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"The Perceptions of Students and Teachers Concerning the English Only Language Policy at Their Mexican Educational Institution"

TRABAJO DE TESIS

Que Para Obtener el Grado de

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PRESENTA

Pablo Francisco Arévalo Parra

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Director de Tesis: Dra. Gricelda Ireri Armenta Delgado

Lectores:

Dr. Troy Crawford Lewis

Dra. Mary Martha Lengeling Kimberley

Dra. Irasema Mora Pablo

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Prólogo

Cuando se aprende un segundo idioma, a menudo se sugiere vivir o visitar un país donde se hable el idioma deseado. Sin embargo, debido a distintos factores, esta opción no siempre es viable para toda la gente debido a falta de dinero o de documentación. Por estas razones, en escuelas de idiomas, los maestros a menudo tratan de crear situaciones donde el idioma deseado es usado en la manera más cercana a como se usa en contextos reales. En el lugar donde trabajo en el centro de México, se aplicó una política donde los maestros teníamos que pedir a los alumnos usar el lenguaje que están aprendiendo afuera del salón de clase como si se tratase de un contexto donde el idioma se hable. Esto significa que los maestros teníamos que hacer que los alumnos hablaran inglés fuera del salón de clase a cualquier hora y bajo cualquier circunstancia, por ejemplo, durante el proceso de inscripciones, solicitud de cambio de horario o dudas sobre el contenido de las clases. Sin embargo, esta decisión creó diferentes puntos de vista, positivos y negativos, relacionados con la aplicación de esta política. El objetivo de esta tesis es explorar las percepciones de los alumnos, profesores y administrativos acerca de la implementación de la política del uso del idioma extranjero dentro de la institución. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa con un método de estudio de caso para explorar las percepciones de los alumnos, maestros y el coordinador de la institución donde la política fue implementada. Para conseguir la información fueron requeridos grupos de discusión, entrevistas vía e-mail y entrevistas personales. A primera instancia, los participantes perciben positivamente las actividades para hablar inglés fuera del salón de clase propuestas por la política de usar solo el idioma inglés. Sin embargo, varios participantes también destacan la falta de funciones comunicativas en el contexto mexicano como un impedimento para llevar a cabo la política.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis project to my family, my teachers and God. Thanks for your support and patience.

Acknowledgements

I want to first thank to my thesis director Dr. Ireri Armenta for all the patience she gave me during the last process of my research project elaboration. She was the one who interviewed me to be accepted in this B.A. and the one who has helped me to finish this thesis. I want to also thank Kana Mino and Dr. Tomoko Takahashi for giving me the opportunity to study abroad and so, to increase my academic and personal skills. I want to thank Jane Ashley, a very important person who helped me to be accepted in the academic exchange and who also played a fundamental role in the elaboration of this thesis.

Chapter 1: Introduction of the Thesis

In this chapter, I explore and describe the fundamentals of this research which are the inspiration for doing this thesis, the main objective of it, and a description of the context where this investigation took place. I also introduce the methodology I used to conduct it, my personal outlook and its possible impact on this investigation and finally I give a brief description of the organization of this thesis.

1.1. Introduction

This research aims to explore the different points of view of the students and the academic staff in relation to a new rule that was applied at my workplace. I work at a language school linked to the Universidad de Guanajuato located in Irapuato in the State of Guanajuato, Mexico. In this place, the academic staff teaches English, Japanese, Italian and French. Five out of the seventeen teachers at this school are or were students from the B.A. in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) degree at the Universidad de Guanajuato and all the teachers are Mexican. Moreover, most of the students are taking classes at the UG in degree programs such as Nursing and Veterinary Medicine. In January 2015, the teachers in this language school received the instructions by the coordinator that we had to follow a foreign language only policy. In this thesis, I use the term *English Only* policy to refer to rules that establish that all students must always speak English (or the language they are studying) while they are on the premises of the language school. Furthermore, we were told that we should persuade students to follow the new rule, which includes the enrollment processes and if they are asking the teachers for help. This policy was designed by the coordinator and some of the teachers since they have tried to promote the usage of the language outside of the class. The teachers must not help the students unless the students do so in English. As for the students of other languages (Japanese, Italian or French), they could use Spanish during the process since the rule is only applicable to English students.

1.2 My Motivation

The recent interest that I have had in relation to the students' feelings, perceptions and awareness of what they need as learners is the strongest inspiration for this research. A few months before conducting this research (in November 2014), I had had a critical incident

during one of the classes I used to attend in my B.A. program which made me realize I forgot about the most important element in teaching which is the students. I only paid attention to what I had been taught was theoretically correct. Parallel to this event during my classes in the B.A., I experienced a situation related to the *English Only* policy when one of the teachers did not allow a student to complete his enrollment process because he did not want to speak in English. Every semester teachers collaborate with the administration in the registration process. We are in charge to do this process with the students. I include an example of the enrollment process in Appendix 1. My immediate instinct was to think that this was something incorrect on the part of the teacher and I imagined that all the students and even the teachers would disagree with how my colleague had acted. Nevertheless, I started to believe that it was possible, and would be interesting to explore, that there could be some students and/or teachers who might either totally welcome the *English Only* policy or totally reject it. Therefore, my motivation was inspired by the interest in exploring and better understanding what the students and the academic staff think about the *English Only* policy in the institution.

The incident described above relates to my previous thoughts where I had thought that everybody would agree with my perspective towards the *English Only* policy. It also implies that there are situations where teachers or the authorities in schools sometimes implement certain policies, as the *English Only* policy in this case, believing that the ideas are "perfect" and that they would definitely work and contribute to the students' learning. Thus, I decided that I wanted to explore the reality of the students' and teachers' perspectives towards this policy, of using in this case English, within the language school context.

1.3 Main Objective of This Research

The main objective in carrying out this research is to explore and understand the different perceptions of students and teachers who experienced this rule where the students and teachers are required to always speak in English in the school context. Thus, I might gain a deeper understanding about how the students and teachers feel in a scenario where they are not allowed to use their first language. This thesis was a challenge, since I had to separate my personal beliefs and be neutral enough to carry out research involving people with

different points of view to my own. Therefore, this thesis helped me to do research without allowing bias to affect the results.

1.4 Research Context

This research takes place in a language school linked to the Universidad de Guanajuato located in downtown Irapuato, Guanajuato in central Mexico. This school is divided into two buildings, one located in the north known as *Sede Norte* and another one downtown, known as the *Sede Centro*. All the administrative processes are carried out in *Sede Centro*, where this research takes place; here all the students (from beginners to advanced) must go through the enrollment process. It is a public school that all people above the age of fifteen have access to. Additionally, students studying in Universidad de Guanajuato degree programs are required to take at least six levels of English at the school or achieve a designated number of points in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to graduate.

I interviewed twenty students, seven teachers and the coordinator (who decided to implement the policy), a total of twenty-eight participants in total. I only chose students from *Sede Centro* due to practical issues. The teachers were chosen from both school buildings since the interviews were carried out by e-mail. From these twenty student-participants, eight are Universidad de Guanajuato students, nine are students from the high school program, and three are members of the general public. Twelve student-participants are beginners and eight are at an intermediate level, and their ages vary between fifteen and twenty-two years old. The common background that all of them share is that they are part of the same English program in the same school. Appendix 2 provides a list with the description of the twenty student-participants of this investigation.

To complement the data for this research I also took into consideration the academic staff. There are twelve English teachers who form the academic staff. Seven of them volunteered to participate in this research and I also included the coordinator of the school. All the members of the academic staff teach English in the research setting. In Appendix 3 a list with the information of the teacher-participants is presented.

1. 5 Methodology and Research Question

Since this research focuses on exploring the different points of view and opinions that students and teachers have about the use of English within the context of the language school, I decided to adopt a qualitative methodological approach. Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that qualitative research is "intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions" (p. 2). The social interactions described in the authors' quote mirror the scenario in the research context where the students and the teachers are required to always use English when they are in the school. Furthermore, the ideas quoted by the authors reflect the different perspectives and feelings that the participants perceive about the use of English within the general school context.

The method I used to study the *English Only* policy and the reactions towards it was the case study model. Hancock and Allgozzine (2011) define a case study as "intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time such as individuals, events, or groups" (p. 10). The *English Only* policy fits into the description of a single unit that I can investigate. Considering the context and the nature of the qualitative research model chosen for this project, the research question for this project stands as follows:

What are the perceptions of students and teachers concerning the *English Only* language policy at their Mexican educational institution?

To collect the data, I used interview techniques. The types of interview I used for collecting data were: e-mail interviews and face-to-face interviews. I also conducted what I refer to as "recorded group discussion" which I describe in detail in Chapter 3. Edward and Holland (2013) note that interviews allow us to "explore the understandings, experiences and imaginings of research participants" (p. 90) and Turner (2010) states that they allow us to "obtain different types of data" (p. 754). I provide a deeper explanation about why I decided to use this type of research and these data collection techniques in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

1.6 Teacher's Philosophy and Impact on This Research

I have always considered myself a "communicative" teacher because I believe that being able to communicate in different settings and being able to use the language to accomplish

different functions should be one of the most important aims for a language learner. However, I am also a teacher who thinks that every student is different and he/she has different learning styles and preferences. On the one hand, the act of speaking English within the language school may give the students more opportunities to practice the language and to improve their language skills, such as some authors suggest (see Chapter 2). On the other hand, the rule that sets the use of English as a requirement within the language school may also not respect the fact that every student is different and that students also have different language learning styles and preferences. These contrasting points of view were my main motivation to write this thesis and explore the students' and teachers' viewpoint about the implementation of the *English Only* policy.

1.7 Organization of This Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters where I develop and describe the writing process. In Chapter 1, I explain my motivation for doing this research and I briefly describe the research context where this thesis takes place. In Chapter 2, drawing upon literature in the field, I develop the topics that emerged while elaborating this thesis project, such as the status of English around the world and in Mexico and the advantages and drawbacks of using activities where English is spoken within the language school context. I also explore the way these topics relate to my research question and the investigation in this thesis. In Chapter 3, I explain and justify the methodology I used to develop this thesis and the research techniques used to gather the data from the participants, such as the use of e-mail interviews and face-to-face interviews. In Chapter 4, I present the results that I could identify from the data collection and the way in which these results answer my research question. Finally, in Chapter 5 I present the conclusions of this thesis research, ideas for possible further research, and the implications as well as some of the limitations that have emerged from this investigation.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, I proposed a brief description of what this thesis is about. This included my main motivation to develop this research topic, which was my wish to become aware of the students' perspectives and the feelings that the students have about using English in this new context. I also described the research context where this thesis takes place and the main

objective of this research. Furthermore, I gave a brief description of why I chose a qualitative research methodological approach and I presented my research question for the development of this thesis project. Finally, I mentioned my own teaching philosophy and the way it might impact this research; I presented two possible contrasting points of view that represent two different opinions on the application of this policy where students and teachers are required to speak English outside the classroom in a general school context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To better understand the themes which emerged from the data collected, I read and researched about English around the world and its impact in different contexts. In this chapter, I provide an account of different points of view towards the status of English around the world. As the chapter progresses, I focus on the status of English in Mexico and its implications, especially regarding the role of English in Mexico and the purpose for its instruction. Moreover, at the end of the chapter I describe different points of view concerning the performance of English language learning activities within the language school.

2.2 English around the World

Crystal (1997) informs us that English is a language that "develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (p. 2). The importance that English has gained around the world might be due to the United States of America and its role in "international developments in technology, control of the new industrial revolution and the military and economic power for the global status of the language" (Ibid., p. 117). This spread and massive usage of English around the world at this moment is also supported by another author: Fishman (1992) also agrees that "English is massively employed in higher-level government, technological and educational pursuits" (p. 20) and "is recurringly associated with practical and powerful pursuits" (p. 23). Finally, McKay (2002) also supports this view, stating that "many individuals learn English because they want access to such things as scientific and technological information and higher education" (p. 21).

I can perceive that, in my context, English works as a tool that people use to get a benefit. For instance, some students in the research setting are obliged to take English classes because their jobs demand that they speak English, or because it is a requirement for obtaining their degree. Therefore, the classrooms in the research setting have engineers who are required by their companies to speak English, and also have Universidad de Guanajuato students who need to be there because they must have a determined level of English to get their degree. This means that these students are at least partially taking English lessons due to what Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) define as an "instrumental motivation", because they

are looking for "advantages for learning a language" (getting their degree or getting a better job) rather than an "integrative motivation, where there exists a sincere and personal interest in the people and the culture represented by the language group" (p. 58). Moreover, authors like Rehman and Bilal (2014) assure us that "both types (of motivation) are important to fulfill the purpose of learning, therefore, it is necessary to know the combination of both the types" (p. 255).

It is possible that, since a considerable number of students who attend classes do so because of instrumental motivation, the perceptions towards the speaking of English within the language school and as a requirement for administrative processes may be affected. This could mean that students may not be interested in learning the language or being part of the culture of English, but rather are interested in obtaining a benefit (either getting their degree or keeping their jobs).

2.2.1 English as an International Language and its Status in Mexico

The fact that English plays such an important role around the world means that there are implications that must be considered when dealing with language learning. To better explain the way English is perceived in Mexico, I must conceptualize the English language in another term known as English as an International Language (EIL). I use this term as Sharifian (2009) defines it when he says that EIL is: "a paradigm shift in response to the complexities associated with the rapid spread of English around the globe in recent decades" (p. 2). I must make a distinction between the different categories where English in Mexico can fit in. On the one hand, Jenkins, (2003, p. 14) differentiates the spread of English depending on the "group of users who speak English", as: English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (p. 14). On the other hand, Kachru (1992) recognizes English around the world in terms of "patterns of acquisitions and the functional allocation of English in culture as: inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle" (p. 356).

To help me place the status of English in Mexico, I found that Jenkins (2003) states that ENL is "the language of those born and raised in one of those countries where English is historically the language to be spoken" (p. 14). Moreover, Strevens (1992) differentiates ESL and EFL stating that:

English is a foreign language when it has no special standing but is simply just another language whereas second language is when it has special standing such as being acceptable in courts of law being the major of instruction in major sectors of the educational system or being used in regional or national administration commonly used on radio or television. (p. 36)

I would immediately discard the possibility that Mexico is ENL because Spanish has been used as the official language in Mexico since its coming into existence, and English has never been spoken as an official language. Hence, I will look at the differences between ESL and EFL. The contrast provided by Strevens (1992) between EFL and ESL helps me to place the English language in Mexico as EFL. Even though English is used in sectors of the educational system such as in bilingual schools, and is used in radio or television, especially in the north in places such as Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez, where English is used by much of the population and where the dollar is even used as currency; the use of English in the rest of the country, such as in this research setting, is not similar within every educational system or social context.

This research takes place in a central state far from the border and although there are some places in Guanajuato such as San Miguel de Allende and the city of Guanajuato where there are English native speakers to talk with, the use of the English language is considerably reduced in general. Furthermore, in the case of Irapuato, the probability of finding English speakers is slight compared to the possibility of finding Japanese or German speakers that live in the city because of the different companies and corporations established in Irapuato. This implies that the use of English compared to other languages may become less relevant in the context and could affect the perceptions that the students have in relation to the use of English within the language school.

In addition to the different points of view offered by the authors above regarding the differences between EFL, ESL and ENL, Kachru (1992) explains that the status of English in the world varies depending on the concentric circles. According to Kachru (1992), these three circles "represent the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts" (ibid., p. 356). Kachru defines inner circle as the countries where the "cultural and linguistic bases of English (UK, U.S.)" (ibid.) are found, the outer circle as the countries where there are "non-native varieties (ESL) of English

in regions through periods of colonization" (such as Nigeria or India) and the expanding circle as the "regions where the varieties of the language are used in EFL contexts" (such as Japan or Korea) (p. 356). Thus, Mexico belongs to the expanding circle because we were never colonized by a country whose first language was English, nor Mexico does have cultural or linguistic "roots" related to English, but English in Mexico is perceived just as "another language" (Ibid., p. 357).

Thus, English in Mexico has an EFL status and belongs to the expanding circle in Kachru's scale. Therefore, from the viewpoint of the authors cited above, it is important to consider such characteristics, since they may influence the approaches adopted by administrators and/or teachers. The following section aims to discuss the impact of the status of English on the research setting.

2.2.2 Implications of the Status of English in Mexico

Since the *English Only* policy in this research consists of asking the speakers to use English exclusively within the Language School and even for administrative purposes, it is relevant to explore these events, because they give me the opportunity to better understand the students' and teachers' perceptions towards this policy. This is because the *English Only* policy aims to simulate a context parallel to a country where English has the role of a native language, such as the U.S. or England; however, the reality is that these "virtual contexts" may not match with the research country setting context, where the status of English is clearly that of EFL. In this section, I explore and analyze some of these issues.

2.2.2.1 Lack of Interaction in the Target Language

One point of view depends on a possible lack of interactional events in the target language that the students receive in a country, whether it is EFL or ESL. Strevens (1992), for example, assures that "it makes considerable difference when it comes to teaching and learning of English whether the environment is EFL or ESL because it affects the learner's prior familiarity with English" (pp. 36-37). In addition to Strevens' quote, where he notes the importance of the familiarity with English that students have, Sridhar and Sridhar (1992) focus on the level of input that the students receive as follows: "The nature of the input is significantly different, the learner is not exposed to the full range of styles, structures, and

speech acts that one normally associates with the use of language as the primary vehicle of verbal communication in a society" (p. 95).

I can perceive this lack of input in my research area context because the students may not be exposed to all the functions of the language that take place in a context where English is the first language. This is noticeable because the only function or speech act that takes place is the enrollment process even though the authorities are trying to build a context where English is spoken as a first language. Thus, the wide number of speech acts such as casual conversations between friends and formal conversations or at work meetings is reduced to a single speech act.

Guo (2011) is another author that notices the difficulties of learning a language in a context where students have a lack of contact with English speakers. He thinks that the environment could not be adequate:

> The context in which learning takes place makes a vital contribution to the success of learning; this is true for language acquisition. Countries in which English is not a primary language often lack an English environment. In such countries, in-class instruction may be the only contact students have with English. Once students leave the classroom, they are totally immersed in their own First-language environment, which seems to offer little exposure to English materials and few chances to see or use English in real settings. (p. 246).

Thus, the reduced exposure to input in L2 does not help the students to develop an adequate language acquisition. To support this argument, Lee, Browne and Kusumoto (2011) explore the level of English that the learners of a language in an EFL setting receive and conclude that:

> Foreign language students studying in their home countries are often faced with the truth that once they leave the classroom there is no guarantee that they will be given opportunities to use the language (TL). For second language (L2) learners studying in a traditional Japanese university context (e.g., a student population comprised of Japanese speaking, domestic students), most their speaking practice had to happen in the classroom or it would not happen at all. (p. 15).

These quotations may mirror in the reality of the context where this investigation takes place since the in-class instruction could be the only previous contact students have had with English. Thus, once students leave the classroom, they are only exposed to a full range of speech acts in Spanish. Because of this, students may be lacking in authentic input in the target language. This factor may greatly influence the way the *English Only* policy might be perceived since it somewhat artificially aims to promote the use of English within the language school as I note in Chapter 4.

2.2.2.2 The Issue of Motivation

There may exist a possible lack of motivation or expectations of success that the students could have in a context where English has an EFL status. Holmes (2008) notes, "English is a Foreign Language in the expanding circle, serving no crucial communication functions within a country" (p. 80). Strevens (1992) argues that "it makes considerable difference when it comes to teaching and learning of English whether the environment is EFL or ESL because it affects the learners' expectation of success and the level of attainment of teachers and learners" (p. 39). The difference in the attitudes toward learning in an EFL and ESL context is the recognition that "in the great non-native speakers' populations English will be taught mostly by non-native speakers of the language, to non-native speakers to communicate mainly with non-native speakers" (Ibid., p. 41). Finally, Li (2009) also provides his opinion about the learning of target languages that are not part of the inner or outer circles and he thinks that "for most NNS, a native speaker pedagogic model is unattainable and impractical as a learning goal" (p. 81).

Moreover, in an EFL setting, there may exist a lack of opportunities to perform in English, which may leave the learners of the language with little necessity of using the language outside of the classroom, since there is no need to do so. This apparent lack of need for using English outside of the classroom can be observed in the context of the city of Irapuato where unquestionably more need exists for a working knowledge of languages such as Japanese or German (see Chapter 1) than English. This lack of need to practice functions and speech acts in English in a given context may mean that the speakers are more likely to choose to study English for what Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) define as "instrumental motivation" and "integrative motivation" (p. 58). These types of motivation mean that

students may go to English lessons because they need a gain such as a certificate, or in order to fulfil a program requirement, and they do not take the language lessons from personal choice or out of a particular interest in the language. Thus, these factors may influence the students to have a negative attitude towards the *English Only* policy as it is applied in the research setting.

2.2.2.3 English in Mexico

Yet another issue relates to the status of English in Mexico, in that it is a foreign language: Despagne (2010), for example, assures us that:

> The diffusion of English makes ESL learning mandatory if Mexicans want to aspire to a better social and economic life. Nevertheless, this contextual 'imposition' highly influences perceptions and attitudes Mexicans have towards the language. This in turn may create a strong barrier to the whole language learning process. (p. 55)

The previous quote creates the possibility to argue that, since English is mandatory in the public grade-school system and in many public and private universities and is generally perceived as a boost for the possibility of getting a better job and education, students should be obliged to study it. However, this does not necessarily mean that the students like to learn it.

If I go deeper into the role that English has in Mexico, I find that English only has little presence in Mexican culture. This presence is mainly related to music or videogames; however, not all the people have access to this side of the culture and not all the people relate to it. For example, Strevens (1992) agrees that "the functions and uses of English by non-native speakers become ever more numerous and unrelated to the nationality of the speaker" (p. 27) and this creates a situation where "using English suddenly has nothing to do with one's nationality" (p. 31). This issue of "incompatibility" between the English language and Mexican culture may suggest that it is possible that Mexicans reject the use of English because English may not have anything to do with their culture and daily life, or because it is perceived to be an imposition.

Due to these socio-cultural mismatches, the relation which exists between the learning of the target language and the teaching methods or techniques teachers follow might be

affected. Holliday (2005) comments: "we follow the new methods of teaching and learning introduced nowadays because we find them effective and interesting" but "there has been resistance to certain activities not because they are superior but because our different context that makes such use rather difficult and in many cases ineffective" (p. 14). Supporting this, Basurto (2010) also provides her thoughts when she says that, "there are mismatches between the policy-makers' rhetoric and what it is feasible to implement in practice, given the particularities of the Mexican context" (p. 219). These mismatches between the characteristics of the activities or methods that teachers want to apply and the learning contexts where the activities or methods take place are common in our teaching practice. This is because most of the times as teachers, we only consider what we think is correct or may work and we do not think about what the learners like or need. Hence, in the case of this research, it is also possible that the administrators and the teachers may not be considering these issues.

2.3 Language Practice within the Language School

In this section, I will explore the literature regarding the implementation of practices and techniques in ELT, in order to focus on the advantages or disadvantages that may exist in our EFL context.

2.3.1 Benefits of Practicing within the Language School

Several authors criticize the lack of opportunities to speak authentic English inside of the classroom. MacLeod and Larsson (2011), for example, state that the practice inside of the classroom is not enough. The authors mentioned that "it is clear that there are not as many opportunities for students to actively produce English in spoken and written forms away from the classroom" (p. 34). Savignon (2002) is another author who perceives the use of activities within the language school positively. She thinks that "in a second language environment, opportunities to use the second language outside the classroom may successfully become a workshop where learners can compare notes, seek clarification, and expand the range of domains in which they learn to function in the second language" (p. 16). Guo (2011) also supports the usage of English beyond the classroom with this quote:

> Activities outside the classroom encourage students to expand their language
> experience to outside the classroom by making them aware of existing and

available English language opportunities in their surroundings. Instead of presenting only formulaic English in textbooks, an out-of-class activity can increase students' exposure to English in existing and familiar contexts. Their conscious attention to English usage in the real world can also increase students' language ability and improve their vocabulary. (p. 252)

Moreover, Van Cauteren and Vleminckx (2009) provide an argument in which they point out that practice beyond the classroom is positive because, "the participants learn things they will never learn in class for example, they can observe behavior, learn to work with others and deal with real problems. At the end of the training they all come out much stronger" (p. 83).

The authors also think that the students are also likely to welcome the use of language practice outside of the classroom. This is demonstrated in the following quote:

Learners can also find that the transfer from what they learn in class is too restricted. Thus, participants of language classes may become frustrated because what they learn and exercise in class cannot be applied outside classroom. They wish for more opportunities to have real language practice as they cannot find it in their own language environment. (Ibid., p. 76)

Additionally, Xiao and Luo (2011) state that "only when students are frequently exposed to the target language outside the classroom can they gradually become competent language learners and users" (p. 241). Through these quotations, I notice that the use and application of activities is perceived as relevant by several authors because of the benefits the students experience within their language learning process.

2.3.2 Drawbacks of Practicing within the Language School

The authors I cited above perceive the use of the language outside of the classroom as something positive. Nevertheless, this strategy might not be equally applied in EFL environments because within these environments the most common exposure to English may be actually limited to the classroom. Thus, the research setting presents an incomplete scenario for the *English Only* policy.

Despite the considerable and vast list of benefits that practicing the language outside or beyond the classroom walls have, I note that several authors also highlight certain issues

that may represent a problem for the application of such practices in EFL settings. Van Cauteren and Vleminckx (2009), for example, state that:

> Although there is no doubt about the possible positive results, extramural activities are time consuming in comparison with a normal teaching program, most of the tasks are 'classroom-oriented' and still controlled" and on behalf of the learners they do not always consider the tasks to be 'important' at that particular moment. Others are not motivated: they do not understand why these tasks are useful; they only want to do classroom exercises. (p. 76)

Furthermore, Lee, Browne and Kusumoto (2011) indicate that sometimes students are reluctant to perform these activities outside of the classroom because "participants were not satisfied with their own performance and this indicates that their reluctance to communicate in English may be more closely related to their perceived oral performance (p. 22). Moreover, they also think that "students may not be at a level of proficiency that would enable them to individually and proactively take advantage of their surroundings and therefore need more guidance and facilitation to interact with others in the target language" (Ibid., p. 23).

Although MacLeod and Larsson (2011) strongly support the usage of classroom activities outside of the classroom, they give their opinion about the reluctant students who avoid completing these activities.

> It could also be stated that when these opportunities do occur, they are often not taken, as L1 remains the preference. This seems largely due to a lack of confidence and could well be a result of a lack of practical practice inside the classroom. The classroom should be the safest environment for students to attempt new use of language and should prepare them for experimental use in real life situations. (p. 34)

Finally, Holliday (2005) also notes a confidence issue related to the application of activities where the learners must practice using authentic language. Holliday (2005) states that "students choose not to take part in the public talk or communicative classroom because they were not prepared to expose themselves in what they considered a dangerous environment of scrutiny and correction" (p. 96).

Van Cauteren and Vleminckx (2009), Lee, Browne and Kusumoto (2011), MacLeod and Larsson (2011) and Holliday (2005) find that it is possible that these practices could

reduce student motivation and cause students to experience low confidence with regard to their English competence, so causing a rejection of the *English Only* policy.

These feelings of discomfort and low motivation caused by certain activity types evidently coincide with some of the best-known theories around the world related to language learning theories such as the affective filter provided by Krashen (1982). In his work, Krashen (1982) not only highlights the importance of three variables that play a fundamental role in second language acquisition, these being "motivation, self-confidence and low levels of anxiety" (p. 30) but he also points out the relationship between the affective filter and individual differences and the level of input. Krashen (ibid.) states that:

> Acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their Affective Filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective Filter--even if they understand the message, the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. Those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input they will also have a lower or weaker filter. They will be more open to the input, and it will strike deeper. (p. 30).

Supporting the possible existence of certain feelings of anxiety that may interfere with the acquisition of languages, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (2010) also warn us about these feelings that arise by using the language. They name this as "communicative apprehension":

> Communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people in groups or in public (…) students are likely to experience even greater difficulty speaking in a foreign language class where they have little control of the communicative situation and their performance is constantly monitored. (p. 127)

Krashen (1982) notices the importance of input and the affective filter (related to motivation, self-confidence and anxiety) with the different levels of anxiety that vary between learners. This means that the level of anxiety of a person who does not have optimal attitudes towards second language acquisition might be higher than the level of anxiety experienced by another person who has more optimal attitudes.

Finally, Guo (2011) thinks that there are some difficulties when applying these activities. However, the author thinks that this drawback is because of the teachers' perceptions, capacity or circumstances in their workplace:

> EFL teachers often doubt the feasibility of out-of- class activities, there are attributed these concerns to three problems: (1) a lack of an adequate English environment, (2) a lack of knowhow for carrying out the task, and (3) the rigidity of the established curriculum, schedule, textbook, or exams. (p. 248)

In conclusion, various difficulties exist in the use of activities within the language school. One of these difficulties is the lack of confidence that the learners can experience because of a perceived lack of competence. Another is that the students might feel they are not prepared enough to accomplish the task of using the language within the language school. In several quotes, the authors propose guiding students when they are doing these activities; however, this does not appear to be happening in the setting where the research was carried out. These evident difficulties become more relevant in the presentation of the data and results in Chapter 4.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the literature related to the themes of this research. At the beginning of this chapter, I began by discussing the status of English around the world and then I explored the specific status of English in Mexico. This included the differences between English contexts such as the functions it has in different settings such as ENL, ESL or EFL. I also explored the different points of view from which a language may be perceived in these three settings, such as the way the expectations of success may be affected according to the context. In this chapter, I highlighted both the benefits of using language within the language school (such as the exposure to authentic language), and some drawbacks of using language within the language school (such as the level of anxiety that students may experience due to this activity). In the following chapter, I provide an exploration of the methodology I adopted and the different data collection techniques that I used to explore the themes in this investigation.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data Collection

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the research methodology and the data collection techniques that I used to explore and better understand the events that took place in the course of this research. I will also explain why I chose qualitative methods as the ideal approach for this investigation.

3.2 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research, in Denzin and Lincoln's words (2000), is a "complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions" (p. 2). Therefore, to find a clear explanation of this complexity, I adopted the Marshall's and Rossman's (2006) concept of qualitative research. These authors blend qualitative research and qualitative methodology into one concept and mention that this methodology is "intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions" (p. 2). In this case, the social interactions described in the authors' definition might be found in the effects of the *English Only* policy, while the meanings that students give to these interactions might be found in the students' and teachers' perceptions of the *English Only* policy.

In addition to their description of qualitative methodology, Marshall and Rossman (2006) provide a set of its characteristics. First, they tell us that qualitative methodology "takes place in the natural world and focuses on context" (p. 3). This is the case of this research, since I explore an event (the implementation of the *English Only* policy) that took place in January 2015. Indeed, one of the objectives of this research is to explore the participants' reactions to the *English Only* policy. Moreover, the authors state that "it is a research that elicits multiple realities, subjective knowledge, understandings and interpretations" (Ibid., p.53). The different points of view of every student represent these "multiple realities", because of the relation of their lived experience to the research theme. The subjective knowledge mentioned by Marshall and Rossman relates to the fact that in this research all the participants´ points of view are personal, and may vary from participant to

participant. One example of the existence of these multiple realities is that during the data collection I used "recorded group discussions" with an interview guide for all the students, with both open-ended questions and the analysis of a critical incident—this gave the participants the opportunity to recall their lived experience and narrate their reactions, to record their own realities.

Once I finished collecting the data, I had the opportunity to follow a process to better understand the different perceptions and feelings related to the way the participants reacted to the *English Only* policy.

Additional authors also support the use of qualitative methodology for the type of research I investigated. Holliday (2007), for example, states that qualitative research "locates the study in settings that provide opportunities for exploring social variables" and affirms that qualitative research consists of "studies designed to lead the researcher into areas of discovery within the lives of the people that he/she is investigating" (p. 5). This relates to the case of this investigation, as I explored the different reactions and feelings that using the language outside of the classroom and during enrollment processes means for the students. This could vary depending on the reasons they have for studying, their confidence in the language, among other factors. So, the intention of this research was not to find whether the students agree or disagree with the use of English outside the classroom and the use of language for administrative purposes (as a quantitative research topic may do), but rather to discover what the students and teachers' opinions are on this policy.

3.2.1 Case Study

Hancock and Allgozzine (2011) state that "case studies are intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time" (p. 10). The authors also state that "the topics examined in case studies include individuals, events, or groups" and they conclude that "through case studies, researchers hope to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved" (Ibid., p. 11). Baskarada (2014) also states that "case study research involves intensive study of a single unit to provide an opportunity for the researcher to gain a deep holistic view of the research problem, and may facilitate describing, understanding and explaining a research problem or situation" (p. 1). Indeed, it

seemed to me that a case study was the method that best matched the purpose of this investigation. In order to get a deeper understanding of events taking place because of the *English Only* policy, I used different types of interviews, as I will describe in the following paragraphs.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Since I deal with what Marshall and Rossman (2006) define as "individual lived experience" (p. 56), the most appropriate data collection technique seemed to be the interview. Using interviews, I could effectively collect specific information from participants related to their lived experiences with the *English Only* policy. I chose interviews because, as Edward and Holland (2013) state, the interviews allow us to "explore the understandings, experiences and imaginings of research participants" (p. 90). In the course of this research, the participants had the opportunity to clarify and explain the way that they perceive the policy in question. As Turner (2010) assures us, interviews can be "developed to obtain thick, rich data" (p. 754).

For the purpose of this investigation I interviewed students, teachers and administrators from the school. I used two types of interviews: some conducted by e-mail, others face-to-face. I conducted e-mail interviews with the teacher-participants, while face-to-face interviews were conducted with the coordinator. To obtain data from the student-participants, I mixed the elements of two techniques, a focus group interview and a group discussion, to carry out what I call "recorded group discussions". In the next section, I provide a discussion regarding the use and selection of this method for the project.

3.3.1 Recorded Group Discussion

Before I obtained the data from the student-participants, I noticed that carrying out a traditional focus group interview was not the best option for getting data from them. Before the data collection, I had considered using a focus group interviews since Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define them as a "systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously" (p. 640). I thought this characteristic could be helpful since I had to interview several individuals, and a focus group interview could serve this purpose. However, Juan and Roussos (2010) are of the opinion that "focus group interviews count with the presence of a moderator in charge

of guiding the interaction of the group and accomplishing the steps" (p. 3). This characteristic became relevant to my decision, because when I invited students to participate, some of them asked me if I or any teachers were going to be there. Moreover, most of them expressed their concerns regarding the confidentiality of what they wished to verbalize in the interviews. Thus, I noticed that my presence could affect the student-participants' perceptions, since I was a teacher in this institution, and since the questions were related to the school and the policies followed there. I suspected that the student-participants would perhaps not express their opinions clearly, or they might feel intimidated by my presence. This means I might cause an observer's paradox effect. In Dale and Vinson's words (2013), this is "the intervention or measurement by an observer that can directly impact the behavior" (p. 305).

In addition to this, I thought that my presence could cause biases in the student-participants' responses, because I have a negative perception of the *English Only* policy. I was concerned that my own opinions might be apparent enough to influence the students in their responses. Therefore, a focus group interview was not appropriate in this case and I decided to follow a different technique. This was an important moment in my investigation because I had to choose which would be the most effective way to collect the student-participants' responses without influencing them. I believe that the data might have been completely different if I had decided to use a traditional focus group interview format.

The technique that I used to collect the data from the student-participants is a "recorded group discussion", which is a mixture of a group discussion with elements of a focus group interview. Nagarathinam and Lakshmanan (2016) define a group discussion as a "forum where people sit together to discuss a topic with the common objective of finding a solution for a problem […] in this type of discussion the moderators can observe the group from a distance" (pp. 169-170). This means that a group discussion does not need a moderator to conduct the discussion in the way that a focus group interview does. However, I did include elements of a focus group interview. These were the use of an interview guide with open-ended questions, a sample critical incident (See Appendix 4) and a tape recorder. Kumar (1987) explains that an interview guide "lists the main topics and subtopics to be covered in the focus groups interview and the moderator guides the discussion toward the issues found in them" (p. 7).

A critical incident is defined by Serrat (2010) as "events or circumstances that make one stop and think" (p. 2). According to the author, "the critical incident technique helps to identify and analyze rare events or circumstances by turning complex experiences into rich data and information" (Ibid., p. 5). Hughes (2007) also thinks that the use of a critical incident "seeks context-rich, first-hand perspectives on human activities and their significance" (p. 11). I used a sample critical incident to motivate the student-participants to express their opinions. The critical incident in question was the occasion on which a student was not allowed to complete the enrollment process until he spoke in English. I decided to use a critical incident as part of the interview guide because I became aware that I would find it difficult to let the student-participants know about the example of the enrollment process orally without using words that could influence their answers. I thought that if I used words such as *reject* or *force*, then the student-participants would react negatively because of my word choice and not because they really believed that. The interview guide included a written account of the critical incident and some open-ended questions. Since the teacher-participants and the coordinator were already aware of this critical incident, I decided that using a critical incident in the e-mail interviews and face-to-face interview with these participants would not be necessary. Thus, I decided that I would only need open-ended questions for these two types of interview.

The tape recorder is a useful device when interviewing. It is described by Krueger (2002) as a tool that does "not miss any of the comments since people often say helpful things in these discussions and researches cannot write fast enough to get them all" (p. 4). In conclusion, the technique I used to gather information from the student-participants consisted of a group discussion where the student-participants followed an interview guide with the use of a tape recorder to record the interview, but without the presence of a moderator.

Once I designed the interview guides, I carried out five recorded group discussions. First, I asked my students who wanted to participate and once I had their names I divided them into five groups of four student-participants to carry out the recorded group discussion. When I invited the student-participants, I told them what the research was about. As I explained above, since I was not present during the discussion, I asked one of the student-participants to read the questions in the interview guide to the rest of the student-participants

to discuss them. Thus, I was not present in the room but I had arranged the questionnaire and the critical incident for the interview guide and I prepared the empty room for the recorded group discussion to take place. I decided to write the guided interview questions in Spanish since I was dealing with beginner and intermediate students and I thought they could not have the necessary language skills to express their opinions as I wanted.

I reunited the student-participants, and talked about the informed consent. When I recorded the informed consent, I told them that I was going to place a tape recorder in the middle of the desk and I was going to leave the room. I was able to notice a positive result from performing this action since the student-participants expressed negative perceptions towards the content that is taught by the teachers in the classroom. I seriously doubt this data would have come out if I had been inside the classroom when the recorded group discussion took place. Then, I explained that one of them was going to read the questions and that all should express their opinion about the questions. I told the student-participants that when they finished they had to turn the tape recorder off and the "recorded group discussion" would be over. When they finished, I took the tape recorder and I transcribed the audio file. I provide a further description of the informed consent I used in section 3.4.

The transcript of the recorded group discussion number 5 is not fully provided in this document because I only transcribed what was necessary. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out that there is a risk of leaving "relevant material overlooked" (p. 149); however, the transcribed parts are all the ones related to the opinions about the use of the *English Only* policy outside the classroom and for administrative purposes. Therefore, the possibility of not including, or excluding relevant data is reduced.

I left the transcripts in Spanish because I considered the problems that translation implies when transcribing data. Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that the process of translating the data involves "issues of connotation and meaning" and the person who translates, "processes the vocabulary and grammatical structure of the words while considering the general context" (p. 115). This means that the process of "generating accurate and meaningful data through translation is paramount" (Ibid., p. 115). Due to these issues described, the process of data translation process becomes complicated since it might be modified depending on the researcher's interpretation. As I am not a translator and I do not

have knowledge to do this properly, I did not want to alter the data by attempting translations. Thus, I chose to leave them in Spanish. There is one example of an extract of these transcripts in Appendix 5.

3.3.2 E-mail Interviews

Meho (2006) defines an e-mail interview as "interviews where researchers can invite participation of large or geographically dispersed samples of people by sending them e-mail messages individually or through message boards, or discussion groups" (p. 1285). In this research, I carried out the interviews with the teacher-participants by e-mail. I sent an e-mail interview to seven members of the academic staff (see Appendix 6).

E-mail interviews are supported by the author since Meho thinks that "in contrast to face-to-face and telephone interviewing, e-mail interviewing enables researchers to study individuals or groups with special characteristics or those often difficult or impossible to reach or interview face-to-face or via telephone" (Ibid., p. 1288). In this case, I decided to use e-mail interviews because it was extremely difficult to get all the teachers together. This is for two reasons; the first one is that most of the teachers work in the morning schedule. The other reason is because all the teachers in the afternoon schedule work from 4-9 PM and it would be complicated to get them together to do a recorded group discussion since there is no free time for us between classes. Fortunately, the face-to-face and e-mail interview provided a good option to approach the English teacher participants in this investigation to overcome the time issue.

Once I received the permission from the coordinator, I wrote an e-mail invitation to the participants. Once they answered back that they wanted to participate, I sent them the open-ended questions with a deadline of one week for their replies. Some of the teachers replied electronically whereas other participants printed the document and left it in my locker. Once I had obtained all the answers from the participants, I proceeded to do the data analysis. In Appendix 7 there is an example of an e-mail interview. The questions were written in Spanish, but I asked the teacher-participants to answer back in either Spanish or English since I considered the level of English was not a problem for the participants to express their ideas,

as we all have competent linguistic abilities. In the same e-mail, I asked their permission to use their data in this investigation, this is explained in detail in section 3.4.

3.3.3 Face-to-Face Interviews

To collect the data from the coordinator of the school, I decided to use a face-to-face, structured interview with the same open-ended questions that I used for the e-mail interviews with the other teachers. Bowden and Galindo-Gonzalez (2015) define face-to-face interviews as "interviews that are conducted synchronously in both time and place and the interviewer and interviewee can see each other and take advantage of social cues such as paralanguage, body language, pauses, inflection, and tone" (p. 81).

The use of face-to-face interviews is well perceived by Irvine, Drew and Sainsbury (2010) who think that "face-to-face interviews tended to be longer and the participants 'held the floor' for a greater proportion of the interview in face-to-face interviews" (p. 3). These characteristics were helpful for gathering more data from the coordinator because they simplified the conditions so that the interviewee could provide more information while recording the data with a voice recorder. Additionally, this way I could ask for clarification in case I needed it. Another reason to use this type of interview was because I had the opportunity to schedule the interview with the coordinator in a way that was not practically possible with my coworkers.

The participants' varying characteristics inspired me to investigate the different types of interview and to find the ones that would provide me with the data in the most practical and appropriate way. Due to the teacher-participants' tight schedule and a possible conflict due to their contrasting points of view, I decided to use e-mail interviews. On the other hand, since the student-participants have a more flexible schedule, I realized I could use recorded group discussions. Finally, since I needed more detailed and specific information from the coordinator, I decided to use a face-to-face interview.

In order to collect the data from the coordinator, it was necessary to schedule an appointment with him. As I realized that the interview might produce a high quantity of data, I decided that it would be important to record the interview in order to be able to analyze it

in more detail later. I asked the coordinator for an interview and I did an orally conducted tape-recorded consent again because I considered it more practical than a written consent and he asked me not to mention his name during this research. The interview took place in the only empty classroom that was available in that date. This was a problem of difficult acoustics because there were many voices from other classrooms and the corridor that increased the difficulty of transcribing the audio file of the interview. Once I obtained the transcript of the interview, the data was codified. In Appendix 8 there is an extract of the interview with the coordinator where he provides his opinions about the usage of English within the language school and during the enrollment processes.

3.4. Ethics

I am aware that in every research project, permission is needed from the participants. Warren (2001) informs us that "it is necessary to deal with ethical codes" (p. 88) when dealing with human subjects. Therefore, I needed an informed consent from the participants to provide the participants with "protection from invasion of privacy, confidentiality and distress caused by the topics from the interview process itself" (Ibid., p. 89). This informed consent is usually provided in written consent forms; however, Warren goes on to mention that "some subjects may not see written consent forms as all protective and they were willing to talk with us, but they were not willing to put their names to any documents" (Ibid., p. 89). Therefore, I decided to adapt the written consent form to an "oral tape-recorded consent" (Ibid., p. 89). This means that in order to make the students feel more secure, I decided not to ask them to put their names in a document but I just explained the informed consent orally. I thought this could make the students feel more relaxed since they were not going to see their names in any document. The informed consent for the recorded group discussion is available in Appendix 9.

 Additionally, I explained to them what the research was about and the measures I would use to protect their identity. I told them that I was the only person to have access to the data in case that they agreed to participate in the research. I assigned one number for each of the student-participants; the number was one to four for each recorded group discussion. I also promised that nobody else would listen to the audio but the researcher. I was able to

explain this while recording the "recorded group discussion" questions and the face-to-face interview with the coordinator since I could orally explain the purpose of the research and the precautions I would take. In the case of the e-mail interviews, the informed consent was different because I did not have the possibility to find the interviewees to ask them to sign their letters; therefore, what I did was to send an invitation to participate by e-mail and once I obtained their agreement to participate I sent them the questions. In Appendix 10 there is the screenshot of the e-mail I sent as an invitation to participate in this research project.

3.5 Coding Data

In order to present the participants' quotations, I used the following coding system:

For each of the student-participants I assigned a number from 1 to 20 and the letter "S" for student, for example S1 or S2 taking into consideration that they were in the same recorded group discussion. I also assigned a number from 1 to the 5 to each one of the recorded group discussions, for instance RGD 1. For the teacher-participants I assigned a number from 1 to 8 to each one of them and the letter T for teacher, such as T1 or T2. All the interviews to teachers were E-mail interviews and this is indicated in the presentation of the data. For the interview with the coordinator, I indicate the source of data e.g., Face-to-Face interview.

In the following table, I present the codification of data.

Recorded Group Discussions (RGD)	Student-Participants
1	S1, S2, S3, S4
2	S5, S6, S7, S8
3	S9, S10, S11, S12
4	S13, S14, S15, S16
5	S17, S18, S19, S20
E-mail Interviews (EI)	**Teacher-Participants**
	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7
Face-to-Face Interview	Coordinator

3.6 Emerging Topics for Discussion

In this section, I explain the way the data was organized once I had obtained the raw data from the student-participants, the teacher-participants and the Language School coordinator. When the transcripts of the data were fully transcribed, I decided to only take into consideration the data relevant to the topics about "the use of English within the language school" and "the use of English in the administrative processes" since those were the two topics this research aims to understand. Then I divided the opinions of the participants about the *English Only* policy into positive or negative. I am conscious that what I was looking for was not to know if they agreed or disagreed with the policy, but to know why they had those perceptions; therefore, this division was made mainly for the purpose of accessing and organizing my data, and for easily following the themes that emerged.

When the data had been organized into positive and negative perspectives about the *English Only* policy, I achieved a better organization of the results and hence a deeper analysis could be possible. Once I re-read the data extracts more in depth, I could identify and discover more specific themes that could be used to reorganize the data into a different configuration. Fortunately, but not surprisingly, a considerable number of themes emerged from the data and it was necessary to make a selection of those that were more consistent in terms of the perspectives of the participants. Appendix 11 includes a list of all the topics that emerged during the analysis of data.

In the following chapter, there is a deeper analysis of the themes that emerged, in relation to the aims of this research: one aim was to learn about the participant's perceptions regarding the implementation of the *English Only* policy within the institution. The most important initial findings included the following:

- I found that some participants perceived the *English Only* policy of speaking English within the language school as an opportunity to practice the language.
- I found that participants perceived the *English Only* policy as a difficult issue to apply due to the EFL status of English in Mexico.
- Some participants perceived the policy about using English for administrative purposes as difficult due to the EFL status of English in Mexico.

- Some participants perceived the application of the *English Only* policy as a frightening and anxiety-causing experience that is difficult to apply because of lack of linguistic competence.

In Chapter 4 I will provide more information about each of these themes. First, I describe the different perceived benefits of the *English Only* policy and the use of English within the language school. As the chapter progresses, I highlight the participants' comments relating to the drawbacks created by the implementation of the *English Only* policy.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a discussion of the methods and techniques that I used to explore the subject of this investigation, as well as a deeper explanation of why the method and techniques I selected suited this investigation best. I also included information about the participants and the site where the investigation took place. I could perceive that the method and techniques I used were well-suited to the subject, because what I was looking for in this research were the perceptions of participants. The data collection technique was chosen to adapt to the circumstances of the context. Such issues as the nature of the participants and the availability of time they had were taken into account.

In the following chapter, I will give a detailed description and analysis of the themes that emerged during the data codification from the raw data.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present and describe the findings I obtained from the data. The themes are divided into data mentioning 1) From Classroom Use to "Real" Use of Language, 2) The *English Only* policy vs the EFL Setting, and 3) Fear Instead of Motivation.

4.2. From Classroom Use to "Real" Use of Language

This section explores how the participants identified benefits related to the development of their linguistic competence due to the implementation of the *English Only* policy.

Eleven out of twenty participants supported the idea that the use of English outside of the classroom within the school premises works as an opportunity to practice what is learned inside of the classroom. The following four quotes are provided because they summarize the most relevant data.

> S1: "Te puedes entender entre más alumnos y ver como lo pronuncias tu para ver si te puedes comunicar con las personas". (RGD 1)
>
> S6: "Nos ayuda igual de practica para irnos digamos adaptando más a este idioma". (RGD 2).
>
> S12: "Es darle un seguimiento a lo aprendido del salón porque sales del salón y ya no te acuerdas prácticamente de nada". (RGD 4)
>
> S19: "Te esfuerzas a aprender nuevas palabras a saber comunicarte y a que la otra persona te entienda lo que estás diciendo". (RGD 5)

I found that these four student-participants perceive the use of the *English Only* policy positively for distinct reasons. S1 and S19 suggest that the *English Only* policy helps students to develop language abilities such as pronunciation and vocabulary. This mirrors Savignon's (2002) perception of the use of activities to practice the second language outside the classroom as opportunities, where learners can expand the range of speech acts, and as a forum where they can speak in the second language. The views expressed by these students resonate with Guo (2011) who explains that the "conscious attention to English usage in the real world increases students' language ability and improves their vocabulary" (p. 252). Thus,

the four student-participants perceive the *English Only* policy as an opportunity to improve communication and language skills.

Furthermore, S6 and S12 provide similar points of view related to the need for extra practice outside of the classroom. S6 affirms that the policy helps students to adapt to the language. This may imply that this student-participant is already aware that English is not part of the students' daily lives and indeed, he perceives the policy as an opportunity to practice English. Finally, S12 also supports the idea of practicing English outside of the classroom, because when students leave the classroom they rarely practice what they learn in the classroom, therefore, from his viewpoint, this is a way to continue learning. This perception matches Van Cauteren and Vleminckx's (2009) idea that the students need to look for opportunities to "have real language practice as they cannot find it in their own language environment" (p. 83). These quotations suggest that the student-participants perceive a lack of practice opportunities and use of the new language inside of the classroom, and due to this lack, they welcome the implementation of the *English Only* policy, because this promises them a chance to practice the language outside of the classroom.

Parallel to the student-participants who highlighted the advantages of using English outside of the classroom, the following quotations provided by the teacher-participants of the school also support similar views:

> T5: "Sería un beneficio más para practicarlo todo el tiempo que permanezcan en el centro o institución". (EI)
>
> T6: "Es necesario para reforzar lo que se aprendió durante clase, además de que en la mayoría de los casos no se practica fuera de él". (EI)

Both these teacher-participants agree with the students-participants' perceptions since they perceive the practice of English outside of the class as a benefit that not all the students take advantage of. From this data, found that thirteen participants (eleven of them student-participants and two teacher-participants) perceive the use of English outside of the classroom positively. This is expressed in two ways: first, these participants think that the *English Only* policy helps to develop linguistic abilities and second, that it compensates for a lack of other practice in the target language. These perceptions are supported by Savignon (2002), who highlights the benefits that such practice provides for the learning of the

language, and by Van Cauteren and Vleminckx (2009), who assure us that if students use the language outside of the classroom, they will have more authentic practice in the language. Nevertheless, one critical matter is that, while these authors perceive the use of English outside of the classroom positively, they mostly refer to ESL contexts. Thus, since the *English Only* policy aims to create opportunities to use the language in a city located in central Mexico, which is an EFL context, and the authors refer to benefits in ESL context, a discrepancy affecting the participants' perceptions and comments may exist.

Additionally, the teacher-participants and the student-participants mentioned an additional benefit from the implementation of the *English Only* policy, since they think the language taught in the English lessons is not sufficiently real when compared to the English they expect to speak in real life. Here are some quotes concerning this theme:

> S19: "Cuando estás con una persona, no vas a preguntar cosas bien básicas que te enseñan aquí como los números". (RGD 5)

> S20: "En la clase nada más te enseñan habla de tu familia quien es tu mejor amigo de tu trabajo y así no le vas a hablar a una persona". (RGD 5)

> Coordinator: "Lo que uno trata de hacer en el salón es crear oportunidades lo más apegadas a la realidad posible, pero al final de cuentas son ficticias". (Face-to-Face Interview)

The student-participants and the coordinator criticize the content that is taught inside of the classroom since it is "basic" and "fictitious". S19 and S20 argue that topics that they learn in the school such as talking about "your best friend" or "family" are not useful for the real use of language. Therefore, the student-participants and the coordinator state that the language taught inside of the classroom is not what the students expect to use in the future. This perception may have been one of the reasons that led the coordinator to implement the *English Only* policy, since he perceives a lack of authenticity in the use of language in the classroom. He may have thought that applying this policy would fill the gap, providing students with real opportunities for language use.

This coincides with what Van Cauteren and Vleminckx (2009) recognize as a frustration, one that happens when students are not able to apply what they have learned in the classroom to the world outside. This apparent frustration expressed by the student-participants relates to the different expectations that they have of the language as it is used in

and outside of the classroom. These differing expectations may create a positive perception of the *English Only* policy.

In this section, the student-participants viewed the *English Only* policy positively, since it brings benefits to their learning, and because they perceive a lack of authenticity in the content taught in classroom compared to the real use of language outside of it. However, the differences between an EFL and an ESL context (in that Spanish is the native language of the social environment) becomes an issue of discussion. I present some of these differences of context in the following section.

4.3 The English only Policy in a Spanish Speaking Environment

Despite the benefits mentioned above, in the next paragraphs I highlight some drawbacks mentioned by the participants that the use of the *English Only* policy creates. This is mainly because the *English Only* policy takes place in an EFL setting and not in an ESL or ENL setting, where it could be applied more appropriately.

First, three student-participants talked about the fact of being surrounded by people who do not speak the target language acts as an obstacle for using the *English Only* policy:

> S2: La secretaria también debería hablar todos los idiomas y así deberíamos hablarle en el idioma que estudiamos, pero pues no es así le hablamos en español". (RGD 1)
>
> S11: "Si te encuentras con alguien en un ambiente rodeado de solamente español pues no te vas a poder desarrollar como tal". (RGD 3)
>
> S17: "Yo creo que eso es imposible de lograr porque se supone que estás hablando con otra persona que habla en español y pues para más facilidad". (RGD 5)

The student-participants argue that since they are in a Spanish speaking environment they have little access to L2 speakers to practice English, and this low exposure creates a drawback to their learning. S11 is of the opinion that in Spanish-speaking environments, the students do not have anybody to practice the language with. Additionally, S17 comments that speaking outside of the classroom is not realistic since it is easier to address other people in Spanish. Furthermore, S2 notices a contradiction in the implementation of the *English Only*

policy since as she suggests, the administrative staff including secretaries and the accountant should also speak English. Nevertheless, that is not the case, because students communicate with them in Spanish, as they do not know English. Therefore, there is a mismatch, since on the one hand the *English Only* policy requires students to speak in English outside of the classroom with other speakers; however, the students find that there is a little access to these speakers, as even those who work in the language school in the administrative staff can only be addressed in Spanish. Possibly the students face a lack of motivation due to the little exposure to English and the lack of English speakers to practice with. This is echoed by Strevens (1992), who suggests that expectations of success and motivation are affected when the environment is ESL or ENL. This is caused by the differences between an EFL context, where there are fewer speakers of the foreign language than in an ESL setting, where it is simpler to find English speakers to talk with. This may imply that the students might be willing to speak and practice what they are learning in the classroom; nevertheless, outside of the class, although willing, they may find few opportunities to speak, because of the lack of access to individuals who speak English. This also could mean that although the students might have the disposition to practice, the context does not provide the opportunity to follow through on this action. This is clear, since participants S2, S11 and S17 highlight the fact that they are surrounded by Spanish-speakers rather than English-speakers.

Three student and one teacher participant brought their viewpoints concerning the function and purpose of English language learning in the setting into the discussion:

S1: "Al momento de salir de salón es como liberarte". (RGD 1)

S3: "Esa es tu decisión o sea si lo quieres hacer bien y si no pues también porque pues al final de cuentas sales de tu clase y o sea aprendiste y ya". (RGD 1)

S18: "Uno sale del salón con ganas de ya quiero irme a mi casa ya quiero hablar otra vez español quiero desestresarme […] me estreso demasiado quiero salir a hablar otra vez mi idioma". (RGD 5)

These student-participants do not perceive the need to use the language outside of the classroom because they live, work and study in a Spanish speaking environment. I could identify this, because as S18 expresses, she does not enjoy speaking English inside the classroom and she "wants to speak in Spanish again". Moreover, S1 thinks that leaving the

class represents a "relief" and S3 comments that the use of the second language stops when the students leave the class. Moreover, T1 expresses the opinion that students "do not practice the language outside of the class since they do not find it necessary". This could mean that the student-participants think that English is only perceived as being for learning purposes, but not for functional purposes in their living context. This implies that the *English Only* policy is not likely to be viewed positively by these student-participants, since they perceive speaking in English as something that should be studied inside of the classroom and not outside of it.

The issue of using English in a Spanish speaking environment was a point of discussion by some of the student-participants. This is what some of them expressed about the critical incident:

S1: "Yo siento que no estaría bien porque vienes a aprender". (RGD 1)

S3: "Yo pienso que es una decisión muy exagerada porque el alumno todavía ni tiene la necesidad de hablar inglés". (RGD 1)

S4: "Fue una exageración porque vienes a aprender". (RGD 1)

S5: "Para mi está bastante mal porque pues de hecho si a eso viene la gente a aprender". (RGD 2)

S6: "Si se supone que alguien va a inscribirse para tomar clases de inglés es porque lo va a aprender es porque aún no lo sabe hablar". (RGD 2)

S17: "Pues uno tiene vacaciones viene descansado y llegas a tu escuela de inglés y salen con que te tienes que inscribir en inglés te quedas con cara de ya ni me acuerdo de que hice en mi vida". (RGD 5)

All of the student-participants above provided different points of view that support the idea that English it not perceived as necessary in their lives. Student-participants S1, S3, S4, S5, and S6 expressed that the imposition of using English during the enrollment processes is not good, that it is exaggerated and undesirable. They expressed that they go to the school to learn, and that they do not feel the necessity to speak in English in their daily lives. This may imply that they are not perceiving English as being useful for their lives, that they view it only as something to learn, but not to be used in real contexts. The adjectives the participants used to express their opinions about using English during the enrollment process might indicate that they do not agree with its use during administrative processes. Furthermore, S17

mentions that English is not part of her life, since she is returning from a vacation period (a non-English environment) and she never expects to use it. This quotation highlights the importance of the EFL setting that the learners live in. As they are not exposed to the English language outside of the class, when they were required to follow the policy they could not speak fluidly. Moreover, S3 mentions that students do not have the necessity to speak English. This quotation reinforces Holmes' (2008) idea that English in a country in the expanding circle has no effective communicative functions.

It can be said that, as Strevens (1992) notes, English is perceived as just another language in the context of Mexico, as it is not a native or second language in that country. It is also possible that because Spanish and not English is used outside the classroom, students may not perceive English as relevant to their real lives. This perfectly matches Guo's (2011) perspective, which is that due to the EFL status of English in Mexico, students are not able to see English in its real setting, so they perceive it as an unnecessary skill.

Through this exploration of the data, I perceive that a mismatch exists between what the authorities believe to be an appropriate method or activity, and the characteristics that the research setting in fact possesses. Ironically, the two participants who recognize this mismatch are also the ones who support the use of the *English Only* policy the most. These are the coordinator and T1.

> T1: "I really believe that students should be encouraged to speak English at school, no matter the situation. (…) I believe that it is a way to show them that English has a function and they should learn to use it" (EI)

> Coordinator: "Me parece a mí que el uso del idioma fuera del salón de clase es extremadamente importante debido a que ahí es donde en realidad el alumno pone en perspectiva su capacidad para usarlo" (Face-to-Face Interview)

However, after further analysis it may be observed that both participants are conscious of the difficulties in the application of the *English Only* policy, much in the same way that the student-participants expressed this in section 4.3. Some of these difficulties include the fact that the *English Only* policy is applied in an EFL context, and the fact that the students' native environment is different to the one where the *English Only* policy is applied.

T1: "I don´t think many people practice it outside the classroom because they don´t find it necessary. It is when you live in an English native country but most people speak their mother tongue, people believe that there is no need to learn English". (EI)

Coordinator: También siendo honestos estamos en un país donde el cual la lengua nativa es el español y eso ejerce una barrera no es lo mismo que estás viviendo en Inglaterra, Australia, Irlanda o Estados Unidos, aquí no es así". (Face-to-Face Interview)

These participants' ideas clearly point out the main differences between an ESL and an EFL context, one which relates to the language spoken in the environment, in this case Spanish. Thus, this implies a criticism of the authenticity of the *English Only* policy within an artificial environment, a context where students are not using English for a real function. In either case, first the participants assure us that the policy is useful, but then they also recognize the difficulties of applying it, because they are in an environment where English is not required often. The coordinator and T1 first recognize the English policy as necessary, but then they admit that there are difficulties as well. This statement echoes Holliday's (2005) perspective about the mismatch between methods that teachers use and the context where their classes take place. Therefore, it is possible that the students reject the *English Only* policy not because it too difficult to follow, but because of the various issues I have discussed above.

In this section, I discovered that despite the benefits perceived by the student-participants, teacher-participants and the coordinator, there were also drawbacks to the application of the *English Only* policy. The drawbacks are related to the status of English in the language school, which is that of a foreign language. This is due to the lack of English speakers to interact with, and also because a lack of authentic communicative functions in the setting. This led the participants to perceive the *English Only* policy as unnecessary. This implies that student-participants perceive their learning inside the classroom and the application of this learning outside of it as two different events, and they do not find a relationship between the two.

4.4 Fear Instead of Motivation

In this section, I explore another possible drawback of the implementation of the *English Only* policy. I found that the *English Only* policy for administrative purposes could be a frightening and anxious experience, because of what students perceive as a lack of linguistic competence on their part.

4.4.1 Lack of Linguistic Competence

The student-participants and teacher-participants perceive a lack of self-confidence and linguistic competence on the part of the students. This circumstance may create an impediment when attempting to achieve the objectives of the *English Only* policy. The following quotes support this argument:

> S11: "No estoy en el suficiente nivel para mantener una conversación o responder unas preguntas más complejas". (RGD 3)
>
> S12: "Se me haría muy injusto que una persona que apenas va en nivel 100 le empezaran a preguntar muchas cosas difíciles que ni siquiera tiene idea de cómo se estructura o que significan". (RGD 3)
>
> S16: "No tienes el nivel suficiente para llegar con la confianza de que te hablen en inglés". (RGD 4)
>
> S17: "Eso es muy injusto, apenas estamos en nivel 1, eso me daría mucho miedo y no sabría que decir". (RGD 5)

Student-participants fear they are unable to complete the enrollment process. First, S11, S12 and S16 agree that the enrollment process is a complex act and difficult to perform, since all lack such linguistic abilities as holding a complex conversation or using correct syntax in a sustained conversation. They perceive these linguistic abilities as necessary for the registration process, and since they feel their linguistic abilities are insufficient, they lack confidence. S12 also describes the registration process in English as "unfair", which mirrors the perception of S17 about unfairness. The fact that both student-participants express the opinion that the enrollment process is unfair because they are in level 100B: these students note that they do not have the same linguistic abilities as a student in a higher level. The teacher-participants in this investigation also referred to this issue. This discussion supports

the notion that level and linguistic ability have an impact on students' confidence when they are faced with a complex speech act, especially one of this type (MacLeod and Larsson, 2011).

Echoing the student-participants' views, six out of seven teacher-participants also provide their points of view on this topic. Most of these points of view support the use of the *English Only* policy but distinguish between students who are at a beginner, intermediate or advanced level. The first two quotes below describe negative experiences that the teacher-participants have observed during the process, the following two express the opinion that it is important to consider the level of the students, and the last two express positive ideas but at the same time recommend taking the level of the students into consideration.

> T4: "Algunos alumnos no conocen el vocabulario y les cuesta trabajo entender". (EI)
>
> T5: "Me gustaría que solo se aplicara a niveles intermedios y avanzados y que se eliminara de los básicos, he visto mucha angustia en ellos". (EI)
>
> T1: "Of course, we have to take into consideration the level of the student, but I believe that most of them can do it". (EI)
>
> T7: "Me parece que debería ser requisito indispensable para alumnos de nivel trescientos en adelante". (EI)
>
> T3: "Es bueno motivar a los alumnos a usar inglés, incluso en esta situación, claro considerando su nivel de inglés". (EI)
>
> T6: "Es una buena práctica para los alumnos, pero hay que tener cuidado del nivel del alumno". (EI)

The first two teacher-participants inform us that they have observed difficulties in terms of linguistic abilities, such as comprehension and vocabulary; one of the teachers observed anxiety in beginner level students during the registration process. This idea matches the previous discussion, where it was argued that linguistic abilities have an impact on the confidence that a student feels in the enrollment process. The next two teacher-participants express the opinion that all the students are capable of going through the enrollment process successfully, and that the *English Only* policy is good practice, creating motivation for speaking in English. However, both mention the fact that it is important to consider the level of the students. Additionally, T3 expresses the opinion that, at least the beginner students are

not being motivated, because level is not being considered. All of this highlights the importance of taking the students' personal characteristics such as level and learning style preferences into consideration. In a similar manner to the student-participants in Section 4.2., T6 states that although the registration process provides an opportunity for practice of the language, the *English Only* policy during registration exposes the students to only a few speech acts, and not to the wide variety of language that students should ideally experience in activities outside of the classroom.

The perception of the participants that a lack of level is an impediment when performing activities outside of the classroom is supported by Lee, Browne and Kusumoto (2011) and MacLeod and Larsson (2011). These authors indicate that sometimes students are reluctant to perform activities outside of the classroom since they are insecure about their linguistic abilities. This would indeed seem to be the case when L2 is being demanded in the registration process.

In this section, we found a relationship between the level of the students and the confidence needed to perform activities outside of the class. This is highlighted by all the teacher and student participants, and in spite of the fact that some teacher-participants perceive the *English Only* policy positively, five out of six teacher-participants are of the opinion that it is important to be conscious of students' levels.

4.4.2 Anxiety Arises During Communicative Functions

In this section, I present and discuss the idea that participants find the use of English during enrollment to be anxiety-creating.

> S18: "El alumno se va a intimidar y ya va a decir no quiero me da miedo eso es lo único que van a provocar que te de miedo a hablar". (RGD 5)

> T2: "Creo que no es necesario y causa estrés a los alumnos. Si yo fuera a inscribirme a japonés y me pidieran hablar japonés para el proceso, dejaría de inscribirme". (EI)

> T3: "Lo mejor sería motivarlos amablemente, y no obligarlos, les da mucho miedo". (EI)

> T5: "He visto angustia que esto produce en algunos alumnos, siento que los acorralamos, los intimidamos, se desesperan". (EI)

The student-participant and the three teacher-participants express that the *English Only* policy causes negative feelings in the students. One of the teacher-participants, T2, does not perceive the enrollments in English as necessary or useful, and that this causes a negative effect in the students' emotions. Further, three teachers (T2, T3 and T5) stress the fear, intimidation, and desperation that students experience during the enrollment process. T2 asserted that if she was forced to follow the enrollment process in Japanese (a foreign language to her), she would stop doing it. This teacher-participant is conscious of how stressful it can be to function in a language that is not native, especially in this type of activity. These feelings of discomfort are apparently not considered by the authorities, as they do not seem to be taking into account the stress caused by a possible denial of enrollment due to language difficulties. The student and teacher participants seem in this case to believe that the *English Only* policy can be more damaging than beneficial. They express themselves more negatively than positively, and those who are positive qualify their approval by commenting that the level of the students need to be taken into consideration.

These quotations reinforce Krashen's (1982) concept of the affective filter and input. This means that if the students do not feel confident enough, language acquisition will be more difficult to achieve. This could imply that the *English Only* policy is causing anxiety in students because it consists of speaking and listening acts more likely to raise the affective filters than to promote acquisition. The coordinator of the school wishes to motivate language acquisition by providing an opportunity to practice in a more authentic context, but by imposing this policy he may actually be doing the opposite, creating anxiety in the students.

These quotes and opinions tell us that students often feel a lack of confidence about their English level, and this lack of confidence affects their determination to use English outside of the classroom. Further, level is felt to be an impediment to performing speech acts outside of the classroom. Indeed, it should be mentioned again that the student-participants in this investigation were beginners and low intermediate level, a fact which affected their views.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained and explored three recurrent themes that emerged from the data. I found contradictory points of view: on the one hand, the student and teacher participants' views support the application of the *English Only* policy, since it offers opportunities to practice what is learned in the classroom and it creates an atmosphere which prepares students to use the language in real-life settings. On the other hand, the participants spoke of two factors which are strong impediments to the application of the *English Only* policy. The first factor is the status of English in the local environment, an environment that provides few opportunities to use English in functional situations. Additionally, students place a low value on the use of English outside of the classroom, arguing a lack of usefulness. The second factor is anxiety related to the student-participants' self-esteem; they mention a lack of full capability when faced with the challenges of the *English Only* policy during the enrollment process.

In the next chapter, I explain the implications that this research may have in my teaching and I describe the limitations the *English Only* policy, as well as possible ideas for further research.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the conclusions of this research project. The discussion includes a presentation of the findings I identified from the data, and what these findings might imply for me personally, and for other teachers experiencing similar scenarios. Additionally, I analyze the limitations of this research as well as possibilities for further studies.

5.2 Answering the Research Question

In Chapter 4 I explained, explored and analyzed the student-participants' and teacher-participants' perceptions of the *English Only* policy and its application at their school. What I found is that both student-participants and teacher-participants perceived the use of the *English Only* policy positively, because in theory it offers an opportunity to practice and reinforce what has been learned inside the classroom. Nevertheless, in practice, the participants question the policy's feasibility, given that they are immersed in an EFL setting. They expressed concerns about the following drawbacks:

- Some participants disagree with the application of the *English Only* policy because they feel that English is not necessary outside the classroom. They perceive English as a theoretical subject only.
- Some participants feel that the application of the *English Only* policy is not functional because not all the people that they find in the institution can communicate in English.
- Some participants think that the use of the *English Only* policy does not work because the students are immersed in a context where Spanish is spoken. Therefore, they have no need to use English to communicate since everybody involved can do it in Spanish.
- Some participants experience feelings of insecurity because either they feel they do not have enough linguistic knowledge to complete the interaction, or because they feel that what is learned in the classroom is unreal compared to the more authentic language that must be used within other contexts.

5.3 Implications

Clearly, the findings reported in this thesis have important implications that are certain to be useful to my teaching practice, and in issues related to beliefs that I previously held. As mentioned in Chapter 1, before carrying out this investigation, I took the usefulness of several activities for granted without considering my students' backgrounds. Indeed, doing this piece of research was an opportunity to give voice to the participants, motivating critical reflexivity on the part of all persons involved. Communication would seem to be a key factor in negotiating decisions relating to the adoption of certain activities, or rules. However, the findings of this research imply that teachers may not be aware whether the methods or strategies being applied are useful for students. During my research, I perceived that the participants observe two primary difficulties in the application of the *English Only* policy: the lack of consideration of the level of the students, and the students' view that English outside of the classroom is unnecessary. These two errors may mirror situations during our teaching practice when we idealize certain techniques, activities or strategies without considering whether the students are able to perform them, or if they perceive them as useful. Thus, there is the need to make more informed decisions regarding the strategies or methods we use in the classroom. If the conditions are not appropriate for the students or for the setting, teachers and administrators should find ways to adapt them for the benefit of the students.

5.4 Limitations

The fact that I asked the participants to express their feelings about something that has been imposed on them may have generated some negative perceptions before the research questions were even applied. I was conscious of this issue before starting the project, and therefore prepared the open-ended questions carefully. However, in my opinion, there is still a danger that asking opinions about something imposed from outside could create negative feelings, even when taking precautions to avoid partiality.

The second limitation was that the themes emerging from data analysis were considerably more than those presented in Chapter 4. So, the data presented here represents only the themes that appeared most frequently. During the analysis, I found some themes that did not have enough material for discussion and exploration. Examples of these themes are listed below. These themes provide a list of possible topics that might be explored in further research.

Finally, the third limitation is related to the student-participants' samples from the recorded group discussions. The sample consisted of discussion by beginner and intermediate students, and as seen above, many of them expressed a lack of confidence in their linguistic abilities due to level. Hence, if the sample had included advanced students, then the results might have included another point of view concerning the *English Only* policy.

5.5 Further Research

I consider that this research suggests additional topics that were not possible to explore within the scope of this thesis. The psychological effects of the *English Only* requirement on students and teachers may be an interesting topic for further investigation: comments related to the imposition of the policy often caught my attention while collecting the data. Some of the student-participants mentioned that the requirement can only be interpreted as a "personal challenge". I found this particularly interesting and would welcome the opportunity to explore it more extensively in the future.

In addition to the psychological effect previously described, while collecting the data other of the student-participants mentioned issues related to the content taught in the program. At times they used semester levels as a parameter to know whether they are capable of using the language at a certain level, and at others they mentioned that they would not use the language contained in the textbook in a real-life context. Therefore, an interesting and meaningful topic for future investigation might be to explore the students' feelings about the language program, about what they are learning inside of the classroom, and whether they perceive this to be sufficient to make them proficient language users.

5.6 Conclusion

I am conscious that the findings provided in the recorded group discussions are not likely to be generalized for all the students' and teachers' population in our teaching context, and that the sample used for this research may not represent what all the students feel. However, the initial objective of this research was not to identify whether the participants agree or disagree with the implementation of the *English Only* policy. Nevertheless, at the end of this research I had gained a better understanding of the participants' perceptions towards the policy. During this research, I investigated and learned about issues such as the status of English in Mexico and how this status influences the way that it is used. In the end, in spite of the fact that the findings of this research cannot be generalized for all the student population and for all classroom contexts, I have become aware that there must be a correspondence between teaching methods and users. Teachers and coordinators may at times become inspired by new methods and attempt to implement them; however, as seen in this thesis, additional issues related to the specific context and needs of our students must be considered, taking into account motivation and practicality. Careful consideration of these factors may help to decide whether these new methods or techniques are useful and appropriate.

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Appendix 1. Example of the Enrollment Process to the English Students

During the enrollment process that the students do in the research setting, they should be able to do the following:

To ask for the academic schedule, to list the documents they have to proceed with the registration, to define the schedule they prefer or to request the change of schedule, among others. Here there are some examples of some of the different questions that the students can be asked for which they have to provide answers:

- What can I do for you?
- What schedule were you looking for?
- Which was your previous schedule? Who was your teacher? What was your grade?
- What documents do you have?
- What is your name? last name? phone number?
- Would you like to change your schedule? Why?

Appendix 2. Descriptive List of Student-Participants

Number of Participant	Gender	Age	Level	UG
S1	Female	17 years	Intermediate	Yes – high school program
S2	Female	16 years	Intermediate	Yes – high school program
S3	Male	15 years	Intermediate	Yes – high school program
S4	Male	17 years	Intermediate	Yes – high school program
S5	Male	21 years	Beginner	Not currently studying
S6	Female	22 years	Beginner	Yes – agriculture program
S7	Male	16 years	Beginner	Yes – high school program
S8	Male	19 years	Beginner	Not currently studying
S9	Female	17 years	Beginner	Yes – high school program
S10	Female	16 years	Beginner	Yes – high school program
S11	Male	17 years	Beginner	Yes – high school program
S12	Male	22 years	Beginner	Yes – nursing program
S13	Male	16 years	Beginner	Yes – high School program
S14	Female	20 years	Beginner	Yes – nursing program
S15	Male	21 years	Beginner	Not currently studying
S16	Female	20 years	Beginner	Yes – agriculture program
S17	Female	21 years	Intermediate	Yes – nursing program
S18	Female	20 years	Intermediate	Yes – nursing program
S19	Female	19 years	Intermediate	Yes – nursing program
S20	Female	22 years	Intermediate	Yes – nursing program

Appendix 3. List of Teacher-Participants

Number of Participant	Age	Gender	B.A. in TESOL
T1	46	Male	Yes
T2	22	Female	Yes
T3	37	Male	No
T4	43	Female	No
T5	52	Female	No
T6	25	Male	Yes
T7	55	Male	No
Coordinator	32	Male	Yes

Discute en tu grupo las siguientes preguntas:

- ¿Cómo consideras tu nivel de inglés?

- ¿Por qué viniste a estudiar a esta escuela?

- ¿Qué piensas del idioma inglés en general?

- ¿Qué opinas del uso de inglés dentro del salón de clase?

- ¿Qué opinas del uso del inglés fuera del salón de clase?

Critical Incident Used for the Recorded Group Discussion with Student-Participants

Lee la siguiente anécdota y describe tu opinión sobre esta situación:

El pasado semestre observé una situación durante las inscripciones. Los maestros de esta escuela recibimos la instrucción de realizar el proceso de inscripción en el idioma que los alumnos estudian, en este caso inglés. En esa ocasión, pude apreciar cuando un evento en el que un alumno de nivel intermedio llegó a inscribirse a su respectivo nivel y horario. Sin embargo, cuando el maestro inició el proceso de inscripción en el idioma inglés, el alumno se mostró renuente a hacer uso del idioma inglés y sólo se dirigía al maestro en el idioma español. La inscripción no pudo llevarse a cabo debido a que el alumno no se dirigió al maestro en el idioma inglés. ¿Qué opinas de este incidente?

Appendix 5. Extract of a Recorded Group Discussion

S17: Nuestra cuarta pregunta es ¿qué opinas del uso del idioma fuera del salón de clase?

S19: Yo creo que también está bien porque si estas en una escuela donde estas aprendiendo inglés lo más que puedas practicar está súper bien. Así te forzas a aprender nuevas palabras, a saber, comunicarte y a que la otra persona te entienda lo que le estas diciendo. Si no estamos en el oral y estamos bien nerviosos y si realmente nos enfocamos a hablar en inglés a mentalizarnos, ¿sabes qué? ya voy a entrar a mi clase a partir de que subes las escaleras puro inglés estaría muy bien porque lo practicas. // **S20**: Ósea está bien, pero por ejemplo no puedes hablarle a una persona sino tienes el vocabulario. // **S19**: Pero lo aprendes (menciona el nombre del participante). // **S20**: Si, pero. // **S19**: Espérate, cuando lo estamos así practicando en lo que nos cuesta trabajo tienes que esforzarte y no te puedes quedar en lo que yo creo que yo sé. // **S20**: Pero más bien debes de aprender por tu cuenta y aparte en la clase nada más te enseñan a hablar de tu familia o quien es tu mejor amigo de tu trabajo y así y no le vas a hablar a una persona nada mas de tu familia de tu trabajo, ósea le vas a hablar de cómo le fue en el día y cosas así. // **S19**: Por eso lo tienes que aprender porque por ejemplo yo tengo amigos que son extranjeros o gente que conoce bien el idioma inglés y siempre te dice ─ es que cuando estas con una persona no vas a llegarle a preguntar cosas bien básicas que te enseñan aquí ─. // **S18**: Claro. // **S19**: Por eso tienes que practicar ahorita con gente que está también estudiando. Yo creo que está bien que hablemos ingles afuera. // **S17**: Pues en lo personal desde un principio que empecé a estudiar inglés en otras escuelas nunca me ha gustado. Me da mucho miedo porque a veces la verdad no le entiendo no sé cómo expresarme igual a la gramática siempre utilizas el presente simple para hablar. Pero si me pones a hablar en pasado ósea los dos tiempos el pasado a mí se me va la onda y afuera del salón talvez yo pudiera con un nivel avanzado. Pero qué tal si hay compañeros que apenas van en nivel 100 y si les hablas en ingles te van a decir ─ oye no te pases ─ si uno sale del salón con ganas de ya quiero hablar otra vez español quiero des estresarme un poco porque así yo lo siento. En la clase de inglés me estreso demasiado quiero salir y hablar otra vez mi idioma. // **S19**: Pero le tienes que agarrar gusto. Entonces no te está gustando el inglés nada más lo estas estudiando por el título. // **S20**: O te falta más vocabulario. // **S19**: Necesitas cambiar esa mentalidad. // **S17**: Y es que, pues el salir y otra vez hablar inglés igual puedes estudiar y extra, pero eso ya es muy aparte como con los estudiantes. // **S18**: La verdad. // **S20**: Por los temas.

S17: Bueno la siguiente nos dice: **"El pasado semestre observé una situación durante las inscripciones. Los maestros de esta escuela recibimos la instrucción de realizar el proceso de inscripción en el idioma que los alumnos estudian, en este caso inglés. En esa ocasión, pude apreciar cuando un evento en el que un alumno de nivel intermedio llegó a inscribirse a su respectivo nivel y horario. Sin embargo, cuando el maestro inició el proceso de inscripción en el idioma inglés, el alumno se mostró renuente a hacer uso del**

idioma inglés y sólo se dirigía al maestro en el idioma español. La inscripción no pudo llevarse a cabo debido a que el alumno no se dirigió al maestro en el idioma inglés". ¿Qué opinas de este incidente?

S17: Pues uno tiene vacaciones viene descansado y llegas a tu escuela de inglés y salen con que te tienes que inscribir en inglés. Te quedas con cara de — ¿qué? ya ni me acuerdo de que hice en mi vida y otra vez inglés —. Es un momento un poco impactante para los alumnos y pues pobrecitos los que van entrando. Pero también si nos ponemos a pensar que muchas veces no son los estudiantes los que vienen a inscribirse sino los papas o los hermanos y si no han tenido la oportunidad de estudiar inglés y vienen con sus hojitas y dicen — maestro me vengo a inscribir — y te dicen — háblame en inglés-- y ellos se quedan con cara de — ¿qué? mejor no inscribo a mi hermano porque yo no sé — o que el venga, ósea como le van a hacer los papas. Esto puede pasar. // **S20**: Pues para mí por una parte está bien porque estamos estudiando inglés y deben hablarlo lo más que se pueda. Pero tampoco está bien que —si no hablas ingles tampoco te acepto los papeles —. // **S17**: Que no sea como un — estamos obligando —. // **S18**: No yo creo que no hay un reglamento. // **S17**: O un fundamento o algo donde te digan — tienes que hablar en inglés —porque si existe entonces si hay que cumplirlo.

S17: Student in charge of reading the questions during the discussion.

//: Symbol used to indicate turn taking in the conversation

—: Symbol used to indicate the start and the end of a dialogue

Appendix 6. Open-Ended Questions for the E-mail Interviews with Teachers and Face-to-Face Interview with Coordinator

Contesta las siguientes preguntas:

- ¿Qué opinas del idioma inglés en general?

- ¿Qué opinas del uso del inglés fuera del salón de clase?

- En tu experiencia, ¿qué tanto has visto que se hable inglés por parte de los alumnos fuera de clase? ¿Por qué crees que se deba eso (ya sea mucho o poco)?

- ¿Qué opinas del uso del inglés durante los procesos administrativos? (inscripciones, solicitud de cambios de horario)

- ¿Qué opinas del uso del inglés como requisito durante los procesos administrativos?

Appendix 7. Example of the Interviews by E-mail

Participant: T1

Gender: Male

Contesta las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Qué opinas del idioma inglés en general?

I believe that nowadays English has become a very important tool in the working field. Unfortunately, many students take English because it is a requirement to finish their careers so they don´t find it meaningful.

2. ¿Qué opinas del uso del inglés fuera del salón de clase?

I don´t think many people practice it outside the classroom because they don´t find it necessary. It is when you live in an English native country but most people speak your mother tongue, people believe that there is no need to learn English

3. En tu experiencia, ¿Qué tanto has visto que se hable inglés por parte de los alumnos fuera de clase? ¿Por qué crees que se deba eso (ya sea mucho o poco)?

. As a teacher, I can see students speaking Spanish as soon as they leave the room, some even start speaking Spanish in the classroom when the class is over. No matter how hard you encourage them to do it; they find it easy to go to their mother tongue instead of using English.

4. ¿Qué opinas del uso del inglés durante los procesos administrativos? (Inscripciones, Cambios de Horario)

I really believe that students should be encouraged to speak English at school, no matter the situation. When I am part of these processes I always speak them in English, I believe that it is a way to show them that English has a function and they should learn to use it. On the other hand, I have seen teacher talking to them in Spanish and I believe that should not be done because students may not find it meaningful learning the language.

5. ¿Qué opinas uso del inglés como requisito durante los procesos administrativos? (Aquellos alumnos que se atendieron solo hasta que usaron inglés)

As I mentioned before, we must try to make them speak the target language, they might not be able to produce correct language, but we could cue them to promote the use of English or any other target language. Of course, we must take into consideration the level of the student, but I believe that most of them can do it.

Appendix 8. Extract of the Interview Recorded with the Coordinator

Coordinator: Bueno, yo creo que se usa poco generalmente los alumnos desde mi perspectiva tienden a ver, hablo de algunos no de todos como el uso del inglés si como algo importante pero no llegan a comprender que grado de relevancia tiene. Entonces a mí me da la sensación de que para ellos cuando están afuera del salón de clase hablarlo no es una prioridad. Ellos buscan quizá otro tipo de actividad y quizá el inglés sea la última de las prioridades. Ahora en ese sentido pues si consideraría que a lo mejor de parte del profesor debería de haber una que otra manera la cual sería muy atractiva para el alumno y engancharse porque también siendo honestos estamos en un país donde el cual la lengua nativa es el español y eso ejerce una barrera. no es lo mismo que estar viviendo en Inglaterra, Australia, Irlanda o Estados Unidos, aquí no es así. Entonces me parecería que sería importante que a lo mejor se mostrasen alternativas o estrategias para que los estudiantes pudiesen desarrollar unos ejercicios donde la práctica se lleve a cabo. // **Researcher**: Ya que estamos en eso, a mí me llama mucho la atención saber qué opinas del uso del inglés durante los procesos administrativos ya vez que se usa para inscribirse que algunos maestros lo usan para inscribir a los alumnos. // **Coordinato**r: La verdad yo creo que es algo muy positivo, yo desde mi punto de vista me parece una cuestión donde el idioma se usa para un bien en específico. En este caso como las actividades administrativas como las inscripciones y demás aun cuando no es una conversación en si realmente es un intercambio de unas cosas muy puntuales y no se extiende más allá de eso. Yo creo que es algo benéfico que los alumnos tengan esa oportunidad. Me ha pasado que algunos chicos desde mi punto de vista tienden todavía a como un poquito de renuencia de no lo quiero hacer, pero a medida que ven que la mayoría de los estudiantes cuando vienen a hacer ese proceso lo cumplen o lo hacen después se integran. Entonces como comentario más puntual me parece que es muy beneficioso.

//: Symbol used to indicate the change of turns of speakers.

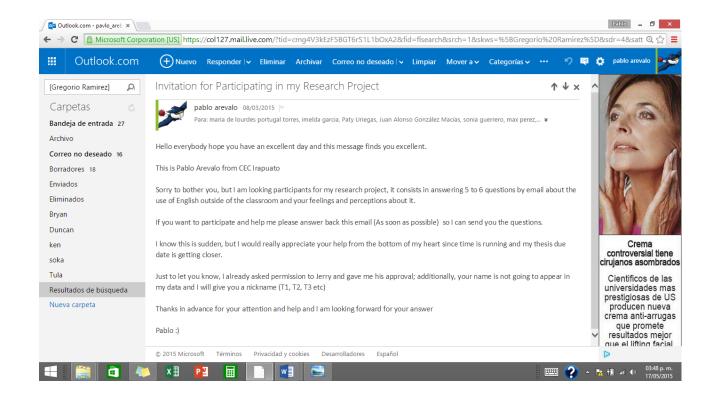# Appendix 9. Transcript of the Oral Tape-Recorded Informed Consent

Oral Tape-Recorded Informed Consent for the Recorded Group Discussions to the Coordinator

Researcher: Muchas gracias por ofrecerse como mis voluntarios para colaborar con mi tesis, esta información la usaré para mi trabajo de tesis así que con este me están dando su permiso para poder usar la información que digan como evidencia de la investigación. Aquí dejaré una grabadora de voz que va a ayudarme a grabar su voz. Quiero decirles que no voy a usar sus nombres usaré su inicial o algo así, no van a salir sus nombres. Este, bueno, les voy a dejar la grabadora y yo me iré para que mi presencia no interfiera con lo que digan. Entonces, él (señalando un participante) va a leer las preguntas y ustedes van a discutir en grupo las siguientes preguntas. Voy a estar afuera, no voy a estar aquí, nada más cuando salgan le ponen aquí en el "stop" y me regresan el celular (risas). ¿Entonces, tienen alguna pregunta? Se me olvidaba decirles, nadie en esta escuela ni en ningún lugar leerá su información o lo que dijeron, solamente yo y como ya les dije les asignare una letra para no usar su nombre, y bueno, muchas gracias.

Oral Tape-Recorded Informed Consent for the Face-to-Face Interview to the Coordinator

Researcher: Bueno, muchas gracias una vez más por colaborar para mi investigación. Como ya te había mencionado antes no saldrá tu nombre ni haré preguntas que indiquen algo de tu identidad, y pues vamos a empezar. Ah sí, lo olvidaba, esta grabación la usaré para recolectar información para mi trabajo de tesis así que la información de esta entrevista la usaré como evidencia de la investigación. Aquí tengo una grabadora de voz para poder grabar el sonido de nuestra voz. Nadie más que yo, sabrá que eres tú y no pondré ni tus datos personales ni alguna cosa que revele quien eres. Una vez más, muchas gracias por participar.

Appendix 10. Screenshot of the Informed Consent sent to the Teachers Electronically

Appendix 11. List of Topics from the Data Analysis

Topics from Open-ended Questions	Number of times quoted
Simulate an ESL or ENL environment	7
Zone of Proximal Development	2
Trial and Error	1
The effort is what counts	1
Lack of competence or level	5
Facilitate Learning	1
Imposition creates motivation	1
Imposition creates frustration	1
Other resources should be used	1
Students must learn well before going outside	1
Fear is caused	3
Acquisition is accelerated	1
Good for practicing	13
EFL issues are implied	13
Topics from the Critical Incident Discussion	Number of times quoted
Causes extrinsic motivation	2
Language used is easy	3
Blame the students disposition	1
Good for acquisition	1
Improves academic development	1
Good for high levels	1
Students must at least try	1
Good for practice	3
Students must get used to it	1
EFL issues are implied	12
Difficulties with language level	11
Causes fear	10
Students should not be forced	1
It can mix languages	1
Opinions about denial of service	3