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INGLÉS**

**Ecuadorian private high school teachers' perceptions on ICT use in their EFL
classes.**

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Ecuadorian private high school teachers' perceptions on ICTs use in their EFL classes realizado por Veintimilla Amores Carmen Yesenia, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por lo tanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

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DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo Veintimilla Amores Carmen Yesenia declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Ecuadorian private high school teachers’ perceptions on ICTs use in their EFL clases, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Mgtr. Paúl Fernando González Torres director del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad”.

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f.....

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated entirely to my parents Rafael Veintimilla and Lucrecia Amores and to my sister Sofía Veintimilla, who are the reason of my life. Their love, example and support encouraged me to strive for excellence.

Yesenia

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First of all, I would like to thank God for giving me the grace of getting my objective. Besides, I am profoundly grateful with my parents and sister who are the biggest support of my life. Also I want to express my feeling of gratitude to my thesis director Mgs. Paúl Fernando González Torres who has contributed to my professional formation and at the same time he has helped me to develop the present investigative work.

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ABSTRACT

The present research work examined the Ecuadorian private high school teachers' perceptions on ICTs use in their EFL classes. The main aims are focused on discovering the aspects that hinder and encourage the teachers to use ICTs, and the gender perceptions about the ICTs use. The information was collected from two private Ecuadorian schools and the sample is constituted by ten teachers, five male and five female. The main instruments were surveys and interviews which show teachers' perception and opinions about the ICTs use. After the analysis, it was concluded that the main barrier to use ICTs in EFL classes is age. Otherwise, English teachers think that the psychological aspect encourage them to use ICTs. Additionally, female teachers show higher levels of insecurity and fear to use technology. On the contrary, there is not difference between genders about the factors that engage educators to use ICTs in English classes.

Key words: Teachers' perceptions, ICTs, Teachers' characteristics, Gender differences, EFL

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo de investigación examinó las percepciones de los docentes de secundaria privados sobre el uso de las TICs en sus clases de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los principales objetivos se centran en descubrir los aspectos que dificultan y animan a los profesores a utilizar las TICs, y las percepciones de género sobre el uso de las TICs. La información fue recolectada de dos escuelas privadas ecuatorianas y la muestra está constituida por diez profesores, cinco hombres y cinco mujeres. Los principales instrumentos fueron encuestas y entrevistas las cuales muestran percepciones y opiniones de los maestros relacionados al uso de las TICs. Después del análisis, se concluyó que la principal barrera para utilizar las TICs en las clases de inglés es la edad. Por otra parte, los profesores de inglés piensan que el aspecto psicológico los anima a usar las TICs. Además, las maestras muestran mayores niveles de inseguridad y miedo a utilizar la tecnología. Por el contrario, no hay diferencia de género sobre los factores que animan a los educadores para usar las TICs en clases de inglés

Palabras clave: Percepciones de los maestros, TICs, Características de los Maestros, Diferencias de género, EFL.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the Integration and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has changed many aspects of the way we live; mainly the educational field has been benefited by technology. For the current society, the use of ICTs with educational purposes is almost indispensable. These devices have become an important tool to get a meaningful learning, especially to learn a new language because it provides learners a natural environment in which they are in a direct contact with the new language. For all these reasons, the present research work tries to analyze deeply how the teachers' perceptions about ICTs use influence in the Ecuadorian education.

This research work was developed under the name: Ecuadorian private high school teachers' perceptions on ICTs use in their EFL classes. Moreover, this paper tries to answer three research questions which seek to discover the teachers' perceptions about the barriers that hinder them to introduce ICTs in the teaching process, the factors that encourage teachers to use ICTs in their English classes, and the last question attempts to discover the teachers' perceptions toward ICTs use according to the gender.

Regarding this topic, researchers have developed several studies in order to have a deeper understanding about the field of ICTs. In that way, the main goal of the study developed by Mollaei and Riasati (2013) is to identify the teachers' perceptions of the use of technological devices and the aspects that repress teachers to use technology in their English classes. In this study, the main conclusion was that the technology is not relevant in the teaching process; so, the most important in this process is the teachers' quality. In addition, teachers perceive that the positive attitudes and the attempt of introduce frequently technology into the classrooms help to acquire more effectively the new language. Following the same line, the study done by Salem and Mohammadzadeh (2018) has as main objectives to discover the teachers' attitudes toward ICTs appropriation and adjustment in the English teaching process and determine the features that encourage teachers to use technology in their classes. In this paper, it was concluded that the teachers' attitudes are the main encouragement to ICTs implementation. Likewise, Shahlou and Izadpanah (2016) seek to investigate the relationship between the English teachers' perceptions toward the use of computers in their classes and their profiles as teachers which encompasses aspects of gender, experience and teaching context. The finding of this study states that, there is a strongly relationship between gender and the use of computer with

educational purposes. Such is the case that, the male teachers show a higher level of acceptance to use computer technology than female teachers.

The present research work mainly benefits the institutions where the information was collected. The study also benefits the researcher and all people who are interested in knowing more about the Ecuadorian private high school teachers' reality regarding to the ICTs field and its use with educational purposes. Moreover, this study contributes to the educational field because presents some applicable solutions which can reduce the factors that the teachers perceived as barriers to use ICTs and also this work could be the starting point for future researches.

CHAPTER I.
LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last few decades, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has spread incredibly, and such is the case that, our modern society depends on ICTs for almost everything. Many are the fields in which the ICTs have become the starting point of great improvements, and the field of education, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, is not the exception. Consequently, hundreds of researchers have directed their attention toward the use of ICTs in educational and pedagogical aspects.

This chapter contains researched information linked with ICTs use in EFL teaching, teachers and ICTs use and teachers' characteristics regarding ICTs use. Besides, this section encompasses a review of six previous studies related to teachers' perceptions on ICTs use in their classes.

ICTs use in EFL teaching

Definition.

ICT is defined as the process in which teachers and students manipulate, transmit and receive information. Over the last few decades, the use of ICTs has become more and more popular in several areas. In the field of education, especially in EFL teaching, the use of ICTs can be defined as the integration of software or hardware instruments during the learning process with the goal of acquiring a meaningful learning. Nguyen and Tri (2014) divided ICTs into three groups: the first group they called learning resources that refer to technological resources used to introduce new knowledge. These instruments can be online programs or videos which help to introduce new information. The second group is called instructional organization of learning activities in the classroom. An example is online tests. The third part of this division is defined by the authors as communication. They are referring to e-mail and social networks that allow us to communicate. Rahimi and Yadollahi (2011) agree with the previous authors and they add that the use of ICTs is to introduce to the class any kind of computer, software or internet application with instructional or educational purposes. According to these authors, we can say that a teacher is using ICTs when he/she takes one of these devices for teaching, assessing or practicing new knowledge and even for giving feedback.

In contrast, González (2016) reveals that the integration of ICTs is not to use a technological device for a simple action. Using a word processor in order to write a paragraph or an essay, or using an online dictionary to find the meaning of a word is not to use ICTs, because this is a kind of leisure. In addition, the author argues that the use of ICTs is the use of a technological tool

that helps the method to raise the quality of the EFL teaching process. Following the line of thought of González (2016), Benmoussat and Zekkal (2016) give a definition of the ICTs, and they clarify that the ICTs are not a teaching method. The authors affirm that these devices are a kind of instrument which supports the method.

The use of ICTs in EFL teaching has to be a well-planned process; according to this, Saleh Mahdi and Sa'ad Al-Dera (2013) present three stages of this implementation. The first stage is acquisition. This is related to the economic aspect which is indispensable to obtain the software and hardware to be used. The next stage corresponds to the introduction of the technological resources and this depends on three additional aspects. The first aspect is related to the space where the technological tools will work. The second aspect corresponds to socializing the ICTs use in EFL with the people who are directly involved with the use of these devices. The third aspect is to acquire stakeholders. Continuing with the main classification, the third and last stage is concerned with maintenance, which refers to the continued use of ICTs during the teaching-learning process.

Importance.

ICTs use in EFL teaching is important because it facilitates the understanding of new knowledge, especially when the ideas are abstract. Therefore, the use of ICTs in English teaching is essential because it makes complex contents easier to understand. Likewise, over the last few decades, many changes related to the field of education, specifically to the pedagogy, have encouraged teachers to innovate their methods and strategies (Soussi, 2015). The ICTs use helps to facilitate the acquisition of new information and also helps to reach the goal or goals of an activity. For this reason, the importance of ICTs use in EFL lies in improving the acquisition of knowledge.

From the point of view of Mcdougald (2013), the use of ICTs is important because the technology gives the teachers and students the greatest opportunities to support and improve the language teaching process. Moreover, the authors add that ICTs use helps the teachers to overcome challenges like providing the students a natural and realistic environment to practice the English language.

ICTs are powerful tools that offer educational opportunities. With the help of technological devices, the students can perform knowledge exchange. That means there is an improvement in

the educational context, because the students become autonomous at the moment of acquiring new knowledge (Thokchom, 2013).

Advantages and disadvantages.

There are many advantages of ICTs use in EFL teaching. They are not only related to the students but also to the teachers. Juliana and Muslem (2017) argue that the advantages can be divided into five groups. The first group corresponds to the multi-sensory stimuli; it is related to the multiple intelligences because when the teachers use a technological device, especially audiovisual material, this allows the students to acquire the knowledge from different channels. With the use of audiovisual materials, the teacher will be attending to one of the most important characteristics of a class, it is the diversity. The second is related to the raise in motivation levels and it occurs when the teachers persuade the students to use ICTs in order to learn English in a modern way. The third one is the practice of collaborative learning where students exchange opinions in order to introduce and internalize the correct information. The fourth is linked to cultural understanding. Through the use of technology, the learners can be in contact with others cultures and learn from them. The last category is self-expression that allows the students to feel free to express their ideas. In addition, Ezza and Bakry (2014) comment that the ICTs use, besides the fact that it helps to empower the multiple intelligences, it helps to promote the responsibility for the students' learning inside and outside the classroom.

Alsied and Pathan (2013) in their study about the use of computer technology in the EFL classroom, point out many advantages related to the use of those devices. One of the most important is that, thanks to the use of technology, the conventional way of teaching has changed from teacher centered to learner centered. This aspect is positive because the teachers, with the help of ICTs, will reach that students become more independent to learn English and they become protagonists during the learning process, so the teachers only will be a guide for the students to acquire, practice and use the new information in different contexts and situations.

Ojeniyi and Adetimirin (2013) claim that "In relation to the use of ICT for learning, technology holds a promise of improved access to information and increased interactivity and communication between teachers and their students" (pg. 62-63). With this, the journalists show that the use of ICTs allows exploring new fields of knowledge, interacting with other people even with native English speakers, and being in direct contact with English language. Moreover, the authors argue that the communication between teachers and learners is directly proportional

toward the confidence. It means that, when the communication of teachers and learners increases, the confidence among them grows too. All these situations become positive aspects to the English teaching-learning process because the students feel comfortable and they are free of stress. Consequently, the flow of the class is more natural.

ICTs are excellent instruments that the teachers can use at the moment of give feedback because this not only marks the mistake but also corrects it immediately and sometimes those devices give appropriate advice. Related to this, Alsied and Pathan (2013) state that “The use of computer technology also helps the learners to assess and test themselves and get feedback” (pg.67).

Within the disadvantages that the use of ICT in EFL teaching presents, the most remarkable is that the majority of teachers do not have enough knowledge to integrate those devices into their classes. Kolbakova (2014) explains that, in order to use these kinds of instruments, the teacher has to be well trained in how to use them and understand why not all students are ready to use some technological instruments. Unfortunately, the majority of teachers do not have this knowledge and, for this reason, the use of ICTs is limited and in some cases it is forgotten.

If a teacher uses any ICTs at the wrong time or with the students who are not capable of benefiting from it, the class will be unsuccessful. Besides, when the teachers use ICTs incorrectly, there is a possibility they lose control of the class and break down the flow of the learning process (Juliana & Muslem, 2017). In addition, the authors assert that the lack of time constitutes a barrier at the moment of using ICTs. It results in frustration when the students are acquiring the knowledge satisfactorily through the ICTs use, and suddenly the learning process is stopped because the time is up. Thus, in this case, the use of ICTs can be a terrible disadvantage.

Teachers and ICTs use

Teacher's role.

Within the ICTs use, the teachers play many interesting roles. Dashtestani (2013) mentions that the teachers are a kind of material developers, which means that; through ICTs the teachers can make useful materials according to the learners' needs. For example: teachers can suggest the students attend a video call meeting after the school hours, with the purpose of practicing their speaking skills, especially communicative competence, outside the classroom. Obviously, the

teachers do not create the program, but they utilize this technological device as a tool that allows them to develop, produce or evaluate the student's knowledge. In addition, Mollaei and Riasati (2013) referring to the teachers said "They also look for better ways of providing students with linguistic skills, meaningful communication and culture" (pg. 1). With this, it is demonstrated that the teachers are not consumers of technology; on the contrary, they are able to transform the technology into useful didactic tools.

Another teachers' role is that they have to generate a collaborative atmosphere through the use of technology during the learning process (Kusano et al., 2013). A clear example of it is to create an online activity like a blog in order to practice peer feedback. In this way, the teacher can engage the students to use the ICTs, and, at the same time students are building the knowledge by themselves. Therefore, in the era of technology, the teachers' role has changed from being the person who gives all of the information, to being a facilitator of knowledge (Mollaei & Riasati, 2013).

According to Thokchom (2013), teachers have the responsibility of introducing ICTs in the learning process in order to develop new skills. Teachers can plan extra lessons if they feel that it will be successful.

Innovating the curriculum is another teachers' role. It means that ICTs have to be integrated as much as possible into the educational reality. This role is highly recognized in Greece, where teachers are transforming the curriculum using ICTs as a primary teaching tool. In that country, the teacher becomes the main promoter of the ICTs use in the teaching process Konstantinos, Andreas and Karakiza (2013). The teachers' role related with the ICTs is complex, because in many curricula the use of ICTs is almost forgotten, so the teacher has the difficult mission of introducing it into the classes to make them productive and successful.

Besides, Markauskaite (2006) points out that one of the teachers' role related to the ICTs use is to be a model. When the teacher uses the technology as an instrument to present, introduce or evaluate the acquisition of new knowledge during the teaching process, the learners adopt the attitudes that the teachers show about the ICTs use. It means that, if the teachers feel insecure about using a technological device this attitude is adopted by their students. On the contrary, if the teacher feels secure about using it, the students will feel confident and free to explore it.

Teachers' competences.

Being competent means that a person is able to appropriately manage the resources that he or she has in order to apply them in his or her professional life. This concept is perfectly applicable to the English teachers' competence related to the ICTs use. Peralta and Costa (2007) point out that, teachers' competences not only have to be technical, but also it is important to develop pedagogical and didactic competences in order to use the best ICTs in a class.

Sakiyo and Badau (2013) agree with the teacher's competences presented by the previous authors, and they add the following competences. The first one is the curriculum application competence in which teachers have to be able to integrate the ICTs in the curriculum in order to keep themselves up-to-date with the contemporary technologies. Administering and implementing ICTs is another important teachers' competence. This competence means that the teacher has to manage the technology resources fairly. ICTs teachers' competence on professional development refers to the skills that the teacher must develop in order to use the technology devices. Moreover, the teacher has to be able to use the technological resources in an equitable way with the purpose that all learners get benefits from it. According to UNESCO, all teachers have to develop all of these competences to become qualified and master ICTs use.

A study done by Bukaliya and Mubika (2011) reveals that it is highly important that the teachers develop skills in the use of programs like word processors or data processors. With the development of this competence, the English teachers and teachers in general can have a register through which they can watch the advancement of their students. With this, teachers can reformulate the lessons and even change the curriculum integrating the use of ICTs. English teachers' competence in the ICTs use is the clue for getting success during the teaching-learning process. There is no sense if the quantity and quality of technological resources is large if the teachers' competence is so low (Yusuf & Balogun, 2011).

Teachers' gender

Teachers' gender is a factor that influences the use and integration of ICTs in EFL teaching. In a study performed by Saleh Mahdi and Sa'ad Al-Dera (2013), they argue that there is a relevant difference between male and female teachers at the moment of using technological devices in English classes. Male teachers use more technology than female teachers. That was the result of a survey applied to a sample of 46 teachers. This occurs because male teachers have taken more ICTs training courses than females.

A study done by Mollaei and Riasati (2013) reveals that both male and female teachers agree on using ICTs in their English classes because it promotes useful instructional activities like online tests or handouts which provide an innovative and a modern way of learning. In the same study, the authors point out that, the female teachers present higher levels of anxiety than male teachers at the moment of using computer devices in English language classes. Markauskaite (2006) agrees with the previous authors. She argues that female teachers are more anxious when using computer devices. Female teachers adopt a nervous attitude when they are in front of technological tools, especially when they decide to use a computer. Perhaps they think that it will not work very well or perhaps they think that these tools will not be successful in providing the correct information. Moreover, according to this study the female teachers look less confident when they use ICTs tools. This can occur because their technological skills are limited. Clearly, male teachers have developed more technological skills because they have been involved in a technological environment since the era of technology started to develop. Furthermore the author adds that, male teachers have a wider knowledge about the new tendencies related to programs and applications that could be useful and interesting for the students. The male teachers use this insight to engage the students in the class and the educators persuade the learners to take part in the English learning process. Therefore, the main finding of this study shows that male teachers use ICTs more frequently than female teachers.

In contrast to the previous authors, who affirm that there are several gender differences about the ICTs use in EFL teaching, a study done in Mexico by Burrola and Vera (2013) shows that both male and female teachers have equal levels of ability in order to use and integrate the ICTs into their classes. Now, male and female teachers have the same opportunities to acquire technological knowledge and in this way teachers are able to innovate their teaching methods and strategies in order to reach meaningful learning.

Teachers' characteristics regarding ICTs use

Psychological.

The teachers' psychological characteristics have great impact in the ICTs use in EFL teaching because they can develop several attitudes, perceptions and even misconceptions between teachers. Kappagoda (2013) in his article mentions that there is an emotional intelligence. This intelligence helps the teachers to understand their emotions, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of the teachers toward ICTs use in EFL teaching.

In addition, Jimoyiannis and Komis (2007) divide beliefs and perceptions into three groups. These are: positive, negative and neutral. The first group refers to the positive attitudes that make educators feel comfortable using the technological devices at all stages of the teaching process. This situation creates a feeling of enthusiasm at the moment of introducing a technological device in the class. Therefore, the teachers are pleased to use ICTs tools because they believe that these elements are a support to reach the lesson goals. On the other hand, the authors present the negative attitudes. Those are feelings that make teachers feel stressed, insecure, worried or upset at the moment of using technology in the class. For this reason, teachers, who agree with this statement, look reluctant to introduce these tools into the teaching process. Finally, in the study the authors mention the third group named neutral. This group is in the middle. The educators consider that the use of ICTs in EFL teaching is not essential; an English class can be developed with technological devices or without them. Indeed, teachers feel a bit more comfortable with the traditional method of teaching, where the educator is the center of the teaching-learning process.

Badia, Meneses and Sigalés (2013) add that, positive and negative attitudes can be defined as favourable or unfavourable predisposition, and also can be defined as technological affinity or technological aversion. In addition, a study done in Iran by Gilakjani, Sabouri and Zabihniaemran (2015) reveals that teachers' negative attitudes create considerable obstacles in ICTs use, because educators' minds does not allow for exploring or exploiting new teaching strategies which are closely linked to the technology. In this respect, Kounenou, Roussos, Yotsidi and Tountopoulou (2015) affirm that the positive and negative attitudes toward ICTs use are moderated by psychological aspect.

Beliefs also affects to the ICTs use, according to Li and Walsh (2010), teachers' beliefs are influenced by stories told by educators who have had negative experiences in the use of ICTs. This situation can provoke misconceptions and teachers can develop fear of using technology in the class.

Within the teachers' psychological characteristics, there is a variable called self-efficacy in computer use. This variable is related to the affective states which can provoke willingness or reluctance toward the use of ICTs in EFL teaching (Kounenou, Roussos, & Yotsidi, 2013). If the self- efficacy and the affective states do not reach a high level in teachers' minds, they will develop negative beliefs related to ICTs use which could be transmitted to the others teachers and even to the students. On the other hand, Badia, Meneses and Sigalés (2013) in their study

mention that, the self-efficacy is a kind of self-evaluation where the teachers notice the expertise that they have developed in ICTs use in the EFL teaching.

Another psychological aspect that contributes to avoiding the ICTs use in EFL teaching is the anxiety. Revilla, Alpiste, Fernández and Santos (2016) mention that, the teachers can experience an unpleasant psychological state regarding with technology use, it is called techno-anxiety. It could be one of the main psychological obstacles to introduce the technology in the teaching process. According to this, Cardona, Fandiño and Galindo (2014) name to the person averse to technology as technophobe, and the user lover of technology is named technophile.

Educational.

Teachers are the principal promoters of learning. Educators apply methods, techniques, strategies and also they use ICTs with the goal of improving the teaching process and getting meaningful learning. In order to use correctly technological devices during the teaching process, the teachers must be well prepared to use ICTs in their classes. Tømte (2013) in her study points out that in Norway, one of the first countries to employ the Information and Communication Technology, the Ministry of Education has an emphasis on developing digital skills. As a consequence of this, many institutions started to include in the curriculum of the teachers in trainee how use the ICTs during the teaching-learning process. In this way new teachers gain insight apparently not related with their branch of knowledge but extremely useful to develop a successful class.

In addition, Almenara (2014) argues that the digital and technological education of the teachers is a determining element for technical-didactic use of ICTs in the teaching process. Besides, the authors mention that the teachers' educational aspect related to technology, not only has to be a teacher training process in how the ICTs are used in the class, but also it should encompass different aspects like instructional, curricular and organizational which allow for the improvement of the quality of teaching. The teachers' education does not end with obtaining a degree; in order to get a higher educational level, the teachers have to be in a permanent formative process. Abuhmaid (2011) mentions a program called Intel Teach to the Future. This program trains the teachers to use ICTs in their classes. The author adds that CADER offers a Higher Educational Diploma in ICTs use. This course helps the teachers to improve the pedagogy through the use of ICTs. Those programs or courses were created in order to improve the teachers' educational level.

Professional.

The professional aspect refers to the qualifications that the educator has to develop and apply in educational settings in order to reach the goal of teaching. In nowadays, the technology plays an important role in the educational field and the teachers have to be professionally prepared to use innovative teaching techniques based on the ICTs use. Therefore, we can say that a teacher is a good professional when he or she puts into practice his or her educational knowledge in order to improve the teaching-learning process. In this regard, Liakopoulou (2011) comments that “a good teacher” associates several aspects such as effectiveness at work, personality traits, pedagogical and technical abilities. All these aspects joined together make a professional teacher.

Moreover, Abuhmaid (2011) says “Pre-service education is not sufficient for teachers to be able to handle their job for the rest of their lives; rather, they require ongoing professional development and support.” (pg. 196). It is easy to acquire knowledge about how to use ICTs in EFL teaching; the real challenge is to become a good professional putting into practice this insight. In other words, the author argues that, the biggest challenge is to apply the educational aspect in real classes.

In order to reach a high level of professionalism the educator has to be teacher and learner at the same time. While the teachers look for a better way of using the ICTs in order to improve the quality of their pedagogy, the teachers can use the ICTs as a self-learning instrument. Therefore, the use of ICTs in EFL classes has double benefit. First, the students catch and internalize new knowledge better and faster than with the obsolete methods and second, the teacher has access to his or her professional development (Sabzian, Gilakjani, & Sodouri, 2013).

In addition, Nagamani and Muthuswamy (2013) in their article mention that one of the most important things about the ICTs use is that the teachers have to understand its usefulness within the teaching process. With this, the teachers can adopt a positive attitude about the ICTs use in the EFL classes. Consequently, the teachers will increase the technology use in different stages of teaching. Therefore, with the flexibility that the teachers use ICTs in English classes, they will demonstrate their professionalism. Flexibility means that the teachers can use these devices not only to teach, but also these technological tools can be used with another educational purposes such as in the design of curriculum, for evaluating the students, making materials, improving the

communicative competence, collaborative learning and so on. Moreover, Hepp, Prats and Holgado (2015) remark that teachers have to be trained in professional ethics and standards that require the ICTs use in the educational field, especially in EFL teaching.

On the other hand, according to Tondeur, Forkosh-Baruch, Prestridge, Albion and Edirisinghe (2016), teachers' professional development cannot be understood as an individual feature. In the field of education, teachers can engage their colleagues to use ICTs in their EFL classes and form professional learning communities. Thus, spreading the ICTs usefulness in EFL teaching with co-workers constitutes a special aspect of the teachers' professional characteristics.

Personal.

Another aspect that affects ICTs use in EFL teaching is personal characteristics. Related to this, Yadollahi (2015) argues that individual differences directly affect ICTs use in EFL teaching. Individual differences are a set of personal characteristics, emotional and cognitive components. Mainly, personal characteristics such as age, teaching experience and gender influence in ICTs use in English classes. The author adds that, apart from academic degree, gender and technical competence, experience affects ICTs use in EFL teaching, positively or negatively. Moreover, the journalist argues that demographic characteristics like lack of experience and age develop a negative effect in ICTs use.

With respect to age, Rahimi and Yadollahi (2011) affirm that age is an important factor that affects the ICTs use in EFL classes because young teachers have enough technological knowledge to put into practice in their professional life. The old teachers have not developed this competence and they avoid using technological devices.

On the contrary, Yunus and Suliman (2014), mention that age is not an obstacle to the use of ICTs in EFL classes. The authors argue that all teachers have to master ICTs use. Old teachers should take technological courses and become competitive with younger teachers. In the same way, Saleh Mahdi and Sa'ad Al-Dera (2013) in their article found no difference in teachers' age related to ICTs use with educational purposes.

Personality is another element of the teachers' characteristics. There are several teachers' personality traits such as extrovert, agreeable, neurotic, friendly among others. Referring to this, Hassanzadeh, Gholami, Allahyar and Noordin (2012) argue that teachers' personality traits do

not have a big impact in the use of ICTs in EFL teaching. The authors mention that only extroverted teachers had a slightly positive attitude toward ICTs use during the class time.

Experience in ICTs use is another teachers' personal characteristic. Regarding this aspect, Saleh Mahdi and Sa'ad Al-Dera (2013) classify the experience in two groups. The first one is called general teaching experience. It refers to the teaching process in which there is no problem if the teacher uses ICTs or not. The second group corresponds to the specific teaching experience in which teachers give significant importance to the ICTs use in EFL teaching process. Some teachers comment that the experience in the use of ICTs is improved when the teachers introduce technological material as much as possible according to the objective of an EFL class.

Moving on the emotional and cognitive part, Bas and Bal-Gezegin (2015) draw attention to the empathy; it is an aspect that allows knowing the students' needs. Thus, thanks to empathy, the teachers will have a wide perspective about his or her students and the educator will choose the correct technological device to be used during the EFL classes. Besides, the authors add that teachers have to construct a kind of self-image; it means that the teachers have to know themselves and try to exploit their skills and using it in order to the students get meaningful learning.

The field of education is very broad and one of the most important aspects in which the researchers have taken interest in investigating is directed toward teachers' perceptions on ICT use in their EFL classes. This constitutes a crucial aspect of this work. For this reason, it is vital to give scientific support through papers which contain information endorsed by a group of qualified reviewers. These studies will be analyzed in the following lines.

The first research that supports this work is developed by Mollaei and Riasati (2013), who point out that this study is aimed at investigating the opinion of the EFL educators regarding the ICTs use during the teaching process, and aspects that hinder the implementation of technological tools in Iranian Language Institutes. 40 undergraduate and graduated EFL teachers were the sample to this study. The authors decided to use a mixed-methodology. The instruments to this research work were interviews and questionnaires. The interview was applied to seven EFL teachers and the questionnaire tries to collect information about teachers' perceptions toward technology implementation. In addition the qualitative part seeks for information by gender related to teachers' opinion on technology implementation. At the end of the study, the authors

conclude that technology in education is a kind of modernism but this have a great importance within the educational field with respect to the contemporary society. In spite of this, the teachers think that, the success of the education depends upon the teachers' quality, not on technology. Moreover, the authors argue that the positive teachers' attitudes towards ICTs use help the students to improve their language skills. On the other hand, some teachers reject the assumption of that technology encourage learner-centered methods. It is assumed that these teachers might not have developed the technological knowledge skills yet.

In order to continue supporting this assessment, the next study to be analyzed is research done by Salem and Mohammadzadeh (2018) which is designed to investigate the teachers' attitude towards ICTs acquisition and use in EFL teaching. Moreover, this study tries to identify the qualities to use technology, and also the importance of ICTs to the culture of Libya. The sample is constituted by 32 teachers. For this study, a mixed-method was applied. Moreover, the instruments were interviews in which the teachers asked some open questions and a questionnaire which seek information about teachers' attitudes toward ICTs use. Regarding conclusions, the authors affirm that the good quality and quantity of technology is not sufficient to create positive believes toward ICTs use. Therefore, the positive teachers' attitude toward ICTs use and a high teachers' technological knowledge is essential to adopt and use technology in English teaching.

The third study corresponds to Shahlou and Izadpanah (2016), who mention that the purpose of the present study was to investigate the relation between teachers' perceptions about the use of computers in EFL teaching and their teaching profiles. The participants were 20 EFL teachers and the method used was correlation of two independent variables. The main instrument was a questionnaire. The main conclusion of this study was that the teachers are totally convinced of the technology usefulness in English language learning. Moreover, the authors argue that there is a relationship between the teaching context and their attitudes toward the use of computers in EFL classes. Likewise, it was concluded that, it is a noticeable the relationship between teachers' gender and their attitudes to technology use; male teachers show more positive attitudes than female ones.

The fourth study offers great support to this work. It is developed by Thapaliya (2014), in which the author mentions that the main objective of the study is to analyze the secondary level reality through teachers' opinions and use of ICTs in English teaching. The participants of this study

were 47 English teachers from Kathmandu district. The method was based on descriptive qualitative design which took as principal instrument a questionnaire. Within the conclusions, the present study has demonstrated that ICTs are interrelated to the teaching and learning contexts because it makes easier to get meaningful learning. In addition, the author expresses that ICTs creates a feeling of motivation among the students and for this reason the teachers use the technology in their English classes.

The next study that helps to improve the scientific knowledge of this work belongs to Al-munawwarah (2014). The author argues that this study aims to investigate the teachers' perceptions toward ICTs execution in the teaching-learning process. The sample is formed by 10 teachers. The method used is qualitative and the instruments were open-ended questionnaires and interviews. As conclusions, the author points out that ICTs use has several advantages in English teaching; one of them is that the teachers can develop a skill of overcoming technological challenges; consequently, it could create positive attitudes toward ICTs use. Teachers think that technological devices are excellent extra materials to carry out the class.

The last study that gives support to the present work is developed by Raman and Mohamed (2013). The objective of this research work is to evaluate the English teachers' perceptions toward the ICTs use in EFL classes and identify the barriers that hinder educators to use technology in their English classes. The sample is constituted by 30 trained teachers. The method applied for this study is based on quantitative design which uses questionnaires to collect information. After a deep analysis, the authors concluded that, teachers feel enthusiasm in increase their technological skills and use them in their English classes and the school authorities are motivated to implement the ICTs devises to provide an adequate environment for teachers and students.

CHAPTER II.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

The field research was carried out in two private institutions located in Latacunga, Cotopaxi Province, Ecuador. In addition, the schools were selected taking into account the easy accessibility to the institution in order to apply the research instruments.

The participants were ten Ecuadorian private high school teachers. Five of them were male and five were female. The teachers impart classes to Higher Basic Education or High School; this is the main requirement in carrying out the field research. In addition, the teachers' age varies between 27 and 62 years old. Moreover, the average experience of the teachers is 14 years.

Procedures

The literature review was taken from reliable sources such as online books, thesis and especially from journals. In addition, those papers encompass scientific information that has been analyzed by qualified reviewers. Most of the information was taken from recent journals. These papers have current information that provides a support for the analysis results. But also, this literature review contains information taken from older papers, which are important because they contain relevant information to be analysed with the current teachers' characteristics and their perceptions about ICTs use.

The research design for this work was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method is directly related to surveys which produce numerical and statistical results in order to have a general idea of the teachers' perceptions about ICTs use in their English classes. On the other hand, the qualitative method applied to this work tries to collect data in words that provides a deeper understanding about what the teachers think about ICTs use in EFL classes. This qualitative data is important because it accompanies the theoretical information providing important support to the statistical results.

The field research process started with the identification of the participants and the research data collection which was developed in about one week. It is important to mention that the research data collection was developed one on one with a small group of teachers. But, for the other part of this process, the structured instruments were given to the teachers and on the next day the replied instruments were collected in order to be analysed.

The instruments used in data collection were surveys and interviews. Both instruments contain demographic information such as gender, teaching experience and teachers' age. The survey is comprised of a total of 35 statements divided in two groups. The first group contains 18 statements which seek to investigate what the principal teachers' characteristics are that can be considered as barriers to use ICTs in EFL teaching. The second group encompasses 17 statements which seek to investigate the teachers' characteristics that are the greatest influence on teachers to use ICTs in their classrooms. The level of agreement or disagreement for the two groups of items is measured through four parameters. These parameters are: "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

Concerning the interview, it encompasses eight open-ended questions in which the teachers are free to express in their own words their perceptions about ICTs use in EFL classes. The questions seek to find information about the importance of ICTs use in English classes, teachers' feelings regarding to ICTs use, perceptions about teachers' characteristics which can contribute positively or negatively in the use of ICTs, advantages and disadvantages of using ICTs in the classroom and the opinion about what gender use ICTs more frequently in EFL classes.

In order to carry out the data tabulation, the collected information has been classified to be introduced in four different tables, with the purpose of getting statistical results that allow the researcher to analyse it and answer the three proposed questions. The first table contains the results that correspond to the first 18 statements of the survey which are closely related to the teachers' characteristics considered as barriers to use ICTs in their classrooms. The second table includes the last 17 statements of the survey which are associated with the teachers' characteristics that positively influence in the use of ICTs in English classes. The third and fourth table tabulates the information in a similar way as the two first tables but the difference is that in the last two tables the information is classified by genders. This will show the similarities or differences between male and female teachers' perceptions regarding to ICTs use.

The analysis was done taking into account the highest percentages from the parameters "strongly agree" and "agree" of each table. These parameters show which statements are considered as barriers to use ICTs in EFL classes and what aspects influence on the teachers to use ICTs in their classroom. In addition, some answers from the interview were taken to support

the statistical results. Furthermore, the literature review plays an important role in the result analysis because it contrasts or confirms the statistical results with theoretical findings.

In order to perform this research work, three questions were considered; these are the following: which aspects related to teacher's characteristics are considered by most of the EFL teachers as barriers to use ICTs in their classroom?, which factor regarding to teachers' characteristics does influence the most on teachers to use ICTs in their classroom? and finally, how is ICTs use perceived by EFL teachers in relation to their gender. Based on the result analysis, the barriers and factors that influence in the ICTs use will be identified.

CHAPTER III.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The present chapter contains the results that were collected from the surveys. The tabulated results will be presented in four tables related to teachers' characteristics considered as barriers, teachers' characteristics that influence in the use of ICTs in EFL classes and the last two tables contain the same information from the two first tables but they are classified by genders. This section also contains the result analysis which will be supported by the interviews and with the scientific information from the literature review. In addition, this chapter answers three research questions. The first question is:

Which aspects related to the teachers' characteristics are considered by most of the EFL teachers as barriers to use ICTs in their classroom?

Table 1. Teachers' characteristics considered by efl teachers as barriers to use icts in their classroom

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
		%	%	%	%	%
1	I feel insecure about my ability to use ICTs as a resource to teach.	0%	40%	30%	30%	0%
2	I do not think I would be able to learn how to use ICTs in my classroom.	0%	10%	70%	20%	0%
3	I am afraid that if I begin to use ICTs, I will become dependent upon them.	0%	0%	60%	40%	0%
4	I dislike working with machines that are smarter than I am	0%	10%	60%	30%	0%
5	I feel apprehensive about using ICTs.	1%	20%	40%	20%	10%
6	I have difficulty in understanding the technical aspects of ICTs.	0%	10%	70%	20%	0%
7	It scares me to think that I could cause the computer to destroy a large amount of data by hitting the wrong key.	0%	20%	40%	40%	0%
8	I hesitate to use ICTs for fear of making mistakes that I cannot correct.	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%
9	You have to be master to understand how to use ICTs	0%	0%	70%	30%	0%
10	I have avoided ICTs use because they are unfamiliar.	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%
11	I have not attended any ICTs training courses	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%

12	I have attended some ICTs training courses; however, I prefer not to use ICTs because they somewhat intimidate to me.	0%	10%	60%	30%	0%
13	I am not interested in attending any ICTs course	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%
14	I do not know how to use any ICTs resource	0%	0%	70%	20%	10%
15	I do not use any ICTs resource in class because I think that ICTs are not necessary to teach English	0%	0%	60%	40%	0%
16	I prefer not to use ICTs because my teaching experience is the most crucial factor in teaching process.	0%	20%	40%	40%	0%
17	I think that age is factor that determines the ICTs use in class	0%	30%	30%	40%	0%
18	In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICTs than the older ones.	20%	40%	20%	20%	0%

N= 10

Source: Ecuadorian private high school EFL teachers

Author: Carmen Yesenia Veintimilla Amores

Regarding the first research question, it is noteworthy that the teachers' characteristics considered as barriers are scant. In spite of this fact, four statements were discovered as barriers to use ICTs in the EFL classes which will be analyzed in the following lines.

The statement: *In my opinion younger teachers are more skillful to use ICTs than the older ones* reached a percentage of 20% within the parameter "strongly agree". It could be considered insignificant but, if it is added to the parameter "agree" this statement reached 60% of agreement. Therefore, more than half of the sample thinks that it could be a reason to avoid using ICTs in their classes. In addition, the item: *I think that age is factor that determines the ICTs use in class*, obtained 30% of agreement. Perhaps the percentage is not significant, but the sample is constituted by ten teachers and 30% in this case is representative. In addition, it is one of the highest percentages within this parameter. For these reasons, this statement is taken as a barrier to use ICTs in the classroom according to the teachers' perceptions.

These results are supported by answers from the interview, in which a teacher states, “If age corresponds to one of the teachers' characteristics, I can say that it is a barrier because the older teachers aren't related to the technology and obviously they don't use it by the lack of knowledge”, it can occur because older teachers do not have enough opportunities to use these devices. In an interview, a teacher with 25 years of experience in English teaching in his interview said that he uses ICTs and added, “In some cases I do, other cases I do not have all the resources”. Analyzing this situation, for the older teachers the only place where they deal with technology is in their place of work, but sometimes it does not provide the technological devices to use in English teaching. In order to solve the lack of technological tools in school, younger teachers try to get technological devices by their own means and introduce them to the classroom, this is because younger teachers try to apply innovative ways to give new knowledge and in this way to support their teaching methodology. Contrary to this, older teachers prefer to keep their comfort zone and use obsolete teaching methods.

The statements 17 and 18 mentioned earlier are closely related among them and these belong to the teachers' personal characteristics. The statistical results of these two statements confirm what was reported by Rahimi and Yadollahi (2011) who argue that age influences in the use of ICTs in EFL classes because young English teachers have enough knowledge to operate technological devices with educational purposes. Unfortunately, older teachers cannot be competitive in this aspect because they believe that their intellectual skills of operating these tools are blocked over the years. In addition, teaching experience is linked to age. In this respect, Yadollahi (2015) states the teaching experience is indirectly proportional to the use of ICTs. While teaching experience is higher, ICTs use is lower. For this reason, in our educational system, older teachers with several years of experience do not use ICTs devices. On the other hand, young teachers use technological devices because they think that these tools help in the development of the English class because they are a kind of support to reach the goals.

The next highest percentage corresponds to the statement *I feel insecure about my ability to use ICTs as a resource to teach*. 40% of teachers agree with this statement. This percentage is relevant because four of the ten participants think that insecurity can be considered as a barrier to use ICTs. Also 10 % of the sample strongly agrees with the statement, *I feel apprehensive about using ICTs*, but this parameter can be added with 20 % who agree. With 30% of agreement, this item is considered by the teachers as a barrier to use ICTs in the EFL classes.

In the interview, a participant answered, “There are some distractions for teenagers; some of them are games or social net that confuses students”. This situation contributes to lose the control of the class. For this reason, the students’ distraction becomes a factor that makes the teacher feels apprehensive or insecure of using ICTs in their English classes.

Feelings of insecurity and apprehensiveness are considered as negative attitudes that affect the integration of ICTs into the EFL classes. These negative attitudes are moderated by psychological characteristics (Kounenou, Roussos & Yotsidi, 2014). The statistical results coincide with the findings of Badia, Meneses and Sigalés (2013) who argue that negative attitudes, in this case apprehensiveness and insecurity are considered as unfavorable predispositions toward ICT use and it can be defined as technological aversion. Regarding insecurity, it is important to mention that this feeling is connected to a variable called self-efficacy. According to Kounenou, Roussos and Yotsidi (2014), self-efficacy is a kind of judgment that the teachers have toward their own teaching capabilities. Therefore, the teachers who have low levels of self-efficacy will feel insecure in using ICTs in their classes. Thus, the insecurity becomes a great obstacle to integrate ICTs in English classes. In addition, apprehensiveness is directly linked to anxiety. Taking into account this relationship, the results agree with the thoughts of Revilla, Alpiste, Fernández and Santos (2016) who mention that techno-anxiety produces in teachers’ minds an unpleasant psychological state which hinders the use of ICT in the classroom. Clearly, the items: *I feel insecure about my ability to use ICTs as a resource to teach* and *I feel apprehensive about using ICTs*, are barriers to use ICTs in English teaching according to the teachers’ perceptions.

The rest of the statements which were not quoted in the previous analysis reached high percentages in the parameters “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. This means that those items are not considered as barriers to use ICTs in the EFL classes. Consequently, those statements do not answer the research question.

The second research question states:

Which factor regarding to teachers’ characteristics does influence the most on teachers to use ICTs in their classroom?

Table 2. Teachers' characteristics that influence the most on teachers to use ICTs in their classroom

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
		%	%	%	%	%
1	The challenge of learning about ICTs use is exciting.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
2	I am confident that I can learn technological skills.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
3	I feel motivated to use ICTs in my class.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
4	Learning to use ICTs is like learning any new skill – the more you practice, the better you become.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
5	I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working with ICTs.	60%	30%	10%	0%	0%
6	I feel that I will be able to keep up with the advances happening in the ICTs field.	40%	50%	0%	10%	0%
7	If given the opportunity, I would like to learn about and use ICTs.	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%
8	I think that ICTs are necessary tools in educational settings.	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%
9	I like to use ICTs because they help me to innovate my teaching methodology.	50%	40%	10%	0%	0%
10	ICTs help me to motivate my students to learn English.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
11	If I had any technical problem with ICTs during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
12	When I have any technical problem with ICTs, I do not feel frustrated.	30%	60%	10%	0%	0%
13	Age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICTs in my classes.	50%	40%	10%	0%	0%
14	I know a lot about ICTs use because I have attended some ICTs training courses	20%	30%	50%	0%	0%
15	I have learned to use ICTs resources by myself	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%
16	I think ICTs has a positive impact on teaching process	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%

17	ICTs use has more advantages than disadvantages in EFL teaching.	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
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10 N

Source: Ecuadorian private high school EFL teachers

Author: Carmen Yesenia Veintmilla Amores

With respect to the second research question, the table two shows that almost all items have a great level of acceptance by the teachers. In order to identify the factors that have the most influence on teachers to use ICTs in their classroom, the highest percentages of the parameters “strongly agree” and “agree” will be thoroughly analyzed in the following lines.

Within the parameter “strongly agree” statement 7, *I would like to learn about and use ICTs*, and statement 8, *I think that ICTs are necessary tools in educational settings*, reached 70% of agreement and if these items are added to the parameter “agree”, they reach 100% of acceptance according to the teachers’ perceptions. These statistical results show that the importance of ICTs use and the desire of learning about them are factors that have the most influence on English teachers to use ICTs in their classrooms.

Within the parameter “strongly agree”, 60% represents the second highest percentage. The statements that show this percentage are the following: statement 2, *I am confident that I can learn technological skills*; statement 3, *I feel motivated to use ICTs in my class*; statement 4, *learning to use ICTs is like learning any new skill- the more you practice, the better you become*, and statement 16, *I think ICTs have a positive impact on teaching process*. Adding the percentages of the parameters “strongly agree” and “agree”, the result is that 100% of surveyed teachers agree with these statements.

Finally, the statements 1, 10 and 11 which state respectively: *the challenge of learning about ICTs use is exciting*, *ICTs help me to motivate my students to learn English* and *if I had any technical problem with ICTs during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities* reached 50% in the parameter “strongly agree” and 50% in the parameter “agree”. Adding these percentages, the result is 100% of acceptance. That means that all teachers consider these items as factors that encourage them to use ICTs in the EFL classes.

Once identified the items that influence the most on the teachers to use ICTs in their classrooms, it is important to group them according to the teachers' characteristics in order to analyze and support them.

Statements 4 and 7 are closely related to the educational characteristics of the teachers. The desire to learn about ICTs and the assumption that knowing about ICTs use is a kind of teachers' skill, encourage the educators to introduce ICTs into the educational field. In this respect, a teacher during the interview expressed, "As teachers and professionals we must be prepared for new challenges". The word "prepared" refers to the education or instruction that the teachers have acquired or desire to acquire in order to use technology in his or her English classes.

The results totally agree with Tømte (2013) who mentions that using ICTs in educational settings is considered a digital skill. The author remarks about the importance of developing a digital competence among teachers with the goal of increasing and spreading the use of technological resources in English classes. Moreover, the teachers' educational level with respect to the ICTs use has to improve over the years because the contemporary society views technology as a principal tool in many areas, especially in the field of education. The teachers' desire to learn about ICTs use lies in the finding of Kumar and Rani (2016) who mention that, the knowledge about ICTs and the use of them improve teaching skills. Without a doubt, this constitutes a positive influence in order to use ICTs in EFL classes.

Analyzing the statements 1, 2, 3, 10 and 16 it is noticeable that these have a direct relationship with the psychological aspect. These statements encompass feelings of confidence, emotion and aspects such as positive attitudes toward ICTs use and motivation not only in teachers but also in students. During the interview, almost all of the teachers answered that they feel confident and relaxed when they use ICTs in EFL classes. Textually, some teachers' answers were "I feel confident and secure, because I can handle the subject", "I feel confident because it is another way to carry the class and also the students will feel comfortable and enjoy the activity", "I think confident, because in the classroom students are not in a routine" and finally a teacher expressed "Relaxed, because I can do interesting my classes and the students are concentrated"

The statistical results and the interview answers are supported by the findings of Jimoyiannis and Komis (2007) who divides the teachers' perceptions and beliefs into three groups: positive, negative and neutral. Thus, the Ecuadorian private high school teachers' perceptions agree with the first group that shows positive attitudes which make educators feel comfortable using ICTs in EFL classes. The authors argue that this situation creates a feeling of enthusiasm among teachers at the moment of introducing ICTs in the classroom. Moreover, the researchers point out that the use of ICTs has a double benefit because it produces motivation in both teachers and students. In addition, the results of this research work reaffirm the findings of Copriady (2015) who states that the motivation is an instrument that encourages and guides teachers to use technological tools. Therefore, motivation is one of the most important influences on teachers to use ICTs in EFL classes.

The results show that the professional characteristics of teachers also greatly influence the use of ICTs. Referring to this, statements 8 and 11 involve aspects that all professionals must take into account before introducing ICTs in their English classes. One of the aspects is related to the importance that educators must give to the use of ICTs in EFL teaching. Another aspect is problem-solving, which is essential to overcome technological inconvenients. In order to give support to the statistical results, a teacher in the interview affirmed that he uses ICTs and added, "We can make the classes interesting". In order to complement this teacher's thought, another teacher mentioned, "teachers can create new ways to teach". Therefore, this shows that teachers are conscious of the usefulness of ICTs within the educational settings. On the other hand, regarding to the problem-solving, a teacher expressed, "As I told in question 4 we must be prepared for new challenges <proactive teachers>". Being "proactive" means to be ready before something happens. In other words, teachers must be attentive and prepared to solve any technical ICTs problem that could affect the flow of the class.

The statistical results and the information from interviews agree with the findings of Nagamani & Muthuswamy (2013), who point out that teachers must understand the usefulness of ICTs within the teaching process in order to develop a positive attitude and introduce ICTs in their classrooms. These results also have a great concordance with what was reported by Salem and Mohammadzadeh (2018), who argues that positive attitudes contribute to the ICTs implementation. These last authors added that, there is no sense to have sufficient ICTs resources if the teachers do not have the predisposition (positive attitudes) of using these devices. In addition, referring to problem-solving, Revilla, Alpiste, Fernández and Santos (2016)

argue that the abilities of ICTs problem-solving encourages the introduction of technological devices into EFL classes and even this situation helps to reduce the levels of anxiety or techno-anxiety.

Tables 3 and 4 contain statistical data which answer the third research question, which states:

How is ICTs use perceived by EFL teachers in relation to their gender?

Table 3. Teachers' perceptions by gender in relation to the aspects that they consider as barriers to use ICTs in their classrooms

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		NO ANSWER	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	I feel insecure about my ability to use ICTs as a resource to teach.	0%	0%	20%	60%	60%	0%	20%	40%	0%	0%
2	I do not think I would be able to learn how to use ICTs in my classroom.	0%	0%	20%	0%	80%	60%	0%	40%	0%	0%
3	I am afraid that if I begin to use ICTs, I will become dependent upon them.	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%	40%	20%	60%	0%	0%
4	I dislike working with machines that are smarter than I am	0%	0%	20%	0%	60%	60%	20%	40%	0%	0%
5	I feel apprehensive about using ICTs.	20%	0%	20%	20%	40%	40%	0%	40%	20%	0%
6	I have difficulty in understanding the technical aspects of ICTs.	0%	0%	0%	20%	100%	40%	0%	40%	0%	0%
7	It scares me to think that I could cause the computer to destroy a large amount of data by hitting the wrong key.	0%	0%	20%	20%	40%	40%	40%	40%	0%	0%
8	I hesitate to use ICTs for fear of making mistakes that I cannot correct.	0%	0%	0%	40%	100%	20%	0%	40%	0%	0%
9	You have to be master to understand how to use ICTs	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%	60%	20%	40%	0%	0%
10	I have avoided ICTs use because they are unfamiliar.	0%	0%	20%	20%	80%	40%	0%	40%	0%	0%
11	I have not attended any ICTs training courses	0%	0%	40%	0%	60%	60%	0%	40%	0%	0%

12	I have attended some ICTs training courses; however, I prefer not to use ICTs because they somewhat intimidate to me.	0%	0%	20%	0%	60%	60%	20%	40%	0%	0%
13	I am not interested in attending any ICTs course	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	60%	80%	40%	0%	0%
14	I do not know how to use any ICTs resource	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%	60%	0%	40%	20%	0%
15	I do not use any ICTs resource in class because I think that ICTs are not necessary to teach English	0%	0%	0%	0%	60%	60%	40%	40%	0%	0%
16	I prefer not to use ICTs because my teaching experience is the most crucial factor in teaching process.	0%	0%	20%	20%	40%	40%	40%	40%	0%	0%
17	I think that age is factor that determine the ICTs use in class	0%	0%	40%	20%	20%	40%	40%	40%	0%	0%
18	In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICTs than the older ones.	40%	0%	40%	40%	20%	20%	0%	40%	0%	0%

5 MALE 5 FEMALE

Source: Ecuadorian private high school EFL teachers

Author: Carmen Yesenia Veintmilla Amores

In response to the third research question, table 3 shows the perceptions by gender in relation to the aspects that the teachers consider as barriers to use ICTs in their classrooms. Through a deep analysis and according to the teachers' gender some similarities and differences were discovered which will be presented in the following lines.

Referring to the female reality, within the parameter "strongly agree" no response has been recorded. But, in the parameter "agree", statement 1, *I feel insecure about my ability to use ICTs as a resource to teach*, reached 60% of acceptance. This result shows that three of five female teachers think that insecurity negatively affects the use of ICTs in English classes. On the other hand, only 20% of the male teachers marked the option "agree" and the rest of the sample marked the options "disagree" and "strongly disagree". Therefore, this statement only constitutes a barrier to the female teachers. In addition, 40% of the surveyed female teachers marked the option "agree" in statement 8, *I hesitate to use ICTs for fear of making mistakes that I cannot correct*. It means that 2 female teachers accept that fear of causing terrible harm regarding the

technological devices constitutes a barrier to use ICTs in the classroom. In contrast with the female results, in statement 8 none of the male teachers showed agreement. 100% of the male teachers reject this statement as a barrier to use ICTs in their English classes.

These negative feelings and attitudes toward the ICTs use can be a consequence of the limited access to technological devices in English classes. In this sense, a teacher said, “We are limited in the use of new technology in the teaching process”. This concurs with the findings of Mirzajani, Mahmud, Fauzi Mohd Ayub and Wong (2016) who argue that one factor to avoid the use of ICTs is the limited access to technological devices. This aspect blocks the development of teachers’ technological skills and contributes to create feelings of fear and insecurity as regards ICTs. It is important to mention that factors such as insecurity and fear correspond to the psychological teachers’ characteristics. As it was exposed in before lines, Jimoyiannis and Komis (2007) divided the attitudes into three groups: positive, negative and neutral. The results presented have a great concordance with the second group that encompasses the negative attitudes which are developed when teachers feel stressed, insecure, worried or upset at the moment of using technology in English classes.

It is important to mention that statement 18, which states: *In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICTs than the older ones*, reached 40% of agreement from the female teachers’ perceptions, and 80% of agreement from the male teachers’ perceptions. It means that this is the only statement that both male and female teachers consider as a barrier to use ICTs in EFL classes. To support this result, a female teacher expressed in the interview, “If age corresponds to one of the teachers’ characteristics, I can say that it is a barrier because the older teachers aren’t related to the technology and obviously they don’t use it by the lack of knowledge”. These results perfectly agree with the findings of Laabidi (2016) who states that age is a factor that influences the introduction of ICTs devices into classrooms. The author argues that younger teachers have more updated technological knowledge than the older ones.

On the other hand, results showed that both male and female teachers reject some items as barriers to use ICTs in their classes. Thus, 100% of the male and female sample disagree and strongly disagree with the following statements: statement 3, *I am afraid that if I begin to use ICTs, I will become dependent upon them*; statement 9, *you have to be master to understand how to use ICTs*; statement 13, *I am not interested in attending any ICT course*; and finally

statement 15, *I do not use any ICTs resource in class because I think that ICTs use are not necessary to teach English.*

Regarding statement 3, both genders deny the idea of becoming dependent on ICTs. This result agrees with Mollaei and Riasati (2013) who argue that teachers are not consumers of technology; on the contrary, they consider technology as useful didactic tools which improve their teaching methodology. Moving onto statement 9, teachers think that it is not necessary to master the use of ICTs for educational purposes. Regarding this, a teacher argues, "The use of ICTs isn't hard to use with teenagers; they catch the concepts easily using those". This agrees with the line of reasoning of Sabzian, Gilakjani and Sodouri (2013) who point out that teachers not only teach through ICTs use, but also they can learn and increase their knowledge about ICTs. Finally, items 13 and 15 reached a high level of disagreement because the teachers have the desire to learn about ICTs and they are conscious of its usefulness. This result confirmed what was reported by Sakiyo & Badau (2013); teachers have to be able to integrate ICTs in the curriculum in order to keep themselves up-to-date with contemporary technologies. Likewise, Nagamani and Muthuswamy (2013) remark the importance that teachers have to give to the ICTs use in educational settings.

In the items 2, 4, 11, 12, and 14 there is a slight difference of disagreement among the teachers' gender perceptions. The mentioned items state: *I do not think I would be able to learn how to use ICTs in my classroom, I dislike working with machines that are smarter than I am, I have not attended any ICTs training courses, I have attended some ICTs training courses; however, I prefer not to use ICTs because somewhat intimidate to me, and I do not know how to use any ICTs resource.* While 100% of the female sample rejects all mentioned statements as barriers, only 20% of the male sample thinks that these factors are barriers to use ICTs. Perhaps, this disagreement toward these items is caused by the idea that the students do not use technology with learning purposes during the class and the teachers feel they cannot avoid losing the control of the class. Referring to this, a teacher said in his interview "There are some distractions for kids; some of these are games or social net that confuse students". This results reaffirm the findings of Mulhim (2014), who mentions that the lack of ICTs training and the lack of effective professional development in ICTs use cause loss of control of the class when the teacher uses technological devices and for this reason teachers prefer not to use technology in their classes.

The last point to be analyzed corresponds to the factors that positively influence to use ICTs according to teachers' gender perceptions which show the next table:

Table 4. Teachers' perceptions by gender in relation to the factors that they consider the most influential to use ICTs in their classroom.

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		NO ANSWER	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	The challenge of learning about ICTs use is exciting.	60%	40%	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	I am confident that I can learn technological skills.	80%	40%	20%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3	I feel motivated to use ICTs in my class.	80%	40%	20%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4	Learning to use ICTs is like learning any new skill – the more you practice, the better you become.	80%	40%	20%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5	I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working with ICTs.	80%	40%	20%	40%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6	I feel that I will be able to keep up with the advances happening in the ICTs field.	40%	40%	40%	60%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%
7	If given the opportunity, I would like to learn about and use ICTs.	100%	40%	0%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
8	I think that ICTs are necessary tools in educational settings.	100%	40%	0%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
9	I like to use ICTs because they help me to innovate my teaching methodology.	60%	40%	40%	40%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10	ICTs help me to motivate my students to learn English.	60%	40%	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
11	If I had any technical problem with ICTs during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities.	60%	40%	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12	When I have any technical problem with ICTs, I do not feel frustrated.	20%	40%	80%	40%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
13	Age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICTs in my classes.	60%	40%	40%	40%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14	I know a lot about ICTs use because I have attended some ICTs training courses	0%	40%	60%	20%	40%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
15	I have learned to use ICTs resources by myself	0%	40%	80%	60%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
16	I think ICTs has a positive impact on teaching process	80%	40%	20%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
17	ICTs use has more advantages than disadvantages in EFL teaching.	40%	40%	60%	40%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%

5 MALE 5 FEMALE

Source: Ecuadorian private high school EFL teachers

Author: Carmen Yesenia Veintmilla Amores

Table 4 shows very high percentages of agreement by male and female teachers. In spite of this, there is a slight relevance of acceptance toward some items which influence the use of ICTs in English classes according to teachers' perceptions by gender.

The results show that some items have 100% of agreement from the female and male sample. It means that the five female teachers and the five male teachers consider the following items as factors that persuade them to use ICTs: *The challenge of learning about ICTs use is exciting, I am confident that I can learn technological skills, I feel motivated to use ICTs in my class, learning to use ICTs is like learning any new skill – the more you practice, the better you become; if given the opportunity, I would like to learn about and use ICTs; I think that ICTs are necessary tools in educational settings, ICTs help me to motivate my students to learn English, if I had any technological problem with ICTs during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities and I think ICTs have a positive impact on teaching process.*

These findings show that both females and males are influenced to use ICTs by the same factors. These factors are psychological such as feelings of confidence, motivation and enthusiasm; professional such as improvement of ICTs use, awareness of ICTs usefulness and ICTs problem-solving; and finally, educational such as the desire to increase the teachers' ICTs training. In order to support these findings, a female teacher expressed that she uses ICTs and added "It helps us to motivate the class through this we can improve the learning process". Likewise, a male teacher confirms the use of ICTs in his English classes and points out "It can enhance the learning process during the class".

In addition, item 6, *I feel that I will be able to keep up with the advances happening in the ICTs field* and 15, *I have learned to use ICTs resources by myself*, reveal a slight difference of acceptance among female and male teachers. The mentioned items form part of the educational characteristics of the teachers and they reached 100% of acceptance by the female sample, but the male sample showed 80% of agreement. Due to the high level of agreement, these items are considered as factors that encourage female and male teachers to use ICTs in their classes.

All these findings follow the line of reasoning of Burrola and Vera (2013) who argue that men and women have the same capabilities and opportunities to acquire technological knowledge and use ICTs for educational purposes.

On the other hand, the level of teachers' disagreement is quite low. The results show that 40% of the female and male samples disagree with statement 14 which states: *I know a lot about ICTs use because I have attended some ICTs training courses*. This means that less than half of males and females reject these factors as positive influences to use ICTs in English classes.

Furthermore, 20% of the female sample expressed disagreement about the following statements: *I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working with ICTs, I like to use ICTs because they help me to innovate my teaching methodology, when I have any technical problem with ICTs, I do not feel frustrated; age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICTs in my classes* and finally, *ICTs use has more advantages than disadvantages in EFL teaching*. In contrast to this, male teachers have not shown any disagreement toward the mentioned items. They are totally convinced that with practice they will increase their technological knowledge and they will even be able overcome any technical inconveniences. But above all, male teachers totally agree that ICTs renovate the teaching methodology.

Taking into account the minimal difference of disagreement among genders, these results have concordance with the findings of Saleh Mahdi and Sa'ad Al-Dera (2013) who affirm that male teachers have more ICTs training than female ones, male teachers also have more internet access. As a result of this, the male teachers show a higher level of self-efficacy than the female teachers. This minimal difference also reaffirms the findings of Shahlou and Izadpanah (2016) who mention that the male teachers use more technology than female teachers. However, in the interviews, four teachers said that the female teachers use more ICTs because women are more creative in the class and they have more confidence.

CONCLUSIONS

The present work has demonstrated that demographic aspects such as age and experience, which belong to personal characteristics of the teachers, are barriers in the use of ICTs in English classes; this is because older teachers do not have enough exposure in the technological field.

From the point of view of experienced and old teachers, the use of ICTs produces loss of control of the class. Therefore, it constitutes a kind of barrier to use technology during the teaching process because older teachers do not feel capable of operating technological devices as younger teachers do. It can occur because young teachers have more opportunities of using these technological tools.

It has been determined that insecurity and apprehensiveness affect the teachers' psychological state creating negative attitudes toward ICTs use. This could occur because teachers show low level of self-efficacy as mention Kounenou, Roussos and Yotsidi (2014) and also because the teachers' levels of anxiety are high as argue Revilla, Alpiste, Fernández and Santos (2016).

Moreover, the findings reveal that the desire to increase technical knowledge and the capability of putting this insight into practice greatly inspire educators to use ICTs in their English classes. Moreover, motivation and confidence denote an adequate psychological state and this encourages the use of technological devices in English teaching.

This study has identified aspects that female teachers consider as barriers and that are a bit different from the male perceptions. Such is the case that, female teachers show higher levels of insecurity when using ICTs; also, female teachers are more prone to feel fear when they use technology in the class. The findings state that age is the only barrier in which female and male teachers coincide.

On the other side, it was concluded that there is no difference about the factors that encourage male and female teachers to use ICTs in EFL teaching. Both genders consider that mainly the psychological aspects promote the use of ICTs. In addition, some educational and professional aspects, especially the ability of solving technological problems and the awareness of ICTs helpfulness are crucial to the introduction of technological devices in the EFL classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ICTs are essential to create 21st century learning environment. In order to reach this, educational institutions should be more open toward innovation and offer to older and experienced teachers ICTs courses that will increase teachers' technological knowledge.

The institution might persuade older teachers to use ICTs with educational purposes providing update workshops in which older teachers acquire some technological skills specially to keep the control of the class while they are using ICTs. With this, older teachers will become as competitive as young teachers within the field of technology.

In order to reduce the level of apprehensiveness, the authorities should give the teachers more opportunities of using technology in English classes. It could be done through the implementation of English labs with ICTs devices. In this way, with the permanent use of these tools, the teachers will feel familiarized with the technology and the negative attitudes toward technology will be transformed into positives ones.

It is important to keep a good psychological state that allows the teachers to have an open mind toward the use of new technologies, understand the ICTs usefulness within the educational field and thus improve teaching methodologies. This will be beneficial for teachers and students.

It is recommended that extra support be given to female teachers who show insecurity and fear toward the use of technology. The school should help to reduce the techno-anxiety that affects teachers. This could be done through ICTs training programs in order to have a homogeneous teaching team, which will have the same technological skills in using ICTs with teaching purposes.

School authorities should organize teacher meetings in order to discuss aspects related to new teaching methodologies based on the use of ICTs and to reinforce aspects that encourage teachers to introduce technology in English classes. Hence, English teachers will form professional learning communities as pointed out Tondeur, Forkosh-Baruch, Prestridge, Albion and Edirisinghe (2016).

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ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

Gender: M ()

F ()

Years of EFL teaching experience: ()

Age: ()

1. For each statement, decide whether you disagree or agree with the statement using the following five - point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	I feel insecure about my ability to use ICT as a resource to teach.				
2	I do not think I would be able to learn how to use ICT in my classroom.				
3	I am afraid that if I begin to use ICT, I will become dependent upon them.				
4	I dislike working with machines that are smarter than I am				
5	I feel apprehensive about using ICT.				
6	I have difficulty in understanding the technical aspects of ICT.				

7	It scares me to think that I could cause the computer to destroy a large amount of data by hitting the wrong key.				
8	I hesitate to use ICT for fear of making mistakes that I cannot correct.				
9	You have to be master to understand how to use ICT				
10	I have avoided ICT use because they are unfamiliar.				
11	I have not attended any ICT training courses				
12	I have attended some ICT training courses; however, I prefer not to use ICT because they somewhat intimidate to me.				
13	I am not interested in attending any ICT course				
14	I do not know how to use any ICT resource				
15	I do not use any ICT resource in class because I think that ICT are not necessary to teach English				
16	I prefer not to use ICT because my teaching experience is the most crucial factor in teaching process.				
17	I think that age is factor that determine the ICT use in class				
18	In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICT than the older ones.				

2. For each statement, decide whether you disagree or agree with the statement using the following five – point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	The challenge of learning about ICT use is exciting.				
2	I am confident that I can learn technological skills.				
3	I feel motivated to use ICT in my class.				
4	Learning to use ICT is like learning any new skill – the more you practice, the better you become.				
5	I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working				
6	I feel that I will be able to keep up with the advances happening in the ICT field.				
7	If given the opportunity, I would like to learn about and use ICT.				
8	I think that ICT are necessary tools in educational settings.				
9	I like to use ICT because they help me to innovate my teaching methodology.				
10	ICT help me to motivate my students to learn English.				
11	If I had any technical problem with ICT during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities.				
12	When I have any technical problem with ICT, I do not feel frustrated.				
13	Age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICT in my classes.				
14	I know a lot about ICT use because I have attended some ICT training courses				
15	I have learned to use ICT resources by myself				
16	I think ICT has a positive impact on teaching process				
17	ICT use has more advantages than disadvantages in EFL teaching.				



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TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

Gender: M ()

F ()

Years of EFL teaching experience: ()

1. Do you think the use of ICT is important to teach English?

YES () NO ()

Why?

2. Do you use ICT in your English classes?

YES () NO ()

Why?

3. If your answer was affirmative in the previous question, how do you feel (afraid nervous, relaxed, confident, etc.) when you use ICT? Why?

4. Do you consider that factors such as psychological, personal, etc., which are related to your characteristics as a teacher, are barriers to use ICT in your classes? (If it is necessary, use some of the statements in the teachers' survey to explain these factors)

YES () NO ()

Why?

5. Do you consider that factors such as psychological, personal, etc. which are related to your characteristic as a teacher have a positive influence on you to use ICT in your classes? (If it is necessary, use some of the statements in the teachers' survey to explain these factors)

YES () NO ()

Why?

6. Is there any advantage to use ICT in EFL teaching?

YES () NO ()

Why?

7. Is there any disadvantage to use ICT in EFL teaching?

YES () NO ()

Why?

8. According to your opinion, who uses more frequently ICT in EFL classes, male or female teachers?

YES () NO ()

Why?
