

## ABSTRACT

*The use of the learner's mother tongue in the second language classroom has been a matter of controversy for many years. Although each method/approach claims to have pedagogical foundations for the inclusion or exclusion of the mother tongue, recent research on this topic questions the foundations of those that exclude it and highlights the benefits of its inclusion in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Furthermore, due to current language policies in some countries (i.e. the English-Only movement in the United States), several authors have claimed that the inclusion of the learner's L1 is possible, purposeful, and effective in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts as well.*

*Although recent research has tipped the balance towards the inclusion of the mother tongue in the L2 classroom, the strength of ongoing methodologies (i.e. the Direct Method) in EFL contexts such as Mexico has led coordinators, teachers, and students to see the use of the mother tongue in the EFL classroom still as taboo. However, despite the negative perspectives towards it, many EFL teachers and learners, especially at beginning levels, recur to the L1 for different purposes.*

*The present research shows the results of data obtained from 44 elementary and 55 advanced EFL students, six EFL teachers and four EFL coordinators at three major universities in the city of Puebla, Mexico gathered through class observations, interviews, and questionnaires. By looking for patterns among the participants and relating the findings of this study to those of previous research on the field, this research presents the most common purposes for which the mother tongue is used as well as the attitudes and beliefs that the participants have towards the use of Spanish in the EFL classroom.*

*This research aims to provide a guideline for EFL teachers about the effective uses that can be given to the mother tongue in the English classroom without running the risk of overusing it and to finally give the mother tongue its place as a useful resource for English Language Teaching.*