

High school students' attitudes towards the use of their L1 in their English class

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Trabajo de grado para optar el título de Licenciado en Lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en
inglés

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2023

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my beloved parents. To my mother, who has been my company and support throughout my life. To my dad, although he is no longer with me, he has guided my life, my decisions and all that I have accomplished so far.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my thesis director Ma. Olga Uribe Enciso to her helpful guidance and supervision throughout the making of this study. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to Kevin Ramirez, Saúl Diaz and Sebastian Salazar, who supported me in carrying out the research. Finally, special thanks to Luz Ardila and Alejandra Gómez, for helping me in the process of collecting data.

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Resumen

Título: Actitudes de los estudiantes de bachillerato frente al uso de su L1 en la clase de inglés*

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Palabras clave: actitud, lengua nativa, lengua extranjera, enfoque monolingüe, enfoque bilingüe.

Descripción:

El uso de la lengua nativa de los estudiantes es una práctica común a la que ellos recurren cuando aprenden otro idioma. Esta práctica ha sido cuestionada por diferentes estudios, en los que los investigadores recalcan el impacto negativo que tiene el usar la lengua nativa en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Estas teorías han dividido opiniones, creando así, dos estilos diferentes de enseñanza de un idioma, el enfoque monolingüe y el bilingüe. Los profesores tienden a tener mayor afiliación hacia el enfoque monolingüe, que aporta una mayor cobertura de la lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, los estudiantes tienen opiniones divididas. Aunque hay unos que les gusta seguir usando su lengua nativa para tener un mejor entendimiento del idioma a aprender, hay otros que prefieren sumergirse completamente en el idioma extranjero. Debido a esas opiniones divididas, esta investigación explora las actitudes de los estudiantes frente al uso de su lengua nativa en la clase de inglés. Para ello, 28 estudiantes de bachillerato fueron consultados mediante una encuesta y entrevista sobre las actitudes que tienen frente a esta práctica y cuáles son las razones detrás de estas actitudes. Los datos recogidos mostraron que los estudiantes si tienen una actitud positiva frente al uso de su lengua nativa en la clase de inglés. Esto debido a los diferentes beneficios que obtienen para su proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, algunos expresaron que, aunque apoyan esta práctica, también validan el uso de sólo inglés.

*Trabajo de grado

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Abstract

Title: High school students' attitudes towards the use of their L1 in their English class*

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Key words: attitude, native language, foreign language, monolingual approach, bilingual approach.

Description:

The use of the students' native language is a common practice that they resort to when learning another language. This practice has been questioned by different studies, in which researchers emphasize the negative impact of using the native language on learning a foreign language. These theories have divided opinions, thus creating two different styles of teaching a language, the monolingual and the bilingual approach. Teachers tend to have a greater affiliation towards the monolingual approach, which provides greater coverage of the foreign language. However, students have divided opinions. Although there are some who like to continue using their native language to have a better understanding of the language to be learned, there are others who prefer to fully immerse themselves in the foreign language. Due to these divided opinions, this research explores the students' attitudes towards the use of their native language in the English class. For this, 28 high school students were consulted through a survey and interview about the attitudes they have on this practice, and the reasons behind these attitudes. The data collected showed that the students do have a positive attitude towards the use of their native language in the English class. This is due to the different benefits they obtain for their foreign language learning process. However, some expressed that while they support this practice, they also validate the use of only English.

*Degree work

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the problem

It is natural to feel disoriented and lost when we aim to learn new things. In such manner, as learners, it is common to bring and use recognizable elements that can support and back this new information. Learning a new language is not the exception. It is a demanding process in which we need to get familiar with unknown words, expressions and grammar rules that, in most cases, differ from the ones we are used to in our first language (L1). In addition, learning a language also implies becoming aware of the different cultural and social elements that shape the foreign language. Therefore, using L1 is a common resource people tend to employ when learning a new language. This is due to L1 being an innate and inherent instrument people are familiar with since they were born and thus, all they know is bound to their native language. All the knowledge and experience are attached to their L1.

For that reason, L1 is used as an assistant or mediator in the process of learning a new language. However, when being in a class environment, learners are always in the debate of using or not their L1 while learning a foreign language. This conflict appears for some reasons. One of them is due to the fact that most English teachers do not use learners' native language in classes, either because of institutional teaching policies or because they just do not agree with using the L1 while teaching and learning a foreign language.

English teachers tend to inhibit students from using their mother tongue while being in class.

According to them, using L1 while learning English as a foreign language (EFL) will impede the full development of the new language. Although prohibiting learners using their L1 is done to avoid learners resorting to their L1 and therefore to promote L2 use, this strategy makes learners get frightened and avoid participating or asking questions in class even if they are lost. Spahiu, (2013) states that for learners, the idea of avoiding the use of their native language is just too stressful for them. As a result, students tend to stigmatize their L1 as

something restricted and almost illegal to use in English class. This stigmatization deprives students from taking advantage of an innate and handy resource that can facilitate their language learning process. Furthermore, this teaching practice of banning students' L1, can influence and shape students' attitudes toward their native language.

1.2 Research question

What are the attitudes of a group of high school students' towards the use of their L1 in their English class?

1.3 Justification

The use of learners' L1 in a foreign language class is a common and regular practice people do when learning a new language. This practice is an everyday proceeding that is experienced by language students and language teachers as well. Being a teacher encompasses the need to know and how to employ all the resources at hand to use when teaching. For example, the different pedagogical approaches, teaching methods and techniques, in order to improve and promote an outstanding learning process. However, teachers sometimes inhibit themselves from using some resources, such as learners' native language. This happens because in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) there is the belief of the absolute and rotund negative impact L1 has on L2. This assumption is due to language transfer, in which L1 could negatively influence L2. Besides, there are some pedagogical approaches, such as the monolingual approach, in which the use of L1 is not recommended, and the L2 is seen as the only and most favorable means for teaching English (Ekawati & Eko, 2014).

However, although teachers' position on using students' L1 is more likely to be unfavorable because of the theory of monolingual approach, it is essential to explore and consider students' attitudes towards the matter. Therefore, this research aims to gain insights

into EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of their L1 in the classroom. Besides, this research also aims to show a current overview of one of the most common resources learners tend to use, their native language, focusing on the attitudes they have towards it and the reasons behind their position. Furthermore, this study will allow teachers to recognize the utility native language has in teaching and learning English as a foreign language, and also enable them to adopt new teaching techniques and regulations taking into account findings.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General objective

To explore high school students' attitudes towards the use of their L1 in their English class.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To identify students' attitudes towards the use of the L1 in their English class.
- To discover students' reasons for using their L1 in the English class.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Literature review

2.1.1 Learners' attitudes towards using L1

Learners may adopt different attitudes towards the use of the L1 in their L2 learning process; any stance they adopt is influenced by different factors. One of these is learner's language proficiency. Learners who have low proficiency in the target language or who are beginning to learn it have a more favorable attitude towards using their L1. As Galali & Cinkara (2017) explain, EFL learners, especially if they have a low proficiency level, have positive attitudes towards using the L1 because it facilitates the foreign language learning process. EFL learners feel in a secure zone when they are allowed to use their L1 in EFL classes. However, for advanced learners the case is different. Although learners who are at a higher level do not seem to have a negative attitude towards using the L1, they prefer to employ the target language to practice and achieve better proficiency.

Another factor that influences learners' attitudes toward using L1 is learners' experiences in class. Incidents affect learners' attitudes and decrease L1 use in order to avoid going through bad experiences again (Nilubol, 2020). For example, having bad grades, being scolded or receiving punishments, are common circumstances students go through for using their L1.

In addition, the language in which the teacher communicates during EFL classes affects the learner's attitudes towards their L1. Teachers are role models for students; their use of L1 allows and encourages students to follow their example and so, lead students to believe that using L1 is admissible in class (Thompson & Harrison, 2014, p. 333). Therefore, teachers' decision to use L1 influences the choice of what language students will speak in the classroom.

In a study conducted by Peralta (2012), it was found that English teachers have a general positive attitude towards the use of Spanish in their classes. Moreover, some encourage

its use, and although others do not encourage it, at least they do not prevent students from communicating in Spanish. In the same study, through classroom observations, students' acceptance of the use of L1 in EFL classes was also evidenced. Thus, it was concluded that learners' attitudes are linked to teachers' attitudes towards using L1.

Furthermore, in another study conducted by Ramírez & Martín (2015) evidence states that when the teacher doesn't recognize Spanish as something negative and instead, they use it for explanation and clarification and other purposes that benefits students, the learning atmosphere is favorable and certain negative factors such as anxiety, fears and insecurities are lowered. In this manner, it can be stated that learners' attitudes towards L1 can also be influenced for the reasons and purposes for which L1 is used.

2.1.2 Reasons for using L1

Using L1 is a common practice among EFL students. The use learners give to their native language is varied, and depends on the kind of task and purpose they want to accomplish. According to Nilubol (2020), one of the main uses learners give to their L1 is for checking and translating new words, unknown concepts and linguistic expressions. In this case, L1 fulfills the function of facilitating the accomplishment of some tasks by allowing students to understand new information and acquiring L2 input. Regarding tasks, when students are asked to produce a written product, they tend to fall back on their L1 even more often than other types of tasks that only required oral communication (Azcarra & García, 2014, p.16). Therefore, when writing, learners are more likely to use their L1. Writing tasks demands more planning and organization, which makes students use their L1 as a means to think, generate and implement ideas.

In the case of teachers, giving clear explanations on certain topics, such as explaining grammar structures or rules that don't exist in students' L1. In this case, the use of L1 is highly beneficial for learners to better understand the target language. For that reason, Galali and

Cinkara assert that low-level learners agreed that a bilingual approach in L2 environment classes might be advantageous to their process, due to the better understanding learners gain when using it(2017). Besides, they add that a “only English policy” will just benefit advanced second language students. Teachers can employ the L1 while coping with troublesome words or concepts for greater comprehension and further explanation, which will clarify students' doubts and enhance L2 interest in students.

2.2 Theoretical bases

The following terms are all related to the L1 use in L2 learning and therefore are relevant concepts to take into account in this project.

2.2.1 Code switching

It is a concept used in the field of linguistics that makes reference to using more than one language in a conversation (Waris, 2012, p. 125). This practice is common among people who speak more languages than their native one. Its use is spontaneous and conscious. It can be adopted in different contexts and for many reasons, such as for showing identity and quoting someone or making reference. Switching between languages is a communicative option available to a bilingual member of a speech community, just like switching between styles or dialects is an option for monolingual speakers (Aranoff & Rees-Miller, 2003). In code switching, one language is dominant over the other one, generally it is the native one.

2.2.2 The monolingual approach

Also known as English-only instruction, suggests that a target language should be the only medium of instruction because it provides more exposure to learners and gives them more chances to acquire the language (Ekawati & Eko, 2014, p. 1). In short, in the case of English, it should be taught not in another language but through only English.

2.2.3 The bilingual approach

It is one of many teaching methods of the English language. This approach is adopted in places where two languages such as L1 and TL are spoken. In this method, teachers often use learners' mother tongue while teaching the TL. The bilingual approach is based on comparing and contrasting the two languages, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. (Gupta, 2016)

2.2.4 Language transfer

It is a phenomenon that makes reference to the influence that L1 Knowledge has on the process of acquiring TL new knowledge. For example, in aspects such as vocabulary, pronunciation, structure, grammar rules, etc. This influence can be either positive or negative. If the information transferred from one language to another is incongruous, it is classified as negative transfer (Feng, 2017, p. 1076).

2.2.5 Attitude

They have to do with beliefs, emotions, and behaviors toward a specific item, person, or circumstance. They can also include evaluating, and such evaluations can be positive or negative. Attitudes are often related to previous experiences, and they can have a strong influence over people's behavior and beliefs. Although some attitudes are long-lasting, they can change as well (cherry, 2021).

2.2.6 Attitude in language learning

Students can have positive or negative attitudes towards the language they aim to learn, people who speak it, and all the cultural backgrounds that shape that language as well. Positive attitudes can facilitate and enhance students' language learning process. On the contrary, negative attitudes can reduce students' motivation. However, negative attitudes can

change by greater and continuous exposure to real contexts in which they use the language, such as meetings with people from other cultures. Students' attitudes towards learning a language may vary oscillate on previous experiences. Attitudes are not developed by accident, but they have some causes for their development. Thereby, having positive or negative attitudes towards a language can exercise significant influence on the learning process and the language performance as well (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013, p. 64).

2.2.7 EFL

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the term used to explain the study of English in countries where English is not the official language. This is not to be confused with English as a Second Language (ESL) which is the practice of learning English in a predominantly English-speaking country (Nordquist, 2020).

2.3 Legal framework

Taking into consideration that this research aims to study and be carried out in an English class environment, this study is covered by the Colombians laws that stipulate the indispensable teaching of a foreign language, in this case, the English language. Therefore, this research is framed within the following laws:

- Law 115 (1994) establishes that some of the specific objectives of education in Colombia are:
 - The acquisition of elements of conversation and reading in at least one foreign language.
 - Understanding and ability to express yourself in a foreign language.

These objectives fulfill the function of accomplishing article 23 in which it is established that Foreign language is a mandatory and fundamental subject that needs to be taught according to the curriculum and the Institutional Educational Project.

3. Methodology

3.1 Type of research

This research adopts the mixed approach as it integrates qualitative and quantitative research, which allows having a complementary view of the phenomenon being investigated. Qualitative research helps to explore participants' feelings and perceptions of the pheromone being investigated; also, it uses more open questions. This type of questioning allows participants to express a more free and wide perspective on the research matter. Whereas quantitative research helps to get information including more precise answers such as those located on surveys (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The purpose of this mixed research is to answer the research question by having a more complete and integrated view on the phenomenon as described by Cresswell & Plano Clark :

It occurs when the researcher intends to bring together the results of the quantitative and the qualitative data analysis so they can be compared or combined. The basic idea is to compare the two results with the intent of obtaining a more complete understanding of a problem, to validate one set of findings with the other, or to determine if participants respond in a similar way if they check quantitative predetermined scales and if they are asked open-ended qualitative questions(2018, p.97)

3.2 Population and sampling

The participants in this study are students from a public school. They are in 10th grade, and they have to study English as part of the compulsory subjects. They have four English classes per week, and every class has a length of 60 minutes. Participants have an A2 elementary English level. In total, there were 28 students, 15 were women and 13 were men from 15 to 19 years old. Considering that the vast majority of the participants are under 18 years

old, and legally they are not adults, a written consent was sent to their parents in order for them to sign the document giving permission to conduct the research and the data collection (see Annex A).

3.3 Assumptions, variables and indicators

Learners' attitudes towards the use of their L1 in their English class have different variables such as the students' level of English, the time they devote to study the language independently, the motivation they have to learn the language, the teaching approach, and some other learning factors. However, those variables are not considered in this study.

The research is focused on high school students whose school does not have an emphasis on this language; therefore, it is expected a low proficiency level and the use of their L1 with different purposes to back up their foreign language learning process. If they use their L1 a lot, they will have a positive attitude towards their L1 in their English class. This expectation is made by the benefits L1 gives to low and intermediate level English students. Another variable that can influence students' attitudes towards the use of their L1, is the teacher. Students tend to follow and imitate teachers' behaviors and features relating to how they teach the class. Therefore, if the teacher is likely to use and have a positive attitude towards Spanish, students will have the same posture.

3.4 Data collecting instruments

Since this study is based on the mixed approach, the process of collecting data was divided into two phases, each one using a different collecting instrument. In the first phase, questionnaires, as the quantitative data collection instruments, were administered to the participants.

The questionnaire was designed taking into account the likert scale. The incorporation of this type of scale was very useful because it is ideal for measuring people's attitudes towards a

given situation. It helps to obtain people's opinion of the research matter, rating how much a person agrees or disagrees with a statement. In the questionnaire 16 statements about the use of L1 in the English class were established, in which participants had to appraise each one with a number from 1 to 5. Each number reflected a degree of agreement or disagreement on the statement. 1 for totally disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neither agree nor disagree, 4 for agree, 5 for totally agree (see Annex B). To collect this information, the questionnaires were delivered in printed form, and were filled out in person.

In the second phase, interviews were conducted, as the qualitative tool, to compare and correlate previous information gathered. In this tool, not all the participants were interviewed, just 9 students from all the 28 participants were interviewed. These 9 students volunteer themselves to participate in the interview. The process of interviewing was carried out face-to-face and one by one. The interview consisted of 8 open-ended questions that were asked to all the participants in the same order (see Annex C). The questions were similar to the survey, in order to contrast the answers given by the participants with the intention of finding patterns and complementing information. The interviews were recorded with the help of a cell phone and a lapel Microphone to have a better recording sound. Both collecting instruments were designed and carried out in Spanish.

3.5 Resources and analysis techniques

After collecting the data, the information was analyzed into three parts. First, for the questionnaire analysis, the answers were uploaded to an excel document, in which the responses were written one by one to be statistically processed. After that, the corresponding graphics to every statement were created, taking into account the corresponding percentages in each likert scale statement. Afterwards, the questionnaire statements were classified and divided into categories, as they are, agreement on using L1, reasons behind using L1,

drawbacks of using L1, students' position towards classmates and teacher using L1. The results of each statement within each category were described and examined.

Secondly, the data collected by the interviews was transcribed and classified through the color-coding technique to find similarities and identify patterns. Afterwards, that qualitative data was analyzed by the content analysis techniques in order to classify, compare and contrast the data into themes, creating categories that facilitate interpretations of findings. Finally, in the conclusion, the data was analyzed by triangulating the whole information collected through interpretation of the researcher considering all the obtained knowledge throughout the investigation. Findings were also compared with related studies.

4. Results

The presentation of the results is divided into two parts. The first one shows the results from the quantitative tool, the questionnaires, showing the corresponding graphics and describing the percentages obtained within each scrutinized theme. The second part displays the results from the qualitative tool, the interviews, highlighting main themes and showing some extracts from participants' opinion found in the responses. Additionally, along with the results, some interpretations are done, taking into consideration the participants' responses, opinions and postures on the matter. According to the results, an attempt to establish participants' attitudes is done.

4.1 Questionnaire

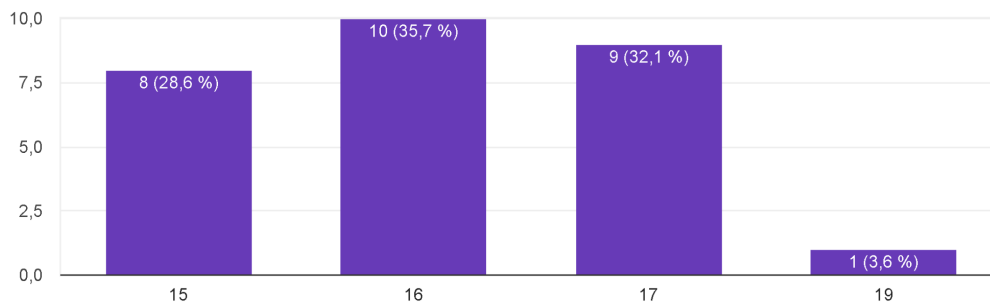
All the 16 statements were classified into 5 themes: agreement on using L1, reasons behind using L1, drawbacks of using L1, students' position towards classmates and teacher using L1. In each category could be more than 1 statement, depending on the theme. In each statement, percentages on every likert scale value will be shown, and in the end a conclusion will be made.

4.1.1 Demographic information

The participants of this part of the study were 28 tenth grade high school students from a public institution. Regarding age, as shown in figure 1, 28,6% (8) of the participants were 15 years old, 35,7% (10) were 16 years old, 32,1% (9) were 17 years old, and 3,6% (1) was 19 years old.

Figure 1

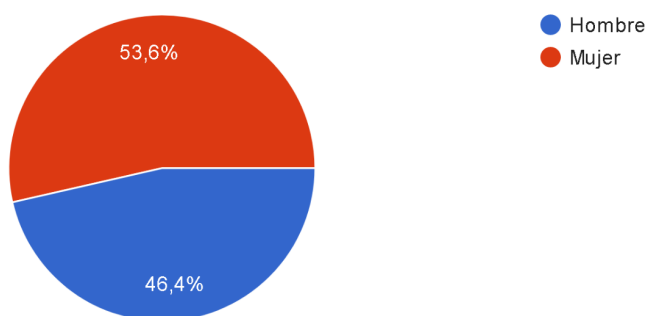
Demographic information: age of the participants



Additionally, in regard to gender, as shown in figure 2, 53,6% (15) of the participants defined themselves as women, and 46,4% (16) defined themselves as men. None of the participants define themselves with another type of gender.

Figure 2

Demographic information: gender of the participants



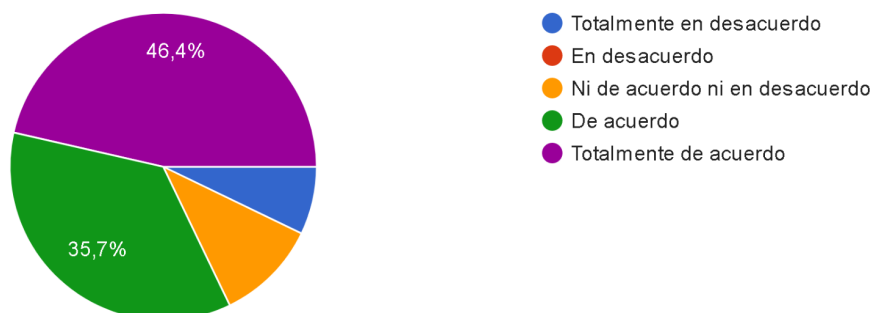
4.1.2 Agreement on using L1

In this first category, students' opinions on the use of L1 was explored. This section incorporated aspects such as students' agreement on using the L1, comfort when using it, if they frequently like to use it, and students' opinion on policies of monolingual approach in the

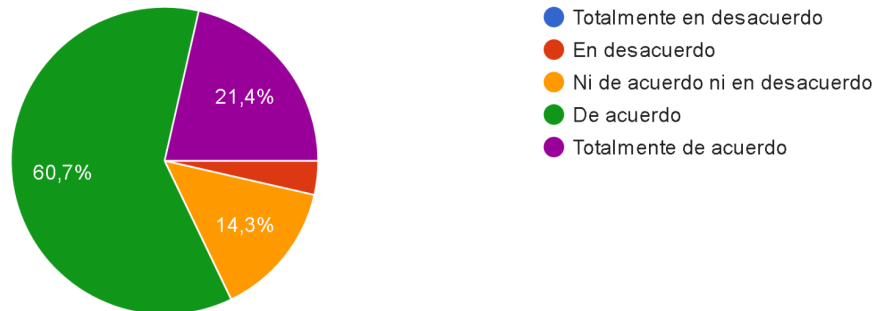
English class. In this category, five statements were included, numbers 1,2,3,15 and 16. In statement number 1, students were asked if they agree with the use of their L1 in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 3, 46,4% (13) of the participants totally agreed, 35,7% (10) agreed, 10,7%(3) did not agree or disagree, and 7,1% (2) totally disagreed. From the results of figure 3, it can be said that a large number of the participants, putting together agree and totally agree, 82,1% (23) assent to use their L1 in the English class, and therefore, an approval and favorable attitude towards using their L1 is appreciated.

Figure 3

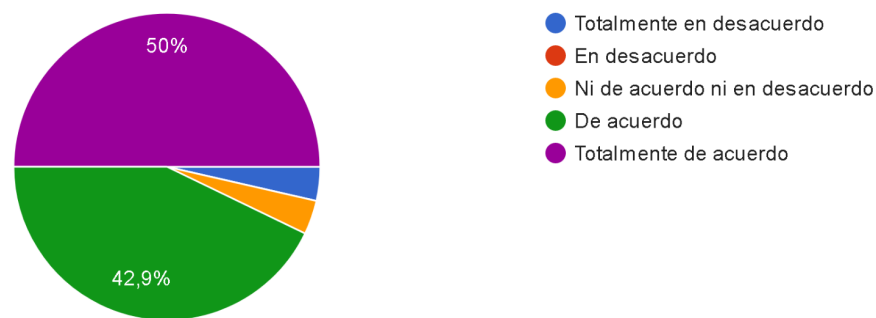
Results obtained in statement 1



In statement number 2 students were asked if they frequently like to use their L1 in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 4, 60,7% (17) of the participants agreed, 21,4% (6) totally agreed, 14,3% (4) did not agree or disagree, and 3,6% (1) disagreed. In summary, a great majority, putting together agree and totally agree, 82,1% (23) of the participants admitted that they frequently like using their L1 in the English class. Therefore, it can be inferred that participants generally resort to their L1, and they enjoy doing it as well.

Figure 4*Results obtained in statement 2*

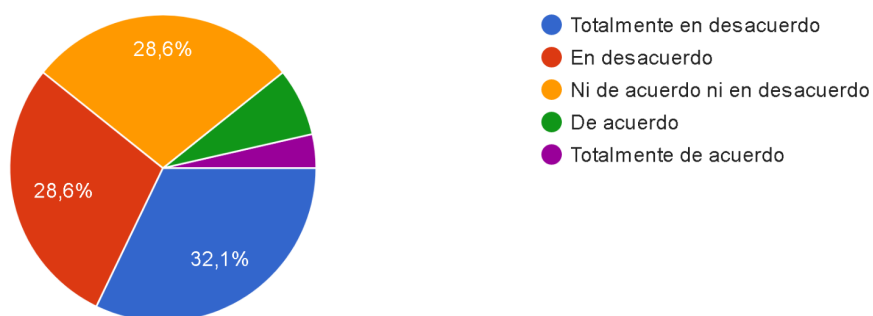
In statement number 3 students were asked if they feel comfortable when using their L1 in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 5, 50% (14) of the participants totally agreed, 42,9% (12) agreed, 3,6% (1) did not agree or disagree, and 3,6% (1) totally disagreed. In total, if we add together the percentage of the ones who agreed and totally agreed, the vast majority, 92,9,1% (23) of the participants felt comfortable when using their L1 in the English class. Meaning that they felt pleasant with it and having no problem when using it, which remarks a positive attitude towards it.

Figure 5*Results obtained in statement 3*

In statement number 15 students were asked if they consider that English language must be the only one used in the English class, such as in the monolingual approach, to which they responded, as in figure 6, 32,1% (9) of the participants totally disagreed, 28,6% (8) disagreed, 28,6% (8) did not agree or disagree, 7,1% (2) agreed, and 3,6% (1) totally agreed. In conclusion, more than half of the participants (putting together disagree and totally disagree) 60,7% (17) dissent from only using the foreign language, which can be taken as an approval for the bilingual approach and a favorable attitude towards employing their L1.

Figure 6

Results obtained in statement 15

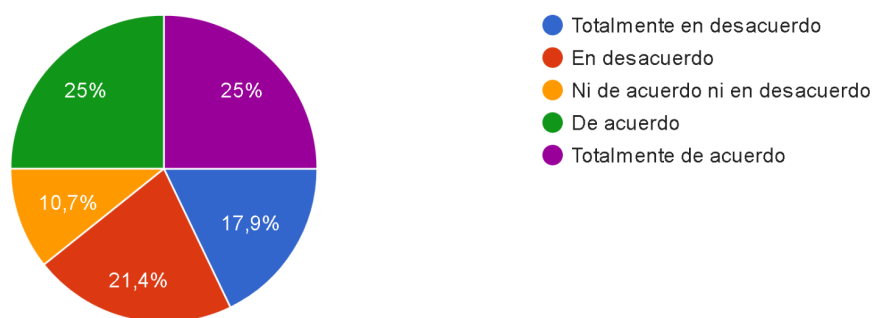


In statement number 16 students were asked if they think their L1 must have a minimum use and with very specific purposes in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 7, 25% (7) of the participants totally agreed, 25% (7) agreed, 21,4% (6) disagree, 17,9% (5) totally disagreed, and 10,7% (3) did not agree or disagree. In this statement, opinions were divided. Half of the participants (putting together agree and totally agree) 50% (14) assent on the minimum use of their L1, while 39,3% (11) disagreed. Comparing these results with the previous statements, it can be said that, even though students did approve the bilingual

approach and like using their L1, they also think that the practice of using Spanish in the English class must have specific purposes. In this manner, that use is reasonable and valid.

Figure 7

Results obtained in statement 16

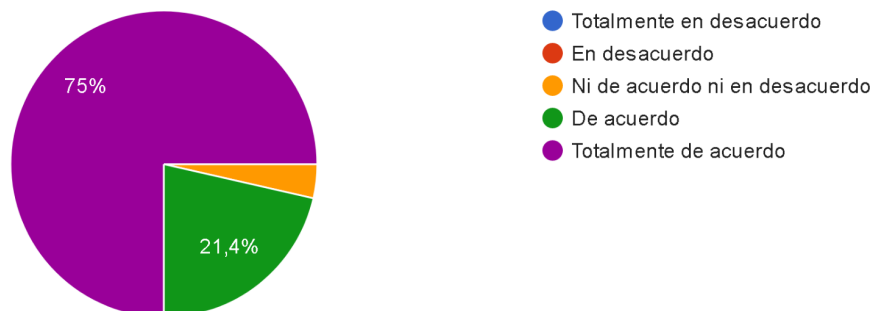


4.1.3 Reasons behind using L1

In this second category, students' reasons for using f L1 were explored. This section included aspects such as the benefits students obtain when using their L1. In this category, six statements were included, numbers 4,5,6,7,9 and 14. In statement number 4 students were asked if they use their L1 to translate and have a better understanding of very technical aspects of the English language, to which they responded, as in figure 5, 75% (21) of the participants totally agreed, 21,4% (6) agreed, and 3,6%(1) did not agree or disagree. As a result, almost all the participants, 96,4% (27) agreed and totally agreed on using their L1 to translate and have a better understanding of the English language. In this category, none of the participants disagreed. Therefore, this can be seen as one of the major purposes and benefits L1 provides to students.

Figure 8

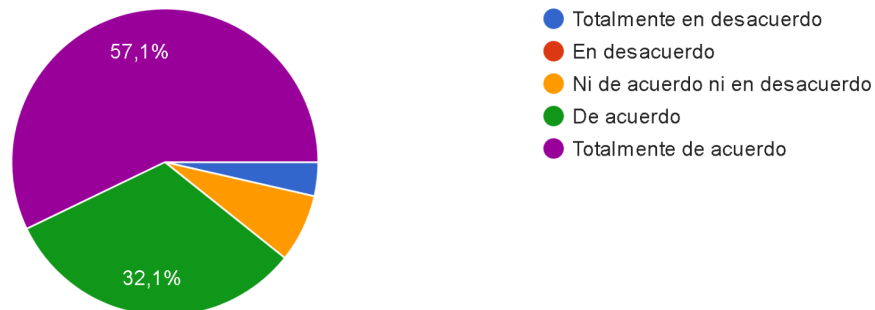
Results obtained in statement 4



In statement number 5 students were asked if they like to use their L1 to organize their ideas before speaking in English, to which they responded, as in figure 9, 57,1% (16) of the participants totally agreed, 31,1% (9) agreed, 7,1% (2) did not agree or disagree, and 3,6% (1) totally disagreed. In sum, a large majority, 89,2% (25) of the participants agreed and totally agreed on using their L1 to organize their ideas before speaking in English. This finding may be related to the belief that the first language is associated with cognitive processes, and that is why students tend to resort to it first. This also explains the complete and massive support to the previous statement, in which students like to check and compare the meaning of words from their L1 to the target language.

Figure 9

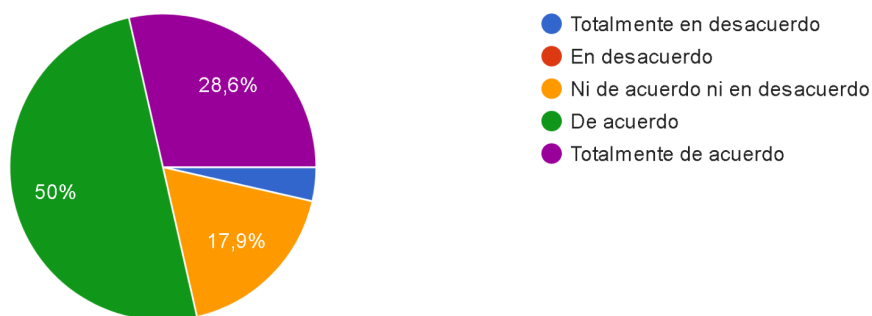
Results obtained in statement 5



In statement number 6 students were asked if they prefer to use their L1 to share their opinions and comments in order to have a more effective communication, to which they responded, as in figure 10, 50% (14) of the participants agreed, 28,6% (8) totally agreed, 17,9% (5) did not agree or disagree, and 3,6% (1) totally disagreed. As can be seen, a significant majority, 78,6% (22) of the participants agreed and totally agreed on using their L1 to share their opinions and comments in order to have a more effective communication. As it is their native language, students feel more confident speaking in Spanish.

Figure 10

Results obtained in statement 6

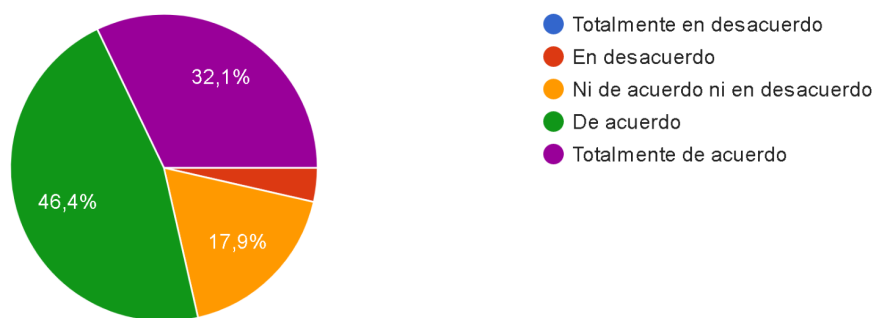


In statement number 7 students were asked if they prefer to use their L1 to ask questions and resolve doubts, to which they responded, as in figure 11, 46,4% (13) of the

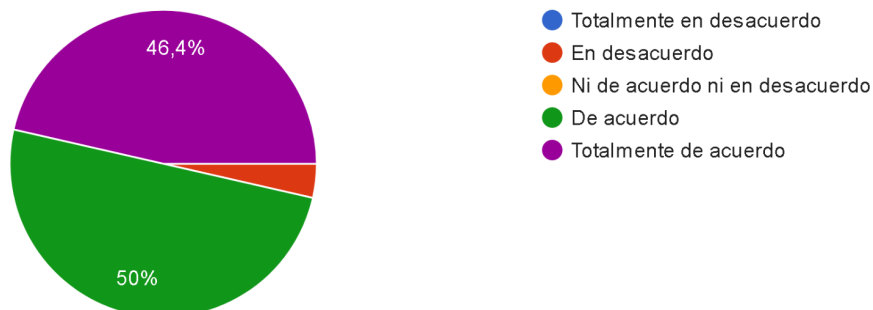
participants agreed, 32,1% (9) totally agreed, 17,9% (5) did not agree or disagree, and 3,6% (1) disagreed. In the end, a considerable majority, 78,5% (22) of the participants agreed and totally agreed on using their L1 to ask questions and resolve doubts in the English class. Following the same line of positive attitude towards using their L1, students prefer to employ Spanish, in this case, for questioning and clarifying information.

Figure 11

Results obtained in statement 7



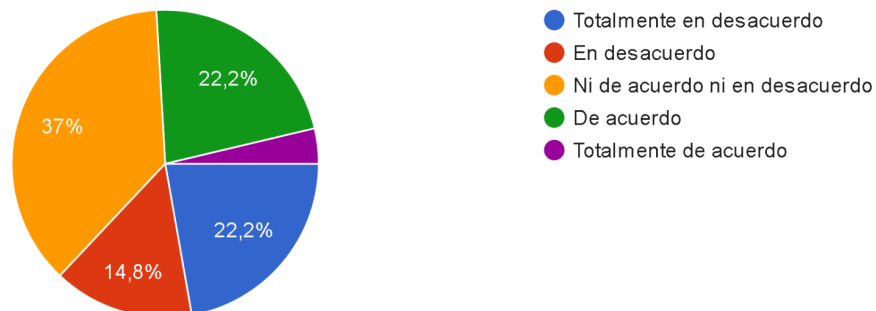
In statement number 9 students were asked if they consider that the use of their L1 assists and facilitates the relationship with the teacher, to which they responded, as in figure 12, 50% (14) of the participants agreed, 46,4% (13) totally agreed, and 3,6% (1) disagreed. In brief, almost the entire group, 96,4% (23) of the participants consider that using their L1 assists and facilitates the relationship with their English teacher. Being their L1 the main channel of communication in the classroom.

Figure 12*Results obtained in statement 9*

In statement number 14 students were asked if they feel insecure when they cannot use their L1 in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 13, 37% (10) of the participants did not agree or disagree, 22,2% (6) agreed, 22,2% (6) totally agreed, 14,8% (4) disagreed, and 3.6% (1) totally disagreed. One participant reserved his position in this statement, and did not vote for any option. In this statement, opinions were divided. On one hand, 37 % (10) of the participants disagreed and totally disagreed with the statement, which means that although students like and prefer using their L1, not using it does not affect them negatively or make them feel insecure. In the middle, we have the 37 % (10) of the participants that had mixed opinions and did not agree or disagree. On the other hand, only 25,9% (7), a quarter of the participants agreed and totally agreed on feeling insecure when they cannot use their L1 in the English class. This last percentage, can represent students that when cannot use their L1, that increases feelings of insecurity, anxiety and stress.

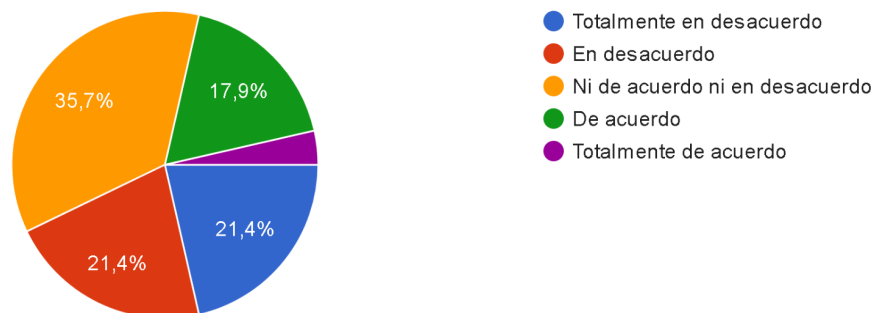
Figure 13

Results obtained in statement 14



4.1.4 Drawbacks of using L1

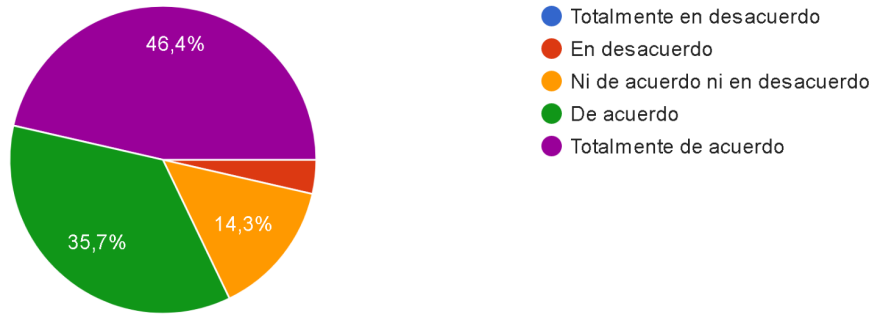
In this third category, drawbacks of using L1 in the English class were explored. This section included aspects such as the disadvantages students identify when using their L1. In this category, only one statement was included, number 13. In this statement, students were asked if they considered that the use of their L1 restricts the learning process of the foreign language, to which they responded, as in figure 14, 35,7% (10) of the participants did not agree or disagree, 21,4% (6) disagreed, 21,4% (6) totally disagreed, 17,9% (5) agreed, and 3,6% (1) totally agreed. As a summary, many of the participants, 42,8% (12) disagreed and totally disagreed with considering that the use of their L1 restricts the learning process of the foreign language, this can be seen as no negative attitude towards using Spanish in the English class.

Figure 14*Results obtained in statement 13***4.1.5 Students' position towards classmates using L1**

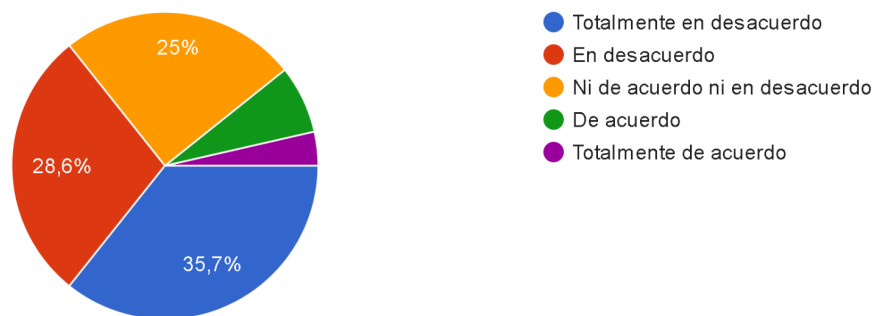
In this fourth category, participants' attitudes towards using their L1 with their classmates were explored. This section included aspects such as the reasons for using L1 with classmates, and their opinion on classmates using L1 in the English class. In this category, two statements were included, numbers 8 and 12. In statement number 8, students were asked if they preferred to socialize with their classmates using their L1, to which they responded, as in figure 15, 46,4% (13) of the participants totally agreed, 35,7% (10) agreed, 14,3% (4) did not agree or disagree, and 3,6% (1) disagreed. In summary, most of the participants, 82,1% (23) agreed and totally agreed with choosing Spanish when socializing with their classmates. This can be taken as another purpose of using their L1, socializing with their peers. This finding matches with the one of using their L1 to communicate with the teacher, making Spanish the means of communication in the English classroom, not only with their teacher but also with their classmates.

Figure 15

Results obtained in statement 8



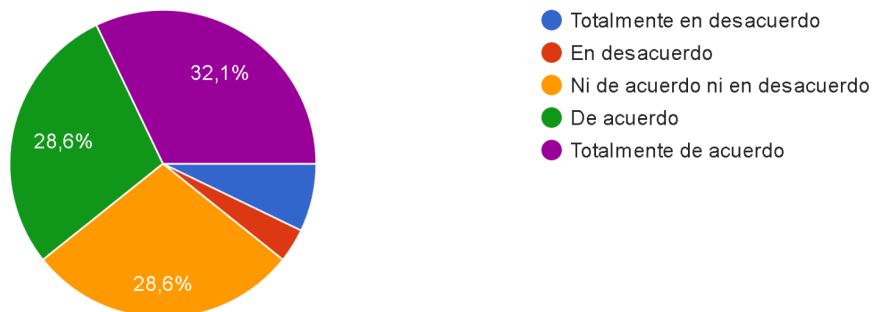
In statement number 12, students were asked if they considered inappropriate that their classmates use their L1 in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 16, 35,7% (10) of the participants totally disagreed, 28,6% (8) disagreed, 25% (7) did not agree or disagree, 7,1% (2) agreed, and 3,6 (1) totally agreed. In brief, multiple participants, 64,3% (18) disagreed and totally disagreed with considering inappropriate that their classmates use their L1 in the English class. Meaning that they approve the use of Spanish not only for themselves, but for third parties.

Figure 16*Results obtained in statement 12***4.1.6 Students' position towards teacher using L1**

In this fifth category, participants' attitudes towards the teacher using Spanish in the English class were explored. In this category, two statements were included, numbers 10 and 11. In statement number 10, students were asked if they liked when the teacher use Spanish in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 17, 32,1% (9) of the participants totally agreed, 28,6% (8) agreed, 28,6% (8) did not agree or disagree, 27,2% (2) totally disagreed, and 3,6% (1) disagreed. In summary, most of the participants, 60,7% (17) agreed and totally agreed with the teacher using Spanish in the English class. This result implies that students prefer receiving explanations in their L1, as in previous results, they agreed in saying that Spanish makes effective and better communication.

Figure 17

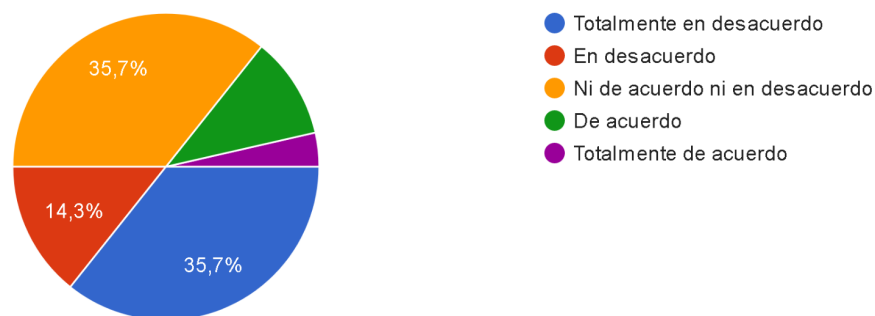
Results obtained in statement 10



In statement number 11, students were asked if they considered inappropriate that their teacher uses Spanish in the English class, to which they responded, as in figure 18, 35,7% (10) of the participants totally disagreed, 35,7% (10) did not agree or disagree, 14,3% (4) disagreed, 10,7% (3) agreed, and 3.6% (1) totally agreed. In this statement, opinions were divided. Half of the participants, 50% (14) disagreed with considering inappropriate that their teacher use Spanish in the English class. In contrast, only 14,3% (4) participants agreed with the statement, and 35,7% (10) had mixed opinions and did not state a clear position.

Figure 18

Results obtained in statement 11



4.2 Interview

The participants of this part of the study were a small sample of the same 28 students surveyed in the questionnaire. A group of 9 volunteers, representing 32% of the chosen group, was interviewed. In this section of the collecting data, neither age nor gender was asked. All the participants' responses were revised and coded according to similarities found. These similarities were classified into 4 categories. Agreement on using L1, reasons behind using L1, drawbacks of using L1, and students' position towards teacher using L1.

4.2.1 Agreement on using L1

In this first category, information about students' opinions on assenting the use of L1 was gathered. Although not all the questions were about if they agree or disagree on using their L1, throughout the interview, participants shared and defended their position on this topic. In line with the questionnaire, responses of the interview share the same position. Students in general did agree and approve using their L1 in their English class, which can be taken as a positive attitude towards their L1. That agreement is associated with aspects such as the benefits they

get from it when using it, and how it assists their learning process. Then, some extracts from the interviews are shown.

Extract 1

Participant 9 “La verdad si lo considero adecuado porque para uno aprender un nuevo idioma es más fácil asociarlo con el idioma que uno ya sabe, y entonces en ese caso, nuestro idioma sería el español.”

Extract 2

Participant 5 “Si considero adecuado el uso del español porque hay temas que recién vamos a aprender o recién vamos a empezar a ver, entonces es muy difícil que uno empieza a aprenderlos hablando en inglés.”

Moreover, participants also agreed with the use of Spanish, affirming that as it is their native language, they felt confident and comfortable when using it. They described Spanish as a tool that is very attached to them, and thereby to their learning process in general.

Extract 3

Participant 2 “Me siento muy cómoda, porque pues es mi lenguaje principal, es una zona muy arraigada a mi.”

Extract 4

Participant 3 “Me siento cómodo hablando en español, pues es el idioma que yo conozco y sé perfectamente cómo es.

However, there were some participants that were in the middle of the dilemma, if they agreed or not, and had mixed feelings when using their L1. There were also others that did not agree with the frequent use of Spanish in the English class, and would prefer to use the foreign language more in order to master it.

Extract 5

Participant 7” Considero más o menos adecuado el uso del español, pues como estamos hablando del inglés, el español no hay que verlo tan frecuente, pues no usarlo tanto, porque estamos usando el inglés.”

Extract 6

Participant 3 “No me gusta utilizar mucho el español, ya que estamos en la clase de inglés para intentar aprender el inglés. Sólo lo utilizo cuando lo considero necesario. “

Regarding the politics of banning Spanish and using only a monolingual approach, plenty of students disagree with that restriction, claiming that it complicates learning the foreign language. In addition, they expressed that as they did not master English yet, they considered using their L1 as a back and scaffolding instrument.

Extract 7

Participant 4 “ Me parece muy mal, porque hay cosas que uno sinceramente no es capaz de entender, o sea no todo puede ser inglés porque pues uno no sabe, o sea, uno también necesita que le digan las cosas en español y eso.”

Extract 8

Participant 9 “ La verdad, es que no me parece correcto, porque siento que dificulta un poco más el proceso. “

Nevertheless, some participants expressed their agreement with the monolingual approach. They said that it will be a type of challenge, only using the target language and it will be helpful to learn English quicker. They also claimed that in the case of an advanced English level, they considered students do not need to use their L1.

Extract 9

Participant 1 “ A mi me parece que está bien, porque es como un mayor reto para nosotros el sólo usar en inglés dentro del aula. Sí, me parece que es mucho mejor para nosotros aprender más rápido el inglés. “

Extract 10

Participant 2 “Pues igual yo creo que, depende mucho en que cierto nivel esté en inglés, porque alguien tan avanzado yo creo que no sea necesario que hable en español porque sería una pérdida para el inglés.”

4.2.2 Reasons behind using L1

In this second category, information about students' reasons for using their L1 was gathered. Complementing what was found in the questionnaires, participants expanded their responses giving more detailed information about the reasons behind using their L1. Students' main reason for using Spanish is to translate unknown words and expressions, in order to clarify doubts and have a better understanding of the foreign language.

Extract 11

Participant 7 “Pues yo lo uso para buscar palabras que no entiendo y darle un significado y pues poder guiarme. Más que todo, cuando nos dejan trabajos así, salen algunas palabras que no entiendo, pues más que todo me guio por el traductor. “

Extract 12

Participant 1 “Sí, pues como ya dije, pues es para resolver las dudas que tengamos y todo eso, y pues es más fácil para nosotros porque no somos muy experimentados hablando inglés.”

4.2.3 Drawbacks of using L1

In this third category, information about students' perception of drawbacks of using their L1 was gathered. Most of the participants did not state finding drawbacks when using Spanish. On the contrary, many students claim that their L1 is advantageous for them because it is easier to understand. Additionally, they add that Spanish does not limit their learning process, but the student himself.

Extract 13

Participant 7 “Pues con el español nos podemos ayudar, nos podemos guiar, no creo que lo limite, yo creo que ayuda a fortalecerlo para tener un buen entendimiento.”

Extract 14

Participant 3 “No, ya es, el que se limita es uno mismo, el español no interfiere en ningún momento a la hora de aprender inglés.”

However, some participants stated that they do perceive the use of Spanish as a type of obstacle, and they think that it can interfere with learning English if it is excessively employed.

Extract 15

Participant 2 “Si se usa mucho, yo creo que sí limita bastante, porque también, hasta cierto punto, es bueno pero si siempre se busca darle a los estudiantes la explicación en español, pues no siempre van a lograr el aprendizaje correcto. ”

Extract 16

Participant 8 “Si, porque hay estudiantes que no saben tanto inglés y usar el español hace que limite que el estudiante aprenda más.”

4.2.4 Students' position towards teacher using L1

In this fourth category, information about students' opinions about if they agree or not with the English teacher using their L1 in the class was gathered. All the participants agreed and had a positive attitude towards the teacher using Spanish. This favorable position is due to the advantages of the teacher explaining in Spanish, such as having better understanding of class topics and class activities. Besides, participants affirmed that using Spanish helps them to have good interpersonal communication with the teacher.

Extract 17

Participant 1 “Sí, la verdad a mi me gusta que el profesor nos explique en español y luego nos explique en inglés, así, yo siento que entendemos mejor lo que él nos está dictando.”

Extract 18

Participant 3 “El español nos ayuda para poder tener una mejor comunicación con el profesor. .”

5. Conclusions

This study aims to explore high school students' attitudes towards the use of their L1 in their English class. In addition, this research analyzes learners' reasons behind having a certain attitude towards their L1 and, in such a manner, to establish learners' positions towards the use of L1 in the English class. Through the two collecting instruments, it was possible to obtain information to accomplish the established objectives. Both of them gave similar results, making the gathered information accurate and precise.

Starting from the first aspect that was asked and investigated among participants, agreement on L1 use, the vast majority did agree with using Spanish in the English class. This can be interpreted as a clear positive attitude towards their L1. Participants also expressed that they like to use Spanish frequently, and when doing so, they feel comfortable, which reinforces the favorable attitude they have towards it. Having positive attitudes to the native language, has a significant influence upon the students' performance in the classroom and plays an essential part in allowing them to learn the target language efficiently (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013, p. 70).

Regarding the reasons why they use their L1 in the English class, all the purposes are associated with the benefits they obtained when using Spanish. To illustrate, participants said that they tend to use their L1 to translate unknown words and expressions. This purpose helps them to have a better understanding of the new topics of the foreign language. Besides, they also stated preferring using their L1 to expressing themselves, as the main channel of communication in their English class with their teacher and their classmates. They use their L1 in situations such as in asking questions, resolving and clarifying doubts, with the intention of having effective communication. According to Thompson (2014, p. 329) students usually code-switched to their L1 in the interest of better understanding teacher's indications, seeking

clarification about classroom tasks and other matters. Additionally, they also stated that they prefer to formulate and organize their ideas first in their L1 before speaking and sharing their thoughts in English. This finding can be related with the comfort and security they feel when using Spanish because of being their first language, they perceive it as a safe and known zone. Students like to use Spanish because as it is a comfort zone, it reduces the feelings of fear, anxiety and insecurity that students have when using another language which is not mastered with as much confidence as the first one. Their L1 helps them to create and maintain a comfortable classroom environment. (Duarte, S. & Martín, I. , 2015, p. 166)

All the benefits students get from using their L1 are directly associated with the agreement they have on their L1. Therefore, it can be inferred that as their L1 is advantageous to their English learning process, they have a positive attitude towards it. Students tend to perceive their native language as a scaffolding tool that helps them to have better results and a more effective output in the foreign language (Ma, 2009). That is the reason why students approve the bilingual approach, in which they claim that using Spanish assists and does not limit the English learning process. Contrary to the position they had on the monolingual approach, in which they disagreed with it, stating that banning their L1 from the English class makes learning the foreign language more difficult.

In relation to students' opinion of their English teacher using Spanish, participants agreed with that, and they perceived it as an appropriate practice in which the teacher can explain some very technical topics using their L1. English teachers can make use of students' L1 in order to translate some aspects of the class in the interest of improving deep understanding of the new vocabulary, in such a way, increasing and excelling comprehension of the second language. (Khan, 2016, p. 138). Students have a positive attitude towards the English teacher using Spanish for meaningful and useful purposes that enhance their learning.

It can be concluded that students do have a positive and favorable attitude towards using their L1 in the English class, and that is why they like to use it frequently. However, It is

also important to highlight that students are also conscious of the importance of having a higher input of the target language and a minimum use of their L1.

Finally, future studies should take into account other contexts. A more extended and different sample could be researched, such as university students, in order to compare and contrast the results with another type of students with different factors that may influence and vary the results. Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore the attitudes towards using L1 not only from students but also from teachers.

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Annexes

Annex A. Consent format



SEÑORES

PADRES DE FAMILIA

COLEGIO PORTAL CAMPESTRE NORTE GIRÓN

Cordial saludo

Por medio de la presente me permito solicitar su autorización y consentimiento para la participación del estudiante en el proyecto de investigación “High school students' attitudes towards the use of their native language in their English class” avalado por la Universidad Industrial de Santander y a cargo del estudiante Hander Giovanni Gómez González, del programa de Lic. en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en inglés.

Dicho proyecto cuenta con las siguientes características:

Objetivo: Conocer las actitudes de los estudiantes frente al uso del español en el proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera , en este caso, el inglés.

Procedimiento: Previa autorización de la institución y consentimiento informado por parte de los padres o tutores legales, debidamente firmado, se procederá a aplicar los siguientes instrumentos de manera anónima :

- Observación de 1 hora de la clase de inglés
- Encuestas a los estudiantes cuya contestación dura aproximadamente 5 minutos
- Entrevistas a los estudiantes cuya realización dura aproximadamente 5 minutos cada uno.

Esta recolección de datos se hará de manera anónima, confidencial y presencial en la institución escolar en el horario de la clase de inglés.

Si requiere más información, o comunicarse por cualquier motivo relacionado con esta investigación, puede contactar al investigador responsable de este estudio por los siguientes medios:

De antemano agradezco su atención y colaboración.

Atentamente,

Hander G. Gómez

Estudiante UIS

yo, _____, identificado(a) con la cédula de ciudadanía número _____ de _____, en calidad de acudiente del(a) estudiante _____, deseo manifestar a través de este documento, que fui informado suficientemente y comprendo los objetivos, los procedimientos y las posibles riesgos y beneficios implicados en la participación del(a) estudiante en el proyecto de investigación: "High school students' attitudes towards the use of their native language in their English class".

Voluntariedad: La participación del(a) estudiante en este estudio es completamente voluntaria, si él o ella se negara a participar o decidiera retirarse, esto no le generará ningún problema, ni tendrá consecuencias a nivel institucional, ni académico, ni social.

Riesgos: La participación en este proyecto no acarrea riesgo alguno.

Beneficios: No se recibirá ningún beneficio económico directo por participar en este estudio. Sin embargo, la participación permitirá generar información para seguir estudiando el tema de investigación.

Confidencialidad: La información suministrada por el o la estudiante será confidencial. Los resultados podrán ser publicados o presentados en reuniones o eventos con fines académicos sin revelar su nombre o datos de identificación. Se mantendrán los cuestionarios y en general cualquier registro en un sitio seguro. Los datos sólo podrán ser manipulados por los investigadores, por la duración del estudio y únicamente con fines educativos.

Así mismo, declaro que fui informado suficientemente y comprendo que tengo derecho a recibir respuesta sobre cualquier inquietud que tenga sobre dicha investigación, antes, durante y después de su ejecución; que tengo el derecho de solicitar los resultados de los cuestionarios y pruebas que conteste durante la misma. Considerando los derechos que el o la estudiante tiene en calidad de participante de dicho estudio, a los cuales se hizo alusión previamente, constituyen compromisos del equipo de investigación responsable del mismo, me permito informar que consiento, de forma libre y espontánea, la participación del(a) estudiante en el mismo.

Este consentimiento no inhibe el derecho que tiene el o la estudiante de ser informado(a) suficientemente y comprender los puntos mencionados previamente y a ofrecer su asentimiento para participar en el estudio de manera libre y espontánea, por lo que entiendo que mi firma en este formato no obliga su participación.

En constancia de lo anterior, firmo el presente documento, en la ciudad de _____, el día _____, del mes _____ del año _____.

Firma _____

Nombre _____

C. C. No. _____ de _____

Annex B. Questionnaire

Edad: _____ Género: Mujer ___ Hombre ___ Otro ___

Mediante la presente encuesta se realiza un estudio para conocer la actitud de los estudiantes frente al uso del español en la clase de inglés.

totalmente en desacuerdo	en desacuerdo	ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	de acuerdo	totalmente de acuerdo
1	2	3	4	5

Teniendo en cuenta la tabla anterior, valore los siguientes enunciados colocando una **X** en la casilla que mejor represente su posición con respecto a lo manifestado.

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Estoy de acuerdo con el uso del español en la clase de inglés.					
2	Me gusta usar con frecuencia el español en la clase de inglés.					
3	Me siento cómodo usando el español en la clase de inglés.					
4	Me gusta usar el español para traducir y entender mejor temáticas muy técnicas del inglés.					
5	Me gusta usar el español para ordenar mis ideas antes de hablar en inglés.					
6	Prefiero compartir mis opiniones y comentarios en español para tener una comunicación más efectiva.					
7	Prefiero usar el español para preguntar y resolver mis inquietudes.					
8	Prefiero socializar con mis compañeros hablando en español.					
9	El uso del español favorece y facilita el trato con mi profesor .					
10	Me gusta cuando el profesor habla en español.					
11	No es apropiado que el profesor use el español en la clase de inglés.					
12	No es adecuado que mis compañeros usen el español en la clase de inglés.					
13	Considero que el uso del español limita el aprendizaje del inglés.					
14	Me siento inseguro cuando no puedo usar el español en la clase de inglés.					
15	Sólo se debe usar el inglés en la clase de inglés.					
16	El español debe tener un uso mínimo y con propósitos específicos.					

Annex C. Interview format

1	¿Considera adecuado el uso del español en la clase de inglés? ¿por qué?
2	¿Le gusta usar el español en la clase de inglés? ¿Qué tan frecuente?
3	¿Qué tan cómodo se siente usando el español en la clase de inglés?
4	¿En qué casos cree que es apropiado el uso del español en la clase de inglés?.
5	¿Cree que el uso del español ayuda en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés? ¿por qué?
6	¿Cree que el uso del español limita el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés? ¿por qué?
7	¿Considera apropiado que el profesor use el español en la clase de inglés? ¿por qué?
8	¿Qué piensa sobre las políticas que prohíben el uso del español en la clase de inglés?
9	¿Desea agregar algún comentario u opinión con respecto al tema de estudio?