

4

*ANALYZING THE USE OF ICTS TO ENHANCE WRITING SKILLS IN EFL LEARNING

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Resumen

Este artículo analiza el uso de tecnologías de información y comunicación (TICs) como técnica alternativa para mejorar la habilidad de escritura en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los objetivos principales fueron examinar el rol de TICs en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera, explorar el fácil manejo de estrategias, materiales o actividades y establecer en qué medida el uso de TICs está mejorando las habilidades de escritura. Durante el proceso de aprendizaje, los estudiantes se enfocan en mejorar habilidades de escucha y habla, sin embargo, la escritura es una de las habilidades menos desarrolladas. Se reúne información para una revisión narrativa usando data bases como ERIC, SCIELO y GOOGLE ACADÉMICO. Adicionalmente, se usaron formatos para recolectar información relevante y luego fue comparada utilizando me-

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ta-análisis para identificar la mejora del aprendizaje de habilidades de escritura utilizando TICs. Los resultados muestran que la implementación de TICs ha sido un pilar básico como base para consolidar una nueva educación, donde se apoyan necesidades de enfrentar propósitos académicos, proporcionando oportunidades para promover la escritura usando técnicas y estrategias innovadoras. El uso de dispositivos de computación brinda en educación oportunidades para innovar con nuevas estrategias para mejorar la enseñanza y aprendizaje. Igualmente, las TICs crea tendencias de enseñanza, ofrece aplicaciones innovadoras de comunicación entre hablantes nativos y estudiantes y permite ser capaces de participar en un mundo globalizado mientras mejoran sus habilidades, incluyendo escritura.

Palabras clave

Aprendices, innovación, habilidades de escritura, escritura y TICs en EFL.

Abstract

This review article analyzes the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as an alternative technique to enhance writing skills in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning-teaching. The main aims were to examine the role of ICTs in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning and to explore ICTs as a teaching and learning strategy, some materials, and activities to be implemented to improve writing skills. The information was gathered from databases such as ERIC, SCIELO and GOOGLE SCHOLAR. The data were classified using formats to collect the most important information and then the information was compared using a meta-analysis to identify the improvement of writing skill learning by using it. Results show that the integration of ICTs has been basic pillars to support education and to provide opportunities to promote writing skills by using innovative strategies and techniques. ICTs allow education to innovate and enhance teaching-learning. In conclusion, ICTs create new learning environments, in which students communicate with native speakers and allow learners to be able to participate in a globalized world while their skills are improving, including writing skills.

Key word

ICT in EFL, Aprendices, innovación, habilidades de escritura, escritura y TICs en EFL.

INTRODUCTION

During the last 20 years, English language teaching and learning have experienced an important integration of ICTs. It has brought new tools to construct strategies and techniques that can be used in both contexts' ESL and EFL. In this sense, this paper offers an extensive review of the integration of ICTs for enhancing writing skills among EFL students. In this fact, a number of researchers have reported writing problems and how the implementation of ICTs in EFL is transforming the way this skill is taught and learned. Firstly, Hinkel (2003) mentions difficulties when learning English for example in writing, which has been one of the weakest skills for EFL learners, even though writing supports learners to communicate feelings or to express ideas. Moreover, Lombana (2002) remarks that English teachers in Colombia felt challenged and threatened by writing when this skill is required to be taught. Likewise, Bruce (1998) expresses that learners were used to traditional writing, using papers and pencils but today, ICTs are transforming writing. Similarly, Purcell, Buchanan, and Friedrich (2013) find that digital technologies are shaping student writing in countless ways and have also become helpful tools for teaching writing to middle and high school learners turning writing interesting and fun. In this way, the implementation of ICTs allows learners to explore ICTs in an innovative, new and revolutionary way, changing the point of reference which is teaching writing with old techniques.

In fact, instead of replacing one kind of writing with another, ICTs are adding to the repertoire of process innovative tools. In this case, ICTs develop a significant part in the writing process because of the easy management and variety of tools used to improve learning. By the same token, Yunus, Nordin, Salehi, Embi, and Salehi (2013) remark that the notion of ICTs in educational fields refers to systems that enable gathering, manipulation, management, access, and communication of information in different forms. Somehow, the procedures during the EFL writing process are showing that those may not be completely effective or need to be complemented by applying other techniques in order to cover students' writing failures when learning English as a foreign language.

Under those circumstances, this paper examines the use of ICTs as a way to en-

hance writing skills in EFL learning and studies its role by comparing and contrasting the information to distinguish to what extent the implementation of ICTs helps to enhance the EFL writing process. What is more, this review article includes practical and theoretical implications. The practical implication is to contribute to the EFL learning and teaching process by proposing the integration of ICTs as a support tool to enhance learners' writing skills and the theoretical implications are to encourage the development of English writing by giving information about the role of ICTs in EFL classrooms and to suggest ICTs as an alternative approach to improve English as a foreign language. Besides, the information is gathered from databases such as ERIC, SCIELO and GOOGLE SCHOLAR and classified using formats to collect the most relevant information and then, comparing all data through a meta-analysis to identify the improvement of writing skill learning using ICTs.

Finally, the results conclude that the use of ICTs can be helpful for improving not only EFL writing but language teaching and learning as long as teachers are trained to manage them and to be able to deliver instructions correctly. Also, ICTs give new opportunities by creating innovative strategies, techniques, tendencies, communication tools and capacities to participate with high quality in globalization requirements. Thus, this review article proposes the following question to assist readers in creating their own perspective based on the information analyzed: what is the role of the use of ICTs to enhance writing skills in EFL learning?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Information and Communication Technologies in EFL Writing

Information and communication technologies have created opportunities to improve learning and teaching practices around the entire world. They complement the teaching and learning process by providing tools that help to develop education. According to Onozawa (as is cited in Marulanda and Martinez, 2017) ICTs have brought more focus on writing, which now transcends classrooms. As noted by Kellogg (2008) and Ferreiro (2001) ICTs facilitate the deep and accelerated production of writing and the learning of language skills. Additionally, Abdullah (2013) suggests that ICTs are great to improve wri-

ting and to innovate in the class. Ally (2008), Pennington (1993) and Warschauer (2010) support that digital technologies play important roles and emerge innovative tools for the teaching and learning writing, construct personal meaning and to experience learning in a different way. In that case, using ICTs to enhance writing skills is a good strategy because they catch students' attention with innovative tools, in which they use new technologies created to support their writing process. In fact, the integration of ICTs transforms writing lessons by making them more understandable, easy to log and assessable for the majority of the learners.

Regarding the use of ICTs in writing, Sweeny (2010) expresses that ICTs are changing the ways in which youth write and communicate. Moreover, Sweeny adds that teachers imagine a potential negative impact on their students' academic writing. Nevertheless, Prensky (2001) categorizes learners as digital natives and teachers as digital immigrants. Alike, Hennessy, Ruthven, and Brindley (2005) mention that the role of the teacher is to be a guide or facilitator for the students. In other words, teachers should take advantage of the students' knowledge about it. Instead of concerns about the use they give to ICT tools, teachers should lead learners in order to complement their writing process with those tools' help. Even though ICTs are sources to enhance writing skills, the teacher may concern about the way students use those tools. For that reason, it is important for teachers to moderate students' use of ICTs, taking advantage of the benefits to enhance writing and reducing the disadvantages of the integration of ICTs in EFL classrooms.

With the intention of enhancing writing through ICTs, learners and teachers have the opportunity to explore the wide repertoire of online platforms such as blogs, wikis, social networks, among others and to express their personalities through them. With this in mind, Ito et al. (as is cited in Sweeny, 2010) argue that "when teens become immersed in special-interest topics online, such as gaming or creative writing, they often appreciate the expertise that is shared by more proficient online friends, even if those friends are adults" (p. 124). In Addition, Lenhart, Smith, Macgill, and Arafeh (2008) and Sweeny (2010) affirms that writing is an integral part of students' lives due to their use of texting and social networking sites, but most of them do not recognize this type of communication

as writing. Otherwise, learners are used to practicing writing unconsciously while using attractive platforms in which they share ideas, thoughts, and feelings with other people. In that way, it is vital for teachers to moderate students' use of ICTs, taking advantage of the benefits to enhance writing and reducing the disadvantages of the integration of ICTs in EFL writing.

Advantages and disadvantages of ICTs in writing

Although, the implementation of ICTs has been important and meaningful for improving writing. It is necessary to mention that the implementation of ICTs to enhance writing skills brings positive and negative aspects of the teaching and learning process. For this, Tamo (2014) points out the benefits which are that ICTs provide new approaches to reinforce the EFL writing process, ICTs are useful tools to promote writing using interactive techniques, they bring the opportunity for learners to create real-world simulations and interact with people around the world and provide learners with a range of authentic material for improving writing. Additionally, Quintero (2008) notes that the use of ICTs permits us to observe how web blogs could benefit the composition class and, hence, provide opportunities for enjoying and improving writing skills. Furthermore, McDougald (2009) highlights that digital tools encourage personal expression in many forms, not just "writing." Contributing dramatically to develop formal and informal writing skills.

In the other hand, Tamo (2014) suggests some disadvantages of applying ICTs to promote writing process which is that teachers may experience obstacles like computers causing distractions to students to succeed the integration of ICTs to promote writing process, some EFL classrooms do not have the resources to apply ICTs, and that some teachers required knowledge to guide learners correctly. Similarly, Bullock (2001) states that there are some inevitable technical problems and when these have occurred the frustration that students feel having lost their work or in being unable to complete an assignment. Despite having some disadvantages, ICTs are useful to benefit language learning and develop students' skills. That is why, we consider that the problem is that ICTs, but how you use them to enhance your language learning. It is important to assume the risk to implement new techniques when teaching writing.

ICTs in EFL Classrooms

The integration of ICTs in EFL classrooms has opened a new path with many opportunities for English language learning. ICTs develop endless options to communicate with people in order to share ideas and learn different cultural aspects. To this respect, Hjalmarsson (2015) and Skolverket (as is cited in Kreutz and Rhodin, 2016) hold that ICT offers great opportunities for developing skills related to context and improving communicative language learning using computers and online software. In the same token, Gregori-Signes (2008) and Yunus et al. (as cited in Hjalmarsson, 2015) agree that the use of ICTs could be a distraction, learners can waste time and teachers can lose control of the classroom. Consequently, the use of ICTs during the English learning process could be helpful for both learners and teachers if there is good management and instructions are delivered correctly. On the contrary, ICTs can turn into a negative procedure due to learners can use it in the wrong way.

Indeed, the use of ICTs in EFL classrooms changes the way teachers and learners perceive the English language as a consequence of the wide repertoire of tools (such as blogs, wikis, social networks, among others) that can be used to improve teaching and learning writing skills. Sarkar (2012) and White (as is cited in Khan, Bhatti and Ahmad, 2011) assert that the use of ICTs has changed the conventional ways of learning and proposes to rethink education in terms of a more current context. Additionally, Purcell (2013) points out that teachers consider that ICTs are shaping learners' writing in myriad ways and also that ICTs have become helpful for teaching writing facilitating personal expression and creativity. However, Tamo (2014) objects that the success of ICTs depends on teachers and learners. In that case, English learning needs to be immersed in a real context to make learners establish contact with current situations. Even more, ICTs give learners and teachers different options to enhance skills by using innovative instruments, in which is possible to express learners' creativity through writing and to be conscious of their own process.

Among the different tools that ICTs offer to EFL learning and teaching, the Internet can be one of the most popular between learners and teachers thanks to the extensive content that it offers to achieve learners' goals when writing or developing other language

skills. In the same vein, McDougald (2013) comments that the internet is at the forefront of language teaching offering teachers and learners alike the opportunity to explore and even exploit English in ways that were not possible before. What is more, Kern and Warschauer (2000) and Muehleisen (1997) agree that the use of the Internet in EFL can motivate students to practice English outside the classroom and to communicate with native people? Since the internet was applied in EFL classrooms as a technique to promote the language among learners and teachers. They can find the materials or activities according to different learning styles, encouraging learners to explore the Internet in order to improve skills during the learning process. It is important for teachers to give clear instructions on how learners have to use the Internet to guarantee good management of its content and good results in their language learning process.

Nowadays, the use of ICTs in language learning and teaching motivates teachers and learners to experiment with a change to a renewed education filled with many tools, programs, and applications that make learning an entertaining process that contributes to improving education techniques. Likewise, McDougald (2009) mentions that the use of Information and Communications and Technologies (ICTs) is becoming a common practice in Colombian educational institutions as a way to enhance the teaching and learning process in English while promoting autonomous learning. In the same way, Amiri (2000) assures that English teachers use innovative teaching tools in classes. Nonetheless, Paraskeva, Bouta, and Papagianni (2008) have attempted to analyze the importance of taking suitable actions in order to include courses of training teachers in modern technologies. Either way, it is quite important not only to integrate ICTs in the EFL classroom but to give teachers the opportunity to receive training courses about what ICTs are, how they work to enhance skills, especially writing and to be able to have a wide view about ICTs to guide learners.

Besides, the implementation of ICTs in EFL classrooms works as a supporting technique to improve teaching, increase learning and innovate classes. In Colombia, most schools are implementing ICTs, creating special classrooms where learners can take advantage of them. McDougald (2009) mentions that “the Colombian Ministry of Communications has invested a great deal of money on technology” (p.25), even though he affirms

that there are still regions throughout Colombia where ICTs access is still not available. In that case, the intentions with the integration of ICTs in schools are to reinforce English as a foreign language teaching and to give learners the opportunity to communicate, express and explore the world using ICTs as a way to connect them with real contexts. In any case, the Colombian Ministry of Communications needs to keep working on integrating ICTs in schools to empower meaningful language learning.

Furthermore, learners in Colombia are supposed to achieve an English level according to each grade. Considering the level that learners have to achieve, MEN (2006) establishes in the Basic Standards that learners in Colombia are supposed to finish school with a B2 level in a scale of the Common European Framework of References for language teaching-learning. But based on Education First (EF EPI) EF (2016) which measures the English level in 72 countries, including Colombia; Colombia is the number 10 in the ranking of 14 Latin America countries monitored, a very low level of English domain, taking the lowest places in the past 5 years. This ranking shows that, somehow, the way English has been taught in schools is not helping students to overcome those language failures, and it affects them in their professional careers due to the high demand the English language has in the country. We think one of the possible ways to overcome this is by using ITCs more often.

Writing skill in EFL Learning

Writing skill is one of the four language abilities that EFL/ESL learners need to master to learn the English language meaningfully. According to Hedge (2000), writing is a complex cognitive process that leads the writer finishes his or her product correctly. Besides, Rojas (2011) and Tolchinsky (1993) stress that writing is a process that involves practices of thoughts, design, and construction of new knowledge that extends beyond basic copying. Accordingly, writing is a complex skill that demands concentration, understanding, and interpreting in order to write adequate and coherent paragraphs. On the other hand, Cross (2007) argues that “writing is more difficult to justify than the other skills. However, the school is a micro-world of its own, in which writing holds a most important role” (p. 268). To this respect, Cross (2007) says that writing is an imperative skill due to the fact that it allows the writer to transmit ideas and thoughts. In addition, at schools, teachers

are constantly looking for new techniques or strategies to improve learner's knowledge and to try to enhance writing.

Recent attention has paid to find techniques and strategies to develop writing composition. Lombana (2012) says that teachers felt challenged when they have to teach writing. Henceforth, Raimes (1991) emphasizes that there are three principal writing approaches: the product, the process, and the genre approach. Similarly, Young (as cited in Matsuda, 2003, p.70) defines the product or traditional approach to writing as 'the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, and punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity, and emphasis); and so on. The genre approach is seamed by the researchers as writing with social purposes in order to achieve particular things and the main focus in the genre approach is on writing about various social contexts.

Consequently, Badger and White (2000) declare that the process approach to writing also places more emphasis on writing skills (planning, revising and drafting) than on linguistic knowledge (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary). Reinforcing ideas, Kroll (2003) maintains that some activities of the process approach to writing in L1 such as pre-writing, drafting, and revisions that could be made through feedback from the teacher or from peers are also imperative in L2. Henceforth, Gomez (2010) indicates that "Students need opportunities to write about what they like" (p.211). Equally, Tribble (1996) establishes some stages for writing, such as Pre-Writing, in which the task is specified, the data, ideas are planned and collected; Composing; Revising focused on recognizing information, styles, ideas and grammatical facts, and Editing for checking grammar, lexis and so forth. What is more, Garcia (2009) states that "students' writing performance in English can be affected by their literacy competencies in Spanish" (p.51). In fact, any of the approaches could be meaningful to promote writing skills through the use of it.

METHODOLOGY

The current paper is based on a documental systematic review of information related to ICTs in EFL learning and how these tools help the student to enhance writing skills. According to Gülpınar and Güçlü (2013) “a systematic review is based on struggles to search for, and find the best possible researchers which will respond to the questions predetermined at the start of the review” (p.45). Moreover, Mayerl (2009) describes a review article as “a critical, constructive analysis of the literature in a specific field through summary, classification, analysis, comparison” (p.1). In this order of ideas, the first step was to establish the literature and identify trends that were relevant to the topic. Then, the researchers analyzed all the data collected in order to present significant facts, findings, and definitions on the topic. After, the researchers organized the information into a narrative review approach, in which original studies were taking into account to be compared and contrasted.

Additionally, a meta-analysis approach was used, which allowed researchers to analyze the information gathered from articles published in academic journals, scientific magazines and thesis related to the use of ICTs to enhance writing and then pool all the results. It is important to highlight that Wolf (1986) defines as meta-analysis “the application of statistical procedures to a collection of empirical findings from individual studies for the purpose of integrating, synthesizing, and making sense of them” (p.5). For that reason, the information gathered was taken from authors from 1985 to 2017 that have been previously cited in databases such as ERIC, SCIELO and GOOGLE SCHOLAR. After that, the data from articles was reorganized, reanalyzed and reexamined using systematic formats that allowed not only to organize the most relevant information, to achieve the goals of this paper but also to sort the name of the article, the reference and the significance of the information provided. Consequently, the information was introduced into the writing according to the development of the writing. Lastly, five keywords were used to help readers to focus on the information, those words are Information and Communication Technologies, writing skills, ICTs in EFL, improving writing, innovation, learner.

FINDINGS

The present review was designed to determine the role of ICTs to enhance writing skills in EFL learning. Regarding the main objective, the results of this review article show:

Information and Communication Technologies in EFL Writing.

This current review found that information and communication technologies have created opportunities to improve learning and teaching practices around the entire world. Furthermore, it was proved that according to the reviewers' experience that ICTs complement teaching and learning process through different tools like computers and tablets that help to develop education giving classes a radical change, to this end Kellogg (2008) and Abdullah (2013) support this idea by arguing that ICTs facilitate the production of writing and the learning of language skills innovating and creating creative and interactive classes. Pennington (1993) and Warschauer (2010) think that digital technologies play important roles and emerge innovative tools for teaching and learning writing. In this order of ideas, the researchers' experience is important to use ICTs to enhance writing skills because they catch students' attention with innovative tools, in which they use new technologies created to support their writing process. In fact, the integration of ICTs transforms writing lessons by making them more understandable, easy to log and assessable for the majority of the learners.

Moreover, the researchers found that the implementation of ICTs carries some benefits and disadvantages. ICTs motivated students to learn, do extra exercises and practice writing. Sweeny (2010) expresses that ICTs are changing the ways in which youth write and communicate. On the contrary, a disadvantage could be that most of the students are not used to include ICTs to their classes and this fact could affect student's attention. Nevertheless, Prensky (2001) states that students are digital and educators are digital settlers. Alike, Hennessy, Ruthven, and Brindley (2005) support the researchers by arguing that the role of the teacher is to be a guide or facilitator for the students. In other words, teachers should take advantage of the students' knowledge about it. Instead of concerns about the use they give to ICT tools, teachers should have prepared with attractive academic activities in order to lead learners in order to complement their writing

process with those tools' help.

Based on the above mentioned, it could be stated that the use of ICTs is clearly innovating dramatically the way the new generation communicate with each other through computers, cellphones, and informal electronic writing all the time. ICTs are sources to enhance writing skills, after reviewing different sources the researchers found that it is essential that teachers be trained to teach students the correct use of it. It is necessary to take into account that students already use informal electronic writing. With the intention of enhancing writing through ICTs, learners and teachers have the opportunity to explore the wide repertoire of online platforms such as blogs, wikis, social networks, among others and to express their personalities through them. Additionally, Sweeny (2010) affirms that "writing is an integral part of students' lives today due to their use of texting and social networking sites, but most students do not recognize this type of communication as writing" (p.124). The researchers demonstrated that learners are used to practicing writing unconsciously while using attractive platforms in which they share ideas, thoughts, and feelings with people around the world. In that way, it is important for teachers to moderate students' use of ICTs including them in classes for teaching academic electronic writing.

Advantages and disadvantages of ICTs in writing

The findings indicate that the implementation of ICTs as a way to enhance writing skills brings some positive and negative aspects. Based on the ideas of McDougald (2009) and Tamo (2014) one positive effect of the implementation is that ICTs provide a new revolutionary way to reinforce the EFL writing process like changing the board for computers to write, using programs that help teachers to correct students' writing. In addition, ICTs offer students the opportunity to communicate and express their feelings and thoughts with English learners and natives around the entire world. This way, ICTs help the students to be ready to face real situations, learn ways to communicate and give students more time to reflect upon their education process. The reviewers considered that including ICTs in teaching and learning writing contribute to the improvement of other aspects of the student like interpersonal communication, freewriting, autonomy and increase the knowledge of how to use ICTs in academic duties.

Although ICTs have been an effective strategy to foster writing skills, some disadvantages could appear to promote this ability. According to Bullock (2001) and Tamo (2014), one of the biggest negative weaknesses is that students may not be aware of what ICTs offer them for academic purposes and they may get distracted on other things rather than fulfilling their homework. In this sense, the researchers consider that a big difficulty to apply ICTs is that there is a lack of enough technological supplies like English labs, Soft wards or any other technological divides in most of the language institutes, some universities and obviously schools. In addition, sometimes the computers or technological supplies available could have technical problems, do not run well or they are simply outdated. Under those circumstances, it may be stated that the problem is not on ICTs themselves, but how people use and inefficiency, in which those tools may be used. Generally speaking, ICTs offer a number of benefits for improving writing in an innovative way, there are also bad aspects of applying ICTs in English language teaching and learning. However, the advantages are much more compare to the disadvantages, so that the researchers recommend the reader to implement ICTs strategies, programs or any other way because ICTs enhance practice, autonomy, self-production, self-review and gain experience to develop their writing capability.

ICTs in EFL Classrooms

The current study found that the integration of ICTs into EFL classrooms has allowed teachers and learners to firstly improve writing by providing tools for EFL learners to communicate with native people around the world, self-practice writing, review what they have written and expand their capability in language learning in general. This finding corroborates the ideas of Hjalmarsson (2015) and Skolverket (as is cited in Kreutz and Rhodin, 2016), they agree that the integration of digital devices and online software help writing process to make progress. What is surprising is that, although the theory says that the use of ICTs leads to classrooms innovation, the researchers have experienced that in some schools is difficult to take advantage of ICT tools due to the lack of resources and teachers' point of view towards technology. It may be assumed that it is necessary to reflect upon the need to equip the schools, universities and language institutes with great resources so that they start training teachers on the benefits of using Information and Communication Technologies as a didactic strategy that help not only students but also

teachers to innovate and create spaces, in which learners acquire writing in a different way.

It is important to clarify that, although ICTs support the language learning process, if instructions are not provided correctly, those tools can distract students and teachers can have problems controlling the class. When exploring ICTs at the beginning, learners may get distracted or concentrated on other things. However, the teacher should deal with the situations carefully not to cut the implementation of any technological program of the software. Instead, she/ he must plan the classes intelligently with the aim of catching students' attention on academic purposes beyond other interests they might have. To this respect, Gregori-Signes (2008) and Yunus et al. (as cited in Hjalmarsson, 2015) and Paraskeva, Bouta, and Papagianni (2008) confirm that when students are exposed to any information that can catch their attention, it is vital for teachers to play the role of facilitator to guide students to guarantee the success of each lesson by making them conscious of how they should use the tools.

In order to overcome those negative implications that ICTs may have on EFL classrooms, institutions and teachers should reach agreements to promote the use of ICTs meaningfully. Also, teachers should be open mind to innovative and realize that ICTs may support them with their jobs. In order for teachers to reflect on the benefits of ICTs in language learning, especially writing, the institution must make an investment of updated resources that help teachers not only to receive training, but they get motivated to use ICTs in their classes more often. To this point, White (as is cited in Khan, Bhatti and Ahmad, 2011), Purcell (2013) and Tamo (2014) state that young learners have a wide idea of the use of innovative tools and it is easier for them to use. Based on this, the researchers recommend teachers to take advantage of the knowledge that learners have about ICTs to enhance their language learning process.

Similarly, authors McDougald (2013), Amiri (2000), Kern and Warschauer (2000) and Muehleisen (1997) agreed that this ICT tool can motivate to enhance language teaching and learning. In this way, the learners should be able to enhance their writing and other language skills and be autonomous of their own process. With the significant im-

pact that these tools have brought into the world, in which most people have access to them, educators should use ICTs as a way to encourage students to use them to improve autonomous language learning. Nowadays, in Colombia, most teachers do not apply these tools due to the lack of knowledge towards the correct use and benefits that ICTs offer. What is more, learners need to be guided through the use of ICTs even though most of them are familiarized with those innovative tools. For that reason, teachers need to be able to explain and give correct instructions in order to succeed and achieve all students' learning goals.

Writing skill in EFL Learning

During the language learning process, writing tends to be one of the most important skills, nonetheless, it is also one of the most complexes to develop due to its complexity. This skill allows learners to express their ideas, to share experiences, and to communicate with other people by producing pieces of papers that convey messages. Hedge (2000), Tolchinsky (1993), Rojas (2011) and Cross (2007) state that writing is a demanding skill that requires concentration, understanding, and interpreting in order to transmit their thoughts. It may be assumed that the writing skill is mandatory to be developed for EFL students. However, writing is less developed skill. One of the issues that emerge from this finding is that new innovative techniques need to be implemented in the classes in order to improve the teaching and learning of writing skills and raise students' interest in this ability. Lombana (2012) and Raimes (1991) support that there are difficulties when teaching writing skills, teachers feel challenged when they have to teach writing due to the fact, they are not trained properly to teach writing, or they have old techniques that are unattractive for students. With this in mind, the reviewers recommend the implementation of ICTs to try new and innovative materials and activities to expand writing practices and teaching strategies.

In short, ICTs should be integrated into language teaching and learning processes, especially for writing skills. Badger and White (2000) remark that it is more important to focus more attention on writing skills (planning, revising and drafting) than on linguistic knowledge (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary). In other words, at the moment of writing it is important to review first writing skills and after that the linguistic

part. Therefore, the reviewers affirm it is very helpful pre-writing and revisions are made through feedback from the teacher or from peers by e-mail. Additionally, according to reviewer's experience it was found that learners' writing performance in English can be affected by their literacy competencies in Spanish and Garcia (2009) supports that it is relevant to have a good writing level in L1 in order to be good writers in the English Language. Finally, it would be interesting to compare experiences of including ICTs in the process of teaching and learning English writing.

CONCLUSIONS

The present review article was designed to determine the role of ICTs as an innovative way to enhance writing skills during the EFL learning process. ICTs have an innovative role because their tools have allowed teachers and students to improve language learning by exploring different technological resources designed to facilitate teaching and learning. Nowadays, teachers and students can take advantage of material, activities, web pages and other means to express- share ideas, and creative writings at the same time that they are communicating with other learners or native people, participating in real situations, interacting with new tendencies and training themselves to be able to supply professional necessities. It was also shown that ICTs help learners to increase motivation due to the impact that ICTs may have on students' minds. Even though ICTs have been used for English language teachers owing to the wide repertoire of tools, the results suggest that teachers should receive deep training about the use, the benefits and how ICTs work to encourage learners not only writing but other languages skills. Moreover, the writers in their experience expressed that although most EFL classrooms have the implements necessary to integrate ICTs to innovate lessons, some schools in Colombia are still in need of resources to integrate ICTs in the classes.

As a result, the researchers found four areas that are being implemented by using ICTs to enhance writing: First, ICTs are creating new generations of new tendencies of learning. It means that teaching needs to be renewed and adapted to this new scenario. Second, ICTs have made the world smaller, people are now interconnected among them,

so students from any part of the globe could communicate, not only with their classmates, fellow county men but with foreign learners and native speakers through social media, Apps, and Websites. Then the students need to write properly to be understood by others. Third, ICTs offer students and teachers opportunities to express their ideas and thought using different online platforms. Fourth, ICTs do not seem merely as a way to enhance any subject area, they have become a powerful strategy to solve academic difficulties and to be able to supply professional demands. Additionally, ICTs have the capacity to afford opportunities to power teaching and learning environments and impact students' learning, motivation, and critical thinking. Furthermore, the implementation of ICT gives an opportunity to innovate education, to enhance writing, to improve learning and teaching strategies. Finally, the researchers suggest future studies to take into account the tools that ICTs offer.

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