EXPLORING THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES DONE BY A TEACHER OF ENGLISH IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL OF CARTAGO (VALLE)

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CARTAGO (VALLE)

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Introduction........................................................................................................................................... 1
2. Statement of the problem.......................................................................................................................... 3
3. Research questions................................................................................................................................... 9
  3.1 Research objectives............................................................................................................................... 9
    3.1.1 General objective .......................................................................................................................... 9
    3.1.2 Specific objectives ......................................................................................................................... 9
4. Theoretical framework............................................................................................................................ 10
  4.1 Information and communication technologies (ict) ........................................................................... 10
  4.2 Impact of ict in education .................................................................................................................. 11
  4.3 ICT in efl .......................................................................................................................................... 15
5. Literature review...................................................................................................................................... 17
6. Methodology .......................................................................................................................................... 21
  6.1 Type of study ....................................................................................................................................... 21
  6.2 Context ............................................................................................................................................... 21
  6.3 Setting ................................................................................................................................................ 22
  6.4 Participants ......................................................................................................................................... 22
  6.5 Researchers’ role ............................................................................................................................... 23
  6.6 Data collection methods ..................................................................................................................... 23
    6.6.1 Observations ............................................................................................................................... 24
    6.6.2 Interviews .................................................................................................................................. 24
    6.6.3 Surveys ....................................................................................................................................... 24
  6.7 Data analysis ....................................................................................................................................... 25
7. Findings and discussion .......................................................................................................................... 26
  7.1 The use of ict as a substitute of the board or the printed materials ..................................................... 26
  7.2 Students’ attitudes affected by the type of activity done. ................................................................... 29
  7.3 Unexpected findings ............................................................................................................................ 32
    7.3.1 Computer, cell phones and internet as the ict tools more used by students ................................. 33
    7.3.2 Autonomous use of ict with academic purposes ....................................................................... 35
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Pedagogical implications</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Research implications</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Limitations of the study</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>References</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research project were to explore the uses of ICT by an English teacher from Cartago, Valle as well as the students’ perceptions toward the use of ICT in the English classroom.

Two guiding questions were posed for the study: “What are the uses of ICT done by a teacher of English in the EFL classroom?” And “What are the students’ attitudes and perceptions towards the use of ICT in their English classes?”

The participants were selected after carrying out a preliminary survey among Cartago teachers from official and private schools, the results of which left us with a single candidate teacher for the study. The results of the preliminary survey are presented in the first part of this study.

A qualitative research approach was implemented and main methods for data collection were observations and interviews.

The study points towards the following findings: the teacher uses ICT as a substitute of the board or the printed materials, the students’ attitudes are affected by the type of activity done, the computer, cell phones and Internet are the ICT tools more used by students and there appears to be an autonomous use of ICT on the part of the students for academic purposes.

The results of our study highlight the importance for teachers and teacher training programs of being realistic about the possibilities opened by the use of ICT in the English classroom and the need of planning carefully that use in order avoid demotivating students. The study also shows the relevance for teachers to explore the access to digital technologies and devices at home and take advantage of it for enhancing the acquisition of the language.

In relation with further research, our work points towards the importance of carrying out studies in relation with the uses of ICT done by in service teachers in order to help design educational policies that may help them implement effective activities and uses of technologies to support language learning.

Key words: ICT, attitudes, perceptions.
RESUMEN

Los propósitos de este proyecto de investigación eran explorar los usos de las TIC por parte de un profesor de Inglés de Cartago, Valle, así como las percepciones de los estudiantes hacia el uso de las TIC en el salón de inglés.

Dos preguntas guías fueron planteadas para el estudio: ¿Cuáles son los usos realizados de las TIC por un profesor de Inglés en el aula de clases? y ¿Cuáles son las actitudes y percepciones de los estudiantes hacia el uso de TIC en la clase de Inglés?

Los participantes fueron seleccionados después de llevar a cabo un estudio preliminar entre los profesores de los colegios públicos y privados de Cartago. Dichos resultados nos dejaron con un profesor candidato para el estudio. Los resultados de la encuesta preliminar fueron presentados en la primera parte de este estudio.

Se implementó el enfoque de investigación cualitativa y los métodos principales de recolección de datos fueron las observaciones y las entrevistas.

Los resultados de nuestro estudio destacan la importancia para los profesores y los programas de capacitación de profesores de ser realistas en cuanto a las posibilidades abiertas por el uso de las TIC en la clase de inglés así como la necesidad de planear cuidadosamente ese uso para evitar la desmotivación de los estudiantes. El estudio también muestra la relevancia para los profesores de explorar el acceso a las tecnologías los dispositivos digitales en el hogar y aprovecharlos para mejorar la adquisición del idioma extranjero que los estudiantes aprenden.

En relación con nuevos trabajos, nuestro trabajo apunta hacia la realización de estudios sobre usos de las TIC hechas por los profesores en servicio para ayudar a diseñar políticas educativas que puedan ayudarlos a implementar actividades efectivas y usar las tecnologías para apoyar el aprendizaje de idiomas.

Palabras claves: TIC, actitudes, percepciones
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To God,
We would like to thank God for guiding and accompanying us to the right path, for his spiritual support and for teaching us the value of friendship and commitment.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Information and Communication Technologies have become an essential part in people’s lives, transforming almost every aspect in the way we see the world. That transformation is affecting economic, educational, political and cultural issues, allowing in this manner, communication between people from all over the world, a flow of information of all kinds, entertainment, and many possibilities to explore other lives and cultures.

In learning and teaching a foreign language, ICT have brought the eventuality to change the ways teachers and learners have access to data, materials, information, news, etc. That is why teachers, knowing all the potential that ICT may bring to the process of English language learning and teaching must incorporate technologies to support their pedagogical practices and then change the way students see world.

This study aimed at exploring the use of ICT by EFL teachers in schools from Cartago, Valle. With this general purpose, the researchers attempted to find how an EFL teacher use ICT in the classroom, and what are the students’ perceptions towards the use of ICT.

The first chapter of this study presents the statement of the problem as well as the research questions that will guide this investigation: What are the uses of ICT done by a teacher of English in the EFL classroom? And, what are the students’ attitudes and perceptions towards the use of ICT in their English classes?

Significant concepts about ICT and their uses in educational contexts are presented in chapter II, where the theoretical framework of this research is described. A variety of studies that contributed to the present research project is presented in the Literature Review chapter.

In chapter IV we described the process of data collection and analysis, expressing that this is a qualitative research that explores social phenomena as they occur naturally. In this particularly study, an English teacher was observed and some students were interviewed in order to understand the phenomena from the participants.
The findings that emerge from the data analysis are revealed in chapter V along with some unexpected findings. In this part of the study, the results showed that the teacher uses ICT as a substitute of the board or the printed materials and that the students’ attitudes are affected by the type of the activity done.

Finally, some research and pedagogical implications are presented as well as the limitations of the study. We highlighted the importance for teachers to explore their students’ access to digital technologies and devices at home, as they could provide learners with extra-class activities helping the process of learning a foreign language.
2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The fast growth of the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is changing our society, transforming almost every aspect of our lifestyle, such as the economy, educational, political, and cultural issues. Those changes allow people to communicate among themselves from all over the world, have access to all kinds of information, and opportunities to explore and know other cultures.

Computers, mobile phones, and the internet are among the ICT most commonly used and they provide services such as search engines (Google, Yahoo search), social networks (Facebook, Twitter), websites, online banking, and electronic commerce, which are used daily by millions of people. However, ICT are not only playing a relevant role in the issues already mentioned, they are also changing the pedagogical practices in Education, since they offer new tools for easy access to knowledge, resources, and information that could help in the process of teaching and learning. Kozma and Anderson (2002) claim that ICT are transforming education by introducing new curricula based on real-life problems, providing different tools to enhance learning, and giving students as well as teachers, more opportunities for feedback and reflection.

On the other hand, English is the most widespread international language, being an instrument of communication in the different fields of human development. English communicative competences are indispensable since the frequent development of the countries requires better communication among people and knowledge of other contexts in order to contribute to the development of the countries. In Colombia, it has been challenging for some students to develop their communicative competences in English language, since in a monolingual country it is difficult to perceive the real usefulness of the language as well as to find English-native speakers with whom to interact and real models of the use of the language.

Consequently, the Colombian Ministry of Education has designed a program which reflects the country’s need to be part of globalization where the communication in a foreign language is a requirement its citizens should develop. This program, called “National Bilingual Program” seeks to improve students’ and teachers’ English communicative competences to
promote the insertion of people in the development of the countries. It also includes new standards of communicative competence in foreign languages: English, using the Common European Framework as a national and international reference to increase communicative competence in the educational system and strengthen national competitiveness. Medina (2012).

Therefore, ICT could help in the improvement of those communicative competences that students need to develop as a requirement to be proficient in the language. With the proper use of ICT, students could enter the real world of the language that is being learned and have opportunities for interaction with other speakers and even EFL learners. Internet and computers for instance, can facilitate the teachers obtain resources for their classes and increase students’ motivation since they can be more in contact with the innovations and current issues in the professional field. As Garoia (2010) says, “students find more pleasant, more appealing, and more motivating to study with computers than with traditional means”. The author also considers relevant to highlight the importance of educational activities regarding computers since they can have a positive impact on motivation and habits study, in the course of years. In addition, students could approach the reality of the target language through the use of chats, social networks, video conferences, listening materials such as podcasts, songs, and a variety of real tools related to all their interests.

For that reason, the integration of the ICT in the educational practices is promoted by different institutions and organizations that defend their potentiality to support the learning processes of students. An example of them is the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), who believe in the power of ICT to help improve learning. The UNESCO seeks to motivate teachers in the use of ICT helping the students to use them in order to foster autonomy and to be a source of ongoing development for the community and citizens who may be involved in the building society of the XXI century.

At a national level, the importance of including ICT in the teaching and learning processes is emphasized by the Colombian Education Ministry through the General Education Act (Act 115 of 1994 updated in 2012) which includes specific references concerning the adoption of technology as part of the aims of education, and as a requirement in the processes of
national development. Moreover, Colombia has created The Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (MinTIC) whose mission is to design, develop, adopt and promote policies, plans, programs and projects in the ICT area, taking into account the Constitution and laws.

The Ministry of ICT provides a quarterly report on the state of the ICT area in the country, highlighting the number of broadband connections, Internet subscribers, and connectivity services. In the beginning of the year 2013, the report revealed that Colombia is on track in terms of connectivity, presenting an increase of 180% in Internet connection, making 7 million 256 thousand users compared to the previous year.

Conscious of the necessity for the integration of ICT in every circle of life, Colombian cities are also taking steps in order to improve the Educational sector with all the potential that ICT provide to the community. The city of Cartago for example, has a program called “Vive Digital Valle del Cauca” which aims to facilitate access to ICT for citizens and educational institutions. In the same line, considering the benefits that ICT bring to the classroom, the University of La Sabana has designed tools such as Virtual Sabana where students and teachers could have virtual classes through the use of forums.

However, despite the interest of international, national and local educational institutions to help citizens include and appropriate ICT, there are few studies in Colombia that reflect the use of ICT done by English teachers in their pedagogical practices. The exploration of the state or the art about this issue in our country, revealed just a few studies about the use of web-based activities and software applications for EFL learning during the last year.

This scarcity of research studies in relation to the use of ICT by English teachers in our context motivated us to carry out a survey among this population in the city of Cartago that showed interesting data in relation with the use of ICT done by them to support their classes. When questioned about their experience and use of ICT both for personal and teaching purposes, the teachers answered along the following lines:
All the fifteen teachers affirmed to use ICT at home; however 66.7% of them (10 English teachers) said that they use ICT in their classrooms as complementary tools to support the process of teaching the language. As it can be seen, there is a 32.3% of teachers that, although being users of technologies for private purposes do not seem to have found the usefulness of implementing their use with pedagogical intention.

When asked about the specific technologies they use in the classroom, a diverse set, both software and hardware, was chosen by the English teachers. In this part of the survey, it was found that computers, PowerPoint, television, and web-pages were the technologies with the highest percentage of use; in contrast the e-mail, Facebook, video-recorders, and radio were the technologies with the lowest percentage of use.

It called our attention that although Colombia has almost 17 million (40% of the population) users of Facebook\(^1\), a significant quantity, only 20% of the English teachers surveyed in this study affirms to use this social network in order to teach the language. The same happens with the e-mail, which being a very popular and simple tool with 6.5 million of Colombian users, is only employed for academic purposes by a 33.3% of the participants.

Something similar happens with radios and video recorders, which are used only by 6.7% and 13.3% respectively of the teachers who answered the survey.

\(^1\)Statistic values reported by Social bakers, a marketing developer for the analysis of social networks.http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/colombia
Exploring the use of Information and Communication Technologies done by a teacher of English in a private school of Cartago (Valle)

The following graphic chart shows the use of technologies done by the surveyed teachers.

In the survey, 53% of the participants pointed out that they had received courses on the use of ICT, and out of them, a 33% had been trained on the integration of ICT in the classroom. Despite this fact, 67% of the participants integrate ICT in their classes. It is remarkable that although there was a 46.7% of participants whose institutions supported or allowed the use of ICT, just 20% felt pressure from the institutions or other colleagues to use ICT.

This survey drew interesting and surprising findings about the relationship between training and use of ICT. After analyzing the data, it could be noticed that some teachers affirmed to use
ICT for pedagogical purposes even though they had not received any training. It is the case of T6, T8, T9 and T10. In contrast, there were other teachers who having received appropriate qualification did not employ technology to support their teaching as was the case of T2 and T5. The latter even affirms in the survey that he feels some pressure from the professional environment to use ICT, but despite it, he still does not do it.

Finally, it seems curious the case of T1, who even though did not received training and was in a school which did not promote or facilitate the use of ICT, affirmed that he used the e-mail with the students and recommended them websites for language learning.

These results gave raise to our interest to investigate more in depth how English teachers use ICT to support their pedagogical practices facilitating the improvement of students’ competences in the language. However, since informal inspections of the schools in which the teachers surveyed were working showed that some of them did not count with the minimal technical equipment necessary to carry out the practices they described, the researchers decided to focus on one particular teacher, whose institution actually had technological devices and study the uses that this particular teacher did of them in his classes.

In order to guide this research project, the following questions were proposed:
1. What are the uses of ICT done by a teacher of English in the EFL classroom?
2. What are the students’ attitudes and perceptions towards the use of ICT in their English classes?

It is expected that the present research will benefit the educational institutions and the future teachers of English since it will contribute with information about the uses of ICT in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language as well as about the student’s perception and attitudes towards their use.
3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to explore the impact of Information and Communication Technologies in EFL classrooms, we pose the following research question:

1. What are the uses of ICT done by a teacher of English in the EFL classroom?
2. What are the students’ attitudes and perceptions towards the use of ICT in their English classes?

3.1 Research objectives

3.1.1 General Objective

Identify, analyze and describe the different uses of ICT in the classroom by an EFL teacher to support his pedagogical practices, as well as the student’s perceptions and attitudes towards the use of ICT.

3.1.2 Specific Objectives

Observe what kind of ICT the teacher commonly used to support his classes.
Observe and analyze students’ reactions when the teacher integrates ICT in the classes.
4. Theoretical Framework

In order to learn about our research topic, give theoretical support to our work, design our study and finally understand the importance of the findings, the researchers of this project explored the term Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), since it is a wide term that embraces many technologies and applications. It is relevant for the readers to know what ICT mean if they want to understand the focus of this study.

We also consider necessary to explore the impact of ICT in the field of education and finally to focus on their possibilities for teaching English as a foreign language in order to understand their importance for enhancing language learning. In relation with the later aspect, we will present the ICT most commonly used by teachers, since it is relevant to know which technologies are being used nowadays in the classroom and the way they are being used if we want to explore new strategies to strengthen students learning.

4.1 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The importance of understanding Information and Communication Technologies is fundamental for the development of this study, as some technologies such as the computer, the internet and the video-beam are part of this investigation.

ICT have become an essential part of everyday life for many people in the world. These technologies are growing in importance and it is predictable that this trend will remain, up to the point that ICT will become a requisite in most people’s work as well as in their social, educational and personal lives.

There are many definitions of ICT, however, in this study, the term ICT is defined in the line of the educational field as we are focused on the use of technologies in English as a Foreign Language learning and teaching.

Cobo (2009) quotes the definition of ICT provided by Fundación Telefónica (2007) and
explains that ICT are the technologies needed to process, manage, create, modify, store, protect and retrieve information. ICT are an essential element of the information society to have access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge.

ICT have undergone a fast evolution in the last decade and particularly in the last years we have passed from considering a music player and a slide projector as cutting edge technologies to seeing them replaced by computers, tablets, ipods, video beams, digital boards and an endless list of resources that can be used by anyone with a computer and internet as for instance websites, video and sound recorders in the cloud, video channels, applications for video calls, and a number of other inventions that are not only much more portable but also bring abundant possibilities for education and language learning.

Cobo (2009) points out that there must be a close relationship between learning, knowledge generation, continuous innovation and use of new technologies. In this sense, it was relevant for us to know the contributions that ICT have brought to the teaching and learning of EFL.

Although the term ICT refer to an enormous variety of technologies, its use is increasingly identified by the use of computers, applications, and internet. Therefore, those technologies will be the scope of the term in this investigation.

4.2 Impact of ICT in Education

In the educational context, ICT can enrich the results of students’ learning processes by increasing their motivation, facilitating attractive activities in the classroom, offering easy access to new and more updated interesting resources, developing their autonomy, changing the traditional teaching-centered approaches and promoting the efficiency in the way students learn. As Cobo & Moravec (2011) affirm, in this context teachers must acquire skills that allow them to build learning communities genuinely inclusive, where every student has a space to give the best of themselves. The authors also highlight that there is a growing recognition of the potential that internet and related information and communication technologies are bringing to
education, such as electronic games, which play an important role for learning.

However, different benefits and limitations arise when using ICT for educational purposes. Haddad & Draxler (2002) provide us with a chart that describes the advantages and limitations of various technological resources widely used in education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web page</td>
<td>• Dynamic and easy modified</td>
<td>• Hyperlinks enable non sequential navigation</td>
<td>• No sequential structure may obscure critical information or cause confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hyperlinks enable non sequential navigation</td>
<td>• Low cost of development and very low publishing costs</td>
<td>• Reading may cause fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low cost of development and very low publishing costs</td>
<td>• Supports interactivity (e.g. navigation, user entered information, etc.)</td>
<td>• Requires PC, electricity, connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can support assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Potential additional system requirements (e.g. Java, plugins)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>Printed photos, maps, and schematic drawing</td>
<td>• Concrete, specific, detailed information</td>
<td>• Low information value relative to text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concrete, specific, detailed information</td>
<td>• Appropriate for learners with “visual intelligence”</td>
<td>• Resistant to reuse by learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concrete, specific, detailed information</td>
<td>• Engaging and motivating for many learners</td>
<td>• “Visual literacy” skills required for best use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Affordances similar to printed photos</td>
<td>• Easily copied, shared, and used</td>
<td>• High cost to reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low costs for reproduction and publishing</td>
<td>• Can be data-based or Web-served for delivery to handheld computers and other “anytime, anywhere” devices</td>
<td>• Limitations similar to printed photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can be data-based or Web-served for delivery to handheld computers and other “anytime, anywhere” devices</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Require PC and electricity, possibly an Internet connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>• Can present contemporary and topical information easily</td>
<td>• Information is not durable; learners can’t “review” a broadcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can present contemporary and topical information easily</td>
<td>• Highly accessible and potentially engaging format (no literacy skills required)</td>
<td>• Poor presentation of complex concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can present contemporary and topical information easily</td>
<td></td>
<td>• No visual component (e.g.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Digital audio (Web- and CD based) | • Widespread adoption in developing countries  
• Moderate production costs  
• Highly scalable  
• Low-cost hardware  

schematics, maps, photos)  

• Synchronous form requires system-wide coordination (e.g. announcements, class schedules, etc.)  
| Digital audio (Web- and CD based) | • Can present contemporary and topical information easily (Web)  
• Information is durable (e.g. it can be reviewed many times)  
• Medium is durable  
• Moderate production costs  
• Low reproduction costs; easily scaled  
• Easily catalogued and reused (by developers and users)  
• Can be indexed or catalogued to enable nonsequential access  

• Requires robust PC and/or high-speed Internet connection  
• High storage “overhead” (in terms of hard drive capacity)  
• May not support presentation of complex concepts  
| Video | Analog | • Highly accessible and potentially engaging format (no literacy skills required)  
• Sequential structure guides learner  
• Concrete, specific, detailed information  
• Appropriate for learners with “visual intelligence”  
• Engaging and motivating for many learners  
• Moderate hardware costs  

• High production costs; moderate reproduction costs  
• Complex information may be difficult to present effectively  
• Information may prove difficult for some learners to analyze/synthesize  
| Broadcast | • Same as analog video  
• Can present contemporary or topical information easily  

• Same as analog video; however, costs may be higher  
| Digital (Web and CD-based) | • Same as analog video  
• Can present contemporary or topical information easily  
• Easily catalogued and reused (by developers and users)  

• Same as analog video  
• Requires robust PC and/or high-speed Internet connection  
• High storage “overhead” (in terms of hard drive capacity)  

13
When comparing both, advantages and limitations, we can see that ICT may provide us with abundant benefits for the process of teaching and learning, although the costs of these devices and applications are one of the difficulties that teachers and students must face in order to use them for academic purposes. Nevertheless, today the costs of those technological resources are decreasing and they are becoming more accessible by all people.

In spite of all the advantages and benefits that ICT bring to education the expected results are not being achieved. Coll (2008) remarked in his study “Aprender y enseñar con las TIC: expectativas, realidad y potencialidades” that these results emerge since there are huge differences among countries in aspects about the incorporation of ICT in Education. While many countries have total equipment of technologies in their classrooms, there are some others that still lack that possibility. The same author says that another factor that affects the results when using ICT for educational purposes is that even when there is equipment that guarantees access to ICT, teachers and students often make limited and no innovative use of these technologies. These powerful technologies often end up being used as word processors and applications that reinforce existing educational practices rather than to transform them. (Cuban, 2003, p. 1/6.)
4.3 ICT in EFL

EFL teachers have started to realize the appeal that the employment of ICT has for their students as well as their possibilities for significant progress in language learning and teaching. The UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (2004) lists some of the most common technological resources used in language learning and teaching, such as audio devices, television, radio-podcast, video, cell phones, computers and internet as well as tablets, touch screens, speech recognition, and video-projectors.

One of the problems that language teachers must confront in their classes is the lack of motivation of the students since they see the possibility of using it in real life as something remote, the teaching is done in many cases with decontextualized resources, and the study time is limited; nonetheless the ICT could facilitate and promote a different learning atmosphere supporting the pedagogical practices by the teacher and the learning and motivation in the students.

In the specific field of English language teaching, Kalnina and Kangro (2007) emphasized in their study that the use of ICT in EFL classes helps students be more motivated to learn, as they find attractive and interesting to work with technologies, and they encourage them to stay on tasks for long periods of time. The authors also pointed out that ICT provide opportunities for cooperative learning by promoting the interaction among students and teachers.

Students have the possibilities to learn about other countries without leaving their home as technologies such as the radio, television, movies and the Internet may create bridges between cultures, thus making learning the language part of a cultural experience, (Jurish, 2001). Besides, teachers can plan language exercises in which they include multimedia and resources from different websites, real communication with students in other countries via e-mail, chat or video conference and participation in discussion forums.

As Soska (2004) affirms, teachers can apply technologies to help students learn academic content, to teach culture of other countries, for instructional testing and assessment, to develop
critical thinking skills; and to expand students’ speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

The subfield of teaching languages with technology is known as Computer Assisted Language Learning or CALL. Although the first steps in this field were reduced to the use of tutorials and grammatical exercises, nowadays the field has evolved to include all kind of activities for language learning supported in computers and internet.

The fact that many English language learners are computer users is prompting ESL teachers to think about using computers in their classes. In effect, many teachers find that the computer is an important part of the pedagogy when it serves as a tool in the classrooms, and use them for different purposes, among them, for presenting information.

Technology performs functions similar to what many teachers do in class and through textbooks, but the important difference is that CALL provides individualized interactive instruction unmatched by what can be provided in the classrooms. In fact, CALL materials allow learners to vary the amount of time they spend at task and may provide individualized interaction with the teacher, other peers or the programs, increasing in this way the possibilities for developing communicative competences in the foreign language.

Among the resources that we can mention are for instance reading applications that may present the learners expository or narrative texts, carefully chosen to adapt to their linguistic needs. This can be equally achieved by selecting video and multimedia materials for listening and speaking.
5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some studies related to the topics involved in this research study are presented in order to obtain an insight about what has already been found in the field of the Information and Communication Technologies for EFL learning and teaching.

Wong et al (2008) conducted a research study titled Insights into Innovative Classroom Practices with ICT: Identifying the Impetus for Change. The study, carried out in eight schools in Hong Kong and Singapore highlighted four trends in ICT implementation strategies were found: the technologically driven type, the pedagogically driven type, the balanced type, and the uncoupled type.

The researchers studied the impact of technological and pedagogical innovations as well as relevant contextual issues on teaching and learning on a sample of eight schools in Hong Kong and Singapore. In this investigation, observations of lessons and focused group interviews were implemented in order to collect the data.

One of the findings of this research study indicates that ICT make a positive impact on changing the teaching and learning processes in the classroom, passing from a teacher centered approach to a student-centered approach. However, the researchers affirmed that innovations in pedagogy must go together with technological innovations to transform teaching and learning. In relation with this issue, Wong et al (2008) stated:

“The use of ICT supports exploratory activities designed by teachers, and facilitates pupils to construct knowledge collaboratively and to express ideas. On the other hand, without a good progress in pedagogical innovations, technological innovations alone do not suffice to bring about innovative classroom practices with ICT”.

This study showed that teachers use technologies such as PowerPoint, Websites, Word processor, and applications in order to present information to the students about topics related to
the language, in that way, changing the teaching, as well as the learning practices in the classroom.

However, the researchers found in their study that there were schools in which despite of the use of ICT, the lessons were teacher-driven, and technology was used to simply reinforce a teacher-centered pedagogical approach.

This is a risk that must be considered when thinking about integrating technologies in the classroom. Despite all the technologies available and all the advantages that ICT may bring to education, especially to the field of EFL learning and teaching, the use of these tools without deep reflection on the purpose that they may serve can bring about teachers who are repeating exactly the old procedures, using a whole set of technological devices but still failing to be innovative in the classroom.

This perspective is confirmed by Coll (2004), who in his study “Aprender y enseñar con las TIC: expectativas, realidad y potencialidades”. This author carried out a bibliographical revision of research done in relation with the integration of these technologies (computers, digital devices and networks) in education and their effects on the processes of teaching and learning. This study showed that in general, teachers tend to adapt the use of ICT in their teaching, rather than in the students’ learning. In other words, the incorporation of ICT into classroom activities is not being a factor to transform and innovate in educational practices.

In relation to the students’ attitudes towards the use of technology in the classroom, Gay et al (2007) wanted to explore the attitudes and usage of ICT among undergraduate management students in Barbados. The participants of the study were 166 students in the Department of Management Studies at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies in Barbados. The researchers found that the participants’ overall attitudes towards the use of ICT were positive although they were reluctant to use technologies to replace traditional teaching experiences, because they valued highly the interaction with the teacher. The study also showed that male students were more willing to use ICT in web instruction than teaching activities and that older students were more attracted to using ICT for teaching activities. The researchers
concluded that it should be maintained “the high levels of ICT usage among students through continuous education and promotion of the benefits attached to ICT resources”. (page, 15)

In the same line, Siragusa & Dixon (2009) in their study “Planned behaviour: Student attitudes towards the use of ICT interactions in higher education”, wanted to determine the attitudes towards the use of ICT of a small sample of undergraduate teacher education students in a Western Australian University.

The researchers found that the majority of the participants had positive attitudes about integrating ICT in their studies and confirmed to the researchers that working with ICT was helpful, easy and pleasant for them. However, some students expressed, they felt anxiety and intimidation when incorporating ICT as part of the learning.

The researchers in this study found that student’s attitudes towards the use of ICT may be determined by the interaction between teachers and students, the methodology the teacher uses or the activities done by the teacher when incorporating ICT in his/her pedagogical practices.

Nowadays, students are more in contact with technology and their knowledge about computers, cellphones and internet is increasing day by day. This fact is also an important issue to take into account when teaching a foreign language as teachers could take advantages to develop other activities for learning.

The study “Youth and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)” published in the World Youth Report by the United Nations (2003), explored the characterizations of media culture from the perspective of young people as well as the links between youth and ICT. The report showed that in Finland and Japan, computers and cellphones were increasingly used by young people. The study was carried out in these countries because they were the earliest owners and users of information and communication technologies.

According to a survey done in the study, youth used the internet mainly to chat with their friends, to follow world events and to see musical videos. Computers were seen in this report as
one of the technologies that brings benefits to young people and children as they are living in an ICT revolution.

According to a survey done in the same study, youth used the internet mainly to chat with their friends, to follow world events and to see musical videos. Computers are seen in this report as one of the technologies that brings many benefits to young people and children as they are living in an ICT revolution. David Buckingham, a researcher on children’s and young people’s interactions with electronic media, and on media literacy education, is cited in this report as he affirms that computers offer new forms of learning and that children and young people are the ones who are more responsive to these new approaches of using the computer to develop creativity and desire to learn, developing as well their autonomy in their process of learning. United Nations (2003) considered that autonomous learning is significant, since it supports learners involve themselves with continuous knowledge and acquisition of new learning.

Finally, we would like to mention a study done by Mantikou, Liakou, and Economidou (2013) in a Greek primary school, in which the researchers investigated the possibility to promote autonomous learning, as a new learning paradigm through the use of Information and Communication Technologies. The findings of this study showed that students were motivated to use ICT for learning purposes. The participants used ICT to gather resources about concepts and units of curriculum subjects, as well as to apply or develop managerial skills. The participants in this study said that the main activities they did with the computer and internet were searching for information, social networks participation and communication. It was observed as well that students started to use the computer in order to learn new things, then they became autonomous in their process of learning.
6. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the process of data collection and analysis carried out with the purpose of investigating the ICT usage by a teacher in the English classroom as well as the attitudes and perceptions that students have towards the use of ICT in their process of learning the language.

6.1 Type of study

This study follows the paradigm of the qualitative research and it describes a social phenomena, ICT uses by an EFL teacher and students perceptions of them, as they occur naturally, exploring the experiences, opinions and feelings of the participants using interviews and observations as methods of data collection (Hancock, 2002). Additionally, this study will include Grounded theory research as part of the qualitative method to bring theory inductively from data, emphasizing “discovery with description and verification as secondary concerns” (Merriam, 2002).

In this particularly study, an English teacher was observed and some students were interviewed so that the researchers could understand the participants’ responses and actions towards the use of the ICT in the classroom.

In the other hand, surveys were used as a quantitative method to do a preliminary study which was used to identify the most suitable study subject for the investigation. The data collected by means of this instrument was processed in a quantitative way and some of the results were commented since they offered insights into Cartago’s teachers’ uses of ICT in the language classroom.

6.2 Context

This research study was conducted in Cartago, a city located in the north of Valle del
Cauca, Colombia. With a population of approximately 132,000 inhabitants, it is considered a touristic city due to its warm climate and the natural beauty of its surroundings. Its economic activities are mainly agriculture, cattle farming, trade and a small industry of artisanal embroidery.

From the twenty-one schools in service in the city, fifteen of them (both state and private schools) participated in the preliminary study done for this investigation. The results of the preliminary study pointed towards a particular teacher who was finally selected as the participant teacher of the research.

6.3 Setting

This teacher worked at private school which has an emphasis in English communicative competences. This educational institution offers courses from kindergarten to eleventh grade employs 26 teachers and receives 315 students, all of them from wealthy economic status.

The school provides its teachers resources such as TV sets, classrooms especially fitted for video-beam usage, computers laboratory and laptops for the teachers to support their classes.

In the private school, there are a total of four English teachers for kindergarten, primary and secondary education. All the students take the English course and are exposed to language classes five, hours per week.

6.4 Participants

Initially, fifteen teachers of English were surveyed to have a preliminary study of the use of ICT by this population. The results of that study and the information collected through informal visits to some of the schools in which those teachers worked, were used to select one of the teachers in order to observe his uses of ICT in the English classroom.

The teacher participant in this study was selected as he was the only one who made major uses of ICT resources in the EFL classroom. He is 39 year old, was born in Tulua (Valle), but he grew up in the United States, where he studied business management and International Business, before returning to Colombia. He has almost eight years of experience as an English teacher in
three different institutions. At the moment, he is in charge of the intermediate and advanced level courses at Andre Breton’s secondary school (with a 30 hours schedule per week).

Apart from using the common technologies in class such as the computer, the video beam and television, the teacher also reported using e-mail and Facebook as resources for teaching the language and he affirmed to feel motivated when using those technologies. Moreover, he had received courses about the integration of ICT in classes and the school in which he works at allows and promotes that teachers use technologies for their pedagogical practices.

Besides the teacher, six randomly selected students from his classes (11th grade) were interviewed to have their perspective in relation to the ICT implementation in the EFL classrooms. The students interviewed are mostly from Cartago (Valle), with ages ranging from 15 to 17 years.

6.5 Researchers’ role

This study was conducted by two students of the English Language Teaching Program from the Pereira Technological University (Risaralda).

The researchers were present on the scene where the phenomena were taking place; however they did not participate or interact with the participants. Taking into account the researchers’ lack of interaction with the people they were studying, it can be said that their role in the research was “complete observer” (Chatman, 1984), since they remained completely detached from the group and collected data through observations, interviews and surveys without interfering in the observed events.

6.6 Data collection methods

In order to gather relevant information concerning the research problem in the present study, the researchers conducted surveys, interviews and observations.
6.6.1 Observations

Marshal and Rossman (2010) define observations as the recording of events, behaviors and objects in the natural social settings. Through observations, the researchers documented and described the behaviors and actions of the English teacher from one private school in Cartago recording events in field notes. The researchers were taking notes about how the class was carrying out, taking into account the teacher’s practices when using ICT and the students’ reactions when the ICT were implemented.

6.6.2 Interviews

In this study, all participants (the teacher and the six students) were interviewed to gather data in relation to the use of ICT by English teacher in the classroom and their perceptions in relation with this issue.

One of the purposes of the researchers was to obtain information that could not be collected through observations, such as the participants’ feelings, perceptions and the interpretation of the world around them (Jick, 1979). The interviews were unstructured as the questions were open-ended looking for flexible and exploratory information (Jick, 1979).

6.6.3 Surveys

Fifteen English teachers from private and public schools in Cartago were surveyed obtaining information about what ICT they use, whether or not they receive courses in ICT integration in English language teaching and how they feel when using them to support their classes. The information obtained was used to do a preliminary study in order to select one of the teachers who was the most suitable to be observed by the researchers.

The accuracy and generalizability of surveys were convenient in this study as the researchers required quantitative data on the problem being studied. In this case, data were collected as Jick (1979) says, in a standardized format, obtaining small amount of information
from a large number of subjects. These surveys helped the researchers to describe and explain in statistic way the information gathered.

6.7 Data analysis

The data from the observations and the teacher’s and students’ interviews were transcribed to digitalize it and then coded and analyzed using software that supports qualitative and mixed methods research, called NVIVO 10. This program allowed the researchers to identify recurrent patterns and events in the different sources of data and recover them in order to get tentative findings.

The researchers looked for patterns in relation to the use of ICT by the teacher and by the students, the purposes of use them, as well as the students’ perceptions and attitudes towards the use of ICT. Once the triangulation was organized, the researchers extracted the findings according to the categories made.
7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data collected from the instruments designed for this study, the following findings emerged in relation to the first research question: *What are the uses of ICT done by a teacher of English in the EFL classroom?*

7.1 The use of ICT as a substitute of the board or the printed materials

It was noticeable that one of the most frequent uses the teacher does of the computer, the video-beam, the speakers and the internet is providing information. It was observed that he presented vocabulary through PowerPoint presentations, digital documents and readings through PDF files, videos from Youtube, grammatical structures and linguistic input in general, all of them, through the use of the computer, video-beam and internet. The teacher made use of these technologies in order to substitute the board or the printed materials. It could be argued that although this type of activities may be somehow beneficial in terms of recycling teaching materials, saving the time that it takes to write on the whiteboard or the money spent in printed materials and avoiding potential spelling mistakes, these are not innovative uses of the digital technologies and do not bring anything extra to the learning process, because the results are not being achieved.

Through the analysis of the data coming from the observations and other data collection instruments, it could be observed that the teacher uses the computer and the video beam as a substitute of the board, employing it for showing the new language items instead of writing them at the moment of speaking. In this way, vocabulary, idioms and grammatical rules were sometimes presented to the students right away from specific web pages related to language learning and teaching.

The teacher presents also to the students, documents, information, class activities, and readings supported by software such as PowerPoint, Adobe and Microsoft Word, instead of providing them with papers that in some cases are expensive because of the number of students, and sometimes are time consuming.
This interpretation emerges from the triangulation of data coming from the three data collection instruments implemented in the study: the observation of the English classes done by the teacher, and the students’ and the teacher’s interviews.

As it can be seen in this fragment from the observation number 3, the teacher made use of computer, the video beam and the internet to show the students some phrasal verbs from a web page:

‘Using the video beam and the computer, the T. shows the students a webpage that has information about phrasal verbs. T chooses the phrasal verb ‘to lay down’ and when he clicks on it, a sentence containing it is displayed. T asks one S to read the sentence and then, he asks the group what is the meaning of the word considering the context’.

The data shows, through the description of the class procedures, how the teacher took advantage of the computer and the video beam in order to show information to the students. In this sense, there is little difference between what he is achieving with the use of technology and what he could do without it, since the same information could have been provided by writing it on the whiteboard or asking the students to use a traditional dictionary.

The interpretation previously presented is confirmed by the opinions expressed by the students in their interviews. In the following sample from student C’s interview, he tells us one of the uses of the computer and the video beam done by the teacher.

Student C:

“Cuando el profesor hace actividades de lectura con el video beam, nos pone a leer a cada uno un párrafo diferente (...)”

The student’s words confirmed that the teacher uses the computer and the video beam to do activities that have little difference with the use of printed material. Instead of bringing a printed copy of the reading text for the students, he projects the text with the video beam and asks the students to read from the projection.

In this study, some students affirmed that the teacher integrates technologies such as the
computer and the video-beam into his classes to present information in order to do activities such as reading comprehension, vocabulary recognition or grammatical structures. In this way, all the students had access to the information without the need to print or to make copies from the document or the book.

In the following sample from the data collected another example of the use of digital documents by the teacher can be seen:

Observation number #1

‘T, using the computer and the video beam projects an exercise on the wall. In it the students have to fill in the blanks with the proper compound word. Next, he asks the students to copy what they see and complete the exercise on their notebooks”

The use of documents and readings projected with the use of the computer and the video-beam was limited since the teacher only used them to save materials, and the students had to spend much time on writing down the information presented.

Our finding aligns with similar research done in the field. Wong et all (2008) affirmed that ICT were frequently used as tools to present information to support the teaching and learning processes. In their study, English teachers from 8 schools showed evidence of the use of ICT resources such as, PowerPoint, Websites, Word processor, and applications in order to present information to the students about topics related to the language. Along the same lines, Coll (2007) cites the findings of a study done by Cuban (2003) that shows that although there are enough technologies in the schools, most teachers use them just as word processors and low level applications to reinforce their teaching instead of being innovative.

In relation with this, Coll (2007) affirms that there is a gap between the expectations of change and the actual educational improvement achieved by the use of technologies. However, in his opinion, the problem is not the expectations, which are fully justified, but that they may come true or not depending on the type of uses done by the teachers.
These results explain also the results obtained in our study in connection with the second research question that our study intended to explore.

7.2 Students’ attitudes affected by the type of activity done.

In relation to the second research question in this study (What are the student’s attitudes and perceptions towards the use of ICT in their English Classes?), and after analyzing the data collected from different instruments such as the students’ and teacher’s interviews and observations, it was found that depending on the activities and techniques used by the teacher in his classes, students could feel motivated and engaged or just the opposite, bored and uninterested despite the use of the computer, the video-beam and the internet.

During the observations, it was noticed that the teacher made use of technologies (computer, video-beam, internet and speakers) in almost all the classes. However, in some circumstances, students’ reactions and attitudes changed while doing the activities proposed by the teacher; some of them seemed to be unengaged and bored throughout the class sessions. Uden et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of taking into account the students’ feelings and reactions, telling that “student engagement is an important precursor for learning”.

The students’ attitude towards the teacher’s use of the video-beam and the computer for this particular type of activity can be observed in the following piece of evidence extracted from the observations done for the study.

Class Observation 1

“The teacher projects a reading text on the wall with the help of a video beam. Then he asks students to read. One student starts reading the first paragraph, then, another student reads the second paragraph and so on until they finish the whole reading. While one of the students does the reading, the other start talking to each other, looking at their cellphones and stop paying attention to the activity being developed. Some learners had some difficulties since, sometimes, the size of letter was too small. Students looked uncomfortable when reading.”
As it can be observed from the description presented, the type of activity developed with the use of the technologies was exactly the same one that could have been performed without it. Instead of providing the students with a printed version of the text, the teacher simply projects it on the wall, but he is not taking advantage of the possibilities that this tool could give him, also it was observed that it was difficult for the students to read the text as the letter was too small, since they could not read accurately.

In the following evidence, it can be seen how a student acknowledged the previously mentioned problem, i.e., that in spite of using technologies, the teacher was not engaging the students in the activity of reading.

**Student C’s interview**

“**Cuando el profesor hace actividades de lectura con el video beam algunos estudiantes no prestamos atención así se esté usando la tecnología, y entonces es más fácil distraerse porque la metodología no es como la más apropiada**”.

We can see in the students’ words that he recognizes that the mere use of technology is not achieving the engagement of the students in the activity because they got distracted easily, since the use of the technologies were not the more appropriate. These non-innovative uses of ICT are affecting students’ attitudes towards their use in the EFL classes.

This circumstance was also seen in another student’s interview where he told the researchers that some activities done in the class as for example readings from a video beam projection, bores them.

**Student B’s interview**

**Cuando el profesor pone ese video beam y nos pone a leer es muy aburrido, porque solo leer, leer, contestar y eso, no son las clases dinámicas que uno espera del profesor.**
As it can be observed the student is clear and specific about his views on the topic of simply reading from a projection and demands more challenge and active activities. As we have seen from the evidence, the interviewed students affirmed that no matter which technologies are being used, the major concern is how the teacher develops the English class activities carry out with the ICT.

From teacher’s perspective, however, the use of technology was enough to engage students since he commented his noticing how students paid more attention to the activities when computer, videos, web pages, songs and documents were employed in the class. He does not seem to notice the lack of enthusiasm and involvement of students in certain moments related to specific uses of ICT that he does.

The following sample taken from the teacher’s interview illustrates our finding:

“En realidad, cuando uso TIC en el salón, siento a los estudiantes más motivados, siempre están atentos a las actividades que realizo. Me han dicho: “profesor sus clases son más divertidas, cuando usamos video beam, cuando usamos... eh... la televisión, el cable, el computador, cuando navegamos, porque es más real pa’ [sic] nosotros.”

Although, the teacher is making an effort to integrate ICT in his practices, some of them are not being successful. The teacher believes that the mere integration of those multimedia resources will achieve involvement and engagement in class activities, as students are constantly in contact with the innovations and technological advances that are changing our daily lives. Besides, according to what he expresses in his interview, he is under the impression that students enjoy the activities that he presents, though those same students expressed a different opinion when they were interviewed by the researchers.

This finding has similarities with the findings from the study “Perceptions of information and communication technology among undergraduate management students in Barbados” by Gay et al. (2006), as they reported that the majority of participants (students in the Department of Management Studies at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies in
Barbados) showed favorable attitudes towards the use of ICT in the educational context, however they preferred more interaction with the teacher, refusing the fact of using computers as replacement of traditional teaching experiences such as face to face presentations of the topics, readings in printed materials, and following the teacher-centered approach.

The findings of our study also present similarities with those obtained by Siragusa & Dixon (2009) in their study “Students attitudes towards the use of ICT integration in higher education. The researchers found that the majority of the participants (students) had positive attitudes when integrating ICT in their studies, telling them that working with ICT was helpful, easy and pleasant. Similarly, the students from our research expressed a positive attitude when using ICT in their process of learning, though they are more critic about the uses that are done. This finding shows the importance of providing specific training for the teachers of languages on the particular and specific uses that can be done of the different technological resources available nowadays. As we have seen from the evidence provided not just any use is successful for language learning, students demand more from their teachers, who must exert their creativity to take advantage of the possibilities and potentialities of the technological resources available.

### 7.3 Unexpected findings

Cell phones and particularly smart phones are becoming one of the technologies used frequently by young people, since they give advantages to the users such as connectivity to internet, and applications for all interests and purposes. Even if people have a computer, the cell phone gives the user the possibility to take it everywhere. Students use Internet as a tool for communicating and socializing. Besides, the wide range of opportunities offered by the Internet is a great benefit for both adults and young people. In general, youngsters stay connected longer than adults, tend to look for access to the Internet from different locations and are involved in a variety of online services and they adapt more easily to technological changes.

Although this research study did not aim at finding out the ICT used by the students in their daily activities, that information emerged from the answers provided by them in the interview that they answered for this research.
Relevant information about this point was obtained from triangulation of the data gathered through the instruments designed for this study, such as students’ and teachers’ interviews, and observations.

We consider that information very valuable since it provides us with an insight about the real uses that students are able to do as well as the kind of technologies that are available for them and it could help teachers to consider them when designing and planning their classes. For this reason, we will present that information as an unexpected finding of this study.

### 7.3.1 Computer, cell phones and Internet as the ICT tools more used by students

Digital technologies and internet have permeated all spheres of society. Even in Colombia, where there are still marked differences in social and economic levels that limit the possibilities of owning certain technologies, it can be seen that most and most people, particularly young people, consider them as an everyday element and use them in their daily lives either at home or in public spaces like café Internet, shopping centers and others.

The students from this study were not an exception. All the participant students interviewed (six) explained that they use computers, cell phones and Internet in their daily activities for academic and practical purposes, (even if teachers do not promote that use), as well as for entertainment.

The following data provide evidence about this finding:

Student B’s interview:

‘Yo uso el computador para entrar a Internet y el celular. A veces cuando llego a mi casa prendo el T.V pero no por mucho tiempo, porque siempre estoy conectándome al Facebook, y buscando tareas en Google’.

We can see that the student owns not only a phone, as smart phone that allows him to be
connected to the internet wherever he is, even at school if he needed it. This shows us that the teacher could make use of different type of resources and activities with the students if only he considered this information.

Student A corroborated the previous information:

*Student A’s interview:*

“(…) yo tengo mi propio celular, mi mamá tiene el de ella, y tenemos televisor, el computador (…)”

Again, we can see that the student has access to technologies at home that would allow the teacher implement more innovative activities for supporting the learning of English. As the students belong to a wealthy economic status, they could bring smart phones to school. Finally, Student E also explains that he possesses and uses different technological devices for a variety of purposes:

*Student E’s interview*

“Uso el celular, los televisores y el computador. Cuando uso el computador entro a las redes sociales como Facebook, Twitter y el Messenger (…)”.

In this case, the social networks appear to be the main tools that this student uses with the purpose of socializing with friends and classmates.

As we can see from the previous data, the problem for not taking advantage of the benefits that digital technologies could offer for language learning is not a lack of technological devices on the part of the students who, as most members of their generation, find them interesting and engaging and look for ways of interacting with their peers by whatever means.

As in our finding, the Youth World Report (2003) stated, in the study “Youth and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)” that in Finland and Japan, computers and cell phones were increasingly used on a daily base by young people. Moreover, according to a
survey done in the same study, youth use the internet mainly to chat with their friends, to follow world events and to see musical videos.

In the same line, a study published by “Experiencia Digital” in 2010 in Spain, reported that the percentage of young people who have accessed to the Internet from their mobile phones has increased by 57%. The study also highlights that the youngest (15-20 years) are the ones who make a more intensive use of these devices. They send and receive emails, find information, locate addresses and routes, or access social networks. The study also stated that access to social networks continues to grow and are now the adults who are more in contact with networks.

Although the context in Colombia in terms of connectivity and access is different from the one in the two studies reported, it must be considered that the access to technologies and the connectivity is improving

7.3.2 Autonomous use of ICT with academic purposes

The new technological tools represent an opportunity to achieve gradually the development of autonomy of students and teachers in learning environments.

Towards the use of search engines such as Google and web pages such as Wikipedia, students found a supportive aid in homework and activities, thus developing their autonomy through the use of technologies such as the computer and Internet.

This interpretation is supported by the following evidence taken from one student’s interview, which showed that if he has homework or investigation activities to do, he uses the computer and the internet to look for them in the well-known search engine named Google.

Student C’s interview

“(…) uso el internet para buscar las tareas en Google, pues creo que se encuentra mucha información ahí”.
We can see in the student words how he reports his awareness of the usefulness of search engines for supporting learning and his autonomous use of that particular application, even without encouragement or guidance from the teacher.

Another piece of evidence that supports this finding comes from other participant student’s interview:

*Student D’s interview*

‘*Uso el computador y el internet pues para consultar la información que necesito para hacer las tareas del colegio y aprender cosas nuevas (...)*’.

As the evidence shows us, the student in the interview says that he uses the computer and internet to look for information but he doesn’t refer to tasks related to English. This is a proof that if the teacher would decide to provide learning activities that used these technologies, students would have the opportunity of benefiting from them.

Finally, also the teacher states that he uses the same resources in his autonomous process for improving his language competences. We can see it in one of his answers to the interview:

*Teacher’s interview*

‘*(...) uso, por ejemplo, cd’s, dvd’s, que los uso también de aprendizaje para también alimentarme con lo que tenga que ver con el inglés, programas de televisión (...)*’.

It is evident from the teachers’ words that he is aware of the potential that technologies have for supporting the development of communicative skills in English since he uses them himself. However, that is precisely the transposition that we don’t see in his classes, where he is not applying those same activities and devices that he considers so useful, but just the more basic presentation tools.
This unexpected finding of our study aligns with the results of a study done in a Greek Primary School, which investigated the possibility to promote autonomous learning, as a new learning paradigm, through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The results of this study were similar to ours since the participants said that the main activities they do with the computer and internet were searching for information, social networks participation and communication. As well it was observed that students started to use the computer in order to learn new things, thus being autonomous in their process of learning.
8. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Digital technologies can open the door to bring a variety of resources and activities to the classroom that may not only improve the acquisition of a foreign language but also to enhance motivation and interest on students.

Our study shows that in the observed case, there is a poor use of digital technologies, as for instance using the video-beam and the computer to replace the whiteboard, and not taking advantage of the wide variety of available options for supporting language learning.

In this sense, we consider important that teachers and teacher training programs wake up to the possibilities opened to us by the use of ICT in the classroom as well as to the fact that those technologies, on their own and without a careful planning are not a magical solution to the challenges that teachers face in the classroom.

Our research also highlights the importance for teachers to explore their students’ access to digital technologies and devices at home, since that knowledge would allow them to provide learners with extra-class activities that may help them benefit from the advantages that the use of these devices could bring to the process of learning a foreign language.
9. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Our exploration of the academic literature related to the use of ICT in the Colombian English classrooms, showed us that there is a scarcity on investigations about what the teachers in Colombia are doing with technologies in this field.

We also found interesting the fact that the teacher studied makes effective use of ICT in his daily life and in his process of professional development and language acquisition but that use is not reflected on what he does as a teacher. For this reason, it also seems relevant to research the obstacles that teachers may be facing in relation with the implementation of innovative activities with ICT in their classes.
10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The preliminary study done for our research in relation with the availability of ICT in different schools showed results that weren’t coherent with the actual conditions of the schools.

Since the purpose of the research was to study the uses of ICT done by teachers of English, it was necessary to verify the answers collected in the surveys by informal conversations with the principals of each school. This process led to the reduction of the number of possible teachers to study up to the point that only one out of the 15 teachers initially considered was found to present the minimum conditions required by the study. This fact forced us to change the type of study initially designed (multiple case study) to the one actually carried out which is a qualitative research. Due to this fact, the information provided by the study must be understood as depicting a very particular situation in a very particular context and not lacking the possibility of drawing any kind of generalizations from it.

We also acknowledge that not piloting the questions of the students’ survey had as a consequence the collection of insufficient information for answering the research question related to students’ attitudes and reactions to the use of ICT. This fact led to the inclusion in the study of students’ interviews that finally provided the needed information for the study.

Finally, we assume that the lack of detail at some points of the description of the observations carried out in the school made it necessary for the researchers to go back in their memories to complete the missing details of some class events that were needed as evidence to support the findings of the study.
11. CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we wanted to explore the uses of ICT done by an English teacher in the city of Cartago, Valle. Through a preliminary survey that was given to the English teachers from the schools, it was selected one of the participants of this investigation, the one who made major use of these technologies. We observed some classes and made an interview to the teacher and the students, the results from these data collected shows that the teacher uses ICT mainly to share and to present information making use of the computer and the video-beam as a substitute of the board or the printed materials.

In relation to the students’ attitudes affected by the type of activity done, it was found that depending on the activities and techniques used by the teacher in his classes, students could feel motivated and engaged or just the opposite, bored and uninterested despite the use of the computer, the video-beam and the internet.

The study shows some interesting pedagogical implications in the sense that teachers need to be aware that students have technology surround them and that teachers need to integrate them in different ways in the classroom. Our study suggest that it is necessary to do more research on what teachers are doing and what the difficulties are encountered when applying those technologies in the classroom.
12. APPENDIX

Students’ interview

Purpose
The main objective of this interview was to gather data in relation to the students’ perceptions towards the use of ICT in the classroom.

Note: The interview was made in Spanish, in order to give comfortableness, to get useful information and not to block the students’ answers.

Questions
1. ¿Usas algún tipo de tecnología? ¿Cuáles?
2. ¿Qué tecnologías usa en casa?
3. ¿Qué tecnologías usa en el colegio?
4. ¿Cuáles de estas tecnologías que usas en casa las usas para fines pedagógicos, o para fines tales como estudiar o instruirte?
5. ¿Tu profesor usa TIC en clase?
6. ¿Te gusta o no que él profesor use TIC en clase?
7. ¿De pronto hay algunas TIC que te resultan aburridoras, o algunas metodologías que se usen con las tecnologías que no te gusten?
8. ¿Qué cosa te parece aburrido del uso de TIC en clase?
9. ¿Cuándo el profesor usa TIC estas te hacen prestar más atención o te distraen?
10. ¿El profesor ha tenido dificultades para utilizar TIC?
11. ¿Qué hace el profesor cuando tiene estas dificultades?
12. ¿Crees que el usar TIC en clase es una ventaja o una desventaja a la hora de aprender?
13. ¿Crees que las TIC son un avance o por el contrario no ayuda avanzar en la educación?

Teacher’s interview

Purpose
The main objective of this interview was to gather data in relation to the uses of ICT done by an English teacher.

Note: The interview was made in Spanish, in order to give comfortableness, to get useful information and not to block the teacher’s answers.

Questions
1. ¿Qué TIC usa usted para sus clases?
2. ¿Qué TIC usa usted en casa?
3. y de las TIC que usas en clase, ¿qué tipo de uso haces de estas con tus estudiantes?
4. ¿Cuáles son los propósitos de uso para el video-beam y el computador por ejemplo?
5. ¿En qué habilidades enfatizas más el uso de las TIC?
6. ¿Qué tipo de respuesta has encontrado de tus estudiantes cuando usas TIC?
7. ¿Te sientes cómodo o incómodo al usar TIC con tus estudiantes? ¿Por qué?
8. ¿Notas alguna diferencia entre enseñar con métodos convencionales, como copias, libros, grabadora o entre métodos avanzados como los de hoy día como el video-beam, el celular, y el computador?
9. ¿Han sido las TIC un motivo para que los estudiantes estén más pendientes de la clase o por el contrario estas han hecho perder la atención?
10. ¿Los resultados cuando usas las TIC durante las clases han sido positivos o negativos?
11. ¿Cómo te has capacitado para el uso de TIC?
12. ¿Piensas que para la preparación o para dar tus clases las TIC han sido una herramienta buena o mala?
13. ¿De qué manera cree usted que el uso de las TIC ha influido en nuestra sociedad?
14. ¿Has encontrado alguna dificultad cuando usas TIC en clase?
15. ¿Cuando tienes alguna dificultad con las TIC buscas soporte o ayuda con algún compañero o estudiante?
16. ¿Piensas que el uso de TIC afecta positiva o negativamente la educación?
17. ¿Tienes algún problema para acceder a las TIC en el colegio?

Field notes

The researchers were taking notes about how the class was carrying out, taking into account the teacher’s practices when using ICT and the students’ reactions when the ICT were implemented.

Things to consider in the observation:

- Description of the activity
- Time
- Hardware used
Exploring the use of Information and Communication Technologies done by a teacher of English in a private school of Cartago (Valle)

- Software used
- Teacher’s attitudes (Why? – Evidence)
- Students’ reactions (Why? – Evidence)
- Problems (in relation to the use of ICT)

<table>
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<th>Hardware</th>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Students’ reactions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. video-beam</td>
<td>1. Power point</td>
<td>1. Anxiety</td>
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<td>5. Mp3 player</td>
<td>5. Podcasts</td>
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<td>6. Radio</td>
<td>6. Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other</td>
<td>_____________</td>
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</tbody>
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Description of the activity

Teacher’s attitudes (Why? – Evidence)

Students’ reactions (Why? – Evidence)

Problems (in relation to the use of ICT)
13. REFERENCES


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