EXPLORING THE USE OF AN APP FOR EFL TEACHING

UNIVERSIDAD ANDRÉS BELLO
Facultad de Educación y Ciencias Sociales
Escuela de Educación

Tesis de pregrado para optar al título de Profesor de Inglés y al grado académico de Licenciado en Educación

EXPLORING THE USE OF AN APP AS A TEACHING AID FOR EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING:
AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY ON TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS

Autores:
Rebeca Yordana Almonacid Amin, Vania Silvana Castillo Pérez,
Rodrigo Alfonso Cifuentes Canto, Macarena María de los Ángeles Oñate Miranda

Profesor tutor: Carol Gómez Merino

Santiago de Chile, 2018.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank to all the people who made this study possible. On the first place we express our gratitude to Carol Gomez who was always present and willing to answer our doubts and help us whenever it was needed. Thank you, Miss Carol. Secondly, Carlos Santander who was the one who developed the app and spent time working with us fixing and polish every aspect of it. Finally, Diego Cancino who created the drawings and images used in the app so they were appealing to the students. We thank all of you because through you this could be possible. We cannot express with words the appreciation we feel. Also, we want to thank ourselves for always being patient and comprehensive with each other. It was a great process and we are grateful to have lived it with each other.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

RESUMEN

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Information and Communication Technologies: How Are They Defined?

2.2 ICTs in Education

2.2.1. Current trends in ICTs for educational purposes.

2.2.2. Misconceptions towards ICT integration in classrooms.

2.3 Benefits of ICTs in Teachers’ Role and Performance

2.3.1. Teachers’ knowledge of ICTs as a benefit for their students and classes

2.3.2. Productive skills and communicative approach.

2.3.3. ICTs and special educational needs.

2.3.4 Benefits of ICTs for SEN Students

2.4 Teachers’ Perception on ICTs

2.5 Teachers’ Acceptance and Rejection of ICTs

2.6 Schools and Teachers’ Training Programmes on ICTs Usage

2.7 Teachers’ and Schools’ Awareness of ICTs’ Benefits Bases
EXPLORING THE USE OF AN APP FOR EFL TEACHING

5.5 Going Back to our Objectives ................................................................. 48

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS ........................................................................ 49

6.1 Pedagogical Implications ................................................................. 49
6.2 Limitations of the Study ..................................................................... 49
6.3 Suggestions for further Research ..................................................... 50

REFERENCES ............................................................................................ 51

APPENDICES ............................................................................................ 57

Appendix A ................................................................................................. 57

Interviews: ................................................................................................. 57

FIRST AUDIO RECORDING (I: INTERVIEWER - P: PARTICIPANT) ...... 57
SECOND AUDIO RECORDING (I: INTERVIEWER - P: PARTICIPANT)
October 5th ............................................................................................... 59

Appendix B ................................................................................................. 64

Observations ............................................................................................. 64

Observation 1: ........................................................................................... 64
Observation 2: ........................................................................................... 64
Observation 3: ........................................................................................... 65
Observation 4: ........................................................................................... 65
Observation 5: ........................................................................................... 66
Observation 6: ........................................................................................... 66

Appendix C ................................................................................................. 67

Journals ...................................................................................................... 67
#1 September 11th ................................................................. 67
#2 September 13th ............................................................... 67
#3 September 25th ............................................................... 68
#4 September 27th ............................................................... 68
#5 October 2nd ................................................................. 69
#6 October 4th ................................................................. 70
ABSTRACT

In this research, we explored the effects a new ICT could have over the lessons taught by a trainee teacher at a public elementary school in a second grade, over the course of six lessons in the months of August and September. The context was a public school located in la Florida, Chile. This research started by analyzing the current literature on ICTs used for educational purposes. The data found on the review suggested that a great majority of the authors related ICTs with good results inside the classroom, and there was a general agreement that teachers should integrate more and better ICTs into their lessons. Later on, this study took a different direction towards the exploration of a teacher’s perception on ICTs. Our team developed a Smartphone app, currently available on the Play Store for Android, whose aim is to aid teachers during their lessons with multiple tools specifically designed for this task. After trying the app, and implementing diverse types of instruments for collecting data from both the teacher and students, we analyzed the data and the results. We finally came up with the conclusion that our ICT had a beneficial impact on our participant’s teaching.
RESUMEN

En esta investigación, exploramos los efectos que una nueva TIC podría tener sobre las lecciones enseñadas por un maestro en práctica en una escuela primaria pública en un segundo básico, en el transcurso de seis lecciones en los meses de agosto y septiembre. El contexto fue una escuela pública ubicada en la Florida, Chile. Esta investigación comenzó analizando la literatura actual sobre las TICs utilizadas con fines educativos. Los datos encontrados en la revisión sugirieron que la gran mayoría de los autores relacionaron las TIC con buenos resultados dentro del aula, y hubo un acuerdo general en que los maestros deberían integrar más y mejores TICs en sus lecciones. Más adelante, este estudio tomó una dirección diferente hacia la exploración de la percepción de un profesor sobre las TICs. Nuestro equipo desarrolló una aplicación para teléfonos inteligentes, actualmente disponible en Play Store para Android, cuyo objetivo es ayudar a los maestros durante sus lecciones con múltiples herramientas específicamente diseñadas para esta tarea. Después de probar la aplicación e implementar diversos tipos de instrumentos para recopilar datos tanto del profesor como de los alumnos, analizamos los datos y los resultados. Finalmente, llegamos a la conclusión de que nuestra TIC tuvo un impacto beneficioso en la enseñanza de nuestro participante.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since we started the English teaching program we have read a lot of theory regarding methods, English language acquisition of a second language, and how we can become prepared teachers, these theories have helped us to be prepared of the reality that we can perceive in the classrooms; the teaching program has also told us about the best strategies and methods to implement in our future lessons; however, when the real practice begins, we are able to see what it is really happening inside the classrooms which make our time at school even more meaningful. Nowadays, we live in a world surrounded by technology which makes it impossible to avoid seeing students with their cell phones listening to music, watching videos and playing video games. We can also see how little kids start to react to this technology since their very early days.

This happens mainly because today parents are daily sharing pictures and videos since the birth of their baby; therefore, kids grow up very close to a camera that connects them to the digital world. In Chile, even though the National Curriculum suggests and promotes the use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies), the variety of these being used in classrooms goes barely beyond power point projections and audio recordings, which is quite limited for the vast options that technology brings us. It has also been proven that “ICTs can improve teaching and hence influence students’ learning by either enhancing what is already practiced or introducing new and better ways of teaching” (Comi, Argentin, Gui, Origo & Pagani, 2016). Wang (2014) also supports this when she emphasizes that teachers’ strategies should be appealing for students needs since it encourages them to be more engage and active during class.

We have seen during our practicum the lack of resources schools provide to teachers regarding ICTs. We have also seen that besides the
resources, there is a lack of experience and willingness from the teachers to use these new technological devices in their English lessons; however, it is acknowledge that Teachers, with their professional knowledge, training and practice, are skilled in classroom management and instruction (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2014). However, only a few teachers incorporate the cell phone inside the classrooms using apps to help students achieve the class objective.

Online platforms and apps such as Duolingo and Kahoot! are very appealing to the students. Having that said, it is important to focus on what kind of experiences, and new and innovative technologies teachers should incorporate in their lessons. This study aims to explore the effects “Cocaví”, an app whose purpose is to be a teaching aid, had on an English teacher of primary school during English lessons. The objectives of this study alongside with the effects of the app are:

i) To explore teachers’ perceptions on the use of ITCs as a teaching aid.

ii) To improve the teaching practice.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, precise context and clear definitions regarding Information and Communication Technologies will be provided. Here we highlight ICTs' importance in education, and what the National curriculum says about them; their benefits for teachers and students, and also, we clarify some misconceptions around the use of ICTs.

2.1 Information and Communication Technologies: How Are They Defined?

In order to have a better understanding of what ICTs are, it is pertinent to start by defining, as well as providing an operationalized version of the concept for the purposes of this study.

According to Firmin and Genesi (2013), an ICT “covers any product that can store, retrieve, manipulate or transmit information electronically in a digital form” (p.1606). Examples of that can be computers, data projection, or a radio, among many others.

As retrieved from The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2018) the Information and Communication technologies involve the development, maintenance, and use of computer systems, software, and networks for the processing and distribution of data.

2.2 ICTs in Education

Throughout the years, we have been witnesses of how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have not stopped developing; complementing their grounds and always influencing our lifestyles and routines. ICTs have gone through innovations and transformed our society, which has completely changed the way people think, work, live and learn (Grabe, 2007, in Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015), especially the latter, which is our topic of interest for this study.
Although people might think the use of ICTs in the educational field is recent, it is documented that technology in the classrooms can even go back to the 1600s (Parson, 2017) with artifacts such as the “Magic Lantern”, which consisted on the projection of images used to engage students’ attention. Alternatively, at the beginning of the 1900s, the use of “Stereoscopes” (which were firstly used for home entertainment) let students watch three-dimensional images for educational purposes. Later on, the appearance of the film projector and the radio in the 1930s, the Apple II Desktop computer and the calculator in the 1970s; the Internet in the 1990s, and, of course the nowadays tablets, smartphones, and different applications, all of which show how technologies never really stopped being an important educational resource since they first appeared. This was evidenced by Becho and Bhattacharya (2017), who noted that the use of computer labs, audios and videotapes, television, and films were being implemented in EFL classrooms back in the 1980s, which reveals that the nature of technology in the classroom since its beginnings has been to provide resources for a better exchange of information that continuous until today.

Hence, the use of ICTs seems to be necessary for nowadays society, especially in EFL classrooms, meaning completely new challenges to teachers all over the world. As a matter of fact, Becho and Bhattacharya (2017) claimed that, “the technology revolution has been a driving force in the evolution of the foreign language classroom” (p.5). This is completely accurate considering the multiple benefits students and teachers can get from the correct use of these tools and the gradual transformation of classrooms to be open to include technological tools in them.
2.2.1. Current trends in ICTs for educational purposes.

The potential of adding new technologies in the classroom may be overwhelming for some, yet it is aligned with the 21st century demands and development. Johnson, Levine, Smith, and Stone in “The Horizon Report” (2010) describe some of the most recent developing technologies available, such as mobile computing, electronic books, augmented reality (AR), and gesture-based computing, which in many cases do not sound very familiar to educators.

Nevertheless, Johnson et al. (2010) recognize a more familiar device such as mobile phones as the primary means for accessing internet resources, mainly because they can comprise a wide range of learning tools, information, online activities, and applications specifically designed for learning. In addition, electronic books are becoming very popular in many educational institutions since they are a useful device that simplifies the task of carrying multiple books. Johnson et al. (2010) assure that “electronic or digital books promise to reduce costs, save students from carrying pounds of textbooks, and contribute to the environmental efforts of paper-conscious campuses” (p.17).

Augmented reality is an emerging technology that according to The Horizon Report (2010) refers to “the addition of a computer-assisted contextual layer of information over the real world, creating a reality that is enhanced or augmented” (p.21). In other words, it is the incorporation of new virtual tools into our real world in order to boost, enhance, or amplify our user’s experience. Devices now are designed to recognize gestures and faces, to follow commands, and to establish a dynamic with the user, which is why they have a great potential for learning since students can use them to construct new understanding based on interactions with virtual objects that bring underlying data to life, as The Horizon Report (2010) suggested.
An updated version of The Horizon Report (2011) adds “Gaming” as another attractive tool to the students, whose greatest potential for learning lies in their ability to foster collaboration, problem-solving, and procedural thinking” (p.5), plus, learners can boost their learning experience by enjoying the process and playing and sharing with others. This type of ICT has been very successful in different parts of the world. A recent study by Ebrahimzadeh and Alavi (2017) selected 241 high school students to play a strategic video game where gamers have to use all their resources, abilities, mental agility and intelligence to overcome challenges and to manage certain target vocabulary-items while achieving the objectives the game required. The results showed a statistically significant achievement on students’ motivation, which increased throughout the study even to participants who refused to play but to watch their peers. Also, the students showed a relaxed and comfortable attitude while playing the video game; therefore, not being in a typical language classroom was a plus for the students’ experience, providing them with a sensation of freedom. Studies such as the previous one are being applied in different educational settings and not only in EFL students, but in others subjects as well. In Malaysia, a study by Barreto, Vasconcelos, and Orey (2017) shows how students increased their learning abilities and motivation while playing math games, study that showed positive results. The findings of this study also encourage teachers and parents to apply the game-method to students on formal and informal settings; similar to what Johnson concludes on the Horizon report (2011) when he states that “games can be applied very effectively in many learning contexts and games can engage learners in ways other tools and approaches cannot” (p.22).

Since technology changes quickly, each day a new feature is added to their functions. Applications or apps are available in every smartphone or tablet to be downloaded free at a low price. Regarding EFL education, there are several apps which might help teachers achieve their aims more successfully. In
the book *110 Amazing Apps for Education*, each app is explained providing a description, its usage at home and at school, and instructions for teachers or parents. Different apps in the book, such as StoryLines, PopOut! The Tale of Peter Rabbit, and ABC Animals provide students the right pronunciation and intonation of the English language even though the aim of the book is to provide not just language teaching apps, but science, math, and social studies apps, among others.

Regarding other famous language apps, we have the case of Duolingo, a well-known app which helps people learn new languages from their smartphones, computers, and tablets. Duolingo has called the attention of language teachers and translators since it translates words and sentences from the users’ native language to the new language they want to learn and vice versa. Even though translation while learning a language has a bad reputation because it is linked to the Grammar Translation Method (Larsen-Freeman, 2000); According to García (2013), translation seems to work, and surprisingly well. Translating is assisted with “hints” when the learner hovers with the mouse over a word and it gives the learner control over the learning process as dealing only with words is easier than dealing with the whole communicative situation in which many other factors may apply. Since the app is in the user’s computer or smartphone, they can use it freely whenever they want and how often they want to, giving the learner a sense of responsibility over their own learning. Language learning apps seem to work successfully, and thank to their effectiveness we can include new and modern ICTs in the classroom. Even though all these apps seem to work successfully, there are many misconceptions about their application as with many other ICTs.
2.2.2. Misconceptions towards ICT integration in classrooms.

Nowadays, there is no doubt that ICTs can have a beneficial impact on classrooms, whether it is for increasing students’ motivation and participation or for using them as facilitators for teaching some more complex units of a subject. According to Rahan (2015), “ICTs can grab the attention of students that are in their turn using these tools outside in their regular lives” (p.26). This is the case of most students these days who live surrounded by technology, as the Pew Research Center (2013) suggests in a study which reveals that about 78% of students from ages 12 -17 own a cellphone in the USA. Sadly, the misleading information and common knowledge about ICTs, which sometimes can be confusing or false, might lead teachers to create faulty lessons or even to the extreme of experiencing complete failure when utilizing ICTs as a teaching tool.

In the online journal The Conversation, Philips (2015), stated that “teachers in schools are not given enough professional support to understand how digital technologies can be used effectively in the ICT classroom” (para. 11). Which is especially true for teachers who finished their studies before the “technological boom”. Moreover, teachers often experience a so called “fear of ICT” or anxiety when using these technologies, given their lack of knowledge on the subject. As a matter of fact, Rahimi and Yadollahi (2010), suggested that teachers who are anxious about computers are often not successful in integrating ICTs and might prefer not to implement such technologies into their classrooms anymore. If we consider the previous data, we can conclude that teachers who are reluctant to try ITCs or have not been successful to integrate these technologies into their curriculum are not properly informed on the convenient use of ITC’s and have a negative point of view on them. Although there are teachers who recognize their value, as Rahimi and Yadollahi (2011) suggest, they still prefer not to include them.
They also stated that the demographics, age, and gender are also significant values to consider when speaking of teachers’ reluctance in the use of ICTs. Data collected in the same study, showed that “Whereas male teachers used ICT more than their female counterparts, female teachers showed greater levels of computer anxiety than male teachers.” (p.204). Also, older teachers “are more technophobic” than the younger ones.

In conclusion, misconceptions and preconceived notions on ICT’s can have a tremendous impact on the teachers’ point of view towards them. For example, Patel and Samara (2010), explained that humans often have preconceived notions, which can have an impact on the topic of matter, and that the new information learnt on the subject can have little to no effect on their points of view. This means that even when teachers who have had negative experiences in the past with ICTs, may not change their minds towards the use of these in their classrooms. Therefore, it is very important to provide proper training to try to fight against the misconceptions teachers might have, and finally achieve the change we desire.

2.3 Benefits of ICTs in Teachers’ Role and Performance.

ICTs promote and improve the teacher’s performance. According to Copriady’s (2015) study, a highly motivated teacher might be more inclined to use ICTs (p.705). Even though face-to-face teaching is relevant and most common in the classrooms, it is appreciated when teachers are able to manage ICTs and integrate them in the curriculum content. As Copriady claims, “the lesson should be presented in such a way that learning would be fun, more attractive and effective through information management and integration with pedagogical competency and practice methodology” (p.705). The latter can result in multiple benefits for students such as Yusria et al. (2015) explained, we can get lessons that are engaging, flexible with the students’ needs, learner
retention and achievement, personalization of learning, and most importantly, gain access to multiple learning resources (p.426). These benefits boost the teaching experience and motivate teachers to keep using ICTs creating a cycle in which both, the teacher and the students, fulfill each other’s expectations regarding learning and teaching experience.

It is important to give teachers training and resources to utilize ICTs inside the classroom due to the multiple benefits they offer. As it is stated by Yusria and Goodwin (2015), “Providing teachers with adequate ICT skills will improve teachers’ confidence in using ICTs in the school curriculum” (p.293). This will help to achieve the goal of ICTs for teachers, that is to create a variety of teaching solutions, which allows access to information through different devices, and allow teachers to produce different material for different situations (Seppälä & Alamäki, 2003). Consequently, the role of the teacher is to be a consultant, which means to identify the students’ interests and use them to achieve the learning goals depending on the conditions the learner is in (Ozdamlia & Cavusb, 2011). Adding to that, these authors point out that the pertinent use of ICTs offers personalized and convenient assessment through “database logs, software packages, online exams, chat rooms, discussion boards, online quizzes, or project evaluations” (p.940). In addition, they state, “a good designed course should provide immediate feedback” (p.940). Hence, these facilities give teachers the opportunity to manage their time better to avoid stressful situations that could be harmful for their health and have a negative impact on the learning and teaching process. As Feltoe (2015) explained, a teacher can be affected by stress in such a way they could even reduce their performance and ability to fulfil their duties effectively. (para. 3)
2.3.1. Teachers’ knowledge of ICTs as a benefit for their students and classes.

One of the greatest benefits of ICTs is the implementation of new technologies in the classroom. This helps teachers alongside students since ICTs can be included in the EFL classes discovering an extensive range of different tools, activities, sources, etc., which can best suit the students' needs. The activities, tools, and sources selected by the teacher through ICTs will attract the students’ attention since they will see them as something new and striking. One of the challenges they face is to use their knowledge of pedagogy, teaching skills and technology to teach content and language skills with a student centered approach (Nelson, Christopher & Mims, 2009). This might be difficult for some teachers since as mentioned by Klement (2018):

“The required technical-didactic knowledge is far from being achieved by all teachers, as some teachers do not dispose of various key competencies necessary for a meaningful involvement of ICT tools into training. The reasons for this shall be sought not only in the lack of these tools, but also in some of the internal influences which prevent the necessary competences of teachers in this field from further development.” (p.128)

ITCs are innovative and ingenious, hence in order to design more creative and inclusive lessons we should take advantage of them. Teachers have encountered new challenges due to the expanding possibilities of the use of ICTs in every respect of the schools’ context in the 21st century, (Albion et al. 2015). Teachers have to be updated in the new techniques and methodologies created in the 21st century since they form part of their students’ lives as
different devices such as mobile cell phones, tablets, interactive videos and apps. This is not a matter of teachers alone, this also include pre-service teachers and the institutions which prepare them. Initial teacher education institutions have also confronted the challenge to improve in-service teachers’ education and prepare pre-service teachers to successfully integrate ICTs into the teaching and learning process, (Sang et al. 2010).

2.3.2. Productive skills and communicative approach.

The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into educational settings, has certainly affected the way students learn and produce the English language. Harmer (2007) emphasizes The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) and states that teachers should use activities where communication is the principal output, and “they should be focused on the content of what they are saying or writing rather than on a particular language form” (p.70). In other words, teachers should provide contexts where students may feel free to use their productive skills (speaking and writing) to communicate in the target language. A study conducted by Dewi, Kultsum, and Armadi (2017) in Jakarta-Indonesia, 36 seventh grade students were tested on boosting their speaking skills through a series of communicative games by using ICTs. The results revealed that even though students at first felt ashamed, nervous and afraid, “their speaking skills were gradually improving” (p.4) (p.67).

Additionally, the teacher who participated in the research confirmed that students demonstrated a considerable improvement on confidence, participation, and fluency since games were the perfect tool to establish a comfy scenario in which students learn by playing games. As for writing skills, a case study carried by Rashid, Watson and Cunningham (2017) in Pakistan, shows the improvements in students’ English writing by integrating cell phones as
11 students voluntarily participated in this study and their goal was to write within 5 weeks at least three open personal blogs in English where everyone had access to respond, make comments, or give feedback about their writings. After training and instructions were given, students demonstrated a lot of enthusiasm when integrating cell phones into the classroom, which promoted their efficiency on performing the task. The majority of the students went beyond of what was expected by writing more than three blogs not only during class but also during their free time. The results also acknowledged the fact that “students were not only putting in more time in planning and revising their writing tasks but were also paying more attention to word choice, spelling, grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure” (p.5) (p.37). Findings such as these, support the idea that by integrating ICTs in the learning environment may have a significant impact on enhancing production among learners.

2.3.3. ICTs and special educational needs.

Integrating Information and Communications Technology may also benefit the support to students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). It is acknowledged the fact that the educational system should be in charge of establishing the right educational setting to every single student, especially to those that possess a condition which make the learning process even harder to face. However, these demands are not fully observed in schools despite the benefits that ICTs bring. Maor, Currie and Drewry (2011, cited by Mohaned Ghazi Abed in 2018) recognized ICTs as a relevant and valuable tool for learners who have writing skills as a difficulty since these technologies provide learners software where they can predict words, fix spelling mistakes and correct grammar. Also, these instruments may have access to voice recognition, which helps the learner to complete tasks and have a better plan organization.
2.3.4 Benefits of ICTs for SEN Students.

Having analyzed the importance of ICTs for SEN students, we explored the actual benefits for SEN students in the classroom. For describing some of the uses of ICTs for SEN students, we will categorize the students' impairment on five main categories, visual, hearing, speaking, motor, and cognitive impairment. Students with visual impairment can have access to text-to-speech applications easily through any smartphone, tablet or computer. Besides, several free online websites allow students to hear what they need (see link https://www.naturalreaders.com/online/). For students with hearing impairment it is of common knowledge the use of medical hearing devices to improve their disability, hence no further explanation will be done here. Students with speaking impairment may just, as easily as the students with visual problems, use text in speech applications in order to communicate with their peers, or teachers.

Students with motor impairment may require some investment in devices such as the trackball mice for computers, (mouse that uses a ball as a cursor to control the computers functions), or facial gesture recognition software, which uses the built-in camera of a smartphone, tablet, or webcam, in order to recognize the student’s facial gestures to control the computers functions. Finally, there are also many different sorts of software designed to aid the teacher with the learning process of students with cognitive issues. According to Meiring and Norman (2005), once you remove physical barriers, SEN students can learn more easily. For example, a dyslexic student who has spelling difficulties might focus mainly on writing correctly rather than the overall performance, once you remove the writing barrier, you open a door for the student to further develop cognitive skills. Therefore, enhance the learning.
2.4 Teachers’ Perception on ICTs

Rabije Murati introduces the term “educational technology” as a tool that every classroom should implement in the learning process in order to prepare people for the future. He claims that “learning [seems] to be more attractive and accessible to the student and at the same time responds to the demands and opportunities of the modern age in which we live” (Murati & Ceka, 2017, p.2). Hue and Ab Jalil (2013, cited by Gebremedhin & Fenta, 2015) state that “the success of technology use in education mostly depends on educator’s attitudes towards technology” (p.4) and their positive attitudes are the ones that will enhance and boost their practice; therefore, it is fundamental to know their perception about the integration of Information and Communication technologies in their classrooms. A study conducted by Gebremedhin and Fenta (2015) in Ethiopia, investigated teachers’ perceptions on ICTs in order to know how prepared they were regarding the use of ICTs. 74 teachers participated in the study by responding a questionnaire composed by 5 parts which measured their expertise on the software, their future professional development, what encourage them to use these tools, how competent they are, and what barriers they have to face during the teaching-learning process. Results showed that the majority of teachers agreed that ICTs are a potential tool to enhance learning, and that it is mandatory in nowadays society; however, many of them agreed that they are unable to use these technologies because of the lack of support the schools provide to their teachers’ professional development. Also, despite teachers’ ability to search information using the software, they feel that “a knowledge gap, a smaller number of computers in departments and lack of consecutive training [work as barriers] as the technology is changing radically” (Gebremedhin & Fenta, 2015, p.10).
2.5 Teachers’ Acceptance and Rejection of ICTs

A recent study conducted by Silviyanti and Yusuf in Indonesia takes into account a model introduced by David, Bagozzi, and Warshaw in 1989 named Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in order to determine teachers’ willingness to use ICTs. A questionnaire and interviews of 42 teachers’ perceptions were measured regarding the utility and facility of technology use because “those are the main factors that will lead teachers to adopt or reject using ICTs” (Silviyanti & Yusuf, 2015). The findings demonstrate that most teachers use computers and access to the internet every day, only a few of them do it once or twice a week. This means that it is a well-known tool teachers are familiar with. Unfortunately, results also showed that “about 61.9% of respondents rarely or never used ICTs in teaching” (p.129) Despite the fact that no one disagreed with the benefits of its usage in language learning. As shown in the previous study, technology is frequently used by teachers. Therefore, if they already accept it and even use it constantly in their daily lives, why not implementing them in their lessons?

2.6 Schools and Teachers’ Training Programmes on ICTs Usage

Regarding teachers themselves, some variables might make the implementation of ICT tools easier. According to Tasir et al., “Those variables are teachers’ ICT competency, teachers’ confidence level in using ICTs, and teachers’ satisfaction on ICT training programmes” (Tasir et al., 2012, p.1). The need of these training programmes is colossal since technology evolves and changes rapidly and many technological devices become obsolete. This requires adaptation and new skills from teachers.

Regarding teachers’ confidence level towards using ICTs, and teachers' satisfaction toward ICT training programmes, the study conducted by Tasir et al. (2012) showed that “teacher’s confidence level toward using ICT is positively
correlated to teacher’s satisfaction toward ICT Training Programmes (0.571, p<0.05)” (p.5). Moreover, this correlation of teachers’ competency and teachers’ satisfaction toward ICT training programmes showed that “teacher’s competency is positively correlated to teacher’s satisfaction toward ICT Training Programmes (0.496, p<0.05). The relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. The value 0.496 indicates that the correlation is moderate” (Tasir et al., 2012, p.6). This has demonstrated that Malaysian teachers feel confidence in using ICTs and they are highly competent while using ICTs by cause of their training programmes which according to Tasir et al “teachers have a high level of satisfaction toward ICT training programmes” (p.6) (Tasir et al 2012). The results indicate that the Malaysian Ministry of Education is aware of the benefits that ICTs provide to teachers, students, schools, and the educational system itself since they provide programmes which satisfy their teachers’ needs.

2.7 Teachers’ and Schools’ Awareness of ICTs’ Benefits Bases

Malaysia’s Ministry of Education stated in 2010 that many governments around the globe have started to invest in ICTs to address the demands of the digital age. Also Tasir et al, have stated that many different countries are already training their teachers “South Korea reported of having trained all teachers in selected subjects, or a total of 3,897 in-service teachers per year. Intel India has reported of training 230,540 in-service teachers across 35 cities in India and a total of 29,702 pre-service teachers. Intel Malaysia has trained over 15,000 teachers to date, while the World Links sponsored training programmes in India have trained 130,000 teachers” (Tasir et al. 2012).

The benefits of ICTs are known worldwide and their implementation is great success for the digital age we are living. Integrating ICTs into the school environment to equip the next generation of teachers and students to become more competitive in the technology-driven globalized world is the aim of this
programmes. Chile is no stranger to this situation since ICTs have been tackled in its Bases Curriculares and the National Curriculum.

2.8 The National Context

In Chile, The National Curriculum is composed by three main instruments: Bases Curriculares, Programas de Estudio, and Planes de Estudio, together, they seek to support the learning process of the students, how? Stating the objectives students must achieve during their time at school (OA), monitoring and recommending didactive ideas and procedures that may help the achievement of the objectives, and establishing a plan in which subjects are distributed accordingly to the schedule the school has adapted. Additionally, resources such as texts, materials, and even computers are distributed all over the country in order to reinforce the learning of the students. Hence, it is crucial for us, us teachers, to make use of these tools in favor of the development of skills and knowledge of our students.

The National Curriculum in its curricular bases situates English as tool to access information and technologies in order to fulfill the demands of the current society (Bases Curriculares, 2012). Bases curriculares promote the use of ICTs in the EFL classroom, emphasizing the potential they have when learning a foreign language thanks to their wide range of possibilities such as CDs, Videos, Computers among others, which boost the development of the four skills of the students (Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing). It has been also stated in Bases Curriculares how benefitial ICTs may be since their use in class motivate learners to make use of the target language, while they also encourage interaction and constitute a great source of authentic material. As mentioned by Nădrăg and Buzarna-Tihenea (2017), “authentic materials and media can help students develop and enhance the connection between the language classroom and the outside worlds” (p.1).
Regarding the educators, the national curriculum states that the role of the teacher is to be a monitor and a guide in the learning process, meaning that ICTs are not supposed to replace the teacher's presence and they must be used as a tool for the class objective.

2.9 What We Want to Do

Technology is ubiquitous across all humanity, and its presence in the language classroom is undeniable. As teachers, we should recognize technology as a potential tool to enhance learning in a dynamic and attractive way rather than a simple smart device which causes only distraction inside the classroom. That is why it has come to us the idea to contribute to the world of ICTs and language education by developing an app which we believe will fit on the ideal classroom for the teacher and student. The app consists on bringing augmented reality into the classroom, where students and teachers can be benefited from it. This app will contribute to students learning process since they will be able to interact with the virtual creature, to choose its functions, and to feel motivated by integrating a new type of ICT in their classroom. Additionally, the app will also work as an assistant for the teacher since the teacher will be able to keep track of the time during activities, store an attendance record, to manage students' rewards, and to carry out key points from previous lessons so that students can recall and repeat past knowledge.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methods were optimum for collecting the data required for this research. In this chapter, the methods selected for our research will be explained in order to better understand each process we followed to obtain data.

3.1 Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was chosen for its qualitative approach. Its emphasis in community action, or in the words of Chevalier and Buckles (2013), “PAR must reflect and act on the complex factors that currently shape the course of human interaction on a global scale” (p.9) and problem analysis, “PAR tends to focus either on solving practical problems or strengthening the interconnections of self-awareness, the unconscious and life in society.” (p9) PAR gives us the proper insights to a potential change through reflection.

The problem we identified is that ICTs are not being implemented by teachers in the EFL classroom, and we noticed not much effort has been made to bring ICTs into the classroom considering the great amount of benefits they can give to education. We strongly believe that it is in our hands and the hands of every teacher not only to teach our students, but to contribute in the development of new teaching methods, techniques and devices for the further improvement of education. Besides providing the best environmental conditions that could both allow and foster the students learning process. With these ideas in mind is that we decided to take action and develop an app that aims to aid the teacher and fulfill the lack of ICTs we usually experience in the Chilean context.

3.2. Participants and Context

According to McIntyre (2007), Participatory Action Research allows to give an “emphasis on people’s lived experiences”, so starting from that, the data
for this research was collected from the lived experiences of a 23-year-old elementary school English teacher with her second graders. She is coursing her last semester in the English teaching program at Universidad Andres Bello and has done her practicum at two different schools in elementary and high school during the last two years. This research took place over a period of 3 weeks during their English lessons, two lessons per week, six lessons in total, in a subsidized school in La Florida, Santiago.

3.3 Instruments and Justification

3.3.1. Interviews.

To explore our participant’s perceptions regarding ICTs we conducted two interviews. One at the beginning of the process, before the first class using the app. This interview gave us important information about the perception that the teacher, our participant, had on ICTs. From the first interview we got to know if the participant liked ICTs, if she has experience using them, and everything related to the teacher’s experience with ICTs. Finally, to prove whether we had encouraged our participant to incorporate ICTs in her classes, we conducted the second interview at the end of the 6th class using the app. From the final interview we got to know our participant’s perception while using an app for 6 lessons and we saw if her perception regarding ICTs changed through the process.

Since we seek to discover our participant’s perceptions on ICTs, interviews were selected as the perfect instrument to achieve our objectives. According to Richards (2003) "We need to go deeper to pursue understanding in all its complex, elusive and shifting forms; and to achieve this we need to establish a relationship with people that enables us to share in their perception of the world" (p. 50). Interviews provided more detailed information about the
teacher perception on ICTs, which is exactly what we wanted from our participant.

3.3.2. Journals.

Since the beginning of our practicum we have become familiar with journals; therefore, we have chosen this instrument to carry out our study. We believe that this type of personal diary allows us to reflect on our actions and experience as teachers. Thomas S.C Farrell (2015) assures that by applying this reflective approach it will “encourage teachers to use data they have obtained to make more informed decisions about their practice” (p.8) so, we think that our feelings, attitudes, assumptions and thoughts helped us establish a critical reflection about our teaching practice with the use of a new ICT. That is why, the teacher who participated in the study wrote one entry of a journal for each of the six classes. This allowed us to explore the perceptions of the teacher towards the classes using the APP. It is worth mentioning that these reflections were as objective as possible so that they did not interfere with the analysis and results of our study.

3.3.3 Questionnaires.

Several instruments were used to collect the data, and they are explained as follows:

In order to know how the students, felt towards the app and what they thought about it, two questionnaires were applied, the first at the beginning of the process, (before the 1st lesson) and the second at the end of it, (after the 6th and last lesson). As stated by Auriat and Siniscalco (2005) “A formal standardized questionnaire is a survey instrument used to collect data from individuals about themselves, or about a social unit such as a household or a school.” In this case the goal of these instruments was making more valid both this study and the teacher's journals, so that what the teacher perceived about
the students and the app, could be compared with what the observer-teacher and what the students saw. This information was also given to the participant to let her know the students' perceptions on the app.

3.3.4. Non-Participant observations.

Each of the six lessons, in which the app was used, were observed by a third person. This person took notes of relevant events and the ongoing behavior of the teacher and students in the classroom. According to Lui and Maitlis (2010) “Non-participant observation is often used in tangent with other data collection methods, and can offer a more "nuanced and dynamic" appreciation of situations that cannot be as easily captured through other methods.” Following this, the data collected from this method was compared with the data collected from the teacher’s journals and the students’ questionnaires. It is worth mentioning that these observations were as objective as possible so that they did not interfere with the analysis and results of our study.

3.3.5. The App.

We developed an interactive application for using it as a teaching aid that allows students to select a personalized pet and name it. This app contains several features the teacher can use as pleased or needed according to the lesson, and it will be controlled from the teacher’s cellphone and will be projected with a data projector on the board. These features are explained as it follows:
1. Weather: The teacher can select an icon that represents the weather of the day.

2. Chronometer: The teacher can set the time needed for an activity.

3. Random button: The app shows a random name from the class on the screen.
4. Settings: The teacher can make any change as needed (change class, change pet, add or quit a name, change the background picture, etc.).

5. Row: The teacher can call the row, a green light turns on when a student shouts “present” and a red light turns on when a student shout “absent”.

6. Date: In this space, the teacher can write the date.

7. Star reward: The teacher can give stars as rewards to the class, they can be taken off if needed.

8. Roulette: The teacher can put several images in the roulette. Once the roulette starts spinning it stops by shouting “stop” or simply touching at it, showing one of the images previously set.

This instrument was created for the participant to try and give her perceptions on including ICTs in her teaching practice. This app does not teach English, it is a tool for teachers, a teaching aid.

3.4 Procedures for Data Collection

The data was collected during the months of September and October two times a week.

In order to collect this data, first we had to ask for the proper permissions to the parents of the students to the English teacher to allow us to modify the lessons she planned; and finally, to the school’s direction in order to allow us to integrate this new ICT into their classrooms. Having that done, started with the first interview to our participant teacher. The participant was informed of the nature of the interview, the estimated duration of it, terms of confidentiality and the uses we would give to the data collected from her, and after she acknowledged these terms, we began with the interview. This first interview lasted about 10 minutes and took place in a café she picked herself, which was calmed and suited the needs of the interview.
From this first interview, we extracted information that served for identifying our participants’ personality traits, teaching preferences and position towards the use of ICTs. Then we proceeded to train the teacher on the use of “Cocaví” and when she felt confident with it, she agreed to introduce it into her lessons. We also explained to our participant that she would have to write a brief journal after each session using the app. This journal would consist on her thoughts and on the app, and her opinions regarding the students’ reactions and behavior towards the app. The lesson before we introduced Cocaví, we made the students take a brief questionnaire that consisted on three questions designed to identify the students’ perceptions on ICTs and their experience with them.

On the first lesson with Cocaví, we showed the students the app and its functions and let them choose the a “virtual pet” from a set of characters built in the app, pet that would be the teacher’s assistant during the following lessons. Apart from selecting the “virtual pet”, the students also could name the pet as “Mister Dog”. During this first lesson, our part of the job was to observe the lesson and to take field notes on the teacher’s and the students' behavior, monitor the performance of the app and the connection with the projector. These field notes consisted on comments on the way the lesson flowed, being as objective as possible so that we did not compromise the results of our project. The lessons that followed the first one went on smoothly without any major issues (to learn more about this go to the findings sections).

After the final lesson, we made the students take a final questionnaire with three new questions whose objective were to discover the opinions of the students on the app and its usage inside the classroom. After collecting this data, we gave the results from both the first and the second questionnaires to our participant, so she could know what the students felt and thought about ICTs
and Cocaví in particular. Later on, we met again with the participant and interviewed her once again. This interview took nearly 20 minutes and took place in the same place as the previous one. The formalities before interview were the same as the one taken on the first place. From this final interview, just as in the questionnaires with the students, we could explore our participants’ feelings and thoughts on the use of the apps, and we also found new insights, that will be displayed further on the next section, on her perspective about ICTs.

3.5 Data analysis

The steps followed for the data analysis were three. Firstly, we identified four codes from the journals, interviews and observations. These codes were Thoughts on ICTs, recommendations for classroom management and ICT usage, positive results from the use of the app, and limitations that the teacher faced during this research. Secondly, we found two main themes, which were classroom management and class participation. Finally, we discussed how these themes were positive or negative for the main objectives of this study.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The main findings from the data collected were directly related on how ICTs can improve teaching practice. We have divided our findings in two main themes: classroom management and the encouragement of classroom participation since it was stated in the interviews, journals and observations that the options the app offers were helpful for the participant to have more control over the students and increase the class participation, this can be evidenced in the following tables:

TABLE 1: INTERVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Classroom management</th>
<th>Classroom participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>1.-” Also, when I use the stars for classroom management, for example, one day, I gave them stars because they were behaving very well, so since the dog showed his happiness, they did it as well”</td>
<td>1.-” when they saw the opportunity to interact with a virtual dog, which was the character they selected, they were overexcited”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.-” when I removed some stars, they started to work as a team, they started to calm themselves down, some students started to tell to the noisy students to stay in silence, or to stay in their sit, because otherwise, the whole class was going to lose more stars.”</td>
<td>2.- “in regular classes there are only 6 students who were always participating, yet when I included the random number, they were</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.-“They showed a lot of empathy with the dog. I could also see that they worked very well when the dog was asking them to do things, maybe because it was cute and something fun for them.”

3.-“every single time that the dog called them by their names to participate, even though they didn’t know the correct answer, they tried to do it anyway because the DOG was calling them. There was a need to answer to the dog.”

4.-“it was not a matter of raising their hands anymore. Now everyone was included. Everyone felt ”

As you see in table 1, we could perceive from the interviews that improvements regarding classroom management were very noticeable. Students showed a respectful attitude towards “Cocavi” especially when the participant made use of the reward feature in order to have more control of the class.
"when I removed some stars, they started to work as a team, they started to calm themselves down, some students started to tell to the noisy students to stay in silence, or to stay in their sit, because otherwise, the whole class was going to lose more stars."

**Example 2 – Interviews**

In the example we can see that students began to work for a same goal which was keeping Cocavi happy by not losing more stars. They even helped each other when trying to maintain a good behavior during the English class.

As for Classroom participation, “Cocavi” had as one of its features “Random Number” which consisted on calling one student randomly. When this feature was used, results were immediately identified:

"Every single time that the dog called them by their names to participate, even though they didn’t know the correct answer, they tried to do it anyway because the DOG was calling them. There was a need to answer to the dog."

**Example 3 – Interviews**

In this example taken from the interviews, it is recognizable how enthusiastic students were when they were chosen by the dog to participate. The participant also state that this happened mainly due to the willingness to
interact with the virtual creature; therefore, the class was more active and focused on the main goal.

**TABLE 2: JOURNALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Classroom management</th>
<th>Classroom participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>1.-” today they wanted to talk a lot and my activities didn’t match with what they needed at that moment. I connected my cellphone to the computer and the entire class saw Cocavi on the board. They immediately got quiet and wondered what I was going to do with it”</td>
<td>1.-” I know very well that if I use Cocavi my students will want to participate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.-” I gave the students 10 seconds to be quiet and focus on what they were doing. Many of them didn’t obey so, as promised, I took off one star. This made the students get quiet one to another”</td>
<td>2.-” It motivated me a lot that my activities and games were appealing to my students. They enjoyed feeling special as being selected by Cocavi”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In table 2, we can see that it has been also recognized from our participant’s thoughts improvements related to our two themes. Classroom management showed a positive progress since the first moment “Cocavi” was introduced to the class:

"Today they wanted to talk a lot, and my activities didn’t match with what they needed at that moment. I connected my cellphone to the computer and the entire class saw Cocavi on the board. They immediately got quiet and wondered what I was going to do with it”

Example 1 – Journals

In example 1, we can notice how quickly students started to behave themselves only because the teacher was doing something new, so they waited in silence until instructions were given.

Respecting classroom participation, the participant again recognized how beneficial having the random number feature was when applying activities where active participation was required.

It motivated me a lot that my activities and games were appealing to my students. They enjoyed feeling special as being selected by Cocavi”

Example 2 – Journals
In the example, it is noteworthy the fact that the participant notice how significant for the student was to be called by Cocaví, so much so that they were waiting for their turn to participate.

**TABLE 3: OBSERVATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Classroom management</th>
<th>Classroom participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Observations| 1.- “She starts giving the class three stars, and promises to take one back every time someone misbehave. The students work in an activity quietly for a little time but the noise slowly starts to appear again, so the teacher takes one star back. The whole class mourns and start demanding to each other be quiet in order to not lose anymore stars.”  
2.- “The teacher projects the app on the board and the students immediately make silence paying attention to the front.” | 1.-” During the activity students were quiet but willing to finish their task in order to be ready to participate in case the pet showed their names to answer in front of the class.”  
2.- “After finishing an activity the teacher uses the random button, it shows a name on the board and the student with that name says “siii, nunca me habia
As well as in table 1 and table 2, in table 3 positive development regarding classroom management was also demonstrated in view of the notes of our observer.

In the following example, we can see again the effectiveness of the reward feature in regard to maintaining the whole class on task:

“She starts giving the class three stars, and promises to take one back every time someone misbehave. The students work in an activity quietly for a little time but the noise slowly starts to appear again, so the teacher takes one star back. The whole class mourns and start demanding to each other be quiet in order to not lose anymore stars.”

Example 1 – Observations

The observer took notes of how this feature was applied during the lesson. Students were given and taken back stars anytime the participant felt it was needed which resulted in a very successful lesson since students were behaving themselves, and they were also supporting the teacher by making noisy classmates to keep silence.
As to classroom participation, the observer witnesses the eagerness to participate from the students, particularly because their name was on the board thanks to Cocaví:

After finishing an activity, the teacher uses the random button, it shows a name on the board and the student with that name says “siiii, nunca me había tocado!” (yes! I’ve never gone to the front!) and goes happily to the front.”

Example 2 – Observations

We can perceive from the example 2 that the student was already waiting for his name to appear, once this happen he was ready to participate without further complains.

Even though findings were noticeable and self-explanatory, key aspects concerning our two themes, classroom management and classroom participation, will be covered in the following chapter as part of our discussion.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Improving Classroom Participation

It is universally acknowledged that active classroom participation is a crucial element in a lesson, as Emmer and Stough (2001) state, cited by Wang, Airong (2014), students should be engaged in learning tasks, regardless of the types of tasks, in order for the learning outcome to be achieved (p.106). We have also experienced that in traditional classrooms the technique mostly used by teachers is the raise your hand Method that have provided to only a particular part of the class the opportunity to answer questions asked in class.

Classroom participation was considerably raised. Students’ motivation to interact with the virtual dog were noticeable in every instrument of our data collected. Comi, Argentin, Gui, Origo and Pagani (2016) suggest that ICTs due to their appealing visuals and software push teachers to create more attractive and engaging lessons for students, which may have effects in the students’ performance and the teacher-student rapport. Additionally, the learning context was appropriate for active participation since students were able to produce the language through an engaging experience, which is suggested by Harmer in his emphasis on The Communicative Language Teaching approach.

We could see this clearly reflected in the field notes and our observations in which we saw that most students were very eager to participate when the teacher asked for volunteer students to perform a task. This observation was also backed up by our participant’s journals and interview. She seemed to be pleased with the results of the study. She claimed to have seen an improvement in the classroom participation since the implementation of the app.
5.2 Improving Classroom Management

The use of the app as a teaching aid was proved to improve classroom management. According to Scherzinger and Wettstein (2018) “classroom management comprises effective monitoring, low-threshold interventions and rule clarity, which allow for efficient use of time and increase the amount of actively-used learning time and learning success.” (p. 4), this definition matches with the positive outcomes the use of the reward star feature of the app gave to our participant in her lessons. The results showed that the students' misbehavior and distracting noises during the lessons were easily managed by the teacher. Every time the reward system was used, the students were willing to finish a task or to stop any misbehavior, so that they as a class could obtain a star. These actions were the result of the use of the app the teacher considered favorable for her lessons, as she mentioned in one of the journals:

“I gave my students 10 seconds to be quiet and focus on what we were doing. Many of them did not obey so as promised I took off one star. This made the students get quiet one to each other. They complained to the noisy students that they could lose more starts and they could not allow it. Thanks to that they behaved very well for the rest of the lesson. Actually, they achieved the 5 starts at the end of the class.”

Journals.

The increased autonomy and commitment of the students towards the lessons were very significant for the participant, who mentioned that after using the app it would take less time planning since she could rely on it for certain activities.
5.3 Our Participant’s Teaching Practice after Cocaví

Regarding our participant's teaching practice after the implementation of the app we could see that it was benefited in the aspects mentioned before (Classroom management and Classroom participation). The teacher used the features of the app in such a way it contributed to an incensement in the active participation in the class as it was mentioned in the instruments (journals and interviews). She mentioned that this helped her because no all students were actively participating but with the app everyone had the chance to talk and participate. In relation to classroom management, the start regard system facilitated the teacher's control of the class since students on their own calmed themselves so they would not lose starts. The teacher did not have to use any other technique since this worked immediately as specified in her journals. This benefited directly the flow of her classes since there was no time lost in waiting for students to participate voluntarily nor asking them to be quiet and focus. Our participant expressed her enjoyment towards these aspects which helped her manage the class in a more student’s independent manner. She also stated:

“This has made my experience with the app and ICTs in general very positive. I am sure I will implement the app and other ICTs with my other students, even the older ones”

Journals

We can see her positive attitude towards the app and ICTs in general in such an extent that in her future teaching practice she will used them again as it was convenient for her.
5.4 Exploring External Factors

We realized during our study that our participant’s experience with the app was affected by some external factors such as her personality and her familiarity towards ICTs. Regarding the previous aspects, each teacher has their unique particularities, previous experiences with technologies, and predisposition towards ICTs, it could greatly affect their performance and experience inside the classroom when utilizing ICTs in their lessons. In our participant’s case, she is a young woman who is very interested in technology and has a great predisposition towards the use of new techniques and methods. This alone made her be very enthusiastic when asked to try this new app in her lessons. She started the study with high spirits and hopes. A technophobic teacher, on the other hand, who is not very welcoming when speaking of trying new things such as ICTs, might had not have the same results as our participant. In the case of her familiarity towards ICTs, our participant was a young teacher who has vast experience in the use of ICTs, not only on her daily life as a means to access information and entertainment, but also in her professional life. She had used different resources such as online books, data projectors, online games, etc. during her classes before the incorporation of the App. As mentioned previously in the literature, many teachers are reluctant toward the use of ICTs, and as mentioned by Klement (2018):

“The required technical-didactic knowledge is far from being achieved by all teachers, as some teachers do not dispose of various key competencies necessary for a meaningful involvement of ICT tools into training. The reasons for this shall be sought not only in the lack of these tools, but also in some of the internal influences which prevent the necessary competences of teachers in this field from further development.” (p.128)
We believe that her positive inclination towards technology in general and the participant’s ICTs background, helped her better understand this new ICTs in a natural way, rather than something “new” that she had to learn from zero. In other words, her background with ICTs and her outgoing manners toward her students helped her include our app into her lessons naturally and smoothly.

5.5 Going Back to our Objectives

During this study, we have stated two main objectives which we wanted to meet through the participant’s incorporation of the app to her classes. The first one was to explore teachers' perceptions on the use of ICTs as a teaching aid and the second one, to improve the teaching practice of our participant. We explored our participant’s perceptions on the use of ICTs, and they were very positive since she concluded that she will use it again and she will incorporate other ICTs in her future teaching; she even stated that she would recommend it to other teachers (Journals and Interviews). Respecting her teaching practice, there was also an improvement since she decreased her time planning because she knew she could relate on the app. This is also mentioned in the previous paragraphs where we have stated our participant’s improvement and positive experience.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Pedagogical Implications

In this digital era, ICTs fulfill a pivotal role for teachers to create more engaging and attractive lessons, hence the importance given by the educational research community. Nowadays, it is also important for teachers to upgrade and incorporate new technology in their lessons, having in mind that it is their responsibility to use them properly to accomplish their objectives. ICTs do not replace any aspect of teaching and should totally be considered as tools used as needed by competent teachers.

Raising awareness about the positive outcomes that technology in education brings, can encourage teachers to have more competencies and willing to embrace new and innovative ways to achieve their goals in the classroom.

This study has shown how the incorporation of technology in the classroom brings positive outcomes such as improvement of classroom management and classroom participation, which together made the teacher felt confident and motivated to continue using the app. Although, we consider that those outcomes would have not been accomplished without the teacher’s good attitude towards ICTs, positive previous experiences and determination towards the objectives of the class.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study was that at first, we planned to have two participants, one with positive and one with negative previous experiences towards ICTs, and compare their results from using the app. For time issues we could not find a teacher with negative previous experiences with ICTs willing to
participate in our study, actually one admitted he were scared to incorporate an app in lessons that already work for him.

Regarding the app, even though it was designed to be a teaching aid and help teachers in their lessons, it is worth to mention that not all the features are suitable for any kind of activity and that is going to depend exclusively on the teacher when or how those features are used. In the case of our participant, the roulette feature did not work as expected and took off a lot of time from her planned lesson; therefore she decided to not use it in the following classes.

6.3 Suggestions for further Research

Reflecting on some of the above aspects, we believe that ICTs’ related studies need to consider a variety of conditions that might make teachers have different outcomes from using the app. This is why we suggest further research considering the following aspects of a teacher: negative previous experiences with ICTs, different personality traits and relationship with their students, and from previous generations. Further research might find other positive outcomes that we are yet to discover. In our subject’s case, the app had the positive outcomes of improving her performance, being an aid for lesson planning and even taking a role as a motivator. We believe that even though ICTs might be on an early stage of development, they promise to take education to a next level in order to accommodate for the emerging needs of our students and their rapidly changing world. Finally, we would also like to encourage other teachers into conducting their own research on the topic, as a bigger research force will lead to better and faster results on the educational field.
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Appendices

Appendix A

Interviews:

FIRST AUDIO RECORDING (I: INTERVIEWER - P: PARTICIPANT)

I: Hello! good afternoon

P: Hi

I: How are you today, after the amazing lunch we just had?

P: fine, thank, I’m fine enjoying the sun...

I: Great! Well, tomorrow you will teach your first lesson with the incorporation of a new ICT! do you know what ICTs are?

P: Yes, I do, actually ICT is the abbreviation for Information and Communications Technology which involved mainly every kind of technology that allows us to keep us informed and to interact in this new digital world, for example, cell phones, radio, television, computers, among others devices.

I: Good, and as a training teacher what kind of ICTs have you implemented so far in your lessons? If you have done it.

P: Well, I have implemented the well-known data projector that allows me to show images and pictures to the whole class, I have also use computers of course which is very useful if you have internet connection since you can find many applications and online games such as Kahoot. Also, so far at my school, we have been using an online version of an Oxford book which contains, videos, songs, flashcards, and games all related to the unit and contents we are seeing with the students.

I: Do you think they accomplish their purpose?
P: yes, most of them have worked very well because you involved every student despite their learning style. So they seem to love it. Also, I know that kids are attracted by colors; therefore, I have many markers of a variety of colors to call their attention. However, the use of the PPT, for example, is easier, faster, and you can include many things to call their attention as well.

I: Do you know any teacher who uses ICTs regularly in their lessons? If so, what impression do you get from them?

P: Well, in my previous school, I worked with a teacher who loved using ICTs, he used them in every single class, and sometimes he also included apps such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube so since these apps were daily used by the students, the activities and projects were very convenient and meaningful to them. They loved it because they could use their cell phones, they could record themselves so it was very impressive the enthusiasm these tools provoke on the students.

I: is there any obstacle when using ICTs?

P: yes of course, actually last class I didn’t have VGA which is a special cable that connects the data projector with the computer, so I couldn’t use any of the online resources prepared for the class, in fact, I couldn’t use any ICTs at all, I just relied my class on the whiteboard, so I consider that if you are going to include ICTs in your lessons you have to know every resource needed, moreover you need to make sure that you know how to use it because sometimes you don’t own a personal computer, for example, and you have to use the one the school provides if they do it because not every school provides the resources for the lessons so it is very hard to accomplish the class without having the knowledge of how to use ICTs or what we need for using them.

I: ok, but soon you have to implement the new app we are creating for our study, so do you see any obstacle while using this new kind of ICT?
P: Well, since I think I’m well provided with all I need, a computer, a cell phone, and a projector to use the app, I don’t see any future problem with the use of the app. And regarding the content and the app, I also believe that there won’t be any obstacles mainly because I know my students and I prepare their lessons suitable for their interest. What else, well they love to participate so I think they will love to do it for “Cocavi”.

I: then, it seems that you are very prepared to face any possible obstacle during these six lessons…

P: yes! I know my students very well, so I do feel prepared to face any consequence. I have experienced the way ICTs work inside the classroom so my expectations are actually very positive, of course, we have to be open minded but if there is any obstacle I’m sure that It will not interfere with our final goal.

I: well, since we are very motivated we will finish the interview with higher expectations for the results of our study…

P: yeeees thanks again, and let’s begin!

I: thank you! See you soon. Bye regards.

SECOND AUDIO RECORDING (I: INTERVIEWER - P: PARTICIPANT)

October 5th

I: Hello! Yesterday, it was the last lesson you teach with the app incorporated, after these six lessons, how do you feel now?

P: Now I’m very happy, but at first I was very nervous. The app had many functions that there were new for me, so I was anxious about using them but after having the first and a second experience it turned out to be very easy and I felt very comfortable while applying the app to my students. I’m happy because I feel it worked.
I: Great! Is there any difficulty that you can recall from the lessons where the app was on use?

P: Well, first I think that you have to know well how to use your computer or the computer the school provides, actually you have to know how to use all the devices needed to apply the app in a successful manner because you can’t project the app from your phone directly to the whiteboard, consequently you need a projector, cables, and in my case an additional app that allowed me to project to the whole class what I had on my phone which was Cocaví (app) so I had to learn how to use it beforehand, but in the end it was very easy. It took me just two hours to understand its usage. However, I considered as a difficulty the fact that we need to be skillful with the use of technology because for me it was easier but perhaps others may find it a little bit difficult.

I: What were the contributions of the app in your lessons? If there were any

P: My students are very motivated, they like to talk, to participate and to produce language, so when they saw the opportunity to interact with a virtual dog, which was the character they selected, they were overexcited. I mean, every single time that the dog called them by their names to participate, even though they didn’t know the correct answer, they tried to do it anyway because the DOG was calling them. There was a need to answer to the dog. Also, when I used the stars for classroom management, for example, one day, I gave them stars because they were behaving very well, so since the dog showed his happiness, they did it as well. Also, when I removed some stars, they started to work as a team, they started to calm themselves down, some students started to tell to the noisy students to stay in silence, or to stay in their sit, because otherwise, the whole class was going to lose more stars. They showed a lot of empathy with the dog. I could also see that they worked very well when the dog
was asking them to do things, maybe because it was cute and something fun for them.

I: Then the app work in terms of participation improvement and classroom management control. Is there any other usage that you applied in your lessons?

P: Well, I also use it for the things that you have to remind your students every day, such as dates and the weather. So they were practicing how to say the date and weather every day. It took part of our routine which I think everyone felt part of the class. Almost the same happened in the case of participation because in regular classes there are only 6 students who were always participation, yet when I included the random number, they were expecting for their name to appear, I think that they felt this pressure that they needed to pay attention because their name could come up any time, it was not a matter of raising their hands anymore. Now everyone was included. Everyone felt part of the whole group.

I: What about the content? Did the app help you a little?

P: Yes! Especially during the warm-up stage and the close-up stage. With little kids, we are always checking vocabulary or reviewing new words seen in class, so the app helped me because it has as a feature adding pictures. For example, one class we were practicing parts of the house and items inside the class, then, I included pictures related to this topic like a picture of a kitchen, a living room, bathroom, and lamp, among others; therefore, they could recognize it and tell the name of what was in the picture. It’s a kitchen!

I: Would you recommend the app to other teachers?

P: Of course, actually, my mentor teacher who also stayed during these lessons, asked me where she can find the app because as I said before she realized that it was very useful for improving group work, since everyone was
helping each other, collaborating for a main benefit for the whole class, in fact, if a student was selected and he or she didn’t know the answer, their classmates began immediately to help him/her, because they could not disappoint Cocaví they needed to keep him happy. So my mentor teacher saw this more than content related it was something attitudinal where you also teach values, like respecting each other and helping each other. It was a huge advantage having the app in the class so I will totally do it, I will recommend the app.

I: is there any consequence that is necessary to tell?

P: just technical issues, for example, when I use the roulette to review vocabulary, it took longer than I expected, I had to cancel a whole activity that I had planned for my class because the roulette was taking too much time to stop and to show the picture. It was a consequence mainly because while we were waiting for the roulette to stop, students lose concentration, they are kids so since they have a short attention span and since nowadays we are in a fast-moving society where technology works fast, they started to talk and do others things.

I: Those features will be fixed though, we are working on it, so there won’t be any problem in the future.

I: as a training teacher, how would you describe this experience with a new app in your lessons?

P: at first I was nervous, you can never rely on technology because everything could happen, perhaps your computer won’t work, the electricity won’t work, the app may have an update etc. I was also nervous because I was having doubt whether they would like it or not, but when I introduced the app for the first time and they could choose the character, their reaction was immediately positive and they were very motivated to keep working with the dog in the following classes. It is very satisfactory seeing your students with a higher
enthusiasm and willingness to participate when you bring something new to the class especially if it is something new that it is for the whole class and not just for one student.

I: I think that you are very happy, same as us. Thank you for being the participant in our study.

P: thanks to all of you who gave me this change of experimenting something new for education.

THOUGHTS
RECOMMENDATIONS
POSITIVE RESULTS
LIMITATIONS
Appendix B

Observations

OBSERVATION 1:

The teacher starts the class smiling and singing a chant for students to get quiet, then proceeds to the greeting-date-weather routine, not using the app. She uses the data projection to review previous content and complete some exercises; she moves around and she can be heard from any place in the classroom. The students follow the class, but there’s a constant noise in the classroom; the teacher ask for silence using chants and songs and the students follow accordingly.

At the middle of the class the teacher introduces the app as “a new friend that is going to help us during the English classes from now on”, she asked the students to select one of the six pet options the app brings and then name it. They chose the Dog and named it Mr. Doggy. The students show excited and astonished about their new friend.

After introducing, selecting and name the pet, the teacher ask the students to work in the last activity of the lesson. Surprisingly, they finished their work without getting distracted by the app that was permanently projected on the data. The class ends with the teacher waving goodbye and the students wave goodbye back enthusiastically to her and the pet.

Observation 2:

The teacher starts the class normally with chants and the routine greeting-date-weather, using the date feature of the app; the students raise their hands anxiously to say the date. The students seem distracted and do not pay attention to the teacher, they talk to each other and the teacher takes some time
to speak to them firmly but not aggressively about their disrespectful behaviour. After that the students get more quiet.

The first activity couldn’t be accomplished in the established time and the teacher decides to finish it using the “random” option of the app in which the pet randomly shows a student name. The students immediately engaged to the class and expectantly hoped for their names to appear on the board. During this activity students were quiet but willing to finish their task to be ready to participate in case the pet showed their names to answer in front of the class. The teacher does a close-up activity using the data to project the textbook and the students ask her if she will use the app again in the next class.

Observation 3:

The class starts as usual with the routine (greeting-date-weather), but in this occasion the teacher uses the weather feature of the app to finish the routine. The students raise their hands to answer. Teacher uses chants and songs during the lesson as she teaches the contents enthusiastically. Some students ask when are they going to use the pet, to that the teacher answers “when you all finish and be quiet”. The children finish the task and the teacher uses the “random” option to correct with all the class. One student asks how can the pet know their names and every time the pet shows a name, the students applaud the selected classmate as they go to the front and give their answer.

Observation 4:

The class starts with the routine. The teacher starts the lesson explaining the contents using the textbook projected on the board. For the next activity she announce to the students they are going to use a new feature, the roulette, and also the “random” option. The roulette rounds until you tap it or shout “stop!” and it shows an image (previously set by the teacher). The selected students go the front and tap the roulette but it takes too long to stop; the student at the front
waits patiently, but the rest of the class starts talking to each other and after a while there is too much noise in the classroom. The teacher can only call 4 students to the front since she ran out of time. She had very few time to do the close-up activity.

Observation 5:

the class starts with the usual routine. The students are noisier than usual and only half of the class responds to the songs and chants. The teacher starts joking about videogames, which engages the attention of the majority of the class; this creates a lot of noise for a few seconds but the teacher asks for silence and everyone obeys. After that, the teacher tells the students that in this class she’s going to use the “star reward” feature of the app. She starts giving the class three stars, and promises to take one back every time someone misbehave. The students work in an activity quietly for a little time but the noise slowly starts to appear again, so the teacher takes one star back. The whole class mourns and start demanding to each other be quiet in order to not lose anymore stars. They finish the activity in silence and the teacher uses the “random” option to correct all together. The teacher gives the class one star for finishing in silence and another one for answer correctly all the questions.

Observation 6:

The teacher projects the app on the board and the students immediately make silence paying attention to the front. The class starts with the routine, greeting-date-weather. The teacher proceeds to the lesson and makes questions and the students raise their their hands to answer. After finishing an activity the teacher uses the random button, it shows a name on the board and the students with that name says “siii, nunca me había tocado!” (yes! I’ve never gone to the front!) and goes happily to the front. The class finishes with a count of five stars and students show very happy about it, everyone claps.
Experiencing the Use of an App for EFL Teaching

Appendix C

Journals

#1 September 11th

Today, September 11th, was the first day I implemented the app. I was very nervous about it because you can never rely on technology but in this case it was extremely necessary. Fortunately, everything worked perfectly. The data projector, my computer, cell phone and internet gave me no trouble. Students were very excited to meet the new friend I talked about. When they saw the app, the chose the dog as the class pet, and all of them were happy with the choice so we selected it! Students wanted to participate with Cocaví and play with it. It was not a distraction since they obeyed the rules of the class even though there was a cell phone projected on the board. As they said, they loved Cocaví. I also saw their faces shining when they saw the dog for the very first time. They found it so “cute” that they could not disrespect its presence. Even though plugging everything and turning on every device took a little time the class was fluid and all the activities and objectives were successfully met.

#2 September 13th

Today’s class was great. Students are usually quiet and calm although the class is during the last to periods of the day. However, today they wanted to talk a lot and my activities did not match with what they needed at the moment. I decided to connect my cell phone to the computer and project Cocaví on the board. I waited for their response and it was a very positive one. They immediately got quiet and wondered what I was going to do with Cocaví. I created a little competition related to the vocabulary of the unit. Cocaví in its settings a random button. This button gives a student’s name as if Cocaví were calling him or her. If you call the roll with the app, the app will give names of only students who are present that day. Since the class takes place during the last
two periods of the day I do not use that feature a lot but when I did it, it worked perfectly. Cocaví gave me the name of one student, and he had to participate (they love participating so it is hard to select one student among many others who are raising their hands but Cocaví did it for me). Everyone was engaged in the activity because Cocaví could call them so they must knew what we were doing.

#3 September 25th

Today I could realize how important are routines in the classroom. Two features of the app which help with routines are the date and weather buttons. I always state the date and weather by writing it on the board but since I started using the app I use its features to do it. I did not realize but today my students asked me about the date because I forgot to put it! They wondered why I had not used Cocaví as I normally do with the date and weather. I just forgot about it in that moment but they did not. I know how important is for my students talking and participating yet something as small as the date or weather are important for them as well. They need this because they are used to it. I don’t know if they realized I didn’t put the date and weather because on the right and left corners there are spaces for them, which obviously were empty, or just because they are used to see at least the date on the board with and without Cocaví.

#4 September 27th

Today’s class was a bit messy. I felt overwhelmed due to time management. As every class I gave my students time to go to the bathroom. I am aware that this sometimes takes time but it is necessary. If I do not do this, they will continually ask for permission to go to the bathroom so this is the way I avoid it.

In this class, I wanted to review the vocabulary from the unit so all my activities were focused on identifying parts of the house. Cocaví has a roulette in
which you can put pictures and when you tap it, it rotates and if you tap it again it stops and gives you a picture. In this activity I used the random button and the roulette but the roulette took a lot of time to stop. Every time a student tapped it to stop it took a minute or two. During that time the others students lose concentration so they started talking and doing something else. This made me lose a lot of time so I would reconsider the time I will use for it. Since I lost a lot of time my other activities had to be fast so we could have met the class objective. My students are smart and hardworking but they get easy distracted. So I used Cocavi’s chronometer to show them the time they had to finish the activity. I obviously gave them enough time so all of them finished the tasks. This was very helpful because they have no idea how long 10 minutes are. The chronometer showed them how long they had to finish the task so they focused on doing it instead of doing something else. Usually I have to tell them how long they have or remind them that we will check the task so they have you hurry, but this time I did not and it worked.

#5 October 2nd

One of Cocavi’s features that called my attention the most in this class was the five starts in the right corner above the pet. Today students were misbehaving a lot so when a student yelled without reason I realized the class was getting out of control. I warned the class that if they continued behaving like that I would take starts off. They already achieved 3 starts so they were happy about it. Students remain in control for 10-15 minutes but during the transition to one activity to the other one they started misbehaving again. I gave my students 10 seconds to be quiet and focus on what we were doing. Many of them did not obey so as promised I took off one star. This made the students get quiet one to each other. They complained to the noisy students that they could lose more
starts and they could not allow it. Thanks to that they behaved very well for the rest of the lesson. Actually, they achieved the 5 starts at the end of the class.

#6 October 4th

Today’s class was the last class I used Cocaví. After these weeks I can see how my planning takes less time since I know I can rely on the app. It motivates me a lot that my activities and games are appealing to my students. They enjoy feeling special as being selected by Cocaví, and I know very well that if I use Cocaví my students will want to participate. This has improved the environment in the classroom which was always calm and placid. Now, all students want to participate (no exception), they are always paying attention, and excited to know what is going on. This has made my experience with the app and ICTs in general very positive. I am sure I will implement the app and other ICTs with my other students, even the older ones. They use technology regularly in their daily lives so if we want successful classes we must adapt to their reality.