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

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Víctor Hugo, my loving husband and friend who has been my support all these years with his strength that was also mine, to my beloved father, José Alcides, who is now walking among angels and always looking after us from heaven, to my dear mother, Regina for every day send me her blessings and prayers; finally, to my sister, brothers and their families who were always there for me. Thank you all for everything.

Dori

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

This research study focuses on the fact that technology is nowadays everywhere, including language education. Therefore, this study was carried out to identify factors that may be considered as barriers or positive influences such as age, gender, training among others, for which, quantitative methodology was used to obtain measurable results from the surveys and qualitative methodology to interpret the responses obtained from the administered interviews. A total of ten English teachers, five female and five male, whose ages ranged from twenty-two to sixty-one and work at two different private high schools in Quito, Ecuador, were the population considered for this research process. The findings revealed that even though there is some evidence pointing at gender as a factor to determine the use of ICT in the EFL classroom or not, the results showed that age and adequate training, at a considerable lower degree, are the true crucial factors that make teachers not to use ICT in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: ICT, EFL, teachers, gender, age, training.

RESUMEN

Este estudio de investigación se enfoca en el hecho que la tecnología está hoy en día en todos lados, incluyendo la enseñanza de idiomas. Por lo tanto, este estudio se llevó a cabo con el fin de identificar los factores que podrían ser considerados como barreras o influencias positivas tales como la edad, género o entrenamiento, para lo cual, se usó metodología cuantitativa para obtener resultados medibles de las encuestas y metodología cualitativa para interpretar las respuestas obtenidas de las entrevistas aplicadas. Un total de diez profesores de inglés, cinco mujeres y cinco varones cuyas edades variaron desde los 22 hasta los 61 años y trabajan en dos colegios privados de Quito, Ecuador, fueron considerados como la población para este proceso investigativo. Los resultados revelaron que, aunque hay algo de evidencia que apunta al género como un factor determinante en el uso o no uso de TICs en una clase de inglés, estos mostraron que la edad y entrenamiento adecuado, en un grado considerablemente menor, son los verdaderos factores cruciales que hace que los profesores no usen las TICs en el salón de clase de inglés.

Palabras TICs, ILE, profesores, género, edad, entrenamiento.

INTRODUCTION

Conducting research about what teachers believe and perceive as factors that either push them to use ICT in their EFL classes or keep them away from such approach is a very important topic to investigate, because there is a plethora of studies in many countries all over the world focusing on such idea. However, in spite of that abundant number of studies, none of them are significantly conclusive, not to mention that such studies do not focus on our national reality.

This study is based on the perception Ecuadorian private high school English teachers have towards using ICT in their classes. In order to carry out this research process, there were three key questions that drove the whole research process in order to obtain reliable information. The first question referred to aspects related to teachers' characteristics that are considered by most EFL teachers as barriers to use ICT in their classroom. The second question was about which factors regarding teachers' characteristics influence the most on teachers to use it in their classroom. Finally, the third question focused on how ICT use is perceived by EFL teachers in relation to their gender.

It is worth mentioning that there are many studies on this subject trying to definitely figure out the aspects that make English teachers use ICT in their classes or not. In this regard, we can mention Mozafari and Wray (2015) who, in their study, tried to identify the perspectives Iranian teachers have about using ICT in their classes and found out that teachers have a positive attitude about it, but do not feel prepared enough to successfully implement it. Salem and Mohammadzadeh (2018) carried out a study on how to successfully integrate ICT in EFL classrooms in Libya and found out that teachers are slowly adopting it, yet they found that they are not well prepared and claim for more help and support from any authorities above them. Finally, Al-Munawwarah (2014) also researched the perception of English teachers toward using ICT in Indonesian schools and he found that teachers have a positive attitude because they are skilled at using such technologies and closes advising to implement ICT in EFL classrooms around the world.

This study will be of great help to English teachers in different parts of the world, especially for Ecuadorian EFL instructors who can make it part of their virtual library for further references. Educational researchers interested in learning how technology is taking over many aspects of our modern society, may also find this research very useful. Besides, future generations of English teachers can also use this study as a reference to maybe even compare it to how technology keeps evolving and growing within the field of education.

CHAPTER I
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a discussion on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the English classroom and it covers a wide range of aspects such as ICT use in EFL teaching, Teachers and ICT use or teachers' characteristics regarding their use. It also includes information on previous studies on the application of ICT in EFL classes because it is important to understand how teachers perceive the use of different technologies in the English classroom.

ICT use in EFL teaching

Definition.

ICT or Information and Communications Technology is a structure made up of both, physical and virtual resources, that allows an up-to-date processing and analysis of information in order to interact in the digital world. This is of great help when applied in the educational field, especially when teaching English because it allows teachers and students to interact in very dynamic ways that would not be possible without the aforementioned technologies. Therefore, ICT in the EFL classroom is essential nowadays to help students master their language skills at a faster pace (Pérez, Santacruz and Gómez, 2012).

As it was mentioned above, it can be said that the development of ICT has not only changed but also drastically shaped our lives as common individuals and as educators to unprecedented limits of what we can learn and achieve in the modern knowledge society we live in nowadays. For this reason, our students are to have the best tools available along with proper competences in order to be active and successful people. Therefore, ICT in foreign language education does not simply mean the use of technology but the total integration of such a thing in a manner that is beneficial for all parts accordingly (Garrido and Ortega, 2014).

Likewise, ICT in EFL teaching refers to the use of such technologies by educators and professionals in the language-teaching field, in order to offer and extend its range beyond typical classroom standards. This is mainly, because technology has the ability to provide not only teachers but also students with excellent opportunities in the shape of rich teaching and learning environments, which will positively affect students' learning, bringing motivation, critical thinking and autonomy throughout the whole language-learning journey (Tamo, 2014).

Additionally, ICT includes a wide range of sources such as computers, the Internet, and other electronic devices such as smartphones, smart televisions, tablets or projectors, which are used to enrich the productivity of an English class. Within this learning environment, students

take an active role by participating in a great number of activities by using all the sources previously mentioned to become engaged in activities that will fully provide them with real-life language experiences bringing educational quality along the way (Fu, 2013).

Besides, it must be mentioned that ICT has not only improved the teaching of foreign languages all over the world with an outstanding number of new schools and universities that are adopting and adapting it in the EFL classroom. This is enabling students of all ages to engage in learning English in a positive and modern fashion (Papadima, Giannikas and Kakoulli, 2014).

Importance.

When it comes to analyzing the importance of ICT in the English language classroom, it must be stated that it is tremendously important because it improves, facilitates and potentiates the learner's foreign language acquisition skills through constant motivation that keeps the learner interested. This interest is thanks to the diversity of resources available when ICT is used in the English classroom, in the shape of online platforms or interactive websites or applications amongst other options. This is exactly what enriches the learning environment and it enhances the quality of teaching (Azmi, 2017).

Additionally, the importance of integrating ICT in the EFL classroom is vital nowadays because it is a medium, a channel through which pedagogical approaches and philosophies are applied in a completely freshened fashion. However, educators must be careful when using ICT in the EFL classroom because its modernity may cause trouble to the educators who are not skilled in the use of such resources. Fortunately, once ICT is mastered, it will become an indispensable component of any modern learning environment, hence its tremendous importance (Korkut, 2012).

In the same way, research studies that have been carried out around the world have demonstrated the huge importance of ICT in the EFL classroom because it has tremendously improved the way teachers approach their students. It is in itself a sort of educational revolution, which is already impossible not to notice. This revolution in the teaching of English as a foreign language is so important that it is present almost everywhere and now teachers have a great range of possibilities to choose from to help their students learn English in a better, faster and modern way (Hjalmarsson, 2014).

Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that ICT is a pragmatic and crucial approach to teaching English as a foreign language because it helps educators by providing them with a sense of relief in their pedagogical practices because it makes all teaching processes not only easier but also more efficient and relevant. This relevance, in turn, makes students feel more comfortable when learning a foreign language in this new, modernized learning environment because it is both challenging and highly motivating (Behzadi, 2015).

What is more, ICT in the EFL classroom has become so important that we must not talk about how viable it is in the English classroom but about how to implement it in every single class due to its efficiency when it comes to improving the teaching-learning process with equal benefits for both teachers and students. Teachers can adapt their pedagogical methods and teaching styles in a smooth way and students are constantly motivated because using ICT in an English class helps reduce the time that is needed to be able to learn the target language. Therefore, the learning environment that ICT creates in the English classroom is of vital importance, especially within the standards of the modern society we live in nowadays (Al-Mahroooqi and Troudi, 2014).

Advantages.

To start analyzing the advantages of ICT in the English classroom, it must be mentioned the fact that it has several advantages such as the engagement it creates in students when they are actively involved in fun and joyful activities. This fun factor emerges because they have to use technology, which nowadays is natural to them. Having students learn a language such as English and virtually any other language means that they will be fully motivated and engaged, thus they will be able to achieve their goal of learning English as a foreign language (Allahyar, Tan and Riasati, 2012).

Also, another advantage of implementing ICT in the English classroom is the fact that teachers can now help their students better than never before thanks to the several options available to them such as blogs, specialized websites or interactive platforms among other options to improve their teaching style. One clear example of this comes in the shape of blogs. Blogs are literally everywhere and they are used by all kinds of people and that is why it is a great tool that empowers them through the ideas they share. What a better way to incentivize students to write in English than by starting a blog. This is not only a great tool for students to feel motivated to write but it also is a useful resource for teachers to help their students improve their writing skills in an easier and more productive way (Nordin, Salehi, Hui and Embi, 2013).

Besides, research has proven that the use of ICT in the English classroom actually polishes and enhances students' language skills tremendously because it encourages them to push their own limits and it also empowers them with enough self-confidence to keep learning English autonomously. It must be noted that this phenomenon does not happen in a traditional classroom where ICT is not present (Silviyanti and Yusuf, 2015).

In addition, another advantage we can observe when ICT is implemented in the English classroom is a psychological factor because students feel a lot less anxiety on their shoulders. This is because learners nowadays can use the technologies used in ICT without a problem and since they can do that, they feel freer to communicate their ideas in English (Mullamaa, 2010).

Above all, we have to observe the fact that the incorporation of ICT in the English classroom has achieved a very important milestone, which is a change in teaching paradigms going swiftly and smoothly from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered classroom. In order for this to happen successfully, educators must adapt to a new role in the class as facilitators rather than being typical instructors. The advantage of this is that students feel more identified with this kind of facilitators to lead the way using different technologies to learn English (Subhashni, 2008).

Disadvantages.

With regard to disadvantages, a very important one is that when ICT is used too much in the English classroom, the students' writing skills may get negatively affected because they tend to use lots of inappropriate abbreviations to write faster such as "cos" instead of because, or "ur" to mean your, amongst many other examples. This abuse of abbreviations is then imprinted in their writing skills, thus affecting it in a much-undesired way (O'Neill and Gravois, 2015).

Besides, the students' reading skills may also be negatively influenced when ICT is used in excess in the English classroom despite the fact that they are indeed being exposed to an acceptable range of reading sources and genres. However, scrolling up and down the screen to read on their screens creates a sense of speed-read that is usually superficial and imprecise when it comes to fully understanding what they are reading (Herrera, 2017).

In the same way, another disadvantage of ICT in the EFL classroom is that teachers can become too dependent on these technologies and may not feel prepared enough to teach

without the aforementioned resources. Students can also become too dependent on the learning technologies available to the point that when they go out to the real world they may not feel confident enough to have, for example, a conversation in an uncontrolled environment with English native speakers (Ozturk, 2013).

Furthermore, another disadvantage of ICT in the EFL classroom happens on the teacher's side of this equation because even if the students are ready to use all these technologies, many times we can encounter teachers who are not skilled enough in using such technologies or simply refuse to use them. There is also the time factor, which makes teachers give up on using ICT in their classes because they consider it excessively time-consuming (Chenzi, 2012).

What is more, the biggest disadvantage of using ICT in the English classroom is the dangers that students may be exposed to when being online such as inappropriate material or cyberbullying among other risks. Therefore, teachers must be extremely careful when choosing what technologies, platforms and other resources to use, keeping the students' safety in mind all the time (Hannah, 2013).

Teachers and ICT use

Teachers' roles.

The roles of the English teachers who are using ICT in their classrooms are many. For example, one key factor is that teachers must not only become acquainted but also completely familiar with the technologies that are essential to ICT such as online platforms or educational apps among others so that they can use those technologies with full confidence (Samuel and Pulizala, 2014).

Actually, the previous role takes us to the next one; teachers must become real motivators to inspire their students when implementing the use of ICT in their English classes. Studies have shown that even though students are digital natives who are completely familiar with all these technologies, it does not mean or imply that they will gladly accept working with these new implementations in their regular classes. They need to be led in such a way that they are constantly motivated by their teachers in order to obtain the best results possible out of their new English environment (Buabeng-Andoh and Yidana, 2015).

Adding to the above-mentioned, another role of the English teacher in the ICT classroom has to do with methodologies and teaching approaches. They must literally make a radical change to their theoretical approaches to teaching English in order to leave way to more modern and suitable methodologies such as blended learning or flipped classroom. Blended learning is a methodology that perfectly combines the use of online digital media with traditional teaching approaches whereas flipped classroom switches the learning environment all the way around by delivering all the instructional content through online platforms and then the more traditional classroom activities such as homework are moved into the classroom. This change of direction is a milestone in the conceptualization and adaptation of ICT in the English classroom (Eickelmann and Vennemann, 2017).

Additionally, when English teachers are using ICT in their classrooms, they must make sure to use all these technologies in a proper way and that can only be achieved with thorough planning. Teachers not only have to plan according to these new technological implementations, but they also have to do it cautiously so that they do not abuse of certain digital tools or underuse them at all (Msila, 2015).

Probably, the most important role of teachers using ICT in their English classrooms is being very careful with the material they choose in terms of students' safety in order to keep them away from all the dangers pertaining to the use of online sources such as cyber-bullying or phishing among many others (Ghavifekr, Athirah and Rosdy, 2015).

Teachers' competences.

Turning to the competences English teachers need to have to implement successfully ICT in their classrooms, the first one has to do with the skills and knowledge English teachers must have. In order to make an efficient use of all the technologies such as word processing programs, online navigation or social networking among others that are available when ICT is used in the English classroom, teachers need to be fully competent users of those technologies to obtain any degree of success in their classes (Malinina, 2015).

Besides, teachers must be fully competent researchers to choose wisely from the immense variety of options available in different digital styles and presentations so that the most appropriate and useful materials are chosen (Mura and Diamantini, 2013).

Additionally, English teachers must be wise to know when to make use of ICT in their classes in order not to underuse or abuse it. This happens because if it is used at the wrong time in or

out of the classroom depending on the teaching methodology being used, then students will not use it properly or may use it but with a feeling of discomfort or rejection towards the class. Therefore, it is essential that the timing considered to use these technologies is the proper one in every single class (Ranjit and Chan, 2014).

Moreover, English teachers must be competent enough to make use of ICT in their classes in such a way that it is not just one fun activity or set of activities but a meaningful process that will actually help students not only to learn English but also to become better citizens for the society (Gajek, 2015).

Teachers' gender.

In order to mention a few aspects about gender, we must consider a first point, which states that the difference between male and female teachers using ICT in their classrooms remains the same in many countries and continents where the topic has been researched with a relatively persisting sixty to forty percent difference favoring male teachers (Park and Son, 2009). Indeed, a seemingly decisive factor seems to be age; male younger teachers in their mid-twenties and below 40 are more active users of ICT in their classrooms unlike female teachers who are neither interested nor trained to do so (Mahdi and Al-Dera, 2013).

Besides, according to some authors, male teachers are more willing to use and implement ICT in their regular classes than their female counterparts because men are more interested in learning new technologies. Hence, male teachers tend to use ICT more in their classrooms (Woollard, 2007).

It must be additionally mentioned that there is a disparity in the use of ICT in English classrooms by male and female teachers. This inequality is not positive for the educational community and some measures should definitely be taken to help more female educators take the technological leap needed to work with ICT in their classrooms such as offering free seminars and workshops to induce more female teachers to use ICT in their classes (Esther and Emeka, 2017).

However, a different point of view considers the fact that gender has nothing to do when it comes to implementing ICT in classrooms. It rather has to do with competences and the goals of every teacher. This refutes the theory that male teachers are more willing to use ICT or even better at its use and any percentages showing a disparity in use between genders is no more than a coincidence (Crawford, 2013).

Teachers' characteristics regarding ICT use

Psychological.

The psychological characteristics of a teacher are paramount to determine the type of teacher an individual will be. A first aspect to consider is conscientiousness, which is applied to English teachers in the sense that they have to be aware that great achievements are expected from them and their students, especially when using technologies; therefore, they must teach accordingly (Hennessy, Harrison and Wamakote, 2010).

Also, another psychological characteristic that is considered essential is self-awareness. English teachers must not only be aware of their own beings as educators but as catalysts to help their students grow educationally, culturally and morally, leading by example when using technology in the English classroom since teaching a language implies covering a wide range of cultural and moral aspects related to the target language idiosyncrasy (Casillas, Cabezas and Ointo, 2016).

Additionally, resilience is another aspect to consider as a strong psychological characteristic of a teacher. This refers to being able to cope with the stress, disappointments and even failure that many times teachers are faced with as a natural facet of their profession, especially when teachers use technologies in their classes because it means more workload on their shoulders (Aldama and Pozo, 2016).

Furthermore, teachers must be highly perceptive individuals to be able not only to deal with their students from an educational point of view but also as people with all kinds of life backgrounds. Therefore, teachers must have the perceptiveness to understand their students taking into consideration their feelings, thoughts and behaviors because not every student feels comfortable at using technologies or may even be totally unfamiliar with them, which may lead to an undesired anxiety in the students that teachers must be aware of (Nikolopoulou and Gialamas, 2015).

Indeed, many are the psychological characteristics a teacher needs to possess in order to succeed in a class where ICT is implemented. However, neuroticism is a psychological trait that no teacher should have because that would mean they are prone to easily worry and stress with all the tasks that need to be carried out as an educator using ICT in the classroom, which may lead to the development of a negative learning environment (Agbo, 2015).

Educational.

As for educational characteristics, English teachers using ICT in their classrooms have to be highly trained and skilled in the use of any and all the technologies available to their advantage so that the class flows smoothly and without any complications. This means that the students' knowledge will be boosted using ICT and will not be affected by any technical problems because the teacher will know exactly what to do in any given situation in the class (Zyad, 2016).

Besides, any individual should be a teacher without the vocation required in order to be so. This, translated to the English teaching field, means that teachers must be passionate about what they are doing because teaching English is not like any other subject. It means developing different language and life skills such as speaking or adapting to a new cultural context. Therefore, if teachers decide to use ICT in their classroom, that should be a personal decision and not an imposition from anyone with authority above them (Göncz, 2017).

What is more, teachers must not only have a vocation to teach; they must also be ethical individuals. The use of ICT has tremendously changed the language-teaching field by providing both teachers and students with plenty of resources to help them achieve their teaching and learning goals. The use of ICT in the English classroom has become so important that it is considered a crucial qualification for language teachers. Therefore, educators must be very careful with what technologies they choose to use in their classrooms, always considering all the principles of morality (Shin, 2015).

Also, English teachers using ICT in their classrooms must be dynamic individuals given the very own nature of technologies which are ever-changing. In this sense, being a dynamic teacher means to swiftly change and adapt to the new technological resources that are constantly updated and improved every day or so. Thus, a teacher becomes a leader and a student at the same time, which is highly motivational for students (Ngugi, Mochama and Edward, 2015).

Furthermore, English educators who implement ICT in their classrooms must have great problem-solving skills to be able to implement the proper technologies and applications to help their students achieve greater goals in their language learning processes. Not every technological resource can be used for every or all language skills or for the same group of

students. This will vary from skill to skill and teachers have to be able to overcome these obstacles wisely (Barnes and Kennewell, 2017).

Professional.

Turning to professional characteristics, we may start with objectivity. English teachers using ICT in the classroom must be fully objective when thinking what ICT resources to use, how and when. Objective teachers will use all the necessary resources based on facts and not on their possibly biased opinions of what may or may not be useful for their students (Mafuraga and Moremi, 2017).

In addition, English teachers using ICT in their classrooms must be coherent. Coherence is observable in the correct use and application of technologies depending on the learning environment of each class. This means that not all classes can be object of the same teaching approaches with ICT due to different factors such as the students' background or access to the technologies intended to be used in their classrooms (Bai, Mo, Zhang, Boswell and Rozelle, 2016).

Besides, language teachers who use ICT in their classrooms must have strong professional standards. Educators with such high standards are sure to develop and lead a rich learning environment. Not only will they choose technological resources for their classes in a coherent way but also sticking to the highest teaching standards, which is not always the case for every ICT resource (Avdeeva, Zaichkina, Nikulicheva and Khapaev, 2016).

Furthermore, another aspect to consider here is being resourceful. This is crucial to English teachers using ICT in their classrooms. Even though there are many technologies available that can be implemented in the language classroom to spur innovation, teachers are the ones who implement them. Therefore, they have to be resourceful on how to implement those technologies to get the best possible results out of them, in order to help students learn in an improved way with plenty of useful resources that adapt to their learning needs and styles (McKnight, et al., 2016).

Moreover, a characteristic that is very important in a language teacher, especially when using ICT in the classroom is being accessible to students. Independently of what technologies are being used in the classroom, teachers must make themselves accessible to their students in order to help them or assist them whenever necessary to prevent students from getting

frustrated and take a negative attitude towards the use of technology in the classroom (Adedokun-Shittu and Kehinde, 2014).

Personal.

Regarding personal characteristics, openness is an essential characteristic of successful language teachers. This is even more evident in the English classroom where ICT is used because teachers must be open to new experiences that may come in the shape of new teaching approaches, new software or applications to their own aid. This openness is key to develop a fun and rich learning environment (Player-Koro, 2012).

Likewise, English teachers must also be extroverted. Extraversion is characterized by sociability and talkativeness, which are key to the success of an English class where ICT is used. This is mainly because teachers must be effective communicators not only as an educator teaching language skills such as speaking but also as common individuals who are not afraid to develop a strong rapport with their students within their technological learning environment (Area, Hernández and Sosa, 2016).

Additionally, all educators, in general, must be kind and respectful. Particularly speaking about ICT in the English classroom, teachers must show these characteristics when it comes to the abilities shown by students when using any technological resources. In some (oftentimes many) cases students may not be familiar with any of them and it is the teachers' responsibility to help and guide them kindly and respectfully to make students feel comfortable and encouraged to keep learning (Basargekar and Singhavi, 2017).

Besides, English learners must be disciplined with themselves and promote this value among their students. When ICT is used in the English classroom, teachers must be disciplined enough to plan their classes, prepare their teaching materials and keep constantly looking for the best technological resources to use and share with their students. Promoting discipline among students is very important to promote a positive and healthy behavior not only inside but also outside the classroom (Prasad, Lalitha and Srikar, 2015).

Moreover, a very important personal characteristic that language teachers using ICT in their classroom should have is nurturance. This refers to being able to provide students with emotional support, especially in those classes where there is almost no human contact due to the nature of some educational systems such as distance online learning. In this case, teachers must make sure to constantly monitor their students not only educationally but also socially

and personally speaking to make them feel emotionally supported, which is crucial to keep them motivated (Mathipa and Mukhari, 2014).

Previous studies in relation to teachers' perceptions on ICT use in their EFL classes

In addition to the information previously mentioned on ICT in the EFL classroom, it is worth mentioning that six studies have been taken into consideration in order to better support all the previous scientific and pedagogical concepts to have a deeper understanding of the impact of ICT in EFL classrooms. One of these studies, which was carried out by Soussi (2013) focused on the perception, obstacles and strategies to use ICT in the EFL classroom. Similarly important are the other studies mentioned in the following section.

Soussi (2015) carried out a study to identify the pros and cons of using ICT in Moroccan EFL classrooms and in order to do so both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were applied with a population of fifteen male and fifteen female teachers from forty different schools, whose ages ranged from thirty to forty-five and were interviewed with a predefined questionnaire of three questions with a five-point scale, to identify their perception on the use of ICT in the EFL classroom, what challenges they face when doing so and what the best teaching approaches may be adopted with that goal in mind. A coding system was used to manage the collected qualitative information and Microsoft Excel was used to process the quantitative data. The teachers' perception on the use of ICT in their classes is rather positive because they claimed it to be enjoyable and helpful in the whole learning process. Teachers agreed on learning to use those technologies as the biggest challenge and age was not an important factor here. As for pedagogical approaches, most teachers agreed on CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) as the best method to apply ICT in their classrooms. This study concludes stating that teachers need more training and schools need to implement more technical and administrative facilities in order to successfully implement ICT in the English classroom and it also advices to use CLIL as the best teaching approach.

In addition, Mozafari and Wray (2015) investigated the perspectives Iranian English teachers have towards using ICT in their classes. An interpretative qualitative methodology was used in order to understand the results of this study, which used a population of five male teachers and four female teachers whose ages ranged from thirty to fifty years old in different schools in Tehran, capital of Iran. To gather information, a series of twelve questions in a questionnaire was administered to the teachers in order to get a better idea on their perception of the integration of ICT in the English classroom. The most relevant questions were about the access those teachers have to ICT resources, what ICT tools they use or how prepared they think they

are to use such tools. Besides, class observations also took place for field observation along with a semi-structured interview. The data obtained was gathered and analyzed with the Maxqda data analysis software. The observed teachers reported that there is not as much access to ICT as needed, which leads to situations where the only technological resource in some cases is a computer with limited Internet access; however, they also reported to feel somehow prepared to use and implement ICT in their classes but claim to need more training. The main conclusion of this study is that even though teachers see ICT as a great tool, they still they need continual professional development and there is also a need for a better ICT integration in their classrooms.

Furthermore, Salem and Mohammadzadeh (2018) worked on a very interesting study to analyze the effective integration of ICT in EFL classrooms in Libya, which focused on the teachers' attitudes toward adapting ICT in their classrooms and its relevance in the Lebanese socio-cultural context. This study followed a dual descriptive and interpretive procedure in order to collect the data through both a coding system for non-numerical data and Microsoft Excel to process all the data. The population considered to carry out this study was of thirty-two English teachers in the Faculty of Art and Education in the University of Tripoli whose ages ranged from twenty-five to forty years old and all of them had a teaching experience of five or more years. Four different questionnaires with sets of sixteen to twenty closed questions and semi-structured interviews were used to gather all the information needed. Teachers reported to be willing to implement ICT in their classes although they claim to need more training and support and they also feel the adoption of ICT in the Lebanese context would be beneficial to their community. The study concludes identifying a series of system-level issues such as the lack of policies to improve the quality of English teaching through new technologies. An interesting conclusion here is that ICT in EFL classroom is being slowly yet increasingly adopted by teachers in developing countries although they need more support from their educational systems.

Similarly, Alsied and Pathan (2013) carried out a study to observe and analyze the advantages and implications of the use of ICT in the EFL classroom. This study applied quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect data from ten teachers whose ages ranged from thirty to forty years old with more than five years of teaching experience. A questionnaire of sixteen questions was administered to teachers to collect data, which was then processed with Microsoft Excel. The main questions were about the advantages of ICT to master the different language skills such as listening or speaking although there was a clear interest in finding out how much easier and enjoyable an English class can be with the use of those technologies. Teachers reported in all cases mostly advantages when using ICT in their classes; especially

in reading and listening skills because of the vast quantity of resources. However, they did report to observe an absence of improvement of speaking skills in their students when using those technologies because of the lack of the human factor. An important conclusion of this study mentions that ICT is especially useful in developing countries where there is not too much exposure to the English language and it helps cut down the time needed to learn English because it is less time-consuming and more rewarding in knowledge although it can be costly to implement.

Besides, Al-Munawwarah (2014) aimed at identifying the way English teachers perceive the use of ICT in their classrooms. The descriptive qualitative methodology was applied in this study with a population of six teachers from a public vocational school in Bandung, Indonesia whose ages ranged from thirty to forty-two years old and with more than two years of teaching experience. The data was collected through the application of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which mostly focused on the participants' viewpoints and ideas. Once all the required information was gathered, it had to be analyzed and interpreted by the author through descriptive qualitative analysis since all the collected data came in the form of words. The most relevant questions were related to how confident they feel when using ICT in their classrooms or how skilled they are to implement such technologies and to what extent they feel ICT makes their classes more enjoyable and interesting. This study closes by stating that teachers report to have better and more enjoyable classes through the implementation of ICT with highly motivated students and they also report ICT helps stimulate learner autonomy. It finally concludes by advising to use ICT in the English classroom despite the fact that it may pose some challenges at first such as teachers having to get used to using those technologies.

Moreover, Merç (2015) carried out a study to examine the use of ICT in EFL classrooms in Turkey. This study is quite fascinating because its population was of eighty-six student teachers (sixty-two female and 24 male) whose ages ranged from twenty-two to twenty-seven years old and were about to finish their careers and in order to do so, they were finishing teaching internships at the Anadolu University English Language Teaching Program. The study applied both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to gather data. A questionnaire consisting of ten questions was used along with semi-structured interviews to gather as much accurate information as possible about the availability of technological resources, the frequency of use of those resources and the reasons that caused those student teachers not being able to benefit from such resources. This data was later on processed by using Microsoft Excel in the shape of tables. Generally speaking, the participants reported to not use ICT as frequently as they would have liked because they did not feel prepared to do so. Interestingly enough, the most relevant conclusion of this study was that there is a

discrepancy between what student teachers are learning and real-world classroom situations where ICT is used, which means there needs to be better training on the use of ICT to keep future teachers up to date as much as possible.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Setting and Participants

The process to collect data for this research took place in the city of Quito at two different private schools, which were selected because they have high English teaching standards and they are very prestigious schools as well.

In order to carry out this study, ten teachers from those private schools were chosen, five male and five female, who work full time as English teachers, hold a university degree and whose ages range from twenty-two to sixty-one years old, with teaching experiences that go from one year to forty-one years.

Procedures

With respect to the research process itself, some key concepts were analyzed in the literature review, such as ICT use in the English classroom, teachers' roles, gender and competences, along with teachers' characteristics regarding ICT use and the analysis of six previous studies in relation to teachers' perceptions on ICT use, in order to find accurate information that would be the foundation and support to develop this project based on well-proven concepts, theories and knowledge from researchers from all over the world.

As for the methodology applied, qualitative and quantitative methods were used to process the gathered data and it was carried out using two surveys of eighteen and seventeen questions respectively, the first one related to the teachers´ characteristics considered by EFL teachers as barriers to use ICT in their classroom; and the second one, referred to teachers´ characteristics that influence the most on teachers to use ICT in their classroom. Descriptive quantitative research was used to analyze the opinions expressed by the participants in the two surveys previously mentioned. To answer all the questions, both surveys used a five-point scale, which is useful to analyze people's opinions and translate them into numerical data.

In addition to the two surveys, one structured interview composed of eight questions related to the use ICT in EFL teaching was applied to six of the ten teachers surveyed and the non-numerical data gathered from all interviews were analyzed applying a qualitative research, in order to do so, a coding system was used to analyze the interviewees' attitudes and an individual analysis of all the answers was carried out as well.

Then all the data was processed in Microsoft Excel to get accurate results and this was possible because the information collected from the surveys was processed in one general table with a record of all answers based on the five-point scale codes along with four more detailed tables that would portray the same surveys but divided each survey by gender to make their interpretation even better and easier. As for the interviews, they were also recorded in a table with a coding system to record the participants' attitudes along with a transcription of their answers.

Altogether, the results of this research study were evaluated considering different aspects such as a compare and contrast analysis between the answers provided by the participants in the two surveys and in the interview, with the concepts and theories found in the literature review taking in account the teachers´ characteristics such as: psychological, professional, educational or personal, in order to jump into conclusions based on pure, solid evidence and facts, and not on any biased or general point of view. For that purpose, the statements that reached the highest values were mainly taken to be included in the analysis.

Finally, the questions that were key to the development this project were vital because they gave the foundation to build the proper conclusions and recommendations and it is worth mentioning that the interviews and surveys were not administered right away, some good quality time was spent with the participating teachers, in order to obtain the most accurate answers from them.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

In this chapter, a description of the data obtained in the research via surveys and interviews that were administered to a group of English teachers working in private schools will be presented in detail, along with a thorough analysis of the three key research questions that drove this investigation, so that, suitable conclusions and recommendations can be drawn with the aim of clearly figuring out EFL teachers' perceptions on the use of ICT in their classes.

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

Table 1. Teachers' Characteristics Considered By EFL Teachers As Barriers To Use ICT In Their Classroom

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
		%	%	%	%	%
1	I feel insecure about my ability to use ICT as a resource to teach.	0	0	60	40	0
2	I do not think I would be able to learn how to use ICT in my classroom.	0	0	30	70	0
3	I am afraid that if I begin to use ICT, I will become dependent upon them.	10	10	40	40	0
4	I dislike working with machines that are smarter than I am.	0	0	10	90	0
5	I feel apprehensive about using ICT.	0	0	30	70	0
6	I have difficulty in understanding the technical aspects of ICT.	0	20	30	50	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	80	0
8	I hesitate to use ICT for fear of making mistakes that I cannot correct.	0	20	10	70	0
9	You have to be master to understand how to use ICT.	0	0	30	70	0
10	I have avoided ICT use because they are unfamiliar.	0	10	40	50	0
11	I have not attended any ICT training courses.	20	10	30	40	0
12	I have attended some ICT training courses; however, I prefer not to use ICT because they somewhat intimidate to me.	0	10	30	60	0

13	I am not interested in attending any ICT course.	0	0	50	50	0
14	I do not how to use any ICT Resource.	0	20	10	70	0
15	I do not use any ICT resource in class because I think that ICT are not necessary to teach English.	0	0	30	70	0
16	I prefer not to use ICT because my teaching experience is the most crucial factor in teaching process.	0	0	50	50	0
17	I think that age is factor that determine the ICT use in class.	0	50	20	30	0
18	In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICT than the older ones.	10	70	10	10	0
N=10						

Source: Ecuadorian high school EFL teachers
Author: Andrade Muñoz, Dori Araceli

Regarding to the first research question, 20% of the sampled population strongly agreed with the statement *I have not attended any ICT training courses.* It is interesting to analyze the fact that the before mentioned item was the only one to be strongly agreed upon, which shows that a very small number of the sampled population may lack the necessary knowledge to implement ICT in their classrooms. It is worth noticing, that all the interviewed teachers claimed to use it for different reasons such as motivation, extra practice or even to bring more interactivity within the class even though some of them have not attended any ICT training courses before. Tamo (2014) states that using ICT in the English classroom helps to get rid of typical classroom standards and highly motivates students to keep learning not only in the classroom but also beyond its walls. On the other hand, Korkut (2012) mentions that teachers, who are not sufficiently skilled to use ICT, should not use it because such action may be more detrimental than positive to their students bringing confusion and discouragement to their learning experience. This leads to consider a professional characteristic in language teachers related to coherence; Bai, Mo, Zhang, Boswell and Rozelle (2016), as a professional characteristic, state that teachers must choose coherently what technologies to use in their classes, because they must know exactly how and when to use them to have a successful learning environment.

Furthermore, 50% of the sampled population agreed with the statement *I think that age is a factor that determines the ICT use in class* and 70% agreed with the statement *In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICT than the older ones.* This shows that English teachers are negatively associating the use of ICT with age factors and wrongly relating

technology to younger people, assuming they are better or more skillful to use it in the classroom just because of their age. Interestingly, and in spite of their opinions, 100% of the interviewees affirmed to use ICT in their classrooms, because they find it very advantageous to better develop their students' language skills, to motivate them and to be part of what they live every day, because they are digital natives.

Regarding those high percentages found in the two statements previously mentioned, Ngugi, Mochama and Edward (2015), as an educational characteristic, state that teachers must be dynamic and keep learning, in order to adapt and adopt the new technologies available to them to improve their classes as a key educational characteristic of a teacher. Göncz (2017) states another educational characteristic by claiming that language teachers must develop life skills to keep up to date with new technologies in spite of their age or gender. However, the same author does mention that the use of ICT in the classroom must not be an imposition. McKnight, et al. (2016) claim, as a professional characteristic, that language educators must be resourceful in order to create rich learning environments with ICT in the classroom and that neither age nor gender should be an obstacle to achieve such goal. It is necessary to mention that the statement *In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICT than the older ones* was also strongly agreed by a 10% of the sampled population, giving a total of 80%, which once again reinforces the idea that educators are biased toward the implementation of ICT in the classroom due to age-related factors. On this matter, Aldama and Pozo (2016) mentioned a psychological characteristic stating that language teachers must be able to deal with all sorts of challenges and situations such as stress or age, especially when using or trying to use ICT in the classroom.

Finally, the results obtained in the surveys show percentages over 50% where teachers surveyed strongly disagreed with aspects related with *they do not think they would be able to learn how to use ICT in their classroom; they dislike working with machines that are smarter than they are; they do not how to use any ICT Resource;* among others, which means that they are not afraid of using ICT in their classroom.

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

Table 2. Teachers' Characteristics That Influence The Most On Teachers To Use ICT In Their Classroom

N°	STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
		%	%	%	%	%
1	The challenge of learning about ICT 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 ICT in my class.	60	40	0	0	0
4	Learning to use ICT is like learning any new skill – the more you practice, the better you become.	70	30	0	0	0
5	I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working with ICT.	80	20	0	0	0
6	I feel that I will be able to keep up with the advances happening in the ICT field.	50	40	10	0	0
7	If given the opportunity, I would like to learn about and use ICT.	70	30	0	0	0
8	I think that ICT are necessary tools in educational settings.	80	10	10	0	0
9	I like to use ICT because they help me to innovate my teaching methodology.	70	20	10	0	0
10	ICT help me to motivate my students to learn English.	70	20	10	0	0
11	If I had any technical problem with ICT during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities.	50	50	0	0	0
12	When I have any technical problem with ICT, I do not feel frustrated.	40	60	0	0	0
13	Age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICT in my classes.	50	30	0	20	0
14	I know a lot about ICT use because I have attended some ICT training courses.	50	30	10	10	0
15	I have learned to use ICT resources by myself.	50	50	0	0	0
16	I think ICT has a positive impact on teaching process.	60	40	0	0	0

17	ICT use has more advantages than disadvantages in EFL teaching.	60	30	10	0	0
N=10						

Source: Ecuadorian high school EFL teachers
Author: Andrade Muñoz, Dori Araceli

With respect to the second research question, 80% of the sample population strongly agreed with the statement *I think that ICT are necessary tools in educational settings.* This is supported by the opinions of the interviewed teachers who consider ICT as a great advantage to improve their teaching style. The interviewees mentioned that technology is everywhere and there is a plethora of teaching technological tools that turn their classes in highly dynamic learning environments, which makes ICT an essential component of their classes. On this matter, as a personal characteristic, Player-Koro (2012) mentions that language teachers must be willing to try new teaching styles in order to make technology an essential part of their classes. Mafuraga and Moremi (2017), as a professional characteristic, state that teachers must choose ICT resources objectively based on the needs of every class to be able to distinguish how and when to use them so that they are properly used.

Besides, the statement *I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working with ICT* was strongly agreed upon by 80% of the sampled population. This goes in line with what was mentioned above in the sense that all the interviewees deem ICT as an important resource and that they are sure they will be confident ICT users after some practice time. The interviewees also affirmed to be willing to keep learning and practicing. That is the key to be a great educator. As a psychological characteristic, Casillas, Cabezas and Ointo (2016) mention that educators are knowledge catalysts and as such, they must keep learning and practicing to pass on that learning desire and knowledge to their students.

Additionally, 70% of the sampled population also strongly agreed with the statement *Learning to use ICT is like learning any new skill – the more you practice, the better you become.* As it was mentioned above, the interviewed teachers stated to be eager to keep learning and to keep practicing because that is beneficial to them on both professional and personal levels. Zyad (2016) states that being highly trained and skilled in the use of ICT through constant practice, is a crucial educational characteristic that a language teacher must possess in order to be able to overcome any technological obstacles or problems that may emerge during any given class.

Moreover, 70% of the sampled population strongly agreed with the statements *I like to use ICT because they help me to innovate my teaching methodology* and *ICT helps me to motivate my students to learn English.* All the interviewees consider ICT use as a very innovative tool that helps them boost their teaching methodologies and engage their students. As a professional characteristic, Samuel and Pulizala (2014) mention that teachers must be completely familiar with ICT to be able to improve and modernize their teaching approaches to obtain better results from their students. Also, as a professional characteristic, Eickelmann and Vennemann (2017) state that language educators must change their teaching paradigms in order to adapt to our modern society by innovating via technological resources such as online platforms, software or even apps to fully engage students. However, Gajek (2015) clarifies the fact that ICT is not meant to be simply used to engage students with a couple of fun activities here and there. It has to be used in such a way that it turns into a permanent, meaningful, didactic and motivational component of an English class. This shows what an important role ICT plays when it comes to innovating teaching styles because this innovation brings a motivational factor into this equation with the result of innovative teachers along with highly and constantly motivated students.

Turning to the second parameter of the data shown above, 60% of the sampled population agreed with the statement *When I have any technical problem with ICT, I do not feel frustrated* and 50% with *If I had any technical problem with ICT during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities.* The interviewees agreed with those statements because they claimed to be ready to face any technical issues pertaining to using ICT in their classrooms and mentioned that language teachers must know how to use these technologies since we are living in a digital age. However, they did mention that if any problems were not possible to overcome, they have to be ready to move on with their class by doing something else in order to replace such activity or activities that could not be carried out in the class. Chenzi (2012) mentions that teachers must be sufficiently skilled in the use of ICT in the EFL classroom to be able to deal with technological problems that may emerge during its application. Whenever this may happen, teachers must be able to find a proper and quick solution so that the class can go on smoothly in order to avoid students from feeling frustrated because of such external factors. However, the same author also mentions that teachers must always be prepared to do something else instead in case whatever ICT resources fail.

Additionally, 50% of the sampled population agreed with the statement *The challenge of learning about ICT use is exciting.* The interviewees stated that they see ICT as something very useful and feel positively challenged to implement it in their classes. They consider ICT as a unique chance to take advantage of the vast number of fascinating tools and technological

resources. However, they are aware that learning about ICT is challenging, yet they are willing to do so in order to improve their classes. Consciousness is an important psychological characteristic to consider here. Hennessy, Harrison and Wamakote (2010) state that educators must be conscious that great achievements are expected from them because of their role as educators in our society and therefore, must face all sorts of challenges to perform greatly and achieve such goal.

How is ICT 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 ICT In Their Classroom

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 ICT as a resource to teach.	0	0	0	0	20	40	30	10	0	0
2	I do not think I would be able to learn how to use ICT in my classroom.	0	0	0	0	20	10	30	40	0	0
3	I am afraid that if I begin to use ICT, I will become dependent upon them.	0	10	10	0	10	30	30	10	0	0
4	I dislike working with machines that are smarter than I am.	0	0	0	0	0	10	50	40	0	0
5	I feel apprehensive about using ICT.	0	0	0	0	20	10	30	40	0	0
6	I have difficulty in understanding the technical aspects of ICT.	0	0	0	20	10	20	40	10	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	0	0	0	20	50	30	0	0
8	I hesitate to use ICT for fear of making mistakes that I cannot correct.	0	0	0	20	0	10	50	20	0	0
9	You have to be master to understand how to use ICT.	0	0	0	0	10	20	40	30	0	0
10	I have avoided ICT use because they are unfamiliar.	0	0	0	10	10	30	40	10	0	0
11	I have not attended any ICT training courses.	0	20	0	10	20	10	30	10	0	0
12	I have attended some ICT training courses; however, I prefer not to use ICT because they somewhat intimidate to me.	0	0	0	10	10	20	40	20	0	0
13	I am not interested in attending any ICT course.	0	0	0	0	20	30	30	20	0	0
14	I do not how to use any ICT Resource.	0	0	0	20	0	10	50	20	0	0

15	I do not use any ICT resource in class because I think that ICT are not necessary to teach English.	0	0	0	0	10	20	40	30	0	0
16	I prefer not to use ICT because my teaching experience is the most crucial factor in teaching process.	0	0	0	0	30	20	20	30	0	0
17	I think that age is factor that determine the ICT use in class.	0	0	20	30	20	0	10	20	0	0
18	In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICT than the older ones.	10	0	30	40	10	0	0	10	0	0
N=10										

Source: Ecuadorian high school EFL teachers
Author: Andrade Muñoz, Dori Araceli

Regarding the third and final research question, which is about how teachers perceive the use of ICT in their classes according to their gender, some very interesting results were found and will be detailed in the lines below.

When it comes to what aspects teachers deem as barriers to use ICT in their classrooms, 10% of the female sampled population strongly agreed with the statement *I am afraid that if I begin to use ICT, I will become dependent upon them*. By contrast, any male teacher strongly agreed with this statement. This, according to the interviewed teachers, has to do with the fact that male educators are more open to technology and can use it at any given time without worrying about becoming too dependent on them. On this matter, Shamim and Raihan (2016) warn that ICT is another tool among the several options that teachers must have in order to teach successfully. Therefore, teachers must not rely exclusively on ICT because it may fail or simply not be adequate for certain teaching topics. Göncz (2017) mentions an educational characteristic by stating that teachers must adapt to the constant changes in cultural contexts, including the use of ICT in the class, but also warns against its use as an imposition and against its overuse in class.

Likewise, 20% of the female sampled population strongly agreed with the statement *I have not attended any ICT training courses*. It is worth noticing here that any male teachers strongly agreed with the statement above, which shows, according to the data gathered from the interviews that male teachers are more willing to use technologies in the classroom mostly because they are more interested in them. However, it is also worth adding the fact that 10% of the male sampled teachers agreed with the previously mentioned statement. This may mean that both male and female teachers do not feel the need to attend any ICT training courses

because they can learn it on their own, especially considering the fact that 100% of the sampled population reported using ICT in their classes on a regular basis. Casillas, Cabezas and Ointo (2016) mention a psychological characteristic here by stating that educators are knowledge catalysts, which in relation to the aforementioned statement means that teachers must keep learning all the time in order to be up to date with the latest teaching methodologies and lead their students by example.

Turning to the second parameter, 40% of the female sampled population agreed with the statement *In my opinion, younger teachers are more skillful to use ICT than the older ones.* Similarly, 30% of the male sampled population also agreed with it. Besides, 30% of the female sampled population agreed with the statement *I think that age is factor that determines the ICT use in class* and 20% of the male population also agreed with it. This shows there is some level of coincidence in the aforementioned statements between male and female teachers. It is clear that to some extent, both male and female teachers, in general, see age as a barrier to successfully implement the use of ICT in the classroom, which is supported by the interviewees' opinions that mentioned that ICT is part of a new, modern digital age and that not everybody can use it with ease. At the same time, this is contradictory because all the sampled teachers reported using ICT and their ages range from twenties to sixties. Ramat and Yaman (2014) mention that among the various factors considered as barriers to integrating ICT there is the age factor, which is mostly an opinion from teachers who are in their late thirties or forties independently from their gender.

This finding is very similar to what our interviewees think about it and that coincides with their average ages. The previously mentioned authors also mentioned lack of confidence as a personal negative characteristic that is keeping educators from adopting new teaching methodologies in their classes.

It is also useful to analyze the gathered data on the other side of the spectrum, 40% of the female sampled teachers strongly disagreed with the statement *I do not think I would be able to learn how to use ICT in my classroom* and 30% of the male sampled teachers strongly disagreed with it. Additionally, 40% of the female sampled population strongly disagreed with the statement *I feel apprehensive about using ICT* and 30% of the male sampled teachers strongly disagreed with it as well. This shows that both male and female teachers, in spite of their beliefs about age being an impediment or even stating that they have not attended training courses, feel confident in the fact that they can actually use ICT in their classes; that is why 100% of the sampled population mentioned to use it. Aldama and Pozo (2016) stated resilience as a very interesting psychological characteristic. Educators must be strong enough to cope

with all the adversities and challenges that are part of their profession. In this sense, teachers must be open to learning new methodologies and approaches such as implementing ICT in their classes.

Besides, 40% of the female sampled population strongly disagreed with the statement *I dislike working with machines that are smarter than I am* and 50% of the males sampled teachers also strongly disagreed with it. This, again, proves that both female and male teachers are not against the use of technologies in their classes. Zyad (2016) mentioned, as an educational characteristic, that educators must be skilled in the use of technologies to be able to use them in their classes. As it was found in the interviews, the entire sampled population is completely aware that technology is an essential part of our modern context and has willingly adopted ICT in their own teaching styles.

Moreover, 40% of the female sampled population disagreed with the statement *I feel insecure about my ability to use ICT as a resource to teach* and 20% of the male sampled teachers disagreed with it too. Likewise, 30% of the female sampled population disagreed with the statement *I have avoided ICT use because they are unfamiliar* and only 10% of the male sampled teachers disagreed with it. These percentages show that both male and female teachers do feel confident to use ICT in their classes. As it was mentioned before, the entire sampled population reported to use it, which only shows their professionalism because they are aware that it is a very useful resource they can neither deny nor reject. Shin (2015) mentions, as an educational characteristic that ICT use is an essential part of modern language teaching and therefore, teachers must be prepared to use it with confidence and plenty of knowledge.

Finally, 30% of the female sampled population disagreed with the statement *I am afraid that if I begin to use ICT, I will become dependent upon them* and 10% of the male sampled teachers disagreed with it. These results show that there is not a big difference between male and female teachers on this matter, meaning that they both know when to use ICT with very specific goals in mind. To support this, the interviewees mentioned that technology is very useful but could never replace the human factor. Therefore, they must know when it can or cannot be or should not be used. Nikolopoulou and Gialamas (2015) state as a psychological characteristic that teachers must be highly perceptive and be aware of their students' feelings and behavior. In this sense, teachers must not be completely dependent on technology in order to not lose human contact, especially in a language class whose main focus is communication.

Table 4. Teachers' Perceptions By Gender In Relation To The Factors That They Consider The Most Influential To Use ICT 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 ICT use is exciting.	30	20	20	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	I am confident that I can learn technological skills.	40	20	10	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	I feel motivated to use ICT in my class.	40	20	10	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Learning to use ICT is like learning any new skill – the more you practice, the better you become.	40	30	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working with ICT.	40	40	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	I feel that I will be able to keep up with the advances happening in the ICT field.	40	10	10	30	0	10	0	0	0	0
7	If given the opportunity, I would like to learn about and use ICT.	40	30	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	I think that ICT are necessary tools in educational settings.	40	40	10	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
9	I like to use ICT because they help me to innovate my teaching methodology.	40	30	10	10	0	10	0	0	0	0
10	ICT help me to motivate my students to learn English.	40	30	10	10	0	10	0	0	0	0
11	If I had any technical problem with ICT during my class, I would continue doing the planned activities.	30	20	20	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	When I have any technical problem with ICT, I do not feel frustrated.	30	10	20	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICT in my classes.	10	40	20	10	0	0	20	0	0	0
14	I know a lot about ICT use because I have attended some ICT training courses.	30	20	20	10	0	10	0	10	0	0
15	I have learned to use ICT resources by myself.	20	30	30	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	I think ICT has a positive impact on teaching process.	30	30	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	ICT use has more advantages than disadvantages in EFL teaching.	30	30	20	10	0	10	0	0	0	0
N= 10											

Source: Ecuadorian high school EFL teachers
Author: Andrade Muñoz, Dori Araceli

After having analyzed what teachers perceive as barriers to use ICT in the EFL classroom by gender, it is now time to analyze what factors influence teachers the most to implement it from the same perspective.

It is interesting to notice that 40% of the female and male sampled population strongly agreed with the statement *I am sure that with time and practice I will be as comfortable working with ICT.* The interviewees, both male and female, are aware that learning to use ICT takes some practice to master it, but it brings great benefits such as being able to have more interactive classes or having access to fascinating online digital resources in the words of the interviewed teachers. That shows a sense of confidence in both genders when it comes to working with ICT in the EFL classroom. Hennessy, Harrison and Wamakote (2010) mention a key psychological characteristic by stating that teachers are expected to achieve great goals in their field and they must be very aware of that in order to keep improving their teaching styles and adapting to new teaching trends.

Similarly, 40% of the female and male sampled population strongly agreed with the statement *I think that ICT are necessary tools in educational settings.* It is clear that the teachers of both genders agree with the previous statement because they mentioned in the interviews that technology is everywhere, and it has now become an essential element of their classes. In this sense, a personal characteristic of a teacher is described by Player-Koro (2012) who mentions that teachers have to constantly renew their teaching styles and making technology a part of their classes is essential.

Additionally, 40% of the female sampled population strongly agreed with the statement *Age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICT in my classes.* In contrast, only 10% of the male sampled teachers strongly agreed with it. It is interesting to analyze the fact that more female teachers believe that age is not a determining factor when it comes to learning to use ICT to implement it in their EFL classes. This is supported by the interviews, which show that all the female interviewees either strongly agreed or agreed with that idea and even reported to constantly use ICT in their own classes. Göncz (2017) mentions that vocation is a key characteristic that teachers must possess to overcome any obstacles, including age, gender or technology gaps to succeed in their teaching goals.

Regarding the second parameter, 30% of the female sample population agreed with the statement *I feel motivated to use ICT in my class* and in contrast only 10% of the male sampled teachers agreed with it. However, it must be noted that the same statement was more strongly agreed by male teachers with a 40% over the 20% of the female sampled population. In other

words, there is some sort of parity on how motivated the sampled population feels about using ICT in their classes because all the interviewed teachers reported more advantages than disadvantages such as plenty of online resources and applications that encourage them to use such technologies practically on a daily basis according to their responses. On this subject, Amine, Benachaiba and Guemide (2012) report that this motivation feeling as a psychological characteristic mentioning that integrating ICT in the EFL classroom has a challenging and motivational factor with a great positive impact on the language learning process.

Besides, 40% of the female sample population agreed with the statement *I feel that I will be able to keep up with the advances happening in the ICT field* and 30% of the male sampled teachers agreed with it too. Moreover, 40% of the female sampled population agreed with the statement *When I have any technical problems with ICT, I do not feel frustrated*, which was agreed by 20% of the male interviewees. According to these results, female teachers feel slightly more confident than male teachers about keeping the technological pace in their classes. This result was also reflected upon the answers from the statement related to facing technical issues that may emerge during a class because more female teachers agreed with such statement than male teachers. However, more male teachers strongly agreed with that very same idea, which means that in general terms both male and female teachers have the same kind of positive attitude towards keeping up to date with the use of ICT in their classrooms and feel confident enough to overcome any possible problems related to its application. These reflections are supported by 100% of the interviewees who reported to be skilled at using technologies in their classes and claimed that they need to be up to date technologically speaking in order to have a better connection with their students. On this matter, Selwyn (2007) mentions that keeping up to date with teaching methodologies and approaches is an essential professional characteristic of successful teachers.

Notably enough, any statement in the table about the factors that influence teachers to use ICT in their classrooms disagreed or strongly disagreed in any meaningful or important percentage to be considered within this analysis. However, it must be observed the fact that 20% of the male population disagreed with the statement *Age is not an obstacle to learn about and use ICT in my classes*, which shows that some teachers do have a tendency to believe age is an important factor when using ICT in their classes. In this particular case, only 20% thinks age is a restrictive factor when using it. However, the interviewees mentioned that, in spite of whatever beliefs about age, they do use ICT in their classes because they feel they may stay behind if they do not modernize their classes with the current teaching trends. This is a psychological characteristic that Abeysekera and Dawson (2014) mention by stating that

all educators must understand that age is not a determining factor when using ICT in their classes. It rather has to do with factors such as determination and motivation to keep learning.

Finally, it is important to analyze the points of view of the entire sampled population regarding ICT use from the gender perspective. Mahdi and Al-Dera (2013) mentioned in a study on ICT use that gender is indeed an important factor that determines its use in the EFL classroom. According to their study, male teachers between their twenties and forties are more inclined toward using ICT than female teachers mostly because of personal interests because they found men are more into technology than women are, especially at those ages. However, Crawford (2013) carried out a study to write about the use of ICT in the classroom and found something completely different when compared to the findings of Mahdi and Al-Dera's study. Crawford's study mentions that the incidence of gender or even age in the use of ICT in the EFL classroom is absolutely a coincidence. It rather has to do with experience and ICT competences, which are obviously necessary to implement it in class. Referring back to the opinions of the interviewed teachers, 100% of them actively use ICT in their classes, 50% of them believe male use ICT more often than women and the remaining 50% believe both genders use it equally regardless of gender or even age, which reinforces Crawford's findings that gender is merely a coincidence when using ICT in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

English teachers do not believe attending ICT training courses is really necessary in order to fully implement it in their EFL classes because they consider it as any other skill, which can be learned on their own and mastered with time and practice in order to successfully implement it in their classes. However, not attending any ICT training courses may be detrimental because there is no better way to learn something than when the information comes from experts, which in turn, may even show a lack of professionalism to keep learning and even a negative attitude towards it.

Teachers consider the use of technological resources as necessary tools in educational settings to innovate and modernize their EFL classrooms, have more interactivity with their students via online and offline resources and applications, and develop a better teaching and learning environment to fully motivate their students.

Teachers believe age is a determining factor when it comes to using ICT in the EFL classroom, they think that younger teachers are more inclined toward using ICT than older teachers, because they are naturally better at using technology.

Teachers do not feel afraid using ICT resources in their classroom, they have a good attitude and do not avoid the use of them; by the contrast, although they do not dominate neither are masters in the technology field, they use it to teach English.

Gender does not seem to be a determining factor to use ICT in the EFL classroom since teachers of both genders reported to use it in on a regular basis. In fact, they both consider its use an exciting challenge and even feel confident enough to overcome any technical issues that may emerge to keep going with their classes without any major complications.

Out of the key teachers' characteristics regarding ICT use that were considered in this study, the psychological and professional characteristics were the ones with the most impact and incidence when analyzing both barriers and influential factors to use ICT in the EFL classroom, which shows that implementing it has to do with feeling confident and getting trained in its use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

English teachers must always keep up to date with the latest teaching methodologies and approaches. Therefore, even though ICT can be learned on one's own, it is highly advisable to attend seminars and training sessions on ICT, to get the best possible knowledge to fully master its use.

Teachers must adopt the best ICT resources in their EFL classrooms to get the best possible results through innovative teaching styles. In this sense, flipping the classroom is a great recommendation to make full use of technologies since students would have to use them on a regular basis.

The Ministry of Education, on a national scale, and school authorities, on a local scale, should take all the proper measures to make sure that the older population of English teachers are not left behind by providing them with all the necessary support in order to train them to be fully skilled at ICT use like their younger counterparts.

There should be a permanent training program open to teachers in order to keep them motivated to use technology resources in their English classes, so that, they can either learn from scratch or master their ICT skills. This training program should be divided into levels, so that the teachers can enter a level according to their ICT skills after taking a placement test in order not to mix teachers with different levels of competence in a single class.

Teachers must be aware that gender is neither an excuse nor an impediment to applying any new teaching methodologies or approaches, because we both are exactly the same. Gender is a natural part of us, but professionalism is not. Therefore, we must be highly professional when teaching to get the best possible results from our students and using ICT is a resource that any teacher, despite their gender, can reject or neglect.

English teachers must deal not only with language factors, but also with cultural and psychological factors in the classroom that may become detrimental to them. To avoid this, English educators should have constant psychological support from the school authorities above them in the shape of permanent talks and seminars to boost their morale and by praising them for their efforts to constantly improve their teaching styles through public recognition.

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ANNEXES

MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

TEACHERS' SURVEY

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.				

N°	STATEMENT				
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 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 with ICT.				
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.				

Thanks for your collaboration

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: _____

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 characteristics 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?

Male ( )   Female ( )

Why?

_____

_____

_____