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Benefits and challenges of integrating technology into the EFL curriculum:

A perspective from in- service teachers.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family especially to my mother and my siblings who have given me all the support to achieve this important goal in my life. I also dedicate it to my friends for the joys and advice that have been present all that time and that have encouraged me to complete this study.

<div align="right">Pablo Patricio</div>

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ABSTRACT

The use of technology as a tool for enhancing teaching and learning English has raised serious interest among pedagogues and especially among teachers. Therefore, this study conducted in Loja aims to determine the benefits and challenges faced by in-service teachers' when incorporating technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus in English classes in high schools. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire applied to a sample of 40 teachers from eight public and private high schools as well as through observation.

The results evidence that English teachers agree on the fact that technology is very useful to make the English classes more didactic, to promote students' involvement in the use of technology and to introduce a new teaching- learning approach supported by technology. At the same time, the study revealed that the implementation of technology in the EFL curriculum is challenging for teachers because of the poor knowledge and the lack of technological skills; as well as due to the limited availability of technological resources in high schools.

KEYWORDS: EFL curriculum, technology, benefits, challenges, in-service teachers

RESUMEN

El uso de la tecnología como herramienta para mejorar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de Inglés ha aumentado especial interés entre los pedagogos y especialmente en los maestros de Inglés. Por lo tanto, este estudio realizado en Loja tiene como objetivo determinar los beneficios y los retos que los profesores en servicio enfrentan al incorporar la tecnología en el diseño y la planificación de cursos y plan de estudios para enseñar Inglés en los colegios. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de una encuesta estructurada aplicada a una muestra de 40 profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera de 8 colegios públicos y privados, así como a través de la observación.

Los resultados evidencian que los maestros de Inglés están de acuerdo que la implementación de la tecnología en el currículo de inglés es muy útil para hacer las clases de Inglés más didácticas, para promover la participación de los estudiantes en el uso de la tecnología y para introducir un nuevo enfoque de enseñanza aprendizaje apoyado en la tecnología. Además, el estudio revela que la implementación de la tecnología es muy escaza debido a la falta de conocimiento y de habilidades tecnológicas; así como debido a la limitada disponibilidad de recursos tecnológicos en los colegios.

PALABRAS CLAVES: EFL currículo de inglés, tecnología, beneficios, retos, docentes.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, technological development and the born of internet has brought about big changes in all the fields as Henderson, Klemes, and Eshet (2000) affirm; in education, the impact is clearly evident on the way how instructors teach and how students learn. Percival (1984) as cited in Deen & Sarojani (2011) also highlights that the birth of the internet and the World Wide Web in the 1980s influenced greatly on the teaching and learning process. After the nineties, the implementation of technology in education, has been evident in almost all teaching areas such as chemistry, physics, computer science and especially in languages. In fact, the incorporation of technology for teaching English has also switched the role of the EFL teacher from a traditional perspective to a more active and student- centered approach supported by technology to cope the real students' needs of the current digital age.

Consequently, the use of technology in the EFL curriculum has become a crucial factor because of the impact that it has on the efficacy of the teaching learning process. This new perspective of technology based on curriculum has brought a lot of benefits and challenges for both teachers and students who are all required to strengthen their technological skills. Teachers need to be prepared and show the most suitable attitudes toward the use of technology in the EFL and to be highly motivated to create favorable learning environments to enhance English learning in order to be able to achieve the current demands of schooling.

Unfortunately, it seems that the use of technology in EFL classes in high school is in short supply due to different factors such as lack of access to technological resources, lack of training, among others. For this reason, it is worth to explore in depth the in-service teachers' perceptions regarding the integration of technology in the EFL curriculum. The purpose of this qualitative and quantitative research is to determine whether or not EFL in-service teachers incorporate technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English and to identify the benefits that it offers especially in the teaching and learning process by answering the following questions: Do in-service teachers

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incorporated technology in the designing and planning of EFL courses and syllabus in high schools?, What are the benefits and challenges that EFL teachers face when they want to incorporate technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English?, What barriers prevent EFL teachers to design a suitable curriculum using technology? and what are in-service teachers' perceptions on integrating technology into the EFL classroom?

The literature evidences that a lot of time and effort has been devoted to research on the field of using technological tools in EFL teaching. In this sense, Abdulwahed, Ghaleb, and Hatem (2010) decided to investigate the teachers' perceptions of both teachers of Arabic and teachers of English about the use of technology in their classes in United Arab Emirates' high schools, discovering that teachers confirmed the unavoidable impact of technology on their own teaching practices which in turn promote students' learning; the participants also agree that they lack knowledge and technological skills which challenges the implementation of technology into the EFL curriculum.

Likewise, Deen and Sarojani (2011) tried to examine Libyan English language teachers' attitudes toward integrating technology in teaching EFL students and the difficulties faced in using technology in high schools in Sebha city. The results demonstrate that most of the teachers had positive attitudes towards integrating technology in teaching EFL students, but unfortunately they faced problems related to time constrains and lack of administrative support.

Another study conducted by Buabeng (2012) aimed to review personal, institutional and technological factors that encourage teachers' use of computer technology in teaching and learning processes, discovered that on a personal level, teachers' feelings, knowledge and attitudes influence their use of ICT in teaching; while on the school level, factors such as support, funding, training and facilities influence teachers' adoption and integration of technologies into their classrooms and finally on the technological level, for successful adoption and integration of technology into teaching, teachers must perceive the technology

as a better practice to teach; consistent with their existing values, past experiences and needs.

Undoubtedly, this study will help all the educational areas where the main participants are the educational institutions as well as EFL teachers and students who are directly involved in the teaching learning process. Thus, this study will be useful because it reflects the benefits that the incorporation of technology promotes in the ELF classroom. In addition, this study reveals the factors that prevent teachers to use technology in the design and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English.

Finally, one of the limitations found in this study is that the sample includes only EFL in-service teachers' opinions. For further research, it would be useful to apply a test to the students and teachers in order to know the knowledge they actually have about the most common and updated technological tools that are now used to teach and learn English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the upcoming development of technology, language curriculum design has changed toward a technology based perspective obliging teachers to plan their courses and lessons considering the current needs of digital learners.

In this context, it is important to start defining the term curriculum design. Amin (2011) defines this term as guidance for teachers and students to know what is to be taught, for what purposes, in which context, how to implement the contents or the teaching programs and how to assess the learning based on the curriculum. Likewise, Drakos (2005) considers that the curriculum lets students to have a guide and an idea of what they will learn and how they will have progressed at the end of the course.

However, designing language curriculum is not an easy process, it requires a long period of research regarding the process and some important aspects to discover the students' needs, lacks and wants in terms of content and knowledge, in order to base the designing of the course on what learners actually need to know. In this sense, Nation and Macalister (2010) state that the process of designing a curriculum program includes components that require considerable time and commitment to find the most important issues that should be taken into account in the planning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses; those components are goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, monitoring and assessment and evaluation. Therefore, when authorities, at schools tend, to allow in-service English teachers to decide on the way how courses must be designed and conducted the results are chaotic; in this regard, Drakos (2005) says that this resolution can cause difficulties, especially for those teachers who have little or no experience teaching English and that the intended outcomes are too far to be achieved this way.

On the other hand, it is important that in-service English teachers take advantage of the current technology and keep searching for new ideas to innovate the EFL curriculum to improve the teaching-learning process. Bury (2011) states that the internet allows teachers to

have access to a world of information to find out new ideas to support the English teaching-learning process.

In the EFL context, curriculum and syllabus are the two most common terms that are widely used. There is a tendency to consider these terms, which are closely related, as to be synonyms; but; there are some aspects that differentiate them. Regarding curriculum Oliva and Ross (2001) as cited in Hismanoglu (2012) affirm that it can be defined as the knowledge, skills and values that students learn in educational setting. Meanwhile, Nation and Macalister (2010) affirm that syllabus refers to the content or matter of an individual topic. It is smaller more specific and it also should include the "what" and "how" words in order to use methodological procedures to organize the syllabus content.

The influence of technology in the EFL curriculum

Many years ago, it was considered that the first teacher's activity was based on direct instruction where teachers were the center of the teaching and learning process while students remained as spectators. But Javidi, Janfaza and Soori (2014) consider that the fast growing of technology to teach English has run to new ways of teaching and learning that can be used into the EFL classrooms and in this way change the traditional nature of the classroom. As Mangal and Mangal (2009) state that the technology has formed its roots and wings in certain distinct aspects and forms in various courses and programs related to the study and applications of educational technology into EFL courses.

In fact, technology along with its various tools must be an essential element in the planning of EFL courses that allows curriculum to be adapted, modified, and designed to meet the needs and achieve the demands of schooling today. According to Hismanoglu (2012) the invention of new available technologies and some educational programs to teach English have been the key to improve the English language instruction. Likewise, Tabari and Tabari (2014) consider that the integration of technology into the EFL curriculum involves many changes such as the use of unfamiliar materials, the creation of new types of assignments, and the invention of new ways of assessing student learning.

Opposite to what is stated above, Zimmerman (2009) considers that the use of technology in the EFL language instruction may let to the teachers manage the class from another country, create classroom material and also support the English language learning process of the students. In others words, technology must be regarded as an important tool that EFL in-service teachers should know, practice and look for training as well as the way to maintain it to get successful into the EFL classroom. Since, it is hard to motivate digital learners with traditional teaching approaches, English teachers are obligated to reinforce their teach skills to take advantages of the hundreds of online tools that are available for free in order to create the most suitable learning environments for enhancing learning.

Use of technology to enhance teaching and learning

The materials used in traditional EFL classrooms were mostly text books, workbooks, lecture notes and handouts that represent a great effectivity into the English language teaching in the past, but now they are not useful enough unless they are combined with updated technology. Morris (2011) highlights that in the last years the technology has changed every aspect of human life and the EFL classroom is no exception. As a result of this, there is the urgent need to make teachers and students aware of the importance of looking at Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as an integral part of education in the personal and professional development.

In this sense, Basal and Aytan (2014) mention that the use of technologies in educational settings in comparison with other disciplines in social sciences, it has gained a great popularity into the English language teaching. Thus, technology may help teachers as well as the learners providing them appropriate media and methods available on the internet to present a different and interactive English language instruction.

Therefore, Moqbel and Rao (2013) affirm that technology is an effective instructional support in the education because based on the utility from its various tools and applications, it has been integrated as a mean to assure success in EFL classroom. The use of technology benefits teachers and students in a wide range of aspects starting from the

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development of autonomy, creativity, innovation, cooperative learning, critical thinking and other aspects that involve learners in active and integral development. That is why Başal and Aytan (2014) claim that the technology needs to be used properly by the teacher in line with the objectives of the language lesson, after a careful planning.

In addition, Mangal and Mangal (2009) mention that in the context of teaching the term technology refers to the use of technological equipment, materials and machines for educational purposes. Thus, it is necessary to take proper decision in terms of the selection of the most useful technological developments that contribute with the English language instruction.

In this sense, teachers need to choose and make use of hundreds of technological tools available on the internet that let them create a more engaging, interactive and motivating teaching and learning environments. The authors also assert that most of that technologies are represented by a complex range of hardware and software approaches that involve a great range of technological tools appropriate to the English language instruction from which teachers and students can benefit in a surprising way.

Educational Technology

Generally speaking Educational technology deals with the selection, development, organization, evolution and use of appropriate technological tools and resources to facilitate the teaching and learning process. According to Bagheri and Abdolrahimzadeh (2015) educational technology supports the teaching and learning environment or even promotes some modifications in education particularly in the English language instruction.

Educational technology is not limited to software, hardware as well as internet applications and activities. Therefore, it implies: hardware and software approaches.

Hardware approach and educational tools

Some sophisticated equipment and gadgets such as computers-laptops, smart boards, overhead projectors, pocket electronic dictionaries, microphones, headphones, radio, digital CDs-DVDs and all the teaching machines may mean a high value in order to be

part of the technological advancement in the world of communication for educational purposes. Silverman (1968) as cited in Mangal and Mangal (2009) mentions that this type of technological tools have its origin in physical sciences and applied engineering to the education.

Although, almost all the material and equipment of hardware approach originally belong to other areas of education, they are borrowed and utilized for English educational purposes. Indeed, the most common are: computers, smart boards, overhead projectors, electronic pocket dictionaries, radios, digital CDs-DVDs and microphones and headphones.

The use of computers has gradually influenced the social and work lives, as well as many of the leisure activities. Nim and Son (2009) state that the extensive use of computers at educational institutions have had a critical influence on scholastic environments along with the impact of the internet worldwide. Similarity, Moqbel and Rao (2013) highlight that computers plays a central role in making the learning environment more motivating, encouraging, and interesting. In this sense, it is necessary to consider that in order to take a great support from this tool, EFL teachers need to get involved in the technological world in which as Harmer (2001) points out the use of computers allow teachers to reproduce languages software packages (often supplied on CD-ROM) providing students the chance to study digital conversations, texts, learn the four English skills, vocabulary or even to listen texts, music, watch videos and record their own voices.

Unfortunately, computers are not widely integrate in all EFL classroom for many reasons. Nim and Son (2009) mention that one of the most common cause for not using computers include: limited class hours, inconvenience of using computer facilities and technical problems such as slow internet connectivity.

Lately, another technological tool like smart board or interactive whiteboards are shown to be an exciting and fun tool that is currently integrated into the EFL courses. Gérard and Widener (2013) define a smart board as a touch sensitive electronic machine that works together with a computer and a projector. According to Ahmad (2012) smart boards support

the teaching process in three main ways, it supports interaction and conversation in the classroom, it promotes the organizational of oral skills and it helps with the presentation of new cultural and linguistic elements.

In this sense, Javidi, Janfaza and Soori (2014) mention that smart boards are able to support communication in combination of other wireless keyboards because when students face a new word while they read, the teacher may enters the new word into the keyboard, then it will appear on the board. For Ahmad (2012) the smart boards also may enhance oral interaction because that tool enables students to speak without having to worry about the mouse, now the simple touch of a finger can produce pictures and text or a wed document appear easily.

As smart boards present a new linguistic and cultural elements, Gérard and Widener (2013) affirm that if teachers design a lesson as usual in a notebook file or word document, by using smart boards, they may present that file where now it can save, overwrite, underline, highlight or circle elements that teachers wants to emphasize during the EFL classes.

In addition, the implementation of certain tools are producing a high effect on the design and planning courses and syllabus to teach English. An overhead projector can not lack in all EFL classrooms. That is why Harmer (2001) claims that the overhead projectors are extremely useful pieces of equipment to enhance the English learning, they allow users to prepare visual or demonstration material and they also require little technical knowledge and usually are easy to carry around. Ginsburg (2010) also considers that using overhead projectors, students are easily fascinated, student's participation increases, users are more mobile instead of plant themselves at the front, notes are more visible, legible and they can be recycled easily.

On the other hand, electronic pocket dictionaries are another tools that may contribute to the English language instruction. According to Midlane (2005) portable electronic dictionaries are pocket-sized devices which can easily be carried by teachers and

students to use in the classroom or for providing day to day language support and translation.

Similarity, Jian, Sandnes, Law and Huang (2009) state that in recent years many electronic dictionaries are supported the languages instructions. That is why they are being made and equipped with USB device, full color and touch sensitive displays where the users can enjoy of many videos as well as of multimedia language training games. Allowing to the users get an interactive English learning.

Although, it is reflected that some audio technological tools also contribute to improve the English teaching and learning process. For Ali (2011) the radio is a powerful audio tool that allows students to get instruction from different educational broadcasts that are designed as radio lesson to achieve teaching objectives. Sometimes EFL teachers associate the radio together with audiotapes and digital CDs-DVDs to provide audio or video programs for promote listening and writing materials. Therefore, Harmer (2001) affirms that audio players are one of the most common equipment used to teach English, since that most textbooks are supplemented with audiotapes or digital CDs-DVDs to do some listening English activities.

Nevertheless, it is considered that technological tools as microphones and headphones also work together with others audio tools.; for example, in an English lab, computers as well as microphones and headphones allow another interactive and didactic way to develop any exercise, allowing students to practice their English skills in an interactive way.

Software approach and educational tools

In educational technology, the software approach is another scientific principle that also contribute widely with English teaching and learning. According to Mangal and Mangal (2009) it has its origin in behavioral sciences that make reference to the applications of the psychology of learning to practical teaching problems, principles of teaching and learning conditions. Likewise, Macwan (2014) mentions that there are a variety of software

innovations such as: applications, programs, social media networks and websites, which contribute with the English language instruction.

Thus, Zakaria (2009) claims that in the last 10 years, the introduction and the development of the internet have had considerable and positive implication into the English language instruction allowing that the EFL teachers can innovate and create new context regarding to schooling of today. In the same way, Zhang (2013) states that the internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) serve as a platform to facilitate the English teaching and learning and provide a great software applications for conducting classes and develop EFL course materials.

As on the internet many software tools are available and can be accessed in wherever and at any time. Yagci (2014) affirms that in order to change the traditional way into the EFL teachers lesson plans' perspectives, teachers can integrate some social media tools in the classroom such as Facebook, YouTube, E-mails, Blogs, Wikis, Word clouds etc.

Consequently, Facebook can play a different educational instructional function. Al-Shehri (2011) indicates that Facebook can enables online interactions between teachers and students both inside and outside of their teaching and learning system, allowing and maintaining the students centered learning environments. As Facebook also brings students the opportunity to enhance their writing skills, Bani-Hani, Al-Sobh and Abu-Melhim (2014) mention that Facebook allows users an interactive way of online English conversations in an individual way or in groups.

On the contrary, in order to search for interactive and educational English songs, videos, conversations or debates; Mayora (2009) states that YouTube is a free online video sharing social network because its potential to provide countless hours of videos based on spoken English, it has been welcomed by EFL teachers and students as well.

E-mails are another tool that widely contributed to the teaching and learning process; Saleem (2014) considers that E-mails are the mother of the all applications. The author affirms that Emails can be means of real communication in the target language; together with

internet, laptops or mobile phones, it can engage students in activities away from the monotonous nature of a traditional EFL classrooms.

Blogs also represent a great open ground of information in terms of English instruction. According to Wu (2008) a blog is a web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal writing paper. Güttler (2011) considers that using blogs EFL teachers can select links or articles to inspire students to research the class and also offer daily reading practice activities; learners can practice their writing by using, creating or constructing their own blog for a small group. These conditions allow the teachers and students work together in an autonomous, innovative and cooperative way to effectively reach the learning or the goals.

EFL teachers and students also can use wikis in order to change the traditional teaching mechanisms to potentially increase the English language skills. Singman (2014) points out that wikis permit to create new classroom environment and have new and interactive ways of communication between teachers and among students. Wikis present some advantages to the English language instruction such as; promote collaborative writing and projects, provide open and save writing works, allow non-liner text structure, provide feedback and provide a simple editing environment (Ahmadi, 2014; Marandi, 2014).

The word clouds software application are another kind of tool that also support the English language instruction. Baralt, Pennestri and Selvandin (2011) define word clouds, as a visual representation of word frequency and that size of each word in a cloud depends on how many times it appears inside of the text.

According to Tafazoli, Chirimbu and Dejica (2014) word clouds benefit the four English skills in the following way:

For *Listening*, the Word clouds allow a pre-listening stage, learning can focusing on the topic, achieving knowledge and proving clear view about what they are going to do.

For *Speaking* it provides word clouds before and during the speaking prevent pauses and stops because learners are benefits from the vocabulary that is exactly relevant to the topic.

For *Reading,* Word clouds can be used as part of pre-reading activity and in this way they help learners to prepare for any task and motivate them to read.

For *Writing,* Word clouds can be used as brainstorms, proving some relevant vocabulary to easily create a word order, speech, questions, sentences, phrase or any writing activity.

Additionally, it is important to analyze that some tools such as text chat, audio-video chat and conferencing are involved in some software applications. Thus, Başal and Aytan (2014) presented a list of software tools where it is appreciated resources such as: *www.voxopop.com* (Listening). It is a web page based on audio tools that allows users to record their speaking voices. Teachers and students can use this tool for discussions, conversations, debates, etc., contributing to the participation of those students who are shy or indisposed to participate in class discussions.

For Speaking *vialogues.com* is a tool for creating a video-based discussion. Teachers can use this tool to create lessons around video, they can add surveys and quizzes and comment on the video lesson where students now can post comments related with the video.

The *www.livebinders.com* (Reading) is a tool used for collecting internet resources. Teachers can prepare a guided tour on the internet related to the contents or subject that will be studied based on the teachers' lesson plans.

Sscoop.it is a tool by which you can publish online publications like an online magazine; teachers can use this tool in a variety of ways including classroom projects. With this tools is simple to create a professional-look online magazine.

Finally, *google drive* (Writing). It is a service for loading and keeping all kinds of documents where teachers can create quizzes and lessons including multimedia elements by using google forms and they can also use document section of google drive for collaborative projects where students also can participate.

On the other hand, in order to bring dynamism and interactivity into the language teaching and learning environment. Online education has now promoted the attention of the

EFL teachers and learners with its open and available educational tools to get English instruction. For teachers and students open English courses has been offering a particular way of learn no matter where they are. Winke (2014) mentions that open English courses are especially important for busy, fully employed people who might travel a lot, study out of the country and for those people who cannot attend classes.

In other words, it can say that hardware approach is more concerned with the production and utilization of audio-visual aid material, sophisticated instruments, gadgets and mass media for helping the teachers and learners to achieve better results inside the teaching and learning process. While software approach tries to exploit the psychology of learning of the production and utilization of software and material in terms of learning materials, teaching-learning strategies, tools of evaluation, and other devices to strengthen the English teaching and learning process.

Benefits and challenges of using technology into the EFL classrooms

Considering that the English as a foreign language involves a variety of teaching approaches, methods and techniques, EFL in-service teachers and students are facing a revolutionary educational process that pushes them to be part of a new style of English language instruction. For this reason, it is important to reflect about the extraordinary advances that widely the technology based in the English language instruction has had.

It is a well-known fact that in the recent years, the use of technology has gained popularity into the educational settings. In this sense, there is a great educational field where some authors point out and confirm that the use of technology helps and contributes with the EFL teaching and learning process. According to Basal and Aytan (2014) technology in educational settings has certain benefits into EFL classroom such as: increase motivation, decrease anxiety, foster more student centered activities, enrich learning and teaching environments and provide students with authentic materials and audiences.

As technology has had a great impact into EFL classroom. Zimmerman (2009) affirms that nowadays almost all teachers have internet access in their office or at home. Thus, they

can be in another country and from there manage the class, or reproduce and create classroom material. Saleh and Sa'ad (2013) also consider that using technology, students can learn faster and easier in anytime as well as anywhere, facilitating an active role of students learning.

However, the integration of technology into the English language teaching present some challenges that EFL teachers as well as students need to face in order to get a successful English language instruction. For Mcdougald (2005) one of those challenges is that the teachers need to create accurate materials that allow students to learn the contents easily, because today many of the books, cassettes, videos and CDs are usually out to the digital age that students are facing.

Additionally, Macwan (2014) considers that the technical audio-visual aids such as computers, videos, overhead projection, and instruments, will stimulate the greatest number of senses because the author considers that the best learning takes place when the greatest number of senses is stimulated.

On the other hand, it is important to consider that the integration of technology into EFL classroom also depends on teachers' training and professional development towards the use of technology.

Teachers' training in Information and Communication technology

According to Pourhosein and Leong (2012) the International Society for Technology and Education (2001) demonstrates that relatively few teachers (20%) report feeling well prepared to integrate technology into EFL classroom instruction. That is why some of EFL in-service teachers lament the fact that the availability of technologies as the internet does not automatically translate into better learning experiences, particularly when students and teachers training are lacking. Therefore, Tognozzi as cited in Tabari and Tabari (2014) affirms that the bad use of the technology into EFL classroom depends on an inadequate training, the fear of computers, the lack of technical knowledge, as well as issues of

intellectual property are among the reasons which prevent teachers from using computers as language-learning tools.

Into an EFL perspective and taking into account that technology is constantly changing, it is deliberated that technological changes can create confusion and fear among educators. Thus, Saleh, Hassan and Sa'ad (2013) state that it is important to train teachers with technological support that allow them to have a clear idea about when, what and where to use the technological tools because it is important that it can stablish a balance between the teacher time and computer time as well as teacher role and computer role. In other words, EFL teachers' training should allow them to find out solutions for the some educational problems that can be appear inside of the EFL classroom where them may be considered as mediators, facilitators and evaluators to the teaching and learning process based on technological usage.

Teachers' Professional development

A great professional development can facilitate teachers an efficient and successful way to implement technology into the EFL classes. As it is not considered as an educational method, Garrett (1991) as cited in Kuo (2008) affirms that professional development is a medium in which a variety of teaching approaches learning strategies, and pedagogical philosophies should be implemented in the EFL classroom by teachers. According to Saleh, Hassan and Sa'ad (2013) a successful integration of technology needs to address three interlocking frameworks for change: the school, the teacher and EFL language policy.

In this context, the educational institutions can play a key role to equip and prepare EFL teachers and students to face the digital era. Hismanoglu (2012) affirms that the teachers need opportunities to develop suitable instructional strategies and encounter circumstances where they can practice and reflect on the pedagogy of using technology in the EFL classroom. Thus, if educators get an intensive and satisfactory professional development, they are the last ones who decide the way in which technology will be implemented in the designing and planning courses and syllabus to teach English.

Consequently, Mandinach (1992) as cited in Ireh (2006) highlights that in order to achieve a successful implantation of the technology; teachers need to face four stages: survival, mastery, impact and innovation.

In the *Survival* stage, teachers need to struggle with technology, that involve management problems as, achieve that 30 students can work with few computers.

In the *Masters stage,* teachers need to be tolerant with the hardware and software problems because they begin to use new forms of interaction with students and classroom practices.

In the *Impact stage,* teachers need to aware that they will incorporate new working relationships based on the classroom structures.

In the *Innovation stage,* teachers modify their classroom environment to take full advantages of technology enhanced EFL curriculum and learning activities.

In the same way, based on the EFL language policy, it is considered that languages instruction should meet the demands that the schooling of today requires. According to Smith, Vellenga, Parker and Butler (2006) EFL policy accredit that EFL institutions critically review and change their curriculum in terms of accessibility (to learning) and accountability (of skills and knowledge).

Regarding the use of technology in language teaching different studies have been conducted in order to analyze the different points of view about the EFL teachers' opinions on the use of technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English. Among those studies, there was one conducted by Lidice and Sert (2012) with the purpose of analyzing EFL in-service teachers' perceptions about the use of technology in classroom practice in terms of its usefulness, advantages and disadvantages, integration and skills development as well as teachers' views on institutional support at one of the foundation universities located on the Asian side of Istanbul.

To conduct this study the authors used semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires to elicit the opinions of the participants in the form of written documents and

files notes. The open-ended questionnaire was distributed to nine English language teachers. Additionally, interviews were applied to encourage the participants to make open-ended comments on relevant points about their views and experiences of using technology in their teaching. In these sections, all the questions was focused on the areas highlighting participants' perceptions of technology integrated language teaching, whether or not they used technology in their classes, in what of activities and their views on students' perceptions related to technology use. Additionally, a 50 minutes intermediate level class with 14 students was observed to see the use of technology by teachers as well as students.

Results indicated that respondents had positive views about the role of educational technology for improving language instructions; they also acknowledged that the challenges faced and emphasized the need for training not for teachers but also for students. At the end of this study, it is concluded that EFL teachers make use of technology to encourage students to construct knowledge, expose students to life-long learning skills and strategies to existing on-line sources, help students who have different learning styles, find out teaching materials and create a motivation environment that is conductive for learning.

Capan (2012) conducted another study where it is intended to explore Turkish EFL teachers' attitudes towards computer use in the classroom. It also examined the relationships between teachers' attitudes and other factors including their perceptions of computer attributes, cultural, computer competence, and computer access. The data were collected through a computer attitude scale developed by Albirini (2006). The scale consisted of five subscales including computer attitudes scale, computer attributes scale, cultural perceptions scale, computer competence and computer access scale. Moreover, a demographic information segment is added to the scale.

The scale was completed online because the participants accessed to their personal e-mail where the questionnaire was uploaded. Findings, in this study show that Turkish EFL teachers had significant positive attitudes and perceptions towards language learning through computer use. Also, it was concluded that the participants were positively inclined to

accept and integrate computer applications into their teaching practices as they were identified with significant positive behavioral attitudes towards computers.

On the other hand, Baniabdelrahman (2013) aimed a study to examine the effect of using internet tools daily diaries on the EFL Saudi Arabia first year university students' speaking proficiency. In this study was considered tow male and two female classroom sections (20 participants in each group). The cluster random sampling method was used in the study. One male and one female classroom sections were randomly assigned to be the experimental group and the other two sections were assigned to be the control group.

Likewise, an equivalent proficiency test was developed by the researcher, it was considered as pre and post-test and it was used twice: one before the study started and one at the end of the study. The purpose of the pre-test was to ensure the equivalence of the experimental and control groups before the study started while the purpose of the post-test was to assess the students' ability in speaking toward the end of the study and to compare the results of the experimental group with the results of the control group. The test considered the description of charts, figures, pictures and demonstration or role cards.

It was found that the use of oral dairies with the first year university students helped significantly to increase their participation and their motivation in English classes since using the cell phone to record, students can send their daily diaries to the teachers, this tool offered students the opportunity to practice their language skills anywhere without the need for prior preparation.

Schoepp (2002) conducted another study at the English Language Center, Zayed University, Dubai, UAE aimed at investigating the relationships between EFL teachers' use of technology, concerns of technology, and the perceived barriers to the implementation for English teaching.

The methodology used to gather date was a web-based survey where through the use of a password; each participant had access to the survey. Thus, the survey contained 110 items approximately, and was available for a period of one month. Reminder emails

were sent to the participants after an initial presentation at a staff meeting. The results showed that there were no significant difference between gender and computer use, and also the analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrates no significant difference between years of Zayed teaching experience and stage of concern.

The last study conducted by Rahimi (2011) aimed to investigate the level of Information and Communication technology (ICT) used in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). It also explored the effects of EFL teachers' personal and technology related characteristics in ICT use in the English classes.

Additionally, two hundred and forty eight full time Iranian EFL teachers participated in the study from schools on one metropolitan city in Iran. In order to collect data, the researchers elaborated some instruments such as; a personal information questionnaire, computer anxiety scale, computer attitudes questionnaire, ICT use rating scale and computer literacy questionnaire, all of them was applied to the participants.

Finally, the results of this study revealed that digital portable devices were used more than computer or network applications and tools in English classes. It was also found that ICT are associated inversely with teachers' age, years of teaching experience, and computer anxiety. It was concluded that the ICT use was correlated inversely positively and significant related to teachers' academic credentials, computer ownership, literacy and use; while ICT use was not related to attitude and gender.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

The present research was conducted in Loja, Ecuador with the participation of 40 in-service English teachers from eight high schools which were randomly selected in the following way; 20 teachers from public high schools and 20 from private high schools of the city of Loja. Teachers have an English degree and their teaching experience is from 1 to 20 years teaching English as a foreign language in high schools. The participants included males and females and their age ranged from 24 and 50 years.

Procedures

In order to ground this study in theory, literature about the role of technology in the teaching of English as a foreign language and the changes and benefits of introducing technology in the English curriculum design was widely reviewed and analyzed from a variety of sources such as journals, articles, online books and printed books.

The qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyze and interpret the data gathered in the field research. A questionnaire was applied to forty EFL in-service teachers from public and private high schools of the city of Loja. The teachers' questionnaire aimed to know their opinions about the use of technology in the EFL classroom as well as to determine if technology is incorporated in designing and planning courses and syllabus to teach English. Additionally, sixteen EFL classes were randomly observed. Thus, from a number of eight high schools, it was applied two observations in each one. The purpose of the observation sheets were to gather information in order to revel if teachers use technology in the English classes and at the same way to contrast the data collected in the questionnaires.

The questionnaire contained eleven and the observation sheet eight questions respectively. Those questions were based on aspects such as: the use of technology in the English classes, factors that prevent EFL teachers to use technology in the EFL curriculum,

the technological tools that educational institutions have available, EFL teachers training to use technology and about the importance of technological tools to teach English.

The data gathered was statistically analyzed and presented in graphs. The qualitative and quantitative findings were analyzed and compared to provide rich and validated findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn to answer the research questions while recommendations were suggested to overcome the barriers that EFL teachers face when they design and plan their courses and syllabus to teach English.

DISCUSSION

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

This section presents the description, analysis and interpretation of the results organized per questions. This information was gathered through the questionnaire and supported based on the observation sheets of the EFL classes as well as on the scientific information and previous studies about the topic to determine the teachers' perceptions on the benefits and challenges that they face when incorporating technology into the EFL curriculum.

Do you include technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English?

Graph Nº 1
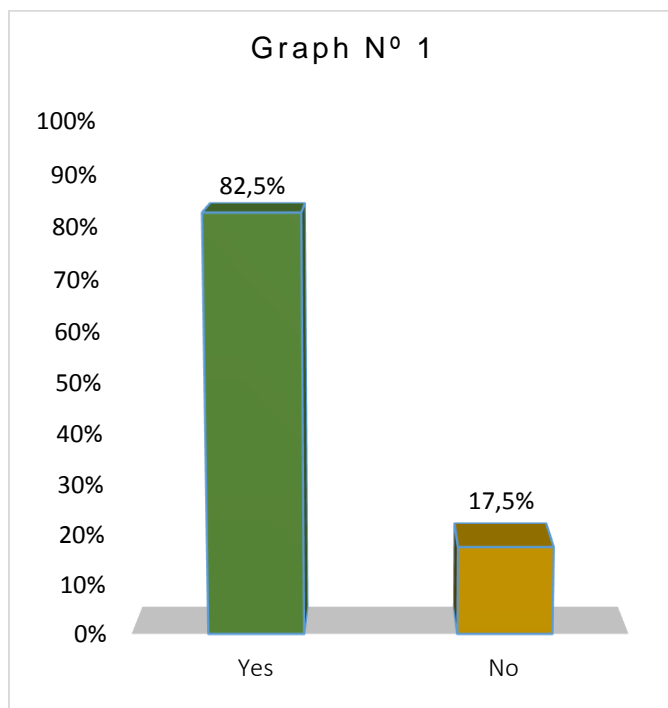
Author: Pablo Quezada
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' responses regarding the implementation of technology when designing and planning courses and syllabus for teaching English, as shown in graph 1, reflect that 82.5% of them include technology as opposed to a 17.5% of them who say that they do not include technology into the EFL curriculum.

However, the researcher found through observation that in 7 classes, out of 16, the use of technology was only limited to the use of laptops and internet in order to perform some English exercises and activities, this reality observed in English classes in the researched high schools contradicts what Alsied and Pathan (2013) affirm regarding technology, who highlight that with the advent of computer technology EFL instruction has led to significant changes in teachers' approaches, methodologies and strategies to teaching foreign language like English thus, they have strongly recommended its use to get effectiveness and dynamics inside or outside of the EFL classroom, the results also contradict what the majority of teachers answered in the questionnaires, who said they actually use technology in their classes. In this sense, results indicate that they already integrated technology in the designing and planning of courses to teach English. That is why; they are convinced that by using technology English teaching and learning will be more innovative, dynamic, interactive and easy for learners.

Do you think that the integration of technology in the EFL curriculum is useful?

Graph Nº 2
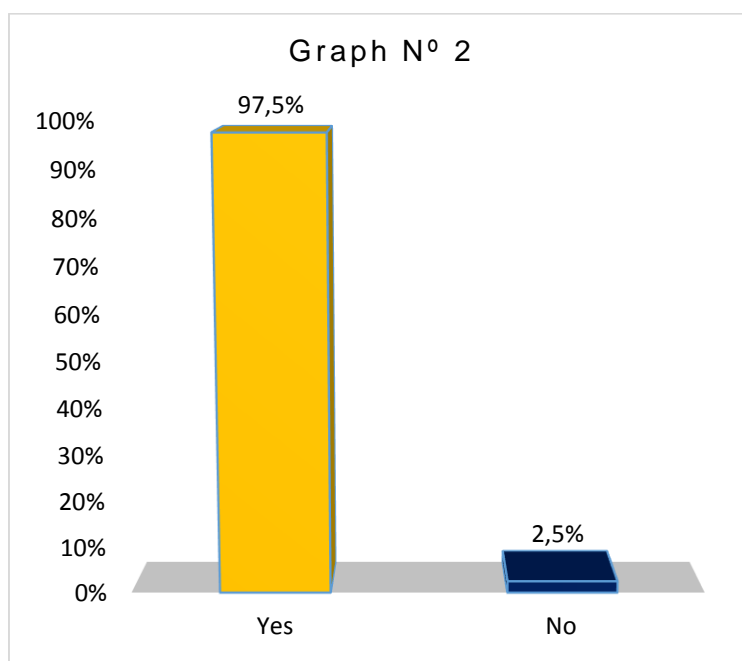
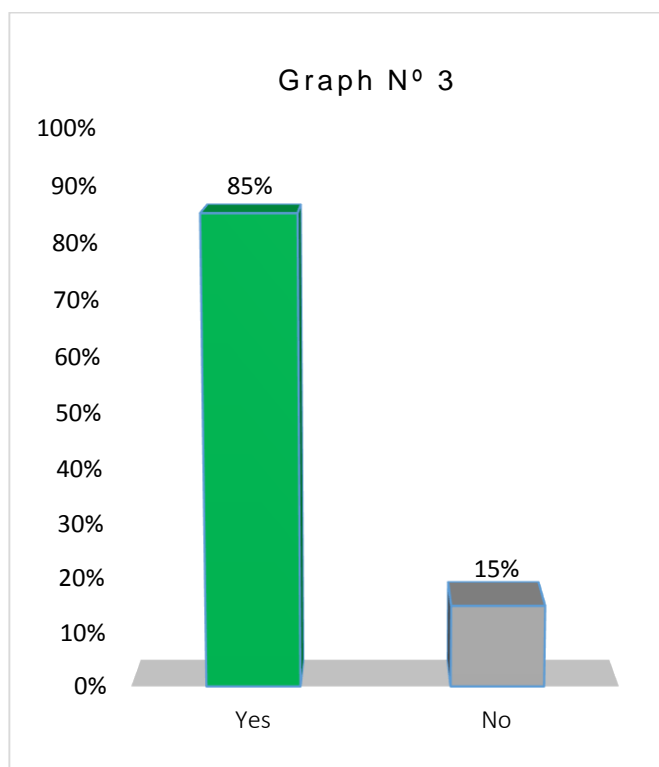Author: Pablo Quezada
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Regarding the question aimed at determining if EFL teachers consider that the integrating of technology into EFL classes is useful, the results presented in graph 1 show

that 97.5% of teachers definitely think that the technology is very useful to teach English. Concerning this aspect Moqbel and Rao (2013) also affirm that technology has been integrated as a mean to assure success in EFL classroom. Nevertheless, it was observed that little or no technology was used to support the English teaching process because the majority of teachers just used laptops and Internet as support to teach English, which is good but is not enough to favor the learning of this language in the digital area where there is an countless number of technological tools and free resources that teacher may use to make English learning more effective.

On the other hand, 2.5% of the respondents, which represent just one teacher, believe that technology is not useful in the EFL teaching learning process; this seems to be because of the lack of technological skills which made this experienced teacher rely on his traditional pedagogical believes up to the point to consider that the technology is not necessary to support the English classes and that rather, it is dangerous because it can substitute EFL teachers. Nevertheless, Hismanoglu (2012) affirms that the invention of new available technologies and some educational programs to teach English have been the key to improve the English language instruction.

The teachers' perceptions concerning the utility of technology in English classes are in line with what Harmer (2001) highlights, who thinks that there is a variety of technological tools which definitely enhance learning because they are useful to expose students to the language, to support English learning in a better way, and to provide an ideal environment to develop all the language skills including listening, reading, speaking and writing. Nola (2011) also states that using technological tools, learners can improve their language proficiency because technology shows to be an affective instructional support in the education specially to teach English

Have you had training in the use of technology for teaching English?

Author: Pablo Quezada
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

As it is shown in this graph 3, a percentage of 85% of the teachers answered that they have had training in the use of the technology. However, it was observed that in spite of the fact that they are aware of the importance tech tools have to facilitate the English teaching (as they pointed out in the items before mentioned), they did not show to feel confident using tools like computers and mobile phones into the EFL curriculum; therefore the implementation of technology in the classes was limited. In fact, the integration of technology requires teachers to be familiar with computers, get technical knowledge and get involved in many changes. Tabari and Tabari (2014) consider that the incorporation of technology also requires the use of unfamiliar materials, the creation of new types of assignments, and the invention of new ways of assessing student learning. Based on the International Society for Technology and Education, Pourhosein and Leong (2012) affirm that relatively few teachers (20%) report feeling well prepared to integrate technology in the EFL

classroom; this proves that this phenomenon is present not only in Ecuador, and that teachers need to learn more about educational.

Graph 3 also shows that 15% of the respondents answered that they have not had any training course or workshop to start using technology in their teaching. Effectively in the class observations, the researcher could determine that only few of EFL teachers have general knowledge of technology while the majority did not demonstrate to know how applying technology in their English classes. Thus, it is important to say that if neither teachers nor the students are trained to use technology, they will not benefit from the advantages that it offers to guarantee better learning experiences.

Does the institution where you work have any technological tool?

Graph Nº 4
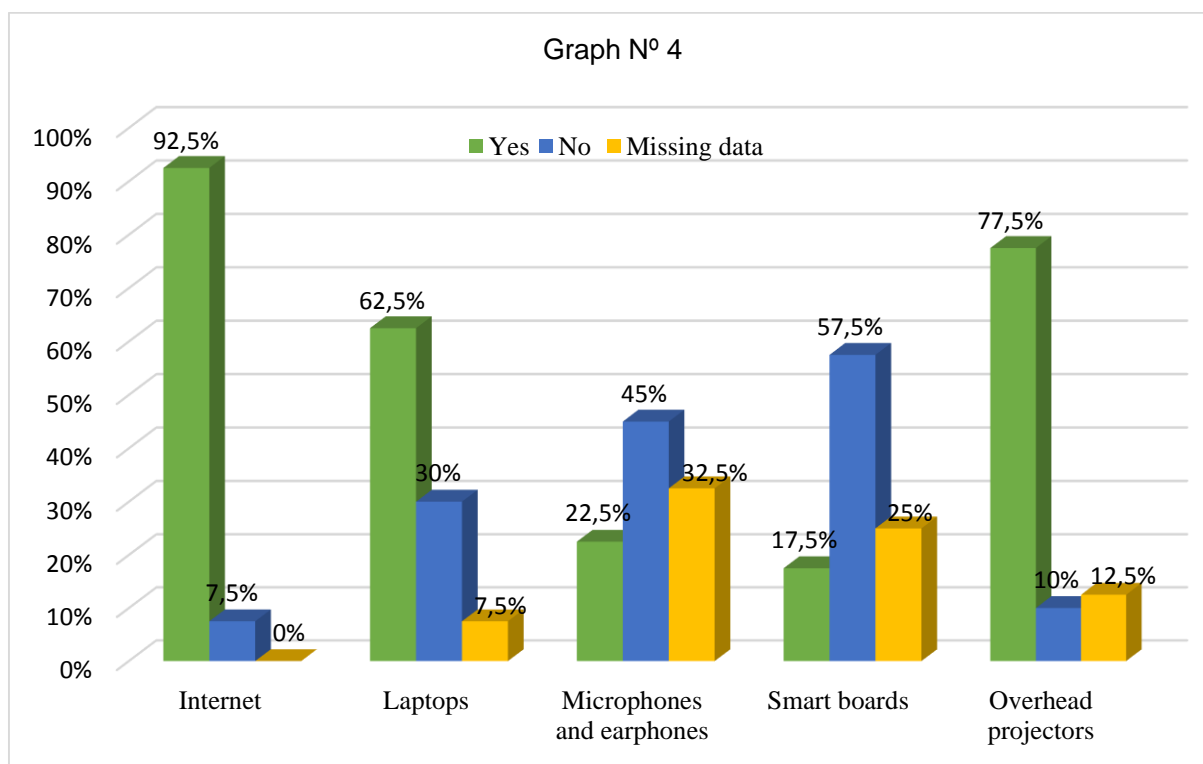
Author: Pablo Quezada
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Regarding the teachers' perceptions about the availability of technology in the EFL classroom, it was determined that the educational institutions have technological tools that can be used for teaching English. Graphic 4 shows that in high schools where teachers work, they have tools such as: internet, laptops and projectors. In this sense, 92.5% of the participants reveal that they have internet access at high school while 7.5 % of them said that

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there is not internet access. Which is positive, since the use of internet has been supported the education especially in the area of languages. Zakaria (2009) states that in the last 10 years, the introduction of the internet into the English language instruction has allowed EFL teachers innovating and creating new teaching and learning paradigms regarding to schooling of today.

Similarity, 65.5% of the surveyed demonstrated that the educational institutions have laptops to teach English while 30% of them revealed that there are no laptops. Concerning this aspect, it is important to mention that in the majority of the observations, it was noticed that just in the English laboratory teachers as well as students have access to computers. Also, it was identified that in the high schools there are excessive number of students, teachers pointed out that they used computers twice a month. As during the observations, it was noted that computers along with the internet were the tools that sometimes were used by teachers. Moqbel and Rao (2013) consider that computers are the most effective instructional tool to teach English that allow to make the learning environment more motivating, encouraging, and interesting. Similarity, Nim and Son (2009) affirm that along with the impact of Internet, computers have had a critical influence on scholastic environments. In fact, teachers should take advantage of the digital age that students are facing.

Additionally, this graph shows that 77.5% of teachers confirmed that in high schools there are projectors while 10% of them reveal that there is not this tool. Thus, as EFL courses may be great improved by using overhead projectors, Ginsburg (2010) mentions that using this tool students are easily fascinated, student's participation increases, users are more interactive instead of standing in front of the class, notes are more visible, legible and they can be recycled easily. Moreover, 45% of the participants consider that in the high schools where they work do not have microphones and earphones but 22.5% of them affirm that there is this kind of tools. In addition, 57.5% of the surveyed teachers demonstrate that high schools do not have smart boards while for 17.5% of them there are smart boards but

during the observations, it was noticed that none of the high schools have smart boards. Likewise, when the English classes were observed, it was proved that the most high schools had internet, computers and projectors, but these tools were not used frequently during the EFL classes and teachers mentioned that these tools do not work very well. Nim and Son (2009) highlight that the problem of using computers is related with the services and technical problems such as slow Internet connections. It this case, it is important to mention that it is something that often happens in many educational institutions.

How do you categorize your technological skills?

Graph Nº 5
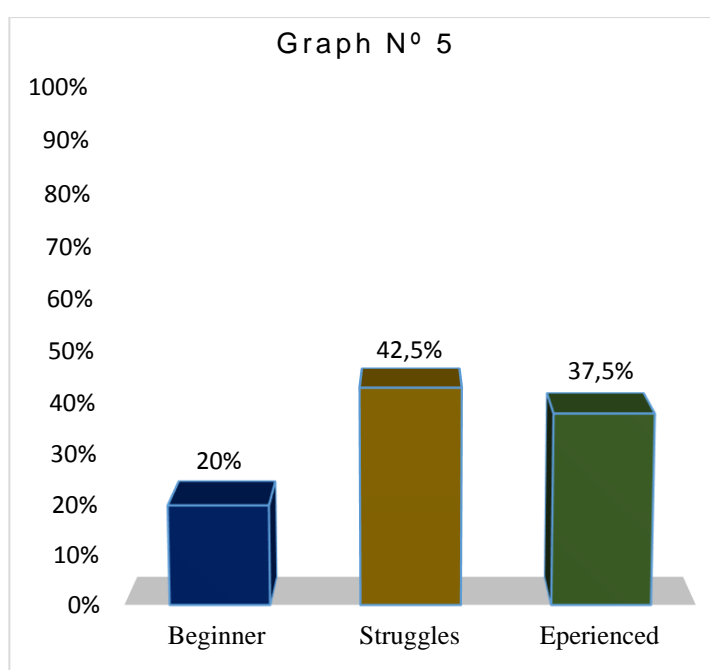
This question was aimed to identify the teachers' perceptions about how they catalog their technological skills. According to teachers' responses, graph 5 shows that 20% of teachers answered that their knowledge for running technological tools is considered as beginners. In this sense, teachers need to be convinced that the use of those tools do not constitute an educational method. Garrett (1991) as cited in Kuo (2008) asserts that it is a medium in which a variety of teaching approaches learning strategies, and pedagogical philosophies are implemented in the EFL classroom by teachers. Consequently, the higher percentage represented by 42.5% reveals that participants consider that they are

experienced to use technology. In addition, this graph also shows that 37.5% of the

participants feel that they are experimented to use technological tools in the English courses;

but these aspects challenge with what was observed in the English classes because it could

be appreciated that teachers did not show a considerable aptitude for running some basic

technological tools such as Internet, computers, mobile phones and sometimes the overhead

projectors.

Likewise, in just twice teachers used some web pages where they share with their

students, extra activities and exercises in order to reinforce the studied contents in the class.

Thus, it reflects that teachers do not have enough experience to use technology. For this

reason, it is consider that teachers were limited to use it. In other words, it is important to say

that teachers should be well prepared in order to face the digital age especially in the English

language instruction, Banas (2010) affirms that educators have to look for technological,

pedagogical and content knowledge instruction that allow them to be part of a new teaching

and learning style based on the use of technological tools.

How important do you think that the following items based on the incorporation of technology in the English curriculum design are?
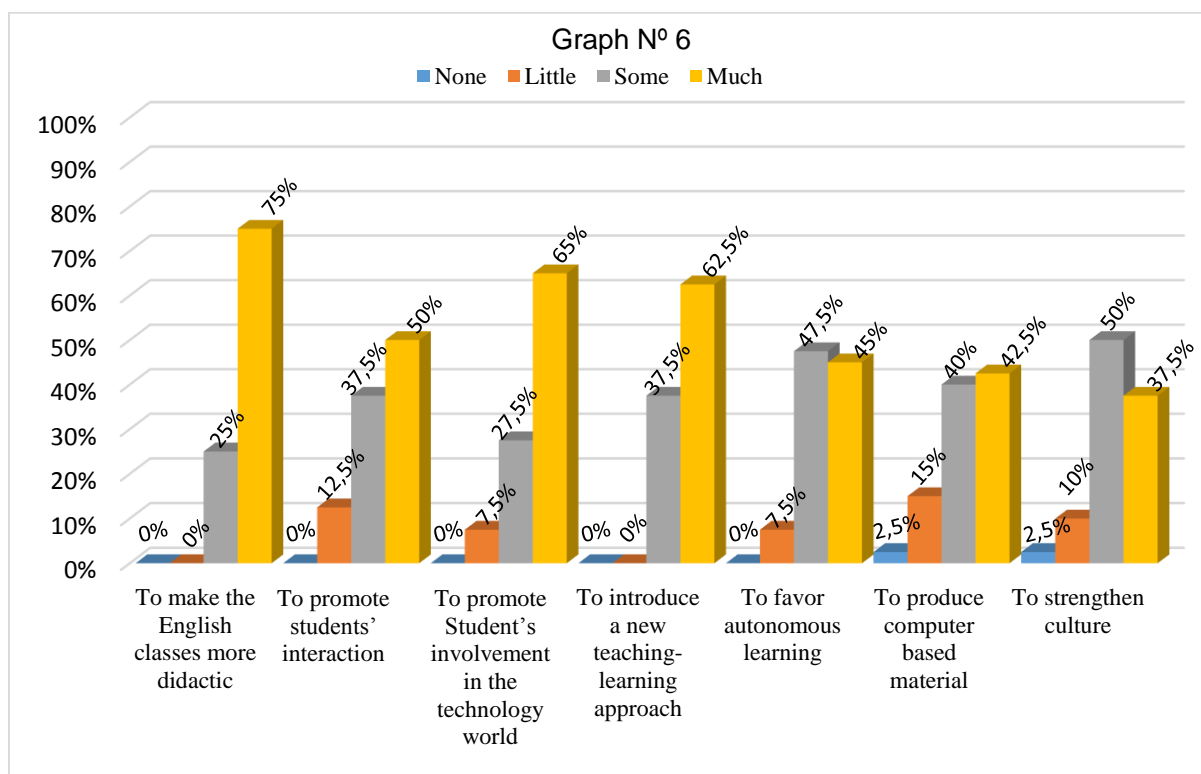
Author: Quezada Pablo
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

In order to gather information about teachers' perceptions concerning the importance of incorporating technology into the EFL curriculum a list of items was previously designed and it was used a scale using Much, Some, Little and None. Concerning teachers' responses as shown in graph 6, it is appreciated that 75% of participants answered that *technology is very important to make the English classes more didactic* while for 25% of them technology has some importance into the EFL classroom. In this Graph also 50% of the participants confirmed that *technology is very important to promote students' interaction.* Similarly, lower percentages such as 37.5% confirmed that technology promotes some importance and 12.5% little importance. In addition, in the item which refers to information about *students' involvement in the technology world*, as it is shown in this graph, for 65% of participants, this item represents too much importance, 27.5% some and 7.5% little. Relating to mentioned items, Saleh and Sa'ad (2013) analyzed how much technology contributes in the EFL

classroom, and the author affirmed that technology allows students to learn faster as well as easier at anytime and anywhere, facilitating an active learning role.

Regarding the item which looks for information about how important it is, *to introduce a new teaching- learning approach,* 62.5% of the surveyed reveal that this item denotes much importance while 37.5% of them answered that it represents just some of importance. Likewise, in the next item related to *favor autonomous learning,* graph 6 shows that 45% of the teachers confirmed that it is a very important aspect, while 47.5% of them demonstrates that this item has some of importance and for 7.5% of them it has little importance. In this case, it is crucial to comment that since technology has a great impact into EFL classroom, Zimmerman (2009) affirms that as lately almost all teachers have internet access in their office or at home; they can be in another country and from there manage the class or reproduce and create classroom material. However, this aspect does not contrast with what teachers answered in the questionnaire because 42.5% of them reveals that educational technology has great importance *to produce computer based material.* For 40% of them this aspect has some of importance that is why it can be said that the teachers' opinions regarding this aspect were almost similar. Additionally, 15% of teachers answered that this item has little importance and 2.5% said it is not important.

Finally, teachers' responses revealed that based on the importance that technology represents to strengthen culture, 50% of them denoted that this aspect has some importance. 37.5% of teachers said it had great importance, 10% little importance and 2.5 any. As a result, in a general view, the majority of teachers were convinced that technology represents such importance to make English classes more didactic, promote students' involvement in the technological world and to introduce a new teaching- learning approach. Deen and Sarojani (2011) also affirm that the use of technology into EFL classrooms is seen as highly beneficial and important especially for EFL language learners as well as educators.

How important do you think that the following technological tools (based on hardware) are?

Graph Nº 7

■ None   ■ Little   ■ Some   ■ Much
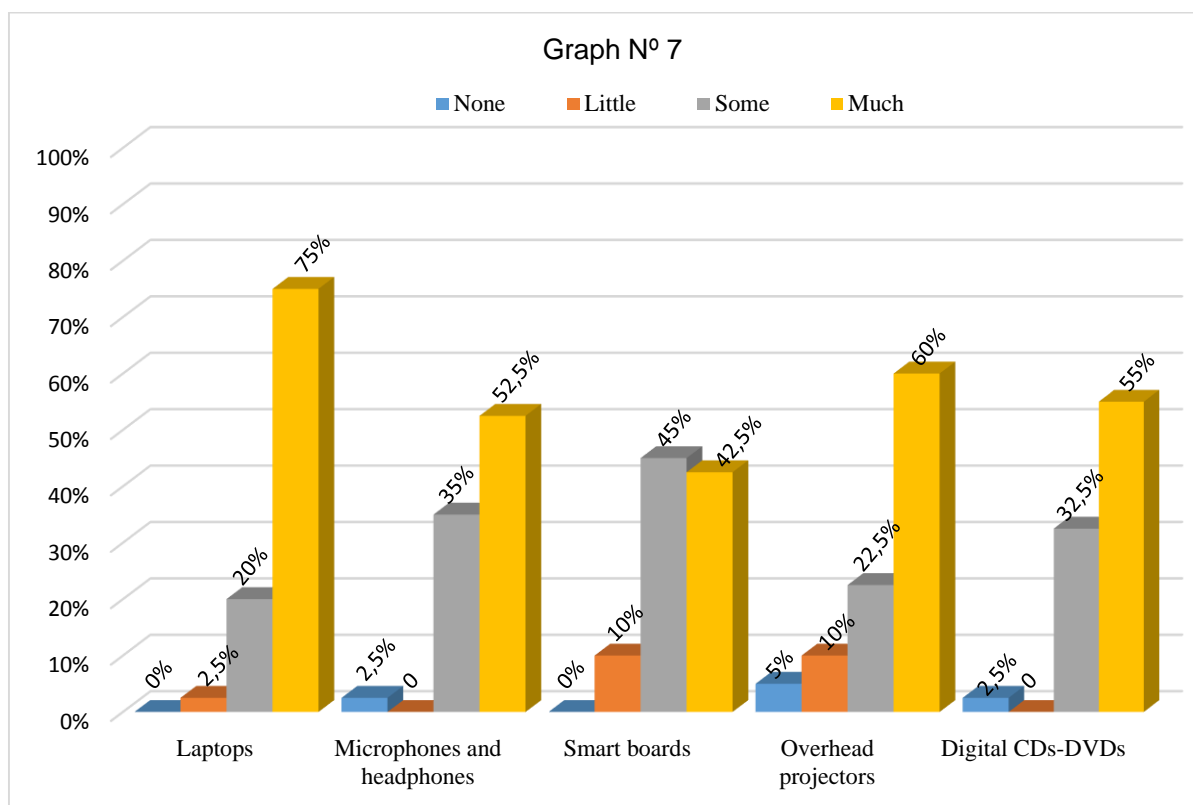
Author: Pablo Quezada
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

According to Mangal and Mangal (2009) most of the technologies are represented by a complex range of hardware and software approaches that involve a great range of technological tools appropriate to the English language instruction. The previous items based on hardware technological tools were analyzed, considering the scale of importance, which contains options such as: Much, Some, Little and None. Thus, graph 7 shows that 75% of teachers' responses reveal that laptops are important for them. For 20% represent some of importance and 2.5% little and none importance. Therefore, it is considered that teachers are convinced how important computers are, but during the observations, it was detected that technological tools such as computers were not widely integrated in the English classes observed. Nim and Son (2009) mention that the most common causes for not using computers included limited class hours, lack of technological skills and technical problems such as slow internet connections. Likewise, Moqbel and Rao (2013) assert that computers

are the most effective instructional tools to make the English learning environment more motivating, encouraging, and interesting

Similarly, teachers' answers reveal that 52.5% of them affirmed that tools such as microphones and headphones has notable importance into the English teaching and learning process, for 35% of them some of importance and 2.5% none. Regarding this aspect, during the observations, it was noticed that computers as well as microphones and headphones allow another interactive and didactic way to develop skill such as: listening, reading or writing exercises because when students were in the English lab, these tools allow them to practice their English skills in an interactive way.

Graph 7 also shows that 42.5% of the participants affirm that the item represented by smart boards is very important, while 45% of them consider that these tools have some importance. Likewise for 10% of them, smart boards represent little importance, and for 2. 5% none. Considering with what Ahmad (2012) highlights that smart boards support the teaching process in three main ways. It supports interaction and conversation in the classroom, promotes the organizational of oral skills and helps with the presentation of new cultural and linguistic elements. It is important to mention that during the observations the researcher noted that none of these educational instructions have used this kind of tools.

In addition, this graph reveals that 60% of the participants consider that overhead projectors are very important while for 22.5% of them this tool represents some of importance, 10% little and 5% none. Concerning this aspect, Ginsburg (2010) mentioned that overhead projectors offers several benefits over the board because students are easily fascinated, student's participation increases, users are able to go around the class, notes are more visible, legible and they can be recycled easily.

Finally, in the last item represented by Digital CDs-DVDs, it was obtained that 55% of teachers reflect that for them it has such importance, 32.5% some and 2.5% none. In this case, However, Deen and Sarojani (2011) affirm that audio players are the most common equipment used to teach English because most textbooks are supplemented with audiotapes

or digital CDs-DVDs. As a result, it can be said that technological tools such as computers, overhead projectors, microphones and headphones also work together with other audio technological tools, promoting interactive and didactic way to develop any English activity.

How important do you think that the following technological tools (based on software) are?

Graph N° 8

■ None ■ Little ■ Some ■ Much
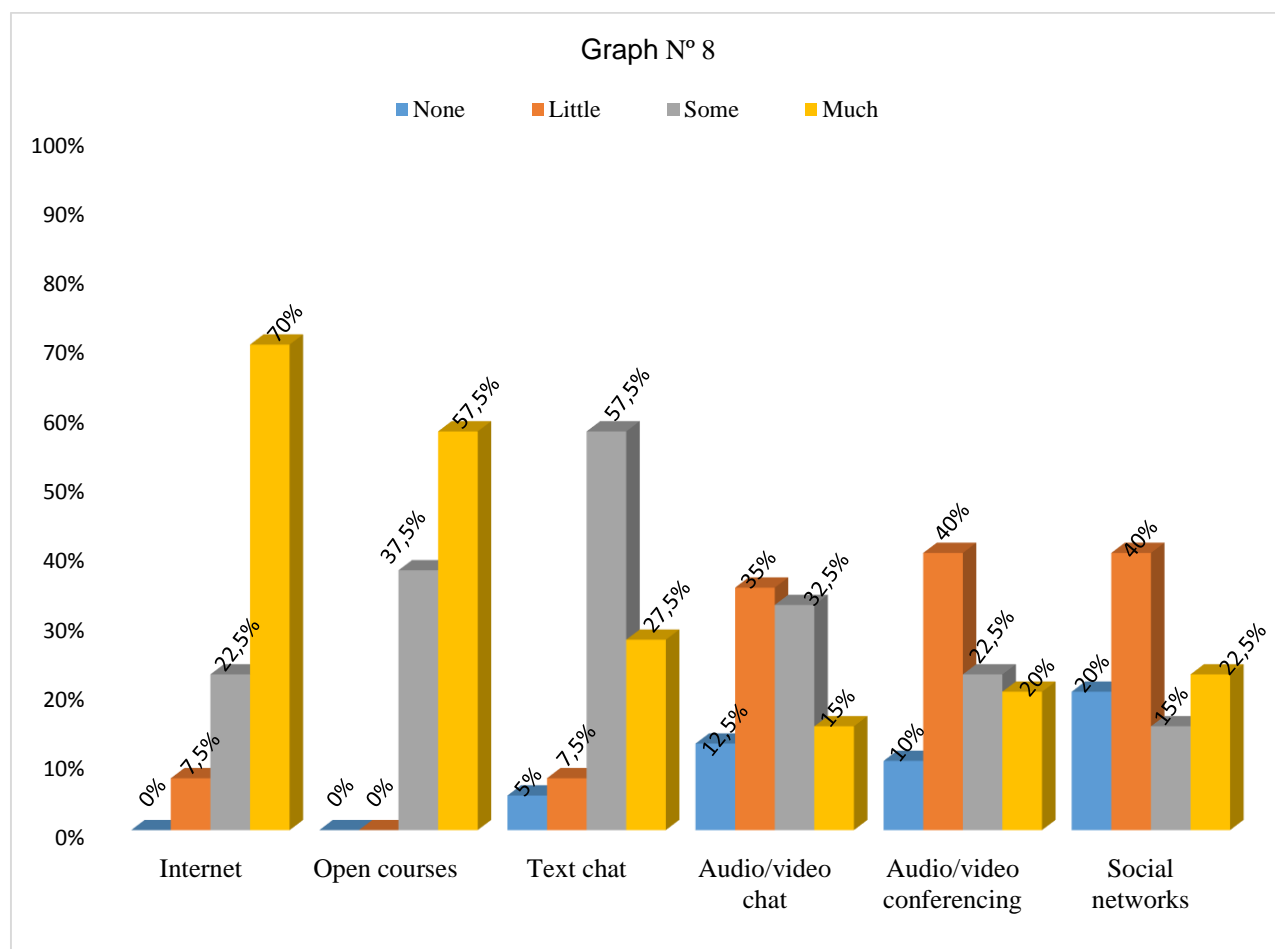
Author: Pablo Quezada
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Concerning this question aimed to determine the teachers' perceptions about the importance that technological tools, based on software, represent for them showed the following: 70% of the participants reflect that the software available in the internet is considered as very important; 22.5 % of them show that this tool has some importance and for 7.5% of them the internet represents little importance. It is a well-known fact that the internet has had a positive impact into the English language instruction. Zhang (2013) states that the internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) serve as a platform to facilitate the English teaching and learning providing software applications for conducting classes and develop

EFL course materials. Teachers' responses also reveal that 57.5% of the surveyed consider that open courses are very important. 37.5% of teachers said that open courses have some of importance. Consequently, it can be inferred that online education has now promoted the attention of the EFL teachers and learners especially as Winke (2014) mentions for those ones who are fully employed, travel a lot, study abroad or those ones who is impossible to attend classes.
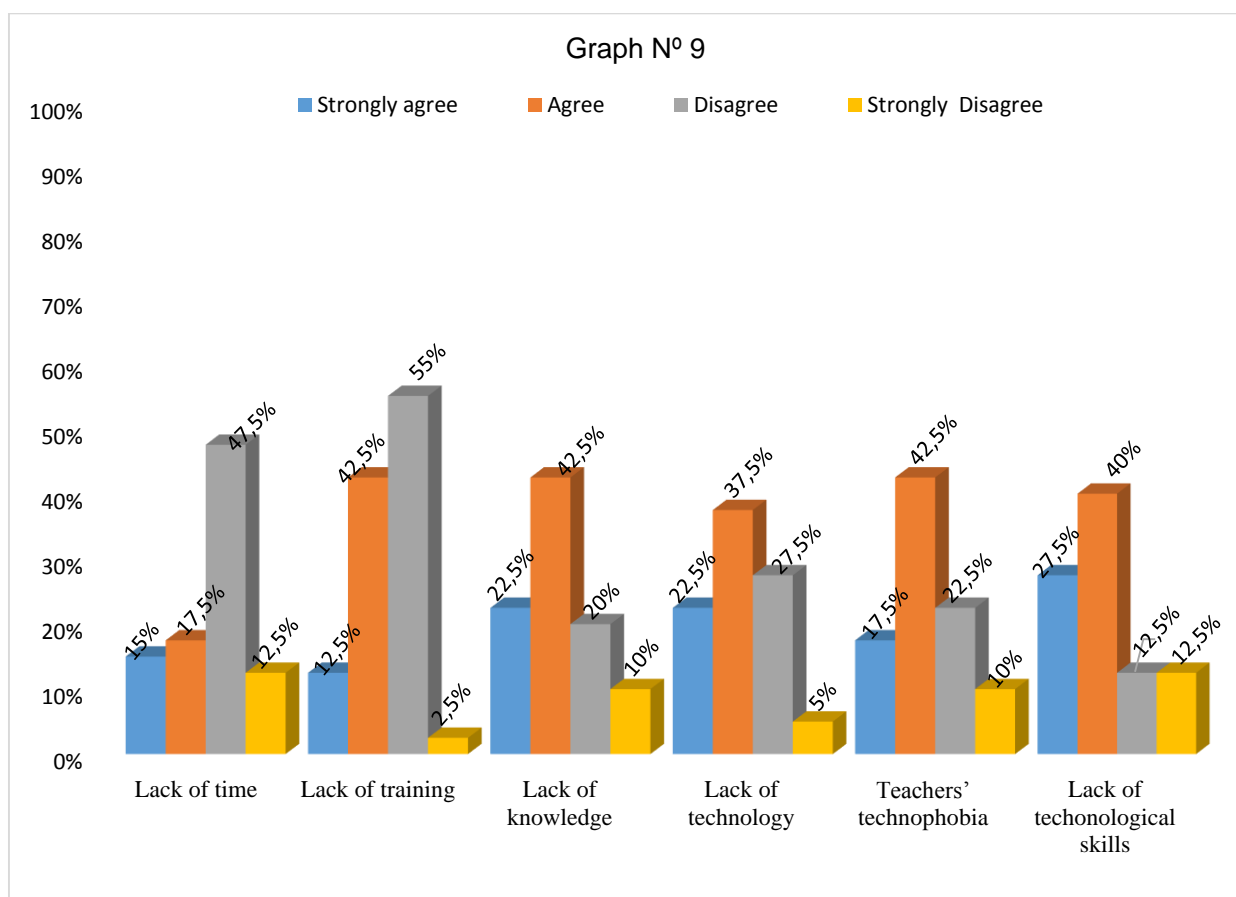
Therefore, the percentage represented by 57.5% corresponds to teachers who are convinced that text chats has just some of importance. 27.5% of them decided that this software tool is very important, 7.5% little and 5% none but for Saleem (2014) text chats including E-mails, are the mother of all software applications because it is considering that using tools such as audio/video chat, audio/video conferencing, it can be means of real communication in the target language. To continue with the analysis and based on the participants' answers, the following software technological tools such as audio/video chat, audio/video conferencing and social networks were considered slightly important because as it was shown in graph 9, the highest percentages are between 35% and 40% where teachers reveal that these tools are quite important.

On the other hand, when teachers were observed, 2 of 16 observations, it was heard that teachers told their students that they should interact in a social interactive group created especially for the English classes. Indeed, it is probably that most of teachers do not know that there is a great list of applications that can be useful to motivate students and involve them in a new teaching and learning process. Consequently, Basal and Aytan (2014) presented a list of applications with a variety of tools such as: *www.voxopop.com* (Listening). It is a web page based on audio tools that allows users to record their speaking voices. For Speaking: *vialogues.com, it* is a tool for creating a video-based discussion. The *www.livebinders.com* (Reading) is a tool used for collecting Internet resources. *Sscoop.it* is a tool, which can be used to make online publications. Finally, *google drive* (Writing). It is a

service for loading and keeping all kinds of documents where teachers can create quizzes, lessons including multimedia elements, collaborative projects or online documents.

Finally, an important point to comment is that in order to strengthen the technological tools based on software, in the main web page of Ecuadorian Ministry of Education was uploaded a very interesting web page where EFL teachers, students as well as parents can find many activities, exercises, games, quizzes, interviews, lesson plans, current events, workshops, online book, social studies and everything related to the English language instruction. This web page is available in the webpage of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education.

Circle the number that best fits your opinion regarding factors that prevent EFL teachers to use technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabuses.

Graph N° 9

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Category	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lack of time	15%	17,5%	47,5%	12,5%
Lack of training	12,5%	42,5%	55%	2,5%
Lack of knowledge	22,5%	42,5%	20%	10%
Lack of technology	22,5%	37,5%	27,5%	5%
Teachers' technophobia	17,5%	42,5%	22,5%	10%
Lack of techonological skills	27,5%	40%	12,5%	12,5%

Author: Quezada Pablo
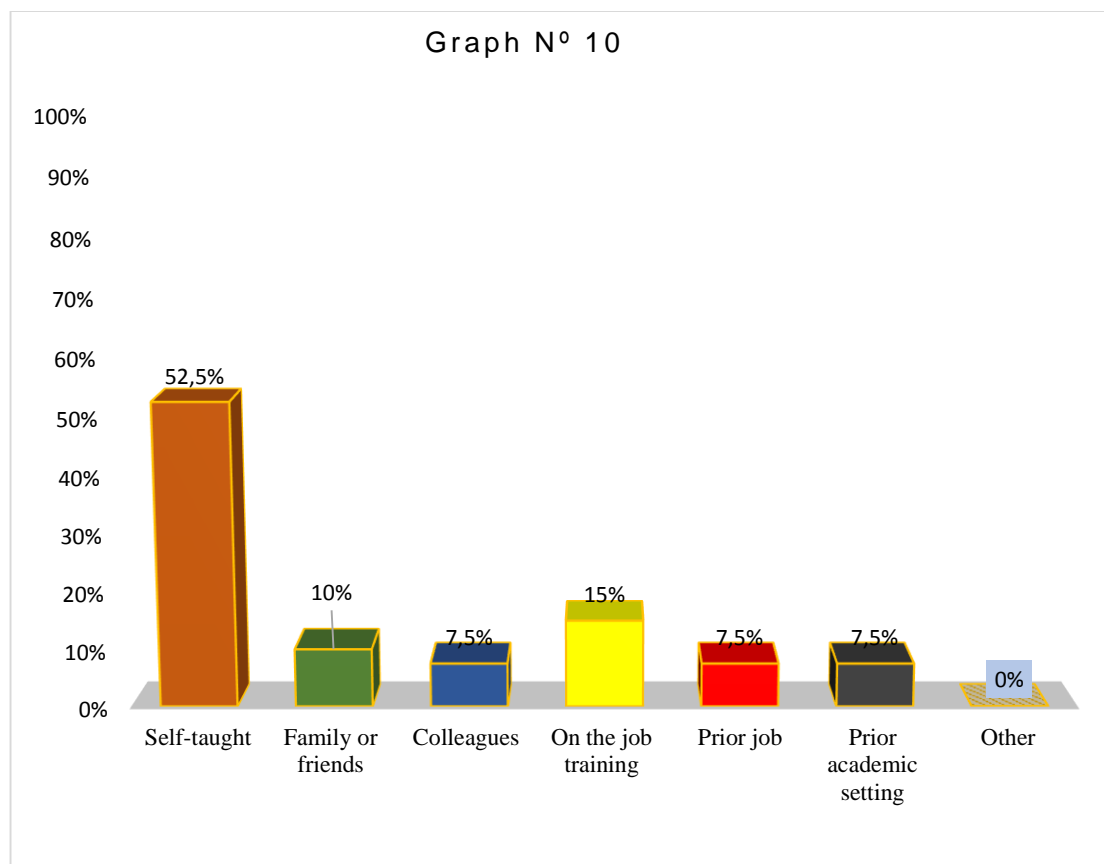Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Regarding factors that prevent EFL teachers to use technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabuses to teach English, a scale was previously elaborated using options such as: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The participants can reflect their personal points of view about the barriers that prevent them to design a suitable curriculum using technology. Graph 9 shows that the surveyed teachers equal to 47.5% of the sample disagreed that *lack of time* prevents them to use technology in the designing and planning of courses to teach English. Meanwhile 17.5% of the participants agreed with this aspect. Another 15% strongly agreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed. In addition, the *lack of training* item demonstrates that 55% of the teachers disagreed in accept that the time do not allow them use technology into the English language instruction. 42.5% of them agreed, another 12.5% strongly agreed and 2.5% strongly disagree. For these reasons, the results show that teachers indicate factors such as: lack of time and training are not the barriers that prevent them of integrating technology in the teaching-learning process. However, this aspect does not contrast with what was observed during the classes. It was evident that the limited

time they have, as well as the lack of training did not allow teachers to use technology properly because s when using technology as a pedagogical tool teachers must also know how to: plan lessons incorporating pertinent technological resources, develop plans for teaching software to students, select appropriate computer applications to meet the instructional needs of the curriculum and the learning needs of their students, among other things.

Results also show that the surveyed teachers, 42.5 % of them agreed that *lack of knowledge* is a factor that prevents them from using technology to teach English. Whereas, 22.5% of them strongly agreed, 20% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. Likewise, *the lack of technology* factor item is represented by 37.5 % of the participants who agreed, 27.5% of them disagreed, another 22.5% strongly agreed and 5% strongly disagreed. In the same way, the item related to *teachers' technophobia* is represented by 42.5 % of the

participants who agreed, 22.5% disagreed, 17.5% strongly agreed, 10% strongly disagreed. Finally, 40% of the teachers agreed that the *lack of technological skills* is a factor that prevents them from using technology, as long as 27.5% of them strongly agreed and 12.5% of the teachers who disagreed and strongly disagreed.

In the classes observed, it was noticed that EFL teachers did not demonstrated enough knowledge about using technology because when they developed some English exercises through the help of technological tools the knowledge applied in those activities were basic. For instance, a computer can be used to listen to songs or to show power point presentations. It denotes lack of technological skills. Also, it was noted that some high schools did not have plenty technological tools in order to satisfy students' demand. In addition, as some authors have been analyzed what are the factors that widely affect teachers to use of technology in the EFL classroom; Toledo (2012) affirms that the lack of technological expertise and confidence was found to be a constraint for the use of technology in the EFL classroom. Meanwhile, Buabeng (2012) highlights that teachers' positive attitudes and professional development are the key factors for a successful integration of technology into the classroom.

How did you learn to use technology? Select only one option.

Graph Nº 10

Author: Quezada Pablo
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

This questions was aimed to determine the way how teachers have learned to use technological tools for teaching purposes. In graph 10, teachers' responses demostrate that, 52.5% of them mentioned that they learned to use technology by themselves, 10% of them by family or friends, another 7.5% of teachers by colleagues, prior job and prior academic setting and finally 15% of them revels that the place where they learned to use technology was the-job training.

The data gathered indicate that the majority of teachers did not receive formal training on the use of technological tools for teaching purposes, thus only the ones who like technology decided to learn by their own and took the risk to embark on the new teaching paradigm based on technology use. From the researcher's point of view, this could be one of the reasons why, during the observations, the majority of teachers were limited to the use of

laptops and internet in order to perform some English exercises and activities because they are the most common devices that we have been forced to learn to use in our daily life Tabari and Tabari (2014) consider that the integration of technology into the EFL curriculum involves many changes such as the use of unfamiliar materials, the creation of new types of assignments, and the invention of new ways of assessing student learning which require preparation.

In order to use technology effectively in the classroom, teachers need to be well-trained; therefore the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education represented by Augusto Espinosa (2015) has organized different training programs for in-service teachers on methodological issues, as well as on the use of educational technology in order for teachers to be able to use it and to apply it in the designing and planning of syllabus. Undoubtedly, all this will bring about a big change in the teaching learning process because all teachers will be pushed to improve their technological skills to be aligned with the digital age.

How many hours per day do you think that EFL teachers need to spend in order to familiarize with the technology?
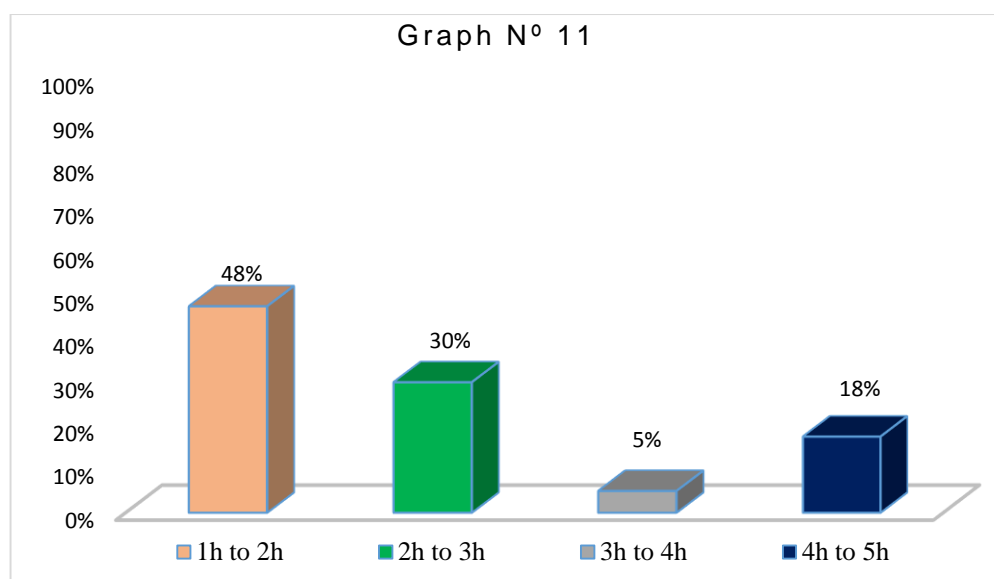
Author: Quezada Pablo
Source: Teachers' Questionnaire

Fulfil the objectives of this study, it was necessary to determine how much time per day EFL teachers need to spend in in order to be familiarized with technology. Thus, as it is shown in this graph 48% of the participants indicate that they spend from one or two hours daily to learn educational technology. Moreover, 30% of them considered that from 2 to 3 hours is a necessary time to familiarize with technology. Another 5% of them mentioned that they need spend from 3h to 4h and finally 18% of them from 4 to 5 hours.

These results evidence that from the teachers' perspective, one or two hours per day is the amount of time they might need to strengthen their technological skills. It is important to mention that teachers must always keep updating their knowledge; thus, among the time that they need to spend leaning about technology, an extra time also should be addressed to get permanent professional growth since as Buabeng (2012) states, teachers' professional development is the key factor for the successful integration of technology into classroom teaching. Likewise, James (2003) indicates that a good familiarization with technology contributes to strengthen the teachers' and students' attitudes toward the use and integration of technology in the EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

In-service English teachers who participated in this study, do integrate technology in the designing and planning of EFL courses and syllabus to teach English, but the majority of them limited its use only to computers and to internet in some of the classes as it was confirmed through observation.

Teachers who participated in this study are convinced that the use of technology to teach English has a lot of benefits such as: to make the English classes more didactic, to promote students' involvement in the use of technology and to introduce a new teaching- learning approach supported by technology, but the majority of them tend to revert to traditional practices.

According to teachers' perceptions, the lack of knowledge, the insufficient availability of technology in high schools, lack of technological skills and teachers' technophobia are the barriers that mostly prevent them to implement technology in the curriculum and syllabus to teach English in the high schools where they work.

The majority of the teachers affirm that they struggle using technology because they have not being trained; the little knowledge is because they have learned to use technology by their own; that might be the reason why it is not widely introduced in the English classes.

According to the teachers' perspective the amount of time they need to strengthen their technological skills is from one to two hours a day, considering that they are digital immigrants and that they need to get familiarized with technology along with professional growth.

Even though the majority of EFL in-service teachers are convinced that the following technological resources such as laptops, microphones-headphones, overhead projectors, digital CDs-DVDs, open courses and internet are very useful devices to teach English; the results show that those resources were not widely used in the English classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is critically important that educational authorities and stakeholders organize practical training programs to increase teacher´s literacy on technological skills, in order for them to be well-trained to integrate technology in the EFL curriculum to achieve better outcomes in terms of language learning.

EFL programs at universities must include, as part of the training program, the specific ways in which technology can be used to support teaching and professional growth, besides the mastering of the language and the pedagogical methods.

Teachers should change their pedagogical beliefs to adopt a new technology based approach to teach in order to enhance English learning by using free technological resources to support the EFL courses and syllabus, meeting this way the EFL schooling needs of today.

The authorities of the high schools need to be conscious about the new approaches for teaching English as well as the way how learners learn today, in the age of digital age, in order to provide teachers with the necessary technological resources to expose learners to the language and to favor interaction, cooperation and autonomous learning.

English teachers should be willing to participate in training programs open courses, and to spend time and effort to familiarize themselves with the great variety of free technological resources available in the internet; this way they will be able to strengthen their technological skills and provide better learning situations.

Considering that most of high schools have at least access to a computer, a projector and internet connection, teachers should take advantage of them to start to introduce at least these resources in the English curriculum, and keep increasing the use of mobiles and other resources that students have, which by the way have become in distractors for students in EFL classes.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Loja, Mayo de 2014

Señor(a) Director(a)
Presente.

De mi consideración:

Reciba un cordial saludo desde la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja –UTPL y desde el Departamento de Lenguas Modernas y Literatura a la vez que le expresamos nuestros deseos de éxitos en sus importantes funciones.

Durante varias décadas la UTPL viene ofreciendo la formación de docentes en el área de Inglés en la Modalidad Abierta y a Distancia, quienes al finalizar sus estudios realizan un trabajo de investigación que les permite conocer la realidad educativa de nuestro país y de esta manera contribuir con alternativas de mejoramiento a la enseñanza-aprendizaje del Inglés.

En el octavo ciclo los estudiantes realizan una investigación previa la obtención del título de Licenciados en Ciencias de la Educación Mención Inglés. Por este motivo, solicitamos su permiso para que nuestros profesionales en formación puedan hacer observaciones, aplicar encuestas y entrevistas en la institución educativa a la que usted muy acertadamente representa, así mismo solicitamos que por su intermedio se les comunique a los docentes de su institución para que colaboren y permitan realizar las observaciones sin ningún inconveniente, ya que esto contribuirá al enriquecimiento de nuestros profesionales en formación dando como resultado el mejoramiento en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje.

Agradecemos su valiosa colaboración que es muy importante para lograr los objetivos planteados en la investigación mencionada.

Atentamente,

Dr. Galo Guerrero Jiménez
DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE
LENGUAS MODERNAS Y LITERATURA

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

MODALIDAD PRESENCIAL
TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

Dear teacher:

This questionnaire is addressed to in-service teachers who are involved in English courses and is aimed at gathering information about teachers' opinions on the benefits and challenges that teachers face when incorporating technology into the EFL curriculum

Your responses to this survey will be used solely for research and academic purposes only. Your participation in this research, together with your individual responses to the questions will be kept strictly confidential.

A. INFORMATIVE DATA.

INSTITUTION'S NAME:_____
TYPE OF INSTITUTION: Public   ( )   Private   ( )
TEACHER'S GENDER: Male   ( )   Female ( )
OTHER_____

INSTRUCTION: High school ( )   English degree ( )   Postgraduate ( )   Others_____

B. CHECK (√) YES OR NO ACCORDING TO YOUR PERSONAL OPINION

1. **Do you include technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English?**
                YES ( )   NO ( )
    Why?...
    ....

2. **Does the institution where you work have any technological tool?**

	YES	NO
Internet	( )	( )
Laptops	( )	( )
Microphones and earphones	( )	( )
Smart boards	( )	( )
Overhead projectors	( )	( )

3. **Have you had training in the use of technology for teaching English?**
                YES ( )   NO ( )

4. **Do you think that the integration of technology in the EFL curriculum is useful?**

      YES ( )   NO ( )

C. RANGE FROM 1 TO 4 THE LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS. USE THE SCALE: 1=None, 2=Little, 3=some, 4= much. Circle the number according to your opinion.

5. **How important do you think that the following items based on the incorporation of technology in the English curriculum design are?**

	None	Little	Some	Much
To help to make the English classes more didactic	1	2	3	4
To promote student's interaction	1	2	3	4
To promote student's involvement in the technology world	1	2	3	4
To help to introduce a new teaching- learning approach	1	2	3	4
To favor autonomous learning	1	2	3	4
To help to produce computer based material	1	2	3	4
To allow to strengthen culture	1	2	3	4

6. **How important do you think that the following technological tools (based on hardware) are?**

	None	Little	Some	Much
Laptops	1	2	3	4
Microphones and headphones	1	2	3	4
Smart boards	1	2	3	4
Overhead projectors	1	2	3	4
Digital CDs-DVDs	1	2	3	4

7. **How important do you think that the following technological tools (based on software) are?**

	None	Little	Some	Much
Internet	1	2	3	4
Open courses	1	2	3	4
Text chat	1	2	3	4
Audio/video chat	1	2	3	4
Audio/video conferencing	1	2	3	4
Social networks	1	2	3	4

8. **Circle the number that best fits your opinion regarding factors that prevent EFL teachers to use technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabuses. Use this scale:**

  1=Strongly agree   2 =Agree   3 =Disagree   4 =Strongly disagree

Factors	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Lack of time	1	2	3	4
Lack of training	1	2	3	4
Lack of knowledge	1	2	3	4
Lack of technology	1	2	3	4
Teachers' technophobia	1	2	3	4
Lack of tecnhological skills	1	2	3	4

9. How do you categorize your technological skills?

Beginner   ( )
Struggles   ( )
Experienced   ( )

10. How did you learn to use technology? Select only one option.

Self-taught   ( )
Family or friends   ( )
Colleagues   ( )
On-the-job training   ( )
Prior job   ( )
Prior academic setting   ( )
Other_____

11. How many hours per day do you think that EFL teachers need to spend in order to familiarize with the technology? Choose one option.

a. 1h to 2h   ( )
b. 2h to 3h   ( )
c. 3h to 4h   ( )
d. 4h to 5h   ( )

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

ANNEX 3

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

MODALIDAD PRESENCIAL
TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

EFL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM	
OBSERVER:	
DATE:	**VISIT No.**
INSTITUTION'S NAME:	
TYPE OF INSTITUTION: PUBLIC ( )	PRIVATE ( )

The high benefits and challenges of integrating technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English. EFL TEACHERS	YES	NO
1. Teachers include technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabus to teach English		
2. In the institution where teachers work there are technological tools such as:		
Internet		
Laptops		
Microphones and headphones		
Smart boards		
Overhead projectors		
3. Teachers show good training in the use of technology for teaching English		
4. Through the integration of technology in the EFL curriculum. Teachers demonstrate that educational technology is importance because:		
It helps to make the English classes more didactic		
It promotes student's interaction		
It promotes student's involvement in the technology world		
It helps to introduce a new teaching- learning approach		
It favors autonomous learning		
It helps to produce computer based material		
It allows to strengthen culture		

5. Which ones of the following   technological tools based on hardware, teachers really demonstrate that they are important.

Laptops		
Microphones and headphones		
Smart boards		
Overhead projectors		
Digital CDs-DVDs		

6. Which ones of the following   factors, teachers show that prevent them to use technology in the designing and planning of courses and syllabuses.

Lack of time		
Lack of training		
Lack of knowledge		
Lack of technology		
Teachers' technophobic		
Lack of tecnhological skills		

7. Teachers demonstrate a high or low knowledge using their technological skills because they look like:

Beginner		
Struggles		
Experienced		

8. Teachers make obvious that they try to familiarize with the technology because they daily spend :

1h to 2h		
2h to 3h		
3h to 4h		
4h to 5h		