

THE USE OF ICT IN EFL CLASSES

What would be the ideal situation?

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2017/2018

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER ONCE MORE,

for believing in me from the beginning.

ABSTRACT

Information and communication technologies, broadly known as ITCs, have undergone several changes to become the powerful tools that are today. Their impact on every area and domain is undeniable, especially within the field of education regarding the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The benefits of using such technologies in Secondary schools as an improvement for the traditional skills in the subject of English, as well as their drawbacks and impediments, are thoroughly discussed in the following dissertation. The portrayal of how should be an ideal situation to work with ICTs within an academic environment, particularly in English classes, is contrasted with the real, not so idealistic circumstances. Furthermore, a practical case that took place at a Secondary school with students of Bachillerato, is also explained in detail with the purpose of observing students' participation, motivation, and engagement with the subject using the available ICTs.

Key words: Information and communication technologies (ICTs), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Innovation, Traditional skills

RESUMEN

Las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, ampliamente conocidas como TICs, han sufrido varios cambios para convertirse en las poderosas herramientas que son hoy en día. Su impacto en cada área y dominio es innegable, especialmente dentro del campo de la educación en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL). Los beneficios de usar estas tecnologías en los institutos de Educación Secundaria como una mejora de las destrezas tradicionales conocidas en inglés, así como sus inconvenientes e impedimentos, se discuten a fondo en el siguiente trabajo. La representación de cómo debe ser una situación ideal para trabajar con las TICs dentro de un entorno académico, concretamente en las clases de inglés, se contrasta con las circunstancias reales, no tan idealistas. Asimismo, se explica en detalle un caso práctico llevado a cabo en un instituto de Secundaria con estudiantes de Bachillerato, con el propósito de observar la participación del alumnado, la motivación, y el compromiso con la materia utilizando las TICs que había disponibles.

Palabras clave: Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TICs), inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL), Innovación, Destrezas tradicionales

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1. Introduction

1.1. ICTs development & impact on education

In a world characterised by the globalization phenomenon, technological advancements and the flow of information have a direct impact on education. In the same way political and economic systems evolve with the passing of time, so does the field of education and the areas associated to it. According to Khivlon and Patru in their United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) publication titled “Information and communication technology in education: a curriculum for schools and programme of teacher development”, “Information and communication technology (ICT) has become, within a very short time, one of the basic building blocks of modern society. Many countries now regard understanding ICT and mastering the basic skills and concepts of ICT as part of the core of education, alongside reading, writing and numeracy” (3). For this reason, educational systems from all over the world have been adopting new technologies in order to integrate ICTs in their curricula and teaching practices, since they have proved to be fundamental in preparing students and teachers for the future.

It is worth knowing that the term ICT does not only include computers, like desktops, laptops, or notebooks, but also radio and television, CD and DVD, projectors, printers, interactive whiteboards, fibre optics, satellites, routers, modems, Wi-Fi, smartphones, tablets, and many other network related equipment. Moreover, it also includes technologies such as social networking. (Anderson 3)

Information and communication technologies have undergone a significant development during the last decades. The evolution of such technologies has not only changed the way we live and perceive things, but has massively affected the teaching and learning processes. While only twenty years ago, a classroom still consisted of a blackboard, VCR equipment, cassette players, calculators, and very limited Internet connection, nowadays both teachers and students have multitude of options when it comes to using technology in their classes. Materials such as interactive whiteboards, projectors, tablet computers, smartphone apps, and many other Internet resources constitute the prevailing academic devices and tools used in present-day schools.

The implementation of ICT based learning systems started to emerge more notably during the early 1980s with the appearance of the first computers. As noted by

Anderson in his article “The Role of ICT in Teaching and Learning; Past, Present and Future Perfect”:

The early 1980s saw the advent of microcomputers in schools, so called to distinguish them from minicomputers and mainframe computers in universities. Microcomputers came with a variety of names – Apple, BBC, Commodore, Atari, Apricot. In 1981, IBM, the company whose chairman had once predicted that five computers would suffice for the whole world, released what it called a Personal Computer, giving rise to the use of the term PC today.

(1)

Nevertheless, in order to reach this development, there have been many other technological achievements longer before. Within these, we can find the use of the first gramophone records during the 1910s, the vinyl records between the 1940-1945s, the cassette players during the 1960s, the floppy disk in the late 1970s, the first Xerox Photocopier in 1975, and the LCD overhead projector used mainly in the early 1980-1990s.

The aforementioned tools have slowly developed and expanded with the passing of time, adapting their use according to society’s necessities. Within the framework of these necessities of adaptation to the new parameters, the invention of the pen drive around 1998 gave the possibility of storing necessary data without having to use cassette players, while the video projectors and the interactive whiteboards that we use nowadays, have replaced the LCD overhead projectors that slowly became obsolete. In the same way, floppy disks, although being ubiquitous during the 1980s and 1990s, started to decline by the mid-1990s because of the introduction of the optical disk and recordable CDs with a greater capacity to storage data. However, with the rise of the USB pen drives, both the use of the floppy disks, and the CDs started to decline even if all serve to transfer files and store information. The difference is that pen drives have more advantages not only because they are smaller, faster to use, and have more capacity, but also because they are more durable since they are not so fragile in terms of the scratchable surface of CDs. Other important achievement worth to mention is the revolution that the cellular mobiles and the Internet provoked during the 1990s. The Internet originated in the United States for defense purposes, while nowadays this technology is used every day by billions of people around the world. These are only just a few examples of how ICTs have developed during the previous century, reaching the point that today, anyone can use their laptops, tablets and smartphones wherever and whenever they want.

Within the field of education, Munro explains in his article “Exploring and Explaining the Past: ICT and History”, that “In the early 1980s the information technology tools on offer to teachers and learners in the education sector were regarded with great awe but, in retrospect, were primitive in comparison with the refined and sophisticated resources we have at our disposal a mere 20 years later” (251). Therefore, it is obvious that nowadays, almost 40 years later since the early 1980s, the technological development is increasing even more and at a faster pace than it did one or two decades before. Thus, it goes without saying that ICTs have now a bigger impact on education than twenty or thirty years ago. This impact is not just directly affecting the innovative ICTs tools and devices themselves, but most importantly, teachers’ methodologies of teaching, and students’ ways of learning. In his article, Anderson states that “it is clear that ICT heralded a paradigm shift in education in that its use in schools is changing how teachers teach and how students learn” (3).

In the case of students, this shift in education has to do with how much they are being exposed to these technologies since little, along with their knowledge on how some of these devices work. According to Uygurer et al.:

When comparing modern and traditional students, it is apparent that the differences are enormous between these two groups. The main and important reason for these differences is the gradual digitalization of the modern age. The traditional students often access information with assistance from others and were limited by time, whereas, today’s students can find information themselves wherever on whenever they choose. Therefore, the characteristics of today’s students are different from the characteristics of traditional students. (625)

In present-day time, it is more important for students to be able to learn how to communicate properly, select and use accurate information in order to solve problems not only within an academic environment, but also in their daily lives, and be innovative and ready to adapt to any situation, rather than learning mechanically and by heart knowledge notions of the past including concepts and skills that are no longer effective. To achieve this, it is fundamental for schools to include ICTs in their teaching practices and subject matters, which they were not that necessary and noteworthy a century ago.

In the same way students’ capabilities and competences depend on the use of technology, so that the skills they learn can accomplish the demands of the actual technology-driven economy and society, teachers need to be prepared to use these technologies and choose innovative initiatives that are relevant for learners. The role of

the teacher must be that of a learning facilitator who guides students in their own process of learning, while students must change from passive learners to active ones, who are able to produce knowledge, organise themselves, and work cooperatively with their other classmates. In the case of teachers and the use they make of technology, is an aim that has been largely discussed, and many educational organizations around the globe have insisted on it during this last decade. Hine's UNESCO publication titled "ICT Competency Framework for Teachers", which is a framework that outlines the competences that teachers need to integrate ICTs into their professional practice, states that:

The use of new technologies in education implies new teacher roles, new pedagogies and new approaches to teacher education. The successful integration of ICT into the classroom will depend on the ability of teachers to structure the learning environment in new ways, to merge new technology with a new pedagogy, to develop socially active classrooms, encouraging co-operative interaction, collaborative learning and group work. This requires a different set of classroom management skills. The teaching skills of the future will include the ability to develop innovative ways of using technology to enhance the learning environment, and to encourage technology literacy, knowledge deepening and knowledge creation. Teacher professional learning will be a crucial component of this educational improvement. (8)

Therefore, as mentioned above, it is important for students and teachers to adapt to these new methodologies including the use of ICTs. Traditional methods from one century ago, like the teacher-centered model where students received the information passively, or where exams were the primary assessment tool for evaluating students are no longer productive (Panagiotakopoulos et al. 91). However, in order to achieve this, the role of learners and teachers is not enough, simply because it is impossible to implement such innovative pedagogies including technology, if the school lacks the necessary infrastructure, resources, and materials. For this reason, educational institutions including Primary school, Secondary schools and Higher education, must have at their disposal electronic environments with a variety of networking devices and digital resources to support such performances inside classrooms. All these factors have a significant impact on nowadays education system.

2. Role of ICTs in English Learning and Teaching

2.1. The benefits of using ICTs in EFL

In the same way the use of ICTs affects students, teachers, and their learning and teaching processes, there has been demonstrated that the potentialities of ICTs constitute a powerful tool for foreign language teaching, especially within the discipline of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). First, the term EFL must not be confused with the term ESL (English as a Second Language). EFL students learn English as a Foreign Language in their country of origin or any other country that is non-native English speaking, whereas ESL students learn English as a Second Language in a foreign country, like U.S.A., Canada, or Australia where English is the predominant language.

It is obvious that ICTs can be implemented within any area or field of study, like Mathematics, Physics, or Biology, but the aim of this dissertation, after describing the development and impact of these technologies, is to; first, present the role of ICTs in English Learning and Teaching along with the benefits it can offer to EFL students, second, illustrate and analyse the traditional skills used in EFL according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFRL) and the Canarian Curriculum for First Foreign Languages (English) and the improvement of those skills by the use of ICTs, and third, expose some of the drawbacks and impediments when using ICTs in EFL. Then, a practical case that took place in a Secondary school with native Spanish speakers learning EFL implementing ICT tools is finally described, along with the ideal situation expected regarding the ICTs resources in Secondary schools in contrast with the real situation.

As mentioned before, when referring to the role of ICTs in English Learning and Teaching, is important to take into consideration the impact that technology has nowadays due to the unstoppable growing presence of digital media. This impact is also affecting economy and society, since they require individuals that are well accustomed with the use of technology, that are capable of working in teams, and who have adopted essential skills such as fast problem-solving and self-learning capacities (Lei 2). The role of ICTs is now more significant than ever due to the fact that the majority of people use their technological devices every single day to search for information of any topic, be updated with the latest pieces of news, connect with friends via social networking, use various applications for different purposes, etc.

Within the area of education, and mostly in the case of EFL learning, there has been proved that technology can be used by students not only in an autonomous way, but also cooperatively when they work in teams or elaborate a project in groups. At the same time, it enhances their motivation and implication. When learning and acquiring a foreign language such as English, motivation plays a very significant role.

From my own experience as a student during high-school, and during the period of the internship this year, I can say that students are no longer motivated in learning a language just by following the units that come in their Student's Book and Workbooks. This is so, because students feel more attracted to work with technological devices that they tend to use daily, like smartphones or tablets in order to do exercises and activities during the class hours, do the homework, or elaborate projects. In their article "Use of ICT in English Language Teaching and Learning", Jayanthi and Kumar affirm that "Now the role and use of technology as a tool for teaching of English language is increasing as educators have understood its ability to create both independent and collaborative learning environment in which students can learn English with much ease" (34). They continue by stating that "Traditional methods of imparting [secondary and] higher education have become less motivating. Here, technology plays an important role in creating innovation and motivation for the learners" (34).

Apart from motivation, another advantage that ICTs provide when learning English as a foreign language, is the wide range of available learning materials and resources that can be found online, and that enhance the audio-visual reception. For Taylor and Aswegen, nowadays students "are more visual learners than auditory learners; they like to learn by doing and not by being told how to do; further, they are self-starters, self-motivators and self-learners" (38). Thus, the conventional classroom teaching turns into one that also uses electronic devices that help teachers and students to come up with many creative and practical ideas that can be implemented during the lessons. For instance, computer based activities on webpages that the whole class can do together using tablets or laptops, use the e-mail to send paper works, like writings or projects done using *Microsoft Office's* applications such as *Word*, or *OneNote*, or prepare presentations using *Prezi* or *PowerPoint* including images, videos, and animations.

ICTs also allow Internet phone calls to host virtual meetings with other classes around the world using applications like *Skype* or *Google Hangouts*, online interactive quizzes that self-assess students in real time by using their smartphones, like *Kahoot!*, or

Quizizz, watching videos on *YouTube*, series on *Netflix*, or films in English with or without subtitles depending on the students' level, and use *Google Drive* presentations that later can be shared by the teacher with the class in order for them to revise the content. ICTs offer the use of social media platforms like *Facebook* or *Twitter* to create a class account that allows collaboration and the sharing of information between the teacher and students, or play innovative game-based approach to teaching like *Classcraft*. According to *Classcraft's* website¹, “students respond positively because it features typical video game aesthetic that students are familiar with”. Since the game is played during the class, and each student creates a character who works together with other classmates, students develop essential skills like collaborative teamwork which fulfils students' needs within education. There are plenty of other examples of learning resources that can be found on the Internet, as well as different smartphones applications which, if allowed, can be incorporated within the classroom.

Another important benefit of ICTs in EFL is the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) like *Moodle* or *Blackboard*. *TechTerms.com*, defines *Moodle* as “an online educational platform that provides custom learning environments for students”. Teachers or professors use such platforms to manage different courses by creating a virtual environment for the subject they are teaching, where they upload useful materials and presentations, assign paper works and tasks for students to submit, give marks, etc. These types of systems have helped to develop educational programs in e-learning environments, like Blended learning, Flipped classroom, or online Distance for Higher education.

Blended learning is the combination of face to face teaching with computer technology. Within Blended-learning, students attend the lesson taught by the teacher inside the classroom, while they also use digital and online resources like laptops or smartphones to work on the contents by interacting with each other. This makes students learn English in a more fun and interesting way, since they do not only use their Student's Book, but interact with each other and engage more in the activities they have to do. Also, it helps students develop many skills at the same time, like Spoken or Written interaction, Reading, Writing, and Listening. In their book titled *Blended Learning: Across the Disciplines, Across the Academy*, Glazer and Rhem affirm that “At its simplest, blended

¹ *Classcraft's* website: <https://www.classcraft.com/>.

learning courses are those in which a significant amount of seat time, that is, time spent in the classroom, is replaced with online activities that involve students in meeting course objectives” (1). Moreover, they insist on that “Effective blended learning courses require students to interact with each other, the content, and their own thoughts. Students need a way to not only take in information but also to process it: checking their understanding, organising their knowledge, and making connections with what they already know” (3).

Flipped classroom is another resource that can benefit the use of ICTs in EFL. Instead of the traditional methodology where students have to physically attend the class and pay attention to what the teacher explains, and give them homework to do, the flipped classroom method goes the other way round. First, students follow the teacher’s lesson at home at their own pace via videoconferencing, by watching videos of the lesson on *YouTube*, or even a *TED*² talk explaining the lesson’s content. In any moment they are free to interact with each other and discuss the topic. They can do it in a forum where each one gives his or her opinion, or if it is a videoconferencing, they are free to participate whenever they want. Afterwards, all students come to school and analyse the topic in greater detail by doing group activities with the guidance of the teacher.

This methodology allows students to learn English by using technology they are accustomed to, while they develop several skills, like Spoken interaction when they discuss the topic with the teacher and other classmates. In their article “Flipped Classroom or an Active Lecture?”, Pickering and Roberts state that with the implementation of the Flipped Classroom “the face-to-face then become student-centered with time devoted to discussion, group work, and problem-solving” (118). They add that “the increased availability of digital resources means it is now much more straightforward to construct content that can be accessed before the class via a virtual learning environment or learning management system” (118).

The rapid, instant access to information due to the development of ICTs, is another advantage for EFL learning. According to Bates et al., “Students of this generation and future generations have greater access to information” (7). The reason for this, is that present-day students have had non-stop access to information and social networking, so

² TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. During a *TED talk*, a specialised person talks for ten minutes or more about topics such as technology, design, cultural and academic aspects, innovation, etc. These talks can be watched on TED’s website or on *YouTube*. They are famous for being talks about “ideas worth spreading”, which is actually the organization’s slogan.

that they expect consistent communication in class as well. In the past, teachers and students did not have the necessary means to search for information in a quick, instant way. They needed to go to the library and search the information in printed books, articles, newspapers, etc. In their article “ICT: New Wave in English Language learning/teaching”, Ghasemi and Hashemi affirm that “For language learning purposes, [ICT] provides text in authentic language, unlike the contrived language usually found in books” (3100).

Moreover, the quantity and quality of resources was not that immense as it is nowadays. For instance, now it is possible to use online dictionaries like the *English Oxford Dictionary*, *Cambridge Dictionary*, or *WordReference* in order to find the definition of a word, whereas in the past it was indispensable to search for meanings in a printed dictionary. In comparison with the past, now teachers and students have multiple options and almost infinite access to material and resources. They can even choose to either go to the library and search information in printed books or articles, or with a simple click, download them if they are available online.

The use of ICTs in EFL learning can also help students develop both autonomous, independent learning, as well as cooperative work in pairs or in groups. Ghasemi and Hashemi declare that “ICT helps English language learners by enabling them to communicate, edit, annotate and arrange text quickly and flexibly” (3099). They also add that ICT “extends pupils’ ability to exercise choice, work independently and make connections between their work in English and in other subjects” (3100). If a student needs to prepare for an exam and has doubts regarding the use and structure of the conditionals, he or she can independently search for videos on *YouTube* where other English teachers explain how the four types of conditional sentences are formed and when to use one or another. Also, when students need to prepare a project in groups about a topic during the class hour, they can distribute their work among them so that each member can search for information, meaning of words, images, and videos by just using their laptops or tablets. If the projects need to be presented in class, each group can use a *PowerPoint* or *Google Drive* presentation to show it to the rest of their classmates using a projector and, if available, an interactive whiteboard. In this case, the teacher guides the students in the process of learning when preparing the projects and can help the groups with new ideas, by revising relevant concepts, etc.

At the same time, with the advantages that ICTs can provide, teachers have now more opportunities and options where to choose from when teaching an English lesson and when assessing learners. Rubrics and sheets to track students' attendance, behaviour, participation and class work can be done using online templates, or applications as *Microsoft Excel*. Other digital tool and application that supports formative assessment is *Formative*³, which allows teachers to edit questions related to any content and “give feedback and easily score or auto-grade student work”. According to the website, the application can be used with any internet connected device and is optimised for Flipped classroom methodology and Blended-learning. Another advantage is that, with the rapid access to learning materials and resources, teachers can now transmit more information to larger groups of students instantly.

Other benefit that ICTs can provide to EFL learning, especially for Secondary school, is the use of social media. I already commented that *Facebook* could be a great tool to create a class account for the teacher and students to share information, leave comments, etc. However, there are many other social media which have largely increased a greater interest among teenagers, such as *Instagram*, *Snapchat*, and *Twitter*. As we shall later along the practical case, students feel motivated to use their smartphones and talk in front of an audience about a subject that they like and is close to them. Such activities developed in class must be authorised, due to the fact that students are still under aged. The same occurs with smartphone's applications, which, if allowed to use during the class, students can benefit from them since they can change the language mode into English, change the overall configuration and privacy settings in English, see the posts of famous people they are following in English, etc.

The aforementioned resources and ways in which ICTs can benefit EFL learning are some examples of how, with the nowadays increasing technological advances, classes can give learners the opportunity to engage into a more active learning environment where learning a foreign language becomes more dynamic and motivating. The following paragraphs focus on how ICTs can improve the traditional skills that have been used in EFL learning, and how with nowadays developments, teaching and learning English is much more interactive and lively than before.

³ *Formative's* website: <https://goformative.com/>.

2.1.1. Traditional skills improved

In his paper “Traditional and Modern Skills”, Lynch states that “The balance between the four traditional language skills has varied over time with changes in theory and pedagogical fashion” (1). He argues that in the old days of the Grammar Translation Method of the 18th and 19th centuries, Reading and Grammar were the most prominent, whereas with the Direct Method of the early 20th century, Listening and Speaking were mostly preferred. In his article he also states that later, in times of the Second World War it became crucial to teach soldiers to be fluent listeners and speakers of other languages, so the U.S.A. Army developed a system called Audiolingualism, which featured activities like intensive oral drilling and insistence on memorisation, believed to strengthen soldiers’ adequate language habits (1).

Lynch mentions that “Since the 1970s, the general movement towards more communicative approaches to second language teaching has involved acknowledging the need to integrate the four skills rather than regard any as primary” (1). The four traditional skills that Lynch mentions, as reflected and explained later, cannot be taught in isolation, but by integrating all of them. Not only that, but nowadays, the skills regarding EFL learning are not only four, mainly because for communication to occur, there must be interaction.

Nonetheless, the four traditional skills, were, and still continue to be taught and evaluated within Secondary school English classes, without paying much attention to other relevant skills or abilities when acquiring a foreign language. Traditional skills are known to be divided into: two receptive skills, which include Listening and Reading, and other two productive skills which are Speaking and Writing. Nevertheless, in the present days of the second decade of the 21st century, with the development of more communicative and interactive learning and teaching approaches, as well as the progress and improvement of technology, the aforementioned four traditional skills have increased in number, and are included in the different categories regarding the learning strategies, which add special emphasis on interaction. The Common European Framework of References for Languages, as well as the Canarian Curriculum of Primera Lengua⁴

⁴ Primera Lengua Extranjera can be translated as First Foreign Language. In this case, English.

Extranjera in Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO) and Bachillerato⁵, comprise the current learning strategies with its correspondent number of skills.

The Common European Framework of References for Languages comes defined as “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe” (1). Its main aim is to describe in an inclusive way “what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (1). Within the Framework, the different levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress are explained, as well as how these are measured at each learning stage. These levels of proficiency, A1 and A2 (Basic User), B1 and B2 (Independent User), and, C1 and C2 (Proficient User) are assessed according to how language communicative activities and strategies are performed. These are divided as it follows:

- Productive/production strategies: Speaking & Writing
- Receptive/reception strategies: Listening, Reading & Audio-visual reception
- Interactive/interaction strategies: Spoken interaction & Written interaction

Within the Canarian Curriculum for First Foreign Languages, it is stipulated that for both, Educación Secundaria Obligatoria and Bachillerato studies, the subject of Primera Lengua Extranjera is compulsory for all groups and levels, and the subject must be taught four hours a week. The Curriculum follows the approach of the Common European Framework of References for Languages, in the sense that it insists on the importance of working with competences and their integration to achieve a communicative and cultural approach of the foreign language. The seven key competences are Linguistic competence, Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, Digital competence, Learning to learn, Social and civic competences, Initiative and entrepreneurship, and Cultural awareness and expression. The Curriculum specifies this in the Introduction section by stating that:

Para la elaboración del currículo de Primera Lengua Extranjera se ha empleado como guía el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas: Aprendizaje, Enseñanza, Evaluación (MCER)⁶. Este documento diseñado por el Consejo de Europa señala que los hablantes y usuarios de una

⁵ Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO) corresponds, roughly, to the British General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and Bachillerato to the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A Levels).

⁶ El Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCER) is the Spanish translation of the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFRL).

lengua son principalmente agentes sociales cuyo cometido es desempeñar tareas a través de un enfoque comunicativo y orientado a la acción, aunque también se caracterizan por otras dimensiones. [...] El MCER define las competencias como «la suma de conocimientos, destrezas y características individuales que permiten a una persona realizar acciones» y define al individuo como agente social. En ese sentido, las cinco actividades de la lengua (escuchar, hablar, leer, escribir e interactuar) cobran sentido en la medida en que su uso está supeditado a la participación en situaciones de interacción social. (2)

As in the case of the Common European Framework of References for Languages, the Canarian Curriculum follows the same distinction in terms of communicative activities and strategies:

- “Comprensión de textos orales” corresponds to the Receptive/reception strategies which include Listening.
- “Producción de textos orales: expresión e interacción” corresponds to the Productive/production strategies including Speaking, and Interactive/interaction strategies including Spoken interaction.
- “Comprensión de textos escritos” corresponds to the Receptive/reception strategies which include Reading.
- “Producción de textos escritos: expresión e interacción” corresponds to the Productive/production strategies including Writing, and Interactive/interaction strategies including Written interaction.

In the case of the Receptive/reception strategies that includes Audio-visual reception, students usually develop this skill by watching videos, films, or documentaries with or without subtitles in English. Obviously, they need ICTs in order to do these activities independently at home or within the class, but the use of ICTs does not only affect this particular skill, but all of them. Both the Common European Framework of References for Languages, and the Canarian Curriculum, insist on the use of ICTs to improve learners’ approach to the language and facilitate other type of resources and materials, not just traditional printed books and photocopies. The Canarian Curriculum of English also emphasises the use of TICs⁷:

La Comunidad Autónoma de Canarias contempla en sus currículos la importancia del aprendizaje permanente. En este sentido, las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC) tienen un papel destacado: dotan de autonomía para aprender dentro y fuera del centro educativo, modelan la forma de relacionarse, de acceder a la información, de transformar, de crear y

⁷ Spanish translation of ICTs: Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación (TICs).

de integrarse con el entorno, por lo que, correctamente utilizadas, aumentan las capacidades cognitivas y expectativas de aprendizaje. Actualmente es más sencillo, significativo y eficaz aprender un idioma extranjero y su cultura mediante películas, series, redes sociales, intercambios comunicativos con sus hablantes, etc., lo que facilita el desarrollo de habilidades comunicativas empleadas en interacciones reales y contextualizadas, que además pueden producirse casi en cualquier lugar y momento. [...] La materia de Primera Lengua Extranjera debe aprovechar las ventajas mencionadas a través de la integración de esta herramienta en sus unidades de programación, entendiendo su empleo desde una perspectiva principalmente comunicativa, y así potenciar el trabajo colaborativo, interdisciplinar y significativo con un enfoque crítico y ético en la utilización y creación de contenido. Las ricas alternativas que ofrecen las TIC, junto al aumento de motivación que conllevan, no solo mejoran el aprendizaje y lo adaptan a la diversidad del alumnado, sino que también permiten el acercamiento a la asimilación de la lengua meta de un modo más natural. (1)

Thus, there is no doubt that ICTs are fundamental in nowadays educational systems, since students have more possibilities to learn the language in a real context with topics of their interest by interacting among each other. For this to happen, it is important to acknowledge how ICTs have helped to improve the past traditional skills into the ones mentioned before and how can these be taught in class with current technology.

Throughout the following paragraphs, each one of the strategies with its corresponding skills are explained in relation to their improvement by the use of ICTs.

- *Receptive/reception strategies: Listening, Reading & Audio-visual reception*
Listening

According to Nachoua's article titled "Computer-Assisted Language Learning for Improving Students' Listening Skill", "Applying the appropriate teaching method plays an important role in the teaching/ learning process including teaching listening as a skill" (1150). Furthermore, she argues that students have difficulties in understanding native speakers and in producing native-like English accent and pronunciation and that in most classes students are unmotivated and act as passive listeners. She affirms that Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a way to motivate students and take an active part in the learning process (1150). Even though the Computer Assisted Language Learning was and is still used in language teaching and learning, nowadays, educational programs like Blended learning or others that can provide face-to-face classroom practices where the teacher uses ICTs to improve students' Listening skills.

While in the past teachers had to carry with them an audio cassette player in order to do a listening activity with students, today teachers can use a computer and a projector to enable students watch online videos in English on *YouTube* and compare different accents, watch films or favourite series in English and get used to the pronunciation of different expressions, listen to songs in English, etc.

Moreover, students can now use online dictionaries like the *English Oxford Dictionary* that apart from giving the definition of the word in question, also provides its right pronunciation. The same happens with the use of online podcasts and recordings that give students the opportunity to pause and replay the parts they have not understood. Apart from all the online resources that exist on the Internet, it is important for teachers to take into account students' interests and not make an excessive use of the traditional listenings that usually come within the Student's Book, as the great majority are not related to students' real-context.

Reading

In his project "ICT and the four major language skills", Lindner mentions that "It seems obvious that the emergence of ICT has had a very significant impact on our reading habits in everyday life. When we take the train or the bus, we rarely see anybody with a real book or newspaper in his or her hand. Instead, people hold their noses over tablets, e-books and of course also computers and smartphones" (13). This of course, affects all members of society, including those working and studying in the field of education.

Regarding the skill of Reading, ICTs give teachers and learners the possibility to find a great amount of texts online. While in the past, texts were only available in the form of books, newspapers and magazines, and the act of reading and understanding a text was possible only via printed sources and a printed dictionary to search for the meaning of words, nowadays, teachers can provide students with many articles. Today, texts are much more than just words or symbols.

According to Larson's article "e-Reading and e-Responding: New Tools for the Next Generation of Readers" teachers need to find new ways of combining printed texts with the type of texts students are in contact outside the school environment, like online texts, mass media, and social media:

As teachers and researchers consider the need to expand the definition of text, we should remember that today's readers are immersed in multimodal

experiences and, consequently, have a keen awareness of the possibility of combining modes and media to receive and communicate messages. This awareness results in an urgent need for teachers and researchers to address the discrepancy between the types of literacy experiences students encounter at school (paper, pencil, and print texts), and those they practice in their daily lives outside the school environment. (255)

Online texts can be read by students using their tablets or laptops during class time, or individually at home. Since there is an enormous variety of topics, teachers can select the ones that are more appealing for students, that are appropriate to the level of the class, and that engages them into the reading process. One option is the use of e-books. These can improve students' ability to read because of their multiple features that printed books cannot offer. In his article, Larson states that:

Many e-books employ multimodal features—such as video, audio, and hyperlinks—as well as interactive tools. Such tools invite readers to physically interact with the text through inserting, deleting, or replacing text; marking passages by highlighting, underlining, or crossing out words; adding comments by inserting notes, attaching files, or recording audio comments; and manipulating the page format, text size, and screen layout. Search features allow the user to locate specific words or phrases within the text or access a particular page. (255)

These electronic versions of books can be viewed in class on laptops and tablets. If the teacher wants so, he or she can also project the e-book on a screen or interactive whiteboard, do a brainstorming of what they think the text is going to be about, explain the meaning of unknown words, highlight important aspects for students to guess what the author is trying to say, get to a conclusion together, etc. One of the main advantages of e-books is that they “are easily transportable and offer instant access to thousands of books through wireless capabilities” (Larson 257).

Another option to increase the skill of Reading, is by means of reading short stories from e-books or try to increase their creativity by writing. Websites such as *Widbook*⁸ give students the option to sign up for free and read e-books, write one, etc. . According to the site, “*Widbook* is a digital collaborative community where you can read, write and publish e-books for free in an innovative and modern environment. Whether you're an indie or established author, a reader, journalist, teacher or a novice, we invite you to join us.”

⁸ *Widbook*'s website: <https://www.widbook.com/>.

Audio-visual reception

The Common European Framework of References for Languages describes the Audio-visual reception when the “user simultaneously receives an auditory and a visual input. This may include activities like following a text as it is read aloud, watching TV, videos, or a film with subtitles or using new technologies (multi-media, CD ROM, etc.)” (71). This skill automatically includes the use of ICTs.

Students can work on this skill in class by watching videos or films in English, follow a *Google Drive* presentation that the teacher is explaining, or by playing games on the interactive whiteboard. When at home, students can improve their Audio-visual reception by watching interviews, tutorials, or talk shows in English on *YouTube*, or by watching TV channels in English like *CNN*. These activities may seem conventional and sometimes boredom for students who have a low level and is impossible for them to follow what other people say. For this reason, teachers should be aware of these type of situations and use other strategies or resources to motivate them to learn. Within their paper, Talaván and Cabrera consider that:

Nowadays, the use of computers is somehow being overridden by smartphones and tablets, and language students increasingly expect to be able to practice communicative skills audiovisually and on the move, whenever and wherever they might be. In this new context, first of all, we should be speaking of audiovisual reception (AVR), and not about mere listening comprehension anymore, since the former is at present much more common in everyday communication. The power of audiovisual language is a very relevant field to be explored within this context, given the potential benefits its pedagogical use can bring about. (34)

Both authors believe that teachers should adapt the enhancement of Audio-visual reception to real needs and start incorporating new methodologies, like teaching using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which is basically learning through mobile phone applications (34). Nowadays, students can develop the skill of Audio-visual reception by simply using their smartphones to log in their social media accounts like *Facebook*, *Instagram*, or *Snapchat* that provide a lot of content in English, like live streaming of famous people they are following, short funny videos, tutorials, pieces of news that appear on their news feed, etc.

- Productive/production strategies: Speaking & Writing

Whereas Listening, Reading and Audio-visual reception are regarded as the three Receptive skills in the learning of English and its use, Speaking and Writing are considered to be the other two Productive skills necessary for the improvement and progress of competent communication. However, as described later, the Interactive skills of Speaking interaction and Writing interaction are also fundamental in achieving an effective level of communication. Without interaction, it would be impossible for learners to communicate with each other.

In the same way ICTs have a major impact on Listening, Reading, and Audio-visual reception, the skills of Speaking and Writing have also undergone changes and improved because of the technological developments.

Speaking

The skill of Speaking or Oral production, is when a user produces an oral text which is addressed to an audience of one or more listeners (CEFRL 58).

Nowadays, it is much easier for students to watch videos where people communicate and observe their vocabulary, the pronunciation patterns of certain words, the use of grammar and collocations, etc. In her article “ICT to enhance speaking skills” Kuppuraj affirms that in the case of Speaking, a teacher can use an interactive whiteboard to provide students with all type of materials of their interest (845). She states that “students can watch even the way the native speakers speak and they can learn a lot about communication, its process and proficiency outside the box. Visualizing the concepts by different persons with varying efficiency through ICT makes the students not only to know and learn the language, but also to practice it in their day to day life” (845).

Traditionally, in order to practise the skill of Speaking, students normally had to read written texts aloud. Today, the skill of Speaking, which for many researchers is one of the most difficult to acquire along with Listening, can be improved for example, by asking students to prepare an oral presentation and speak about it in front of the rest of the class. When preparing the oral presentation students can use their laptops, tablets or smartphones to search for information.

Another activity is to show students *TED* talks videos on *YouTube* about academic and cultural aspects, or about anything related with the unit they are working on, and ask them to give their opinion about it at the end. Another activity which also includes the

use of videos and usually results entertaining and funny for students, can be that to watch people speaking with different accents in English. In this case, the teacher asks students to watch videos of different accents in English not only within the United Kingdom and the varieties found in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but also English accents from Australia, U.S.A., Canada, etc. Then, they can practise and try to use some of these accents when speaking and see if they can say some of the words and expressions in the same way as in the video. Nevertheless, teachers should tell students from the beginning that any English accent, although different from the one used in England, is as acceptable and respectable as any other.

It is important for teachers to create a comfortable environment, and acknowledge students that everyone commits mistakes when speaking. According to Taviil, “Teachers should sweep away the boundaries and create a safe stress-free environment to encourage and motivate the students to speak” (766). It is also important for teachers to avoid the constant correction of students’ pronunciation of words and expressions when they want to participate. This will allow them to gain confidence in themselves when speaking on future occasions.

Writing

In the case of the skill of Writing, ICTs also play an important role. According to Drigas and Charami’s article “ICTs in English Learning and Teaching”, “Writing can be perplexing for many students since it requires correct use of grammar. Unlike spoken language, written language cannot use gestures or body language to explain what it is that needs to be understood or conveyed” (6). It is true that the skill of Writing requires a certain control of the language, not only in terms of grammar, but also vocabulary, connectors, expressions, use of formal or informal language, etc.

In the past, it was quite difficult to find ways to have access to instant information when writing. Teachers, professors and students had to find books, different volumes of encyclopaedias, articles and different papers in libraries, newspapers or magazines. It was common to use conventional tools like a pen and a paper or a typewriter, and also a printed dictionary at hand in case there was a need to search for words and their respective meaning.

Nowadays instead, with the large development of ICTs, it is common to use laptops, tablets, e-books or smartphones to write, rather than using pen and paper.

Moreover, many students are asked to do their writings using *Microsoft Office* applications like *Word*, and send it via e-mail, or use *Google Drive* and share the writing with the teacher. In this way, not only it is easier for teachers to correct because the legibility of the handwriting is no longer a problem, but they can also check if students know how to present a paper adequately by taking into account neatness elements like the use of margins, the line spacing, the font size, etc. Lindner adds that “these interactive functions that computers can provide compared to conventional writing tools, such as a pen and paper or a typewriter, are a great resource for both the teacher and the students. They provide clear and fast corrections and thus enable the learner to work at his or her own pace” (17).

Another advantage of using ICTs is that “Despite the fact that computer typing is arguably faster and tidier than writing with a pen, computers also offer a wide range of language tools that help the writer. Some examples of these kinds of tools are spell checkers, grammar checkers or thesauri” (Lindner 17). When writing a document using *Word*, the application automatically corrects the spelling mistakes that the text may have and even makes the student aware of them.

More tools that students can use are online free spell and grammar checkers like *Grammarly*⁹, which you can add to the *Google Chrome* web browser. According to the website, “*Grammarly* scans your text for common and complex grammatical mistakes, spanning everything from subject-verb agreement to article use to modifier placement”. Apart from correcting mistakes from a text, since it is added to the web browser, it also corrects common misspellings when posting a comment on social media networks like *Facebook* or *Twitter*, or when writing an e-mail using *Gmail*.

When writing a text, other useful tools can include a thesaurus. A thesaurus is different from a dictionary, since the former lists many synonyms and antonyms of the searched word, while a dictionary provides the definition of the word. A thesaurus can be helpful for students to make their writings sound authentic and not repetitive, as it provides dozens of synonyms where to choose from. One of the best online thesaurus students can use is *Thesaurus.com*¹⁰, since it is free and very easy to work with. The website is defined as “the world’s largest and most trusted free online thesaurus”. This is

⁹ *Grammarly*’s website: www.grammarly.com/.

¹⁰ *Thesaurus.com*’ website: www.thesaurus.com/.

so because, “For over 20 years, *Thesaurus.com* has been helping millions of people improve their mastery of the English language and find the precise word with over 3 million synonyms and antonyms and the ability to filter search results by relevance, word length, and complexity.”

Finally, another potential benefit is that students may attain certain willingness to write if this way of writing is interesting for them. In her paper “ICT in the Writing Classroom: The Pros and the Cons”, Boudjadar explains this in detail:

On computers, students can practice writing about topics related to their interests. Instead of assignments on dull topics of writing that do not necessarily interest and attract students or topics on which they have very little information, students would write about ‘real’ topics in real contexts. They will be interested in what they write because it is real and not imaginary. For instance, they would be able to write about their daily lives in English, which can largely motivate them. (9)

- *Interactive/interaction strategies: Spoken interaction & Written interaction*
Spoken interaction

According to the Common European Framework of References for Languages, “In interaction at least two individuals participate in an oral and/or written exchange in which production and reception alternate and may in fact overlap in oral communication” (14).

Whereas in the past, this could only happen by having face-to-face conversations with other interlocutors, nowadays, with the massive expansion of ICTs, it is much easier for students to develop this skill, both in class, and in their free time. Traditionally speaking, this is done in class by starting a debate about a topic and let students interact with each other by exposing the advantages or disadvantages of something, or by acting and doing role plays.

However, when integrating ICTs during an English class, students tend to engage more with the proposed activities because these motivates them to interact with each other, since they do not make use only of conventional materials like books with dialogues to read aloud. One effective ICT tool already mentioned, is the use of online self-assessment applications like *Kahoot!*, which, if used by forming groups, students can interact among them and with the teacher, by demonstrating their knowledge in answering the correct option to the question orally. This is effective when students are previously

told that, if they want to win the quiz, they must interact with their other classmates speaking in English. In this way, students use ICTs by answering questions with their own smartphones or tablets, while the teacher also uses a computer and projector to show the quiz to the whole class.

Other activities that can be done to improve the skill of Spoken interaction by using technology, are videoconferencing with other class using communication platforms like *Google Hangouts* or messaging applications like *Facebook Messenger*. This would allow students to interact with students from other high-schools from the same country and with a similar level of English, or interact with other students from English-speaking countries and practise by introducing themselves, asking and answering diverse questions related to their studies, hobbies, etc.

Teachers can also divide the class in two groups and ask each one of them to use their smartphones in order to find information about a specific topic close to their real-context and that they may enjoy talking about (e.g. the best places to visit in the Canary Islands). After finishing deciding, first, both groups have to initiate a debate about how many places they have found and give reasons why these are the best to visit. The group with more places found and talked about is the winner. Activities similar to this, tend to be appealing for students since they are allowed to use their devices to find information, and by counting and speaking about places they have visited and recommend to visit, also motivates them to win.

In her research paper “The Importance of Speaking Skills for EFL learners”, Qureshi states that:

Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. Communication takes place, where there is speech. Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. The importance of speaking skills, hence is enormous for the learners of any language. Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community. We use language in a variety of situations. People at their work places, i.e. researchers working either in a medical laboratory or in a language laboratory, are supposed to speak correctly and effectively in-order to communicate well with one another. Any gap in commutation results in misunderstandings and problems. (2)

In this sense, it is true that developing the skill of Speaking is important, since students need to have a command of the Productive and also the Receptive strategies in order to be able to interact. For this reason, the Interactive strategy that includes the skill

of Spoken interaction is in a way sometimes more difficult to develop as it is directly intended for communication purposes. When someone learns a language the main aim is to be able to communicate properly in that language. However, this cannot be done without practising the other Productive and Receptive strategies: “As processes, reception and production (oral and/or written) are obviously primary, since both are required for interaction” (CEFRL 14).

The Common European Framework of References for Languages clarifies that Interactive strategies, especially the skill of Spoken interaction, which, as Written interaction, differs from the activities done when doing a simple Speaking or Listening activity:

The processes involved in spoken interaction differ from a simple succession of speaking and listening activities in a number of ways:

- productive and receptive processes overlap. Whilst the interlocutor’s utterance, still incomplete, is being processed, the planning of the user’s response is initiated on the basis of a hypothesis as to its nature, meaning and interpretation.
- discourse is cumulative. As an interaction proceeds, the participants converge in their readings of a situation, develop expectations and focus on relevant issues. These processes are reflected in the form of the utterances produced.

(92)

Therefore, learning to interact is much more complex and differs from learning just by producing and receiving information. This is so, mainly because interaction is fundamental for effective communication between interlocutors. Tavil also insists on this fact and emphasises the importance of teachers in this process:

In real life, listening and speaking are always in integration, so teachers should teach these two skills in an interacted way. Although the students may know how to listen and speak in the language, they may still not be able to communicate in this language mainly because these skills are not used in integration. Use of authentic materials and real life situations could naturally lead to the integration of skills since this is the case in real life. (766)

Written interaction

The skill of written interaction has also been affected by the development of ICTs. Two decades ago, activities that included written interaction were those in which there was a correspondence by letters, fax, or simple e-mails between one or more people. Today the situation is different. With the passing of the years and the rapid technological advances, the integration and use of ICTs in EFL learning within academic environments,

has offered teachers and students more options to improve learners' skill of Written interaction.

With the increasing use of social media, students are continually communicating with each other by sending messages via *WhatsApp*, *Instagram*, or *Facebook*. Instead of viewing the use of smartphones as excessive and negative, teachers could try to integrate their use in their English classes by creating a Facebook account of the class where the teacher uploads interesting links or articles, so that the other students can leave comments expressing their opinion. This can also be done by creating a blog where only the teacher and students have access and practise by writing in English.

As already mentioned in the *Reading* section, digital collaborative communities such as *Widbook* also gives students the possibility to practise the skill of Written interaction and share their texts with other people, comment others, etc. This promotes interaction and also collaboration between people. As noted by Yunus et al. in their study "Pros and Cons of Using ICT in Teaching ESL Reading and Writing":

The Internet allows like-minded people to communicate through websites, blogs, and social networking sites. Many of these sites include an option that permits users to work collaboratively and publish their writing. This type of writing is becoming more prevalent in the workplace, so exposing students to this process may provide them with skills that will translate directly to their future work as adults. (121)

The use of videogames is another option to practise Written interaction, since they have been incrementing a lot recently. Famous massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) such as *World of Warcraft (WoW)* and *League of Legends (LoL)* allow users to chat in English among each other in real time while playing. This has proved to be beneficial for adolescents in acquiring English as a foreign language. In her study, "Acquiring English Through the Game *World of Warcraft*", Heathcote describes her impression as a teacher:

As a teacher at an upper secondary school, I have met a lot of students who play *WoW* frequently, and it seems they all share the same belief about the language learning potential of the game. When using the different forms of communication present in the game, students engage in authentic interaction in English with people of different nationalities, cultural backgrounds and linguistic abilities. (1)

As mentioned by Daggett in his article "Preparing Students for Their Technological Future", "Video games, typically seen as distractions to academic study, also are gaining traction among schools for enhancing instruction. Introducing such

games into the classroom allows students to connect to a medium they are familiar and comfortable with” (3). He also adds that “Appropriately designed video games can be used as a way to start a unit of study or to reinforce previously learned concepts” (3).

Normally, within the field of EFL learning, Written interaction is also practised when using Learning Management Systems (LMS) like *Moodle*. Teachers, apart from uploading relevant content of what students are learning, they can assign tasks which must be answered by learners writing a document and upload it before the deadline. Afterwards, the teacher can comment on the task by making observations explaining which parts need improvement or not, if what is written includes the majority of all the asked requirements, etc.

Finally, students can also interact by sending messages or e-mails in English with the students belonging to the classes with whom they have previously orally interacted by means of videoconferencing, using applications software like *Skype* or *Google Hangouts*.

2.2. Drawbacks and impediments when using ICTs in EFL

Technology has not only affected the substantial areas and domains during the first two decades of the 21st century, such as medicine, means of transport, tourism, or engineering, but also, as already explained, has had and continues to have a strong impact on education. At the same time ICTs provide many advantages regarding the improvement of teaching and learning a foreign language like English, it also presents some drawbacks and impediments, especially within Secondary school education.

Teachers' professional development

One of the principal impediments when using ICTs in EFL teaching and learning, is the fact that teachers have not been previously taught or trained in how to use these technologies properly within an academic environment. There are cases where Secondary school institutions are equipped with advanced technological devices, like interactive whiteboards, projectors, tablets, etc. but neither the teachers nor the students know how to make a productive use of it. This is due to the fact that teachers have not received previous learning programmes on how these tools work and the benefits they can provide. Moreover, as stated in Suryani's essay “ICT in Education: its Benefits, Difficulties, and

Organizational Development Issues”, the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency analysis has found more difficulties that teachers from developed countries may find when integrating the use of ICTs in their classes. Some teachers are afraid of being embarrassed in front of the class if they are not capable to use the computer, or if suddenly the machine stops working, while others, tend to feel anxious if their students know more or are better at using technology than themselves (21).

Therefore, as Samuel and Pulizala affirm in their paper “Role of ICT in English Language Teaching”, that in the same way English language teaching has evolved due to the development of advanced technology, methodologies and techniques, it is essential for language teachers “to understand and adopt [these] various methods and techniques and also apply them in classrooms. Language teachers should keep themselves abreast of the current trends to create inquisitiveness among the student community and prepare them for the challenges of the future” (282).

Problematic management system on ICTs application

Another important impediment is the lack of organisation and coordination when implementing ICTs within the Secondary school. Suryani affirms that:

The ICT implementation should also be supported by good coordination and management system on the ICT application. Those are covering clear job specialization on who will be responsible to help teachers in class, monitor the progress of ICT in schools, or conduct ICT training. This aspect is very important since many teachers are reluctant to use technology in class because they frequently do not get immediate help when they stuck with computers in class. (19)

This can happen on many occasions during a class. Sometimes it is because the Internet connection fails, because the speakers do not work, or simply because the computer itself does not turn on. If the school in particular, does not have any established norms and there is no serious control on the management and coordination regarding ICTs implementation and use, it is very hard for teachers to implement these technologies in their classes.

Distraction and lack of control

Another important drawback is the negative use that students often make of such technologies during classes. Although the majority of them may follow the teacher’s explanation when required to do a task by using their laptops, tablets, or smartphones during class to search for information for an activity, some of them use their mobile phone

as a distraction to chat with friends on *WhatsApp*, log in social networks like *Facebook* or *Instagram*, or listen to music using their headphones by seating at the back of the class. This usually leads teachers to interrupt the lesson on many occasions as these students are reluctant to work and prefer to distract others. Boudjadar affirms that “When online, students can be distracted by the entertaining side of computers. [...] Another issue is that some students tend to spend more time on social media sites. Facebook, for instance, does distract users with flooding ‘stuff’ from friends and acquaintances from all over the world” (11).

Sometimes with larger groups of students it is impossible to control what each one of them is doing with their technological device, if they are using it for the proposed task, or for accessing other websites. In their study, Yunus et al. believe that class control is important for most teachers to master, especially novice teachers, when using ICT devices for tasks or activities (125).

Excessive and inappropriate use of ICTs

Associated to what is described above, another significant impediment is the excessive use of technological devices. As noted by Anuncibay in her article “ICTs and teenage students. Problematic usage or dependence”, “Misuse of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) is a risk factor that increases the probability of problematic consumption. The risk is present not so much because of its addictive potential nor because of the vulnerability of the individual, but because of abusive and continual interaction” (231).

There are many studies about this topic, and the majority of them contradict each other. Some academics and researchers connect this with the abusive use of videogames, which leads students to be more hyperactive and aggressive when interacting with other people. Other researchers have conducted studies that proved that students do not know how to make a correct use of the Internet, either because they did not control the time they spent in front of a computer screen, or because they disengaged with their academic performance. Others instead, have showed that the use of these technologies help students to be more socially interactive, although there are researches that show that their use weakened social relations, and even generated mental health problems as depression (Anuncibay 231).

In cases like these, professionals should teach young Secondary school students of twelve and thirteen years old how to make a correct use of ICTs by developing informative courses and workshops, so that they can learn how to use these technologies properly and safely. Also, when not at school, parents should be aware of how their children use ICTs and identify when there is a problem.

Excessive amount of resources

Another drawback when using ICTs in EFL learning, is the tremendous amount of information students can have access to. Teachers should guide learners in their process of learning and acknowledge them with the fact that not everything they can find on the Internet is one hundred percent reliable. Also, they need to be aware of the fact that when writing a paper, they need to acknowledge their sources. This is something that it is not that demanded in EFL learning in Secondary school, but it will certainly be required in Higher education. Also, because of the great amount of websites, students can get exposed to inappropriate and unsafe content if the school does not have any restriction regarding the access to these webpages.

A strict focus on using only ICTs

Using ICTs properly has its advantages, but also students should engage into reading printed books of their interest in English, going to the library and search for information not only by means of a computer, but in all kinds of printed resources and materials like articles, dissertations, newspapers, journals or encyclopaedias, knowing how to search information in printed monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, etc. This will allow students to develop not only the Linguistic or Digital competences, but also Learning to learn and their sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship.

Plagiarism and deficient translations

Regarding the correct acknowledgment of sources, plagiarism can be considered another impediment in EFL learning. Since ICTs provide many materials and resources, which the great majority of them are written in English, sometimes students just copy and paste what they have found on their writing or other papers they have to handle to the teacher. The same occurs when students write in Spanish and use translation services like *Google Translate* thinking that this method is efficient, when it is not.

Other drawbacks and impediments may include the loss of time if the computer, projector, or interactive whiteboard does not work and the teacher may have to change of class if the lesson demands their use, or the fact that students do not make any effort in learning English and developing skills by reading a printed book or article, only because it is already published on the Internet.

3. A practical case: I.E.S. Domingo Pérez Minik

3.1. Ideal situation to work with ICTs in Secondary School

After describing the benefits that ICTs can provide in relation to EFL learning, taking into consideration the skills, and the drawbacks or disadvantages that sometimes can appear, I am now going to explain what should be the ideal situation to work with ICTs in Secondary school.

First, the implementation of ICTs should be an element that forms part of the School-based Education Project¹¹ and its application or performance really occurs within the school. At the same time, there should be a plan describing the management of ICTs in concordance with the school's infrastructure and resources. There are cases in which the school's infrastructure does not allow the installation of ICTs at a great scale.

Second, there should exist a coordinator or group of coordinators specialised in the use of these technologies. They should be able to organise themselves in order to improve the implementation of ICTs in the classrooms, to investigate about the latest trends and most beneficial technologies for the school, and to show ICTs capabilities to teachers so that they can understand better how these work.

Finally, regarding the ICT devices that a Secondary school should be equipped with, this includes several technologies. At least, each classroom should incorporate a computer or a laptop, along with an overhead digital projector and speakers. If not all, most of the classrooms, instead of having a blackboard, they should integrate a whiteboard or an interactive whiteboard.

Interactive whiteboards are tools that allow images, videos, documents, or any kind of resource to be displayed onto any board by using a projector. The advantages of using an interactive whiteboard, instead of a simple whiteboard or blackboard, are that both, teachers and students, can manipulate the elements on the board by touching the screen directly with their fingertips. Thus, elements are much easier to be written, drawn, clicked, inserted, dragged or deleted. Moreover, the use of an interactive whiteboard promotes participation, cooperation, and integration among students when doing any activity, or playing games in teams, etc.

¹¹ School-based Educational Project makes reference to "Proyecto Educativo del Centro", also known as PEC.

With regards to the use of printed books, old editions of Student's Books and Workbooks are still used in many Secondary schools in the same way they were used ten or more years ago. However, the latest and most updated Student's Books come with links to *YouTube* videos that are related to the content of the unit and include topics that are interesting for students to learn. They can be installed and digitalised in order to be projected during classes. For instance, the latest *Make the Grade* Student's Books from the editorial Burlington Books for 1st and 2nd year of Bachillerato. According to Burlington Books' website¹², "Make the Grade is an accessible and motivating course that offers an innovative approach [...] covering all the official requirements for Bachillerato. It is compatible with levels B1-B1+ of the Common European Framework."

The Student's Book includes sections where students have to work cooperatively which makes the class more dynamic, while it also contains interactive student content where learners can work on their own. The Book also promotes e-learning by including Flipped Classroom sections that stimulates "independent learning and helps students to prepare for their lessons in advance". This edition also allows students to download a WordApp in their smartphones from the *App Store* or *Google Play* to work on interactive wordlists and activities to revise content.

Another important aspect is that each classroom should have Internet connection either by cable, or directly by Wi-Fi in order for teachers and students to be able to search for information, do online self-assessment quizzes, watch and listen to videos, films, and series in English, do a videoconference with other classes, etc.

It is also important for the Secondary school to be provided with a laboratory classroom equipped with many computers so that the teacher can give a lesson in English where each student can work with his or her own desktop computer. Nowadays, there are schools that provide each student with a tablet in order to do exercises and activities. This can be a great option if teachers do not want students to use their own laptops or smartphones, since these type of tablets are more easy to control as students cannot enter websites to distract themselves, or access online webpages that may include inappropriate content. In comparison with the past, nowadays it is much more difficult to attract

¹² *Make the Grade* course on Burlington Books' website: <https://www.burlingtonbookscatalogue.es/make-the-grade>.

students' attention and engage them into learning English without using any of the aforementioned ICT tools, as these form part now of their everyday life.

After describing what would be the ideal situation to work with ICTs in Secondary education, I would like to describe the real situation regarding ICTs and their use in Secondary schools in general, and also comment on my own experience when doing my internship during this course at I.E.S. Domingo Pérez Minik¹³.

3.2. Real situation

It is difficult to describe the real situation of the implementation of ICTs in general, since not all Secondary school institutions are equipped with the same technologies due to problems related with infrastructure, financial situation, localisation, student's background and resources, the school's implication, and many more aspects. It may also be that the use of ICTs is not that much required in all subjects, or that its use does not help students in improving their academic performance. As already explained, whatever would be the case, the Common European Framework of References for Languages, the Canarian Curriculum, the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, and other educational institutions, and laws in general, emphasise the fact that the use and domain of ICTs is fundamental for students' future.

Even if it is complicated to make a general assumption regarding the use of ICTs in Spanish Secondary education, many authors have complained about this situation stating that teachers are not enough qualified, or that there is no implementation of a consensual project regarding these technologies and the innovation they may provide. According to Bravo et al.: “la falta de conocimientos y actualización del profesorado, tanto sobre el uso de las TIC, desde un punto de vista puramente instrumental, como sobre las actividades innovadoras basadas en las mismas, desde una perspectiva más metodológica, dificultan una buena implementación de éstas en el contexto educativo” (2). In fact, many authors and researches have highlighted the main problems related to the integration of ICTs in Spanish Secondary schools. In their article “Evaluación de

¹³ I.E.S. stands for Institutos de Educación Secundaria in Spanish. They constitute the public Secondary school institutions in Spain. They are the place where students study ESO and Bachillerato.

procesos de innovación escolar basados en el uso de las TIC desarrolladas en la Comunidad de Castilla y León”, García-Valcárcel and Tejedor list the main issues:

- Ineficaz formación del profesorado para el uso de tecnología adecuada a las necesidades de los alumnos.
- Escaso tiempo disponible de los profesores para la colaboración entre ellos y el desarrollo de programas de tecnología integrada.
- Carencia de personal disponible para mantener los ordenadores y solucionar problemas técnicos y de aplicación didáctica (Coordinador de TIC).
- Falta de ordenadores y accesibilidad a Internet en todas las aulas (no sólo en laboratorios o aulas específicas). (127)

In my case, the real situation regarding the development of ICTs, as well as their equipment, was not that advanced or updated as explained in the ideal situation section. During the eight weeks of internship, apart from giving class and implementing my didactic unit, I had the opportunity to go to other classrooms, departments, library, computer laboratory and specific multimedia study halls where I was able to observe the available technological devices and the use that teachers made of them.

My general impression was that, apart from the school’s own ICT resources, which are addressed in the next paragraphs, the real situation regarding students’ level on the subject of Primera Lengua Extranjera from 1st year of Bachillerato was not the ideal one, in the sense that it did not corresponded to a B1 level because their actual level was much lower.

In the case of the teaching methodology, even though teachers used the common available ICT tools, like a desktop computer and the projector, this was mainly to show the digitalised version of the Student’s Book in order for students to do the exercises and correct them together. Sometimes, teachers used the computer and projector in order for students to watch a film with subtitles, or search for a particular video on *YouTube* related to the unit.

During my stay at the school, I never attended a meeting where teachers, along with the ICT coordinator, discussed the current situation of ICTs and how they worked, if these could be improved, which one was no longer useful, or the possibility to integrate them in all the classrooms. Nevertheless, I had the chance to attend a short meeting with the ICT coordinator. He explained the school’s main technological resources and how some of them were not functioning accordingly, how sometimes it was difficult to integrate the latest technologies -due to the school’s old infrastructure- and the plan of

improvement for the next academic year -taking into account all the technological issues that need to be solved.

3.2.1. School resources

Founded in 1990, I.E.S. Domingo Pérez Minik's resources regarding ICTs, is not that numerous and updated as it may be in other centres. Since it is an old school, sometimes is difficult to equip and provide better technological installations due to its infrastructure.

From what I observed, the majority of classrooms only include a whiteboard. Some other classrooms instead, are equipped with desktop computers available only for the teacher's use, and projectors. However, not all classes have access to Internet, and if they have, it is only by cable. This is so because the school is not enabled with Wi-Fi connection, although the centre is planning to have it available for the next course.

The school has an Aula Medusa and a computer laboratory. However, both of them are barely used by teachers and students. This is so because the majority of the desktop computers in the computer laboratory are antiquated, whereas others are totally obsolete. This is one of the main reasons why teachers do not use the computer laboratory to give class, since there are not enough computers functioning for each one of the students.

Nevertheless, there are four classrooms which are properly equipped with an updated desktop computer, Internet connection by cable, overhead projector, and speakers. Three of them are where students study a Superior Grade Formative Course in Informatics and Technology, where each student brings his or her own laptop to class for the lessons, whereas the other classroom is the class where I implemented my didactic unit and did the final activity with two groups of students of 1st year of Bachillerato.

As mentioned before, all the classrooms include whiteboards, with the exception of one classroom, which is equipped with one operative interactive whiteboard, as well as an overhead projector and speakers. The classroom is mostly used by 1st year of ESO students. Nevertheless, teachers use the interactive whiteboard to project the digitalised Student's Book on the board and play games at the end of each unit. Thus, students only

get to use the interactive whiteboard when playing any game where they need to stand up and touch the screen with their finger.

In the case of the different departments, not all of them have Internet connection, but there are desktop computers and printers that teachers can use, although many of them prefer to bring their own laptop or tablet.

There is also one multimedia classroom with specialised sound system used mainly for conferences, but the class can be used by teachers in case they need to give a lesson and this implies watching a video or film with an adequate system sound, or in the case of English students, to do listening exams as they can hear better what is being said rather than with simple speakers.

Finally, regarding the school's own website, the ICT coordinator said that it needs to be updated because the information is not clearly presented, and that it should be ready to access and use during the next course.

3.2.2. Student's background

My didactic unit and final communicative activity have been implemented with the two groups of 1st year of Bachillerato at I.E.S. Domingo Pérez Minik. The group A studying the field of Science had a total of seventeen students, while the group B studying the field of Humanities had a total number of twenty-four. All the students from both groups were Spanish native speakers. As I already mentioned before, the level of English was much lower than the one expected for 1st year of Bachillerato, although there were cases in both groups where a small body of students, including four or five, had an appropriate level and demonstrated a good control of almost all skills.

The background of these two groups of Bachillerato coincides with the general profile of the great majority of students at the school. Generally speaking, students have a low economic level, who come from families with difficult situations, such as unemployed or divorced parents, students living with their grandparents, etc. For this reason, sometimes students cannot afford buying the necessary school materials for class in almost all subjects. In the case of English, some of them had their Student's Books and Workbooks, while others did not. The same happens in the case of 1st year of Bachillerato

students, in the sense that due to the low economic level, the majority of them cannot buy essential materials for class.

With regards to the general level of the class in relation to each skill, the teacher had already told me that their level was not adequate, and that their lowest grades were those corresponding to the skills of Writing and Speaking.

With time, and after getting to know each group of students better in relation to their acquisition and learning of the language, I realised that many of them had a serious lack of motivation with the subject and were simply not interested in following the lesson, participating nor doing any exercise or activity. At the same time, other few students from each group were more participative and showed a great interest in what they were learning, by interacting with the teacher and engaging themselves in the learning process, developing most of the skills

Therefore, I thought that, in order to involve all students into the learning process and make the ones unmotivated to engage and participate equally, it was necessary to attract their interest with a topic that they enjoy knowing and learning about, and also associated with their real context.

For this to happen and for them to obtain better results, I decided to focus my didactic unit on the theme of social media. Apart from being a topic of their interest, I wanted to motivate them to learn English through the use of ICTs. In this case, by allowing them to use their smartphones with the permission of the school, both for the elaboration of the final project, and also along the didactic unit when required.

Sometimes it happens that, although the classroom itself is equipped with ICTs, students never get to use them because the computer is only available for the teachers' use, or, as I explained in the case of the interactive whiteboard, students only use it to follow the digitalised version of the Student's Book and play one or two games that come at the end of each unit.

Even though the general economic level of these students is medium to low, all of them own a smartphone with available data to use. At the same time, the majority of them have a desktop computer or laptop at home, but not all have accessible connection to Internet. However, they know how to use these devices, since they form part of their everyday life and also because in Bachillerato, they have to present papers or do different

tasks or assignments using the computer not only for English, but for other subjects as well.

One of the main reasons why I did not want them to make an excessive use of their Student's Book, is because I wanted to teach updated content in relation to social media, and just use the book on specific occasions, when doing some exercises of vocabulary, or use it in case of any grammar doubt. Besides, sometimes students are not motivated to learn English because they have to use the Student's Book for everything, and very rarely do collaborative group activities together, practise the skill of Spoken interaction about issues they may interest them, etc.

Finally, considering all these aspects and the diversity that one can encounter between two groups in terms of students' engagement and motivation when learning a foreign language, and students' careless attitude and negativity, it would be interesting to know if by using a topic of their interest and the same ICT device, the situation changes and improves, or remains the same.

In the following section, I am going to explain the final activity/project students had to do using their smartphone device during classes, as well as portraying relevant aspects during the teaching of my didactic unit in relation to the use of ICTs and social media.

3.2.3. Project overview

Disclaimer

Before describing the teaching methodology used along the didactic unit and for the final project, I want to clarify the fact that I adapted myself to the ICT resources available in the classroom, which were a desktop computer, a projector, two speakers, and a whiteboard. At the same time, I had to adapt to the class' general level of English, and take this into consideration during the implementation of the didactic unit. Finally, I want to specify that the use of smartphones by students was permitted by the school, teacher, and families, as most of them were under aged.

The adapted Didactic Unit

The main aim of this didactic unit, was to introduce the theme of social media in a more entertaining and interactive way, by asking students to participate and give their opinions, and allowing them to use their smartphone devices in different occasions during the unit to practise diverse skills, especially Speaking, in order to prepare for the final communicative task.

In doing this, I had to adapt the unit that came within the Student's Book they were using, which was Unit 8 *Everybody's Business?* from Burlington Books' *Contrast* for 1st year of Bachillerato, and change the theme into *Social Networkings*. Since I wanted them to learn updated information and facts about social media, I chose to not use the book that much, since the majority of the unit's content was outdated.

For this, I prepared *Google Drive* presentations to work different aspects that appeared in the original unit, but adapting them for the class in order to be more appealing, dynamic, and communicative. Communicative because this adaptation meant that students had to participate and give their opinion orally, so as to practise the skill of Speaking during the didactic unit and for the final activity. Therefore, I decided to use my own presentations for the introduction and the vocabulary related to Social Media, the grammar including the Relative Pronouns and the Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses, and the writing about how to give an Opinion Essay.

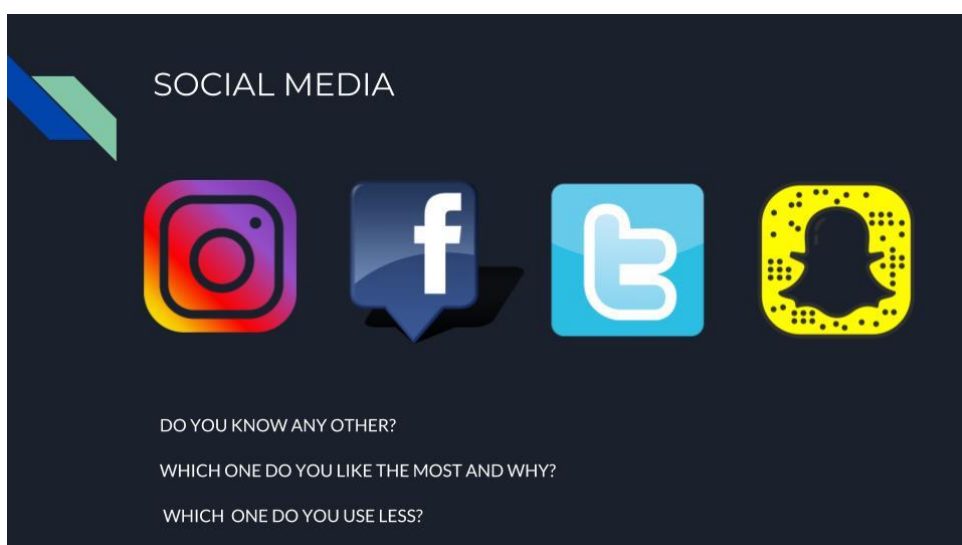
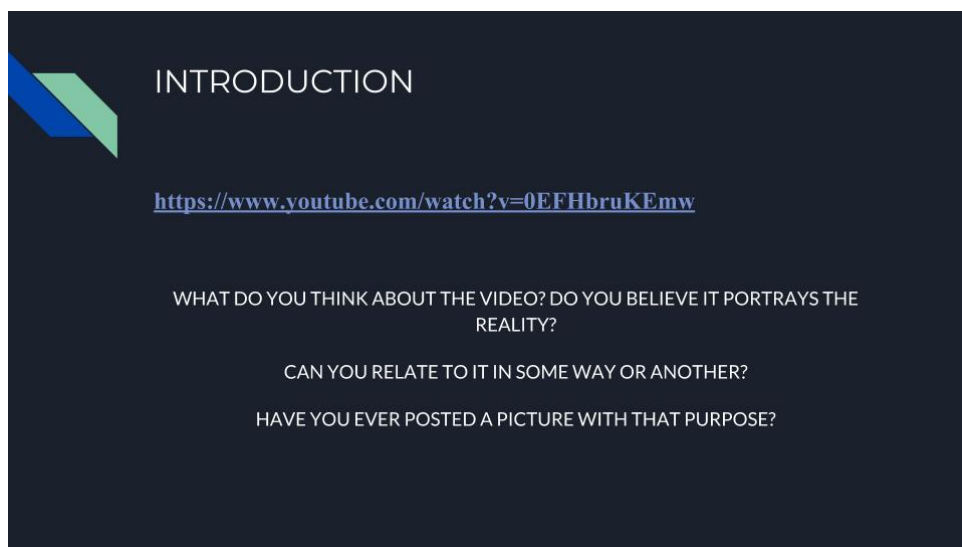
Nevertheless, in the case of reading and pronunciation, I used the Student's Book. The content of the reading was about general privacy issues and it was necessary for them to know those facts for their final activity in case they were going to mention some of them.

During all these presentations, first, I included a video or did a brainstorming for students to participate orally, which allowed me to notice their previous knowledge. Since it was a topic that attracted their attention, the majority of students, even those who were not motivated before, started little by little to give their opinion, participate, and ask doubts.

After finishing with each presentation, I always handled them photocopies of exercises and activities to practise what we saw that day in class (see Appendix). For this, sometimes they had to get into pairs and do some of the oral activities together in order

to practise the skill of Spoken interaction, while other times, they had to give me their opinion individually. When doing the activities, they could use their smartphones to check for the meaning of words using online dictionaries or diverse applications, excepting the case of specific vocabulary exercises to revise previous content, where their use was not allowed.

The pictures below show some examples of two slides on how I prepared the *Google Drive* presentation for the introductory lesson, so that students could get involved and speak about what they thought about the video, and do a brainstorming talking about the social media they liked to use.



From the beginning, students were informed that it was permitted to use the mobile phones during class, but always with an educational purpose, due to the fact that the unit was about social media, and also because they needed to practise using an ICT device, in this case a smartphone. Moreover, after introducing all the necessary vocabulary regarding social media, students were recommended to change the language of their social media accounts from Spanish into English in order to practise each time they logged in. This would allow them to get used to the new terms in English, which would help them when doing the final activity.

In the case of the listening, I did not use the one that came within the Student's Book because it was not that much associated with students' real context. Instead, I wanted them to listen to a listening about the history of emoticons/emoji. Before doing the listening I asked them to participate by talking about their favourite emoji, which ones they used less or more, the misconception about some of them etc.

As always at the end, I handed them a photocopy with exercises to answer and also added an activity where the whole class had to talk and decide on the meaning of some emoticons in English. Below are some examples of the emoji they had to guess.



After having worked the theme of *Social Networking* in class during two weeks and a half, this time from a more interactive and communicative point of view, students had the sufficient knowledge to start elaborating their final activity.

Final communicative activity/project

The final communicative activity consisted on doing an oral presentation in front of the class by presenting a picture board about one specific social media that students have previously elaborated. During the elaboration of the picture boards, the class was divided in groups of four members. Each group had to choose one social networking between *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Snapchat* or *Twitter*. From the beginning, they had to work cooperatively with their other classmates, since they needed to decide who was

going to talk about the history of the chosen social media, while the rest three remaining members had to speak of famous people they followed on that specific social networking.

Regarding the history of each social media, students had to find when was the social network created and by whom, the place where it originated, the principal features and functions, the number of active users, the privacy settings and more aspects that they considered relevant. Only one member of the group was going to speak about this as a way of introducing the social media on the day of the presentation. In the case of the three members that had to talk about famous people, they needed to include general information about them, such as name and age, place of origin, why they were famous for, why did they followed them, etc. by giving their opinion. For this, they could also log in their own social media accounts and search for the famous people's profiles in order to obtain more information.

When elaborating the picture board, it was fundamental for each member of the group to use the smartphone during classes in order for them to work cooperatively when putting everything in common.

Each group had the freedom to structure, write and decorate the picture boards as they wished. They could include photographs of famous people, write using felt-tip pens, permanent markers, coloured pencils or crayons, add or draw the logo of the chosen social network, or provide links of interesting videos related to their content. The process of elaborating the boards took two sessions of 50 minutes for both groups.

Once done that, each group presented their picture boards in front of their other classmates speaking during ten minutes (two and a half minutes each member) about the history of the social media, and about who were the people they liked to follow and why. In this case, both groups also needed two sessions to finish their oral presentations. At the end of each presentation, the other students could ask the group any question related to the elaboration of their picture board, the overall content, or other interesting facts about the social media in question. The final boards were exposed and hanged in class as a way for students to see that their work is valued, and also to motivate them for the oncoming units they were going to work on.

The main aim of this final communicative project was to get students accustomed to speak in front of the public by expressing their opinion properly about a topic that was

interesting for them, using the smartphone as an ICT tool to search for relevant information.

The photograph below shows the final picture boards about social media that each group presented exposed in the class.



Assessment Criterion and Competences

In order to evaluate these final oral presentations, I chose the criterion number 3 and 5 of the Canarian Curriculum of 1st year of Bachillerato of Primera Lengua Extranjera. The criterion number 3 corresponds to the communicative activities and strategies of “Producción de textos orales: expresión e interacción” from the Curriculum, and at the same time it corresponds to the Common European Framework of References for Languages’ Productive/production strategies, which includes the skill of Speaking. Criterion number 5 corresponds to the same communicative activities and strategies as criterion number 3, but in this case the student is assessed as a strategic user, whereas in criterion number 3, the user is evaluated as a social agent.

Within the description of the criterion number 3, the Curriculum refers to the importance of using ICTs in preparing and expressing oral productions:

Con todo ello, se persigue constatar que el alumnado es capaz de aplicar sus conocimientos sobre elementos lingüísticos de uso habitual y menos común y de emplear de forma responsable recursos tradicionales y las TIC para producir textos orales monológicos en los que sigue unas pautas de organización, y en los que da instrucciones o soluciones a problemas prácticos, y comunica conocimientos concretos o abstractos sobre otras materias, o sobre asuntos generales o de su interés. (102)

In relation to the corresponding competences worked in class and which are applied in both criteria, these are the following:

- The Linguistic competence was practised along the whole didactic unit when students tried to speak in English most of the time by participating during classes, expressing their thoughts and opinions, intervening to correct exercises, etc. Obviously, the linguistic competence was also worked when students did their final communicative task, that is the oral presentation.

- The Digital competence was practised by allowing students to use their smartphones to log in the different social media accounts and search for information about what they were going to say during the presentation.

- The Social and Civic competences were developed when students had to learn how to work in groups, distribute the tasks, organise themselves, and respecting each other's points of view and turn to talk when presenting the picture board.

- The Learning to learn competence was little by little acquired when students had to search and select valid information by themselves using their smartphones, structuring the picture board in order to write the different aspects in the right place, etc.

- Finally, the Sense of Initiative and entrepreneurship was practised when students had to implicate themselves with the work, by choosing who was going to talk about each aspect, proving their initiative when presenting, and trying to elaborate the best picture board.

The assessment of students has also been evaluated through daily rubrics where we observed if students worked during the class time by using their smartphone adequately, if they organised themselves, helped each other when needed, and interacted by speaking in English.

3.2.4. Suggested activities

One of the activities that I prepared for students after finishing the didactic unit, was a *Kahoot!* quiz¹⁴ with questions related to the whole content that we had seen along the unit. This could have been done in class without any problem because all the students had a smartphone with available data, and also because the class was equipped with basic ICTs like a desktop computer with access to Internet via cable, a projector, and speakers. Unfortunately, due to the lack of time, I did not have the possibility to do the quiz with the students in class.

Other option that would increase the use of ICT, would be that instead of elaborating the picture boards manually, students could do a *Prezi* or *PowerPoint* presentation to explain the rest of the class the history of their chosen social media and the people they like to follow. This would have also allowed them to insert links to *YouTube* videos related to their social network and be able to see them in class. Nevertheless, it was going to be difficult for students to get into groups and do a *Prezi* presentation in the computer laboratory as the great majority of computers do not function, or do it at home, since not all of them own a laptop or PC with Internet connection.

Other activity that students could do in order to practise the skill of Spoken interaction, would be to invite the students from 1st year of Bachillerato A to see the picture boards of the other group and comment on each one as if they were attending an exposition, and vice versa. The group that receives the other one, would be in charge of explaining the social media they have chosen and the famous people they like to follow to their other classmates. This would allow students to interact with each other and speak about their interests not only to their own class and teacher, but also to other students from other groups.

Finally, a great way to assess students' grade of satisfaction with the teaching methodology used for the unit, would be to do an anonymous questionnaire using *Google Forms* by combining Likert scales with closed questions in order to later analyse and see the results. The questionnaire would help teachers to see students' opinion regarding the use of smartphones as an ICT tool to search for information inside the class, the

¹⁴ Link to the *Kahoot!* quiz that I have previously prepared: <https://play.kahoot.it/#/?quizId=21e555d7-8c3c-4780-8164-5279ad8f409b>.

permission to log in their own social media accounts, or to use *Google Drive* presentations and videos instead of following the Student's Book in printed or digitalised version. The questionnaire would serve to analyse how students prefer to learn English as a foreign language, either by using a more conventional method, or by communicating and participating actively in class.

4. Conclusion

As explained during this dissertation, Information and communication technologies have revolutionised all areas and domains around the world, including of course, that of education. ICTs have developed with the passing of time and have significantly grown in number. However, as explained in this paper, even though ICTs are nowadays more predominant than ever, there are still Secondary schools that are not equipped enough with these technologies. This may be due to various reasons, but the truth is that, as stated on many occasions throughout this paper, even if the school has the most basic ICTs tools available, these tend to be neglected and used only by the teacher. This produces a lack of motivation by part of the students since there exists an imbalance in terms that, if the great majority of people uses technological devices almost every single day for doing different activities, why this is not applied within the educational field as well.

ICTs have both its benefits and impediments. An excessive and uncontrolled use of them would just bring problems during class time. Nonetheless, during the implementation of my didactic unit and final activity, I can say that students engaged themselves more in the teaching-learning process and participated to a greater extent in the discussions and debates that originated in class by just showing them a video and ask for their opinion. Instead, when making use of the Student's Books and asking them to read and listen to aspects that were not close to their real context, they did not show the same motivation. The same occurred with the use of smartphones.

After doing my internship, and having the opportunity to teach within a real context and observe how students react when using different teaching methodologies, I believe that it is not convenient to completely prohibit the use of smartphones in class - least with Bachillerato students- as they are adolescents and like to use all types of social media to follow or interact with other people. Although many teachers tend to control each movement their students do when these have their smartphones at hand, it would be better to change the mind-set and include them in the teaching methodology. First, if they are using their smartphone instead of paying attention to the lesson, it is mainly because the lesson does not motivate them sufficiently enough, or because its content is taught in a way that does not allow the student to react and actively engage with the subject. Second, since this generation of students has grown up by using such technological devices almost daily, it is essential to also include them in class, always with educational

purposes such as those mentioned during the paragraphs of this dissertation. In this way, students would get more involved as they know how to use such devices, and they would experience the feeling of learning a foreign language without the pressure of hiding them all the time.

Even though, I did not have the sufficient time to handle them a questionnaire and know their opinion, I asked them if they enjoyed learning by implementing such devices along the lessons. Their answer was positive and the majority of them agreed that this method is far more engaging because they are tired to still having to ‘stick’ to their Student’s Books and Workbooks every single academic year. Also, they felt motivated because, as I mentioned above, the topic of social media catches their attention and they like to know more.

Finally, I would conclude by stating that is important to implement ICTs in EFL learning, and even more nowadays, but always without making an excessive use of them. Students need to practise with books as well, not only be experts in using just technology. Therefore, I believe that the best way would be to implement ICTs and printed materials in conjunction, but most importantly, teach updated, interesting, useful, and realistic content for students to enjoy by learning, and as a way to prepare them for their future.

5. List of Acronyms

AVR: Audio Visual Reception

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

CD: Compact Disc

CD-ROM: Compact Disc Read-Only Memory

CEFRL: Common European Framework of References for Languages

CNN: Cable News Network

DVD: Digital Video Disc

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESO: Educación Secundaria Obligatoria

ESL: English as a Second Language

IBM: International Business Machines Corporation

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IES: Instituto de Educación Secundaria

LCD: Liquid-crystal Display

LMS: Learning Management System

MALL: Mobile Assisted Language Learning

MCER: Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas

MMORPG: Massively multiplayer online role-playing game

PEC: Proyecto Educativo del Centro

PC: Personal Computer

TED: Technology, Entertainment, Design

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USB: Universal Serial Bus

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APPENDIX

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL MEDIA VOCABULARY

1. Match the following words to their corresponding definitions.

Account Username Password Log in Log out News Feed Post (noun)

Search Bar Friend Request Notification Profile Timeline

Cover Photo Feed (noun) Filter Caption Snap Lenses Hashtag

Follower

1. These are used to integrate with a user's face to create entertaining animations and overlays that enhance a user's Snaps	
2. A message that is automatically sent to you to tell you there has been activity on one of your social media accounts, for example, when someone has commented on something you have written on Facebook	
3. To connect a computer to a computer system by typing your name, so that you can start working	
4. A rectangular space used to type a name or username in order to find a person, a page, etc.	
5. A tool for creating special effects on an image	
6. A word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media websites and applications, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic	
7. An identification used by a person with access to a computer, network, or online service	
8. It is constantly updating list of stories in the middle of your Facebook homepage. It helps you to see the most	

interesting stories from the friends you interact with the most	
9. Information about a person's life, work, interests, etc. on a social networking website	
10. Something you send to a person on a social media or social networking website to be their friend	
11. To stop using a computer system or program by giving a particular instruction	
12. The part of a social media (in this case, Facebook) website where items that have been added by you, or that relate to you, are shown	
13. The basic unit of content on Snapchat. It can be a video or a picture captured and shared on this app	
14. A long photo you can place at the top of your timeline	
15. An arrangement by which a user is given personalized access to a computer, website, or application, typically by entering a username and password	
16. A piece of writing, image, or other item of content published online, typically on a blog or social media website or application	
17. The first thing you will see after signing into this app. It contains all of the recent images that have been posted by people you are following	
18. A string of characters that allows access to a computer system or service	
19. A title or brief explanation accompanying a posted photo	
20. Someone who chooses to see a particular person's posts (= messages) on Twitter	

- Get in pairs and talk about a memorable, funny, or embarrassing experience you have had on social media (e.g. a friend who once posted an unattractive photo of you). Try to use as many of the words above as possible. Then, you will have to tell the rest of the class about what your classmate has told you.