L1 when “teaching grammar”, 2 affirm that they use it to “create rapport”, 2 state when “translating vocabulary”, and 7 use the native tongue to “compare the languages”.

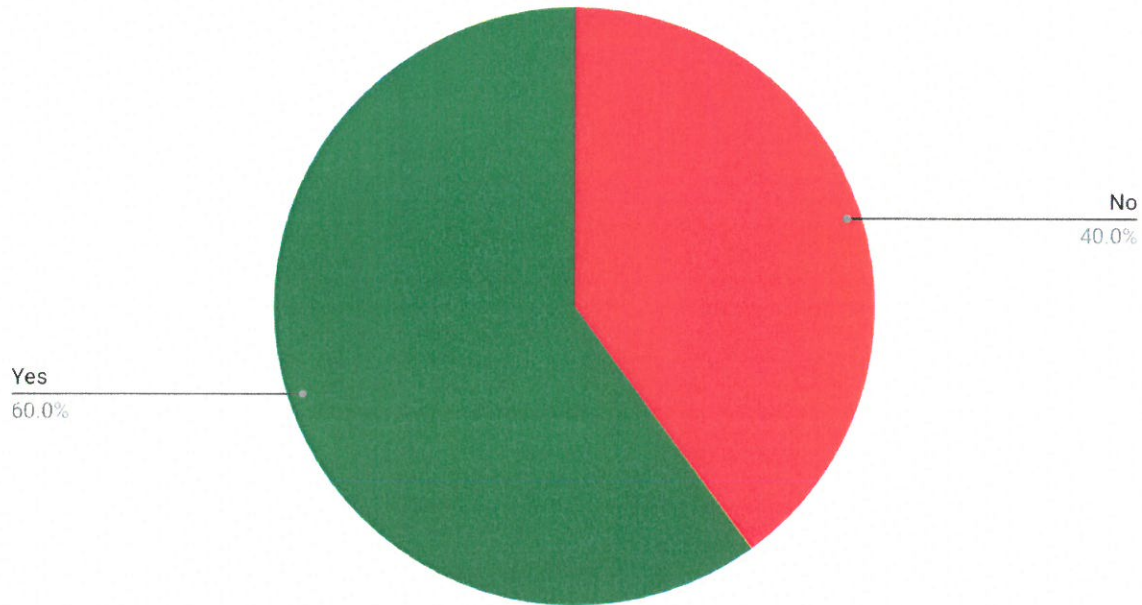
How do you use L1 in your EFL classes



This information shows that the teachers are, for the most part, using the L1 as recommended by the experts. by comparing both languages it can help to achieve a better understanding of context and culture. However a significant amount of teachers state that they use it to explain grammar, which is not recommended.

The third question of the survey applied to the teachers is if they thought it was good to use L1 in EFL classrooms. To which 6 teachers state it should be used and 4 are against the idea of using L1.

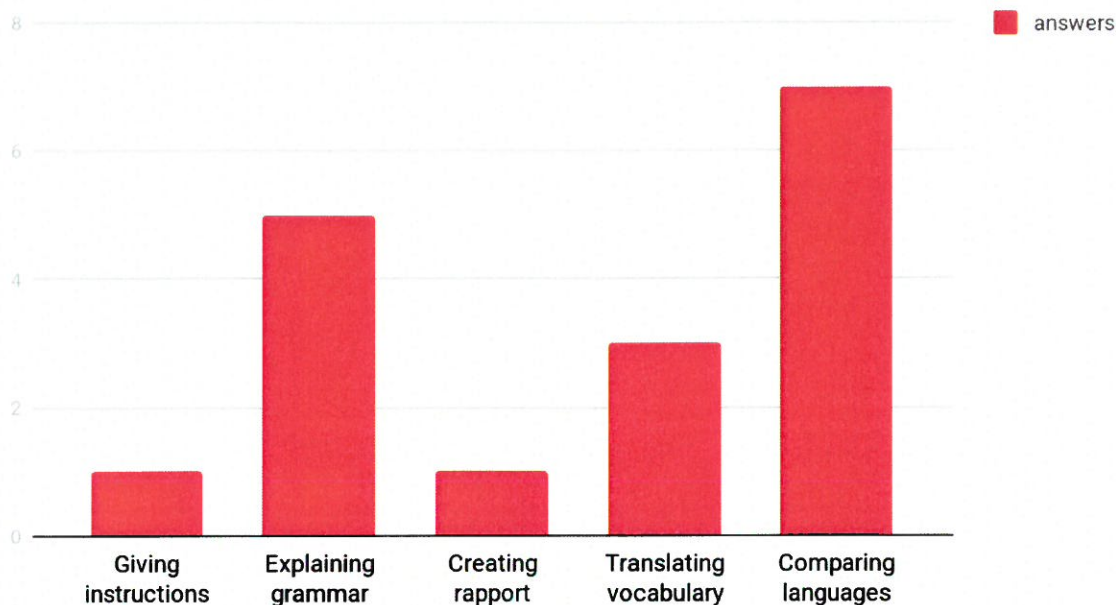
Do you think L1 should be used in EFL classes?



By analyzing these results, it can be seen that most teachers believe using L1 is a good method. However, there is one teacher who uses the Native tongue and does not believe in the method.

The last question in the survey is how the teachers believe the native tongue should be used. To this question, 1 teacher states that when “giving instructions”, 5 teachers defend “explaining grammar”, 1 suggests “creating rapport”, 3 recommend when “translating words and vocabulary”, and 7 argue “comparing the languages”.

How should L1 be used in an EFL classroom?



These results show that indeed teachers have a general idea of how English should be used. However the results given by the students show something completely different. Teachers in many cases use L1 to explain grammar, which may affect the comprehension of the learner.

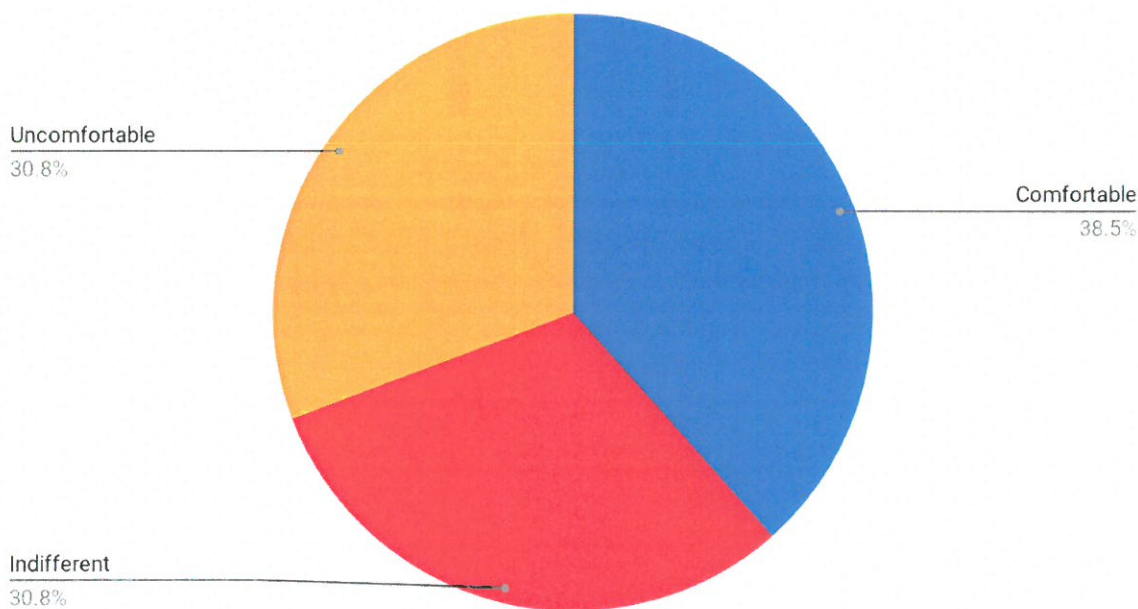
The third survey applied is to see how the students felt with the changes made to the use of the native language in the EFL class if it improved or worsened their experience. This survey was applied to all the students however half of which had the use of L1 removed from their classroom, when in contrast the other half had the use of the native tongue present in the ways recommended by the experts.

Starting with the initial half that had an only English activities (group 9-1A), the observations show the following: even though the students understood and managed to complete all the exercises, it took longer for the teacher to control the group and to transmit

the message of the topic and instructions of the activities. The teacher had to repeat several times, making the students who had already understood, get distracted. This resulted in a messier classroom. Once the students were organized and understood what to do, the class continued with normality. Approximately 8 min of the class were lost. After the class, the students were asked to fill out the survey to see how they felt. To which the results are:

In the first question of whether or not the students felt comfortable with the use of only English, out of the first group of 13 students, 5 mentioned they felt comfortable, 4 selected indifferent and 4 selected they felt uncomfortable with the lack of L1 in the classroom.

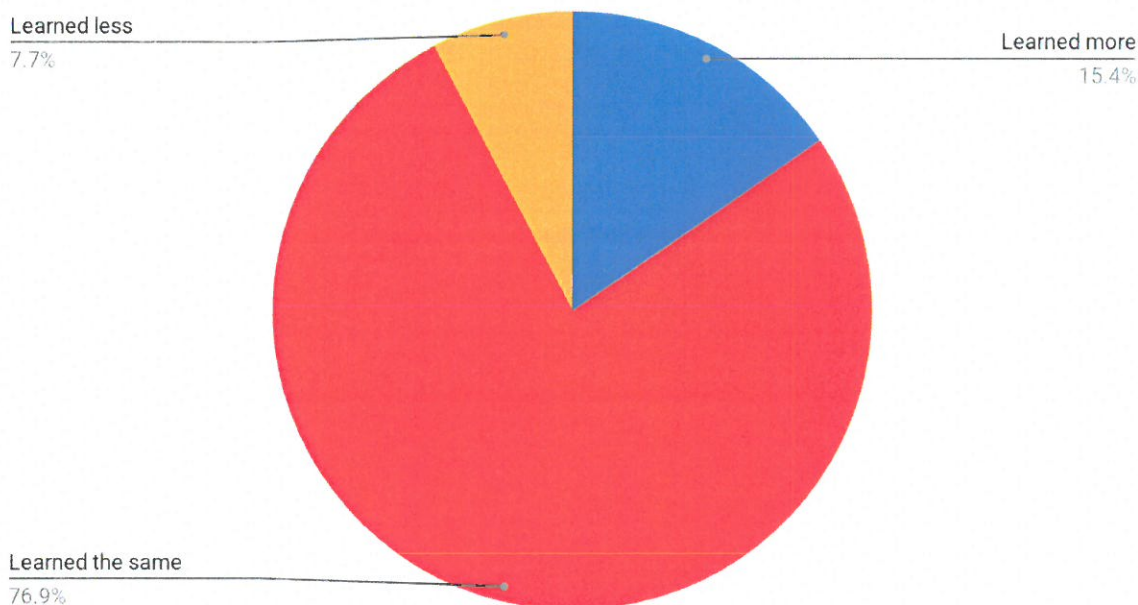
How comfortable do you feel with the use of only English?



Analyzing these results it can be said that even though most students state, Spanish should be present in an EFL class, more than half feel good or at least ok with an only English class. Therefore students do not mind the use of English only.

The second question made to these students is related to the amount of learning that they had. To this question 2 students suggest that they learned more, 10 students that they learned the same amount, and only 1 student who says that he or she learned less.

Did you learn more with the use of English only?

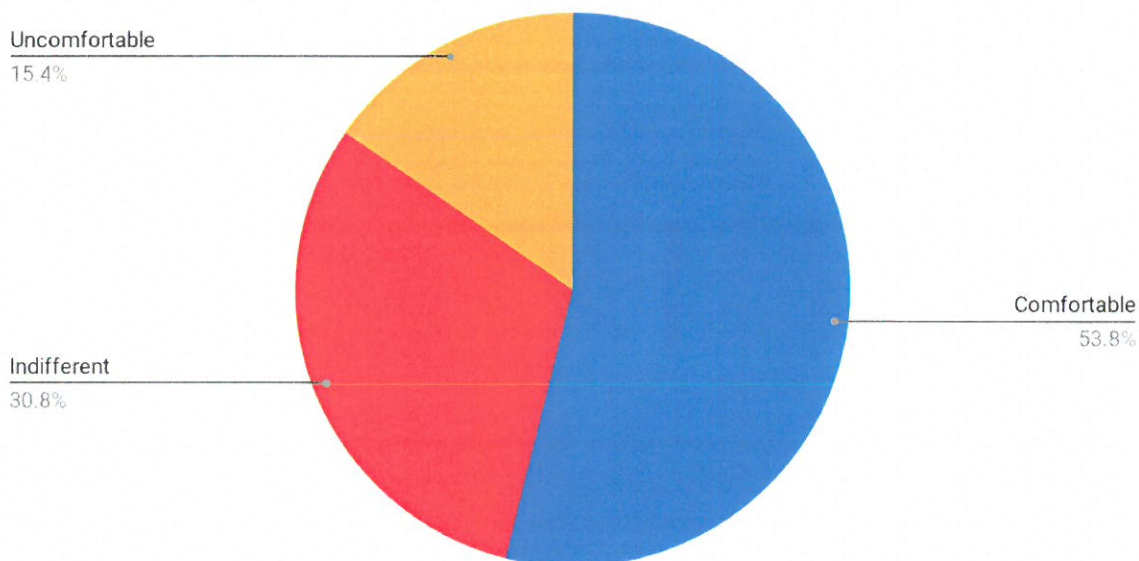


Interestingly enough, students do not perceive a big difference in an English only environment. Most claim they have absorbed the same amount of information as they would have if there had been native tongue in the mix.

When applied the investigation activities to the second half of the group (9-1 B), the investigator could observe that the students understood the instructions and topic much faster than the other half. However the use of L1 in the classroom on the students' behalf increased substantially. Even though they worked faster and produce the same amount of output in the target language, the students were much more talkative in their spare time. When completed all the activities, they as well answered the survey however oriented to the use of L1 in the classroom.

The first question answered by the students was in relationship to how comfortable they felt with the use of L1 in the classroom. In this case out of 13 students, 7 suggested that they felt comfortable, 4 suggested that it was indifferent and 2 students claimed that they did not feel comfortable with the use of L1.

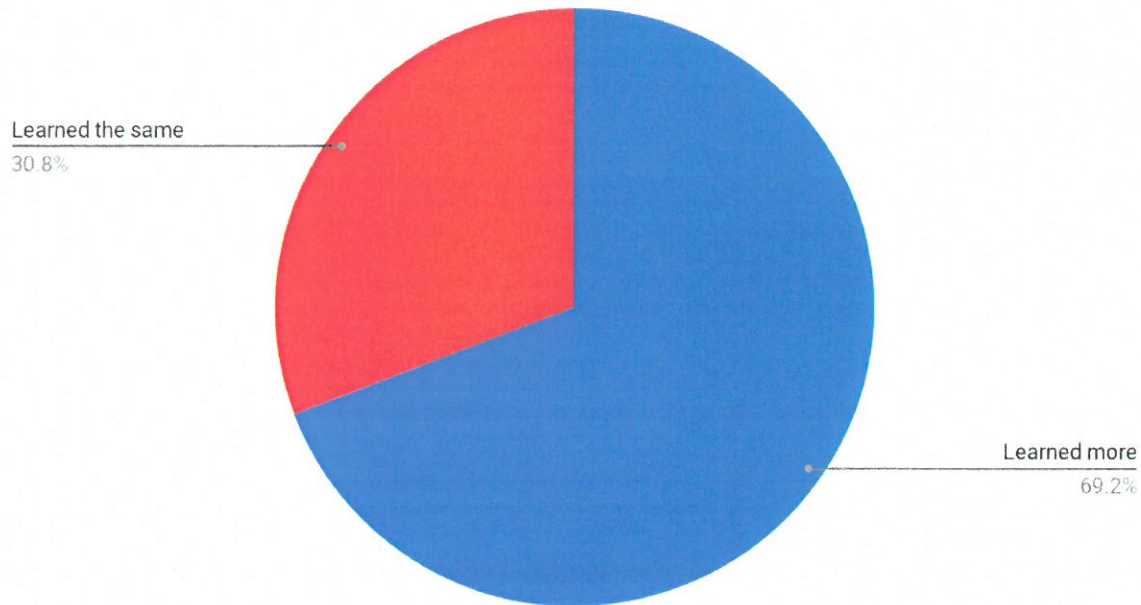
How comfortable did you feel with the use of Spanish in the English class?



By observing these results it can be determined that the students feel much more comfortable when using the native language.

In the last question made to the students, reflecting how much they learned in the class, 9 students state they learned more with the use of L1, 4 students state that it was indifferent, however, no student stated they learned less.

How much did you learn when the use of Spanish was permitted?



By analyzing this data it can be said that when using the native language, no student is getting left behind. They are all understanding and learning more, or the same amount if it were an English only class.

4.2 Restatement of the question

The initial research questions state: "How does the Native language interfere in the process of English learning as a foreign language?" To answer this question, the activities were made to each half of the group and then compared their feedback. As well the observations made by the investigator help to determine how exactly L1 interferes. After the research, it can be determined that depending on how L1 is used, it can interfere in a positive or negative way. Therefore the question should be modified to "In what scenarios can the native tongue be used in an EFL class?"

The second research question is "How can the use of the target language only improve or worsen the learning process in the classroom?" This question is answered by the research made and by observations made by the investigator. The surveys made to both students and teachers help to determine if the learning process was improved or worsened. In some scenarios the use of only the target language, can confuse and leave students behind. Therefore incorporating the Native tongue to the EFL classroom can improve the learning process. Furthermore the research question can evolve to: "How much L1 sufficient to the point of not interrupting the learning process?"

Chapter V

Reflections

5.1 Feelings and Experiences

After completing this investigation, it can be assured that much is learned from the experience. To have observed the reactions of the students when only English was used and when their native language took place. The amount understood was significantly more when they had their native language, and was a faster process to have them producing in the target language, versus when only the target language was used. On the other hand, when the native language was permitted or used, the students would be more talkative in their L1, making it a little more difficult to continue with the class. It is necessary to continue the research to see if later in their learning process, the use of L1 will after all affect their learning process, to ensure that the results are not only short term, but long term as well. Another factor that could be changed is to have another population of students and see how they perform under the investigation. The investigation has been very illuminating and has helped to understand how students prefer the classes.

5.2 Plan for further action

As mentioned before, it is important to consider as well the long term effects that the use of L1 may have. The research must be continued and the activities varied in the amount of L1 used. It is important as well not to use L1 in scenarios where the target language can be used and understood by the learner. This way once an objective or goal set by the teacher and student is reached, the native tongue does not interfere in the practice and the student can perfect the topics explained and worked on. The main use teachers can give to Spanish is that of a tool, to help understand and practice English, after all it is the target language.

Chapter VI

Conclusions

6.1 Outcomes

When analyzing the results of the research, there are many conclusion to get to. Starting with the results from the survey answered by the students before the activities were applied, it can be inferred that Spanish is used in EFL classes in Costa Rica. Many students suggest it should be used in the classroom. One of the most interesting deductions is how the students state, their teachers use L1 and how those same teachers say they use the native language. When comparing the results of the teachers and students survey there is a major difference in how the teachers use L1. Students state their teachers use it in the worst ways, however the teachers argue that they rarely use the native tongue, and when used, it is as recommended by the experts. By analyzing this information it can be inferred that either the students are lying about how their teachers use L1, which is highly unlikely. Or that the teachers are conscious of how they should use Spanish, however prefer to attend the wants of the students, even when it might not benefit them.

Furthermore, by analyzing the results after the activities were made, starting with the English only half, it can be determined that the students did not feel much difference in the classroom. This can be interpreted as, the students know the language, however prefer when possible to use L1. The interesting information is, when analyzing the results from the half that was exposed to L1, they felt much more comfortable in the class and state they understood and learned more. To all this information, it can be concluded that students feel better when their native language is used. They understand the information in a more profitable way if the L1 is used as recommended by experts and can improve their learning process.

As a general conclusion, the use of the native language, if used correctly can be very beneficial to both teacher and more importantly students. However, if the teacher is not using L1 in a correct way, it is better to have an English only class.

6.2 Implications

One of the research questions asked about the way in which the native tongue interfered in the learning process of EFL. To answer this question, it was necessary to identify a basic level of English that was done by observation. Furthermore add or remove the native tongue from the scenarios, to then observe once more the process of learning that the student has. By doing this, future teachers may have the possibility to understand and utilize the native language as a tool to help the EFL class.

The second research question looks to answer how exactly Spanish can be used in a classroom to improve or worsen the learning process. In order to find an answer to this question, some investigation was done and different activities were made to test what the research stated. This research not only helps teachers to know if L1 is useful in an EFL environment, but how and when they can use it as a tool to improve the learning process of the student.

6.3 Strengths

Some of the strengths that this research counts with, helped it get the effective results as it did. Those strengths are the following:

- a) The support of the teachers and students: Both interviewed teachers as test subject students helped to complete the research in an effective way by providing information to the investigator. This led to better and more accurate conclusions.

- b) The willingness of the institution: The institution as well is a big part of the success of the research. Thanks to them, it could be done in a real life classroom and make the results of the research correct.

6.4 Limitations

During the research, there were few limitations that would interfere drastically. Some of the limitations that can be mentioned are:

- a) The lack of previous research: This topic, even though it is of interest and importance, there is a lack of recent published investigations in related fields. This made it more difficult to obtain sources of reliable and up to date information.
- b) To design the correct activities: When exposing the students to L1, it was necessary to design the proper activities in which the native language could be used in a correct way. This to improve the learning process of the student. The activity must be interactive, with some explanation so that it can be compared to Spanish, and to have students asking how are certain things said in English.
- c) To determine the level of English: It is important to determine first the level of English that the students have to see how L1 can be used in a more profitable way. This is sometimes very difficult because languages take into account many different skills. The research was focused on how the students level of learning is, not in specific skills, making the research a little bit simpler.

Chapter VII

Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations

From this research, many conclusions are made. However, from the research, it can also be extracted recommendations and advice for future teachers that are unsure if and how they can use L1 in an EFL classroom. The following recommendations from this research can be taken into account for future teachers.

- a) The native tongue can be a very useful tool. Depending on the use that the teacher gives it, Spanish can help the class and the students learning process.
- b) If the teacher does not use the native language in the correct way, it is better to keep the class only using the target language.
- c) Use less the L1 as students achieve their goals and can progress in the language. Do not maintain Spanish in the class even when the students know advance English.
- d) Even if the students request to use L1 in a way that does not benefit them, do not comply. It is better to force the student to use and understand the target language using other methods. Use Spanish only in the scenarios presented before.
- e) Continue with the research for a longer period of time. This to ensure the results are reliable and constant, not only momentary.
- f) Change the population that is being observed. Just as the previous recommendation, to remark the results are constant.

Chapter VIII

References and Annexes

References

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After Activity survey

How comfortable did you feel with the activities regarding the use of Spanish in the class?

☐ More comfortable ☐ indifferent ☐ Uncomfortable

Do you feel you learned more with the use of Spanish in the class?

☐ learned more ☐ learned the same ☐ learned less

After Activity survey

How comfortable did you feel with the activities regarding the use of Spanish in the class?

☐ More comfortable ☐ indifferent ☐ Uncomfortable

Do you feel you learned more with the use of Spanish in the class?

☐ learned more ☐ learned the same ☐ learned less

After Activity survey

How comfortable did you feel with the activities regarding the use of Spanish in the class?

☐ More comfortable ☐ indifferent ☐ Uncomfortable

Do you feel you learned more with the use of Spanish in the class?

☐ learned more ☐ learned the same ☐ learned less

Initial Student Survey

1. Does the teacher use spanish when giving the class?

☐

Yes

☐

No

2. In what scenarios does the teacher use Spanish? Mark more than one if necessary.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving instructions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explaining Grammar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating Rapport
<input type="checkbox"/>	Translating words or vocabulary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comparing English to Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/>	All the time

3. Do you think Spanish should be spoken in an English class?

☐

Yes

☐

No

4. In what scenarios do you think Spanish should be spoken in an English class? Mark more than one if necessary.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving instructions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explaining Grammar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating Rapport
<input type="checkbox"/>	Translating words or vocabulary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comparing English to Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/>	All the time

Initial Teacher Survey

1. Do you use Spanish when giving the class?

☐

Yes

☐

No

2. In what scenarios do you use Spanish? Mark more than one if necessary.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving instructions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explaining Grammar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating Rapport
<input type="checkbox"/>	Translating words or vocabulary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comparing English to Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/>	All the time

3. Do you think Spanish should be spoken in an English class?

☐

Yes

☐

No

4. In what scenarios do you think Spanish should be spoken in an English class?
Mark more than one if necessary.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving instructions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explaining Grammar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating Rapport
<input type="checkbox"/>	Translating words or vocabulary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comparing English to Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/>	All the time