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Using Spanish in English Language Chilean Classrooms? Perspectives From EFL Teacher Trainees

¿Usar el español en la clase de inglés en aulas chilenas?
Perspectivas de futuros profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera

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This article presents a study which explores perceptions of Chilean future teachers of English as a foreign language regarding the usage of Spanish as L1 in English lessons. The participants belong to first- and fourth-year levels of their programs at four universities located throughout Chile. The data collection tool was Mohebbi and Alavi's (2014) Likert questionnaire, along with an open questions section. The data were subjected to descriptive statistical analyses and mean difference tests. The results indicate that the participants would use Spanish in the English class mainly for two reasons: (1) for pedagogical-didactic purposes and (2) to maintain the student-teacher relationship. The study concludes that there are no statistically significant differences in regard to the course-level year the subjects are enrolled in or regarding the university with which they are affiliated.

Key words: English as a foreign language, English language teacher training, use of L1 in the L2 classroom.

Este artículo presenta un estudio que investiga las apreciaciones respecto del uso del español como L1 en la clase de inglés que tienen futuros profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera chilenos que cursan primer y cuarto año de su programa de estudios en cuatro universidades de Chile. Los datos se obtuvieron a través del cuestionario tipo Likert de Mohebbi y Alavi (2014) junto con una sección de preguntas abiertas. Los resultados indican que todos los participantes sí usarían el español en la clase de inglés, principalmente por dos motivos: con fines pedagógicos-didácticos y para mantener la relación estudiante-docente. El estudio concluye que no existen diferencias estadísticamente significativas en los resultados dependiendo del año que cursa el sujeto ni a la universidad a la que pertenece.

Palabras clave: formación inicial de profesores de inglés, inglés como lengua extranjera, uso de L1 en la clase de L2.

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Introduction

There are many factors involved in the teaching and learning of a foreign language. These factors include the language itself, in terms of its inherent characteristics as a system and its use, as well as other factors, such as the teacher, the learner and, also, the government policies that provide the guidelines regarding the educational standards in regard to the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

The foci of this study are on, first, the teachers, more precisely English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher trainees, in regard to the way in which they view the teaching of EFL in the classroom and, secondly, the public policy establishing the criteria related to disciplinary standards, learning outcomes, as well as the methods to be used to achieve them.

In Chile, the ministerial guidelines require the use of teaching methodologies which promote a natural method of language acquisition and a communicative approach. The aforementioned methodologies advocate for the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). In regard to this requirement, the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2013b) states: “This integrating perspective, apart from being aligned with the communicative approach, renders the language in a more natural way, closer to real situations, and it is therefore more motivating” (p. 246, our translation). The emphasis is placed on maximizing learners’ experience in the target language.

However, reality shows us that, in the Chilean context, this ideal is far from being realized: In other words, EFL teachers do not follow the requirements set by the Chilean Ministry of Education by conversely using different language teaching methods and by turning to their L1 (Spanish) when teaching EFL in the classroom (Barahona, 2016). Regarding this, López, Rumeau, and Valenzuela (2016) show in their study that the methodology required by the Ministry of Education is not being applied as envisaged. In fact, the use of

Spanish—both by teachers and students in the EFL classroom—is a common practice. They also point out that no government document addresses the use of L1 in the classroom, neither to adopt a restrictive position nor to establish scenarios where it is admissible.

Given the above scenario, some questions that arise can be posited as follows: Why do teachers resort to the L1, regardless of what is required by public policy? In what situations do they use the L1 in their L2 lessons? How often do they draw on the L1 in their L2 lessons? In this context, it is important to establish what perceptions future Chilean EFL teachers have, given the fact that these teacher trainees are presented with a number of different paradigms in regard to methodology, while at the same time encouraged to utilize those that seemingly promote the exclusive use of the L2 in the classroom in line with the Ministry’s standards for EFL teacher training which declare that: “The teaching of the language involves mainly the communicative approach (Communicative Language Teaching), which can be harmonized with other approaches emphasizing communication” (Ministerio de Educación, 2013a, p. 21, our translation). The Ministry of Education, therefore, promotes and encourages the use of the target language by means of the communicative approach.

From the above, the following questions arise: What is the perception that these future EFL teachers have regarding the use of L1 in the L2 classroom? Do their perceptions differ depending on their year level and/or the university to which they belong? This paper seeks to give an account of the answers to these questions.

Background

Throughout history, the use of L1 in the L2 as foreign language classrooms has been controversial with numerous research studies presenting evidence both in favor and against this practice. Hence, the debate between whether teachers should exclusively use the L2 or allow the use of L1 in the classroom has been in constant flux

(Du, 2016; Kayaoğlu, 2012; Khati, 2011; Nation, 2003; Ostovar-Namaghi & Norouzi, 2015).

Benefits of the Students' L1 in the L2 as a Foreign Language Classroom

The teaching-learning of an L2 has been historically based on a bilingual approach, mainly through the method called the grammar-translation method. This changed as new paradigms emerged, giving rise to monolingual approaches, and the integration of new methodologies that emphasized the exclusive use of the L2 (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) in the classroom.

One of the general principles of monolingual approaches is to maximize the use of the L2 in the classroom. As a result, some scholars reject any potential beneficial use of the L1 and advocate for the target-language-only use in the L2 classroom (Brown, 2014; Harmer, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Similarly, they ignore that, in the real world, both students and teachers have different reasons for using the L1 in particular situations, especially where teaching-learning is given in the context of EFL or when the L1 is shared by the teacher and his/her students (Du, 2016; Khati, 2011; Nation, 2003).

Currently, the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom already has both theoretical and empirical postulates in its favor (Auerbach, 1993; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Du, 2016; Harmer, 2001; Kayaoğlu, 2012; Khati, 2011; Levine, 2014; Liao, 2006; Nation, 2003; Ostovar-Namaghi & Norouzi, 2015; Yildiz & Yeşilyurt, 2016), which show that a reasonable use of the L1 during the teaching-learning process of the L2 can, among other things:

- Facilitate the understanding and learning of new vocabulary.
- Be useful to perform contrastive analysis between both languages.
- Explain and clarify L2 grammar rules explicitly.
- Verify the understanding of contents, tasks, and activities.

- Explain and correct errors and mistakes made by students.
- Reduce anxiety levels in students.
- Maintain the flow of the class by optimizing the times used to explain tasks and activities, contributing to the classroom management.
- Enhance the autonomy of students during tasks and activities.
- Enhance the metacognitive processes involved when using both languages.

In sum, reasonable and judicious use of the L1 is positive and enhances the teaching and learning process. Considering this, some advocates still warn against its excessive use (Cook, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

Disadvantages of Using the L1 in the L2 Class as a Foreign Language

In contrast to the above, there are authors such as Yildiz and Yeşilyurt (2016) and Bozorgian and Fallahpour, (2015) who assert that the use of L1 proves disadvantageous. One of the most common arguments discussed in the literature is that there is a reduction of exposure to the target language in the foreign language classroom.

The foregoing is congruent and consistent with the postulates of monolingual approaches, which support the exclusive use of L2 in the foreign language classrooms. One of the principles that these approaches put forward is that the L2 can be learned in the same way as an L1, so it is vital to continuously expose learners to the L2 to achieve learning (Kieu, 2010).

In this context, the results shown in Mora Pablo, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford, and Goodwin's (2011) study indicate that overexposure to the mother tongue in foreign language classes can generate in the students a dependency on using only the L1, truncating the possibility to practice the L2. This had been previously confirmed by Harmer (2001) in his literary review on the subject.

An important issue to take into consideration in this scenario is that the use of L1 is commonly linked to a low mastery of the L2 by the teacher (Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; Ostovar-Namaghi & Norouzi, 2015; Reimer, 2012). This may obviously hinder the students' possibilities to have quality language input from their teachers.

Studies on the Use of L1 in the Foreign Language Classroom

At present, the literature regarding the role played by the L1 in foreign language teaching and the research examining its different uses within the foreign language classroom make it clear that the use of the students' native language is a common practice (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Kayaoğlu, 2012; Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; López et al., 2016; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Reimer, 2012; Rodríguez & Oxbrow, 2008; Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002; Yildiz & Yeşilyurt, 2016).

The studies mentioned above examine aspects concerning the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom regarding, for example, the frequency of L1 use (Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002), the perceptions of teacher trainees (Yildiz & Yeşilyurt, 2016), the perceptions and opinions of in-service teachers (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Kayaoğlu, 2012; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014), the perception of teachers and students (Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; López et al., 2016; Reimer, 2012; Tang, 2002) and teachers' attitude (Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002). The data collected from the results and conclusions of the studies carried out by the aforementioned authors support the uses of L1 in the EFL classroom. These findings also reveal how the use of the L1, addressed from different situations or purposes, influences the EFL classroom.

In regard to the teaching of lexis and grammar, the most repetitive results of the abovementioned studies show that both teachers and students believe the L1 to

be useful when teaching new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and concepts difficult to explain in the L2. An important point mentioned by authors such as Schweers (1999), Rodríguez and Oxbrow (2008), and López et al. (2016) is that the use of the L1 seeks to ensure that students can contrast their mother tongue with the foreign language, helping them to internalize knowledge and to notice differences and similarities between both languages, contributing to the facilitation of the L2 learning process.

Similarly, it is argued that the use of L1 shows benefits by encouraging and motivating students to learn English, consequently developing a pro-active participation of students and teachers (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002; Yildiz & Yeşilyurt, 2016). Also, some research findings claim that the use of the L1 helps to teach students with low motivation and/or low mastery of the English language and to improve rapport between the teacher and student. According to Yildiz and Yeşilyurt (2016), due to the constant use of L2 in the classroom, there were cases of students who became more anxious when they could not understand what was being said in the L2 and consequently could not understand what was going on in the class, generating a negative attitude towards the learning process and the exclusive use of the target language.

Method

Despite the ample literature found on this topic, there has been none accounting for what happens in a Chilean context, let alone in regard to Chilean EFL teacher trainees. Therefore, this study seeks to focus on discovering what perceptions future Chilean EFL teachers may have regarding the use of Spanish in the EFL classrooms while taking into account which university year level they are and the university they belong to. This becomes an appealing question since

these teacher trainees are presented with different methodology paradigms during their education, but encouraged, as stated before, to utilize those that promote the exclusive use of the L2 in the classroom to comply with the Ministry's standards.

Given the above, the objectives of the study are to

1. determine the perceptions of EFL teacher trainees regarding the use of Spanish in the EFL classroom,
2. find out if there exist differences in perceptions depending on the university year level the participants are in in the EFL teacher training program, and
3. observe whether there are differences in perceptions depending on the university the participants belong to.

Paradigm

Given the aforementioned, the research reported herein is descriptive, non-experimental, and cross-sectional (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2006). It is also quantitative since the collected data can be transformed into usable unbiased statistics.

Participants and Study Context

Regarding the selection of the participants, it is of a non-probabilistic and for convenience type, as defined by Hernández et al. (2006) as "Subgroup of the population in which the choice of the elements does not depend on the probability but on the characteristics of the investigation" (p. 241, our translation). In this way, the participants of this study were 229 university students of the EFL Teacher Training Program (*Pedagogía en inglés*, in Spanish) at four Chilean universities located in four regions of the country: Arica-Parinacota and Antofagasta (two northern regions), and Maule and Ñuble (southern part of the country, covering around one thousand miles of the territory). Out of the 229 participants, 132 were in the first-year level of the program and 97 in the fourth year. The total number of participants included 155 female and 74 male students.

According to the geographical location of the participants, the breakdown is as follows: Arica-Parinacota, 27; Antofagasta, 86; Maule, 54; Ñuble 62. The data collection was carried out in person during the month of October of 2017. Appropriate facilities were used for this purpose and the ethical aspects involved in the research were secured.

As for the four universities included in this study, they include the same axes and dimensions for EFL teacher training. The first dimension is the communicative competence of the English language and the knowledge of linguistics, literature, and culture. The second dimension is the development of competencies related to the methodology and didactics of EFL teaching, and the last one is the attitudinal dimension, linked to the personal and professional stance (Abrahams & Farias, 2010; Ministerio de Educación, 2013a). Additionally, these four universities follow the guiding standards and current plans and programs of the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2013a) during the years of training. For that reason, the predominant methodological approach taught in the didactics and methodology courses of these four universities corresponds to communicative language teaching.

Data Collection Instrument

The data were obtained by means of Mohebbi and Alavi's (2014) questionnaire, which uses a Likert scale with 22 statements (see Appendix A). These statements were translated into Spanish and adapted to meet the needs of the study regarding the participants who were not in-service teachers (Mohebbi and Alavi surveyed in-service teachers in their study). The 22 statements are related to situations or contexts in which Spanish could be used in the EFL classes. For each statement, the participants had to indicate the frequency of use of Spanish according to the options *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *usually*, and *always*.

In order to verify the understanding and reliability of the statements, a piloting was carried out with the

participation of second- and third-year students of the EFL teacher training program of only one of the universities included in the study. In addition, open questions were added in order to verify the internal validity of the instrument (see Appendix B).

To protect the ethical aspects of the investigation, the participants were asked to sign an informed consent form. The application of the instrument was given at the convenience of the students' course schedule, which meant using approximately 45 minutes of class time of one of their courses.

Process of Analysis and Results

Once the instrument was applied, the statistical analysis of the data was carried out. These analyses are presented below.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

In order to identify the internal structure of the data, a factor analysis was done. To do this, a parallel Horn analysis was performed in order to identify the

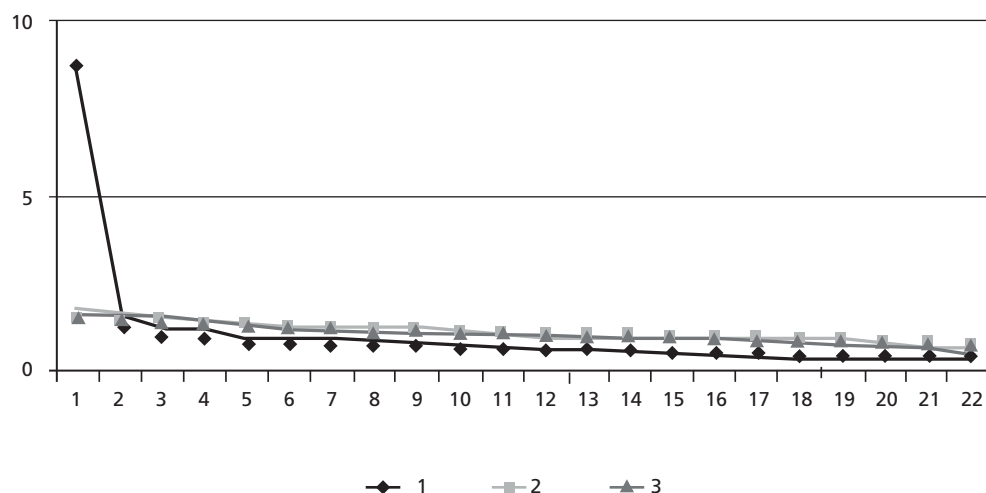
optimum number of factors to be retained. Figure 1 illustrates the results of the test.

Figure 1 shows that only two factors were higher than the 95th percentile of the simulated eigenvalues, so a factorial solution of 2 factors will be considered.

A factorial analysis was carried out using the Maximum Likelihood method as the extraction method and the Direct Oblimin method as rotation. Regarding the sampling adequacy indexes, a $\kappa_{MO} = .921$ was obtained and for the sphericity test an $\chi^2 = 2398.422$, $p = .00$. Table 1 shows the exploratory factor analysis.

Items 12, 20, and 19 were excluded from the analysis since they failed to lean toward any of the two factors. The first factor explained 35.032% of the variance of the model and considered items 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21. By content, these items referred to the use of Spanish with pedagogical-didactic purposes. The second factor grouped items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 22 and explained 6.25% of the variance. This factor referred to the use of Spanish to maintain the student-teacher relationship.

Figure 1. Results of the Horn Statistical Processing



1 = Real eigenvalues. 2 = Percentage 95% of simulated eigenvalues. 3 = Mean of simulated eigenvalues.

Table 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

	Factor	
	1	2
s15	.786	
s11	.690	
s16	.687	
s14	.672	
s10	.640	
s18	.512	
s8	.489	
s9	.474	
s17	.456	
s13	.429	
s21	.426	
s2		.769
s1		.713
s3		.652
s4		.634
s6		.616
s5		.583
s7		.415
s22		.380

Descriptive Statistics and Mean Difference Tests

Below are descriptive statistics of the calculated variables that were obtained with the exploratory factor analysis. Table 2 summarizes the global descriptive statistics.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Dimensions of Use of Spanish Language

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Pedagogical-didactical purpose	1.09	4.73	2.79	.76
Student-teacher relationship	1.00	5.00	3.01	.70

As shown in Table 2, the means are similar, in rather central values of the scale. However, the average of the use dimension for the student-teacher relationship is slightly higher.

Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics by university and at the same time places the contrast statistics for the group comparison. As observed, in both cases there were significant differences in at least one group with respect to the others ($p < .05$). Subsequently, the post-hoc tests were analyzed to identify where the differences could be found. The Tukey test was used since the assumption of equality of variances was not violated in either case.

In the first place, for the use of Spanish for pedagogical-didactic purposes, Uni.4 was significantly superior to Uni.2 and Uni.1 but not to Uni.3.

On the other hand, with the dimension of use of Spanish for the teacher-student relationship, there were only differences between Uni.4 and Uni.3 as shown in Table 4. Again, it was the first which had the highest average, which implies a greater use in this dimension.

For the participants' course level (first or fourth), no statistically significant differences were found in the means. This can be observed in Table 5.

Table 3. Descriptions of Dimensions of Use of Spanish by University and Proof of Difference in Means

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Typical Deviation	F	p-value
Pedagogical- didactical purpose	Uni.4	62	1.27	4.73	3.09	0.64	5.010	.00
	Uni.3	54	1.09	4.45	2.80	0.87		
	Uni.2	86	1.18	4.09	2.65	0.72		
	Uni.1	40	1.73	4.45	2.63	0.77		
Student- teacher relationship purpose	Uni.4	62	1.63	5.00	3.19	0.71	3.182	.03
	Uni.3	54	1.00	3.88	2.83	0.65		
	Uni.2	86	1.50	4.50	2.94	0.64		
	Uni.1	40	2.00	4.63	3.12	0.78		

Note. Uni.1 in Arica-Parinacota, Uni.2 in Antofagasta, Uni.3 in Maule, and Uni.4 in Ñuble.

Table 4. Post hoc Comparisons for Dimensions of Spanish Use Among Universities

I J		Mean difference (I-J)	Typical error	Sig.	95% confidence interval		
					Lower Limit	Higher Limit	
Pedagogical- didactical purpose	Uni.4	Uni.3	.29	.14	.17	-.07	.65
		Uni.2	.44*	.12	.00	.12	.76
		Uni.1	.45*	.15	.01	.07	.85
	Uni.3	Uni.4	-.29	.14	.17	-.65	.07
		Uni.2	.16	.13	.62	-.18	.49
		Uni.1	.17	.16	.68	-.23	.58
	Uni.2	Uni.4	-.44*	.12	.00	-.76	-.12
		Uni.3	-.16	.13	.62	-.49	.18
		Uni.1	.02	.14	1.00	-.35	.39
	Uni.1	Uni.4	-.46*	.15	.01	-.85	-.07
		Uni.3	-.17	.16	.68	-.58	.23
		Uni.2	-.02	.14	1.00	-.39	.35
Student- teacher relationship purpose	Uni.4	Uni.3	.36*	.13	.03	.02	.69
		Uni.2	.24	.11	.15	-.05	.54
		Uni.1	.07	.14	.96	-.29	.43
	Uni.3	Uni.4	-.36*	.13	.03	-.69	-.02
		Uni.2	-.11	.12	.78	-.42	.20
		Uni.1	-.29	.14	.19	-.66	.08
	Uni.2	Uni.4	-.24	.11	.15	-.54	.05
		Uni.3	.11	.12	.78	-.20	.42
		Uni.1	-.17	.13	.55	-.51	.17
	Uni.1	Uni.4	-.07	.14	.96	-.43	.29
		Uni.3	.29	.14	.19	-.08	.66
		Uni.2	.17	.13	.55	-.17	.51

* $p < .05$

Table 5. Means by Course Level

Course level		N	Mean	SD	T	p
Pedagogical-didactical purpose	First year	132	2.72	.77	-1.611	.108
	Fourth year	110	2.88	.75		
Student-teacher relationship purpose	First year	132	3.07	.68	1.432	.151
	Fourth year	110	2.94	.72		

In this regard, both purposes are statistically the same for both course levels. Although this is not a longitudinal study, it may be possible to infer that the perceptions these participants have when they start the program will not change as they move along their training which, in turn, may mean that the teacher education they receive regarding exclusive use of the L2 in the classroom does not permeate their perceptions and beliefs.

Discussion and Conclusions

The study reported in this article set out to explore the Chilean EFL teacher trainees' perceptions regarding the use of Spanish in the EFL classroom. In order to accomplish the purpose, three objectives were established. The first one was to determine the perceptions of EFL teacher trainees regarding the use of Spanish in the EFL classroom. After having done a factorial analysis of the instrument, results show that the participants would use Spanish in the EFL classroom for two main reasons: (1) to maintain the student-teacher relationship, with an average of 2.79 and (2) for pedagogical-didactic purposes with an average of 3.01, as observed in Table 2. These results also show evidence that all the 229 participants would use L1 when teaching English.

The second goal was to find out if there exist differences in perceptions depending on the university year level (first and fourth) the participants are in in the EFL teacher training program. In this case, no statistically significant differences were observed.

However, as already described, in terms of the use of Spanish in the EFL classroom for pedagogical-didactical purposes, the results for the university of the Ñuble region were higher than the ones located in the Antofagasta and Arica regions, but lower than the Maule region. Nevertheless, and according to these results, it could be inferred that the amount of years in their study programs do not change the student-teachers' perception as regards the use of Spanish in the EFL classes.

For the last objective, which was to observe if there are differences in perceptions depending on the university the participants belong to, the results reported that differences among the four universities (of four geographical locations along Chile) are not statistically relevant. However, it can be concluded that with regard to the use of Spanish for pedagogical-didactic purposes, the universities of the regions of Antofagasta and Arica-Parinacota have the lowest averages (2.65 and 2.63 respectively) while the lowest averages on the use of Spanish for student-teacher relations are given by the universities of the Maule and Antofagasta regions (2.83 and 2.94 respectively). Concerning the factor of use of Spanish in the EFL classroom for developing and maintaining rapport between the teacher and student, differences are observed only between the participants of the Ñuble and Maule regions.

The findings of this study are consistent with studies such as those done by Schweers (1999), Tang (2002), Rodríguez and Oxbrow (2008), Kovacic and Kirinic

(2011), Reimer (2012), Mohebbi and Alavi (2014), Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015), López et al. (2016), and Yildiz and Yeşilyurt (2016) so long as the surveyed participants recognize the benefits of using the L1 in the L2 classroom.

In the same way, it is possible to conclude that these future EFL teachers do not intend to observe ministerial policy, which advocates for monolingual methods. This is aligned with the study by López et al. (2016) in which it is concluded that “communicative language teaching methodologies are not followed in our context; and that is what leads both teachers and students to use L1 and explain things (grammar structures mainly) that are not contemplated in these particular methodologies (CLT)” (p. 69). This conclusion as well as the findings of our study, both in the Chilean context, make it necessary to open up this matter for discussion so that both public policy, as well as the methodology and teaching courses in the initial EFL teacher training, accept and optimize the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom—considering the L1 rather as a useful tool, which should be used judiciously, depending, for example, on the learners’ communicative competence level and the subject matter covered in class, among other factors.

Although the findings of this study are compelling, its limitations are recognized in the same way that Mohebbi and Alavi (2014) conclude about their study. The authors suggest that future studies should expand the number of participants and include the perspectives of in-service EFL teachers, taking into account variables such as their years of experience, the different socio-economic contexts, their personal experiences as teachers, and the teacher levels of language proficiency, among other factors.

Although this study is of an exploratory nature—since no studies about this issue have been reported in the current specialized literature in relation to EFL teacher trainees in Chile—another limitation considered was that the study was of a quantitative-

only nature. A qualitative component to it would have made the results more robust. In this sense, we suggest that future studies consider a mixed methodology.

Likewise, it is recommended that longitudinal studies be carried out with the purpose of following up, for example, participants’ possible changes of perceptions regarding this matter through time and to what extent. Similarly, more in-depth studies could be conducted such as class observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and so on. This is in order to analyze the phenomenon with a real-world approach and put forward strategies where the use of the L1 is allowed. Findings of this sort could provide empirical evidence for EFL teacher training.

With the outcomes of this study, it is possible to predict that the participants of this study will most likely use Spanish in the EFL classroom, just as is the case of in-service teachers as reported by Barahona (2016) and what we have observed in our visits to different schools in Chile, both private and public. Considering this a reality, we think that EFL teacher training curricula and syllabi must integrate theory and practice regarding the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. Not doing so means to deny a fact that is evident. By the same token, the Ministry of Education should assume this reality and open up to a more flexible policy, where the focus should be placed on optimizing strategies and methodologies to improve the development of language proficiency in students.

It would be really interesting to carry out studies of this nature in other countries of Latin America in order to know what is done in EFL teacher education regarding the topic presented here. Also, it would be very informative to observe whether government language policies are similar and how these impact EFL teacher training programs. All these should be done with the purpose of sharing and discussing what would benefit most the newest generations of language learners.

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About the Author

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Appendix A:

L1 Functions in L2 Instruction Questionnaire

(Taken From Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014, pp. 72-73)

This questionnaire is designed based on second language acquisition (SLA) research findings with regard to potential functions of second language (L2) learners' first language (L1) in L2 classrooms. Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements and practice them in L2 learning classrooms according to the scale below. Please mark the most appropriate option for each statement.

L1 Functions in L2 learning classroom	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
I use learners' L1 to teach new vocabulary.					
I use learners' L1 to explain grammar.					
I use learners' L1 to provide clarification when learners do not understand in L2.					
I use learners' L1 to provide feedback and explain their errors.					
I use learners' L1 in giving written corrective feedback on learners' compositions					
I use learners' L1 to explain instructions for assignments or projects.					
I use learners' L1 to give meta-linguistic knowledge, in particular about discussing the tasks, such as the objective and the steps of tasks.					
I use learners' L1 to negotiate the syllabus and the lesson.					
I use learners' L1 in administrative issues like exams and announcements.					
I use learners' L1 in dealing with discipline problems in class.					

I use learners' L1 to establish or assert authority.

I use learners' L1 at the end of the class to answer possible questions.

I use learners' L1 to encourage and comfort learners.

I use learners' L1 to build rapport with learners.

I use learners' L1 in giving personal comments.

I use learners' L1 in making humorous comments.

I use learners' L1 in presenting information about the target culture, in particular discussing cross-cultural issues.

I use learners' L1 to supervise and guide them when learners perform a task collaboratively.

I use learners' L1 to conduct pre-task activities, namely pre- listening and pre-reading.

I use learners' L1 in giving individual help to learners.

I use learners' L1 to save time on lengthy task explanations.

I use learners' L1 in making contrast between L1 and L2.

Appendix B: Open Questions

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you think it is convenient to use Spanish while you are teaching English in Chilean classrooms? Explain.

2. In what situations would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English lessons?

3. How often would you use (have you used) Spanish in your English lessons? Explain.
