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ICT in the Teaching of English: Analysis of ICT-Related Methodologies

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have been gaining ground in the educational field. Their use in the class of English as a foreign language presents great advantages, not only in terms of linguistic learning – as numerous studies have clearly demonstrated – but also as regards personal skills – since students experience the learning of English from new and novel perspectives. This paper offers an analysis of some of the most innovative methodologies nowadays making use of ICTs for the teaching of English, namely Flipped Classroom, Challenge-Based Learning, Mobile Learning, Ubiquitous Learning, Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning. A comparison of these approaches is provided as well with the purpose of serving as a guide for a possible future implementation in the English class.

Key words: English learning, ICT, ICT-related methodologies, L2 English

Las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC) han ido ganando terreno durante los últimos años en el ámbito educativo. Su uso en la clase de inglés como lengua extranjera presenta numerosos beneficios, ya sea con respecto al aprendizaje lingüístico – como abundantes estudios han demostrado – o a habilidades personales – dado que los estudiantes experimentan el aprendizaje del inglés desde una perspectiva nueva. Este trabajo presenta un análisis de varias de las metodologías más novedosas en la actualidad que utilizan las TIC en la enseñanza del inglés: Flipped Classroom, Challenge-Based Learning, Mobile Learning, Ubiquitous Learning, Task-Based Learning y Problem-Based Learning. Incluye además una comparación que tiene como objetivo servir de guía si se considera aplicar dichas metodologías en la clase de inglés en un futuro.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje del inglés, inglés L2, metodologías TIC, TIC

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1. INTRODUCTION

> "ICT is not the future of our
> children's education, it is the present
> and we need to make investment in
> ICT now!" (Naace).

In just twenty-two words, the National Association of Advisors for Computer in Education (Naace) achieves perfectly to encapsulate the relevance that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has in education. Numerous studies have been carried out nowadays proving the effectiveness and benefits that ICTs present in the educational field for both teachers and students. Nevertheless, there is still ongoing debate on whether the use of technology for educational purposes is actually beneficial or, if by contrast, it does only produce negative results. It is important to remark, however, that the number of those opposing to technology in education is clearly surpassed by the amount of ICT supporters. A case in point is Chamberlain, who claims, "Education is evolving due to the impact of the Internet. We cannot teach our students in the same manner in which we were taught. Change is necessary to engage students not in the curriculum we are responsible for teaching, but in school. Period." (Chamberlain). In our constantly changing world, ICTs have acquired a great importance, becoming one of the most relevant elements not only of education but also of our daily lives, contributing in that way to the progress of society. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) goes even further in analyzing the relevance of ICT by declaring in 2002 in its book *Information and Communication Technology in Education: A Curriculum for Schools and Programme of Teacher Development* that "ICT has become, within a very short time, one of the basic building blocks of modern society" (8). It could be stated, therefore, that the significance of technology in today's society is huge, as perceived in the fact that if technology stops working, we are not able to perform certain tasks, such as watching the news, cooking a meal or sending a message to a friend. Bearing these ideas in mind and before starting with the analysis of such topic, it is important to shed some light on the concept of ICT. There is a great number of definitions regarding what ICT really is and which forms of technology does it encompass; for that reason, some of them are offered below in order to clarify its real nature. One of the best definitions is that provided by UNESCO, which asserts,

ICT refers to forms of technology that are used to transmit, process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means. This broad definition of ICT includes such technologies as radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed line and mobile phones), satellite systems, and computer and network hardware and software, as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as videoconferencing, e-mail and blogs. (*The UNESCO ICT* 1)

In the same way, Rouse, contributor to TechTarget – one of the best networks of technology-specific websites – and manager of its IT encyclopedia and learning center, defines ICT by also focusing on the forms of technology it includes, therefore stating,

ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning. (Rouse)

Finally, last but not least significant is the definition given by Cabero Almenara, who instead of listing the forms of technology that ICT comprises, describes it by presenting the three media it deals with, i.e. computing, microelectronics and telecommunications, hence affirming,

En líneas generales podríamos decir que las nuevas tecnologías de la información y comunicación son las que giran en torno a tres medios básicos: la informática, la microelectrónica y las telecomunicaciones; pero giran, no sólo de forma aislada, sino lo que es más significativo de manera interactiva e interconexionadas, lo que permite conseguir nuevas realidades comunicativas. (qtd. in Belloch Ortí 1)[1]

Special mention deserves the presence of ICT in education, as it is this field the point of interest of the present paper. By making reference once again to UNESCO's

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[1]. Broadly speaking, new information and communication technologies are those technologies based on three basic media: computing, microelectronics and telecommunications; yet, they do not only spin in isolation but also interactively and interconnected, which is the most significant aspect, allowing thus to obtain new realities of communication.

publication, it is learnt that "many countries now regard understanding ICT and mastering the basic skills and concepts of ICT as part of the core of education, alongside reading, writing and numeracy" (*Information and Communication* 8). Within the last 25 years, technology has been little by little gaining ground in the field of education, causing a turn of 180 degrees in the way teachers transmit knowledge and the manner students receive and assimilate it. As Leinonen and Mendoza López clearly illustrate, during these years the presence of ICT tools in education has varied greatly, which has contributed to the development of the current ICTs. It is actually by the use of ICT tools that the traditional way of teaching and learning has changed as "they can influence and transform learning by fundamentally changing the way in which a content can be taught and learnt" (Bottino 16). Yet there is still a great controversy regarding the use of technology in education; some people consider that using technology for teaching is counterproductive for students, resulting thus in low test scores and bad behavior (Buckingham, "Digital distractions"). Moreover, they deem that because of ICT tools, students are more prone to experience an "electronic generation gap, in which [they] are losing contact with the values of their parents" (Buckingham, "New Media Literacies" 10). On the other hand, there are also people that believe that rather than having a negative effect on students, technology contributes to their understanding and subsequent learning (Buckingham, "Digital distractions"). In addition, according to ICT supporters, these new technologies "are inherently empowering" for students because they involve great benefits for them (Buckingham, "New Media Literacies" 10). In his article "Digital distractions: What's wrong with the debate about technology in education", Buckingham reflects on this issue. In the end, the British author concludes that what really matters when talking about the use of ICT tools as a teaching resource is how "we manage them, and how we use them to bring about more productive – more creative and more critical – forms of learning" (Buckingham, "Digital distractions"). As well, Buckingham makes reference to a report on this question written by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), more specifically to its foreword, in which the relevance of technology in education is demonstrated, illustrating,

> Technology is the only way to dramatically expand access to knowledge. Why should students be limited to a textbook that was printed two years ago, and maybe designed 10 years ago, when they could have access to the world's best and most up-to-date textbook?

Equally important, technology allows teachers and students to access specialized materials well beyond textbooks, in multiple formats, with little time and space constraints. Technology provides great platforms for collaboration in knowledge creation where teachers can share and enrich teaching materials. Perhaps most importantly, technology can support new pedagogies that focus on learners as active participants with tools for inquiry-based pedagogies and collaborative workspaces. (qtd. in Buckingham, "Digital distractions")

2. MAIN ADVANTAGES OF ICT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Research on the presence of ICT in foreign language education (Çakici; Drigas and Charami; Ghasemi and Hashemi; Houcine; Klímová and Poulova) has shown that the use of ICT tools for the teaching of English as a foreign language presents a great amount of benefits, both for students but surprisingly also for teachers. In the case of the former, ICTs are beneficial in the sense that, as learners of English, students get to experience their usage while learning a second language (Drigas and Charami 4). Regarding the latter, teachers' profit consists in moving from being simply instructors to also facilitators, handing thus part of the responsibility of the learning process over to students (Drigas and Charami 4). Therefore, bearing these ideas in mind, this section will briefly explain some of the main advantages ICTs have in the learning of English as an L2.

In general, it is possible to affirm that the use of ICT tools as an educational resource transforms the English class due to several reasons, being some of them presented below. First, teaching materials can be adapted more easily to students' needs, being increased thus their engagement as lectures combine different ICTs, which results more interesting, dynamic and innovative (Houcine 1-2; Klímová and Poulova 53-54). Second, the use of ICT permits to provide an instant and faster feedback, an aspect highly appreciated by students as they esteem receiving comments on their activities (Houcine 2). Feedback can be either given by teachers or by technological tools themselves; the former, for instance, can comment on an essay about English music that has been previously uploaded to a virtual platform. In the case of the latter, considering for example online activities on how to use properly modal verbs, the same tool already provides users with the correct results at the same time they are completing such activity. Third, ICTs contribute to the development of students' remembering and thinking skills, which is particularly useful in the learning of a second language (Klímová and Poulova 55). As English is not their mother tongue, it is frequent for students to encounter difficulties that may complicate the learning process and reduce the learning pace. Nevertheless, due to its numerous and diverse characteristics, ICT helps to enlarge students' memory skills, which facilitates language learning. Fourth, distinct learning styles can be adopted with each student and at different times of the learning process, as the variety of ICT tools available for the English class is huge (Klímová and Poulova 55). It is common knowledge that nobody learns in the same way, and that as a result, it is necessary to

supply each student with those materials that may be more helpful to her/him and that may contribute in a greater way to her/his learning. Lastly, thanks to the use of ICT tools, it is possible to devote class time to improve specific linguistic skills, such as pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar, as the Internet provides authentic and up-to-date resources (Ghasemi and Hashemi 3100; Houcine 1-2). In other words, ICTs allow students to be exposed to actual English, something that was not possible before in the English class (Klímová and Poulova 55). As Klímová and Poulova acknowledge, these online materials can be "tailored according to students' immediate needs", being therefore of great usefulness to teach particular linguistic aspects (53).

With respect to the figure of teachers, it is relevant to mention that they acquire a huge significance in the process of learning English with ICT tools, as the impact such tools have in students "is highly dependent on … the teachers' motivation and [their] savoir-faire" (Houcine 1). Teachers are an essential element when learning takes place by using ICTs, being required their collaboration in order to achieve a successful language learning and becoming almost as important as students themselves. One of the main benefits ICT tools present for teachers is the shift that takes place in the classroom from a teacher-centered approach (typical of traditional education) to a student-centered one (Ibrahim qtd. in Drigas and Charami 4). In the teacher-centered approach, the teacher takes all responsibility in the learning process; s/he has to prepare the educational materials that will be dealt with in class, deliver the lesson, solve any doubt that may arise and evaluate students' activities; whereas students merely listen, take notes and do the exercises. Nonetheless, in the student-centered approach, as its own name indicates, students become the central point since they shift from being members of a large group in the learning process to specific individuals. What this variation implies is that students receive now a more personalized teaching, in contrast to the teacher-centered approach where content is taught to all of them in the same way. Students are in charge of their own learning and knowledge, while teachers simply act as collaborators in the process, facilitating and guiding students in the learning of English through the use of ICT. Yet, teachers do still prepare the lesson and assess students, although students' role acquires more importance as they have to take real responsibility both inside and outside the class. In this approach, it is students the ones establishing their own learning pace, which is of great usefulness since the teacher is able to devote more time to each student. This

personal and tailor-made attention, which emerges as students occupy now a central position in the learning process, on the part of the teacher, helps her/him discover how students are assimilating new content individually. On the other hand, on the part of students, this one-on-one guidance, apart from producing better academic results does also contribute to improve their motivation and interest for learning English (Houcine 2), as they realize that the teacher is concerned with their particular learning problems. A case in point illustrating how ICT tools contribute to achieve better academic results in L2 English is Ishik University (Erbil, Iraq) (Altun 23-26). This Iraqi university carried out a study aiming to investigate to what degree ICTs help to improve students' linguistic skills, and thus, their academic performance. 99 students of third and fourth year of English language at Ishik University participated in the study. Participants were asked to complete a survey containing several questions on the use of both traditional and technology-based methods in the learning of English as a second language. They were required to give their opinion by using a 5-point scale – including *none*, *weak*, *satisfactory*, *strong* and *very strong* – to show their agreement or disagreement. As regards the findings of the study, concerning traditional teaching methods it was found out that 72.72% of students consider that this kind of method contributes to their improvement of English. On the other hand, the percentage of students believing that technology-based instruction helps them progress in English rises up to 78.78%. Notice that although there is little difference between both percentages, the one of technology-based instruction is bigger. What this implies is that a higher number of participants deem ICT tools as better contributors to English improvement and their grades, as observed in the fact that almost all students (88.88%) think that technology-based instruction is necessary in the learning of English as a second language.

Concerning the figure of students, as Beauchamp and Kennewell remark, one of the main advantages the use of ICTs have for them, if properly used, in the learning of a foreign language is the liberty of managing different resources (qtd. in Drigas and Charami 4). These authors argue that the opportunity to work in class with a wide range of technological tools allows students to "move towards autonomy and be able to devise more dialogic and synergistic approaches in the future" (qtd. in Drigas and Charami 4). What this means is that they can go a step further in the learning process, being thus capable of establishing by themselves new forms of learning English based on

communication and group work, with the aim of accomplishing common linguistic goals. Consequently, students start to become self-sufficient, which transforms their learning path as they acquire new skills they did not previously have as regards language learning (Beauchamp and Kennewell qtd. in Drigas and Charami 4). This self-sufficiency that appears in students results in the improvement of independent learning (Houcine 2), a highly positive aspect since they discover how to learn English grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation – among other aspects – individually in a group setting. As they are acquiring new linguistic skills, their English level increases; as a result, they later use this new accomplishment to help other students that may have difficulties in class. Moreover, as Houcine illustrates, by helping others, students are more aware of the importance of communication in order to achieve a successful language learning (2), which clearly contributes to boost their linguistic competence. ICTs permit students to interact with English native speakers in actual situations and to develop "real-life communication" (Ghasemi and Hashemi 3099; Klímová and Poulova 54). Hence, they realize that making use of what they know as regards language, and subsequently of communication, is an essential aspect in the proper and complete learning and improvement of English (Ghasemi and Hashemi 3099).

3. ICT-RELATED METHODOLOGIES

3.1. FLIPPED CLASSROOM

1. Nature, i.e. what it is about.

Simply put, Flipped Classroom is a new way of organizing the English classroom. It is a "pedagogical model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed" (Educause 1). The change that takes place in instruction is made on the belief that traditional lectures are not fully exploited equally by all students, as there is a wide range of different ways of learning depending on each student. In that sense, the Flipped Learning Network claims that there is a shift "from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter" (1).

In essence, it can be affirmed that Flipped Classroom consists in "short video lectures [that] are viewed by students at home before the class session, while in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, or discussions" (Educause 1). Special attention deserves the use of videos as a teaching resource, as they constitute the key element of this educational approach. These videos can either be recorded by teachers themselves or be selected from an online repository containing videos already made by other teachers or experts on the topic that is going to be dealt with in class (Educause 1). Flipped Classroom firmly defends the usage of videos as a teaching resource as it is deemed that they acquire an important role in the learning process, since students are thus able to review lectures as many times as necessary, whenever and wherever. In fact, as Puppo notes, they can "cover the materials at their own pace and maximize intake", something that was not possible in the traditional lecture, "while also fostering increased learner autonomy", because they become responsible of their learning.

Lecture time changes its location, occurring now at home (or at any other place outside class, due to the ubiquitous aspect of the methodology). This variation is of great relevance as it results in the possibility to regard class time as "a workshop where students can inquire about lecture content, test their skills in applying knowledge, and interact with one another in hands-on activities" (Educause 1).

2. Figures of teacher and student and which positions they occupy in the learning process.

Concerning the figure of teachers, the establishment of Flipped Classroom in the English class presents a series of small modifications in their role with respect to traditional teaching. First and most importantly, they move from being instructors – therefore in total charge of both the class and the learning process – to guides, coaches and advisors – whose main task is to encourage "students in individual inquiry and collaborative effort" (Educause 1-2). As well, as the Flipped Learning Network remarks, their function is to guide "students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter" (1). Previously, teachers occupied an in-front-of-the-class position, as their role consisted mainly in explaining English grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation, among others, to students. Nevertheless, in Flipped Classroom, they are at the same level as students since they do no longer explain lessons inside the class, and thus, as the former and the latter now work hand in hand, "a more collaborative and cooperative contribution to the teaching process" on the part of teachers starts to take place (Educause 2). This change in their position allows teachers to consecrate more personalized attention to each student according to their specific linguistic needs (Muldrow 29). Notice that this tailor-made attention emerges because of students' new central position in the learning process. In fact, the new role that teachers perform in the English class is highly valuable in terms of language learning, as they are able to "continually observe their students, providing them with feedback relevant in the moment, and assessing their work" (Flipped Learning Network 2).

With respect to the figure of students, their role in the English class experiences a turn of 180 degrees. With Flipped Classroom, students become the central axis of the learning process, as they are the ones establishing the pace of English learning (Educause 2). Thanks to this approach, students are able to determine which aspects need to be covered in the English class – whether it is syntax, reading or vocabulary – since they are conscious of their own comprehension and learning of English. By completing their tasks at home, students become aware of the content they have trouble with, and thus can manage class time to solve any problem. As Muldrow clearly illustrates, the English class is completely tailored to their own needs since "students have the opportunity to make use of the material they are learning in a reinforced setting" (29). On the contrary, in the

traditional English class, the teacher is the one setting the content to be dealt with, which may impair the learning of some students as they may already master those linguistic aspects. Class time belongs to students, and in that way, the responsibility of maximizing class time to improve English oral skills falls utterly on their shoulders. Students' role is essential in Flipped Classroom, since the work that was previously done in class must now happen at home. For that reason, if students are not fully engaged and do not play their part, this innovative approach will produce no satisfactory results in the English class. It is crucial that students exploit home time to watch the videos and work with the materials prepared, considering that class time is now devoted to review the content and to resolve possible doubts that may have arisen at home. If that is not the case, and students do not perform as expected, class time is then of no usefulness.

3. Positive and negative aspects as regards English learning.

All the innovative characteristics that Flipped Classroom presents result in a great amount of positive aspects regarding the learning of English as a foreign language. Nonetheless, this novelty in the way of teaching also implies some negative aspects that should not be overlooked when considering the establishment of this methodology in the English class.

Beginning with the positive aspects, one of the clearest benefits of Flipped Classroom is that it allows devoting more time to practice real English in class (Puppo; Walsh). Class time becomes a space where students, as Puppo remarks, are able to "engage in meaningful interaction in the target language", which contributes to increase students' linguistic competence and oral skills as "the teacher is present to offer feedback as needed". It is common knowledge that in order to obtain a complete and successful learning of any foreign language, speaking is essential. It is for that reason that Flipped Classroom focuses that much on emphasizing English talk time, since it is believed that it will tremendously contribute to improve students' English competence and develop their communicative skills (Puppo). Another strong point of this methodology is the large amount of time available in class for the resolution of content-related doubts. With Flipped Classroom, class time becomes a sort of pooling space intended to resolve any problem that may have appeared at home while students were studying the lesson.

Besides, due to this newly organized class time, it is possible for teachers to "detect errors in thinking, particularly those that are widespread in a class" (Educause 2). Hence, teachers are able to help students to acquire a more comprehensive and thorough learning of English, since class time is totally customized to students' linguistic necessities. Considering the technological nature of Flipped Classroom, another benefit, in this case for students, lies in the possibility to rewatch and review at home educational materials as many times as necessary (Puppo). In that regard, it is possible for students to go through the content covered as often as required, which helps them to obtain a greater understanding. In the flipped English class, "lectures [are] under the control of the students" and as such, they are less likely to miss "significant points because they are trying to transcribe the instructor's words", something common in traditional lectures (Educause 2). Furthermore, the technological essence of Flipped Classroom is also advantageous for English teachers. According to Puppo, "by recording a lesson and then enhancing it with text, images, audio, and interactions, [teachers] are likely to reach more of [their] students in a way that appeals and makes sense to them". Additionally, concerning the provision of content to students, teachers have more freedom of schedule as they can upload teaching materials at any time from their homes. In contrast to traditional lectures in which content is always delivered at the same time, with Flipped Classroom teachers are able to send digital material to students whenever they have finished preparing it.

Nevertheless, Flipped Classroom does also present negative aspects, some of which are of great importance considering that this methodology will be followed in a class of English as a foreign language. One of the main problems has to do with the quality of the videos provided to students. Notice that neither recording a video from scratch nor selecting one already created are easy tasks, as a great amount of aspects must be taken into consideration. Learning a foreign language entails a series of difficulties, being the main one that such language is not students' mother tongue. For that reason, if the videos are complex in terms of language learning, being thus not fully suitable for students, they may find trouble understanding the concepts explained and will not bother to watch them at all. Another negative aspect of this methodology is that, as lecture time takes place at home, some students may consider unnecessary to attend class, because they may doubt of its effectiveness as they already have the material to study. Yet, the fact that class time

is reversed with respect to traditional lectures does not imply that the learning system is completely changed. The lecture still needs to be delivered and studied by students, the only thing that changes is the location where it takes place.

4. Degree to which it makes use of ICT tools, both in and out of the classroom.

As the key element of Flipped Classroom is the use of videos as a substitute for traditional lectures, it is obvious that this methodology will make extensive use of ICT tools, both inside and outside of the classroom. ICTs are the paramount element in order to obtain a successful language learning, being thus their use necessary all along the learning process.

On the one hand, although class time becomes now a space intended to practice oral English, ICT tools do also play an important role. Their use inside the classroom may simply consist in rewatching videos in order to review the content and solve any possible doubt that students may have. Besides, it is also common for English teachers to create quizzes or other digital content aimed to help students consolidate and practice new linguistic content.

On the other hand, using ICTs outside of the classroom, i.e. at home, is essential for the proper functioning of this approach. As it has already been discussed above, Flipped Classroom consists in reversing the traditional lecture, which implies that the lesson that was previously delivered in class by the teacher now occurs at home – or in a library or at school in extracurricular time for students that do not own technological devices. For that reason, since class time is no longer devoted to explain the content, home time becomes highly valuable in terms of language learning. It is obvious that the degree to which ICTs are used outside of the class will strongly depend on the responsibility and commitment of each student, as the teacher is not in control anymore of making them pay attention to the lesson. In a normal situation in which students perform as expected, the usage of ICT is great, as it is the only way of accessing the educational materials provided by the teacher. Notice that this methodology can be combined with other educational approaches depending on diverse factors, as for instance the linguistic level of students,

the topic that is going to be covered or the amount of time available for the English class, among others.

3.2. CHALLENGE-BASED LEARNING

1. Nature, i.e. what it is about.

> The Challenge-Based Learning framework provides opportunities for both independent and group work. Moving back and forth from individual thinking to group thinking increases the diversity of opinions and creates space for all learners to participate. Being able to work independently and in a group is a desired outcome of the experience for the learners in Challenge-Based Learning. (Nichols et al. 27)

Challenge-Based Learning is an innovative methodology based on the provision of educational challenges to students that they need to overcome in order to acquire new knowledge. According to Nichols et al., "through Challenge-Based Learning, students and teachers are making a difference and proving that learning can be deep, engaging, meaningful, and purposeful" (4). Being completely different from the traditional lecture-type class, Challenge-Based Learning presents an alternative form of organizing class time. As a way of teaching new content, teachers give students a series of challenges somehow connected with real world problems of the 21st century. Students are then asked to work in groups with the purpose of creating a collaborative space in the classroom that will help them to resolve the challenge and will contribute to their learning of new information, in this case of English.

This educational approach presents a great amount of benefits regarding its establishment in the English class, being some of the most significant ones explained below. Firstly, Challenge-Based Learning transforms the learning process by "[placing] all learners in charge, and responsible for the learning [of English]" (Nichols et al. 7). As it is illustrated further on, the roles of both teachers and students are modified; students are expected to decide by themselves how they are going to resolve the challenge, whereas teachers simply guide and assist them throughout the whole process. Nichols et al. remark that this change of role is highly positive as it transforms the class into "an environment for deep reflection on teaching and learning" (8). Secondly, because of its establishment,

it is created "an authentic environment for meeting academic standards and making deeper connections with content" (Nichols et al. 7). Students are required to solve challenges dealing with particular aspects of the language, and hence, they must select the proper tools to obtain successful results. A final positive aspect is that it makes a "purposeful use of technology for researching, analyzing, organizing, collaborating, networking, communicating, publishing and reflecting" (Nichols et al. 7). Due to the technological nature of this methodology, students are able to work with a wide range of ICTs, not learning only about English but also about different ICTs.

Challenge-Based Learning has acquired a great popularity among teachers all over the world since it "provides a safe space for all learners to think creatively, try new ideas, experiment, fail, receive feedback and try again" (Nichols et al. 9). In fact, it has been demonstrated that this organization contributes to students' learning as it is created a learning space where they feel comfortable and are not afraid of failing (Nichols et al. 9).

2. Figures of teacher and student and which positions they occupy in the learning process.

Challenge-Based Learning is based on the idea that everyone, regardless of its prior function, is a learner. What this belief implies for the management of the English class is that the roles of both teacher and student undergo some changes with respect to their previous positions in class (Nichols et al. 8).

Beginning with the figure of teachers, it is necessary to mention that, in spite of what is thought, the innovative framework of Challenge-Based Learning does not "diminish or demean the role of teachers … as they still have the primary responsibility for a successful learning experience" (Nichols et al. 8). It is true that students are given more responsibility with respect to traditional teaching; yet, as Nichols et al. remark, teachers are still at a higher level in terms of class control and management, which implies that their figure is completely necessary in the learning of English. As it happens in Flipped Classroom, the change that takes place in the role of teachers simply involves a swift from being instructors – or information experts, as Nichols et al. declare – to collaborators and guides (17). In that way, with this new position, "they [are able to]

leverage the power of students, seek new knowledge alongside students, and model positive habits of mind and new ways of thinking and learning" (Nichols et al. 17). Instead of providing solutions to students, in Challenge-Based Learning teachers assist them in their search (Nichols et al. 17-8). What this modification in the role of teachers means is the sharing with students of class responsibilities, clearly illustrated by Nichols et al. when affirming that, "most of what is considered "teacher work" in traditional settings is completed with the students during the challenge experience" (17). Therefore, teachers – now seen as collaborators and guides of the learning process – are expected to provide "structure, support, checkpoints and the right tools to get work done, while still allowing space for self-directed, creative, and inspired learning" (Nichols et al. 17).

As regards the role of students, with Challenge-Based Learning they become aware of the whole process of learning English – from initial aspects such as the selection of a topic for a lecture to the preparation of the lecture itself. Concerning the use of ICTs, the establishment of this methodology in the English class allows students to "have instant access to information through technology and the web, [and] manage their own acquisition of knowledge through informal learning" (Apple Inc. 3). Students are expected to make a proper use of ICT tools in order to solve the challenge; they need to take their own decisions and ponder about possible outcomes that may appear after those. In short, it is possible to assert that students move from a passive position – common of typical lectures – to a more active one.

3. Positive and negative aspects as regards English learning.

The establishment of Challenge-Based Learning presents both strong and weak points regarding the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Concerning positive aspects, one of the main benefits of this methodology is that students are able to manage the whole learning process, as they are in control of the challenge. Although they can obviously count on the help of teachers, students are in great part responsible for decision making, which results in a greater involvement as they become aware of the complexity of the learning process. Since students are required to solve a particular linguistic challenge, they become conscious of the significance of their

decisions. They realize that those decisions will have a strong consequence on the final result, being thus necessary to ponder deeply about what and how they want to do in order to obtain a successful result. This freedom to make decisions is highly positive for students, contributing hence to increase students' autonomy of learning as they have more liberty to work on their own. Following the previous idea, the fact of being in control of the whole process allows students to work with an enormous range of ICTs according to their own necessities when considering how to solve the challenge. Students will obviously need to decide beforehand the tools they will use, aiming to obtain positive results with respect to language learning. Thus, they become aware of the different technological devices at hand in order to improve English, hence practicing the language and learning about ICT. Another strong point entailed by the establishment of Challenge-Based Learning in the English class is that of group work. Due to the collaborative nature of this approach, students are asked to work in teams most of the times in order to solve challenges. This requirement presents indeed a huge benefit, as students start to develop a series of skills that would be highly valuable in their future. Moreover, as regards linguistic learning, Challenge-Based Learning contributes to improve students' linguistic competence. The fact of working with other classmates makes students put into practice their knowledge of English, since it becomes the language of communication among the members of the group. For that reason, students start to pay attention to their linguistic production, both in writing and in speaking, as they seek understanding and the resolution of the challenge.

With respect to negative aspects, and bearing in mind the last strong point provided for this approach, one of the main disadvantages of Challenge-Based Learning is that the fact of working in groups does also entail some negative implications. When working in groups, different roles need to be performed, obviously by distinct students. As the roles may vary from one group to another depending on the capacities and interest of students in the learning process, some students may peevishly take advantage from this situation, hence not working at all. The purpose of Challenge-Based Learning of working in groups is for each student to contribute to the process by playing their part, as group work contributes greatly to linguistic learning, as it has already been explained above. Another weak point of this methodology has to do with students' English production. It is common knowledge that, when learning a foreign language, writing is easier than

speaking, as in writing it is possible to place ideas and then come back to them. Nevertheless, speaking in English is much more difficult for language learners, because they have to construct first their linguistic production in their mind and then actually speak it, which involves a more complex process. Students may therefore abandon their interest in speaking in English and come back to Spanish. For that reason, it is essential that teachers help students to speak in English, as this is the main aim of the methodology, and not in Spanish, which will impair students' English learning. Teachers' role consists in encouraging students when speaking, even if their production and pronunciation are not completely correct, as students will lose in that way the fear of speaking English. Another negative aspect, in this case for teachers, is the fact that following the Challenge-Based Learning methodology in the English class can become a tough process. In order to obtain successful results as regards language learning, teachers need to organize and prepare in advance all the materials necessary for the challenge. It is true that the process of creating a good challenge can be time-consuming and hard, but it is also relevant to mention that the positive results that are achieved clearly outnumber negative aspects with respect to the learning of English as a foreign language.

4. Degree to which it makes use of ICT tools, both in and out of the classroom.

As a starting point, it is necessary to mention that Challenge-Based Learning makes an "authentic and powerful use of technology," both inside and outside of the classroom (Nichols et al. 10). In this educational approach, technology is regarded as a tool "used to research, communicate, organize, create and present information" (Nichols et al. 10). Such a great emphasis is given to ICT, as it is believed that "the use of technology allows learners to own and transform the learning experience" (Nichols et al. 10). Yet, ICT usage varies depending on whether students are inside the English class or at home.

As the challenges that are presented to students require of collaboration and group work, it is possible to state that Challenge-Based Learning is a methodology that mostly takes place inside the classroom. For that reason, a greater use of ICT tools will be made inside the English class; the use of ICTs inside the classroom is essential, being in fact the only way students have to solve the challenge. Such use may differ from challenge to

challenge, but generally, students will need to look for information that will help them in the resolution of their work, whether it is grammar webpages, exercises on vocabulary or an online article about syntactic units. In that sense, Nichols et al. affirm that, "ideally, the learning environment includes computers, rich media creation tools, the Internet, and mobile devices for anytime, anywhere access to information, content, and communication." (19)

On the contrary, home time does not entail a high use of ICT, as Challenge-Based Learning does not require so much work at home on the part of students, as it will be necessary for them to meet in groups in order to continue working together in their challenge. Therefore, the use of ICTs outside the English class may simply consist in students reviewing what has been dealt with in class with the aim of strengthening new linguistic content.

3.3. MOBILE LEARNING AND UBIQUITOUS LEARNING

Before beginning, it is necessary to mention that these two methodologies, i.e. Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning, are analyzed together as they both share the same basic characteristics. The only difference between them, as Radi Aljohani et al. remark, is that the former highlights "mobile computer as the centerpiece learning technology and the enormous possibilities mobile technology creates for learning," whereas the latter focuses on "the spirit of ubiquitous computing, [and] does not highlight any device as the centerpiece learning technology" (230).

1. Nature, i.e. what it is about.

Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning are novel methodologies that allow students to obtain and teachers to provide "educational content on personal pocket devices such as PDAs, smartphones and mobile phones" (Mobl21 1). These approaches are characterized by being "self-paced, un-tethered and informal in its presentation," as the main tool used in the English class is mobile technology (Mobl21 2). Because of this fact, some people consider that these methodologies are not adequate for a school setting; yet,

several authors have demonstrated (O'Malley et al.; West; Yahya et al.) the numerous advantages that Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning present in education. As West observes, students are passionate about this type of technology, being thus "no surprise that [they] want to employ mobile devices to make education more engaging" according to their own needs. The main idea underlying these approaches is the possibility to learn anywhere and at any time; as a result, geographic boundaries are broken, which allows both teachers and students to interact through instantaneous messaging, inside or outside the English class, and contributes to the improvement of English (GATE 2; Mobl21 2; Yahya et al. 117). The possibility of accessing educational content "wherever a student is located" produces significant outcomes, as "it enables, empowers, and engages learning in ways that transform the learning environment for students inside and outside of school" (West).

Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning are gaining ground in the educational field due to their numerous and significant characteristics, which are transforming the learning process. As well as by providing a ubiquitous and instant learning, these methodologies outstand by its flexible nature, adapting thus to each student's needs (GATE 4). One of their most relevant features lies in the motivation that boost in students, because of the possibility to access different apps with the aim of improving their linguistic competence (GATE 4). In contrast to other ICT tools, mobile technology is affordable for almost every user, which also has positive aspects in the classroom as no student may suffer from technological discrimination (GATE 4). Besides, students are able to obtain real linguistic information, being this aspect of great usefulness regarding language learning as they are in touch with actual English (Yahya et al. 121).

2. Figures of teacher and student and which positions they occupy in the learning process.

As starting point, it is important to mention that these methodologies do not entail a huge change in the positions of teacher and student with respect to traditional learning. The English class is organized similarly to a traditional lecture, though mobile technology is introduced in the lesson as a way of contributing to students' learning of English.

Regarding the figure of teachers, they are still the ones organizing and leading students in the learning process (GATE 11). They establish the learning pace and prepare the materials that are going to be used in class. However, teachers need to pay special attention in this case, as they are required to create activities appropriate to use in mobile devices. This is an essential aspect to take into account when designing or selecting content, since mobile technology presents different characteristics from other ICT tools. Hence, teachers can use mobile devices to create class and task lists, to take notes, to design different types of content – for instance, videos on grammar rules, vocabulary posters, web quests to improve writing skills – or to create presentations, among other possibilities (GATE 8-9).

Concerning students, in the same way as in a common lecture, their task consists in paying attention to the teacher's explanation and taking notes. Nonetheless, the use of ICTs in the English class makes them move from a passive position to a more active one, then becoming more involved in the learning process (GATE 11). Outside the classroom, it can be stated that their position is slightly more modified, since they are expected to carry out almost a continuous usage of ICTs, as this is the core idea of these educational approaches. Students are fortunate due to the continuous access to educational material at whichever place they are, simply by using a mobile device.

3. Positive and negative aspects as regards English learning.

Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning present both strong and weak points with respect to their establishment in the class of English as a foreign language.

Beginning with positive aspects, one of the main benefits of these methodologies is the possibility to access educational content when needed, which increases students' contact with the English language (GATE 5). Students are able to work with English at anytime and anywhere, which rises their linguistic interest as they realize that learning English is not confined to a class setting (GATE 5). Another strong point has to do with the usage of mobile technology. As it has been mentioned above, students are familiarized with such devices and will thus find no difficulty when required to work with them in class (GATE 5). In fact, as the use of mobile technology is permitted, students face the

learning of English from a new and positive perspective that differs from the one of traditional lectures, in which learning English is sometimes considered an obligation. With a renewed conception of English, the learning process occurs now with more easiness – as students feel relaxed – which contributes greatly to their learning. Moreover, these devices allow easily the use of games as an educational resource (GATE 5). It is commonly known that pleasant atmospheres where students feel comfortable and at ease have a strong impact in the learning process. Being aware of that, Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning propose a sympathetic environment where students learn English at the same time they are having fun. Hence, these approaches are favorable for students' learning of English as they "improve twenty-first century social interactions [since] mobile technologies have the power to promote and foster collaboration and communication, which are deemed essential for twenty-first century success" (Mobl21 4). Furthermore, thanks to the establishment of these approaches in the English class, a "personalized learning experience" is enabled (Mobl21 4). As it has already been discussed in this paper, not all students learn in the same way and at the same pace. Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning address and solve this problem because they support "differentiated, autonomous, and individualized learning" using diverse mobile technology (Mobl21 4).

Nevertheless, the novelty found in these approaches also produces some negative outcomes, as for instance "the potential for distraction or unethical behavior; physical health concerns; and data privacy issues" (Mobl21 5). There is growing evidence that a constant use of mobile technology results in users becoming inattentive and careless for other aspects of life. It is for that reason that many parents do not want their children to use technology, since they consider that negative aspects clearly outcome positive ones. For a proper understanding and learning of English, it is necessary that students compromise to use mobile technology adequately in order to achieve the expected results. As regards health concerns, opponents to mobile technology uphold that not only is students' learning impaired but also their health, because of the external characteristics of mobile devices (small screens and keyboards, among others). Students make a continuous use of mobile technology in their spare time, which affects negatively their visual health; thus, according to opponents, an increase in such usage will only make it worst. Another weak point is related to the huge diversity of mobile technology available

for educational purposes (Mobl21 5). In contrast to what it might appear, this variety of tools is not positive as it "represents a challenge for teachers and learners who wish to accelerate academic outcomes as well as the producers who seek to facilitate such learning" (Mobl21 5).

4. Degree to which it makes use of ICT tools, both in and out of the classroom.

Because of the ubiquitous and technological essence of these methodologies, it is possible to assert that they make a great usage of ICTs, both inside and outside the English class.

Inside the English class, ICTs are used as much as in the rest of the methodologies analyzed. The fact that the main device used in these approaches is the mobile phone is of high relevance, as it is owned by almost every student nowadays. What this means is that students will work faster since each of them has a particular tool, being thus able to toil at a greater rate. In this case, the use of ICTs can be summarized in the search of information or the completion of activities and games. As already mentioned, it is important to select the proper activities and games in order to obtain the greatest benefit of students' use of mobile phones inside the English class. Some examples of digital applications common in this methodology are *Kahoot!* and *Plickers*. These applications allow teachers to assess students' knowledge of English by the realization of catchy quizzes that boost students' interest and motivation for learning English.

The use of ICTs outside the classroom can be regarded as an essential aspect for the correct development of these approaches. As the technological devices that are used in these methodologies are the same students make use of everyday, it is considered that it will be easier for them to use such devices outside the English class to learn English. As regards content, at home, students are mostly asked to complete short activities that can be concluded in a short period at any place.

3.4. TASK-BASED LEARNING AND PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Before beginning, it is necessary to mention that these two methodologies, i.e. Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning, are analyzed together as they both share the same basic characteristics.

1. Nature, i.e. what it is about.

Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning are innovative methodologies for language teaching. As Larsson remarks, "[their] advantages are well documented: students are known to develop greater communicative, thinking and problem solving skills … than with regular lecture-based education" (2). The belief underlying these two approaches is that, in order to completely learn a language, a high degree of exposure is necessary. Both approaches present great benefits for students as they are placed in real world situations where oral communication becomes an essential element of the learning process (Pools-m 3). The tasks and problems proposed to students deal with real and open-ended challenges that require of students' knowledge of English and of ICTs to solve them (Boothe et al. 1; Larsson 2; Mathews-Aydinli 1; Ng Chin Leong 41; Pools-m 3). This interest in real life problems or tasks has to do with the idea that, as Boothe et al. declare, "the key to the success of English language acquisition … is to utilize selected constructive problems purposefully designed to address the desired learning outcomes, [which] are often influenced by social and contextual factors" (1). By trying to find a solution to these issues, students increase their linguistic knowledge and competence by making use of English during the whole process – as it "becomes a tool" necessary for the completion of activities (Pools-m 3). The nature of the tasks or problems provided to students can vary greatly – depending on the content that is going to be taught in class – as long as "the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose … in order to achieve an outcome" (Pools-m 4). Examples of tasks and problems may include making a hotel reservation, going furniture shopping or simply doing a puzzle. A relevant aspect to bear in mind when preparing educational materials is the selection of topics; teachers need to "select topics that will motivate learners, engage their attention and promote their language development as efficiently as possible" (Boothe et al. 1; Larsson 2; Pools-m 4).

2. Figures of teacher and student and which positions they occupy in the learning process.

The establishment of Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning in the English class results in some modifications as regards the positions of teacher and student.

Beginning with the figure of teachers, one of the main changes that take place has to do with their swift from being instructors to coaches and facilitators (Boothe et al. 2; Mathews-Aydinli 1; Pools-m 3). In this case, teachers are in charge of organizing the development of tasks and problems, assisting students all along the process and evaluating their performance and linguistic production. In fact, as Boothe et al. affirm, teachers are now regarded as resources that "encourage student-generated questions and monitor English language and content knowledge through discovery" (2). Thus, teachers are required to take a step back in order to be able to grant students some freedom to perform as they wish. In fact, from this new position, teachers can obtain a global vision of students' linguistic skills and know therefore which content needs to be reinforced. Teachers need as well to help students in their production of English, making sure that all the members of the group participate in the conversation and contribute to solve the task or problem.

Concerning the figure of students, they move from a passive position in class to a more active one in which they are responsible for their own learning of English, therefore "learning how to build on prior knowledge and focusing on the process of knowledge acquisition" (Ng Chin Leong 42). As they are required to talk, speaking English is mandatory, which implies that they need to take a more active role in the classroom. This has strong benefits for them as they increase their linguistic competence at the same time they acquire confidence and gain problem solving skills. Moreover, by working in groups, students are aware of their level of English, since the main aim is to communicate and being understood by others (Ng Chin Leong 43). As a result, they start to pay more attention to their English speaking production, minding therefore their pronunciation and both the lexicon and grammatical structures they use, as a way of obtaining a higher degree of understanding.

3. Positive and negative aspects as regards English learning.

Both Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning present significant advantages and disadvantages with respect to the learning of English as a foreign language.

Concerning positive aspects, one of the main benefits of these methodologies is that they contribute to improve largely students' communicative skills (Larsson 3). Whether it is individually or in groups, students are required to speak in English with the aim of solving the task or problem proposed by the teacher. In fact, these activities are of great help for students, as Larsson clearly explains:

> By building a language course around assignments that require students to act, interact and communicate it is hopefully possible to mimic some of the aspects of learning a language "on site", i.e. in a country where it is actually spoken. Seeing how learning a language in such an environment is generally much more effective than teaching the language exclusively as a foreign language, this is something that would hopefully be beneficial. (3)

Another strong point that these approaches present has to do with students' linguistic competence. The fact that they are asked to deal with real life situations makes students realize of the importance of speaking correctly English, as the main purpose of the conversation is to be understood. Hence, as Larsson observes, Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning encourage "students to gain a deeper sense of understanding" (3). In contrast to traditional lectures where students learn by heart linguistic content simply because it is necessary for an exam and "then promptly forget [it]", now students are able to "[acquire] a sense of when and how to use which vocabulary", which is more beneficial for them as they will not forget it that easily (Larsson 3).

Regarding negative aspects, and continuing with the previous idea, one of the main disadvantages is also related to students' English knowledge and competence. If the topics selected are too complex and are not adequate for students' linguistic level, it may occur that they will not be able to produce profitable results. Hence, teachers have to choose proper topics so that students can work adequately. Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning encourage "students to use their own language and vocabulary,"

being for that reason "necessary for the teacher to help students expand these" (Pools-m 6). If that is not the case and students do not acquire new content, then their level of English will continue to be the same and they will not improve. Mathews-Aydinli addresses this issue in her article, concluding that the best way to solve this problem is by grouping students "with stronger and weaker language skills" together, so that those "with weaker skills [will] hear the language and observe the learning strategies of the stronger students" (5). In the same way, students with stronger linguistic skills will also benefit from this grouping as they have more "opportunities to engage in interactions and negotiate meaning with their peers" (Mathews-Aydinli 5). The Turkish author proposes another solution, which would be to "preteach challenging vocabulary through reading and discussion" (Mathews-Aydinli 5). Another weak point appears when preparing the tasks and problems. The use of these methodologies in other disciplines such as Science or Law is highly frequent, being therefore numerous the books dealing with such challenges. Yet their use for the teaching of languages is quite recent so finding documents containing proper activities may become difficult. Obviously, teachers can always design their own tasks and problems, though they have to bear in mind that "it is however imperative that the problems are interesting, challenging and relevant to the students' reality or their educational value will be seriously decreased" (Larsson 4).

4. Degree to which it makes use of ICT tools, both in and out of the classroom.

Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning make a large use of ICTs, both inside and outside of the classroom.

The usage of ICTs inside of the English class is great, since they are one of the tools students have at hand to solve tasks or problems given. In these methodologies, as oral communication is mandatory, students are expected to make use of ICT tools in order to keep the conversation going and resolve the activity. For instance, suppose students have to make a hotel reservation for their next summer vacation and they need to ask about specific details of the hotel itself (staff, meal schedule, parking lot, etc.). Therefore, they may use ICTs to search for specific vocabulary related to the topic (as *baggage*, *bellboy* and *valet*), look for the meaning of unknown words of everyday language (as *require*, *enquiry* and *chatter*), or simply make sure of how a certain grammatical structure

is used (as question tags). ICTs acquire a high relevance inside the English class because students are able to find by themselves solutions to their linguistic doubts instantly. This has a positive effect in their learning as the teacher does not give directly the explanation to them – as it happens in traditional lectures – but rather students go a step forward and start solving their own problems, which increases their learning autonomy.

On the other hand, considering that tasks and problems need to be completed in class time, the use of ICT tools outside the English class is not that big. Hence, students may benefit from home time by revising the linguistic content dealt with in class, aiming at improving their knowledge of English. They may look for information about the topic of their task or problem or do online activities to strengthen what they have learnt, among other possibilities.

4. DISCUSSION

As it has been illustrated above, all the methodologies under study present great advantages as regards their establishment in the class of English as a foreign language. However, some existing differences among them may determine teachers' preference for one over the others.

The nature of these methodologies makes it possible to divide them into three different groups: first, Flipped Classroom; second, Challenge-Based Learning, Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning; and third, Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning. Flipped Classroom proposes a change of 180 degrees with respect to traditional teaching; what was previously done inside the English class, now happens at home, which allows to use class time to resolve doubts and to practice English. This is a risky proposal since, if students do not work at home, then this approach fails provoking negative outcomes in the learning of English. Flipped Classroom emphasizes class time to speak English, which is highly innovative, though negative issues should also be considered. On the other hand, Challenge-Based Learning, Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning believe in the use of challenges, tasks and problems, respectively, to teach English. In this case, students need to work in groups to solve questions inside class by using English as means of communication and ICTs. Nonetheless, it is essential that students speak English and not Spanish aiming at improving their linguistic knowledge and competence. As well, activities have to be adapted to their English level, as if that is not the case, students may find themselves in not knowing how to perform. Finally, Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning make use of mobile technology as a complement in the learning of English. These approaches take advantage of the ubiquitous nature of mobile technology, thus allowing students to practice English anywhere and at any time. Yet, there are also negative aspects, as the fact that students are already familiar with such mobile devices and may therefore employ class time to other activities rather than language-related ones.

With respect to the role of teachers and students, it is possible to observe two different possibilities. In Flipped Classroom, Challenge-Based Learning, Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning, teachers move from being traditional lecture-type instructors to guides and coordinators of the learning process. This implies that a greater

responsibility lies on students' shoulders as they are in charge of taking significant learning decisions that before belonged to teachers. It is essential to bear in mind this swift before introducing such methodologies in the English class, as well as students' age and linguistic level, since their effectiveness may be impaired. Students need to be given responsibilities and duties according to their age and level in order to obtain fruitful results. This becomes even more relevant in the case of Flipped Classroom, since the greatest part of the learning process takes place at home and hence, students need to be given educational materials that they will be able to work with on their own with no problem. On the other hand, in Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning, teachers and students' role remain in general unchanged, though there are some modifications. Students' position outside class varies as they are expected to make almost a constant usage of ICTs in order to continue learning English. Thus, it is necessary a commitment on their part with the aim of making the best of the learning process.

To make a comparison of these methodologies regarding positive and negative aspects is – from my point of view – useless, as there will always be distinct opinions depending on the person putting into practice a specific methodology in their English class. Notice that the strong and weak points of these approaches have already been exhibited in the previous section with the purpose of offering a general idea of each of them. The opinion on which methodology is better will strongly depend on the teacher and on other external factors that may appear depending on the situation in which it is established. Some of the external factors that may influence teachers' disposition for one methodology over the others are the following ones: students' academic level, students' English level, the number of English hours in the curriculum, and teachers' familiarity with ICT tools. Firstly, students' academic level plays an important role in the decision taking. Because of their age – and the subsequent independence and autonomy that are consequently acquired – students from higher years find no difficulties working on their own at home, becoming for that reason ideal candidates for Flipped Classroom. On the contrary, students from early years may find more frequently the necessity of teacher assistance during the learning process, being therefore better an educational approach that does not entail that much work and responsibility on their part. The same situation happens with students' English level. It is essential to bear in mind that students are learning English as an L2, which implies that their linguistic level may not be as good as

teachers would like or expect. Instead of seeing this as a discouragement and considering the discard of some of these approaches, teachers should regard them from a different perspective and try to adapt them to students' English level, aiming at increasing their linguistic skills and communicative competence. Next, the number of hours available for the subject of English is also of great significance, strongly influencing the decision of which approach to follow. Some of these methodologies take more time to plan before fruitful results start to be seen. For instance, for English teachers that only have 2 hours per week, following Challenge-Based Learning may get out of hand, wasting in that way highly profitable class time. Instead, a better option would be to combine those 2 hours of English with either Mobile Learning or Ubiquitous Learning, as these approaches require less previous preparation. Finally, teachers' familiarity with ICT tools is another strong factor in the selection of methodology. Teachers need to be self-aware of their acquaintance with ICT, as some of these methodologies suppose a greatest use of ICTs in the English class than others. Students are able to work with ICT with extreme ease, something that teachers face in some occasions with more difficulty as they were born in a different time where technology was not that advanced. Thus, it is relevant that teachers continue learning about new ICTs and put them into practice, in order to provide students with the latest technological and educational advances.

Concerning the use of ICT, it is possible to group them into two: Flipped Classroom, on the one hand, and the rest of methodologies on the other. In Flipped Classroom, the highest use of ICT tools occurs at home, contrary to the rest of methodologies where it happens in class. This is an important aspect to take into account since not all students may have private access to such devices and may therefore find enormous difficulties to perform as required. It is true that with Mobile Learning and Ubiquitous Learning the same problem could appear; yet, almost every student nowadays owns some type of mobile technology – as its price is more affordable – which diminishes such possibility. As regards the use of ICT tools as such, all of these methodologies make an adequate usage of devices according to the age and academic level of students, so they will find no difficulties even if it is the first time they use a device or a tool.

In my opinion, the best methodologies are those in which the greatest part of the work takes place inside class, as teachers are able to monitor students' learning process and discover linguistic problems they may have. Flipped Classroom is highly innovative

as regards English learning though there is a risk that students will not play their part – as lessons are delivered at home –, being thus linguistic learning nonexistent. In the rest of methodologies, lessons are given inside the classroom – with slight variations depending on the educational approach – and thus it is easier to control students' performance both in and out of the English class. As for which of the other methodologies is the best one, it is difficult to say without having established them in a class. Once again, results will greatly depend on several factors that cannot be fully contemplated and solved until these methodologies are followed in a real English class.

5. CONCLUSION

As the present paper has demonstrated, the use of ICTs supposes great benefits concerning the learning of English as a foreign language, both for teachers and students. By the analysis of six ICT-related methodologies, it has been illustrated that ICT tools do not only increase students' motivation and interest for learning and enhancing their English skills, but also contribute to improve both their linguistic competence and knowledge of new current technologies – clearly relevant in the 21st century world.

There is nowadays a wide range of ICT-related methodologies available for the teaching of English as a foreign language, having been analyzed in this paper just six of them, i.e. Flipped Classroom, Challenge-Based Learning, Mobile Learning, Ubiquitous Learning, Task-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning. A thorough study of these educational approaches has been offered with the aim of facilitating their selection for the English class. A comparison between them and a subsequent discussion have been provided as well, intending to clarify the similarities and differences among them. Yet, the final decision will obviously depend on the teacher and her/his own circumstances, being therefore extremely difficult to label one of these methodologies as the best one for the teaching of English as a foreign language.

It is essential for teachers to reinvent and keep learning about ICT tools and new ICT-related methodologies in order to provide students a proper and accurate learning of English. In the best of cases, after handling ICTs for a while, teachers will find no difficulties in their new way of teaching, always keeping up with the latest educational advances. On the other hand, as ICT tools are increasingly present in everyday life, students will enjoy and long the English class and will improve their linguistic skills even without noticing it.

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