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Linguistic Input in the Secondary EFL Classrooms. An Analysis by Teaching Levels

Estudiante: Dª Raquel Martínez Álvarez

Tutor: Dr. D. Francisco Javier Sanz Trigueros

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ABSTRACT

The present paper explores the nature and pedagogical purpose of linguistic input in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, across the four levels of compulsory secondary education (ESO) in Spain. Based on the qualitative analysis of classroom transcripts from bilingual and non-bilingual groups, the paper identifies how input is tailored to learner's proficiency and educational level.

The analysis focuses on three key dimensions of input support: gestures, visual aids and linguistic adjustments, examining their frequency and function in real time teacher speech. The results reveal a marked progression in the nature of input: lower levels strongly rely on multimodal scaffolding and simplified input to aid comprehension; while higher levels present more natural, fluid, and culturally embedded input. Among all supports, linguistic adjustments are the most frequently used strategy.

Ultimately, this work underlines that linguistic input is not solely a means of delivering content, but a strategic pedagogical tool that must be adapted to the communicative and educational needs of learners in secondary education.

Keywords: Linguistic Input, EFL Teaching, Secondary Education, Teacher Discourse, Bilingual Education.

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo explora la naturaleza y el propósito pedagógico del input lingüístico en la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), en los cuatro cursos de la educación secundaria obligatoria (ESO) en España. Basado en el análisis cualitativo de transcripciones de grupos bilingües y no bilingües, el estudio identifica cómo se adapta el input del profesor al nivel competencial y educativo del alumnado.

El análisis se centra en tres herramientas clave de apoyo al input: gestos, soporte visual y ajustes lingüísticos, examinando su frecuencia y función en el discurso docente en tiempo real. Los resultados revelan una progresión clara en la naturaleza del input: los niveles inferiores de la ESO dependen del andamiaje multimodal y de la simplificación del lenguaje, mientras que los niveles superiores presentan un input más natural, fluido y culturalmente contextualizado. Entre todos los apoyos, los ajustes lingüísticos destacan como la estrategia más empleada.

Finalmente, se reflexiona sobre el hecho de que el input lingüístico se presenta como una herramienta pedagógica que debe adaptarse a las necesidades comunicativas y cognitivas del alumnado.

Palabras clave: Input lingüístico, Enseñanza de inglés, Educación secundaria, Discurso docente, Educación bilingüe.

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1. Introduction

Justification

In recent years, linguistic input within foreign language classrooms has been clearly recognized as a key factor in the process of language acquisition. Within the framework of secondary education in Spain, where English is the compulsory foreign language taught, it becomes essential to fully recognize the characteristics of the teachers' linguistic input to enhance its teaching quality. The present study aims to contribute to this matter by analyzing real classroom transcriptions at different teaching levels within Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO), further analyzing the differences in the input between bilingual and non-bilingual classes, concretely in the 4th level of ESO.

This analysis is relevant for several reasons. First and foremost, comprehensible input is one of the cornerstones of language acquisition (Krashen., 1982). Thus, understanding how it is presented in actual classrooms contexts is essential to acknowledging and supporting students' learning process. Moreover, the current coexistence of bilingual and non-bilingual programs in Spanish secondary schools highlights the need to analyze what input students receive, how it is produced, and what its quality is. The distinction between these two contexts offers an opportunity to investigate whether teaching settings and curricular expectations modify teacher discourse and teacher input strategies.

Although there is theoretical literature related to EFL teachers' input, for instance Ellis and Collins' (2009) or Walsh's (2011) among others, there are not many recent studies that analyze it in real classroom settings in Secondary Education. Some relevant contributions that examine patterns of teachers' discourse on EFL classrooms, namely Cullen (1998) or Hall & Walls (2002), have been made, but those works are limited, as they are based on generic language classrooms. Consequently, few studies have registered and analyzed how input varies across the different educational levels of ESO, nor have they focused on the different input between bilingual and non-bilingual classrooms. This gap underscores the need for conducting the present study.

Aims

The present paper is driven by the following aims:

- To indicate the theoretical characteristics of linguistic input and the factors that enable its correct acquisition.

- To analyze the linguistic input provided by EFL teachers in the four levels of compulsory secondary education.

- To compare the characteristics of input between bilingual and non-bilingual 4º ESO classrooms.

- To study the role that gestures, visual support and linguistic modifications play as supporting strategies for the input produced in the classroom.

- To draw methodological implications for current EFL teachers regarding how input is adapted across the different proficiency levels.

2. Theoretical background

The following pages present theoretical aspects that, presented in three subsections, pertain to the object of study of this work. Since the aim is to explore in detail the oral discourse of EFL teachers, this theoretical framework begins by contextualizing input as an integral part of the linguistic competence of the teachers. Afterwards, a review on the hypotheses of language acquisition is carried out, focusing specifically on the Linguistic Input one. To conclude, theoretical specifications regarding the elements required to make the EFL teacher's oral discourse comprehensible are presented.

2.1. The linguistic competence of the EFL teacher

Linguistic competence is a fundamental concept in the field of language acquisition that sets the basis for understanding how individuals adopt and produce language. Theorists in the field have already provided different insights on linguistic competence, shaping how this is approached in several linguistic frameworks. It was introduced by Noam Chomsky (1965) to describe the idea of speakers' implicit grammar knowledge, along with their capacity to produce and comprehend sentences in a language.

To gather linguistic competence under the umbrella of current educational practice, it is crucial to mention the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020) (CEFR), which sets clear descriptors for the different language proficiency levels (A1-C2). EFL teachers are expected to master the highest levels of this established scale, as well as accurately identify and respond to their students' language requirements in the different levels.

The continuous development and refinement of linguistic competence among EFL teachers is crucial. Continuous training, including advanced preparation courses, and the use of non-formal education, allows the EFL teachers to keep track of contemporary educational demands while perfecting their own linguistic abilities and trajectory (Khomenko et al., 2021). This highlights the importance of not only mastering language's grammar, but also the need to have the capacity to adapt to new pedagogical and technological demands, as they are constantly evolving.

The scope of linguistic competence in teaching a second language does not only include grammatical, lexical, and phonological aspects, but also pragmatic and sociolinguistic competencies. The latter refers to the capacity to know and use the language according to the cultural and social dimensions, while pragmatic competence refers to the use of language through a variety of communicative contexts.

An essential feature within linguistic competence is the capacity of the teacher to make spontaneous adjustments to their input to adapt it to students' comprehension. These on-the-spot decisions include rephrasing, simplifying complex vocabulary, inserting pauses or slowing the pace; and they can be triggered by students' questions, or even expressions. One of the key reasons that Walsh (2011) gives to reinforce this speech modification is that not only do the students need to understand the teacher, but that most of the time the teacher is the primary and only reference the students have as a model language.

It is essential to consider the training of EFL teachers as something key to facilitate their sociolinguistic competence, allowing them to acquire necessary skills that enable them to be aware of the social-cultural dimensions of communication and apply them to their classes.

In this regard, Andrews (2003) introduces the concept of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA), providing an actualized and comprehensive view on language teachers' linguistic competence. Andrews states that TLA requires consciousness on the way language works within real communication, how input is processed by learners, and how the instructions given can be adapted to align with student's requirements. His approach sets aside traditional structuralist perceptions, presenting linguistic competence as a functional and integrating concept, key for EFL to integrate, in order to properly proceed in today's multilingual learning contexts.

Continuous professional training of EFL teachers is essential in ensuring their adaptation to evolve within pedagogical and technological demands. Researchers on the matter have shown the positive impact of professional training programs on improving linguistic competence of teachers, demonstrating the need for continuous formation in this domain (Tahir, 2019). Giving priority to this competence and placing it as a central

feature of an EFL teacher, educators can be better prepared to guide their students towards using language in real world situations on a truthful and proficient way.

Research conducted by Majeed and Yassein (2013) showed that EFL teachers should have sufficiently strong linguistic competence, as they are expected to have a good competence in the language they are teaching. Therefore, they also point put out the need to constantly develop their language knowledge, highlighting the importance of properly developing this competence "through self-development" in order to support their performances in teaching English. Furthermore, Hattie (2009) adds to this statement that EFL teachers must continually develop both linguistic competence and communicative competence, even more than other relevant skills (Tahir, 2019).

Linguistic competence allows EFL teachers to modify their language depending on the proficiency of students. In classes with lower control of the language, the input includes simplified syntax, slow pace, more repetitions, or visual support. By contrast, in higher levers, the input increases and it becomes more complex. Krashen (1982) points out that this adjustment within beginner and advanced classes is key to provide "comprehensive input" also called "i+1", or what is the same, but delivering language slightly beyond the learner's level without being very advanced. According to Krashen, this way of delivering input manages to have a positive impact on students' acquisition, and it is more effective than teaching grammar rules isolated. Teachers' capacity to assess the student's linguistic level and adapting their input accordingly is the representation of what linguistic competence is in the classroom. For instance, in a lower grade of secondary education, namely 1st ESO, a teacher might use short and clear sentences followed by gestures or simple visual support, while in a higher grade as in 4th ESO, the teacher might switch to a more real and authentic discourse, using colloquialisms or speeding up the speech. This change in the teacher input guarantees that all students understand the content being taught in the classroom.

Another essential aspect within the dimension of linguistic competence is the ability to find an equilibrium between input's authenticity and input's accessibility. As stated above, the use of fluent language in the classroom is key, but it needs to be at the same level as the students' linguistic knowledge. Krashen (1982) further develops this need and states that language acquisition relies on that comprehensible input, which needs to be a little beyond learner's current level, but still understandable for them. Regardless,

this adaptation of modifying language, for it to have a specific level of difficulty and understanding, requires real-time awareness and the skills of modifying input on the spot.

As Walsh (2011) highlights, successful EFL teachers are continually changing their discourse to be at the same level their students' understanding. They master strategies such as changing pace, rephrasing or supporting their words with other means. Linguistic competence enables teachers to put together these strategies without losing the integrity of real language use, making input both real and accessible.

Furthermore, linguistic competence plays an essential role in classroom management, due to it affecting not only the proper delivering of the input, but also how teachers deliver instructions and respond to students' attitude. An EFL teacher with a high level of linguistic awareness is able to adjust tone, pace, vocabulary and the complexity of utterances according to the context, such as detailed instructions if they are delivering new content, or provide simplified and clear language to give feedback. This way of using language on an adaptive way influences the creation of a proper learning environment where students can engage and understand the expectations placed on their learning process.

Teacher's ability to control its discourse, and thus the input they produce, needs to align with students' proficiency levels to reach the expected language acquisition. Understanding how the input is produced and its impact on the second language learning process is therefore essential; hence, Krashen places the Input Hypothesis at the core of his broader theory of language acquisition.

2.2.   The five hypotheses in language acquisition

After addressing the linguistic competence of EFL teachers, it has been considered that a review of the hypothesis of language acquisition should be conducted. The reason lies in the fact that, by taking into consideration these hypotheses, EFL teachers would be required to make a conscious usage of their own linguistic competence in order to make conversational adjustments along with other supportive implementations in the classroom.

Krashen's theory of language acquisition includes five key hypotheses presented in the following order: the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis,

the Monitor Hypothesis, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, and the Input Hypothesis. As a whole, they constitute a comprehensive bodywork that unfolds the process by which individuals acquire a second language. Comprehending these hypotheses is key to analyze the way input is used by EFL teachers and processed by students in classroom contexts.

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis states that there are two ways of growing capacity in second languages, although they are independent from one another. It states a difference between acquisition and learning. The first one is approached as a subconscious process, interchangeable with the one children experience when acquiring their first language. In comparison, learning is approached as a conscious process that implies direct knowledge of grammatical instructions and rules (Krashen, 1982, p.10).

The distinction presented by Krashen in this first hypothesis is essential, as he theorizes that achieving language proficiency in a second language comes directly from acquisition. As so, success in second language teaching must prioritize providing opportunities to promote meaningful communication, along with an exposure of learners to a relevant input, rather than focusing merely on the memorization of theoretical rules and isolated formal instructions.

The Natural Order Hypothesis states that we learn language rules in a foreseeable pattern. Krashen points out that some of the rules come early, while others come later, with this order consistent among learners. For instance, the progressive "-ing" or the "-s" in the plural appear sooner than others, such as the third person "-s" or the formation of questions, which appear later on latter stages. This organic pattern of acquisition is not influenced by the order in which grammatical theory is taught, but by the internal readiness of the learners. That is, if the teacher happens to specifically teach complex structures on an early stage, students are going to acquire them once they are prepared naturally to do so.

What this implies for EFL teachers is that instruction needs to align with the natural way in which students adopt grammatical features. Therefore, educators need to align their input with this developmental process, adding different structures within the classroom discourse, always bearing in mind that it needs to be both meaningful and understandable. Instead of teaching isolated grammar rules, EFL teachers need to provide input through real communication which will naturally lead to learners getting both early and late acquired features.

It is also essential to grasp the way natural order functions in order for EFL teachers to assimilate certain learners' errors interpretating as part of the development, not as a failure. Some flaws are unavoidable and are also necessary within the acquisition process. This way of perceiving errors can guide assessment practices as it promotes a flexible approach adapted to the natural development of the learners, as they do not all acquire grammatical structures at the same pace. Natural order allows teachers to establish realistic expectations while supporting the learners to construct their knowledge in the second language.

The Monitor Hypothesis explains how acquisition and learning are employed within the production process. It highlights that the capacity of producing utterances in a second language arises from our subconscious knowledge, that is, from our acquired competence. Krashen (1982) states that conscious knowledge serves only as a "monitor", referring to an internal "editor". Thus, we recall what we have learned in order to make corrections in our output, but the basis of speech still emerges from acquisition.

According to Krashen, for the monitor to work effectively, three conditions must be met: the learners need to have enough time, they need to be "consciously concerned about correctness" and they need to be aware of rules in the language. However, these requirements are not often attainable within spontaneous conversations. Thus, the monitor is usually used in the context of controlled situations, such as written tasks or planned speech.

Figure 1

Monitor Hypothesis Diagram from Krashen's Monitor Model.
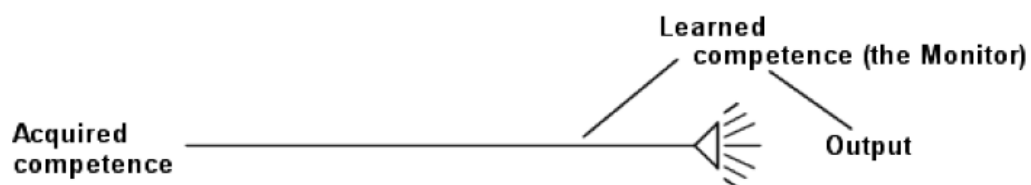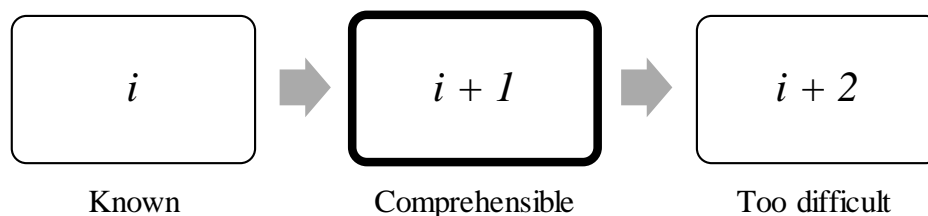

Note. Reproduced from Krashen (1982).

This hypothesis happens to explain the difference between language learners; some of them are over-users of the monitor, that might lead to slower fluency, while others do not use the monitor, and rely on intuitive knowledge. The final goal is making learners use learned rules without obstructing natural communication, therefore, make a

balanced use of monitor. For EFL teachers' practice, this hypothesis suggest that input produced in the classroom should make emphasis on fluency and real use of language, while allowing space to reflect on corrections in proper contexts.

The Input Hypothesis is one of the central pillars of Krashen's theory of second language acquisition. According to the Input Hypothesis, language is acquired rather than learned; that acquisition happens when learners are delivered an input a little over their competence level, known as "i+1". Krashen (1982) states that students comprehend input at the so-called "i" level but acquire new language knowledge when they are presented with messages at the level of "i+1" always maintaining the condition that the input needs to remain understandable and meaningful for the learner. This relationship is presented visually in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Input Hypothesis "i+1" Diagram Related to Learner Acquisition.

i		$i + 1$		$i + 2$
Known		Comprehensible		Too difficult

Note. Adapted from Krashen (1982).

The present hypothesis highlights that acquisition happens only through input, not by production. As so, Krashen states that the aspect of fluency appears as the result of acquisition, not the cause of acquisition. Thus, it is stated that learners should not be pressured to be constantly producing in the SL before they are ready to do so, instead, they should be given the proper exposure to natural language use.

The feature of comprehensibility within input is key. For input to be effective in the process of acquiring it needs to be delivered in a way that allows learners to understand its meaning regardless of if they are unfamiliar with some parts of it. Teachers are responsible for making input comprehensible, therefore delivering the i+1 properly. To achieve this, EFL teachers should use strategies such as rephrasing, changing the pace of speech, using visuals or employing gestures, all of which are key for comprehension. These strategies help learners understand those unfamiliar aspects and link them to the already existing language they know.

The present input hypothesis supports communicative language teaching focusing on meaningful interaction and moving away from the traditional teaching of isolated grammar. Thus, Krashen asserts that learners acquire language naturally when they are participants in the process of understanding the messages they receive, not when they are taught traditional rule-based theory.

This perspective is undoubtedly relevant in EFL classroom contexts, as teachers are the main source of input for learners. Teachers' linguistic competence, their knowledge of learners' abilities, and their ability to adapt to specific factors occurring in the classroom directly influence whether or not this acquisition occurs in learners.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis labels the variables linked to emotions that make an impact in language acquisition. Krashen (1982) argues that aspects such as motivation, anxiety or self-confidence directly influence the proper accomplishment of language acquisition. If these factors happen to be positive, the named "affective filter" is low; thus, it allows more input to reach the acquisition mechanism. In contrast, when these factors are negative, the filter arises and inhibits input.

This hypothesis points out the necessity of fostering a supportive class environment. The EFL teachers do not need to only focus on the aspect of linguistic input but also on the emotions of the students, ensuring their well-being in order to maximize the efficacy of their instruction.

Figure 3

Affective Filter Hypothesis Diagram from Krashen's Affective Filter Model.
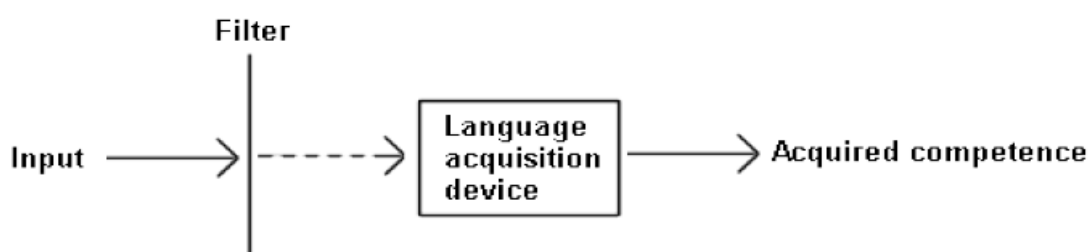
Note. Reproduced from Krashen (1982).

Likewise, interpreting the affective filter assists teachers in perceiving student performance without fear of making mistakes. A student that makes mistakes recurrently might not have an absence of capacities, but they might be experiencing emotional

barriers that affect their learning. Thus, taking priorizing the learners' emotional well-being is required to deliver proper language instruction.

By gathering all of Krashen's five hypotheses of language acquisition, it can be stated that the centrality of input within second language acquisition is essential. While each of the presented hypotheses point out a different perspective of the process itself, they all support the idea that the input needs to be meaningful, appropriate to the learners' level and produced within a context that supports both comprehension and confidence. The following section will present in which way the theoretical foundation leads to the actual practice in the classroom.

2.3.   Comprehensible input

As introduced in previous sections, Krashen's Input Hypothesis is considered a central component of his theory on language acquisition. Therefore, he states that input plays an important role in the understanding of EFL classrooms' contexts and functioning. According to this hypothesis, acquisition happens when students are exposed to "comprehensible input", that is, language a little above their level of proficiency, presented as: $i+1$ (Krashen, 1982). In the context of secondary EFL classrooms, this theory happens to be essential for the EFL teachers, as they are the principal source of this named input. It is essential to keep in mind that EFL classrooms are spaces where students engage with foreign language, and although the teaching is meant to be contextualized, it is far from being the same as the one produced in immersion environments. This highlights the importance of not only providing comprehensible input, but also making it accessible, meaningful and suitable for the teaching level in the different learning stages.

To approach Krashen's hypothesis on a deeper level, it is necessary to observe how he describes the means needed to encourage subconscious acquisition of the second language. Therefore, it is necessary to delve into input's implications with respect to the role it has on the EFL classroom (Krashen, 1982). In chapter three of Krashen's book, he outlines what "*good input*" (p.57) is and what it should have to promote acquisition among learners. Notably, he also outlines that input needs to be aligned with the students' interests: "the best input is so interesting and relevant that the acquirer may even 'forget' that the message is encoded in a foreign language" (p.66). Thus, learners cannot be given

isolated grammar rules, they need to be provided with meaningful and engaging materials to invite students to have authentic interactions within the L2.

Moreover, Krashen points out that optimal input does not need to be essentially grammatically sequenced. Instead, he emphasizes that exposing learners to natural language, present in real communication contexts, is crucial for them. Additionally, he highlights the need to provide enough quantity input: learners need meaningful and repeated exposure in order to internalize unknown language forms (Krashen, 1982, p.71). In addition, Krashen also highlights the teachers' role, not being mere deliverers of language, but also facilitators of rich input, which leads to reducing the affective filter and creating proper classroom conditions that foster acquisition (Krashen, 1982, p.74)

While the Input Hypothesis has been highly influential in the field of second language acquisition, it has also been widely debated. Some controversial aspects within the theory have been pointed out by scholars. For instance, scholars like Luo (2024) argue that Krashen happens to exaggerate the "significance of language input" but he does not present how learners' learning mechanisms interact with the input provided. Luo highlights that input is the first thing that scholars focus on when processing the language, and there are several elements that can enhance or disturb that concentration and later acquirement. Subsequently, some scholars contend that this hypothesis disregards the role of output, feedback and explicit instructions, tools that have been demonstrated to support language learning process, concretely among intermediate and advanced levels (Gass and Mackey, 2013) Therefore, it cannot be assumed that isolated input delivery guarantees that learners develop internal language knowledge, rather, input needs to be understood within a broader framework that make use of the specific strategies that make input comprehensible.

The relevance of comprehensible input is clearly perceived when approaching the differences between the secondary levels. In lower levels as in first or second year of ESO, learners rely on supported input and scaffolding, while in higher levels such as third or fourth of ESO learners are expected to be able to understand complex language with some specific adjustments. In addition, current educational contexts in Spanish secondary schools present different environments: bilingual programs and traditional EFL classrooms, in both the teacher being the main source of constant input in the target language. Despite the fact that input hypothesis has already been studied in matter of

theory aspects, not many studies have explored how it is wielded in different educational levels within real classroom contexts, making this a meaningful contribution to the field.

The present section will explore three essential practical strategies applied by EFL teachers to enhance their production and delivery of input: gestures, visual support, and linguistic adjustments. These strategies will be explored focusing on their ability to ensure that input is not only produced but is also accessible and suitable for to be acquired across the different levels within secondary education.

2.3.1. The importance of gestures

Nonverbal behaviors are an essential part of the pedagogical repertory of EFL teachers (Sato, 2018). Among them, gestures play an important role as part of the teacher's input produced in EFL classrooms, which substantially affects the learners' comprehension of the language. Daraghmi and Asali-Van Der Wal (2023) asserts that "it is impossible for a teacher to convey information effectively without using non-verbal cues" (p. 156). They identify various channels through which nonverbal behavior is transmitted, with the visual channel being central for capturing movement, therefore, gestures. According to these scholars, gestures produced by teachers, such as head and hands movement, eye contact, posture, and facial expression, shape the student's perception, and influence how they process the input they receive.

Several authors have analyzed how gestures impact in terms of effectiveness in order to reach to the ideal classroom input. Lazataron (2004) for instance, investigated how gestures enhanced the input produced by teachers while explaining unplanned vocabulary aspects. The analysis suggested that the effects of gestures happened to modify oral input, making it comprehensible for learners. Similarly, Sato (2020) conducted a study in which it was analyzed if there was a real difference between the utterances produced in the second language with gestures, and those which were produced without gestures. Sato states that the effect of gestures manages to ease teacher's speaking in the L2, and therefore, their input quality. The results obtained suggested that teacher gestures are key in EFL classrooms, and that it should be considered imperative to further analyze the implications of gestures within L2 teaching education (Sato, 2020).

From a pedagogical perspective, the employment of gestures must not be approached as merely an unconscious matter; rather, teachers need to have intentional consciousness on how nonverbal behaviors can complement their educational objectives,

mainly when teaching at different language levels. On the matter, Daraghmi & Asali-Van Der Wal (2023) highlight that "consciously employed non-verbal behavior enhances learning in the classroom" (p. 161). Thus, incorporating nonverbal strategies as gestures into the training of EFL teachers ensures that the input provided in the EFL classrooms is not only comprehensible but aligned with the needs of the different secondary levels to reach acquisition on the language.

2.3.2. The importance of visual support

Visual support refers to non-verbal visual elements that complement verbal language produced in the classroom, as images, digital presentations, videos, flashcards and realia among others. As Krashen (1982) states in Input Hypothesis, learners need to be exposed to comprehensible input, yet a little over their level, in order to acquire language effectively. To ensure effectiveness of this process, visual aids play a crucial role supporting that extra linguistic difficulty added to the already known language.

Evidence gathered among numerous studies supports the impact that visual aids have on language acquisition. For instance, a study conducted by Sadeghi et al. (2013) with EFL learners between the ages 10 and 16, showed a comparison between traditional definition based, instruction and vocabulary teaching supported by visuals. The findings after comparing these two perspectives revealed that those students who received input supported by visual aids demonstrated better comprehension and retention of new vocabulary taught. This data shows that visual support is not only a classroom tool, but an essential aspect to create comprehensible input in EFL classrooms. Moreover, as the study was conducted on the age range of common ESO students, it is relevant as well to highlight that the study demonstrates the utility of visual support on lower levels, but also on higher ones, as this type of materials enrich the learning experience setting aside the proficiency level, as they help to clarify concepts, and enhance the engagement of learners.

From a pedagogical perspective, it is imperative that teachers implement visual support in a strategic and intentional way, to align with instructional goals rather than presenting it superficially. Incorporating visual support into EFL teacher training ensures that they are not only capable of delivering engaging lessons, but also that they deliver input adjusted to the diverse needs that learners manifest on the different stages of secondary education, ultimately supporting fruitful language acquisition.

2.3.3. The importance of linguistic adjustments

Linguistic adjustments refer to the changes that teachers make within their language in classrooms in order to ensure that the input produced is both comprehensible and accessible to the learners. These adjustments refer to the act of simplifying the structure of sentences, slowing the pace of speech, emphasizing, repeating, paraphrasing, even translating terms or using code switching if necessary. As Krashen's input hypothesis (1982) emphasizes, it is imperative that input is comprehensible, therefore, linguistic adjustments are necessary to be done in order to accomplish that statement, adapting the discourse to be accessible and comprehensible for learners. Specifically, in secondary EFL teaching environments, the different levels demand linguistic modifications that ensure that the input is adequate and fosters a conductive environment that leads to acquiring the language. Thus, scholars such as Gass et al. (1998) underscore the importance of linguistic adjustments as tools that contribute to comprehension, noting: "For second language learning, […] clearly, one function of modification is to make the language comprehensible" (p.230)

Afamery (2018) provides an analysis of the way teachers adjust their input in order to reach student's comprehension on its analysis *Teacher Talk Adjustments in EFL Classrooms*. In the study, it is identified a range of adjustment strategies, as repetition or simplification, and strategic use of the learners' mother tongue when necessary. The study reveals that these adjustments observed are not arbitrary, but a reflection of the teacher's conscious effort to deliver a comprehensible input both engaging and effective. Moreover, the analysis also demonstrates that the kind and frequency of the adjustments depend on the student's level: for lower levels, teachers relied more on simplification and repetition, while in higher levels it focuses more on paraphrasing or refined explanations.

From a pedagogical point of view, linguistic adjustments involve intention and awareness from the EFL teachers. They must be aware of the needs of the students, and therefore they need to adjust their language in real time to adjust their language delivery to these needs, which are by nature changeable.

As a whole, these strategies: gestures, visual support and linguistic adjustments, form the base structure of comprehensible input in EFL classrooms. The next section of the work will expand this theoretical framework by examining how these strategies are applied in real EFL classroom contexts, providing an analysis of real transcripts collected across the different levels of secondary education (1st ESO to 4th ESO), also underscoring the nuances under different programs (bilingual and non-bilingual).

3. Analysis of linguistic input samples

Given that the theoretical foundation supporting the role of comprehensible input within second language acquisition has been established, the present section focuses on the analysis of a series of input transcriptions produced in EFL classrooms. An examination of how the three key strategies depicted in the previous section, gestures, visual support and linguistic adjustments, are manifested in authentic classroom contexts to facilitate learner comprehension and engagement. Through an analysis of EFL teachers' discourses across different levels ranging from 1st ESO to 4th ESO and comparing bilingual and non-bilingual programs in this last course, this study aims to identify nuances and pedagogical implications that relate to the effectiveness of proper input delivery.

The data for this analysis consists of transcripts of classroom input productions compiled in real EFL lessons in a secondary school in Castile and Leon. These transcriptions present naturally occurring teacher linguistic production in the classroom, although the student exchanges have not been provided explicitly. Specifically, three transcriptions were collected from each of the secondary levels from 1st to 3rd ESO. For 1st to 2nd ESO data was compiled from non-bilingual classrooms. For 3rd ESO data was gathered from two bilingual classrooms. In the case of 4th ESO, eight transcriptions were compiled, four from a non-bilingual classroom and four from a bilingual class; allowing for a comparative analysis of the input delivered across these different teaching contexts. Specific attention is paid to the teacher's language modification, the integration of non-verbal behaviors, and the usage of visual aids to scaffold the understanding of the students. This part of the work will also focus on presenting whether these strategies vary according to the proficiency of the students, the context of the classroom or the content being taught at that moment.

Ethical considerations were addressed prior to the collection of the transcription. Before the collection of the input samples, participant teachers were given an informed consent using a formal form (see Annex 6.2). The document outlined the objectives of the present study, and relevant information to take into consideration on their behalf. In the same line, to ensure complete confidentiality and protect the identities of all participants, the transcripts do not include teachers' names, nor any detail about the

students, the center or the institutional context itself. All personal names, place names or context references have been anonymized during the transcription collection.

The significance of the present analysis lies in the potential to establish a path to connect both theory and practice. Theories such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis happen to emphasize the relevance that comprehensible input has, but few studies have focused on how these principles manifest on real classroom practice, nor in the specific context of Spanish secondary education. Through the analysis of real classroom data, this section aims to offer insights regarding how EFL teachers employ key input strategies to enhance their teaching and therefore, to reach the diverse needs of their students.

3.1. Analysis of input: *Gestures*

ESO – Year 1

The analysis of year one of ESO, non-bilingual classroom input transcripts, shows that gestures are constantly present in the classroom, supporting learner comprehension and guiding and engaging learners through the learning process. As Daragmi and Asali-Van Der Wal (2023) claimed in their work, the role of nonverbal behaviors, happens to be indispensable in the teaching process. The observed teacher integrates gestures on a conscious manner all throughout the development of the class, to reinforce the meaning of the content being taught, and to reinforce the verbal input produced.

It is noticed that the most repeated gesture in the sessions is visual anchoring, understanding the last as gestures that guided the sight of the learners to a visual element. This is seen in all of the three lessons, as the teacher regularly points out the digital screen, blackboard, or even physical materials, along with verbal explanations that link with the visual object. For instance, in transcription number three it is displayed [points at the screen] on numerous instances, while performing a vocabulary correction task. The book pages were displayed on the digital board, and the teacher pointed out the correct items as the learners were delivering their responses.

It is also worth noting that, although not systematically tracked within the transcript, other embodied gestures such as pointing at the students when they raised their hands, the teacher usage of the room space, and the facial expressions are a constant factor

within the development of the class. It has been noticed that in comparison to higher levels, the gestures in this level tend to be slightly exaggerated, depicting the teacher's need to provide additional reinforcement and clarification among students in low proficiency levels. This observed reality aligns with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), that claims gestures to be helpful when ensuring that the input is both comprehensible and engaging, keeping it adapted to suit the needs of the learners.

Beyond the repetitive visual anchoring, it is worth pointing out the methodology used by the teacher in the classroom, as it directly approaches the matter of gestures being central in the learning process. For instance, in the second transcription, a mindfulness breathing warm up activity is developed: *"sit with your back straight, relaxed ..."* (Annex 6.1, transcript 2) the teacher does a multiple sided learning activity: guides the students' attention to their gestures while guiding them through language.

Additionally, gestures that accompany linguistic adjustments are also perceived within the transcriptions. For example, in transcript one, the teacher explains that there are four posts, while indicating the number with the fingers: "*How many? Four posts? [makes number gesture with the hand]*" (Annex 6.1, transcript 1). Moreover, in transcript number three, the teacher does a silence gesture while explaining the pronunciation of a word*: "Does it have an e in it? Then you don't have to read an e, just as if you do this shhhhh" [the teacher does a silent gesture]"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3)

From a pedagogical perspective, the use of these gestures analyzed on this level is not arbitrary. They demonstrate intentional nuances and consciousness to reach the teacher's aim of students understanding the input being provided. Thus, effective teachers need to embody different communicative strategies, verbal and non-verbal, to support the learning process of the students in all levels of proficiency.

As a whole, of gestures in 1st level of secondary education reveal that nonverbal behaviors are key in scaffolding comprehension, maintaining engagement within the classroom, and supporting linguistic input produced.

ESO – Year 2

In the second year of secondary education, the support that gestures gives to the teacher's input is more visible and functional, compared to higher years as 4th of ESO. At this level, learners still need heavily nonverbal communication strategies as in 1st ESO. Thus, gestures are produced by the teacher to make students process oral input better, manage the interaction within the classroom, and maintain the attention of the students. It can be appreciated that the teacher uses gestures to support comprehension, instructions and classroom manners.

Among the most recurrent gestures observed on these transcriptions, deictic gestures stand out among the others. Pointing and hand movement are constantly observed in the classroom, as means to manage classroom's control or the participation turn of students. In a variety of instances, the teacher uses hand signals to get the students' attention in order to indicate who is expected to do a task: *"As X is not here… XXX you are the firsts ones [TCHR does a gesture with her hand]"* (transcript 5) this type of nonverbal behavior is key at this specific level, as learners need multimodal support to understand what they are expected to do, and keep them aligned along the lesson.

It is also evident that gestures at this level are used to regulate the behavior of the classroom. For example, in transcript number 6, the teacher tells the students to be quiet while using a hand motion to reinforce that command: *"Shhhh, X [teacher does a gesture of silence with its hands]"* (transcript 6). Similarly, in other commands as *"Sit properly! And your mouth close [TCHR does a gesture of silence]"* (transcript 6) and *"So now, close your notebook [TCHR does a gesture as if closing a book]"* (transcript 6) the teacher pairs the command with a gesture to reinforce it.

Illustrative gestures also appear, for instance in transcript 6, where the teacher tries to make the students guess the title of a movie by mimicking a movement: *"El título de esa peli… esta que hacen así [TCH moves to exemplify]"* this gesture helps the students recall the movie, through a familiar nonverbal cue.

Gestures also function as supportive repetition of verbal instructions in the classroom. For example, in transcript 6, when explaining how to draw the bingo activity, she reiterates the explanation two times, and when stating that students are expected to use the third column of irregular verbs to do the activity, she does the number with her

hand twice: on a first instance*: [...] so it means the third column, each verb one square in the third column. [TCHR does number three with her hand],* and in a second instance: *[...] in the participle form, which is the third column [TCHR does number three with her hand]*

Although not explicitly transcribed, subtle non-verbal behavior was observed in the lessons. For instance, when the students were performing their oral presentations, the teacher often nodded her head or smiled to encourage the students, and to show active listening. These provide instant feedback and contribute positively to lower the affective filter.

ESO – Year 3

In the 3rd ESO bilingual classroom where the transcripts were compiled, gestures appear as a recurrent strategy applied to enhance the input's delivery of the EFL teacher. This type of input support happens to guide students throughout the content being taught. While gestures appear constantly throughout all the transcriptions, in this specific level, it is shown that the nature and frequency of the usage of them is slightly different than in the rest. It needs to be noted that two of the descriptions appear to be similar due to the fact that it was a class given to two different groups but with the same activities. Nonetheless, this allows as well to grasp the adjustments the teacher makes on the second time delivering the input on the same content.

One of the observed gestures that aims to support the teacher's input are rhythmic gestures. This is particularly useful as the students are engaging with Shakespeare's literature, and although they are familiar with Shakespeare's works, those specific sonnets were new to them. As it can be observed, the teacher consistently knocks the rhythm on the table while reading the sonnets aloud*: [TCHR knocks rhythm in the table while reading the poem]* (transcript 9) and in certain instances, he asks the students to follow him while doing the knocking gesture and reading aloud: *[TCHR reads the poem knocking the rhythm in the table, students follow the teacher]* (transcript 8). Moreover, the teacher even modifies his gestures to clarify the moments of pausing in the sonnet: *[TCHR knocks the rhythm in the table one hands knocking, the other marks the silences]* (transcript 8). All of these instances where the teacher accompanies its input with gestures, enhances learners' prosodic awareness and makes abstract literary concepts clearer for them;

besides, connecting auditory input with physical movement helps the student acquire the patterns of English poetry, reaching further to achieve significant learning of the contents being taught.

Another frequent use of gestures observed within the analysis is the role they play in complementing explanations. Through pointing gestures that direct students' visual attention to certain elements, input delivered is easily comprehended by the learners. For example, in transcript eight, while analyzing a sonnet, the word "*wire*" appears, and the teacher asks the students: "*Do you know what a wire is?*" And he says: "*is like this metallic thing*" while he points at one "*[TCHR points a cable in the room]*". Furthermore, in another instance, while engaging with the significance of one of the sonnets: "*sun is the symbol of beauty and love, and in some perfumes, there is more light that in her mouth, which is like…*" the teacher textualizes the feeling the author is trying to present: "*[TCHR does a gesture to exemplify]*". Later in the transcript another explanation of a word is accompanied by a gesture: "goofy *means… do you know goofy from mickey mouse [TCHR does a gesture to exemplify]*", as so, the teacher manages to illustrate the point using gestures to introduce the meaning of the word.

From a pedagogical perspective, the gestures observed in these three lessons reflect that the intentional teaching strategies were not only meant to clarify input's meaning, but they also engage the students with the lesson on a cognitive way. Unlike lower levels of secondary education, in which gestures serve mainly to scaffold basic vocabulary or certain guiding instructions, in this level are used to reinforce higher level tasks such as performing literary analysis, doing cultural interpretations or grasping cultural nuances of a text. Furthermore, using rhythmic gestures and exaggerated movements the teacher creates a learning environment in which the learner connects language with context through meaningful ways for them.

Moreover, the teacher usage of this kind of input support appears to be flexible, as it adapts to the demands of each of the lessons. This can be seen when comparing the two lessons given in the same content to different classes, as the teacher slightly modifies her input and therefore, the gestures. This capacity of adaptation by the teacher demonstrates a high level of awareness by the teacher, an essential aspect that EFL teacher must embody.

Finally, the analysis of gestures as tool for input's support in the third level of secondary education underlines the essential role that nonverbal behavior has on sustaining learning engagement and comprehension of the language. Compared to later levels observed, where the gestures were slightly limited to bridge basic comprehension gaps or to support instructions, at this level it is shown that gestures evolve into a more sophisticated pedagogical tool, supporting both critical interpretation and language acquisition.

The non-bilingual group of ESO Year 4

In the 4th ESO non-bilingual group, the use of gestures unfolds in a centered and less recurrent way compared to lower levels as 1st or 2nd ESO. While in lower levels of ESO gestures are focused on scaffold comprehension, guide classroom management or maintain the students' engagement, at this higher level the teacher uses certain gestures specifically aligned mainly with clarification of grammatical concepts, or cultural related concepts. For instance, the teacher points out at the digital board on an instance where an explanation of different tense forms was being conducted. The gesture aimed to show the difference between the usage of two future forms: "*El tres fijaos que lo explico y lo hacéis para mañana, cuando se puede usar esto… [TCHR points to the blackboard] y cuando se puede usar esto [TCHR points to the blackboard]*" (transcript 15) Although the input is delivered on the L1, the gestue draws the students' attention to the sentence displayed on the board which is in English. As the explanation unfolds, the teacher continues elaborating in the L2: "*puedo decir "i am going to study medicine", o "i am studying medicine". Do you understand it? Let's correct number 2 X*" (transcript 15). This pattern shows a key instance where gestures are used as strategic anchors delivered in certain moments, and always linking student's attention to the L2 content, regardless of the use of code-switching on transitional parts of the explanation. It has been found worth of mention, that even though subtle gestured done by the teacher have not been compiled on these transcriptions, facial cues were constant. Moreover, they were highly notorious when asking the students aspects regarding the content being taught, such as: "*have you heard this word? what do you think this unit is going to be about*?" (transcript 16) both to seek the students' attention and maintain their engagement. It is worth noting that in this specific group these types of questions were essential due to the characteristics of the class, as student participation was not active, and production of output was noticeable

lower than in other observed classes. Thus, the teacher's use of subtle gestures alongside these open-ended questions were essential to maintain the group attention and promote engagement.

Additionally, the teacher's usage of gestures in this specific non-bilingual 4th of ESO group, can be conceived as a piece of a communicative strategy that do not relies much on overt physical support, and relies more on targeted and intentional nonverbal behavior. This aligns with the level of learners, which in this ESO course constant gestural scaffolding is not as necessary as in lower levels, but it is still used occasionally to reinforce complex concepts or emphasize certain aspects. Subsequently, teacher's facial cues when asking reflective questions promote a dynamic atmosphere in the classroom, making passive learners engaged with the input. These subtle gestures reflect perfect awareness by the teacher in matters of management styles and assuring engagement of learners.

The bilingual group of ESO Year 4

In the 4th ESO bilingual classroom, the employment of gestures is particularly less notable in comparison to lower levels of ESO, and to the non-bilingual group of the same level. While it has been observed that in lower stages gestures serve as an essential form of scaffolding that supports the teacher's input, at this specific level the teacher does not rely much on overt physical cues. This can be due to the fact of the students being able to work with a higher command of the L2, and that they present a higher linguistic autonomy.

Indeed, no significant or prominent gestures were explicitly reflected in the compiled transcriptions. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that while observing the classes, subtle gestures like head nods or eye movements were present. They were mainly performed to signal students' turns when correcting tasks, or to encourage students to answer open ended questions. These nonverbal cues, although minor, contributed to the dynamic of the classroom, guiding students' interactions to the content without giving them overt explanatory gestures. For instance, in transcript 12 when correcting an activity, the teacher after each correction calls to a different student: *"Correct. Okay, next. X? [student's intervention] [...] We continue. X?"* (transcript 12) and while naming the

student, inviting him or her to correct the exercise, he nodded his head to assure that when the student looked at him, he understood that he/she was meant to do that part.

Although these subtle gestures were not transcribed due to the complexity of capturing such small physical nuances, they played a subtle but meaningful role in the teacher's classroom management and therefore, need to be mentioned. They reflect that at this level; gestures serve mainly to fine-tune participation and subtly scaffold the autonomy of the learners. For instance, transcript number 12, the teacher stands on the side of the digital screen while he explains the structure of passive sentences, but no significant gestures are tracked along the explanation, saying: *"Okay, rule number one: Susan gave me a present. What is this, the object or the complement? The object becomes the subject of the passive sentence. [TCHR writes on blackboard]"* (transcript 12). Notably, no evidence of gestures was tracked during the explanation, suggesting that the teacher is expecting from the students that they mentally link the ideas without relying on any physical cues. This portrays how higher cognitive demands are part of advanced levels, where learners are encouraged to grasp concepts on a more independent way.

From a pedagogical standpoint, this less frequent but intentional usage of nonverbal cues aligns with the communicative strategies expected to be present on higher levels of EFL classrooms, where teachers seek promoting learners' output rather than giving evident scaffolding. These transcriptions also reveal that nonverbal strategies evolve depending on the proficiency of the learners, and how they become less about comprehension support of the input, and more about managing interaction and promoting engagement within the classroom. Thus, while working within high levels, EFL teachers should focus students' participation and critical thinking rather than mediating constantly the input. This also aligns with Krashen's Comprehensible Input Theory (1982) that proposes that input naturally changes at higher levels, without needing to lower the linguistic demands.

3.2.   Analysis of input: *Visuals*

ESO – Year 1

In the 1st ESO non-bilingual classroom, visual support appears as a tool that serves to complement verbal input while enhancing the learners' comprehension. Unlike gestures, that involve movement, this tool rely on nonverbal visual aids: written text on the board, physical materials, videos or projections of the book on the screen. The presence of visuals as part of the classroom discourse happens to be relevant in early levels of secondary education, as learners benefit from this type of scaffold that makes abstract concepts concrete.

In all three lessons visual support played a significant role within the teacher's input. In transcript one, students work on an activity using magazines, they were given images of famous people, along with a template of a social platform post empty. They were asked to create a mock post using the caption of the post to create an engaging sentence describing what the people from the magazine were wearing. It needs to be noted that, they have already worked with many of the vocabulary concepts regarding the topic: clothes, textures and patterns. When the students did not know a certain word in the L2 they asked the teacher, then the teacher would show them an image from the magazine or merely point out at all pieces of clothing of the image and name each of them. Moreover, the blackboard was also used to link the unfamiliar content with visual drawings. For instance, this is shown in transcription one*: "X is going to draw some things [on the blackboard]"* where the conversation assistant drew on the blackboard the logo of the social media platform "Instagram" engaging both linguistically and visually the activity with the task.

On the second transcription, the students were played a video of two characters interacting in a restaurant. The video frames followed a strategic order, so when the characters talked about a word related to the topic being taught at the moment: food, the camera zoomed on that exact food item, visually reinforcing verbal input. This usage of audiovisual material provides learners with the ability to connect language to meaning, contextualizing the learning on real world situations. It is worth noting that the teacher paused the video or repeated certain parts to assure that the students were able to

comprehend the information given*: [TCHR plays part of the video] [TCHR plays the video again]* (transcript 2).

From a pedagogical point of view, these varied forms of presenting visuals supporting input enhance comprehension and engagement within the class. Furthermore, visual support also makes acquisition of advanced input possible, as Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis highlights, it is needed to provide learners with comprehensible input, slightly beyond their level, always supported.

Remarkably, the transcripts show that the reliance on visual support at 1st ESO is noticeable higher than in the rest of the levels, a fact that reflects the specific needs that lower proficiency learners present in EFL classrooms.

ESO – Year 2

Regarding the use of visual support in the second group of ESO, it is noted that few instances of this specific type of support are tracked in the transcription. This might be due to the nature of the lessons conducted, as they were focused on oral presentation and interactive tasks, where the students already accompanied their output with their own visual aids.

When performing the oral tasks in transcripts 4, 5 and 6, the students displayed their own visual material to support their presentation. However, these materials were created and used by the students as part of their output. Therefore, they could not be considered as visual support given by the teacher to support her oral production.

One clear instance where the teacher relies on visual support to scaffold learners' comprehension of instructions is observed in transcript 6. When explaining the activity, the teacher draws what the learners are expected to draw on their notebooks: *"You have twelve gaps, in each gap you need an irregular verb, the irregular verb must be in the participle form, which is the third column. [TCHR draws on the blackboard the bingo structure]"* this visual aid helps the students to clarify the task and clarify the oral instructions given by the teacher.

Apart from this specific instance, no additional moments where visual aids are observed. The reason for this lack of specific support may be because of the high amount of gestures used throughout the lessons, as they already serve to clarify meaning and enhance students' comprehension in the classroom.

ESO – Year 3

In the 3rd ESO level, visual support appears as a way of scaffolding that supports the teacher's verbal input throughout the lesson. This support helps learners to understand abstract or cultural material presented in the lesson. Throughout the analyzed transcripts, the teacher always relies on visual planned and unplanned support to ensure that the student engages with unfamiliar concepts using visual concrete references.

One clear instance of this appears on transcripts eight and nine, when the students are guided through an analysis of specific Shakespeare's sonnets. While breaking down the quatrains, reading them and explaining, the sonnet was displayed on the digital screen in each instance, allowing the students to visually follow the text's structure along with the teacher's input of the explanation.

Furthermore, visual support is also introduced when approaching new vocabulary or cultural concepts. For instance, in transcript number eight, when the word "wire" appears while explaining a sonnet, the teacher points to a real cable of the class in order to make the students perceive a visual referent to link its input, complementing as so its explanation. This way of supporting input through visual aids, transform an abstract term for the students into a tangible reality, making input comprehensible on a simple way, without the need of further lengthy explanations.

Additionally, in transcript nine, the teacher visually scaffolds his input about an explanation of how students had to organize their notebooks to start the new topic by drawing the structure of the student's notebook pages on the blackboard, while providing the oral instructions at the same time: *"[...] and now we are going to start a new paper completely new, [TCHR draws on the board the structure of the pages]"* (transcript 9). These visual representations of their notebook serve as a reference that supports both the organizational input given and the expectations of their work, reducing possible confusions that might occur from isolated verbal instructions. Such use of the board makes abstract concepts and instructions visual and accessible, making the teacher's input concrete and assuring that the learners acquire the language and the requirements.

Integrating multimodal resources is essential in order to support the learners' process of comprehension and acquisition; specifically, when delving into new concepts or advanced content (Cambridge Assessment English, 2018). Therefore, the analysis of

visual support within the 3rd ESO level demonstrates that visual aids happen to be not mere extra pieces of material, but key tools that complement the input produced by the teacher. The visual support usage of the EFL teacher manages to assure the comprehension of meaning of the verbal production, scaffolding linguistic and cognitive engagement in the class.

The non-bilingual group of ESO Year 4

The analysis of the 4th ESO non-bilingual classroom transcripts show that visual support is a key element that makes teacher's input accessible to the learners. It can be observed that visual support is constantly integrated into the classroom for both, reinforcing verbal explanations, and guiding learners on grammar instruction or introducing new contents.

Throughout the three transcripts, the teacher always uses the digital board to display the book, along with the blackboard, where he writes complementary explanations. For instance, during an explanation regarding future tenses, the teacher often writes examples on the board that support the content presented on the digital book. This allows the students to follow both the oral explanation and the visual representation. This double support ensures that the learners understand complex and unfamiliar content.

In addition, the teacher uses multimedia resources, as in transcription 16, where a video is displayed on the digital board to introduce the new topic. The usage of this type of visual support provides a richer and meaningful input understanding, as students see real-life situations. This visual scaffolding might require background knowledge, nonetheless the teacher provides the necessary explanation for the students to engage with the content they are presented within the video.

Furthermore, the teacher uses visual support to organize the tasks and the instructional input he delivers. For example, in transcript 18, the learners are introduced to the new topic, and they are asked to do an activity related to the creation of a survival kit. The teacher manages to use both blackboards to link the content displayed on the digital one, to the explanation he writes on the traditional one. By giving the students a clear and linked visual reference, the misunderstandings are minimized, and learner autonomy is maximized while developing the activity. This usage of both boards depicts the organizational skills that the teacher embodies. The consistent usage of visual

management tools that support constant teacher's input, strengthens the alignment of oral instruction and student understanding.

Approaching this from a pedagogical perspective, the systematic integration of visual support by the teacher at this specific level, helps to support multiple learning styles and assure comprehension. when dealing with abstract materials. By employing these tools: both boards, along with the display of multimedia resources, the teacher assures that the input is both verbal and visually accessible for the students, fostering comprehension and proper acquisition of the language.

The bilingual group of ESO Year 4

In the 4th ESO bilingual group, visual aids demonstrate to be crucial as a form of scaffolding the teacher's verbal input. Unlike in lover levels analyzed, in this one, being the higher level of ESO and working under the bilingual program, visuals are not used to support basic comprehension, but to help clarify advanced linguistic aspects. A clear example of the support that visuals provide to input is portrayed on transcription number 12. In this specific class the teacher explains how to transform active to passive voice. During the explanation the teacher writes on the blackboard examples supporting the explanation: *"[TCHR writes on blackboard] Okay, rule number one: Susan gave me a present. […] The object becomes the subject of the passive sentence. [TCHR writes on blackboard]"* (transcript 12). The teacher usage of the board as visual support for the input to be comprehended by the learners, reinforces both their comprehension and their retention.

Moreover, the teacher uses multimedia resources on the digital screen. For instance, on transcription 10, the students were correcting an activity based on a video they were previously shown. This visual aid helps students to engage with the new vocabulary being introduced. Thus, the video embodies a visual anchor that keeps the engagement of the students while liking it to the task they are meant to do. In the same lesson, when displaying the video the teacher comments on it: *"[TCHR plays the first part of the video] Don't do these things when you travel—that's a strange thing to do"*; when correcting the task, he mentioned certain frames of the video; creating connections between the vocabulary and the images: *"No. Okay, three hundred dollars, that is when he is stealing the apples"* (transcript 10); and when displaying the video he also comments

on it: *"[TCHR plays the first part of the video] Don't do these things when you travel— that's a strange thing to do".* (transcription 10). In the same line, he searched for images on the internet whenever the students do not know a reference. For instance, when a Frank Lloyd Wright's construction appears on an exercise, the teacher searches for an image to show the students: *"[TCHR puts the image on the screen], okay this is the house, now, see it. Shhhh"* (transcript 12).

Approaching this use of visuals from a pedagogical perspective, they happen to be not incidental but intentional scaffolding techniques. Moreover, these techniques are aligned with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) in which he highlights that in order to provide the i+1 effectively, it can be valuable to integrate visual reinforcements along with the verbal explanation. Thus, the teacher enhances both the accessibility, and the meaning of the input delivered. Overall, the use of visual aids in the bilingual 4th ESO level portrays a thoughtful usage and well-structured teaching strategy that reinforces and enhances the input that the teacher delivers.

3.3. Analysis of input: Conversational Adjustments

ESO – Year 1

In the transcripts of 1st ESO lessons, conversational adjustments are one of the most prominent strategies employed by the teacher to support her input. The adjustments observed include simplifying language, spell words, relying on repetition, code-switching, giving translations, scaffolding new meaning, indirectly teaching pronunciation or changing the tone of voice. All of these play an essential role bridging the existing gap between the input delivered, and the students' competence in the second language.

One of the most frequent strategies used in the lessons is repetition. It can be observed throughout the three transcripts that the teachers constantly repeat key words, phrases and explanations to reinforce the students' comprehension. For example, in transcription three, the teacher repeats that yogurt can be written in two ways, three times. In that same transcript, the teacher mentions two times that the word "spicy" does not have an "e" at the beginning: *"Spicy it doesn't have to have an e in front of it", "Same thing, does it have an e in front of it? Spicy."* It is also observed that the teachers are always ensuring the engagement of the students with sentences or words as: *"Are you ready?"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 1) *¿Alguna duda chicos?"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3) *"¿vale?"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3) *Any doubt?* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3). Repetitions not only ensures that the students follow the tasks, but also increases the chances that learners grasp vocabulary, pronunciation or structures. Moreover, these acts of repeating certain aspects facilitate retention, aligning as so with Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, were it is highlighted that challenging input needs to be delivered on a repeated meaningful manner to reach acquisition.

Another frequent adjustment is code-switching. In all of the three transcripts of this level the teachers alternate between L1 and L2, mainly in instances where unfamiliar or complex terms appear, providing the students with an explanation in both languages. From delivering instructions to do a task, to comment on the class behaviour *"I need you to turn down the volume. Bajamos un poco el volumen"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 1), to explain new words *"to share? Para compartir"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 2), *"un yogur con*

fruta, a yogurt with fruit" (Annex 6.1, transcript 2) or to assure that the learners are engaged *"Any doubt? ¿Alguna duda chicos?* (transcript 3). This intentional switch between the L1 and L2 functions as a scaffold, linking existing knowledge with new one.

In the same line, explicit translation is also used by the teacher regularly. It often appears when explaining new vocabulary or verbs. For example, *"Mushrooms, champiñones o setas"* (Annex 6.1, trascript 2), *"Desert es desierto"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3) *"Dairy product es un derivado de la leche"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3) *"Crunchy crujiente"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3). These explicit translations assure that the new concepts are immediately accessible for the learners, leaving possible misunderstandings aside.

Another adjustment strategy present is the teaching of pronunciation through repetition. It is observed in all of the three excerpts that in instances where the teacher is correcting an exercise, or the learners are delivering a response, the tendency of the teacher is to repeat what it has been said by the students. In transcript three, the lesson begins with a correction of an exercise done previously, and it is observed that for every student intervention giving a response, the teacher repeats the sentence or word: *"Sauce", "Grapes", "Mangoes"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 3). It is not explicitly addressed in the transcriptions but while observing the lesson, the exaggeration of the vowels while pronouncing the words was evident. This is not only a tool that enhances input, but also aligns with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, as this form of non-explicit correction, lowers the affective filter in the class.

Scaffolded techniques within the input delivered are recurrent in the transcripts. This is shown at specific instances where the teacher breaks down complex information using accessible steps. Instead of providing difficult explanations, teachers on this level tend to rely on guiding questions. These kinds of questions are produced in order to build meaning, pushing the students to grasp meaning from prior knowledge in order to infer the new meaning presented. For example, in transcript number two, the teacher asks students about personal experiences on restaurants before introducing new concepts related to the topic: *"C'mon, what is a menu?"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 2) *"What does he order? […] A chocolate brownie with?"* (Annex 6.1, transcript 2). Thus, it is also valuable as it links classroom language with real world contexts, making the input meaningful. There are some instances where the teacher spells new words aloud, when it is shown that the students do not fully understand it. For instance, in transcript number

two, the teacher spells "*every*" "*suit*" and in session number three the word "*cookie*", is spelled twice in that session: "*¿Cookies? Sin esa c, c-o-o-k-i-e*" (Annex 6.1, transcript 3).

As a whole, the analysis of these input transcriptions regarding the linguistic adjustments applied reveal that these strategies are central to delivering comprehensible and engaging input in lower levels such as in 1st year of ESO.

ESO – Year 2

In the second year of secondary education, there is a prominent use of conversational adjustments employed by the teacher. These scaffolding adaptations of the verbal input of the teacher reflect the proficiency level of the learners, as in this grade they still need support in processing and producing in the L2.

A specific adjustment that can be seen throughout the transcripts is the use of code-switching between the L1 and L2. This follows the same pattern as in the first year of ESO but differs from upper years of secondary education. The teacher alternates between languages, especially when delivering instructions, to ensure that everything is understood and the dynamic of the classroom is maintained. An example of this appears in transcript 4, as the teacher says: "*I'm going to tell you, te voy a decir qué columna tienes que poner*" using L1 to clarify the information classified as procedural. It is worth noting that the teacher often devolves into L1 when the learners manifest that they have not understood something, but the first explanation is always provided in the L2.

Repetition and simplification are strategies employed in every transcript of this level. Instructions are often delivered twice, reformulating them using shorter and clearer structures. For instance, in transcript 6, the teacher says**:** "*As the other day, you need four gaps. Four squares. Four*" but when the students appear unsure, the teacher simplifies and rephrases the instructions given the previous day: "*You have twelve gaps, in each gap you need an irregular verb, the irregular verb must be in the participle form, which is the third column*" and then repeats this same utterance, almost identically, twice.

When looking at the teacher's phrasing, it is clear that the teacher segments the input into acquirable chunks, using lexical repetition as a structuring tool; repeating the final word of one clause as the first word of the next: "*gaps, in each gap*", "*an irregular verb, the irregular verb*". This technique makes processing easier, while it helps learners to retain information significantly better. Notably, when giving this type of explanation,

the teacher slows the speed of her voice, making her pronunciation exaggerated, and producing the utterances slower, for the students to grasp all the necessary information.

Additionally, as seen in other courses, scaffolding questions appear frequently throughout the transcripts. For instance, questions as "*Are you ready*", "*Do you have any questions?*" or "*Are you nervous?*" are not only employed to check comprehension, but to keep the students focused throughout the development of the lesson.

These conversational adjustments reflect the teacher's awareness of students' needs at this level of ESO, and her aim to keep the input accessible, appealing and pedagogical effective in this stage of acquisition of the L2.

ESO – Year 3

In the 3ʳᵈ ESO compiled transcripts linguistic adjustments are different than the analyzed on lower levels. This difference is due to the fact that in this class, 3ʳᵈ ESO students are under the bilingual program, and as a consequence, they have a stronger command of the L2 in comparison to lower levels of ESO. The transcriptions reveal that the adjustments are applied when addressing abstract or literary themed topics; varying from previous transcriptions, where adjustments were made in explanations or introducing new vocabulary.

One of the most frequent linguistic adjustments used in the three lessons was rephrasing. The transcripts show that the teacher rearrange sentences in order to clarify the meaning on them for students. For instance, in transcript number eight, when the teacher is explaining Shakespeare's sonnets, several metaphors appear. In order to make the student fully understand the meaning of these literary devices in the L2, he relies on simplifying the sonnet: "*love is respect and affection, if you love someone you are not going to want to change him or her, you have to love her for who she is.*" (Annex 6.3, transcript 8) This way of simplifying complex material ensures that the students connect cognitively with the meaning.

Another frequent adjustment often used within the classes is explicit explanations of terms portraying cultural references. In transcripts eight and nine the teacher focuses on explaining specific words by linking them to concepts already known by the students: "'*Outcast' is someone who's chased by the police, as in western movies. You know the posters where they are looking for someone and they offer money for them*" (Annex 6.3,

transcript 9); *"faith is destiny, when you feel bad you think is your destiny"* (Annex 6.3, transcript 8). In the same line, questions and constant checks for ensuring understanding are observed in many instances. The transcripts show that the teacher stops constantly to ask the students in order to ensure that they are engaged and understanding the content being presented: *Do you know what a wire is?; why our lips are more red that other things in our face?* (Annex 6.3, transcript 8). This way of making the learners reflect on existing knowledge serves as a tool to engage the students in the lesson, while figuring if the input delivered has been processed by the students. These type of open ended questions allow the teacher to encourage learners to make meaning, rather than limiting input into only delivering information in a passive way.

Moreover, several instances where the teacher uses a range or "colloquial" words or contractions are observed. These conversational adjustments have been approached as a way of embodying on a certain level an "informal environment" within the classroom: *"my god"*; *"Jesus Christ"* (Annex 6.3, transcription 7) *"and you say whoa..."* *"gonna"* (Annex 6.3, transcription 8). Although Krashen happens to highlight that in proper informal environment learners can take advantage in order to acquire the language, he points out that this environment is *"not always willing to supply comprehensible input"* (Krashen, 1982, p. 58). By introducing this simulated informality in the classroom, the learners are provided both informal and comprehensible input, reversing that counterpart that Krashen highlights.

Another linguistic adjustment observed while analyzing the transcriptions are the changes of pace and tone performed by the teacher. It was observed in the lessons that when changing content or in certain instances that the activity required specific help, the teacher adapted his input to suit the content taught. For instance, when Shakespeare's sonnets are being read out loud by the teacher, he modulates the tone: *[TCHR changes the tone]* (Annex 6.3, transcript 8). Another remarkable adjustment that the teacher happens to do on his lessons is using humor. For instance, when the teacher is explaining beauty standards in the Elizabethan era, he compares them to modern social media and how they are approached now, using an informal and amusing tone: *"Those instagramers, those influencers, in ten years' time, nobody is going to remember them"* (Annex 6.3, transcript 9). Furthermore, delivering input in a humorous tone, also lowers the affective filter, creating a safe classroom environment that supports engaging and learning in the class: *"Have you ever known a sad bird apart from Piolín, who is always miserable?";*

From a pedagogical approach, these linguistic adjustments on the teacher's input manages to reflect intentional teaching strategies that a high level of competency on managing the classroom and engage the students on it. Moreover, it is necessary to mention that, although the topic being taught on the lessons: Shakespeare's sonnets, may not seem interesting by 3rd ESO students, the teacher relies on the linguistic adjustments presented, and manages to make them appealing for them. This aligns with one of the statements made by Krashen in the point *"Other Features that Encourage Acquisition",* as he highlights that: *"If the topic being discussed is at all interesting, and if it is comprehensible […] anxiety will be lowered, and acquisition will result"* (Krashen, 1982, p.74)

Overall, linguistic adjustments observed in these 3rd ESO bilingual classrooms portray how intentional and adaptive strategies applied to input delivered can elevate learner's engagement and acquisition. By combining rephrasing, explicit explanations, changes of tone and pace, humor, usage of colloquialisms and contractions, the teacher reaches two beneficial points: maintaining learning interest and keeping meaning accessible and meaningful. This analysis proves that on higher proficiency levels, input's adjustments are not only applied to simplify vocabulary, but to allow deeper cultural connections, which aligns with Krashen's theoretical principles (Krashen, 1982). This sets the stage for understanding different strategies applied on the varied levels of ESO; aspect that will be directly addressed on subsequent analysis.

The non-bilingual group of ESO Year 4

The 4th ESO non-bilingual input transcripts show an advanced use of conversational adjustments that support comprehension and the autonomy of the learners. At this level the teacher is aware of the command of the students but remains watchful in moments where adapted input is needed. For instance, when explaining abstract grammar points, or new vocabulary that embody cultural significance.

It can be observed that instead of only using simplification adjustments, the teacher relies on rephrasing. This allows the teacher to present both, the difficult input, along with its rephrased version to ensure clarity. For example, during discussion when explaining

future forms, the teacher clarifies the distinctions by rephrasing: *"you can say I'm going to do an exam, or I'm doing an exam"* (Annex 6.5, transcript 15). This approach has a double benefit for the learners: the explanation is simplified and easy to understand, but they are exposed to authentic structures, allowing the students to grasp real-use forms of the L2, while assuring its understanding. In the same line, the teacher usage of authentic natural-sounding language is evident, for example, he uses the informal contracted form of "going to", "*gonna*" more than four times per transcript. Although informal, this language brings native-like utterances to the classroom, mimicking everyday contexts; this adjustment within input requires careful pedagogical treatment, in order to ensure that students fully understand the connotations of formal and informal registers.

Another frequent conversational adjustment observed is the teacher usage of code-switching and translation. This usually happens when introducing new terms that embody cultural meaning. Examples include phrases to clarify as: "in the exam, *en el examen teneis que mirar esta frase. va a llover no digo vaya que nubes* you see the clouds it's going to rain" (Annex 6.5, transcript 15); "This afternoon I'm playing a football match. *Voy a jugar un partido de fútbol."* (Annex 6.5, transcript 15). These bilingual scaffolding techniques help to link familiar knowledge with unfamiliar one, facilitating easy integration of meaning.

The teacher relies on open-ended questions such as *"have you heard this word?", "And what kind of adventure would you like to do?", "What can you see? Help me"* (Annex 6.5, transcription 16) these instances reflect not merely questions without purpose, but they establish a conversational dynamic that leads learners to reflect both individual and collectively, thereby creating meaning. Notably, these kinds of prompts were particularly essential in this specific group, as the general participation of the students was lower compared to other classes observed; and students produced less spontaneous output. Therefore, the teacher premeditated incorporation of these questions served to stimulate engagement and ensured that the learners interacted with its input on an active way.

Finally, integration of humor and informal tone is presented within the teacher's input; for example, the teacher remarks: "*Seeing that you don't see the numbers you will have to go to the oculist.*" (Annex 6.5, transcript 16). This allows the teacher to promote a low affective filter in the classroom, building a proper space for learners to feel relaxed and encouraged to participate, contributing to their learning process. This aligns with the

Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 19829) which highlights that by lowering anxiety levels, better input assimilation and acquisition is reached by the learners.

Overall, these strategies reflect the 4th of ESO EFL teacher's pedagogical awareness and linguistic competence, able to adapt input in real time to align with the needs of the students, foster engagement, and facilitate meaningful learning within a carefully developed classroom environment. This aligns with Krashen's principles, which highlight the importance of shaping language input, classroom management, and applying proper communicative techniques according to the proficiency level of the students. Thus, EFL teachers need to be flexible with language, employ scaffolding techniques and master learner-centered methodologies, in order to support comprehension and maintain engagement and motivation.

The bilingual group of ESO Year 4

In the 4th ESO bilingual group, it is observed that the teacher employs conversational adjustments aligned with the learners' advanced level. Thus, less adjustments are made to simplify the teacher's input, and more are done to represent authentic communicative nuances, encouraging comprehension and promoting metalinguistic thinking.

One strategy present within the transcripts is reformulation delivered with explanations. That is, instead of simplifying the content, the teacher reformulates it and gives extra information within it. For example, the teacher says on transcript 12: "*Susan gave me a present. What is this, the object or the complement? The object becomes the subject*" In this instance, it is shown that the teacher guides the student to the proper answer, without relaying in any type of simplification or adaptation of instructional input. Thus, he guides the students using precise terminology to make them acquire abstract structures.

Another linguistic adjustment observed is the implementation of questions that foster self-correction along with peer explanation. It is notorious that along the transcripts the teacher is constantly making this type of questions: "*Will you arrive? It doesn't make any sense, use your common sense*", "*would you say here what?*" (Annex 6.4, transcript 13) "*who was it? Could you spell it?*" (Annex 6.4, transcript 12) By doing this, the teacher

encourages the learners to analyze their productions, fostering reflection and promoting metalinguistic awareness among the learners.

In contrast to the rest of the levels, minimal, almost no use of L1 is observed. While in lower levels of ESO, specially from the non-bilingual program, Spanish was used as a scaffolding tool. In this group there is just one evidence of the usage of the mother tongue in one of the transcripts: *In English, passive sentences are more typical than in Spanish. Se venden bicicletas. How do you say that in English?* (Annex 6.4, transcript 12). This isolated example is used not to simplify the input, but to present a contrast between the two language systems, enhancing as so, the understanding of the differences they manifest.

Additionally, the teacher also presents cultural references in a more prominent way than in the rest of the secondary courses. For example, references to films are made: *"in The Wizard of Oz, okay we continue" "X have you seen Casablanca? No*?" (Annex 6.4, transcript 12) or architectural figures as Frank Lloyd Wright (Annex 6.4, transcript 12), are mentioned in the class; expected to be understood from context by the students; although if the teacher considers, further guidance is provided: *oh woah, this is the house, well do you find this house beautiful? Do you know that no one lived in this house? Do you know why*? (Annex 6.4, transcript 12) linking authentic references and following questions to support students' comprehension.

Another prominent conversational adjustment perceived is the constant use of contractions and colloquialisms. Contracted forms as "isn't" or casual expressions as *"c'mon"* or *"you know"* (Annex 6.4, transcript 10) expose students to natural fluent language in the classroom. For instance, a proper example would be: "*C'mon, everybody, relax but pay attention"* (Annex 6.4, Transcript 10). Where the casual expression helps to create a communicative environment that aims to mimic the L2 real-world, preparing the students to have authentic interactions in the language. Furthermore, this aim to portray real English usage, is backed up by the teacher itself. For instance, when talking about the activities he has prepared, he states: *All of these sentences sound like every day English, yes? Next.* (Annex 6.4, transcription 12)

Humor also is key within the conversational adjustments strategies observed. The teacher constantly employs humor to lower the affective filer in the class, which affects positively to the motivation of the students. An example of this would be an instance on

transcript 12 where the teacher says: "*Jesus Christ! You are obsessed with clothes*" "*So, has the curse of the fallen blackboard ended?*" (Annex 6.4, transcript 12) "*and don't follow the temptation*" (Annex 6.4, transcript 10). In this context, humor does not imply only that the students' engagement increases, but it is a way of showing learners informal language and social nuances in a direct way.

Altogether, these conversational adjustments: cultural references, contractions, humor, authentic expressions, reformulations and specific questions, reflect the teacher's aim to promote critical thinking, real-world English exposure, metalinguistic awareness and proper autonomy by the learners; all aligning with expectations present in advanced EFL contexts.

Figure 4

Distribution of Input Support Strategies by Year and Program
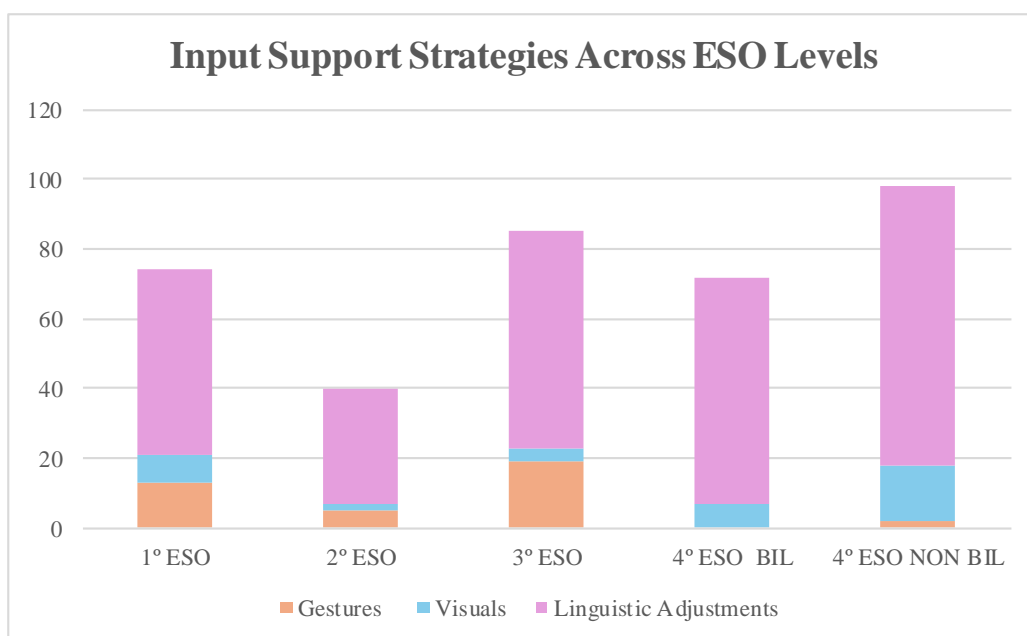
This chart displays the frequency of use of the different input strategies analyzed: gestures, visuals, linguistic adjustments across ESO levels. The figures are based on the analysis of three transcriptions per course level, allowing the compiling of all instances of input strategies used. It is worth noting that the nature of each lesson, as well as the teaching style of the individual teachers, may influence the distribution and frequency of the strategies. This visual representation provides a clear insight into the way input support evolves throughout secondary education, appreciating the shift from multimodal support to more natural language exposure.

3.4. Teaching implications

The analysis carried on the input transcriptions from the different levels of ESO, manages to portray the pedagogical implication that input production has for EFL teaching in secondary education. The shifts between strategies, resources and modifications' degrees of input adjustments observed among the different levels and programs suggest that EFL teachers must be highly aware of the linguistic and learning needs of the students.

First and foremost, the role of input as the main channel for acquiring the language in EFL contexts, cannot be underestimated. In non-immersive settings such as the ones analyzed, the language delivered by the teachers happens to be the primary and almost, the only source of exposure to English that the learners receive. Thus, assuring that input is comprehensible and has a clear pedagogical purpose, becomes an essential task.

One key implication regarding teaching is the imperative need for developing awareness of input differentiation across levels. Therefore, it is crucial to adjust the input with different support strategies depending on the level. In lower levels such as in the first and second years of ESO, learners benefit significantly from the use of nonverbal cues as gestures and visuals, along with communicative adaptations such as repetitions or simplifications. These tools make the processing of information easier for the students, helping them to build basic understanding and knowledge of L2. In contrast, in upper levels such as in the fourth year of ESO, concretely in bilingual groups, less scaffolding is needed. Thus, this reality allows natural, fluent and cultural related input to be present in the lessons, preparing learners for authentic communication outside the classroom. Therefore, it is evident that the EFL teacher must be capable of adjusting the nature of their input in a dynamic way, modulating it to their students' needs.

This aspect has significant implications for the EFL teacher training. EFL teachers do not only need to master language proficiency, but they also need to be equipped with the proper tools to analyze and adapt their own input. In practical terms, this implies that EFL teachers must deepen their ability to assess their own classroom discourse and identify instances where support is necessary, when is needed to simplify, and when learners can be exposed to advanced, more complex utterances. Teachers' capacity to balance support and difficulty deliberately is key to promoting comprehension and progress. As seen in

the analysis, students with low proficiency levels benefit from input reinforced by gestures, a lowered pace of voice, or usage of the L1. In contrast, in upper levels of ESO learners respond better to natural speech, cultural references, colloquialisms, humor and opportunities that enhance the construction of knowledge on their own.

Moreover, EFL teacher training programs need to place focus not only on the development of linguistic competence, but on pedagogical awareness of the usage of L2. It might be positive that teachers could engage in reflective tasks that help them become aware of how their linguistic production is received by learners. Furthermore, training in adjusting certain aspects regarding their input, such as registering or pacing, could also be beneficial for them in order to enhance the support of students' learning development.

As a whole, schools should promote ongoing teacher development in this specific aspect. Observing peer input, proposing scaffolding techniques with other teachers, and engaging in a collaborative way, can promote highly reflective, and input aware, teaching. Lastly, this would also help to design language input that supports learners' needs in a focused and thoughtful way.

4. Concluding remarks

This paper aimed to analyze the nature and pedagogical function of different linguistic input supports at the different levels of Secondary Education in EFL classrooms. By examining teachers' discourse in real classroom interactions, the study has shown how input varies considerably according to the learners' proficiency level, and type of program. The results suggest that input is not a simple tool, but a powerful pedagogical device that needs to be strategically adapted to the context where it is delivered.

Throughout the analysis, it became noticeable that the lower levels of ESO (the 1st and the 2nd) needed a highly supported input; enriched with gestures, visual elements, simplifications, and occasional use of the L1. It is worth noting that of these supports, linguistic adjustment is the strategy most frequently used by the teachers. These strategies help learners to grasp meaning, keep the classroom attention, and progressively build a strong base in the L2. Whereas, at higher levels of ESO, specifically in 4th ESO bilingual, input becomes much more fluent and culturally contextualized. In these kinds of settings, teachers rely more on natural speech, humor and real-world references, rather than on other supportive tools, which promote autonomy and prepare the learners for real L2 communication beyond the classroom walls. These variations reinforce the idea that input must be intentionally designed and flexibly adjusted. The EFL teacher needs to be aware of his or her use of language: what, how and when to say something is a key teaching skill that impacts directly on the progress of the learners.

Although this work provides relevant insights, it is important to recognize its limitations. The analysis focused on specific groups of students within a particular educational context. The number and type of input varied from session to session, depending on the nature of them. Moreover, it was not possible to select specific sessions in advance, due to time constraints and overlapping schedules during teaching practice, which is when the transcripts were compiled. Future research could broaden this line of investigation by examining input at other educational stages, in different school contexts.

Ultimately; linguistic input is not merely a medium for teaching language, it is the embodiment of pedagogical intention. The way that EFL teachers speak, explain, adjust, and connect with the L2 enormously impacts what learners comprehend and recall. Making that input intentional, strategic and aligned with the students' level is essential to fostering meaningful and balanced language learning in today's EFL classrooms.

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6. Annexes

Note on transcriptions:

For reasons of length, the present appendix only includes a sample (two transcripts from 1st ESO). The complete compilation of transcriptions (1st to 4th ESO, bilingual and non-bilingual) can be accessed for consultation at the following link:

TFM_Annexes_transcriptions_Martínez_Álvarez_Raquel.docx

6.1. Transcription of Input Sample 1º ESO

Transcription 1: Classroom Input Register – 1st ESO Non-Bilingual

TCHR: Hello, how are you!
TCHR: *Hey, donde están tus modales?* Is X missing today?
TCHR: Oh, X, were you sick the other day? *Estabas malita?*
[student's intervention]
TCHR: I have a question. What do you have to do? You can tell me in Spanish.
[student's intervention]
TCHR: How many? Four posts? [makes number gesture with the hand]
[student's intervention]
TCHR: No.
TCHR: X is going to draw some things. Okay, what do you have to do? I know you know.
[Writes on the blackboard]
TCHR: And?
[Writes on the blackboard]
TCHR: What are they doing?
[student's intervention]
TCHR: And what are they wearing?
[student's intervention]
TCHR: Sometimes we can say a lot about what we are doing. We talked about descriptions at the beginning of the year. X, are you tired?
[student's intervention]
TCHR: We are all tired, that's fine.
[student's intervention]
TCHR: You can write your Instagram, you can write whenever you want. It's okay, I have tape.
TCHR: Because you can make a story. First, you need to begin, then do it, finish, and then I will give it back to you. Remember that we are experts on wasting time. *Se nos da fenomenal perder el tiempo.*
[student's intervention]
TCHR: Slow down. I don't have scissors.

TCHR: And as all Wednesdays, we are so lucky to have [the conversation assistant]. Ask her, how do I say this? How do I say that?

[student's intervention]

TCHR: We don't care, c'mon.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: I don't understand you.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Oh, where?

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Yes. C'mon, you didn't even start.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: One at a time, sorry?

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Is where? Or has?

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Marriage is…

[student's intervention]

TCHR: No, that's husband.

TCHR: You can sit together, you can talk, you can laugh together, but work. You can do everything today.

TCHR: Stop that, X. Probably X has a better mark than you.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: X don't be offensive.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Yes. Stop barking, c'mon. [conversation assistant], we have here a very fancy talk.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Remember, I always have the exams one week with me. I will give you the exams next week.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Clients or customers?

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Uf, that's a big question. I think that's gloss.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Uf, I don't have any idea, I don't read this kind of magazines, I just got them from my mom.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: It begins with a 'B' and has three letters. X, turn down the volume. X, why are you talking? Have you finished? I can give you more if you want to

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Say better the man on the right

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Okay, I will, I promise

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Really? I need you to turn down the volume. *Bajamos un poco el volumen.* Hey, have you finished?

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Have you talked about all those things? So, you have not finished then. The more you work, the better you become.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Every? E-V-E-R-Y.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Suit? S-U-I-T. Five minutes! Five minutes! C'mon, X, *vamos! ¿Qué pasa? A ver*, X,, I need you to finish today. *Tenemos que terminarlo hoy en clase y tenemos que hacerlo lo mejor posible, así que estos 8 minutos que nos quedan vamos a intentar hacer buenas frases con su sujeto, su verbo, pero venga que nos queda poco y lo estáis haciendo muy bien.* And write your name!

[student's intervention]

TCHR: Yes, X, are you ready? *Ey, os quedan 3 minutos para hablar de esas cosas, mientras tanto a trabajar*

[student's intervention]

TCHR: No, no, when the bell rings. Well, I told you to finish today. Are you ready? Nice.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: This is vocabulary that we have studied, so you can have a look through your photocopies.

TCHR: Everybody say thank you to [the conversation assistant]. Have a nice long weekend!

Transcription 2: Classroom Input Register – 1st ESO Non-Bilingual

TCHR: Alright, who is not going to X? I have the list; I can check it. If you come to class, we will be in the same class, okay?

[Student's intervention]

TCHR: You have your presentation tomorrow. He took two pictures, right?

[Student's intervention]

TCHR: Fine, [the conversation assistant], do you mind starting with the menu that we began yesterday? Page 64. Before beginning, let's take some breaths to train our focus. But before that, take out your book, notebook, and everything you need. Get ready to work. We will pause for some breathing and then continue working. Since we are often absent-minded, *cuando tengamos todo preparado*, I sit with my back straight and settle down.

[**TCHR** modulates the tone of voice]

TCHR: Sit with your back straight, relaxed, releasing tension. Place your hands on your lap, *y si estás a gusto, puedes cerrar tus ojos. Si no, enfoca tu mirada al suelo o en un punto donde no te distraiga*. Let's start breathing deep and slow. Inhale deeply and exhale slowly, slower and slower, and then relax your back, releasing tension. Place your hands on your lap, I inhale deeper and deeper, exhale long and slow. *Inhalo cada vez más profundo, exhalo largo y lento.*

TCHR: *Ahora, coloca una de tus manos sobre tu pecho, debajo de tu garganta. Vamos a empezar a hacer círculos como cuando tenemos tos. En cada círculo que hagas, piensa en algo que necesitas escuchar hoy: "Estás esforzándote mucho, venga, que va a salir bien este trimestre." Mira a ver qué necesitas ahora; todos necesitamos algo distinto. Piensa a ver. Con esos círculos sobre tu pecho, siente el calor de tu mano y el bienestar de conectar con tu cuerpo. Sigue respirando profundamente. Detén el movimiento, baja la mano, respira y mueve despacito los dedos de las manos y los pies. En la próxima respiración, abrimos los ojos y empezamos en nuestra página 64.*

TCHR: *Ahora, en exámenes, nos entran muchos nervios e inseguridad. Pensamos en cosas que nos impiden concentrarnos. Este gesto nos conecta con nosotros mismos.*

[Conversation Assistant's intervention]

TCHR: Can you talk about what is on page 64?

[Conversation Assistant's intervention]
TCHR: C'mon, what is a menu?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Who has ever been to a restaurant?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Who has ever been to a pizza place? It could be Burger King; that is also a restaurant.
[Conversation Assistant's intervention]
TCHR: Ordering is asking for food.
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Did you sit down, order food, and then leave? Who ordered the food, you or your parents?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: To share? *Para compartir.* I always do that. It's really good.
[Conversation Assistant intervention]
TCHR: Café, coffee is when you drink…Do you drink coffee?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: No? X stop or you're out. Next time you go out, okay? You can ask the rest of the students because today I have no patience. What do they serve at a café?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: And then, do you want to take a ten?
[Conversation Assistant's intervention]
TCHR: Desert… Dessert.
[Conversation Assistant's intervention]
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: X, will order. *Pediría la* margarita pizza. X, what would you order in that restaurant?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Oh, from the menu.
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Okay, you have one minute to tell others what you would order.
[Students working]
TCHR: X, what would you order?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: To share with X?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Another coffee? X, and you?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Good, a sandwich. X, and you?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Pizza and?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: X?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: What type of sandwich?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: Are you hungry now?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: I would order a smoothie. Do you remember, X? Can you tell us?
[Student's intervention]
TCHR: You can do it at home.
[Student's intervention]

TCHR: Un batido, a smoothie. Un batido.

[Student's intervention]

TCHR: No? What is it?

[Student's intervention]

TCHR: And you mix it together? *Si no lo bates, es un yogur con fruta*; a yogurt with fruit. Alright, so in activity four, we have some questions. Three things that you have to watch and write.

[TCHR reads the questions one by one]

TCHR: You need to write down the answers.

[Student's intervention]

TCHR: If the book is yours, you can write it down. If not, do not write in the book.

[TCHR plays the video]

TCHR: X, can you turn on the lights? Thank you. Do you need to see it again? Before watching it again, talk to your partner about what you have understood. *¿Qué habéis entendido?* Okay, ready?

[TCHR plays the video again]

TCHR: So, first question. Raise your hand if you know the answer… only four people? Pay attention.

[TCHR plays part of the video]

TCHR: Who knows the answer now? Why are they ordering without Tom? *¿Por qué van a pedir antes de que llegue Tom?* More or less, X? Any idea, X? Why do you think they are ordering?

[Student's answer]

TCHR: No, no, no. The question is: why are they ordering?

[Student's answer]

TCHR: *Porque tienen hambre.*

[TCHR writes the word]

TCHR: Why? Because Tom is late and they are hungry.

[Student's intervention]

TCHR: X, how do we say this?

[Conversation Assistant's intervention]

TCHR: I don't know in America, but in England, they have invented a word. *Cuando tienes mala leche porque tienes mucha hambre.* Alright, next question. Pay attention.

[TCHR plays the video]

TCHR: What are they ordering? *¿qué piden para todos?*

[student's answer]

TCHR: Spicy meat pizza

[TCHR plays the video]

TCHR: Well, one thing, do they have to pay for the water?

[student's answer]

TCHR: No

[TCHR plays the video]

TCHR: Good, so what does Anna order? What does she order?

[student's answer]

TCHR: No but the spicy pizza is for everyone, what does she order for her? Give me one

[student's answer]

TCHR: Peppers

[student's answer]

TCHR: Mushrooms, *champiñones o setas*

[student's answer]

TCHR: *Si pero eso lo piden para los dos, la pizza y el agua*. X, lights please. She order…. *Pero me falta algo porque estamos hablando en presente*…X lights off please.

[TCHR plays video]

TCHR: And what does he orders? He orders what? X?

[student's answer]

TCHR: A chocolate brownie with? *No puede ser que yo sea la única que está escribiendo, he dicho que si el libro es tuyo en el libro, y si no en el cuaderno*. A brownie and and icecream. X turn on the lights please. Why is he asking it the brownie has nuts?

[student's answer]

TCHR: Yeah maybe because it is allergic. Do you think that it is important to know how to order food in other countries?

[student's answer]

TCHR: So, [conversation assistant], can you come here and help us out?

[Conversation assistant's intervention]

TCHR: Can I clean? [points at the blackboard] because we have to write [writes on blackboard: "At a restaurant"] next week you are going to do a roleplay. We want you to write some structures that you can use. So we have. In your notebook, *copiamos en el cuaderno*.

[Conversation assistant's intervention]

TCHR: *Vamos a ser super educados y educadas*, we are going to be polite, *porque si sonreímos en un restaurante la persona que nos atiende se va a sentir mejor, tu te vas a sentir mejor y todo va a ser mejor.*

[conversation assistant's intervention]

TCHR: *No, en español sería igual*

[conversation assistant's intervention]

TCHR: *Hay que ser siempre educados y educadas.* I Will have the margarita pizza

[conversation assistant's intervention]

TCHR: But don't say put, say bring, or can I have… or can you give me or I would like to.

[conversation assistant's intervention]

TCHR: *En españa a veces lo hacen o a veces no, pero en Inglaterra vienen a mitad de comida y vienen y te pregunta, ¿qué tal?*

[student's intervention]

TCHR: *Hay muchas frases, pero la más común es,* how are you doing? *Y ahí puedes decir, pues esta frio o me gustaría otro trozo de pan…*

[student's intervention]

TCHR: And you can say?

[student's intervention]

TCHR: *Claro,* or can I have the bill, *cuando acabamos pedimos que nos traigan la cuenta, que nadie se vaya sin pagar la comida.*

[student's intervention]

[conversation assistant's intervention]

TCHR: *Vale, que habéis entendido,* one person, one person, X go.

[student's intervention]

TCHR: *Fijaros, el sueldo medio de Estados Unidos a la hora es siete, pero para los camareros son dos a la hora, y el resto las propinas. Que en mi opinión se aprovechan, entonces la gente ayuda y da un quince porciento. En Inglaterra se suele dejar un diez. Esto es obligatorio. En España tiene un sueldo conforme a la ley, dejamos algo porque que bien nos han atendido.*

[bell rings]

TCHR: *Seria otra opción.* Say thank you to [the conversation assistant]

TCHR: I Will see you tomorrow *nos vemos mañana…* and your presentations, *y vuestras presentaciones!*

6.2. Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the study: Linguistic input in the Secondary EFL classrooms. Analysis by teaching levels and lesson proposal

Researcher: Raquel Martínez Álvarez

Institution: University of Valladolid

Contact: raquel.martinez@estudiantes.uva.es

Description of the study: The aim of this study is to analyze the transcriptions of teachers' input in a high school for research purposes. The data obtained will be used exclusively for academic and scientific purposes, guaranteeing the anonymity of the participants.

Procedure: Transcripts of teachers' classroom interactions will be collected. Participation implies allowing the collection and analysis of these transcripts.

Confidentiality: The data obtained will be treated confidentially and anonymously. Under no circumstances will information that could identify the participants be disclosed.

Voluntariness: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Teachers have the right to withdraw their consent at any time without any negative consequences.

Consent: I have read and understood the information provided in this consent form. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time. I give my consent for my transcripts to be used in this study:

Name of teacher: _____

Teacher's signature: _____

Date: _____