

# LANGUAGE DOMINANCE IN ESL CLASSROOM: HOME LANGUAGE OR ENGLISH ONLY

**AUTHOR**  
Eric Lau

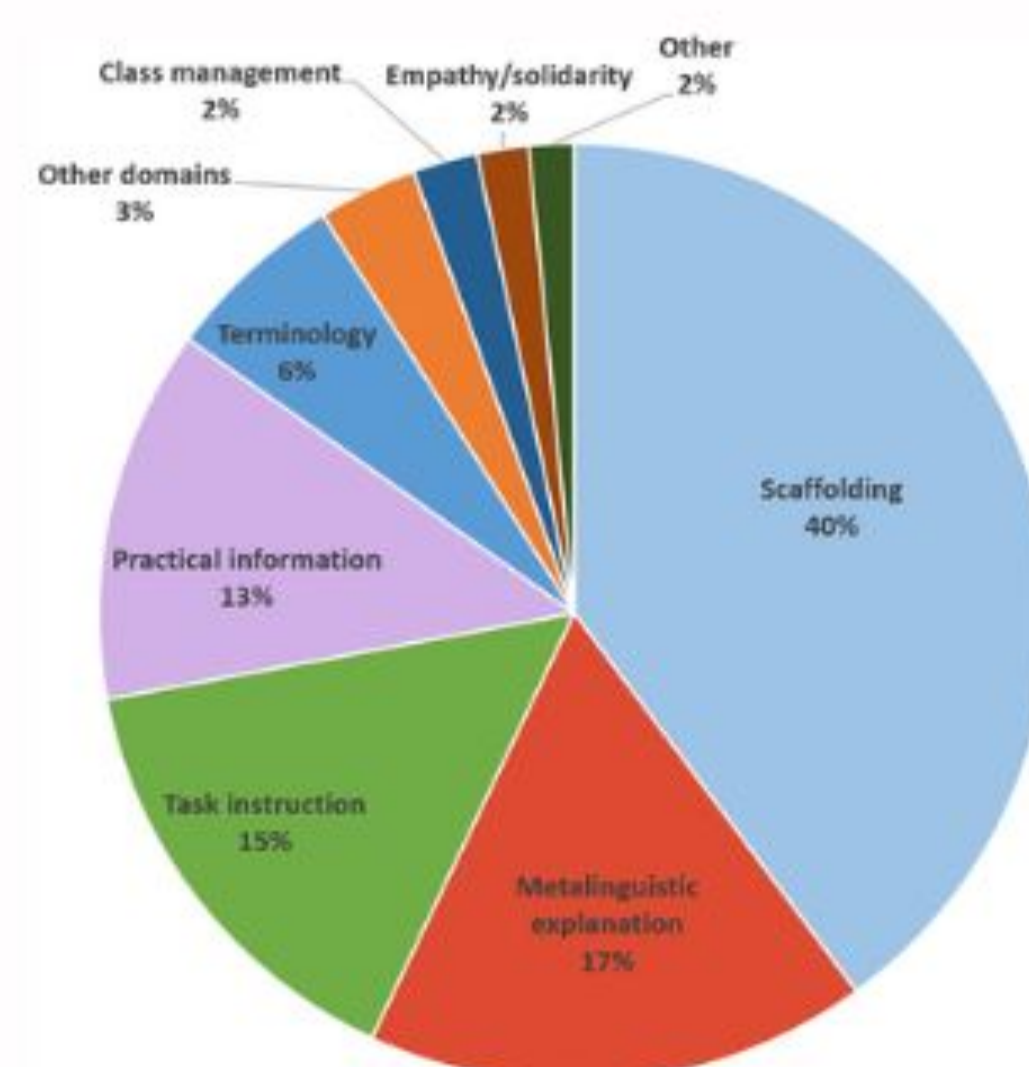
**INSTITUTION**  
Andrews University  
Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

## INTRODUCTION

Home language is a valuable resource for ESL learners to make progress in learning English. Having said that, there are also critics commenting that it hinders their ability and diminishes their chance to employ the target language.

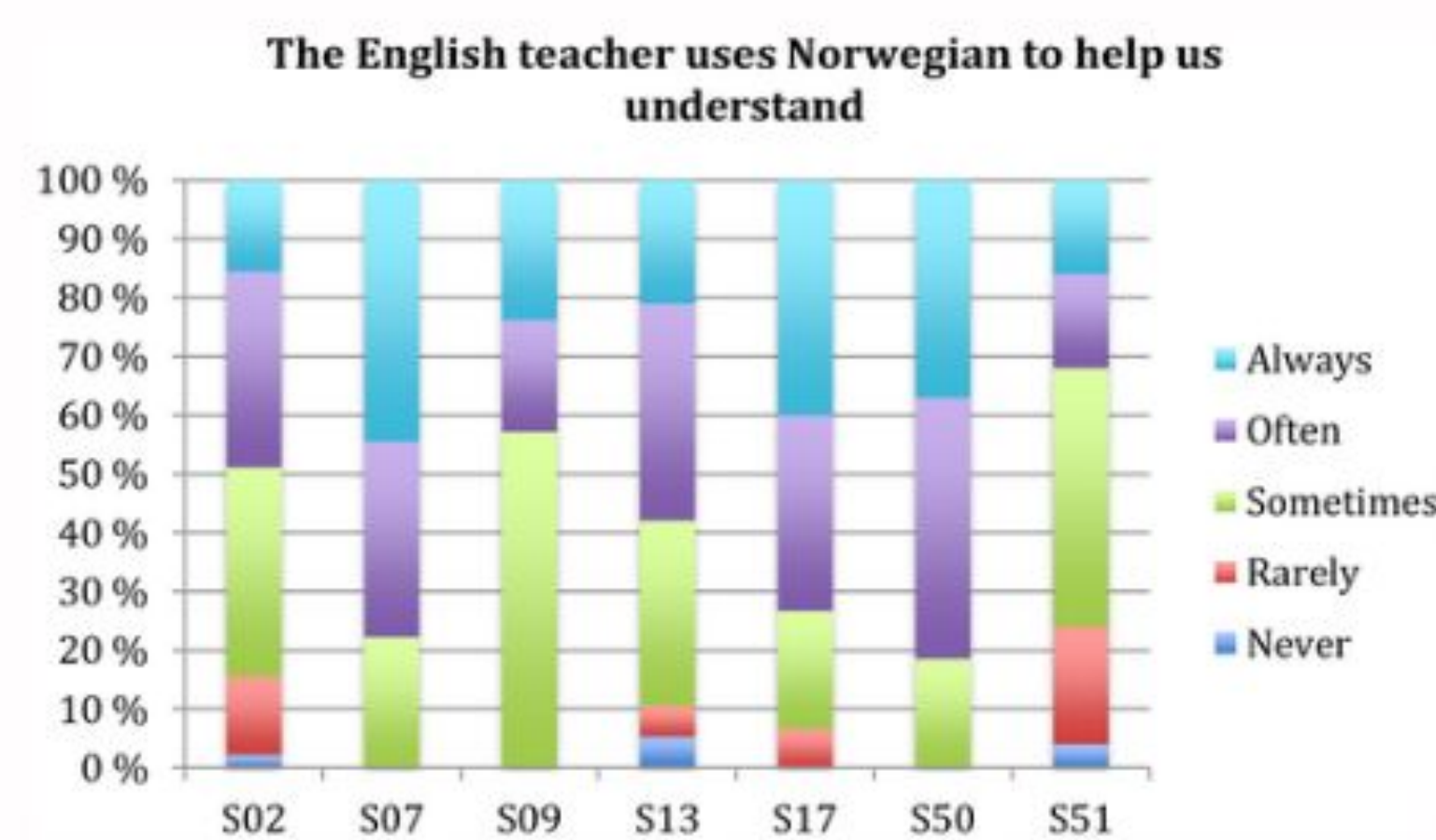
## HOME LANGUAGE

- Providing or allowing explanation of concepts and translating difficult terminologies in students' home language speed up the learning process and scaffold comprehension
- Allowing communication in L1 establishes a more relaxing and home-like atmosphere that is conducive to learning
- Making L1 use necessary to engage prior understandings since students' prior knowledge is encoded in their L1
- Enabling others to learn discrepant culture and reinforcing own's culture
- Preventing unnecessary compartmentalisation of languages



**Figure 1** Brevik, Lisbeth M & Rindal, Ulrikke. (2020). *Language Use in the Classroom: Balancing Target Language Exposure With the Need for Other Languages*. Retrieved November 17, 2022 from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/tesq.564>.

Demonstrating the proportion of how the home language is employed to help students in an ESL classroom

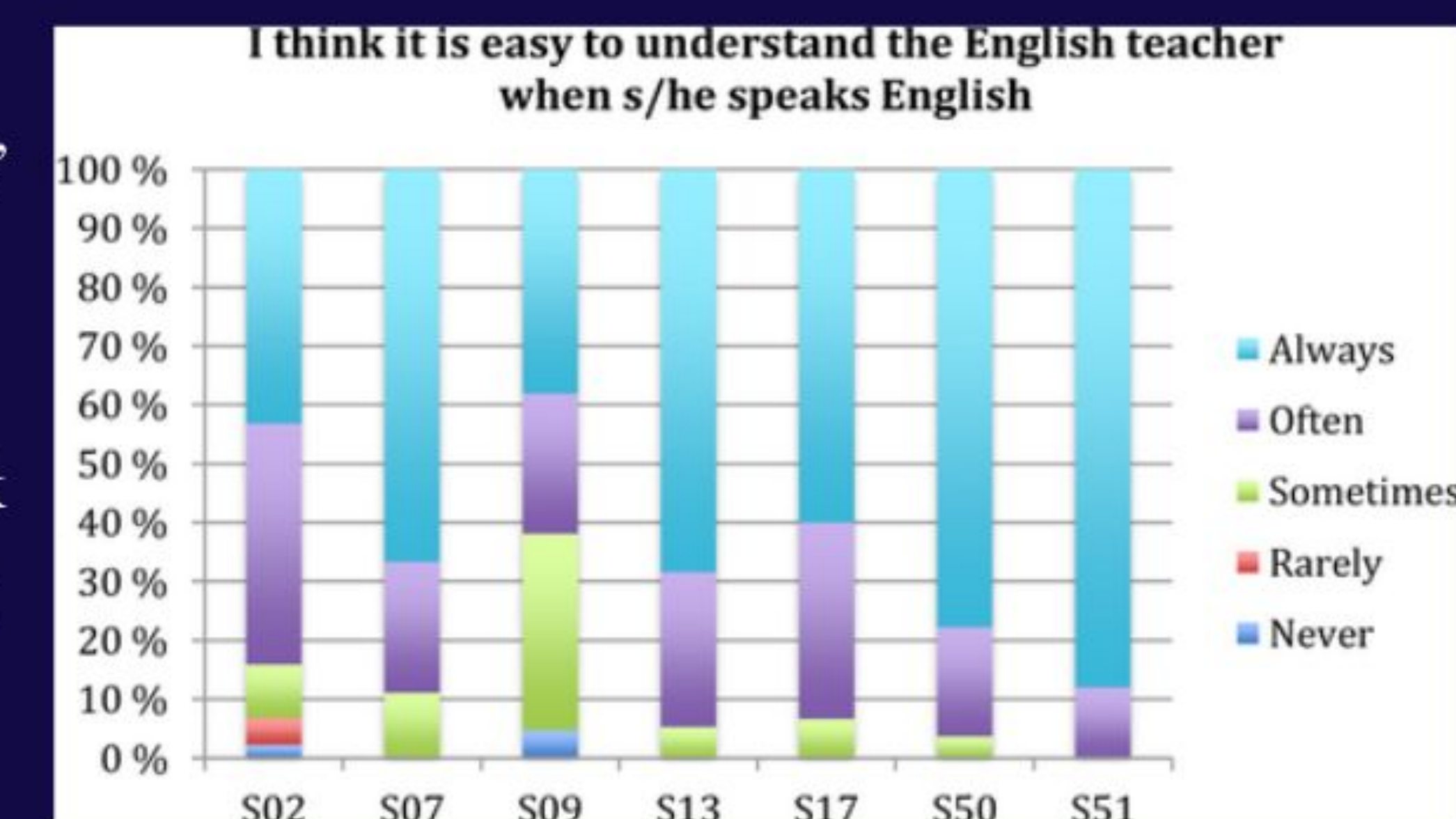


**Figure 2** Brevik, Lisbeth M & Rindal, Ulrikke. (2020). *Language Use in the Classroom: Balancing Target Language Exposure With the Need for Other Languages*. Retrieved November 17, 2022 from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/tesq.564>.

Asking whether the English teacher used Norwegian to help students understand course material; 58% of students selected often or always, 33% selected sometimes, and only 9% selected rarely or never. Illustrating that English teachers tend to use home language to help students understand the content.

## ENGLISH ONLY

- Creating an environment which allows students to be immersed in it and allowing teachers to facilitate students' use of target language
- Helping students to develop an English mindset and speak it internally in order to foster it as a regular language in their lives
- Preventing students getting accustomed to using home language as a crutch
- Encouraging them to engage English in different tasks so as to increase their familiarity with English in various contexts.



**Figure 3** Brevik, Lisbeth M & Rindal, Ulrikke. (2020). *Language Use in the Classroom: Balancing Target Language Exposure With the Need for Other Languages*. Retrieved November 17, 2022 from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/tesq.564>.

Demonstrating a survey result that 88% of all students reported that they often or always found their English teacher easy to understand when they spoke English

## CONCLUSION AND A NEW DIRECTION

Immersion learning should not be considered a way to erase one's first language. Teachers can provide an English-only section during the class discussion period while acknowledging and allowing the use of home language in the teaching section. In fact, a further concern raised by educators is how to balance target language exposure with students' first languages.



SCAN ME