ICT as a tool and a resource in teaching English

A study of teachers’ motivations and attitudes towards using ICT in the English classroom

Giovanni Bianchi

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Supervisors: Jessika Nilsson, Henrik Kaatari
Examiner: Marko Modiano
Abstract

This study examines what motivates language teachers in primary school to use ICT and what attitudes they have towards ICT. Six teachers working in four different Swedish primary schools between the first and third grade were interviewed. The teachers actively used some kind of ICT resource during their English lessons. The study showed that external factors such as requirements from the school and local school authorities motivate teachers to work more actively with ICT. These external motivators can influence the teacher’s perception and use of ICT in both positive and negative ways. When it comes to internal factors that affect the teachers’ motivation to use ICT in English, the most important factor is whether they consider ICT tools to be a positive addition to their teaching and whether a good balance between digital and traditional tools can be achieved to accommodate every student’s need.

Keywords: English, ICT, primary school, digital tools
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1. Introduction

ICT has in recent years become a big part of the Swedish school system. ICT stands for Information and Communication Technology which implies the integration of technological tools in the classroom and teaching. Håkansson and Sundberg (2012) describe how ICT has become an important tool over the past 15 years and how the usage of computers affects students' learning outcomes. They also describe how research has not been able to prove strong links between the use of ICT and improved student results.

As Håkansson and Sundberg (2012) point out, there is not enough evidence to say that ICT helps students achieve better school results but at the same time there are many different sources that claim the contrary and that there are clear improvements in different aspect of teaching in a classroom where ICT is introduced to the students and the teachers.

Many of the studies on ICT focus on the students’ perspective and what kind of results they achieve when ICT is introduced in the classroom. Instead this study focuses on what perception the teachers have regarding ICT. Since ICT and digitalization are fairly new concepts that are becoming more popular every year, more demands are placed on the teachers and the consequence of this is something worth exploring.

1.2 Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to investigate what motivates primary school teachers to use ICT, what attitudes these teachers have towards ICT and what strategies and tools they use in the English classroom.

Thus, the research questions of this study are:

- What motivates teachers to use ICT during English lessons?
- What attitudes do teachers have towards the usage of ICT during English lessons?
- What ICT strategies and tools do teachers use in the English classroom?
2. Background

2.1 What is ICT?

ICT stands for information and communication technology and includes the use of various hardware and software in education, something that has become a major part of the Swedish school system in recent years. Oksana Guzhva (2018, p. 8) notes that Sweden is one of the highest performing countries in the EU in terms of adapting and developing ICT in school. This continuous implementation of ICT is also visible in the *Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare* which states that "Students should be able to orient themselves and act in a complex reality, with a high level of information flow, increased digitalization and rapid pace of change" (Skolverket, 2018, p.7). New documents have also been created to strengthen ICT and digitalization within the Swedish school, such as *Nationell digitaliseringsstrategi för skolväsendet*, a document that clearly shows the government's pursuit of continued competence in ICT and where the goal is not only to be "the world's best" in digitalization and ICT but also always strive to always be a leader in this field (Ministry of Education and Research in Sweden, 2017).

2.2 A worldwide phenomenon

The development and integration of ICT in the school system is also visible in other countries. Anne-Maree Eyles (2018, p. 110) describes in her article how technological development has had great significance for the global economy over the past two decades and that ICT skills have become an important requirement for the Australian labor force. The author also says that the Australian government responded to the need for ICT by implementing it throughout the national curriculum from the preschool class to the upper secondary school since ICT is now both an independent subject and a requirement in each subject in the Australian curriculum. The author also mentions that this national initiative aims to ensure that each
student will be equipped with technical and cognitive skills to use, develop, create and communicate using technical tools. This will contribute to ICT competence, creativity and self-confidence to help obtain future employment (Eyles, 2018, p. 110).

According to Siri Ekberg and Shang Gao (2017, p. 45), education is something that can be a useful tool to help future generations develop their knowledge in information technology. This is something they analyze in their article, where they describe how they believe that ICT is a driving force for achieving high-quality education. By actively using ICT, teachers can create new solutions and opportunities in the classroom for all students. This has created a great interest around the world for ICT. But even though its popularity has never been greater, many teachers find it difficult to effectively implement ICT tools in their teaching strategies (2017, p. 43).

According to Sofkova-Hashemi and Cederlund (2016, p. 222), communication in today’s society has changed drastically due to technical improvements. Today, children take part in multimodal literacy activities and participate in various literary forums, usually with the help of screen-based technology. They create, share and engage in visual, verbal and digitized texts. Sofkova-Hashemi and Cederlund further describe in their article that by engaging in these activities, individuals create new skills that allow increased in-depth network-based participation in different communities. In the future and in these communities, it will be necessary to handle both conventional and digital texts as well as a type of thinking that encourages problem solving, innovation and collaboration (Sofkova-Hashemi and Cederlund, 2016, p. 222)

According to the document “Sweden's digitalization strategy”, it is a civic right to have access to digital tools and its possibilities and comprehend that ICT facilitates understanding of the digital processes or flows that affect our society and information channels. The Swedish
Government has set a goal that all pupils should have adequate digital competence (Ministry of Education and Research Sweden, 2017, p. 4).

2.3 Problems in teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Swedish classroom

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching in the Swedish classroom starts during the first primary school year. Many teachers can find this hard especially if they are not very acquainted with the English language to begin with. This is something that Kapranov (2018) studied in his research. With the help of a survey where 33 elementary school teachers participated, Kapranov (2018) examined which problem-areas the teachers find when teaching English in a Swedish classroom. The results show that there are many areas the teacher considers challenging when teaching EFL. Some of the problem areas relevant to this paper raised by the teachers are: pronunciation, spelling, learners background, vocabulary, teaching methods and insufficient motivation.

Some of the teacher’s comments regarding pronunciation during English lessons are about how the distinction between the sounds “/ʃ/ and /tʃ/” do not exist in Swedish and it can be hard for teachers and students alike to know the different between these two sounds. When it comes to spelling, Kapranov describes the usage of silent letters in the English language, something not as common in Swedish and a good Swedish example the teacher can give when doing that is the word *ljus*, when you pronounce it, you do not pronounce the letter “l”, you pronounce it as “/juːs/”.

One of the interviewed teachers in Kapranov’s research also addresses insufficient motivation and how lazy Swedish pupils are, both in their spare time and in school. The interviewed teacher described how today’s students spend their spare time indoors in front of computers
and how in school they rather use computers and iPads to write than to write with pen and paper which consequently worsen their spelling. Some of these problems can be solved or avoided with the help of digital tools and it is something that is explored in the section 4.2.2 of this paper.

2.4 Classroom improvements
González Otero (2016, p. 83) describes in her study how important EFL (English as a Foreign Language) has become in Spain. This is probably also part of a society becoming more "global" since English is the world’s most common language. The researcher takes into account previous studies that show how ICT helps students develop their knowledge in foreign languages and she wants to confirm this with her own study. The author examined how ICT is used to facilitate the learning of English in the Spanish school and how new ICT tools can help students with learning English as a second language. González Otero (2016, p. 85) chose to investigate this when she noticed that the Spanish curriculum for EFL focused on books and the teacher's knowledge and not on newer and more technological methods that students could relate to. After the study was completed, González Otero (2016, p. 91) was able to determine that the studies that had previously been carried out in this area were in accordance with her own results which showed that the students' oral knowledge had improved drastically with the help of ICT tools.

According to a study by Fredriksson and Åhlin (2018, p. 25), one of the advantages of digital tools is that teachers do not need any other motivation factor to make the students learn. Thanks to the use of ICT, the students look forward to working, whether in a group or individually, and usually do not need to be engaged by the teacher by any other means. The authors explain that the students can link the use of digital tools in their spare time to a positive experience even when it is time to work in the classroom. This theory is supported by
several researchers. In a study conducted by Adriana Maritza Rivera Barreto (2018, p. 119),
the focus is on older students and the use of ICT as a tool to learn new languages. The results
of the study showed that the students’ motivation increased when ICT was integrated during
English lessons (Rivera Barreto, 2018, p. 136).

2.5 Social structures
Although ICT can be used by teachers to personalize their teaching to accommodate every
student’s need and make them feel more included, success is not always guaranteed. This is
something that is addressed in Poromaas (2013, p. 649) where the author analyzed data from
three different schools in Sweden with different demographic compositions. The researcher
states that students from low educated families are likely to have fewer opportunities to
interact with computers due to limited access to IT equipment at home and thus they have less
self-confidence in using ICT at school. In school the students' individual abilities are
constantly subject to adapting to social settings. Inequality, related to social structures, forces
schools to compensate for this deficit through a pedagogy that develops students' knowledge
of ICT, a skill that they do not develop at home. Furthermore, the author explains how social
background should not be the primary factor in the students’ choices and opportunities within
the school system and that ICT has the potential to develop more individualized and
differentiated learning. ICT skills, both pedagogical and technical, must be mastered by
students in order for them to meet the needs and demands of the workplace (Skolinspektionen,
2011).
3. Method

3.1 Structured interviews

Structured interviews were the chosen method for this study, making this a qualitative study. This means that a selected group of teachers received the questions which were prepared beforehand (Bryman, 2011). There are several advantages in choosing a structured interview, one of these advantages is that it facilitates comparing the respondents’ answers (Bryman, 2011). The six teachers were interviewed in person. They were contacted by phone or email when asked if they had the possibility to participate in an interview. In the email that the teachers received, they got to know what the thesis was about and what the questions would require from them. Telling the respondents what the study is about is something that Bryman (2011, p.202) recommends. I also communicated to the teachers that if they had any questions or concerns, they could contact me at any time. After they had accepted to participate, a date to meet was established by email or phone. The questionnaire was sent to the teachers beforehand to give them a chance to prepare their answers.

During the interviews, the questions were asked in the same order they were sent to the teachers beforehand unless an answer was unclear or if more context was needed. In such cases, follow-up questions were asked to help gain further insight. The interview consisted of 16 questions. The initial questions were focused on personal information such as age and background in regard to education and employment. The following questions focused on how the local school authorities and the school work with ICT in English. The final questions focused on how the teacher worked with ICT in the classroom and their attitudes towards the use of ICT. Teachers A, B, C, E and F were interviewed in a quiet room at the school they work in where no one could disturb us while teacher D was interviewed in their home. The interviews were conducted in Swedish to avoid the language barrier being a problem. The
interviews were conducted in March and June 2019 and were recorded using a phone app to then be transcribed.

3.2 Participants
For this study, six different teachers were interviewed. All six interviewed teachers were female. Three of these teachers (Teacher A, B and C) worked in the same school while the three other teachers (Teacher D, E and F) worked in three different schools. The fact that three of the teachers work at the same school might provide a broader picture of how that particular school works with ICT. The criteria for selecting these teachers were that they currently should be teaching English in a Swedish primary school between the first and third grade and that they actively use some kind of ICT resource during English lessons.

• Teacher A is 33 years old and has worked as a teacher for nine years. She has worked in first, second and third grade classrooms and is currently working with a first-grade class. The teacher has also worked in five different schools and two different counties. The teacher has 30 minutes of English each week with her class.

• Teacher B is 45 years old and has worked as a teacher for 22 years. She has worked with every grade between first and sixth grade and is currently working with a second-grade class. The teacher has also worked in five different schools and two different municipalities. The teacher has 30 minutes of English each week with her class. Teacher B is also a Lead teacher in digitalization.

• Teacher C is 42 years old and has worked as a teacher for 18 years. She has worked with the preschool class as well as with every grade between first and fifth grade and is currently working with a second-grade class. The teacher has also worked in six different schools in different municipalities. The teacher has 30 minutes of English each week with her class.
• Teacher D is 27 years old and has worked as a teacher for one year. Right now, she is working with a first-grade class but has also had an internship with a second and third grade. The teacher has only worked in one school. She also has 30 minutes of English each week with her class.

• Teacher E is 28 years old and has worked as a teacher for two years. She has worked with second and third grades and is currently working with a second-grade class. The teacher has also worked in two different schools in the same county. The teacher has one hour of English every two weeks with her class.

• Teacher F is 32 years old and has worked as a teacher for two years. She has worked with first and second grades and is currently working with a second-grade class. The teacher has also worked in one school. The teacher has 30 minutes of English each week with her class.

4. Results
Below the results of the study will be presented.

4.1 What motivates teachers?
During the interviews, questions were asked about external and internal factors that could affect the teacher's view of ICT and its use in English teaching. The questions asked were designed to try establishing whether the teachers felt any kind of pressure from external factors, like demands from local school authorities or school to use ICT in their teaching.

4.1.1 Demands from the local school authorities and the school
The first question in the interview was if the teachers had any requirements for using ICT and if yes, what kind of requirements. Teacher A told me that she did not feel that they had any clear overall requirements by the local school authorities or school to use ICT. The only tool that the staff had to use is Office365. She considered this to be an important factor in why
some teachers did not use ICT at all, since the few unclear requirements were so abstract that they could be interpreted in different ways. In the former county she worked in, there were more demands for the teachers to use ICT in the classroom. Teacher B reported about more general requirements in the curriculum, where ICT was now mentioned in almost all subjects, especially when it comes to teaching about source criticism (the skill of evaluating an information source) and how to behave online, but these requirements were not something she was too concerned about. Teacher C told that the local school authorities were now creating a document for the principal area that would help the students know what levels of knowledge they have to achieve after each year in regard to ICT. She then explained that the document was not done yet and that they will start using it next semester. This may be an explanation as to why only Teacher C talked about this document and not the other two teachers. Teacher D also spoke about the requirements of the curriculum. She further described that since she works in another county that works more actively with ICT, they had a high standard on the requirements the local school authorities put on them. She explained that there were demands to use as many digital tools as possible to reduce paper waste and costs on books and utilize the licenses the municipality had purchased for all schools. Teacher E reported about not having any requirements but that she felt that today's society makes children interact with digital tools during their spare time and that is something she feels needs to be applied in the school. Teacher F told me that she does not have any requirements for using ICT in the classroom but that there has been talk between her colleagues to try to actively use more ICT tools in the EFL classroom.

The next question was whether there were any plans within the school concerning digitalization. Teacher A, B and C described the document regarding what each student should be able to learn at the end of each semester. Teacher B also told that in other schools there was a plan for what level of knowledge the staff should possess in regard to ICT and
how to offer further education to cope with the "lowest level" of knowledge in digitalization. However, this system was not something currently present at her school.

Teacher D further talked about the fact that in her school and county they had high demands on working with ICT and digitalization and that they had to use as many digital tools as possible in Swedish, Mathematics and English lessons and try to stay away from physical books. Teacher D also described how the municipality’s investment in ICT had made it possible for all pupils from year 1 to have their own laptop. She thought this was something very positive since the curriculum states that teachers should apply ICT in as many different topics as possible. Both teacher E and F did not report any plans of using ICT tools within her school in the EFL classroom.

Judging from these answers, all teachers felt some kind of pressure from the local school authorities and the school when it comes to the usage of ICT in their teaching. Almost all teachers have some kind of requirement they had to meet regarding digital tools in the classroom. At the school where Teachers A, B and C work, the requirements for ICT are about to increase since new guidelines concerning the students’ digital skills are being processed.

4.1.2 Pressure from colleagues

The next part of the interview concerned whether the teacher felt pressure from other colleagues towards using ICT in English teaching. Teachers A, B and C told that many teachers at their school work with ICT and especially in the higher grades where the students have access to an iPad they can work with. Teacher C also told that one teacher was very interested in ICT and works actively with BlueBots, which are small robots the students can program themselves to make them perform various tasks. Teacher D explained that some teachers at her school used ICT in English but that most people used books. Teacher E
reported that some of her colleagues use iPads and PC:s when working when EFL while teacher F talked about how her colleagues actively use Smartboards when teaching English.

These answers showed that many other teachers at the same school as Teachers A, B, C and E use ICT. Teacher D did not have the same circumstances as teacher A, B, C and E, however, she has higher demands from the municipality that put pressure on all teachers at her school to use ICT while teacher E knows that some teachers use ICT tools at her school while working with EFL.

4.2 What attitudes do teachers have towards ICT?

After talking about external factors, the teachers were asked about their own view and attitudes toward ICT to establish any internal motives they might have.

4.2.1 The teachers own interest in ICT

The teachers were asked if they had had any education in ICT from either university education or continuing education after university studies. Since teachers B and C attended university several years ago when ICT was not such a used resource in learning as it is today, they did not have any education on the subject at university. Teachers A, D and E both had some kind of education in ICT during their university studies. All interviewed teachers, however, were interested in using ICT in teaching and everyone had studied the subject further after university. Teachers A, B, C and F had taken several courses to learn more about the subject. On top of that, Teacher B has educated herself further as a lecturer in digitalization. The answers to this question show that all six teachers who were interviewed had a personal interest in ICT and digitalization and that they wanted to learn more.
4.2.2 The advantages

The teachers were asked about what advantages they see with the use of ICT in the EFL classroom. Teacher A described how according to her one of the best uses of ICT is to give an incentive to make students work. An example she used was that if a student does not feel like writing by hand she would let him write on a laptop instead. The teacher believed that ultimately the important thing is that the students are active during the EFL classes and with the help of ICT this becomes much easier.

Teacher B talked about how ICT helps students decide themselves how quickly they want to work. This is an advantage when you have a class where the students are at different levels of knowledge because with the help of digital tools they receive immediate feedback on the screen. Teacher B also talked of another advantage, the fact that in her experience some students can concentrate better in front of a computer than when writing on paper because they do not have to focus on their fine motor skills like using a pen, but instead, they can easily use the computer keyboard. The teacher also told that ICT provides more opportunities in teaching. An example of this is in the subject of geography, where the students can actually see what a place looks like using Google Earth rather than just talking about it. The teacher also mentioned that even if there are many advantages with ICT, it is important to balance it out with traditional methods of learning that do not include the use of ICT tools.

Teacher C also talked about how students with weak motor skills find great advantages in working with digital tools. She also explained how teachers can use ICT to help students with for example dyslexia or other neuropsychic impairments through programs such as Office Lens, a program that reads any text for the student. The teacher considered this to be a fantastic tool for those students who might otherwise be ashamed of always needing an adult to help them when it comes to reading and writing. The teacher also described how she believes ICT in the classroom is a fantastic tool for children that are interested in IT, since
Programmers and IT developers are in high demand everywhere and ICT tools help children develop their skills at a young age. Teacher D talked about ICT's multimodal qualities and how they can capture all students’ attention in different ways with the help of pictures, sounds and games. According to Teacher D there is always something to accommodate every student’s need and that is something that is possible thanks to ICT. Teacher E briefly answered to the question by talking about the many possibilities for new teaching methods that can be achieved with the help of ICT tools without giving any clear answer to what she meant with “new teaching methods”. What Teacher F thinks is positive with ICT tools is the possibility to motivate the pupils with new and exiting methods of teaching. She describes how thanks to ICT tools it is easier to find customizable learning tools for every student since everyone learns in different ways.

Each teacher was also asked to recollect a successful moment in the English classroom where ICT was used. Teacher A described how successful she thought it was when the pupils could watch different series intended to teach kids how to count in English and how they can connect words with different Swedish words that help them remember at a later time. An example of such a word is the number "four" which in Swedish sounds like "får" which means sheep in Swedish. The students thought it was great fun when the program joked about it. Now the pupils always remember what comes after the number three in English because it sounds just like the name of an animal in Swedish.

Teacher B talked about how successful it was when she can combine videos and songs on the laptop with something the students manually can do in the classroom. Following instructions in English is not easy, but by working together and seeing how a task is done on a big screen, it becomes much easier and the students activate several senses at the same time.

What Teacher C believed to be successful with ICT in English is that the students can learn to sing a song together in English using a laptop and speakers. She told that since none
of the students really knew how to pronounce the words, they felt it was more acceptable to make mistakes and more pupils were willing to sing along with the group. This is something that becomes more difficult when singing in a language everyone around you understands. This is considered by Teacher C to be a fantastic way to teach children what the English language sounds like since it can be rather difficult. Teacher D believes that a successful teaching moment is every time she can make a lesson special and fun for the students with the help of ICT tools. She believed that these occasions help students remember the lesson for a longer period of time and that is when they learn the best. Teacher E couldn’t recollect any specific moment since she has not actively used ICT tools in the EFL classroom that much while Teacher F had trouble coming up with a relevant answer.

All the participating teachers clearly show that they think there are many advantages with ICT in English. In summary, the teachers consider digital tools to be beneficial to the pupils when it comes to speaking and learning a new language orally by taking advantage of the multimodal aspect of ICT.

4.2.3 The disadvantages
The teachers were asked about what disadvantages they see with the use of ICT in the EFL classroom. Teacher A described how one of the negative aspects of using ICT is how some of the students often prefer to work with digital tools instead of working “manually”. This is most noticeable in Swedish and English where students must learn to write by hand but instead, they prefer to write on a laptop.

Another aspect of ICT that Teacher A considered to be the most negative one is the differences between different counties. Teacher A had previously worked in another county where ICT was strongly prioritized in all subjects and where she and the students had broader access to newer and more advanced tools. One example she talked about is how she had to downgrade from a Smartboard to a simple white sheet. This is something that has strongly
influenced her teaching and she believes that it also affects her students, as access to digital tools is a priority if the students are to develop their digital skills. The teacher also discussed that students who are not used to using digital tools outside of school have a lot more difficulty in using them when they have the chance in school.

Teacher B talked about how ICT can easily take over a lesson instead of being a complement to teaching. The teacher explained that in order to get as much as possible from ICT, different methods should be applied with the help of digital tools, otherwise pupils may merely do the same thing as they did on paper. Teachers B believed that multimodality is one of the greatest positive aspects of ICT and it is important to take advantage of it.

Teacher C believed that what is negative with ICT is that nowadays it is "in everything". The teacher believed that it is overwhelming how much ICT is believed to be a good addition to all different subjects and she stated that there are studies that show the contrary and that ICT can degrade students' learning. Teacher C also believed that multimodality is the strength of ICT and that one has to take advantage of it to complement a lesson instead of having digital tools "take over" in the classroom.

The greatest drawback Teacher D saw with the use of ICT is how students can get used to always getting a direct response and that everything becomes a game. Teacher D told that because many of the apps found on iPads, laptops etc., are structured as games it can make students feel like everything that has to do with ICT is a game and not a platform for complementing their learning. However, she believed that it is the teacher's responsibility to decide the right digital tool for her class and not chose something "just for fun" but to critically review what the students will learn from that particular tool. Teacher D also believed that ICT should be a supplement to teaching and not what teaching should be based on.

Teacher E and F believed that the most frustrating moment when using ICT tools is when they do not work properly. Some examples the teachers talked about were when the Internet
does not work or when batteries do not charge as they should. Teacher F continued by talking about how she believes ICT tools to be too “hyped” at times, especially since there is not any tangible proof of it helping teachers and students in primary schools.

Although all teachers that were interviewed actively use ICT, they had no problem pointing out its shortcomings. The most recurring “flaw” that everyone seemed to agree on and related to something negative in regard to the use of ICT tools, is to not use ICT just because it is something that is popular right now. Almost all teachers somehow spoke about how they think ICT should be a complement to learning and not what learning is based on.

4.3 ICT tools and methods

The last part of the interviews consisted of discussing what type of ICT tools and methods the teachers use in their lessons and why they feel the need to use them in their teaching.

4.3.1 Physical ICT Tools

The interviews showed that the projector is one of the most widely used ICT tools by teachers during EFL classes. Whether the students work together with the teacher or individually, the projector can be a good starting point where the students can share information. All interviewed teachers told that they use the projector in one way or another during English lessons. Teachers B and C also told that since they often work as a group with the class during their English lessons, the projector becomes a well-functioning tool to capture the interest of all students at the same time. An ICT tool that must be used to access the projector is the computer. Computers are used by all the teachers who have been interviewed for both searching and using different digital tools when teaching English. However, only teachers B, C and D allow students to use the computer in connection with English lessons.

Teachers A, B and C have access to iPads in English teaching and something they extensively use. Many digital tools require access to iPads. Teacher F is the only interviewed
teacher that actively uses a Smartboard during her English lessons. She explains that the 
teaching material they use in book format also has a function where they can jointly do 
exercises on the Smartboard in advance and therefore use it as an ICT tool. Teacher F 
explains that the main reason she uses the Smartboard is because it becomes more enjoyable for the pupils to work together with the board before they get to work by themselves and they are also more motivated to work independently. Teacher A told that Smartboard was something she used in another municipality before and something she could use in teaching English if she had had access to it. Teachers A also uses BlueBots and she considers it a well-functioning tool to be able to teach the students more about programming while at the same time learning related words in English since the program that comes with the robots can be used in several languages. To summarize, the total amount of different physical ICT tools used by the interviewed teachers were: projectors, iPads, PC:s, BlueBots, PC for students and Smartboards (see Figure 1).

4.3.2 Digital ICT tools and apps

Through the use of the Internet, the teacher has access to an infinite amount of material that can be used in teaching English. The most popular answer to the question of “what kind of digital tools are used during English lessons?” was to utilize digital material like movies and series from the website UR (Utbildningsradion) and YouTube. At UR there are several different series in English where the students can listen to other adults than just their teacher speak in English. YouTube has the same function, but it is more difficult to find material that is adapted for children without having to check it yourself beforehand, something that the interviewed teachers state they do not always have time for. The series that are most popular at UR among the interviewed teachers are Kids English Zone, Pick a Color and Meka med engelska. Teachers A, B and C who work at the same school used these three series from
grade one to three. Teacher A also uses Medioteket, a similar website where there are several series for children.

According to the interviewed teachers, apps are a great way to give the students the possibility to work independently. Apps are available for iPads and therefore cannot be used by teachers without access to tablets. The teachers that take advantage of various apps are Teachers A, B and C. Teacher D has access to iPads but does not use any specific apps when it comes to teaching English while teachers E and F do not have access to any iPads at all. The apps that Teachers A, B and C use are mainly Bingel, Puppet Pals, SayHi and Fun English. To summarize, the total amount of different digital ICT tools used by the interviewed teachers were: Bingel, Medioteket, UR, Youtube, Puppet Pals, SayHi and Fun English (see Figure 2).

![Amount of physical ICT tools used by the interviewed teachers](image)

Figure 1. The amount of physical ICT tools used by the interviewed teachers.
4.3.3 Why use these tools?

After asking what type of ICT tools the teachers use, they were asked why they use these tools in their teaching.

Teacher A described how she feels teaching should be varied and that every student learns in different ways. With the help of ICT tools, she can find a successful way to teach for every student. She also feels that learning a new language should be fun and it is easier to achieve this with the help of digital tools and apps.

Teacher B talked about how digital tools and apps help the student to get started. By watching a movie together on a big screen and following a tutorial in English on how to do certain tasks the students achieve a higher understanding. Further she told that by watching small parts of the tutorial together the students can understand new words better and connect images with what is being told, helping them to mimic and understand the English language. She also spoke on how, with the help of “Bingel” every student can improve in what he/she thinks is fun or useful. By choosing a theme that interests the student like animals, numbers,
colors etc., he or she can improve on words that they find relevant in more ways than just listening to their teacher speaking English. Teacher C had a similar approach and she uses a PC to let her students engage in activities together (like tutorials and songs) and she also uses iPads and digital tools and apps (like Bingel) to let the students develop their own strengths individually.

Teacher D believes that English lessons can cause performance anxiety for those that are not so good at speaking English. Therefore, she uses movies on UR and YouTube to help the students practice word comprehension while listening to someone other than their teacher talk and sing in English. In Teacher D’s opinion this makes the English language appear less “threatening” to the students. She also believes that the most important thing is that the students have fun and that they speak as much English as possible during her English lessons. Teacher E couldn’t answer this question since even if she was positive toward the use of ICT during English lessons, she hasn’t had the chance to use any ICT tools during the two years she has been teaching. She further told that this is because of the lack of time during the week for planning and executing English lessons and because of poorly equipped schools. Teacher F’s reasoning for using ICT tools during English lessons is that her book is closely linked with an application on her computer that helps her teach in a more multimodal way. She also believes that the students have an easier time learning when making the lessons more fun with the help of digital tools.

4.3.4 Absence of ICT tools
During the interview the teacher were also asked if they had any wish for an ICT tool they might like to use or that they miss in their teaching. Teacher A expressed how she will miss her iPads during the upcoming year since at her school they only have a set of iPads for each student during their first year, after that they upgrade to one pc per two students. Besides that,
she would like a Smartboard to use during her lessons. Teacher B told that she wishes there were more units of iPads and PCs so that each student has their own. That is one of the reasons why she works so much together with her pupils during English lessons. Teacher C expressed the same feelings as her colleague in regard to the need of more units. Teacher D would love to have a more accurate protocol for what works and doesn’t work in regard to physical ICT tools and digital ICT tools and apps. She explains that as of now she needs to critically examine every ICT tool she wants to work with and it would be much easier if there was an official place where teachers could take material without having to take a leap of faith with every digital tool found. Teacher E wished there were more time for using ICT but had no specific wish for any ICT tool in particular. This is because of her inexperience and of not knowing “what’s out there” to work with. Teacher F expressed the same feelings as teacher B and C in that she wishes there was one iPad for each student instead having to let them share with one another. Beyond that she doesn’t have any specific wish, she feels that she doesn’t know so much about digital tools and what she could wish for.

4.3.5 More or less ICT?
The last question the teacher answered and elaborated further on was whether they felt that, if they would have had the possibility, they would like to work more or less with ICT tools during English lessons?
Teacher A talked about how she believes iPads are a superior tool to computers and how she would like to work even more with them. She further talked about how she thinks iPads are a better tool for students in primary school and that PCs should only be introduced when the pupils get older. Teacher B and C also want to work more with iPads and it’s something they believe could be possible if there were units for every student. Teacher D believed she is working with a moderate number of ICT tools when taking into consideration the amount of
time she has every week for planning and executing English lessons. Teacher E would love to use more ICT in her English lessons and she talks about how she believes digital tools to be a fantastic aid to get the students’ attention and interest. She further talks of how learning with only paper and pen can be boring from time to time and therefore it is more fun with the help of ICT tools. Teacher F estimated that she devotes approximately 50% of her weekly English lessons time to ICT and that in her opinion it’s an appropriate amount of time. Therefore, she doesn’t wish to work more or less with ICT tools.

5. Discussion

5.1 Result discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate what motivates language teachers in primary school to use ICT and what attitudes second language teachers have towards ICT.

As previously mentioned, The Swedish Ministry of Education (2018) states that Sweden wants and tries to be a leading country when it comes to ICT and digitalization. This development of ICT is also visible in other countries like Australia, where the labor force is now highly dependent of ICT (Eyles, 2018). These goals are reflected in the curriculum as well as in the requirements that the counties and schools have on the teachers. All teachers in the study feel some kind of pressure from external factors like the local school authorities or school when it comes to the usage of ICT in their teaching. Every interviewed teacher has some kind of requirement she has to meet regarding digital tools in the classroom. In one of the schools it even appears that the requirements for ICT are about to increase as a new document concerning the students’ digital skills is being processed.

Some of the answers also show that Teachers A, B and C might be influenced by the fact that many other teachers at the same school use ICT. This can create a subconscious need to use ICT and to be equally engaged with digital tools as their colleagues. This can create a
stressful environment where teachers feel obligated to use ICT to match their colleagues. Teacher D has higher demands from the local school authorities which can put pressure on all teachers at her school. Teacher E and F theoretically have the same demands as Teachers A, B and C since they work in the same county and city but don’t use as many ICT tools (physical or digital) in their EFL teaching. This can be interpreted as Teacher A, B and C having a bigger personal interest in ICT tools and therefore using these tools more in their teaching. Another way to interpret this is that Teacher E and F lack the knowledge and interest to learn more about the requirements imposed by the local school authorities and in fact fail in their mission as teachers.

Teacher A talked about how ICT can be used as an incentive to motivate students to work. This is confirmed by Fredriksson and Åhlins (2018) study that showed students often receive more motivation to work when ICT is part of the teaching. The pupils connect their positive experience with digital tools and are more willing to work in school if ICT is involved. This conclusion is also supported by Rivera Barreto’s (2018) study on children’s motivation when using ICT during English lessons. The respondents clearly showed an active interest in ICT and digitalization and seemed to believe that ICT is a driving force for achieving high-quality education (Ekberg and Shang Gao, 2017). They seemed to show they want to learn more by advancing their own level of knowledge in order to be able to apply new methods and ICT resources in their teaching. The teachers also clearly believe there are many advantages for their pupils when using ICT in English. This type of thinking is supported by the curriculum which states that "Students should be able to orient themselves and act in a complex reality, with a high level of information flow, increased digitalization and rapid pace of change"(Skolverket, 2018, p. 7).

González Otero (2016) proves with her study that ICT helps strengthen students' knowledge in a second language. In answers to questions about the advantages of ICT, several
teachers talk about how ICT helps students develop their oral English skills while singing. From being able to sing together, to being able to connect different sounds to words that the pupils already know in Swedish, ICT is a great tool for developing knowledge in a second language according to the interviewed teachers.

As mentioned before, although every interviewed teacher actively uses ICT, they had no problem pointing out its shortcomings. What every teacher agreed on was on the popularity of ICT and how it is important to use it in an appropriate way. All teachers somehow spoke about how they believe ICT should be a complement to learning and teaching. One of the most common answers among the four interviewed teachers when it came to the disadvantages of ICT was how difficult it can sometimes be to use ICT in an effective way during English lessons. The teachers discussed that if one attempts to use digital tools as effectively as possible, it can sometimes be difficult to find a good balance between traditional teaching methods and digital teaching. This is in line with what Ekberg and Gao (2018) found, that even though ICT's popularity has never been greater, many teachers find it difficult to effectively implement these tools in their teaching strategies. As one of the interviewed teachers described, it can be great to use these tools to motivate students to learn more, but teachers should always be able to judge when a digital tool is just superfluous in relation to what the students have to improve on. By finding this balance, the teacher can help students develop their digital skills within the English language but also an understanding of the digital processes that affect our society and information channels (Ministry of Education and Research Sweden, 2017). This type of thinking matches Sofkova-Hashemi and Cederlunds (2016) point on how in the future, the students’ abilities involving the handling of conventional and digital texts will be vital.
5.2 Method discussion

Structured interviews have been a successful method for acquiring the information needed for this study from the teachers. Although the questions were open-ended to allow the teacher to answer as well as they could without directing their answers in a specific direction, the structure of the interviews was easy to follow. The teachers spoke for about fifteen minutes each, which was a moderate length of time. The most time-consuming task with this method was the transcription which took about six hours to complete. The negative thing about this method is that the answers received may be very short or similar to each other and do not give enough material to use later on. Therefore, it is important to be ready with follow up questions when needed. Follow up questions should not vary between subjects since these can make the interviews more unreliable. The follow up questions that were included in the interviews were “what do you mean?” and “can you explain further” to give a better context and quality to the answers.

The questions used in this study were created to be as objective as possible without “nudging” the interviewed teachers into a specific direction when answering. One of the problems that were discovered during the interviews was that the questions created for this study do not work well when the interviewed teacher is not familiar with ICT tools or the local school authorities’ demands on teachers regarding digital tools. This is something that can be improved upon by creating alternative questions that benefit both the interviewer and the informant when it is obvious that the interviewed teacher is not familiar with ICT.

The interviews were conducted with a total of six teachers, three from the same school and three from different schools. While this research is relatively accurate to establish what motivates the three teachers that work at the same school to use ICT tools in their classroom, it can not be applied for the other interviewed teachers. This is because we only have the perspective of one teacher from each school, something that can be misguided by the teachers
own values surrounding ICT without backing them up with other teachers’ thoughts on the subject.

Furthermore, some of the questions posed during this study turned out to be superfluous and did not add any substance to the study. These questions are question number 9 and questions number 17 (see Appendix 1 for both). Question number 9 is superfluous in the case of interviewing many subjects from the same school. Question number 17 was superfluous because it did not add any relevant answers related to this study. If this study would ever be replicated, I would suggest removing these questions and only ask 19 out of the 21 questions used in this study.

5.3 Reliability and Validity
As this is a qualitative study with a limited sample of informants it is difficult to reach external validity. To achieve external reliability and the same results of this study the same informants should be interviewed at the exact same time this study took place, something that is impossible to achieve. This is due to the fact that this study contains questions about local school authorities and school regulations regarding education that can change at any time and may affect the studies result. Since this is a qualitative study, the criteria for reliability are hard to achieve. As Bryman (2011) describes, qualitative studies are not as reliable as quantitative studies since they are less based on facts and number and more on social environment and contextual outlook making, the validity and reliability of this study low.

6. Conclusion
The aim of this study was to investigate what motivates language teachers in primary school to use ICT and what attitudes second language teachers have towards ICT. In conclusion,
external factors such as requirements from the local school authorities and school motivate the teacher in the study to work more with ICT.

Teachers A, B and C that work in the same school and show a big interest in the use of both physical and digital ICT tools use these devices to their advantage to a larger extent than the rest of the interviewed teachers that work in the same city as them. Therefore, it might be possible to conclude that if internal positive factors are present in a teacher’s attitude toward ICT tools, he or she will try to use these tools to their advantage as much as possible despite external factors being present.

This study also showed that if a teacher considers ICT tools to be a positive addition to their teaching, they will probably use these tools as much as possible even if they themselves do not know of studies with evidence of ICT tools helping students achieve better results in school. The choices made by the teachers in using ICT tools were often based on their personal experience with these tools and something they can confirm has worked in past EFL lessons with their pupils. The most common answers being that it is easier to find a way of learning for every student and that they find it simpler to engage every student in EFL lessons. For further research, it would be interesting to see if there is a difference between schools, older and younger teachers and if ICT tools are something that benefits more boys or girls.
References


Appendix 1

Intervjufrågor

1. Hur gammal är du?
2. Hur länge har du varit yrkesverksam lärare?
3. Vad har du undervisat i för årskurser?
4. Hur många olika skolor har du arbetat på?
5. Hur många minuter engelska har din klass varje vecka?
6. Har du haft någon utbildning i IKT? Under lärarutbildningen såväl som fortbildning i sig?
7. Vilka tillgängliga IKT program och hårdvara finns på din skola?
8. Har du några krav att använda dig av IKT? Om ja, på vilket sätt?
9. Finns det några kollegor i engelska eller andra ämnen som använder sig av IKT?
10. Finns det någon plan i skolan gällande digitalisering?
11. Finns det en övergripande kommunplan för digitalisering?
12. Vad ger dig personligen motivationen till att använda dig av IKT-verktyg i engelskundervisningen?
13. Vad krävs för att du skulle använda dig av IKT mer i undervisningen i engelska?
14. Hur bedömer du elevernas färdigheter eller mognad för använda dig av IKT i engelskundervisningen?
17. Berätta om ett framgångsrikt eller icke framgångsrikt moment (helst inom engelska) där IKT har ingått.
18. Vilka IKT-verktyg använder du dig av i undervisningen i engelska?
19. Varför använder du dessa verktyg?
20. Vilka IKT-verktyg saknar du?