

# Percepción de los estudiantes respecto del uso de las TIC y el aprendizaje del idioma inglés

## Perception of students regarding the use of ICT and learning English

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### RESUMEN

#### Palabras clave

Percepción, TIC, aprendizaje, inglés, lengua

La creciente integración de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación en el ámbito educativo implican investigar el cómo y en qué circunstancias y condiciones estas herramientas apoyan a los estudiantes en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma. Lo anterior llevó a exponer la percepción de ellos respecto del uso de las TIC como apoyo para el aprendizaje del inglés. La investigación se realizó con un enfoque cuantitativo, transversal y descriptivo. La encuesta se aplicó a 162 estudiantes inscritos a la carrera de Negocios Internacionales de una universidad pública mexicana. Los resultados muestran que los alumnos perciben de manera positiva el uso de las tecnologías como apoyo en el aprendizaje del inglés; son conscientes de cómo estas herramientas pueden ayudarlos a adquirir habilidades para dominar un segundo idioma; no obstante, reconocen que aún no han logrado interiorizar el uso de las TIC, principalmente las dirigidas exclusivamente al proceso educativo. Por otro lado, consideran que las plataformas como Moodle y algunos tipos de software educativo no favorecen su aprendizaje, con lo cual se hace necesario repensar el uso de estas herramientas y convertirlas en un espacio dinámico para brindar mayor participación por parte de los estudiantes.

### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords

Perception, ICT, learning, English, Language

*The growing integration of information and communication technologies in education has involved investigating how and under what circumstances and conditions these tools support students in learning a second language. This led to exposing their perception of the use of ICT as a support for learning English. The research was carried out with a quantitative, transversal and descriptive approach. The survey was applied to 162 students enrolled in the International Business career of a Mexican public university. The results show that students perceive positively the use of technologies as support in the learning of English; are aware of how these tools can help them acquire skills to master a second language; however, they acknowledge that they have not yet managed to internalize the use of ICT, mainly those aimed exclusively at the educational process. On the other hand, they consider that platforms, such as Moodle, and some types of educational software do not favor their learning, which makes it necessary to rethink the use of these tools and turn them into a dynamic space to provide greater participation by students.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the inclusion of ICTs has transformed education, more specifically higher education given the exponential development of these tools. Different papers have documented this transformation and their authors point out that the use of these tools support the teaching-learning process (Cabrera, Sánchez and Rojas, 2016; Briede, Leal, Mora and Pleguezuelos, 2015; Cavazos and Torres, 2016; Pérez and Saker, 2013; Velarde, Dehesa, López and Márquez, 2017). These authors report success and failure experiences, and they highlight the concern of incorporating them permanently to promote the students' learning. Along these lines, technologies have expanded considerably and now they represent not only one of the main objectives posed by education through ICTs but one of the most pressing needs of the current knowledge society. Educational stakeholders continue to explore the implications technologies have on higher education and they are seeking to promote spaces to dialogue and reflect on this topic.

Currently, one of the core tasks, given the scenario of the growing integration of ICTs in the educational environment, has to do with the need to know how, to what extent and under what circumstances and conditions the incorporation of ICTs in the teaching-learning processes is modifying the educational practices in the classrooms and, above all, to know if ICTs are affecting learning positively (Bustos and Román, 2011).

On the one hand, higher education is at the center of the student teaching process and critical thinking. In this sense, ICTs play a key role in offering new scenarios and possibilities to develop competences (Esteve, 2009). One of the competences the use of ICTs may foster is the reading comprehension of the English language; however, the data submitted by the director general of the Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad (IMCO [Spanish acronym for the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness]), Juan Pardinas Carpizo, present a different scenario since they show that 5% of Mexicans only speak English (Becerril, 2015).

This shows that, despite the efforts of educational institutions, the learning of English is one of the pending tasks since, as shown in the study conducted by the Mexicanos Primero [Mexicans First] organization (O'Donoghue, 2015), the lack of real learning of English in Mexico reveals the weaknesses of the educational system in regard to the implementation of an educational policy, which shows the imperative need of a change of paradigm of the teaching and learning of this language.

Educational institutions are facing an important challenge in this regard. It is necessary to innovate and apply new technologies and tools that facilitate the learning of the English language, among those, the technologies since they can be the elements that foster the educational process when they are made available to teachers and students (Morales, Trujillo and Raso, 2015).

These tools can foster the learning of English and allow changes at a personal level such as attitudes and ways of thinking, to didactic and pedagogical elements such as contents, work and the direction of teacher practice. For Vera, Torres and Martínez (2014), these innovations generate new educational environments that influence the teaching-learning strategies and the didactic models. In particular, the relation between ICTs and the teaching of a second language is generated by changes that ICTs may produce in the students' learning. This means going beyond teaching with technologies since a transformation in the mentality is needed since "the important thing is not the excess of information but rather the ability to process it" (Vargas, 2015).

In order to do so, multiple efforts have been made through the use of tools that facilitate the access to contents in English, such as audios, videos, blogs, social networks, among others; besides the fact that more institutions and teachers that use them are incorporating them into their practice. Currently, we see classrooms equipped with projectors and computers, electronic boards, and even tablets with educational applications. However, these are not always used pedagogically, i.e., they do not achieve combining technologies with teaching methodologies and the learning obtained. (Hernández, Casado and Negre, 2016; Cabero and Llorente 2015).

Arteaga (2011) mentions that ICTs can be used in the process of acquiring a second language to enrich and foster learning since most of the students coexist with technologies naturally; they have grown with them and they use them on a daily basis. Studies show that one of the integrations of these tools in the educational setting has been given in the area of languages through teaching strategies that foster interactivity and promote motivation, efficiency and improvement of knowledge in a flexible environment (Arteaga, 2011).

The integration of ICTs and social networks reconfigure the students' learning environments by allowing them to train as future graduates and to develop new skills such as participation, critical thinking and initiative. This can generate a new university model (Esteve, 2016); however, this depends, to a large extent, upon the circumstances dictated by every educational center since the use of technologies may vary (López de la Madrid, 2007) and, hence, different results are achieved.

Based on the foregoing assumptions, we consider necessary to foster the discussion on the importance to assess, through the students' perception, the efficacy of the pedagogical uses of ICTs as their English learning support. Hence, based on these evaluations, we can recognize the processes and practices that are more efficient in offering innovative technologies that help students to learn, since as Bustos and Román (2011) point out, it is vital to "identify, characterize and understand the potential of ICTs to promote specific and necessary transformations in educational practices" (p. 4).

The research presented here aims at exposing the perception of the students of International Business in regard to the use of ICTs as an English learning support, since English is one of the most important languages in the world (*Excélsior*, 2015).

As part of the globalization and internationalization of education, the use of a second language has been acknowledged as one of the most pressing necessities in higher education (Moctezuma y Navarro, 2011). The studies in International Business have been in great demand in the last years and have become one of the most requested and competitive studies at national level (Vizcaino, Urzúa López and Muñoz, 2010); hence the importance of knowing, from the students' standpoint, to what extent the use of ICTs support the learning of English, and if their teachers use the technology, if they motivate them and if this contributes to their knowledge. The competence of the basic mastery of this language is one of the compulsory graduation requisites for the students. This has become one of the main concerns of both teachers and students.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was approached quantitatively and was based on the non experimental cross- type design with a descriptive and correlational methodology. To do so, we designed an *ad hoc* structured survey (Bernal, 2000), subject to expert judgment with which the content reliability (Fox, 1981) and validity of said instrument were assessed.

The research aimed at analyzing the perception of the students of International Business of a Mexican public university in regard to the use of technologies as tools that support the learning of the English language, identifying the factors the students consider favorable to such learning and knowing which technologies or tools teachers mostly use and which of them foster the learning of this language.

The study was applied to the entire population of this field of studies in both morning and afternoon classes which represented 320 enrolled students. However, at the moment of validating the instrument, we only considered those that had answered 100% of the questions, a total of 162 respondents, 88 women and 74 men. In regard to the semester, the number of respondents was distributed as shown in the following Table:

**Table.** Number of students in the International Business studies surveyed and distributed by semester.

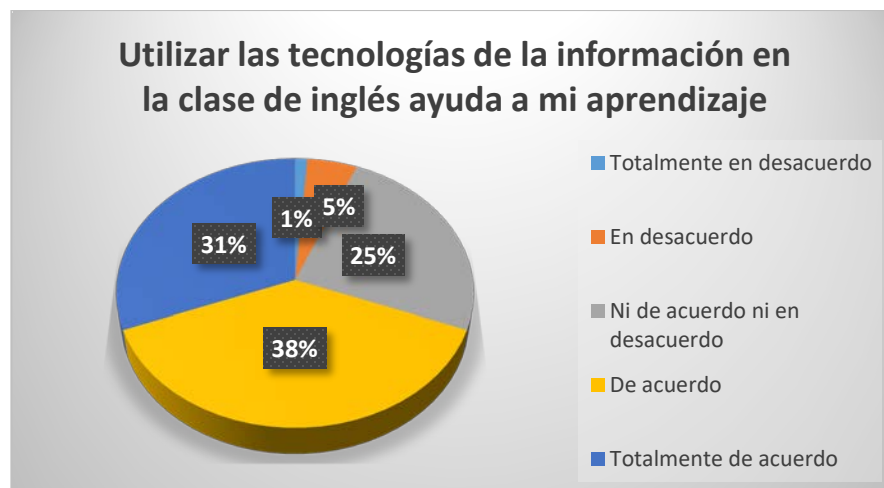
Semester	Number of students	Valid Percentage
3°	23	14.2
4°	30	18.5
5°	25	15.4
6°	27	16.7
7°	36	22.2
8°	21	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Self development.

We designed an instrument in accordance with the research objectives and the context in which it was applied. It consists of 15 items in Likert-type format, with five rank points, two in each polarity and one intermediate. They are rated from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). These were drafted according to the responses regarding the respondents' perception about the use of ICTs and the learning of the English language. To approve the contents of the questions, we resorted to the validation strategy by three experts on the topic of technologies for education (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2010), and to recognize the dependence between the respondents' perception about the use of ICTs and the learning of the English language, we applied the chi-square statistic test.

## RESULTS

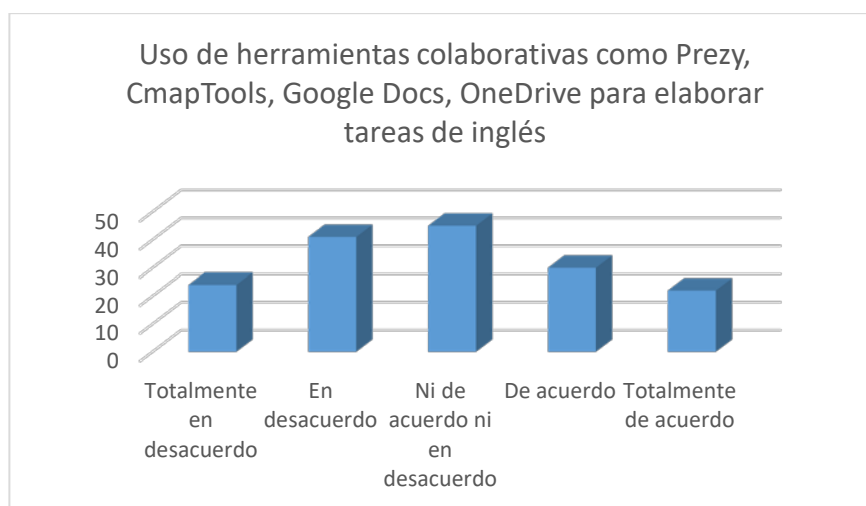
As a result of the analysis of the questionnaire data applied to the students, 31% of the respondents totally agreed and 38% said they agreed that using technologies in the English class could help their learning, which means that 69% of the students accepted that technology does support their educational process (See Graph 1); however, 25% do not take a clear stand since they do not agree or disagree; and 5% only disagree and 1% totally disagree.



**Graph 1.** Students' perception in regard to the use of ICTs and the learning of English.  
Source: Personal development.

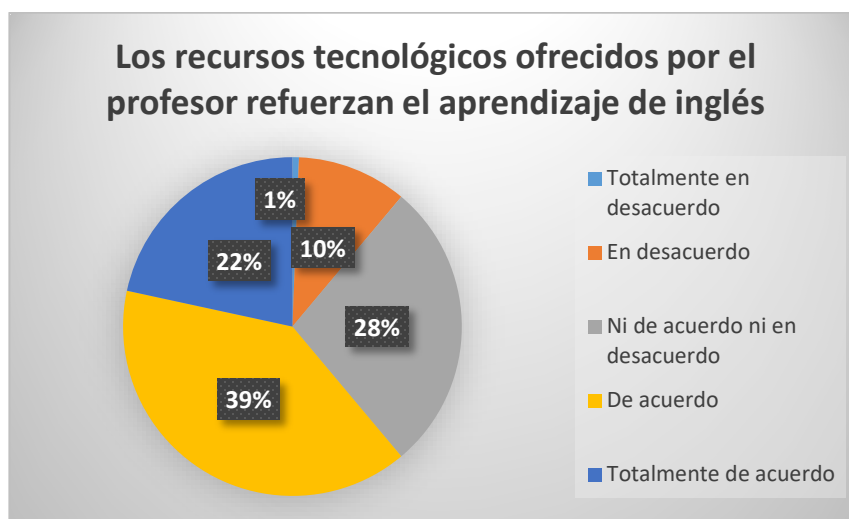
When correlating the data concerning the age and perception on using technologies, there is significance among those students that are older and think that using technology and practicing outside the classroom is necessary to learn English more easily. However, when making the correlation between the students of different semesters, we realized that there is no significance.

In regard to the question to know if the use of collaborative tools such as Prezy, CmapTools, Google Docs, OneDrive, among others, can help learning English, most of the students were inclined to respond that they did not agree or disagree (See Graph 2).



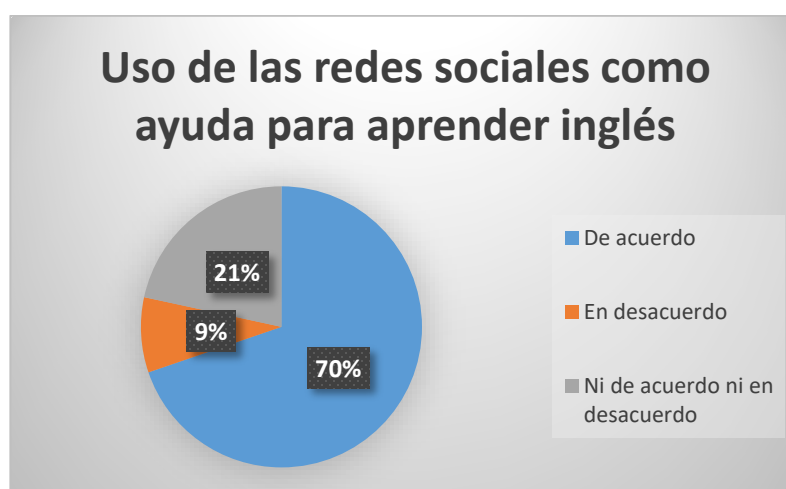
**Graph 2.** Students' perception on if the use of collaborative tools supports their learning of the English language.  
Source: Self development.

Likewise, the results highlight that 22% of the respondents totally agree and 39% say they agree that using the technological resources offered by their teachers to reinforce the English language help them in their learning; 10% only disagree and 1% totally disagree; the remainder, 28%, do not have a definite opinion on the topic (See Graph 3).



**Graph 3.** Student's perception on if the technological resources offered by their professor reinforce the learning of the English language.  
Source: Personal development.

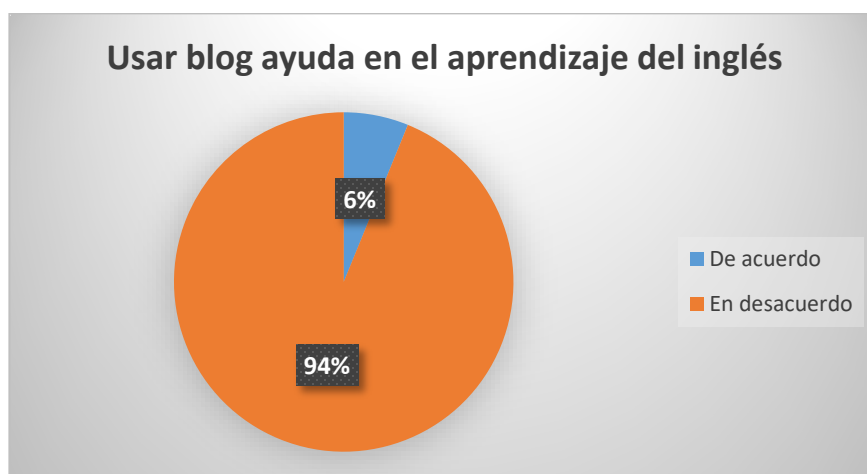
When asking if the use of social networks could help support their learning of English, according to Graph 4, the responses were overwhelming: 70% agreed that using these tools could help them improve their learning, while 21% did not agree or disagree, and 9% only disagreed.



**Graph 4.** Students' perception on if the use of social networks helps them in learning the English language.  
Source: Self development.

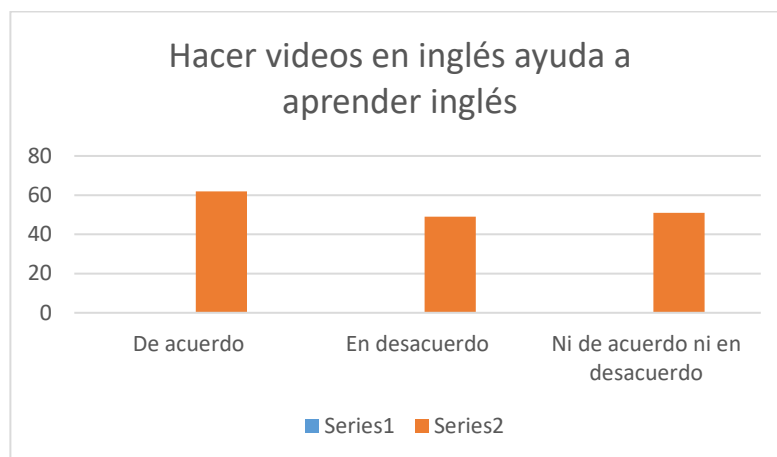


The strong responses in regard to the use of the blog as an English learning support drew our attention since 94% of the students mentioned that using this tool does not offer them any support in their learning, the responses tended toward “totally agree” and “totally disagree” (See Graph 5).



**Graph 5.** Students' perception in regard to the use of the blog as an English language learning support.  
Source: Self development.

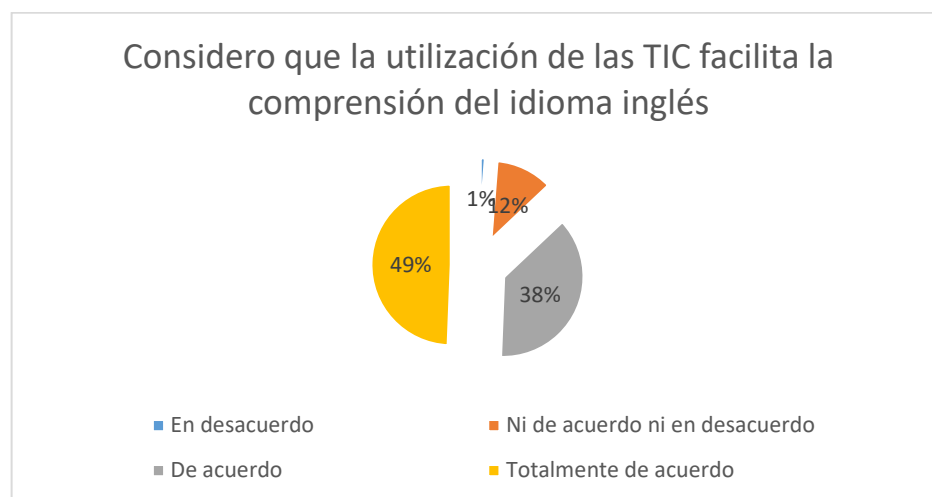
The opinion in regard to the use of the video to learn English is divided; 62 students agreed that by using this tool they can learn better; on the other hand, 49 disagreed and 51 did not provide a definite answer to the question (See Graph 6).



**Graph 6.** Students' perception in regard to the use of the video as an English learning support.  
Source: Personal development.

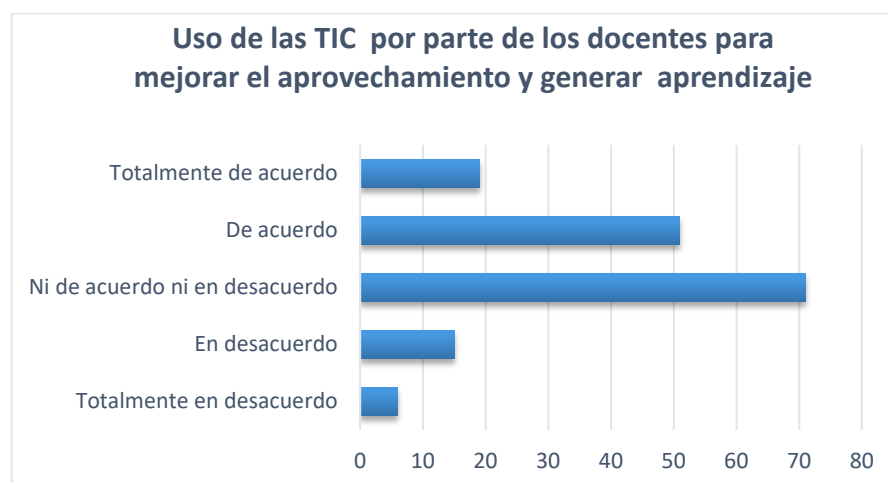


In regard to the students' perception on whether they consider that using ICTs facilitates their comprehension of the language, as shown in Graph 7, 49% of the respondents said they fully agreed and 38% agreed; 12% did not express a clear stand, since they indicated that they neither agree nor disagree and 1% said they disagreed.



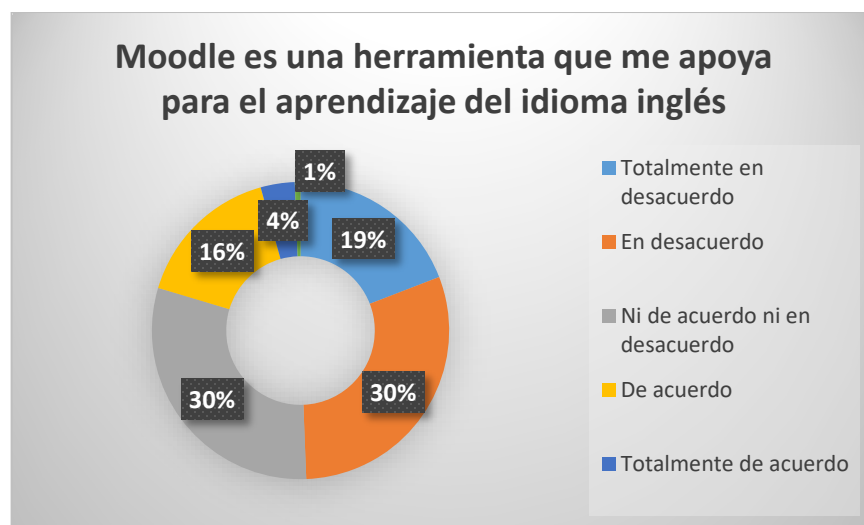
**Graph7.** Students' opinion if whether they consider that using ICTs facilitates their comprehension of the English language  
Source: Self development.

Likewise, the respondents were asked if they consider that English teachers encourage the adequate use of technological resources to improve their use and generate learning: 52 students totally agreed and 18 agreed, 71 did not have a defined response, and 14 disagreed and 7 strongly disagreed (see graph 8).



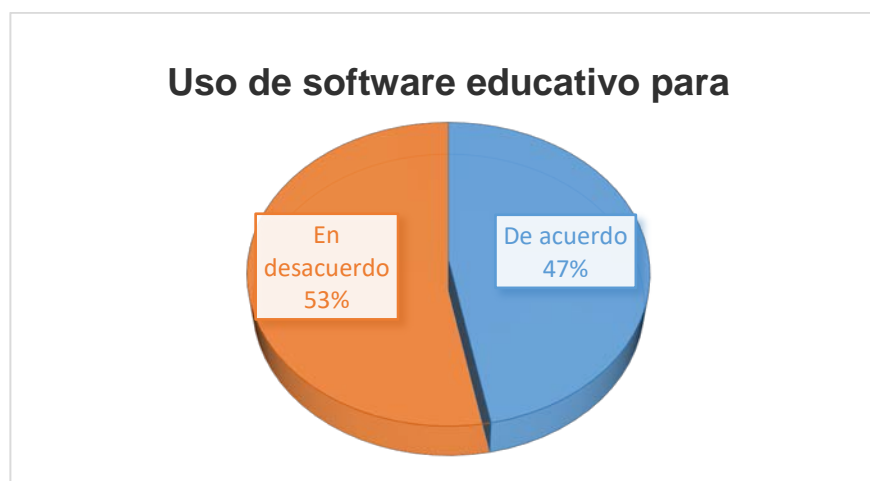
**Graph 8.** Students' opinion on whether they consider the teachers' use of ICTs help them make progress in learning the English language.  
Source: Self development.

In regard to the use of platforms, more specifically Moodle, 19% of the respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed and 30% said they disagreed that these platforms can help their learning, which means that almost 50% considers Moodle as not useful; 30% did not agree or disagree; and 16% only agreed since they perceived that this technology supports their learning of English, and 4% said they totally agreed (See Graph 9).



**Graph 9.** Students' perception on whether they consider Moodle as a tool that support their learning of the English language  
Source: Personal development.

Regarding the question about whether using specialized software to learn English strengthens learning; most respondents, i.e., 53%, answered no; while 43% said yes (See Graph 10).



**Graph 10.** Students' opinion on whether they consider the use of educational software as fostering the learning of the English language.  
Source: Self development.

The results also show differences between the perceptions of those who attend advanced semesters and those who are just starting, as the latter were sure that it is not necessary to use technologies outside the classroom to reinforce their learning of English, while those in advanced semesters said that it is essential to use them both inside and outside the classroom, since they consider that technologies can help them develop skills such as listening, speaking, reading and comprehending the language.

## DISCUSSION

In general, the students' perception regarding the use of technologies to learn English is good, since the frequency of use indicates that more than 60% agrees that using them strengthens their learning, which is consistent with the papers presented by Ponce and Morán (2017), Tena (2017), Morales *et al.* (2015), who believe that technologies enable the learning of languages and support the development of the students' practical skills. However, it is worth highlighting that another large number of respondents do not assume a clear posture on whether technologies really benefit their learning. According to the results of the subsequent questions, this is due to the fact that teachers do not use technologies that motivate learning, i.e., besides using them in the classroom, students as well as teachers should make the most of the full pedagogical potential of technologies in approaching learning.

The results show that students perceive that using social networks helps them develop their ability to learn the English language and they said that ICTs facilitate more specifically their reading comprehension; this shows how important it is to use this type of tools with a pedagogical approach. This is consistent with Morales *et al.* (2015), Vera *et al.* (2014) and Arteaga's (2011) posture, who point out that ICTs are currently important for the teaching-learning process and since they have been positively assessed and been made available to teachers and students, they would be essential elements to overcome the barrier between learning and practicing English.

In contrast to the above, the students perceive the specific use of blogs and the Moodle platform as tools that do not contribute to their learning. They consider them monotonous, without any consistent communication dynamic or interactive capacity. This is contrary to the ideas presented in papers that praise the benefits of this platform and the use of blogs to motivate and support student learning. Pérez and Barba (2010), Martínez de Lahidalga (2008), Valdez, Ávila and Olivares (2014), and Yugsán and Sani (2017), are among those that mention in their research that students show interest in learning when working with this type of resources, since their contents can be dynamic and interactive and are useful in increasing the motivation in learning the English language. However, they also agree that teachers still need more training besides developing digital skills to use these resources more efficiently since the expected results have not yet been achieved.

The above highlights the fact that higher education institutions have not offered their teachers sufficient pedagogical training on how to use technologies, as they remain concerned about the acquisition of the best applications and equipment to be used in educational practices. These institutions also neglect the teaching strategies that teachers should take advantage of through the use of ICTs so the ultimate objective of the teaching-learning process may be achieved. Likewise, the lack of teacher training affects the operation and activities in blogs or educational platforms; and presenting only activities from a data repository has a demotivating effect on the students who use these technologies since it limits their learning.

Furthermore, this emphasizes the hesitancy of students who were dubious in using videos and applications such as Prezy, Cmaps, Google Drive and educational software as their English learning support since students and teachers alike do not know the pedagogical use that the foregoing materials can offer them because these have not been incorporated to the entire teaching-learning process. This is consistent with the position of Martínez, Villareal and Dávila (2016), who stress the need to pursue the teachers' training in developing digital and pedagogical skills with the intention of incorporating ICTs in their teaching practice, and thus, motivate the students to use them (Sanabria and Hernández, 2011; Morales *et al.*, 2015).

The use of ICTs facilitates the students' autonomous learning since it allows them to learn at their own pace and encourages their active participation. Even though there is still a long way to go, educational institutions are making efforts to optimize the conditions that will allow including pedagogical and didactic curricular programs to the teaching of English. Moreover, teachers must also incorporate this type of resources in their didactic strategies to enrich pedagogical mediation and support the students' mediatic subjectivities. These are part of the pedagogical challenges posed in an increasingly digitized world.

The work presented in this paper provides data on the technologies students perceive as useful in improving their learning. These data are useful for higher education institutions, especially for those that are concerned with innovating and encouraging the learning of a second language through the use of technologies as tools that reinforce the development of competences and skills to comprehend, write, listen and read English.

Our study provides information on how, to what extent and in what circumstances and conditions these tools become basic resources to be incorporated effectively in the classroom. The results of the perceptions are an approach to what students believe about whether technologies can help them. Likewise, the teachers' lack of teaching strategies is evident when it comes to using effectively technologies designed to support learning with educational platforms and software; i.e., enable real learning

with the support of ICTs. Teachers must make changes in their teaching methodologies by using those strategies that best respond to the characteristics of the learning situation.

The foregoing reinforces the need to place greater emphasis on the pedagogical aspects that help the student to learn. Coll (2010) and Díaz-Barriga (2010) insist on the importance of applying teaching strategies with the support of ICTs that promote learning. However, according to the results of this research, this need is met in those who use technologies to teach and learn, and who are aware that this will be the starting point to encourage and support students in their educational process.

Likewise, this study has made us realize the lack of information in regard to the use of ICTs for learning English. Given these conditions, it is advisable to continue our research namely on the link between technologies and student learning, more specifically for the learning of a second language. Unfortunately, not enough studies have been conducted to corroborate these actions. Adopting technological tools in education poses significant challenges since teachers do not use technologies as significant learning support for their students; hence, educational institutions should take this issue into consideration.

The results presented in this research are interpreted partially since we have only studied the perspective from the students' general standpoint; hence the need to deepen our study on the impact of ICTs in the learning of languages through qualitative studies to ensure the quality of our data. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage studies that address the significance of using technologies to learn English and, in turn, conduct comparative studies between traditional classes and those using technological tools efficiently.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the data shown in this research, students are immersed in technology and for them it represents an important support in their learning. They are also aware of how these tools can help them acquire the skills to master a second language. Likewise, they consider that social networks, games and videos, encourage their learning. This is perhaps due to the fact that these are the technologies they are more familiar with and they master better.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that students have not yet internalized the use of ICTs, namely those aiming exclusively at the educational process. One example of this is the number of students' responses expressing indecision or an undefined opinion. Students recognize that it is possible to learn English through technology but they consider that their teachers have not yet found the adequate didactic strategies to link tools and contents since technology alone does not contribute in obtaining significant learning but contents, (knowledge)

taught with the support of technology, do. Lastly, we conclude that using technological means to learn does not suffice; these technologies need to be interactive and allow the students to participate in order for them to be motivated in continuing to learn. It is also important to note that applying ICTs to teaching English is not an easy task since it requires ongoing innovation focused on the students' intellectual development. The increasing presence of technology is a fact; nevertheless, only using them with a didactic purpose will strengthen their use in student learning and training. Hence, it is advisable to continue doing research that will disclose if using social networks, videos, games and software with which the students are already familiar and combine them with teaching activities and strategies established by the teacher, could actually encourage the students to develop skills to learn and practice English. Likewise, it is worthwhile rethinking the use of platforms and transforming them into dynamic spaces that facilitate the participation of students in their administration and configuration.

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