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The use of L1 in FL classrooms: (dis)advantages

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ABSTRACT

The use of the L1 in the foreign language classroom has been a matter of debate, especially in the last few decades. This dissertation is primarily concerned with researching and exposing in detail the advantages and disadvantages that using the L1 in the foreign language classroom can bring for the students. To accomplish this goal, a thorough exploration of articles and thesis about the beginning of this controversy and about the opinions and views of different investigators has been developed. A historical overview of the topic, the advantages and disadvantages of the use of L1 in the foreign language class and a revision of the reality in the classrooms are studied in order to provide a clear vision of the topic. Finally, a set of activities including L1 will be given to exemplify how to introduce it in a real classroom.

Key words: L1 use, foreign language classroom, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), advantages, disadvantages

RESUMEN

El uso de la L1 en el aula de lengua extranjera ha sido una cuestión de debate, especialmente en las últimas décadas. Esta disertación se ocupa principalmente de investigar y exponer de forma detallada las ventajas y desventajas que el uso de la L1 dentro del aula de lengua extranjera puede tener para los estudiantes. Para conseguir este objetivo, se ha llevado a cabo una exploración exhaustiva de artículos y tesis sobre los comienzos de esta controversia y sobre las opiniones y puntos de vista de diferentes investigadores. En este trabajo, se estudia el origen de esta controversia, las ventajas y desventajas del uso de la L1 en el aula de lengua extranjera, y una revisión de la realidad del aula, con el fin de proporcionar una visión detallada del tema. Finalmente, se incluirán una serie de actividades que utilicen la L1 para ejemplificar como esta se puede introducir en una clase real.

Palabras clave: Uso de la L1, aula de lengua extranjera, inglés como lengua extranjera, ventajas, desventajas

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1. INTRODUCTION

When investigating about the way foreign languages have been taught throughout history, it is seen that methodologies change as time advances and different needs have to be covered when learning a language. One of the aspects that has been a matter of debate for a great amount of years is if the L1 of the students should be eliminated from the FL (Foreign Language) classroom or rather if it should be combined with the FL itself. Some researchers have considered that L1 is a useful tool (Khan, 2016; Shin et al., 2019; Purnama et al., 2022; among others), while others see it as an impediment for students in the learning process (Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985; Chaudron, 1988; Turnbull, 2001; Miles, 2004; among others). When talking about L1, this is referred to those classes where the L1 is the same for all or the majority of the students.

Until the 19th century, the tendency was to use the L1 when teaching a FL most of the time. However, this tradition changed radically to an exclusive use of the FL within the classroom. Later, methodologies have evolved to a special interest in communication. This type of approaches prioritize the increase of FL input in the class and, consequently, tend to avoid the use of L1 (Purnama et al., 2019). However, Hall and Cook (2012) found that, more recently, L1 is being reconsidered as a helpful tool in the teaching of foreign languages.

According to Macaro (2001, p. 535), there are three different theoretical positions towards the use of L1 in a FL classroom:

- The Virtual Position: The use of L1 in the foreign language classroom is totally unnecessary and invaluable, as it has no pedagogical function. If the teacher has a certain proficiency level in the FL, it can and should be eliminated from the classroom.
- The Maximal Position: The use of L1 in the foreign language classroom has no pedagogical functions. Nevertheless, it is difficult to rely only in the FL because of the different learning conditions that can exist in the classroom (students' attitude, difficulties, language, etc.)
- The Optimal Position: The use of L1 in the foreign language classroom has pedagogical implications and care should be taken in analyzing how to use it in a coherent and useful manner.

Since foreign language teaching is a worldwide practice that expands more and more every day, it is crucial to know which is the best way to teach it. For the topic of this study, the

L1 use in the FL classroom, it is important to see if L1, something that is perfectly accessible, can be considered by teachers as a tool to help their students. For this purpose, both the perspectives for and the perspectives against L1 inclusion should be analyzed in order to strike a balance and see if one can and wants to take advantage of it or not.

The aim of this paper is to investigate about this topic in depth, gathering the positive and negative aspects that the inclusion of L1 in the FL classroom may entail. These objectives have been fulfilled by carrying out an exhaustive analysis of different studies. Then, a reflection has been done in order to create a discussion based on the analyzed theories, together with a proposal based on the gathered information on L1 use in FL classrooms.

This dissertation is divided into six different sections. The first one deals with a historical overview of the topic from the beginning of foreign language teaching until nowadays, putting especial emphasis on the evolution of methodologies. The second section discusses the advantages of using L1 in the FL class, while the third one explores its disadvantages. The fourth section describes what is the reality of the issue in the FL classes. The fifth chapter contains a discussion of the main points and ideas that have been achieved with the creation of the previous sections, followed by the overall conclusions of the dissertation. Finally, chapter number six offers a didactic proposal introducing L1 (Spanish in this case) following the opinion of those who support its use in the foreign language classroom.

2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC

In the following section, first, a brief historical background of the emergence of English Language Teaching is given. Then, an overview of the different methods that emerged is provided, and finally, the current situation regarding the topic is presented, so that the matter is properly contextualized.

As it is presented by Howatt (2004), English teaching started in England in the end of the Middle Ages, with a context in which the Tudor dynasty started ruling the country. Thus, French bilingualism disappeared slowly and gradually in England. With the arrival of this dynasty, different kings started extolling the use of English as the unique official language of the country. With Henry V, English became the official language for royal correspondence. In this context, the different kings of the Tudor dynasty, started to pay more attention to the English language and gradually it became the official language of the country. This language had to be used for different negotiation and trading purposes, and therefore, it is at this point in history that interest in teaching English language started. Thenceforth, teaching methods started being developed, and, consequently, new methodologies emerged and evolved from then on. However, one of the aspects that has varied the most over the years with the continuous emergence of new methods is the use of the L1 when the FL is being taught.

The first method that emerged was based on the Grammar-Translation methodology, which was used on the teaching of Greek and Latin languages. As these languages were not used to communicate orally but rather to read and write, the spoken part was completely forgotten, and teachers focused on the teaching of grammar rules throughout models of texts in the FL. Learners were presented the different rules and vocabulary through these text models. They had to memorize them, and then, as a practice, they translated texts from the L1 into the foreign language, or the other way around. Hence, both the L1 and the FL were used in this method to teach the English language only in the written form (Titone, 1968).

As argued by Miles (2004), for many years, the Grammar-Translation method was the most well-known and used in the English teaching. Nonetheless, perspectives changed when mass immigration started in the 20th Century, specifically the one from Europe to America. This circumstance created a heterogeneous society in relation to languages and produced a shift in the English classrooms, as they had a higher number of students and these students did not share their L1. Consequently, teachers had to make use of the FL itself to teach it, causing the forced

elimination of the L1 of the students. In this context, the Direct Method emerged. It consists in introducing the language orally to the students through photographs, pictures, actions, etc. The Direct Method focuses mostly on the oral and the pronunciation parts, and it completely elides the L1 from the classroom (Skidmore, 1917).

Another method arose in the 1940s, during the Second World War, which is the Audiolingual Method. This method was developed to help people belonging to the Army to learn foreign languages for military purposes. It focused on a continuous repetition and memorization of the different structures of the foreign language. This would create an automation of patterns which would supposedly make the learners achieve proficiency in the pronunciation and communication on such foreign language. For this, the Audiolingual Method introduced exclusively FL input (Mei, 2018).

The previously explained methods are the most well-known early methods for foreign language teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). In the current days, those old methods have been replaced because of the different interests in the present time. Today's society leads us to teaching methods and approaches which seek for "meaning exchange and to use language for real-world, non-linguistic purposes" (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), and downplay the dominion of the grammatical structures. This is what leads Second Language Teaching (SLT) to the Communicative Approach (CA). This approach maintains that the goal of SLT should be the oral and communicative competence and that teachers must not forget to help students in their classes to develop the four different skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Also, this approach puts students in the center, and encourages the teacher to let them try to communicate their ideas without pointing directly at their errors. Moreover, it lets students work with grammar in an inductive way, allowing them to discover grammatical rules by themselves. Despite of the changes in the focus of interests, the tendency upon the usage of the L1 is the same as in previous methods, as using L1 is not permitted during the classes (Sanjaya, 2014). As Miles (2004) adds, the CA defenders prompted the exclusive use of the FL even if the basis for doing so were not clear.

The CA is the one that 'LOMLOE', the Spanish law on education in force nowadays points out as essential for the teaching of foreign languages.

There are also some methods which are worth mentioning and are called the "alternative" ones, such as the Suggestopedia Method or the Total Physical Response (TPR),

which sprout as well in the 20th Century. These are methodologies that are still present in SLT, but are not as widely used as the CA.

Suggestopedia was a method developed by Georgi Lozanov in year 1978. In it, the teacher presents a set of vocabulary and grammatical structures indirectly by including them inside a text which is normally a dialogue or a script of a play. Students must listen to the teacher's pronunciation and then, memorize this dialogue or script and represent it (Bakhromova, 2022). On the other part, TPR, which was first developed by James J. Asher in the year 1988, is said to follow the natural process of learning a language. It consists of introducing different vocabulary in the FL to the learners while this vocabulary is gestured so that it becomes easier to understand. The process would be first to listen and observe their model, the teacher, pronouncing a word and mimicking it at the same time, and then, to repeat after the teacher (Putri, 2016). As Putri (2016, p. 20) says, because of the characteristics of this method, "it is only suitable for teaching young learners". In any case, both of the methods highlight the fact that the foreign language is the only language allowed when putting them into practice.

Nonetheless, methodologies have evolved throughout time. Today, as learning different languages has become an issue of growing interest, there are lots of experts studying and discussing this matter. They are especially concerned about which are the best tools and ways to teach a FL. One of the latent debates related to this issue has to do with the usage of the students' L1 in SLT classes. There is great controversy regarding this topic, since there are arguments both for and against its use (Cook, 2001). The two parts will be revised in detail in this dissertation.

3. ADVANTAGES OF USING L1 IN THE FL CLASSROOM

While researching about the reasons to be in favor of the usage of the L1 of the learners within a foreign language classroom, focus will be placed on two different aspects: i) the theoretical concepts which sustain why using L1 in a classroom could be beneficial for students, and ii) the practical part, i.e., how to implement L1 in a FL¹ classroom correctly and the specific uses each of the practices can be given.

Two important aspects have to be understood before commenting the positive view upon the use of L1 in FL classes: Cross-Linguistic Influence (CLI) and the Affective Filter Theory. These two concepts must be kept in mind by instructors when teaching a FL.

CLI, also referred to as transfer, is defined as “the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Odlin, 1989, p. 27). Also, Hall and Cook (2012) clarify that when people learn any foreign language, their mind follows an unconscious process of decoding the message in the FL into the L1 to obtain its meaning, and then they process the information in both languages to try to understand the grammar rules, sometimes by transferring from their L1. This CLI can affect the learner not necessarily in a negative way, as it can also boost the learning process, depending on the similarities and differences between the two languages in contact (Meyer, 2008).

Interference will be different depending on the L1 of the student and the foreign language that this student is dealing with. In any case, as L1 “directly impacts the process of acquisition of a second language” (Torrijos, 2009, p. 157) it must be taken into account when teaching a foreign language. Moreover, advocates of L1 use in FL classroom rely on the so called positive cross-linguistic influence to argue in favor of introducing L1 in the class.

In relation to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, as Krashen (1982, p.31) explains, “a variety of affective variables relate to success in second language acquisition”. For him, the affective variables that most influence the learning process are motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. This means that if students are motivated, believe in themselves and have no stress in relation to the foreign language classroom, their affective filter is low, and, therefore their learning process will be more prosperous. When we deal with a foreign language classroom, it

¹ The concepts L2 and second language will also be used to refer to FL

is highly probable that students do not understand certain contents, comments of the teacher, tasks, etc. This is one of the most common sources of stress for students and causes them to rise their affective filter (Cook, 2001). One possible solution relies on the usage of students' L1, which will overcome this issue. In fact, it is the most important reason to use L1 in the FL classroom. Therefore, the Affective Filter Hypothesis must be taken into account too when teaching a FL.

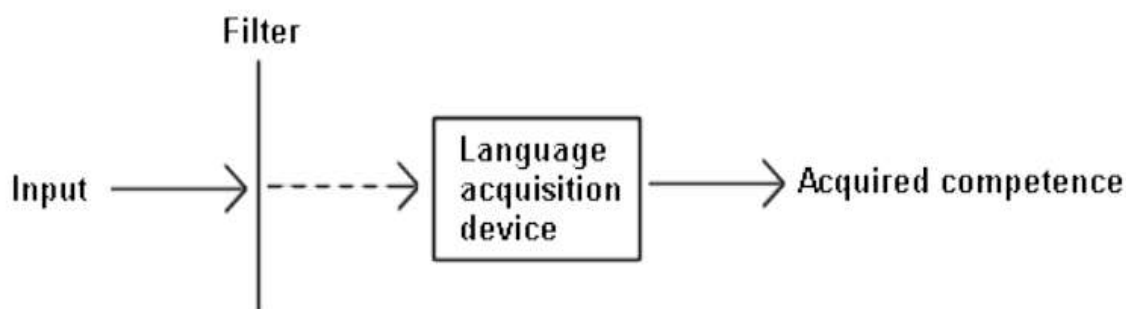


Figure 1. Graphic representation of the Affective Filter Hypothesis. (Krashen, 1982, p.32)

When analyzing experts' view, it is observed that all the advocates of the use of L1 within the FL classroom coincide in seeing L1 as a multifunctional element. This is, that its introduction in the FL classroom fulfills different purposes when used in specific moments of the class. These functions of the L1 and the ideal moments for it to be used will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

First of all, in relation to CLI, when people learn a foreign language, they already have acquired their L1. This L1 has been acquired only by receiving input in the language, i.e., they have not been instructed formally on how to speak in their L1. Because of this, as Cook (2001, p.1) argues, the process cannot be equal when learning a FL, because we are dealing with a very different situation, as learners of a FL have “more mature minds, greater social development, a larger short term memory capacity and other differences from young children”. This means we do not deal with the same type of individuals who acquire a language unconsciously by receiving more and more input, and therefore, we cannot treat them in the same way (Cook, 2001). Researchers such as Hall and Cook (2012), Khan (2016) or Adwani and Shrivastava (2017) agree that this knowledge background based on the L1 should be exploited and cannot be left aside, as learner's prior knowledge and beliefs serve as the foundation for new knowledge and comprehension (Hall and Cook, 2012). This means that students will inevitably

have in their minds their L1 and that educators can benefit from the already acquired L1 and use it to compare, give examples, etc. of the foreign language so that new knowledge is based on familiar aspects, and the process is simpler for the learners. It is also affirmed that “children should be trained to make mother tongue utilizable for learning a second language by transferring the kindred rules” (Adwani and Shrivastava, 2017, p. 162). In this sense, it is found that learners construct knowledge of a foreign language by adding new information to the aspects of the language they have already grasped, which are all related to the L1. In other words, if a grammatical rule in the L1 is similar to one on the FL, this would be taken as a reference by students, and it will accelerate the learning of such rule. In any case, the L1 is something that cannot be extracted from students’ minds, as it is inevitably there. Additionally, it can boost the learning process in certain properties of the language. Therefore, it is suggested to take advantage of this when it is possible and not to leave the L1 aside during the learning process (Hall and Cook, 2012).

In respect to the Affective Filter Theory, as it is expressed by different authors such as Cook (2001), Meyer (2008) or Shin et al. (2019), the foreign language classroom can be an intimidating and threatening space even for adult students, and this does not contribute to their learning process. Lowering the affective filter makes learning of a foreign language more efficient. Therefore, one of the main roles of the FL teachers is to lower the affective filter of the students, and this is mainly done by facilitating comprehension, creating a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and establishing a certain confidence relationship between the teacher and the students (Meyer, 2008).

First, it seems to be useful to introduce new topics in the L1 of the students. If some contents are explained in the FL, possibly students will not completely understand the content and will “learn something improperly, which may lead to a problem” (Purnama et al., 2022, p. 1823). Explaining new grammatical elements in the L1 makes sure that all the students understand them, and then, this sets the basis to start working on this new topic being sure that all the students are able to do so (Hall and Cook, 2012; Shin et al., 2019; Purnama et al., 2022). However, Cook (2001) advises that grammar shall not be explained as a starting point of the class, but rather when it arises in the class content. This means that she finds it more profitable to introduce the students to a certain grammatical aspect within the input in the foreign language, and then, once they have seen it in the practice, explain how it works. The introduction of new topics not only includes grammar, but also vocabulary and expressions. If

new contents are given in the L1 from the beginning, students will have a better understanding, and this will lead to a positive feeling towards the foreign language. Equally, Purnama et al. (2022) highlight the importance of explaining the most difficult topics in the students' native language. This also applies to those concepts in the FL that do not exist as such in their L1. Meyer (2008, p. 153) argues: "how a teacher could use the L2 to communicate a concept that [does not] exist in a student's L1 with any accuracy; is questionable. Using the L1 is likely the most efficient way of doing so". With these actions, the objective is that students understand the contents from the beginning, losing less time repeating them or solving doubts that have less possibilities to arise if using the L1 (Meyer, 2008; Purnama et al., 2022). This understanding will increase the motivation and self-confidence of the students, and reduce anxiety, provoking students to lower their affective filter. Moreover, by explaining grammar, vocabulary and other contents in the L1, students will understand it quicker than if this was done in the FL. Consequently, the learning process will be more efficient and the teacher will lose less time with explanations, being able to devote this time to students' practice with other activities (Meyer, 2008).

Once a topic (vocabulary, grammar, expressions, etc.) has been explained, students are asked to complete some tasks. In this situation, teachers need to make sure that learners have understood the content explained, which needs to be used to complete these tasks. This is named comprehension check. As Atkinson (1987) argues, asking for the meaning of some concept or idea in the L1 makes students use both the L1 and the FL, as students will be given a term in the FL and they will have to translate it into the L1. This is quicker and more precise than other ways of checking the students' comprehension, for example, looking for other ways of expressing the same ideas or making gestures. This strategy seeks for quickness, as the teacher can save time for other activities.

Another efficient way of using the L1 in FL classes seems to be for ordering tasks, giving instructions, and organizing students for classroom activities (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001; Hall and Cook, 2012; Shin et al., 2019; Purnama et al., 2022). In a class session it is of key importance that students participate. Whenever a task needs to be performed, the most important thing is that students know clearly what they have to do so that they can successfully complete it. The best way to ensure the understanding of the students is to give instructions in the L1. Hence, no student will have the feeling of being lost from the very beginning of the task, and the basis to start working will be clear (Purnama et al., 2022). Purnama et al. (2022,

p. 1832) affirm that “giving instruction in L1 to students was the main concern to make the material easy to understand”. However, Atkinson (1987) points out that giving instructions in L1 should only be done in earlier levels of learning, and the amount of L1 should progressively decrease as the students’ proficiency level of the language increases. Again, this strategy seeks for the well-being of the students. If they do not know what to do and how to start a task, this will be demotivating for them and, thus, result in a feeling of frustration. Therefore, introducing the L1 when giving orders and instructions contributes to lowering the affective filter, as previously mentioned.

During class sessions, it is important for teachers to maintain the order of the students so that classes can develop correctly, and the learning process advances adequately (Cook, 2001). Cook (2001) sustains that, using the L1, for example, to ask for silence, sounds more serious and is, therefore, more effective than using the foreign language. Effectiveness plays here the main role. If they have to ask for silence three times in the FL, but only one time in the L1, they will choose the second option and lose as little time as possible (Purnama et al., 2022).

Many researchers such as Cook (2001), Hall and Cook (2012), Shin et al. (2019) or Purnama et al. (2022), agree that a factor which influences the learning process is the relationship among the teacher and the students. L1 is commonly used to build a closer relationship among students and teachers. It can be used to joke, to motivate students, to connect with them, to speak about some current topics, news, etc. These actions will produce a distended atmosphere in the class, a break in which students will disconnect and escape from the boredom that the class may cause them for a moment, and maybe see the class as a funnier place (Purnama et al., 2022). The teacher can also use the L1 to show empathy and concern for students’ well-being and to call their attention. This shows teachers’ respect for students and for their L1. If the teacher-student relationship is enjoyable this will lead to a higher attention level, and therefore to a higher level of understanding (Cook, 2001). This is crucial because, as Purnama et al. (2022, p. 1832) point out, “to transmit the information effectively, it is necessary for the teachers and students to establish strong communication”. Moreover, if the teacher occasionally addresses the students in their L1, he “can also be held as a model of someone who successfully learned another language” (Meyer, 2008, p. 149). This can result as a motivation for those students who find learning a FL difficult if they see the teacher as someone who was in their positions years ago. These actions contribute to create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom, which will make the affective filter go down. As Hall and Cook (2012, p. 287)

state, creating this feeling in students is not an option for the teacher, but a “moral obligation”.

As well as introducing some elements in the L1 in teachers’ discourse contribute to a better learning, there are also certain moments in which permitting students to speak in their L1 can be beneficial. Allowing students to tell their opinion about the class itself and their learning preferences, or expressing their feelings and private thoughts in their L1 is positive for them (Atkinson, 1987; DiCamilla and Antón, 1999; Cook, 2000; Hall and Cook, 2012, among others). The same happens with communicating with other classmates, collaborating or asking for help. Doing it in their L1 is easier than in the FL, and furthermore, they can be more accurate. Permitting them to do so will reduce their stress level when speaking in the class if they feel they can express themselves freely. Besides, it is positive that teachers ask them about these aspects, as students feeling the interest of teachers lowers the affective filter and transforms the classroom in a safe space for students (Atkinson, 1987; Di Camilla and Antón, 1999; Hall and Cook, 2012, among others). It is also beneficial to let students ask doubts and questions to the teacher in their L1. If they feel embarrassed speaking in the foreign language, they may never ask their doubt and commit future errors because of this (DiCamilla and Antón, 1999). Moreover, as Hall and Cook (2012) add, using L1 is a natural unconscious act performed by students of a FL, who are usually accustomed to speak in their L1 under normal circumstances. These authors assert “own-language use facilitates learning by reducing the processing load for learners during cognitively challenging tasks” (Hall and Cook, 2012, p. 289). Again, this is a question of making students feel more comfortable in class and facilitating their learning process as well as making the most of the class hour.

Also, according to Atkinson (1987) and Cook (2001), a good point to let students introduce their L1 is when testing or examining them. Atkinson (1987) believes that it can contribute to make a test more valid and reliable, not only by introducing L1 in the instructions, which has been mentioned previously, but also permitting students to use L1 in their answers. Moreover, Cook (2001) adds that if students can only use the foreign language, they are very limited in terms of the structures and the vocabulary they can use. If they are allowed to use their L1 they could perform better and show better their comprehension ability. Thus, introducing the L1 when testing will help the teacher seeing students’ ability with FL more precisely. Also, as students have the possibility to perform better in exams, this will motivate them, raise their self-esteem and consequently lower their affective filter (Atkinson, 1987).

Another way of introducing the L1 in the FL classroom is by translating. Translation is

a method which is said to be un-useful in the learning of a FL. However, other studies see it with a different perspective. Hall and Cook (2012, p. 283), state that “in many contexts translation is a natural and effective means of language learning” and add that looking for a translation when we do not understand the foreign language is part of human natural behavior. They state that studies show evidence of mental translation of students during the class and that they use their L1 to compare it with the new aspects learned in the FL. Other authors like Atkinson (1987), Khan (2016) or Shin et al. (2019) agree that in some accurate cases it can help students to see specific meanings of some grammar structures or vocabulary. As they have a perfect understanding in their L1, translation contributes to transmit any information in a more effective way. So, as Cook (2001) points out, again the reason for using L1, in this case, through translation, is the search for a more effective learning. As Shin et al. (2019, p.3) mention, “recent studies continually list useful features of translation such as helping learners to identify accurate meanings of L2 vocabulary, texts and grammatical structures and increasing cultural awareness and understanding”. Translation, therefore, stimulates a more accurate learning of FL.

Atkinson (1987) also believes that, when a student makes a mistake, it is very useful to make him translate the sentence, word, expression, etc. into the L1. Consequently, the students usually realize what their error is more easily. Also, to reinforce certain parts of the foreign language which do not work the same way in the L1, Atkinson (1987) finds translation useful. As he observed, students are more aware of this difference when seeing it in both languages. Additionally, he sees translation as a useful way of testing students, since he argues that if students are able to translate, they are even more able to use the foreign language in real life situations.

Colina and Lafford (2017) support the idea of using translation within the FL classroom, treating it as a ‘fifth skill’. Frequently, translation is rejected for educational purposes because it is mainly seen as a search for equivalence, as a literal transfer to a different language. However, these authors define it as “the negotiation of a meeting point between two cultures, that can facilitate students’ encounter with the concepts, ideas, values and attitudes of others, demanding a revision of their own”. This definition of the concept is the one that makes translation a useful pedagogical tool to be integrated in the FL classroom, with the possibility of including it not only as a mean for FL teaching but also as a product of it. To create a fruitful use out of it, teachers should establish a clear purpose to work with it, and obviously include in

the translation activity or activities that are included in the curricula of the course. Translation activities can help to raise the students' awareness of the context of the text, its register, its lexicon, its grammar, and the culture that the text reflects, among many other things. A positive aspect of translation activities, is that they can be included at almost all levels of proficiency, even in work-oriented courses, provided that the content of the activities is appropriate for the students of the course. Also, these activities are complete because, depending on the way they are organized, they can contribute to develop different skills (Colina and Lafford, 2017).

Apart from the previously mentioned aspects, "translation techniques form a part of the preferred learning strategies of most learners in most places" (Atkinson, 1987, p. 242), and it is important to take into account the opinion of students. Using activities that they have manifested to like and find interesting shows concern by the teacher about students' opinion, and it will lead again to lower the affective filter (Purnama et al., 2022). Suggested activities involving translation include, for example, watching films in the foreign language subtitled in the L1. This has the benefit of making students "exploit L1 principally for getting the meanings of the L2" (Cook, 2001, p.1). However, it is important to state that with these ideas authors do not support the complete elimination of foreign language use and practice in the class. Atkinson (1987) clarifies it as follows: "I am not trying to suggest that they (translation activities) can in any way replace a sufficient number of fluency activities in the classroom; they could, however, complement them" (Atkinson, 1987, p. 244). This is, that he sustains that translation activities are beneficial but other types of activities have also to be developed in FL classes.

What the advocates of using L1 in foreign language classes share is that L1 has to be used as a tool or vehicle for FL acquisition. Atkinson (1987) or Shin et al. (2019), among others, call for the judicious use of the native language, i.e., a non-abusive use of the student's L1. The L1 cannot be the exclusive language used in the class, as it "plays a secondary role by helping students to anchor L2 concepts to the L1" (Meyer, 2008, p. 157). In this sense, they are in favor of the introduction of student's L1 for specific purposes, but baring always in mind that the FL should be the protagonist of the class. Besides, Shin et al. (2019) conclude that L1 is especially useful for those students with a lower level of proficiency in the given language. If a student with scarce knowledge in the foreign language enters a class where only this FL is spoken, this student will have trouble understanding, and therefore would feel overwhelmed by this situation (Cook, 2001). The use of L1 contributes to comprehension and reduces the feelings of frustration and anxiety inside the foreign language classroom.

In a similar vein, as argued by DiCamilla and Antón (1999), the L1 seems to play a crucial role especially for the least proficient students of FL as well as for those who are shier (Meyer, 2008). Moreover, all the authors reviewed agree that the L1 usage in the FL classroom should not be exclusive, this is, that both languages must be used, and, most importantly, that the quantity of FL input must be increased as the students advance in time and level. Meyer (2008) suggests that the appropriate process is allowing students to use L1 vocabulary or expressions to fill their knowledge gaps in the foreign language, and gradually stop doing it as progress in the learning process takes place. As he summarizes, “the use of the L2 should be maximized whenever possible. The L1’s primary role is to supply scaffolding to lower affective filters by making the L2 and the classroom environment comprehensible” (Meyer, 2008, p. 157). What can be understood is that L1 use is meant to create a support for students learning, but that the foreign language is the main focus of the classroom and this must not be forgotten, and that the quantity of this support (i.e., the use of the L1) should be progressively diminished.

In some occasions, teachers have expressed that they are not aware to which extent they use L1, and which purposes they comply by doing it (i.e., they are not really conscious of this process) (Hall and Cook, 2012). Thus, we can assume that using L1 in the FL classroom is, apart from useful in the aspects previously mentioned, an action that cannot be completely eliminated because in several occasions it is unconscious. In this context, as something inevitable, the most appropriate thing to do, according to Hall and Cook (2012), is to take advantage of it and to make the most of its pedagogical potential. With regard to students, something similar occurs. As Brooks-Lewis (2009, p. 227) states, “banishing the learners’ first language from the classroom deprives learners of their normal means of communication and so of the ability to behave fully as normal people”.

Despite the arguments in favor of introducing L1 in the foreign language classroom, it is important to highlight that “the use of the students’ L1 becomes a far more practical issue when dealing with linguistically homogeneous classrooms” (Meyer, 2008, p. 147). That is, the benefits of the use of L1 can only be obtained when all or the majority of the students share this L1. If this is not the case, perhaps other views have to be revised. With that said, not everyone agrees that the use of L1 is beneficial for FL students. The following chapter reviews the disadvantages that might arise in this specific context.

4. DISADVANTAGES OF USING L1 IN THE FL CLASSROOM

When exploring the disadvantages of the usage of the students L1 in the foreign language classroom, attention will be focused on two different points. First, the essential theories on which the reduction of L1 in FL classrooms rely will be revised followed by a part in which the drawbacks are explained in more detail.

To review the FL learning topic, it is necessary to check Krashen's (1981, 1982, 1985) works, as he is one of the authors who has investigated, theorized and written about this topic the most. He is a great defender of the exclusive or near-exclusive FL use in FL classes (Pennycook, 1994). For examining his ideas in depth, the theory of second language acquisition should be explained, which consists of five different hypotheses:

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis
2. The Natural Order Hypothesis
3. The Monitor Hypothesis
4. The Input Hypothesis
5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

For the development of this dissertation, focus will be placed on four of them, leaving aside the third one, the Monitor Hypothesis, which is not relevant for the topic that is being investigated because it does not contribute to argument against L1 use in the FL classroom.

First of all, for the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, two key concepts should be defined. These are the two different systems that Krashen (1981, p.1) distinguishes to develop ability in a language, which are acquisition and learning. As Krashen (1981) states, acquisition refers to the process in which people develop ability in a language unconsciously by performing a great amount of interaction, i.e., communicating in the foreign language, and focusing on the content of the messages and not on their form. Thus, acquirers will have the ability to feel that a message is correct or incorrect although they may not be able to explain why. The acquisition process refers to the process that children undergo when developing their L1. On the contrary, learning refers to the process in which speakers develop the ability in a language in a conscious manner by understanding and applying linguistic rules and mechanisms. As Krashen (1982, p. 10) claims, acquisition is not an exclusive ability of children, but it is also possible later on, as "the ability to "pick-up" languages does not disappear at puberty". Having said this, Krashen (1981) considers that FL classes should have exclusive or near-exclusive FL use, so that the

process students undergo when learning a FL is as similar as possible to acquisition, and so that this process takes place as naturally as possible, without explicitly explaining any aspect of the language, and completely ignoring students' L1. In fact, Krashen (1981) refers to learning without explicit instruction as acquisition too. It is important to mention this first hypothesis and have the distinction of these two concepts clear, as the main ideas of authors against L1 use are related to this distinction.

Based on the previous definitions, a link can be established between the term acquisition and the Communicative Language Teaching or Communicative Approach. This approach is one of the most used approaches in language teaching nowadays, and it is the one that the Spanish law of education (Consejería de Educación, 2022a) encourages to use in the foreign language classrooms. This link is worth mentioning because the Communicative Approach is the one that best fits into the law in force currently in Spain. As acquisition is directly connected to communication, and, as Sanjaya (2014) says, L1 is not allowed in the Communicative Approach, it is seen that the main purpose of Communicative Language Teaching is that students acquire the foreign language instead of learning it. Moreover, the main arguments against the usage of L1 in the foreign language classrooms are associated with being in favor of trying that students undergo a process as similar as possible to acquisition rather than learning it through explicit instruction. For this reasons, the distinction and understanding of this two terms is necessary in this dissertation.

The second theory is the Natural Order Hypothesis, in which Krashen (1985) states that the order in which grammatical rules are taught in class is useless if this class is intended to favor acquisition. This is so, because when acquisition occurs, the process itself has a specific order in which rules are acquired by the students while they are acquiring the foreign language. Hence, the order in which grammatical rules are explained, and their explanation as such, are useless, since the grammatical rules will be grasped in a natural manner if the process of acquisition takes place.

The fourth theory is called the Input Hypothesis. It is explained both in Krashen (1982) and Krashen (1985). This hypothesis aims to explain how learners progress in the foreign language. To explain this, he uses "I" to refer to the current level somebody possesses in a FL, and "I + 1" to refer to the next level, to a step beyond. Krashen (1982) asserts that the way students acquire a language is by receiving input containing an "I + 1" level. This input has to be understood by the student focusing on its meaning, and not on its grammatical structures.

The contradictory part is how students can understand an input that goes beyond their level. He clarifies that when learners receive input, they do not only make use of their linguistic competence, but also of other tools such as the context of the message, their knowledge of the world or any extra-linguistic information that can help students in the task of decoding the input. This hypothesis supports the idea that students do not necessarily need their L1 to become competent in a foreign language, and that the more input they receive, the easier they will gain competence in this FL.

The fifth and last theory is the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which has already been explained in the previous section. Although L1 can make students feel more comfortable as they understand what is being said, seeing in the classroom the real utility of the FL as well as being able to produce in such language can also contribute to these positive feelings. Apart from comprehensible input, students need to have a positive attitude towards the foreign language; otherwise, it would not be acquired.

Krashen (1985, p. 4), summarizes the five hypotheses explained above providing the following affirmation:

People acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input 'in'. When the filter is down and appropriate comprehensible input is presented (and comprehended), acquisition is inevitable. It is in fact unavoidable and cannot be prevented.

As Krashen (1981) shows, the L1 of a foreign language student causes the so-called first language interference, also referred to as CLI. This concept has been defined in the previous section, and has been presented as an aspect that justifies L1 use in FL classroom and that boosts the foreign language learning process. Nevertheless, Krashen (1981) downplays CLI affirming that it does not occur if acquisition is at the center of the FL teaching strategies. This CLI occurs when the performer "has not yet acquired enough of the second language" (Krashen, 1981, p. 7). Therefore, if acquisition is targeted in the classroom, CLI should not be taken into account and should not be a problem.

When analyzing other studies (Atkinson, 1987; Chaudron 1988; Turnbull, 2001; Miles, 2004 among others), it is observed that there are arguments both against the use of L1, and to enhance the value of the use of FL in foreign language classes, but, in any case, they follow the same line of ideas. Arguments related to both groups of beliefs and their detailed explanation

will be presented in the following paragraphs.

In relation to the Natural Order Hypothesis, this theory demolishes one of the main justified usages of the L1 in FL classroom, which is the introduction and explanation of new grammatical rules and of difficult grammatical properties and aspects of the foreign language. As the acquisition of grammatical rules is a natural process that occurs within the acquisition process itself, if the FL class is oriented to acquisition, there is no need to introduce grammar explanations during the classes. Besides, as Krashen (1981) argues, acquirers are normally not aware of the grammar rules of the language, but have a ‘feeling’ of what is wrong or right despite of not really knowing why. This makes them commit less errors and correct themselves more easily. Additionally, as authors like Izquierdo et al. (2016) comment, grammar rules are not necessary in everyday communication. Therefore, if a class is intended to promote acquisition, the usage of L1 for introducing grammatical aspects is completely disregarded.

One of the strongest pillars to support the usage of a high amount of FL inside the classroom, and consequently, to reject L1 use, is Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1982). Authors such as Cook (2001) state that instruction of foreign languages should be founded as much as possible on the characteristics of acquisition. Therefore, as it has previously been mentioned, acquisition is developed by receiving input in the FL. As Hlas (2016) also adds, teachers providing input to the students in the foreign language is essential to stimulate their acquisition process. In the same line, Turnbull (2001, p. 532) highlights that input in the foreign language is the most crucial reason to maximize the use of FL in the classroom, as he states that “the amount of TL input does make a difference to learners’ TL development”. It is obvious that to learn a foreign language students need to have certain exposure to it. For this, one of the main functions of foreign language teachers is to provide students with a great amount of examples in such language (Cook, 2001). And the reason for this is not simply to promote the acquisition process, but because for many students, teachers are the unique source of input in the foreign language that they have (Turnbull, 2001). Authors such as Sener and Korkut (2017), as well as Cook (2001), also support the idea that the main role of the teacher is to maximize exposure of students to the foreign language, as sometimes, the FL classroom is the only opportunity they have of listening and speaking in the foreign language itself, and therefore, using L1 reduces their opportunity to practice the different skills in the FL.

Another reason for amplifying as much as possible the use of FL in foreign language classroom is the development of fluency and oral skills. When learners try to gain competence

in a foreign language, what they usually seek, among other aspects, is fluidity and oral competence. In this way, Krashen (1981) also adds that oral production and fluidity in this foreign language cannot be taught, as they can only emerge in a natural form. Therefore, the only way of stimulating oral performance and fluidity is to provide the speaker with a great amount of input, and these abilities will come solely once the speaker has the sufficient level to perform orally in a fluent manner. Otherwise, with the use of L1, fluency and oral skills would be more difficult and require much more time to be achieved. This means that Krashen (1981, 1921, 1985) presents acquisition through communication in the FL as an exclusive path for students to achieve fluidity. In the same line, Sener and Korkut (2017, p. 57) add that “excessive use of L1 limits the chance of practicing and thus deprives learners of the chances of practicing oral skills and developing communicative competence”.

Also regarding input, and in confrontation of authors who support using L1 when giving instructions and explanations, Chaudron (1988) argues that students should be exposed to as much linguistic functions as possible. In this sense, he states that the teacher should speak in the foreign language when giving instructions or when developing an activity, but also when managing the classroom or when maintaining discipline during a session, so that students are also exposed to that type of structures. This way, students can listen, and therefore, acquire a broader variety of vocabulary and structures within their FL courses.

“I + 1” type input does not necessarily have to be ‘forced’ or prepared by teachers. Krashen (1982, p.21) states that simply by talking to students in the foreign language in a natural way, “I + 1” will be covered. As he textually explains “when communication is successful, when the input is understood and there is enough of it, “I + 1” will be provided automatically”.

Some may argue that if input is provided in the foreign language and not understood by students, acquisition is not achieved, and therefore, the previous argumentations are not valid at all. However, to help with this, Cook (2001) proposes TPR as a great methodological tool to maximize foreign language use being helped by gestures that can make the teacher’s input easily understandable for the students. As Krashen (1985) also adds, some visual support in any format, for example, videos, photos, flashcards, keywords, examples written on the blackboard, etc. can help students with the understanding of the “I + 1” input type. It is a very useful tool for teachers and can help preventing the use of the L1 in the classroom, maximizing the input in the FL and improving the understanding of the students.

Another important basis for the elimination of L1 in FL classrooms is the exposure of students to real life situations and vocabulary in the foreign language. As Cook (2001), Hall and Cook (2012) and Izquierdo et al. (2016) claim, exposing students to real-life situations and vocabulary of everyday life is not only more useful than teaching aspects which are inapplicable, but also more motivating for the students. A foreign language is not a collection of contents that needs to be learned in order to pass the subject. It is a new way of expressing information and communicating with others. As Cook (2001, p.3) summarizes, “the L2 will remain a set of odd and arbitrary conventions if the students do not experience it in meaningful ways”. Izquierdo et al. (2016, p. 28) add that “infrequent L2 use for these purposes in the observed public classrooms can hinder students' perception that the L2 can be used for genuine communication, thereby preventing them from realizing its value in real life”.

Apart from activities with a certain objective, Cook (2001) suggests that the teachers should also include in their classes social interaction with students in the foreign language. Examples could be having conversations about the weather, about any important recent news, or about any of their interests. With these type of conversations, students once again are exposed to a wider variety of structures and vocabulary, and they can be able to see how FL in daily life conversations is applied. Turnbull (2001) agrees with these ideas. He also adds that when teachers speak in the foreign language no matter the situation or the topic they are dealing with, students, apart from obtaining a richer experience and knowledge on the foreign language, perceive the FL as a useful tool for everyday life communication. Hence, students immediately see its application and usefulness in real life and this often leads them to a feeling of motivation that benefits the learning process and makes them lower their affective filter and be more open to acquire the FL. In addition to the lowering of the affective filter, this exposure to everyday discourse makes students “achieve effortless comprehension and production” (Izquierdo et al., 2016, p. 29), and therefore, optimize the class time. Equally, they also add that teachers who use FL for social communication cause positive impressions and perceptions on their students, provoking as well to lower the affective filter.

Some authors such as Hlas (2016) or Izquierdo et al. (2016) state that sometimes the use of L1 in the foreign language classroom is due to ‘teacher reasons’. These are either a lack of level or a lack of self-confidence of the teacher when talking in the FL.

Other causes for the use of L1 are: student’s motivation is low, there is a fear upon the teacher to lose students in the course, teachers do not feel proficient enough to use the foreign

language at a certain point of the class, or the teachers do not want to make such effort to speak in the FL (Hlas, 2016, Izquierdo et al., 2016). According to Hlas (2016), some teachers use L1 because they feel more tired whenever they use FL for long periods of time and for their own comfort of using L1 rather than FL. This also occurs because of the better management they possess of their L1, and their feeling of managing a class better when doing it in their L1, i.e., the lack of confidence

All the aforementioned factors affect students in a negative way, depriving them from receiving input in the FL, and they are another reason why investigators are against L1 inside FL classrooms, especially if these reasons are related to teachers' attitudes or preferences and not with the understanding and well-being of the students. They agree that teachers are the ones in charge of exposing students to the FL language, and they should as well act as a model for them. If they do not have the sufficient level for doing so, Izquierdo et al. (2016, p. 29) suggest that, "teachers need further language training and professional development in their efforts to use the L2 in a greater variety of contexts and with a greater variety of discourse purposes".

Another disadvantage that Turnbull (2001) adds about using L1 in FL classes is the loss of attention by the students. This author states that, when students are accustomed to hearing their L1 in the classroom, they tend to ignore the speech performed in the foreign language, assuming that the instructor will later repeat the message in the L1. In the same line, as Atkinson (1987) explains, when students hear the teacher using L1 very frequently, they get used to direct the teacher in the L1 too. As Atkinson (1987) adds, speaking in a foreign language requires a bigger or smaller effort, but if the model (the teacher) does not do this effort, the students would probably do the same. These situations have to be avoided, as if they become a routine and happen repeatedly, the input in the FL received from the teacher will decrease as well as the practice of the students in the FL will be diminished. It has to be remembered that in many cases, the FL classroom is the only source of FL input and the only place to practice.

Regarding CLI, this interference or influence makes students follow some rules and structures of their L1 that do not exist in the FL and leads to committing errors in the foreign language. However, the advocates of this FL-only teaching rely on the preference of classes which try to resemble the process of acquisition, because as Krashen (1981) states, L1 transfer is stronger and more common in those students that learn a language instead of acquiring it. He also adds that the solution for this interference is to provide a higher quantity of input to the student, and while the proficiency of this student grows higher, the interference will diminish.

As Krashen (1981, p. 68) discusses, “acquisition may be slow, but it is, in the long run, much more useful when language is used for the purpose of communication”. On account of this, eliminating L1 from foreign language classes favors acquisition, and with this acquisition, CLI would not appear.

In exchange of what Krashen (1981) exposes, there are other authors such as Miles (2004), who state that the use of L1 interferes in the FL learning process and does produce negative CLI or error transference, as he claims that there are not two languages which function exactly the same. However, both Krashen’s (1981) and Miles’ (2004) ideas bring up to the opposition to L1 use in FL classes.

In opposition to translation within the FL classroom, Atkinson’s (1987) ideas are again worth mentioning. He thinks that excess of L1 use and especially of translation use can bring in students the feeling that they do not understand anything in the FL unless it is translated into their L1. This will demotivate them in their learning process and create a rise in their affective filter. Additionally, Atkinson (1987) and Cook (2001) state that languages have vocabulary, expressions or linguistic connotations that do not always have equivalents in other languages. Therefore, if translation is recurrent in the class, students will be lead to create inexact translations that leave out important aspects of the FL. Thus, authors like Atkinson (1987) and Cook (2001) advise teachers against translation in FL classes to avoid demotivation in students, and to eliminate the idea that the L1 and the FL can resemble somehow, which can lead to misunderstandings.

5. THE REALITY OF THE CLASSROOM

The above discussed issues consist mostly on theoretical notions about the topic of L1 use in FL classes. However, there are two principal parts in a classroom, the teacher and the students. As the topic is directly related to both of them, it is crucial to research about how the reality in the class is, about what really happens, and about the vision of the protagonists on the matter. That is, to understand the topic from the participants' perspective. In this section, the amount of L1 used by FL teachers and the opinion of both teachers and students about its inclusion in the FL classroom will be exposed.

Macaro (2001) investigated 6 student teachers of English working in France. The investigator recorded their classes for a two-month period, and then had an interview with them to discuss the recordings. The results lead to a mean of 6.9% of the speech being in the L1 during the class time. Sessions had between 0% as the class with less L1 use, and 15.2% as the class with more L1 use. Moreover, teachers expressed that the main use they do of L1 is to clarify aspects that students do not understand in the FL. As a conclusion of this interviews, it was noticed that not many teachers considered the idea of eliminating L1 from the FL classroom and that the use of the L1 is not very high.

Manara (2007) observed English lessons in Indonesia and reported in a table the frequency with which teachers used L1 and FL in different courses. Each of the courses corresponded to a different skill. The frequency of L1 use goes from 0% in the writing course level 2, to a 66% in the writing course level 4. These results are shown in figure 2 below.

Teachers/ Course	A Speaking 2		B Writing 4		C Listening 2		D Reading 4		E Structure 4		F Writing 4		G IC 2		H Writing 2		I IC2	
	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E	MT	E
Give instruction	0	15	0	6	0	16	0	27	1	29	9	18	0	31	0	19	1	13
Feedback	0	3	32	6	0	4	0	10	12	15	1	5	0	3	0	9	1	4
Check compre.	0	5	0	0	0	15	3	22	0	27	6	10	0	13	0	10	0	9
Vocab	6	8	0	0	0	3	1	10	4	5	0	0	1	7	0	0	3	5
grammar build good rapport	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	23	45	0	0	1	10	0	7	1	3
L1 and L2 differences	1	7	1	1	0	2	8	10	18	4	1	2	1	10	0	0	1	8
assignment administra tive info	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11	0	2	0	2	0	2
Error correction	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	8	25	0	2	0	9	0	5	0	3
Others	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	6	22	5	11	0	2	3	0	0	1	0
Total	8	44	33	17	2	46	12	91	91	161	34	49	5	89	0	56	10	52
Percentages	15.4	84.6	66	34	4.2	95.8	11.7	88.3	36.1	63.9	41	59	5.3	94.7	0	100	16.1	83.9

Notes:	MT = mother tongue	0 – 25 % (never)	51 – 75 % (often)
	E = English	26 – 50 % (rarely)	76 – 100 % (always)
	IC = Integrated Course		

Figure 2. Frequency of teachers' use of L1 and FL in the classroom (Manara, 2007)

In relation with teacher's opinions, Manara (2007) concluded with his research that 57% of the teachers agreed that FL should be the only language used in the classroom, whereas the remaining 43% found it acceptable to include L1 during their classes. However, 82% of the teachers agreed that comparisons among L1 and FL are beneficial for FL learning. In general, it is also shared by the interviewees that L1 can be useful depending on the type of materials used, the students' proficiency and the goals that are supposed to be achieved.

Morata (2012) conducted a study in which she observed and reported two class sessions of an English teacher in a Spanish secondary school. In this case, the results of the study are that the teacher used L1 in 68% of the class time in the first analyzed session, and 84% in the second. The teacher alleges that if she speaks in the FL students do not understand her and get lost. So, results lead again to a use of L1 in an attempt to favor students understanding in the class.

Hlas (2016), analyzes the use of L1 by teachers of Spanish in the United States. She uses surveys, interviews and also audio tapes obtained from the recording of the class sessions of different volunteer teachers. In the surveys, 96 participants were asked if they agreed with the virtual, the maximal or the optimal position. The results, as shown in figure 3, were 84.6% of the surveyed teachers thinking that L1 has pedagogical values and can help students in the learning process (optimal position). 12.1% of the teachers thought that L1 has no pedagogical use but that it is impossible to eliminate it from the class (maximal position), and 3.3% completely rejected using L1 in the FL classroom. Moreover, they were asked about their preferences introducing L1 when teaching different skills and contents. Results showed that, listening and speaking were preferred to be taught in the FL, while grammar, writing, vocabulary and reading were more likely to be taught adding L1 at some point.

	All TL	Mostly TL	Equal L1 and TL	Mostly L1	All L1
Grammar	0	28.5	38.9	30.5	2.1
Writing	18.9	62.1	16.8	1.1	1.1
Vocabulary	27.7	60.6	10.6	0	1.1
Reading	31.9	55.3	9.6	2.1	1.1
Speaking	48.4	46.3	4.2	0	1.1
Listening	56.4	40.4	2.1	0	1.1

Figure 3. Which language should be used to teach FL? (percentage for n=96) (Hlas, 2016, p. 311)

In addition, Hlas (2016) found teacher support to L1 use because, in general, they felt they saved time and they saw students' motivation increased, although they called for an effort of teachers to maximize FL as much as possible. However, the results showed that teachers seemed not to agree in the purposes for which L1 should be used. Nonetheless, what they did agree with was whether this use depends on aspects such as the FL level of the students, the way students feel, or the contents covered in the class.

Izquierdo et al. (2016) analyzed the use of L1 and FL during 5 FL sessions of 9 different teachers. They video-recorded their classes and examined the amount of L1 and FL that they used during the classes. As it can be seen in figure 4 below, the variability among the different teachers is notable, with a range of L1 use from 16% as the lowest percentage, to 71% in the case of the highest percentage.

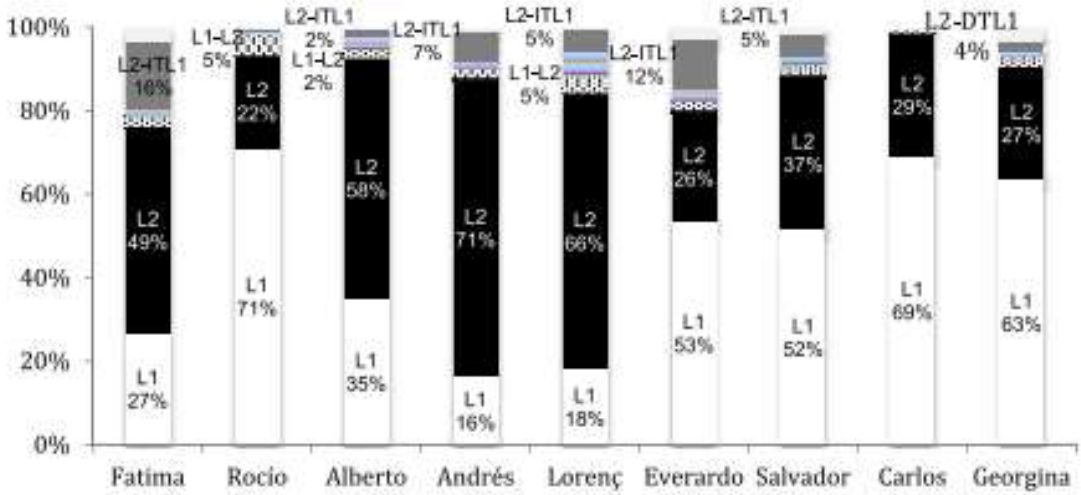


Figure 4. Teacher's language choice according to Izquierdo et al.'s (2016) investigation.

In Sener and Korkut's (2017) investigation, 41 teacher trainees from Turkey were asked about their view on the topic. 86.6% of them admit they use L1 in their FL classes, while the rest (13.4%) were not advocates of its use. These authors also studied the view upon the use of L1 in FL classrooms of the aforementioned teacher trainees. This was done through written reports of the trainees that contained their opinions about other teacher's classes. Both advantages and disadvantages in the use of L1 were found. One of the most shared opinions in favor was that the inclusion of L1 in FL classes contributes to motivate students and stimulates their participation. This is mentioned by 44% of the interviewees. On the contrary, 56% of the trainees also shared that using L1 reduces the possibilities of receiving FL input and of

practicing oral competence in the FL. Moreover, 17% of the trainees thought that the use of L1 is essential in the FL classroom, while 32% think that L1 should not be allowed. Another 17% declared to be in favor of a balanced combination of both L1 and FL.

In Nazary's (2008) study, 85 Iranian students of English as a FL answered to a questionnaire to determine their attitude upon the inclusion of L1 in their English classes. Results show that the higher the level of students in the FL, the least they said to need L1 inclusion in the FL class. A mean of 20% of the students in the investigation thought that teachers should use L1. Furthermore, Iranian students were specially adherents of word and text translation within the class, and of using L1 to compare certain aspects of L1 and FL.

Brooks-Lewis (2009) analyzed the opinion of students from whom she was the teacher. These students were from Mexico, and had Spanish as their L1 and English as their FL. Their opinions were gathered through questionnaires and a learning diary in which they had to note their perceptions of the class every day. In general, students found the inclusion of L1 in the FL classroom as a beneficial aspect for them, which made them enjoy the class, understand the contents, and, at the same time, feel free to express themselves. Brooks-Lewis (2009, p. 224), reports "very few comments in the data against the incorporation of the L1", and, on the contrary, "overwhelmingly positive perceptions" upon the inclusion of L1 Spanish.

Shin et al. (2019) created a literature review of several studies and experiments. Regarding students view, these authors also confirm the idea that, in general, they see a benefit in L1 inclusion in the FL classroom, with a special highlight on those students who are less proficient in the FL. Further to this, they found that children and adolescents preferred L1 use, but adults had preference for FL-only classes.

In a similar vein, regarding student's opinions, Manara (2007) contributes also to this issue, briefly investigating the vision of the students through different interviews. In this case, 64% of the interviewed students were in favor of the inclusion of L1.

Anindya et al. (2022) conducted a study in Indonesia which consisted in observing FL classes to capture the behavior of the students in the classes in respect to the use of L1 and FL. With this observation, the researchers appreciated that certain students within the class tended to use L1 very frequently in the FL classroom. Those students were interviewed to know the reasons that lead them to make use of L1 so frequently. Answers showed they did so because they found it easier, because there were no explicit prohibitions of doing it, and because they

felt more confident speaking in their L1. Besides, they manifested that, in their opinion, teachers should use L1 to favor a clearer teacher-student communication.

Finally, Purnama et al. (2019) analyzed the opinion of English teachers working in Indonesia by interviewing them, and concluded that the teachers found L1 use effective and necessary for students' comprehension of the contents and the development of their learning process.

As it can be noticed, the percentage of speech in the L1 within the FL classroom comprehends very varied figures, as numbers between 0 and 86% can be found. However, what is perceptible is that most of the teachers studied in the aforementioned investigations use the L1 at some point in their classes. Regardless of the use they make of the L1, it can be appreciated that many of them would like to eliminate the L1 from the classroom and that they are against its use. The reasons why they use the L1 are generally related to a better communication with the students and to clarification of non-understood aspects. What many teachers agree with is that the amount of L1 use has to be regulated depending on the materials used, the contents of the session, and the proficiency and feelings of the students, and that teachers should make an effort to amplify the L1 use as much as possible in their classes. Notwithstanding, teachers in general do not consider that the L1 can be eliminated from the FL classroom.

In respect of students' view, a great number of the surveyed ones are in favor of L1 use in FL classes and do appreciate its benefits. Nonetheless, it is observed that as the proficiency of students in the FL gets higher, the need of the L1 use and their positive perceptions towards it diminishes.

6. DISCUSSION

As it has been seen, L1 use in FL classrooms has been changing with the evolution of the different methodologies. However, controversy with the topic started being more evident since the CA started being used. From then on, several studies, such as Brooks-Lewis (2009), Hall and Cook (2012) or Dailey-O’Cain (2014), among others, have been conducted on the matter to see if the best way to teach FL is by including or not L1.

First of all, when it is said that L1 should be allowed and should be used in the FL classroom, this does not mean that it should be the only language used. In fact, even some researchers giving arguments against its use, such as Turnbull (2001) or Cook (2001), consider that a balanced and judicious introduction of L1 can have some benefits, and that, in any case, the main objective of the teacher should be to maximize FL use as much as possible.

Something to take into account when discussing L1 use in the FL class is the information that can be found about the topic. In this case, a great variety of articles have been found which deal with the beneficial purposes L1 can be used for, as well as articles that investigate the reality of the FL classrooms. However, few articles can be found which exclusively support and argument in favor of FL-only instruction, as many of the articles which are ‘against’ the use of L1 only admit that the correct thing to do is maximizing input in the FL. As Dailey-O’Cain (2014, p. 333) states “the evidence against the virtual position is so overwhelming that it is difficult to find proponents of it among researchers”.

Apart from the lower quantity of articles that argument against L1, these are also older. Most of the articles found that fit in this type date back in the 1980s and 2000s, in opposition to those that revise the usefulness of L1 in FL classroom, that are more recent in time. This can lead to think that these arguments could be obsolete and possibly do not reflect the way in which FL teaching takes place currently as well as the necessities of nowadays FL students.

The main reasons against the introduction of L1 in FL classes take as a justification both the Input Hypothesis and the concept of acquisition, meaning that these arguments rely on the affirmation that FLs should be acquired imitating the process of L1 acquisition, and that this is done by providing input. Those arguments are provided by authors such as Krashen (1981, 1982, 1985), Atkinson (1987) or Turnbull (2001) among others. However, it should be taken into account that when learning a FL, the individuals we deal with are not of the same characteristics. These individuals have already acquired a L1, and it is impossible to isolate and

reject the L1 in the learning process of the FL. Comparisons related with the L1 are inevitable to appear, especially in the early stages and lower proficiency levels. This comparison refers also to the use of translation. As Stavrou (2020, p. 2) adds, “it is best to deal with direct comparison between the two languages, rather than ignoring it”. Thus, when L1 is already there and cannot be left aside, the best that can be done is to take advantage of this knowledge and exploit it. When two languages are in contact, CLI takes place. Positive CLI has proven to accelerate the learning process whereas negative CLI has proven to delay it (Cook, 2001; Hall and Cook, 2012; Khan, 2016; etc.). Therefore, it is essential to bear this in mind in the FL classroom.

More than that, Krashen’s (1982) Input Hypothesis supports FL-only classes as teachers are supposed to be in many cases the unique source from which they obtain FL input. However, Shin et al. (2019) expose that in the last years this has changed, as students nowadays are able to encounter FL input easily through new technologies, especially through social media, music, series, movies or the internet in general.

Anindya (2022) discusses that the use of L1 in FL classes is considered taboo and some teachers are even ashamed to recognize that they use the L1 in their classes. However, Izquierdo et al. (2016, p. 22) affirm that it is “a common phenomenon that takes place mostly in every FL class where students and teacher share the same L1”. If the use of L1 is difficultly rescindable in FL classes, it is important that teachers are given certain notions on how to use this L1, which can serve as a teaching tool in a way that is profitable for students (Sener and Korkut, 2017). Several articles suggest to include in the FL class the so called ‘judicious’ use of L1. For this implementation, certain conditions need to be established.

First, ideally, L1 should be used just in the right measure, and it should be reduced in amount as the level of students increases, always with the purpose of lowering the affective filter and boosting the students’ learning process. The uses through which these purposes are reached can be seen in section 3 of this dissertation. However, some more specific guiding lines to consider before using L1 in the FL class can be added.

Regarding the students’ age, Nazary (2008) and Shin et al. (2019), affirm that when dealing with young learner classes, they usually prefer that teachers include L1 in the class. However, they also point out that generally, adult learners with experience in learning other languages are the ones who feel more comfortable with FL-only classes.

To introduce L1, it is also important to focus on the proficiency of the students we are dealing with. In this sense, Shin et al. (2019) state that the lower the level, the more advantages it has to use L1, and they clarify that L1 amount should be reduced as the level increases.

Learners' interests should also be taken into account. Hlas (2016) states that when using L1, care should be taken on which type of students the FL class contains. For example, it is not the same if classes are compulsory and students have no other option, than if they are elective and students want to be there. In any case, students are the focus of the class and sessions should be understandable and enjoyable for them. L1 inclusion contributes to this understanding, and understanding leads to participation and enjoyment. Otherwise, students who take FL as a mandatory class would lose interest, and the ones who are voluntarily learning the language, are probable to quit from the course.

Lastly, focus shall be placed on the type of skill we want to develop. Speaking and listening oriented activities should be done mostly in the FL. However, reading, writing, or other types of activities such as cultural ones, are suitable to introduce L1, bearing always in mind the term 'judicious' (Hlas, 2016).

Both theories in favor and against L1 use in the FL classroom have as an argument the Affective Filter Hypothesis. This means that both put as a priority the well-being of students and their interests and preferences. This would lead to do in class whatever students feel more comfortable with. However, normally classes are 'heterogeneous' in the sense that they are made up of very different individuals with varied preferences. Moreover, equal courses are supposed to have similar levels in the FL, but real world shows that many times this is not the case. In addition, Shin et al. (2019) assess that FL-only classes produce in many cases the non-involvement of students as a result of the communication errors among teachers and students. Because of this, students' priorities should be taken into account, as well as the level of all of them, and L1 should not be banned if using it in certain specific occasions can make at least one of the students follow the teacher better.

Whenever FL continues being at the center of the class, and positive purposes are in mind, L1 should be acceptable in FL classes as it can contribute to a better classroom atmosphere and, most importantly, to a boost in students' learning process.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this study was to gain a thorough understanding of the advantages and disadvantages that using L1 within the FL classroom can bring for students, in order to reflect and discuss the theories found about the matter.

Regarding the history of this controversy, it can be established that the use of L1 in FL classes has been changing with the emergence of new methods to teach FLs. With Grammar-Translation methodology, one of the first methods, the tendency was mixing L1 and FL in equal amounts. However, perspective changed with methods such as the Direct Method and the Audiolingual Method, which completely elided L1 from the class. This tendency continued with the CA, the most used approach nowadays, which despite of changing the interest upon contents, maintains rejection to the L1. As in our days, learning an FL is very common and more and more people do it, experts study about the best ways to teach languages, and one of the most controversial topics is the inclusion or not of L1 in the class.

As for the advantages of the use of L1 in FL classrooms, the first thing to be mentioned is that L1 is already in learner's minds. Therefore, comparisons and L1 aspects will appear inevitably, and it is proposed to use them in the class rather than ignoring them. Besides, L1 is considered a useful teaching tool that can serve to optimize class time, to make students have a more positive view on the subject, to feel in a pleasant atmosphere, and to boost their learning process, etc. This can be done by using the L1 in specific moments such as to introduce new and difficult topics, to check comprehension, to provide tasks, to test students to maintain the order of the class, etc. Other optimal moments to include L1 which have more to do with socializing are to communicate in order to establish a good teacher-student relationship or to allow students to express their opinions and feelings. Translation is also considered a beneficial activity for FL learning.

Concerning the disadvantages of introducing L1 in the FL class, this basically deal with the idea that the process learners undergo when acquiring their L1 has to be repeated in the FL class to acquire the FL as naturally as possible. Because of this, L1 use is rejected, as well as explanations of grammatical aspects, since in the acquisition process no more languages need to be introduced, and no grammar has to be explained. In this sense, it is also affirmed that the more input students obtain in the FL, the better for their learning process, as introducing L1 leaves less space for FL input and for a wider variety of FL situations. Furthermore, exclusive

FL use is said to motivate students as they are able to see its usefulness immediately for every aspect dealt with in class. L1 use is also said to cause the loss of students' attention in a belief that teachers will always repeat any FL message in the L1. Finally, preventing the use of L1, may avoid comparisons among L1 and FL aspects and thus, diminish the presence of negative CLI.

With respect to the reality of the classroom, it has been seen throughout different studies that the majority of FL teachers use L1 at some point of their classes although the L1 amount is variable in percentages. However, in general teachers express a desire to eliminate L1 from their classes, but they consider that it can be impossible to do so. What many do agree is that L1 use has to change depending on the materials, contents and proficiency and feelings of the students, and that an effort should be made by teachers to amplify FL use as much as possible. In relation to students' opinions, they share positive views about L1 use, and seem to need it less as their FL level gets higher.

In the search for articles that argument against L1 use, the amount of information is less than the one we encounter that argue in favor of it. Moreover, the articles against date mostly from 1980s and 2000s, which might indicate that this information does not reflect nowadays FL teaching. Researches in favor of L1 use assess that it is not possible for students to get rid of their L1, and that comparisons among both languages are inevitable to appear. In general, researchers agree to be in favor of a balanced use of L1, making an effort to maximize FL input as much as possible. In this situation, the best to be done seems to be establishing certain rules for a correct and useful introduction of the L1. The basic rules are to introduce L1 in those classes where it is common for all the students, to diminish L1 input quantity as the level of proficiency gets higher, and to avoid it in speaking and listening oriented activities, always bearing in mind students preferences and necessities.

8. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

The following activities have been created in order to give a few examples on how the topic of this dissertation, the use of L1 in the FL classroom, can be applied within a real classroom and within real context. This proposal consists on a set of four activities designed for the inclusion of L1 (i.e., Spanish) in the FL (i.e., English) class in a balanced manner. The activities have been created based on the conclusions achieved throughout this dissertation.

This didactic proposal takes into account some aspects of the Real Decreto 217/2022, of 29th March which establishes the organization and minimum teachings of Spanish secondary obligatory education (ESO), and also of the Decreto 39/2022 of 29th September which establishes the organization and curriculum of ESO in Castile and León. Thus, aspects of ESO law will be commented. However, these activities can be applied to any kind of students, at any level and including any content that needs to be covered. The task depends on the materials that the teacher chooses to develop in terms of difficulty and topic. The only condition is that students for whom this type of activities are implemented have to share the same L1, in this case Spanish.

<u>Activity/task number 1</u>		
Title: Guessing the idiom	Type: Introduction	Timing: 20 minutes
Classroom management: Students will be working in pairs	Resources: Worksheet provided by the teacher with idioms in English and their equivalents in Spanish. Idioms are mixed so that students have to guess the equivalents.	

The functioning of the activity will be the following. Students will work in pairs and they will be given a worksheet per pair. They will have 10 minutes to discuss these idioms, and match them with their equivalents. Once this time has passed, the teacher will choose different students that will comment orally to the whole class the meaning and the equivalent of the different idioms. This part will last for another 10 minutes, and it will serve not only as a correction for students' answers, but also as a clarification of the meaning of the different idioms.

Many of the English idioms have equivalents in Spanish. However, the equivalents are not usually literal translations. This makes Spanish very useful in the introduction of new

idioms, as students will have the Spanish reference and can compare it to the English version. Here, the use of L1 will cover the function of helping to explain difficult topics to students. With this activity, students will be able to learn and compare English and Spanish idioms, as there is the possibility that some students do not know some expressions in their own L1.

This activity can be directed at any course or level of FL, depending on the difficulty of the idioms that the teacher includes in the worksheet. Furthermore, it can be used to cover the topic of idioms, but also to introduce any other difficult expressions. Students that complete this task will practice communicative and speaking skills while solving the activity in pairs, and then when explaining the meaning of the idioms to the rest of their peers. Moreover, culture plays here a major role, as idioms are part of the culture of a country. Therefore, knowledge, value and respect on culture, one of the main stage objectives of the ESO, can be highlighted with this task.

<u>Activity/task number 2</u>		
Title: Changing the language	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 20 minutes
Classroom management: Students will work in groups of three	Resources: A worksheet with two different texts (one in English and one in Spanish) provided by the teacher	

In this activity, the teacher will provide each group a worksheet containing two texts, one in the L1 and another one in the FL. The aim is that students read both texts, and provide a written summary of these texts in the other language in a range of 20 minutes. This is, they will have to summarize the English text in Spanish, and the Spanish one in English. Meanwhile, the teacher will work around the class checking students are working correctly. Then, the whole class will comment the most interesting aspects of the translations.

Spanish contributes here to make sure that the contents seen in a session or a unit have been understood, as it is an indirect way of asking students for the meaning of something. It can prove the understanding of vocabulary, but also of more generic ideas. Moreover, when summarizing the English text, students will be able to show their comprehension ability more easily, as communicating in their own L1 is easier.

The activity can be adapted to any course by varying the difficulty and the length of the

texts given. Also, as a reinforcement activity, it can be used to revise any content and vocabulary seen in the class depending on the topics of the texts that the teacher chooses for it. This activity will activate students' knowledge, as they have to think and search for the way of expressing the same ideas in the other language, making use of both the L1 and the FL. As texts have to be translated, students cannot copy or re-use any words or sentences. This would make them reflect about the best way of expressing the ideas in a different language, and to look for different ways of telling the same with other words in case they do not find the word they want to say. Reading and writing are developed through this activity, together with communication skills by talking to the other members of the group.

<u>Activity/task number 3</u>		
Title: The mediator	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students will be working in pairs	Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A realia document in Spanish - A flashcard with ideas and clues on how to make questions and to give answers. 	

Activity number 3 consists of a role-play that will be developed in pairs. In this role play, one will act as a Spanish worker and the other one as an English tourist in Spain. There will be a realia document (a worksheet provided by the teacher will also be accepted) written in Spanish, for example a restaurant menu, a pamphlet with information of a city or a museum, a poster with information about a festival, etc. The English tourist will have to ask the worker about different aspects appearing on the document, and the worker will have to answer the questions. They will be helped by a flashcard in which different suggestions will appear to guide them through the activity. They will have 15 minutes to organize themselves and to dialogue while the teacher goes around the class checking the conversations and making suggestions.

In this case Spanish works as a starting point for the task. As the document is in the L1 of the students, they will share a common known context from which they will depart. This contributes to students' motivation, since from the very beginning of the activity both will know

what they are talking about.

This activity can be adapted to any topic depending on the material that the teacher chooses. Also, the difficulty of the text can be modulated depending on its length, its register, and the elements that it contains. Therefore, the activity can be used for any FL course provided that the text is adapted to the students' level. This activity will activate students' prior knowledge and revise vocabulary and contents of any kind. As skills, it is especially useful to practice speaking. Regarding grammar, it would be particularly helpful for revising interrogative structures. Moreover, it will be useful to practice definitions (with a menu), summaries (with a pamphlet), explanations (with a map), or other elements depending on the document. Also, the specific competence of mediation is addressed through this task.

<u>Activity/task number 4</u>		
Title: Let's compose a song	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students will work in groups of four	Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pen and paper - Photocopy with a of a song or a part of a song provided by the teacher 	

This activity consists on giving students a song or a part of its lyrics that they will have to translate. They will work in groups of four people with a photocopy per group. Students will have 15 minutes to translate the song or part of it into the other language. This can be done by handing in the song to the students in English and they will have to translate it into Spanish or the other way around. Another adapted version could be to give the students two chunks of lyrics, one in the L1 and the other in the FL, and they have to translate both. If this activity is chosen, students should have also more time, i.e., 30 minutes. The objective is to create a translation as loyal as possible to the meaning of the original lyrics, but originality and fun also play a role in the activity.

This is a pure translation activity that requires students to show knowledge in the language and at the same time develops their creativity. As it has been seen, translation puts in practice the knowledge in the FL, and if students are able to translate, they will be even more

able to communicate in other real-life situations.

Once again, difficulty is variable depending on the material used. Contents covered by the activity can also vary depending on the thematic of the lyrics. Here, as well, the language of the lyrics has to be taken into account to decide on the level to which the activity is intended, as translation from the L1 into the FL is more difficult than translation from the FL into the L1, since students have “more profound linguistic and cultural knowledge of their own language” (Fernández-Guerra, 2014, p. 155). This activity can be used as a reinforcement for any content as long as the song contains it. It is especially useful to work on different verb tenses and specific vocabulary. More than that, it is a funny activity that can make students enjoy learning and lower their affective filters.

The activities found above are just some examples to illustrate how L1 can be introduced in FL class in a balanced way. These activities try to reflect the moderate and judicious use of L1 and to concrete on the specific function that L1 has on each of them. However, individual activities and not a whole session have been presented, because the use of L1 should be balanced. Ideally, this kind of activities should be used from time to time and should not take place every day.

By checking the law in force currently in Castile and León for secondary obligatory education, it can be seen that the four proposed activities work on the stage objective i), which deals with comprehending one or more languages, and also expressing in one or more languages. Plurilingual and linguistic communication key competences are as well enhanced with the four tasks. Since all the activities are done in pairs or in groups, the cross-curricular content of cooperation among equals plays a major role in each of them.

Regarding the contents, the examples given are open and with no specific covered contents to avoid any limitation that specifying the materials and contents can cause. Moreover, through this, it is better demonstrated that any idea can fit within the activities.

Apart from the L1 appearing in the activities themselves, Spanish can also be introduced by the teacher in the situations that have been pointed out in section 3, such as to maintain the order of the class, to create a pleasant atmosphere through jokes and funny conversations, or to allow students to express their opinions and preferences. Spanish should not be introduced if it does not fit any function that contributes to students' motivation or learning process.

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