STUDENTS’ SELF-CHOSEN AUTHENTIC MATERIALS FOSTERING LANGUAGE LEARNING AUTONOMY AND IMPACTING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE.

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RESEARCH PROJECT

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1. ABSTRACT

Learning languages, especially English, has become almost a requirement for the modern globalized life. This project is an attempt to enhance pedagogical interventions, trying to provide innovative ideas as using self-chosen authentic materials to impact communication and foster language learning autonomy. This experience enabled the participants to explore new strategies by reflection based on their views of their own processes. The processes of these volunteers were analyzed and provided valuable findings regarding enhancements in written communication, as well as significant improvements in input skills such as reading and listening which were assessed through communicative performance tasks. Their attitude towards learning also became a powerful ally towards succeeding their own set communicative goals. All of the former was registered by a procedure of data collection carried out during the first semester of 2011, and using different instruments to grant validity and reliability to this descriptive case study.

Key words

Self-chosen Materials, Fostering of Autonomy, Communicative skills.
2. INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, it is all the time of vital importance that teachers and everyone involved in this challenging experience, research for new ways to make this duty more productive and significant for students everywhere in the world. It is for this reason, that teachers explore new ways of presenting more engaging and motivating alternatives to their learners, and the field of language learning cannot be an exception, since communication is one of the primary goals for learning. Considering this global situation, and my interest as an education undergraduate student; I decided to work on a research project in order to give some answers to some problematic questions that entered my mind when developing my practicum, with the purpose of assisting in the solution to language learning issues in my classroom related to communication and autonomy.

This research project is presented to meet the requirements for graduation in educational programs at the San Buenaventura University Bogota-Colombia, meeting the parameters of the faculty’s research line called ‘Desafíos contemporáneos en la enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas.’ This study emerged from a problematic question, which was divided into three sub-questions. All of them, concerning the impact of self-chosen authentic materials on language learning autonomy and communicative competence. In order to answer these questions a whole process of research was developed following the vision of descriptive case studies. Through a rigorous data collection and analysis of different instruments for collecting data, three main categories emerged in order to give answer to the research questions.

This paper will provide written support to all the study including specific information. For instance, the first part of the paper will begin to explain how and why this idea was born, while describing the relevant reasons why this project had to be carried out; taking into account main aspects
like students’ environment, the institution, and teachers. Right after that, this paper will state the research questions and the aims connected to them. It also will focus on discussing the main theoretical views that support this project, along with previous research made in this field to contextualize and give a valid theoretical frame. Next to this, the paper will provide information containing the programming for the project, in other words the general schedule for the activities of the study, including from first questionnaires to the submission of the final document. In addition to that, it is relevant to specifically describe the pedagogical intervention needed to fulfill the purposes of the project, since this worked as the main support to generate meaningful data. Therefore, further in the document, the set of procedures and instruments defining the way in which the data from the study was collected and analyzed will be closely described. Finally, a group of conclusive ideas will be stated, along with some pedagogical implications that the study generated, with a description of limitations encountered during the process, including those ideas born for further research.
3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Through my experience as an English teacher, I realized that my English students from the Saturday reinforce practice at the public school COLSUSIDIO LAS MERCEDES, lacked language learning autonomy, which resulted into failure when building up communicative competence in a foreign language. During the first meeting previous at the beginning of the practicum, the director of the English department at the school stated that students only relied on what academic lessons could offer them, and did not have an independent language productive practice back home in which they could enrich and transcend into communication what they had studied in class. In other informal meetings previous to the beginning of the sessions on Saturdays, English teachers at school manifested that most of the students present difficulties in class because they are not responsible, and do not feel familiar with the material and the contents studied. Moreover, some other students appear not to be interested in learning English at all.

This issue might have been mainly triggered by four reasons: First, they did not know that autonomy was essential in order to learn a foreign language. Second, they were not autonomous learners of English because it was simply not necessary or attractive for them to be so. Third, the unavailability of interesting and authentic back-up material at the school's resource center, and fourth, the little experience of teachers at school to develop programs encouraging autonomy and using authentic material to match students’ interests, since the plan to follow was structured in a very academic-scholar scope, supporting other school subjects, covering grammar focused contents, and linguistic units; but not containing a direct connection whatsoever with the students' real life after class. This evidence was found in the analysis to the syllabus carried out before the practicum began.
Consequently, my Saturday’s students’ performance in regular classes was low; their communicative competence in English tailed off and the class practice became unfruitful for many of them who completed the courses. Therefore, I thought that working with students’ self-chosen authentic material could be helpful in order to impact communicative competence, and foster language learning autonomy. Self chosen authentic material was a didactical strategy in which students chose some material of their interest to work on. This material had to be authentic in nature and the choice was discussed with the teacher in order to check the suitability of the material for the English practice. Furthermore, my own outlook as an autonomous learner of Japanese working with ANIME TV series could be transferred to my students and become a useful tool that might help them enhance the aspects formerly mentioned.

There were some studies, carried out locally, related to this research, that highlighted the importance of the aspects of autonomy and authentic material in language practices. Such research experiences will be roughly addressed in the following lines because they shed some light on the past research in order to help students gain learning autonomy and enhance communicative competence.

García, Y., Martínez, G. & Sanabria Y.,(2006). Aprendizaje del Inglés Como Lengua Extranjera según el Enfoque comunicativo. Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación. Universidad de La Salle. Bogota - Colombia. This research was aimed to use the theory of communicative approach to implement an innovation in EFL teaching at a local school. Researchers claimed that systematization of practices led to communication is important to generate lessons that provide the students with the communicative skills, enough to tackle practical communication in real life. The experience in this research enables teachers to become creators of meaningful
communicative experiences for students. All the knowledge generated in this process had to be verified through communicative practice, following international communicative standards.

The next two projects worth addressing are both carried out by a group of students at the Javeriana University. Orozco, N.,(2008). Diseño de Actividades Comunicativas a Partir de un Material Audiovisual Autentico Para la Clase de E/LE (Español como Lengua Extranjera). Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Facultad de Comunicación y Lenguaje. Bogotá-Colombia. This work proposed the use of communicative activities based on an audiovisual authentic material. These activities were proposed for a specific group of students of Spanish as a foreign language in advanced levels. In order to design these activities the following aspects were taken into account; a methodology called “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)”, the integration of linguistic abilities that belongs to this methodology, a video as audiovisual and authentic material, and the model of a methodological path from Tomlinson, which was followed to develop materials for the language class. It is necessary to clarify that the step of pedagogical development to select the authentic material and to establish the design of the communicative activities was taken from the formerly mentioned model; due to the fact that the purpose is not the creation of material itself, but to use the model to make decisions about the design of the communicative activities. Subsequently, this work is important for this research because it shows the creation of activities with authentic material to enhance communication in a foreign language.

Guarín, J., Albarracín R. & Lobato, A. (2006). Practicas de enseñanza y aprendizaje Autónomo: Tensiones, Progresos y Desafíos. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Facultad de Educación. Bogotá -Colombia. This project, deals with the importance of autonomous learning in today’s education. It focuses on the strategies to be applied so that students can gain autonomy
to meet the demands of the new academic society. In other words, it is an exhaustive description of the application of some strategies that contribute to the autonomous learning of second semester students at the Fundación Universitaria Monserrate.

The formerly mentioned research studies on communication found that students in general tended to be a little inhibited when trying to communicate their ideas, but this issue could be overcome when real life situations, where meaningful language is required, were brought into the classroom in a systematic, graded way. Also, the research on authentic material to improve communication generated an intrinsic motivation in the students, since they felt identified with the material and embraced it. Furthermore, they were learning about something new in the target language while autonomy was being fostered. The findings of these projects are directly related to my intention of describing the impact of self-chosen authentic materials to foster language learning autonomy and communication. The next section will state the research questions and the aim along with the objectives, for a better comprehension of what this study pursues.
4. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Research Aim

- This research project aims to describe and evaluate the impact on communicative competence and the fostering of language learning autonomy by working with students’ self-chosen authentic material.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question

- How does the work with students’ self–chosen authentic material foster language learning autonomy and impact communicative competence in the focal group of nine graders at Colsubsidio Las Mercedes School?

Sub-questions

- How students’ self–chosen authentic material might influence students' communicative competence?
- How closely related are the use of self-chosen authentic material and the development of autonomy?
- What impact does this project have on students’ learning autonomy awareness?

Specific Objectives

- To describe how self-chosen authentic material could be related to improvements in students' communicative competence.
- To explore and describe the possible close link between self-chosen authentic material and the development of autonomy.
- To describe the general impact on language learning autonomy awareness as an outcome of this project.
6. JUSTIFICATION

This project offered a group of ninth grade students from el Colegio COLSUBSIDIO LAS MERCEDES the chance to work with self chosen authentic material in order to impact communicative competence and foster language learning autonomy. The former aspects seemingly were being overlooked and a little misguided in the school’s regular English lessons, as manifested by some of the school’s teachers. The implementation of the project’s strategy might be helpful to reduce these lacks in English language practices. This kind of study enables us to see how useful the work with students’ self-chosen authentic material can be in EFL practices, to foster language learning autonomy and impact their communicative competence. According to Nunan (1999) authentic material is all that spoken or written information that is produced genuinely on a daily basis of communication, and not specifically intended for English learning. The former means that students on their own or with the assistance of their teacher can include into their language practice, magazines, newspapers, books, music videos, songs, games etc. They will face the language of the “real world.” Therefore, students will have the chance to contextualize their learning beyond the classroom, they will be more focused in content and meaning rather than in language (Gebhard, 1996), and they will be intrinsically motivated to choose authentic materials to their liking, which opens a way into language learning autonomy.

Learning autonomy is all about students becoming responsible for their own language learning processes. Understanding the purpose of their language practices, taking the lead to create and execute activities for their own benefit, along with the constant self-checking of their progress in communicative competence, are the main features of autonomous learners (Little, 1991). Furthermore, one of the aspects of autonomy closely related to this research is that students have the chance to choose their own authentic material to work and develop communicative competence in and out of the classroom, in the
way they want it. In other words, “there is a consensus that the practice of learner autonomy requires insight, a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and a readiness to be proactive in self-management and in interaction with others” (Little, 2008). By gaining autonomy students might have positive changes in their communicative competence.

According to the CEF (2008), communicative competence is all that a learner of a foreign language can do with new language, in terms of understanding, speaking, and writing. Communicative competence is then understood as to be made up of linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence. All the former are vital aspects in the process of communication. Linguistic competence deals with the skills, phonological, lexical and syntactical parts of the language. Pragmatic competence refers to the functional use of the linguistic part. For example, production of language functions and speech acts, according to the context and situations. It also deals with the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence. Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with socio-cultural conditions of the language. In other words, rules of politeness, language rules between generations, sexes, classes, and social groups. The descriptors of these aspects of communicative competence are classified according to levels of complexity matching a level of proficiency in a particular language.

When communicative competence is impacted by the use of self-chosen authentic materials, something important is expected to occur in students’ progress that is worth recording and describing, in order to apply it with other students. Impacting communicative competence with students’ self chosen authentic materials could represent more vocabulary acquisition, more appropriateness when communicating, and a better use of communication strategies (Bachman, 1990). It could be important for this group of students to undergo this learning experience, since they lack the chance to have a different language practice apart from school and their exposure to the foreign language is low.
According to a research study at Perdue University (1986), authentic materials play an important role in the building of communicative competence. The findings of the study suggested that all students from the group responded in a positive way to the work with authentic materials in the classroom, and some thrived under the situation of total responsibility for their learning process. Besides, by the end of the project students were self-motivated and language production was beyond expectation; students responded better to materials containing up to date events information and current realia. Nevertheless, it was also remarked that it is important to consider that the work with authentic material calls for a big extra amount of preparation time and insight from teachers.

This project might benefit these students in terms of intrinsic motivation towards the practice, authentic language use, interesting contents, and genuine exchange of ideas. In summary, the work with self-chosen authentic material is expected to generate a positive effect on learning autonomy and communicative competence, which are critical for succeeding a foreign language. Furthermore, this experience with authentic material might provide me with elements to be more creative and innovative when planning my future lessons. I also have the opportunity to enrich my pedagogical experience from the didactical point of view, since the application of this strategy calls for dedication, close observation, readjusting and redefining of the language goals depending on the students’ communicative and autonomous progress. The next section will provide theoretical support and some insights from previous research to this study.
7. LIT REVIEW ‘Some Insights Into Supportive Theory and Research’

In order to structure, support and help accomplish the aims of the current research project, it is relevant to analyze what has been done in this field. The theory discussed in this review will help us have a clearer picture of the horizon of this research, in order to go over areas already studied and with some positive results in EFL teaching. The insights obtained from the study of this theoretical information will be applied in the most appropriate way to enhance the progress of the project. Also, they will be taken into account for the design and planning of the instruments. Evidences of people learning about one thing they like or need through English, are meaningful and rich experiences to consider.

The laid out theory in this paper will deal with Language Learning Autonomy, Communicative Competence, and Authentic Material. Some research done in related fields also will be somewhat addressed such as; one study related to the improvement of language learning of new coming international students at a University in Honk – Kong. The study relates some insights into addressing this type of ESL learners. Another research is based on describing the differences between a group of US-born learners and Non-US-born learners promoting self-directed learning, and a study dealing with learner autonomy and second/foreign language. All these research projects with their fields of study approached before (theories) will assist this study, clarifying and focusing our scope. In order to start getting in touch with the above mentioned theoretical components, let us take a closer look to each of them and the importance in this research project.

7.1 Learning Autonomy

According to Little (2008), learning autonomy is a problematic term, because it comprises a variety if parameters often confused with self-instruction. Learning autonomy is concerned with that psychological positive attitude of students towards the awareness of the process in their own learning
and practices. It deals with deep insight and reflection about strategies, self-commitment, effectiveness and materials. To trigger language autonomy in students it is necessary that an autonomous teaching is provided. In other words, according to Holec (1981), teachers must assist students with the setting of goals, taking the initiative in planning and executing activities, and the regular evaluation of the effectiveness of the learning process. Students learning autonomy challenges teachers to have a holistic view of learners focusing on cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social dimensions, while observing the interaction among them.

One of the main reasons why learning autonomy should be attained is that autonomous learners are reflectively engaged with their own language practices (learning). Kuramaravadivelu (2003) reinforces this idea when he suggests that learning can be highly effective when it is integrated within a personal framework. Obtaining this, students also participate proactively to fulfill their tasks; meaning that the issue of motivation is solved. Broady and Kenning (1996) also argue that there must be a strong connection between autonomy and motivation, since learners' self-esteem is involved and encouraged. Complementing that idea, Little (2008) also adds that Due to the fact that autonomous learners are insightful and reflective, they generate the capacity to overcome motivational setbacks on their learning processes. In the particular case of effective communication, this can only be developed through use of the language. Taking the former into account, learners that possess social autonomy will find it easier to achieve a high level of effective communication. Language learning autonomy can be triggered by the use of self-chosen authentic materials; they could provide the students with an own identity, focus and purposes towards learning. Expanding the explanation about the benefits of language learning autonomy, We learn from Dickinson (1987), Ellis and Sinclair (1989), Little (1990), Wenden (1991) (as cited by Kuramaravadivelu 2003, pg 133), “that promoting learner autonomy is a matter of helping learners to develop a capacity for critical thinking, discover their learning potential, gathering
knowledge about the learning process, develop self-control and self-discipline, give up total dependence on the teacher and the educational system, understand that autonomy is a complex process of interacting with one’s self, the teacher, the task, and the educational environment.” This means that students have the main role on decision making towards their learning, evaluation and practicing of the target language, which does not imply that it should be an isolated process. Instead, students can make their learning insights concrete with their peers and their teachers, adding their own educational vision and purposefulness to their language experience. It could be only logical to be tempted to think that authentic self-chosen material might play a significant role in the development of learning autonomy.

For example, a look to the project “English through Self-study by New Arrival Children” carried out by (Tang & Yang, 2000) will provide supportive information for this project regarding learning autonomy. As the common language programs and approaches did not seem to offer the best way to enrich and empower newcomers’ abilities towards the learning of English as a foreign language, a group of teacher-researchers in the Chinese University in Honk Kong began an investigation on the effects that a new program: English Self-Learning Packages (ESLPs) could generate on new arrival children (NAC). The program included the world wide known theory of Autonomous learning as a pillar for self study; this guided to building autonomy and responsibility in the students for their own learning processes.

The program also included the communicative approach for the practices in the target language. The study began with some interviews to get information about the preferences of the students as to what and how the activities would be like, and the way they want to be assessed besides how to be assessed. The most favorite ones were those that had to do with videos, readings and culture in general, unlike the grammar and language based ones which did not have a very warm embrace of opinions among the students. As the end of the study the application of this new program showed some good results in most of the population who underwent it. However some students seemed reluctant to the idea
of being left that independent and argued the lack of teaching presence during the course (Autonomous learning does not suggest the no presence of a tutor).

Some theorists cited in this document stated that autonomous learning works well only with grown up population. Nevertheless, the results of this study showed that many children involved in the courses enjoyed and learnt responsibility for their language learning. This study is of great relevance for this research project, since it gives a clear idea that something similar has been tried before with positive results. It reinforces the thought of the autonomous learning as an important tool in language practices. Also, the choosing of materials and assessment methods show how important is that aspect for successful learning.

This next research to be described was developed by Kerka (2005), and it is in some way important because it describes some important characteristics that autonomous language learners hold. It deals with the comparison between 25 US born second language learners and 25 non US born, applying Self Directed Learning (SDL). The studies realized by Nolan (1990) showed that dependent and autonomous behavior can both be found in learners at different learning stages no matter where they come from. Cultural differences were apparent: U.S.-born learners were more likely to resist dependence, whereas Asian-born individuals accepted the dependent relationship and also made autonomous learning efforts. At various times, both groups engaged in independent learning from (authentic material) books, tapes, and films; sought the assistance of resource persons such as co-workers who were native speakers; and enrolled in formal language classes. Nolan (1990) suggested that “there is no such thing as a purely autonomous adult second language learner” (p. 276). Summing up the ideas of the study, it seems that it is necessary to learners to have a very qualified guide in the practice so they can assert their learning progresses. This article shows another light on attempts that have been made to make language learning richer, quicker, and meaningful. Even though Self Directed Learning
(SDL) is not a theoretical part of this project, it is an interesting educational view to consider as experience of this project, which deals in great extend with the matters of independence in choosing strategies and materials, in addition to self-confidence in students to run their own practices.

7.2 Authentic Material

There are several good definitions and views for authentic materials, but let us regard some dealing directly with the matter of autonomy. One worthy idea about the nature of authentic material is provided by Nunan (1999). According to him, this type of material is all that spoken or written information that is produced genuinely on a daily basis of communication, and not specifically intended for English learning. Expanding this definition, Cook (1981) in a study focused on using authentic material in the classroom. He stated that authentic material means using examples of language used by native speakers with a specific purpose, regardless of an educational aim. Anybody who feels willing to bring into the classroom newspapers, magazines, TV series, a train ticket, etc, is taking advantage of the use of authentic materials. Some authentic materials may seem simple in language and easy to understand, but the real issue is that sometimes, for instance, if you bring a short notice from the streets to the classroom you will not be able to understand what it really means if it is detached from its original context. That means that not all authentic materials are necessarily suitable for classroom use. Besides, some of them demand very precise information about native speakers’ daily life. However, authentic materials are in fact a valuable part of teachers and students’ resources, since they can do some things other created materials are no capable of. Furthermore, authentic material might help with the gain of autonomy in students since these with the guidance of the teacher can easily access to more authentic material based on what they have developed and achieved. According to Senior (2005), students need to be provided with clear goals and pedagogical support on their authentic material so that they can feel confident and
approach their material in accordance with their abilities. This way, suitable tasks will emerge between the understandings of teachers and students.

To follow up scoping the use of authentic material more closely as an empowering tool for learning and autonomy, it is worth mentioning the advantages of them. According to Phillips & Shetlesworth (1978) and Peacock (1997), authentic materials have positive effects on learners’ self-esteem because they are intrinsically more motivating and interesting than created materials. The supply of interesting sources for language learning in the media and on the websites is vast and handy; besides, they relate closely to language learners’ interests. Authentic materials provide genuine cultural and social information about the target culture. They expose the students to real language use, rather than structured limited created materials designed to satisfy one purpose. Moreover, they support more creative approaches to teaching and learning, encouraging independence, autonomy and creativity in both students and teachers. The fact that students from this project have the chance to choose their own authentic material with the assistance and guidance of the teacher might set a first step into the field of autonomy and then this could directly trigger the desire to enhance their communicative competence in the target language.

7.3 Communicative competence

Communicative competence needs a clear and concise reference in order to be analyzed, assessed and described. Some criteria have to be established toward what communicative competence is and consists of. Therefore, it is important to address some of the views about communicative competence. For instance, Hymes (1972) addressed it as the inherent grammatical competence plus the ability to use correct grammar structures in communicative situations, which imply the use of sociolinguistic features. Unlike Hymes (1972), Savignon (1983) centered the emphasis on the ability in
the concept of communicative competence. Namely, she conceived communicative competence as “the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors” (Savignon, 1972, p8).

It could be told that at that time the former model was a more revolutionary way to view the concept of communicative competence, strongly suggesting that language proficiency somehow equates with communicative competence. Nevertheless, there are some other explanations of what communicative competence implies. Bachman (1990) included the term «communicative language ability», claiming that this term mixes the meanings of both language proficiency and communicative competence. Bachman & Palmer (1996), also stated that many characteristics of language learners such as some general language features, their knowledge of linguistic aspects, affective schemata and language ability influence their communicative language ability.

Regarding this project, communicative competence will be addressed considering the latest model of description in the CEF (2008); this is aimed at assessment as well as learning and teaching of languages. This project will adopt its definition, its purposes and language indicators in order to validate the information on changes in communicative competences that occur during the application of the project. According to the CEF, communicative competence is all that a learner of a foreign language can do with the target language, in terms of understanding, speaking, and writing. Communicative competence is then understood as to be made up of linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence. All the former are vital aspects in the process of communication. Linguistic competence deals with the skills, phonological, lexical and syntactical parts of the language. Pragmatic competence refers to the functional use of the linguistic part. For example, production of language functions and speech acts, according to the context and situations. It also deals with the mastery of
discourse, cohesion and coherence. Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with socio-cultural conditions of the language. In other words, rules of politeness, language rules between generations, sexes, classes, and social groups.

The descriptors of these aspects of communicative competence are classified according to levels of complexity matching a level of proficiency in a particular language. The level to be considered in this project is A1 (Breakthrough). Therefore, student-participants will be put to perform activities according to the indicators of A1 from the CEF. An A1 learner should be able to understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Also, he/she must introduce him/herself and others while being able to communicate ideas about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Moreover, A1 learners should be able to interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. All these characteristics have their direct independent referents on the list of indicators per language skills. In order to grasp a more complete idea of what this research project pursues, it is relevant to get ideas from the findings that previous research on this field provide.

Another aspect from this project to be addressed is communicative competence linked to the use of authentic material. Based on the results of a research study carried out at Perdue University by Kiembuan (1986), authentic materials got to play a significant role in the empowering of communicative competence. The findings of the study suggested that all students from the group responded way positively to the work with authentic materials brought to the classroom, and some of the students even thrived undergoing the condition of total responsibility for their learning process and expected outcomes. Besides these facts, by the end of the research project students were highly self-motivated and language production was beyond expectation; as an added value, it was registered that students responded better to materials containing up to date events information and current realia. Nevertheless, it
was also remarked the relevance to consider that the work with authentic material calls for a big extra amount of preparation, expertise, time and deep insight from teachers. Autonomy from teachers and students is also required in order to support the work with authentic material.

Talking into account the theoretical explanations laid out in this paper, and the information gathered from the research findings on the field of communication competence, authentic material, and autonomy; it can be understood that the three constructs mainly discussed are important and fruitful for English learning practices and therefore relevant and necessary to be well grasped to successfully direct this research project. Unquestionably, using up-to-date authentic materials related to the students’ environments and daily life, triggers autonomy, and this condition itself, empowers communicative competence, since students feel highly motivated towards the sharing and exploring of ideas and the interaction in and out of the classroom.
8. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research Project was born out of the necessity of having more enthusiastic, engaged, and communicatively productive students in my classroom. Several ideas came to mind when trying to help students out in the priory mentioned aspects. I considered their current language situation at that moment, their environments back home, and the given conditions at school in English classes. After a time of deep reflection on the matter, I finally had three intriguing inquiries that were socialized with some of my colleagues from the practicum and with my tutors; all that procedure eventually led to the posing of one main question and three sub-questions found at the beginning of this paper. The chronogram for this project will be displayed at the end to illustrate the way in which this study was programmed.

8.1 Type of research

It was essential to adopt a qualitative approach, because this methodology of study provides the scope for achieving analytical and descriptive purposes, fundamental to answer problematic questions, for instance, the ones related to learning autonomy and communicative competence. As explained by Denzin & Lincoln (2000), these types of research allow pursuing answers to problematic questions through a rigorous, systematic and predefined set of procedures. Besides, the process requires collecting evidence that leads to findings that are not determined in advance, and reaches conclusions completely applicable beyond the boundaries of the study. As an added value, it also aims at the understanding of a given research problematic situation or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves.

Having all of the former into account, this research was conceived then, as a descriptive case study, due to the fact that this study is not concerned with comparing or contrasting findings at this stage. It attempts just a mere description of phenomena related to autonomy and communicative
competence when using self-chosen authentic material, which should be enough to give strong enough answers to the research questions. This means that this research project aims only at observing and describing closely and systematically, changes in particular phenomena occurring in the aspects of learning autonomy and communicative competence, in a selected group of students from a regular English practice. According to Yin (1984), a descriptive case study is an inquiry that focuses on studying a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, and uses different sources of evidence to be supported. He also suggests that descriptive case studies are primarily based on observations during the process.

This study sets off with the idea of describing the way how communicative competence and autonomy could be impacted when using self-chosen authentic material in a selected group of voluntary students from a language class. Therefore, these features can also be viewed as part of the chosen type of study, since Anderson (1993) sees descriptive case studies as being concerned with why and how things occur in real life contexts, while enabling the registration of the difference between what was planned and what actually happened. Furthermore, they are never applied to focus on the study of entire organizations. On the contrary, they focus on a particular issues, characteristic or unit of analysis.

Focusing independently in concepts to be analyzed is an important advantage that descriptive case studies hold. According to Sampieri, Fernandez, & Bastista (1991), this type of methodology allows thorough description of phenomena that have been roughly studied before. More specifically, it enables to describe concepts, present in the phenomenon of interest. Furthermore, the description of the phenomenon of interest help answer research questions and open the way to slight predictions. As stated by these authors describing is measuring. This means that “in descriptive case studies a series of issues are selected, and then each of them are thoroughly observed independently, so what is being researched can be described (p. 71).”
In general terms, this type of study enables the exploration and in-depth description of the impact on communicative competence and the fostering of language learning autonomy, which interact with each other when using self-chosen authentic material.

8.2 Setting

This project was carried out at the public school COLSUBSIDIO LAS MERCEDES, located in "el barrio el Muelle de la ciudad de Bogota. It is a public school which is run by a private company (Colsubsidio), whose vision is to provide society with integrally educated individuals and formal citizens who contribute to the development of their community, city and country. The fact that this public school is run by a private company, gives it a special kind of population of students unlike the other public schools, since most of the children are related to the running company’s regular employees. The project was developed during the sessions of the teaching practicum that took place every Saturday morning during the first academic semester (four months) in 2011. The number of students attending these practicum sessions varied between 20 and 25 students per group. The purpose of the practicum was to reinforce English practices at the school. In other words, it was an added value that the school in agreement with the Universidad de San Buenaventura offered to some students of this scholar community.

8.3 Participants

The students involved in the project were eight out of a group of 25 in a sex-mixed class. The age range varied from 13 to 15, as they were students from 9th grade at the school. Most of students mainly belonged to a working socio-economic stratum. They were all English basic students to the proficiency levels assessed in the placement test provided at the beginning of the sessions (A1 students, according to the CEF). These eight students had to volunteer to put the strategy with self-chosen
authentic material into practice. Since this was a project that intended to foster autonomy, they had to decide on what material they thought suitable and interesting to accompany their English learning and improve communication. Most of them chose pop and rock songs, others stuck to basic literature using world’s classic books. Negotiation and deep discussions on authentic materials, activities, goals and approaches with each of the students in every session, were necessary in order to keep track on the progress of the participants, and help them achieve their communicative goals.

8.4 Data collection procedures

**Instruments:**

In order to collect sufficient and relevant data to answer the questions that poses this research project, three main instruments were selected according to the type of study, which is descriptive case study. It is important to mention before continuing, thou, that this data collection was carried out with the full approval of the students involved as participants, as they signed the form used to suit that purpose (see appendix 1). The instruments are reflective journals, questionnaires and communicative performance tasks. These three main instruments were validated after a piloting stage was carried out in the previous months with another target group. Their choice was based on the quality of information they gather, according to the research questions.

**Reflective journals**

They were useful in this study because they provided specific information of students’ appraisal and feelings during preparation of the activities with their own material and the performances in the different eight Saturday sessions. Apart from this, journals (see appendix 2) also served as the resource to keep track on the development of the independent work on their material they did back home, during the week. This means the activities that were set and shared on Saturday sessions were fully developed
back at home. To explain a little bit further the functionality and purpose of journals in this study. (The Learning Support Guide to Reflective Journals, 2001) defines them as accounts describing experiences and observations the students register while participating in an intense and involved manner, along with the advantage they provide to put learning into context. In other words, they help students keep on the right track of what they are doing. Probably one of the most important features is the fostering of independent and critical thinking. In addition, journals help the study in the task of collecting enough data about their students’ interaction, progress, and perceptions about the tasks they were developing. Furthermore, this instrument was a rich tool to record the advancements in autonomy that students were achieving during the research.

**Questionnaires:**

According to Kvale (1996), the main task in questionnaires is to collect information to understand what the interviewees say. Besides, Mc Namara (1999), states that specific questions in questionnaires are particularly useful for obtaining the information behind the participant’s experiences. The inquirers can chase in-depth information about a topic. Therefore, in this research project two standardized semi-open-ended questionnaires (see appendixes 3 and 4) were implemented because they are easy to record, summarize, compare and analyze; one at the beginning and the second right after the middle of the data collection. These questionnaires contain some questions focused on the main aspects of my study (autonomy, authentic material and communication).

**Performance tasks:**

According to the CEF (2008), communicative competence can be assessed through performance tasks which aim at the established proficiency levels. In this case A1. Performance tasks (see appendixes 5, 6 and 7) consist of a set of activities with communicative goals. These activities can combine various language skills such as: (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) or can be dedicated to strengthen only
one skill. This means that the data collected here was all academic data related to communication. There were three tasks administered to students. The first in the middle of the practice, the second two weeks later, and the third at the end containing elements of autonomy. The next section will be devoted to explain in detail the pedagogical intervention and also to describe how it is connected to reach the aims of this project.

**TIME LINE:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>February</th>
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<th>May</th>
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<td>Conclusions and implications</td>
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- Saturday 11th
- 21st - 26th
- Saturday 28th
- First half April
- Second half April
- First week of May
9. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

This part of the document attempts to comprehensively describe the pedagogical intervention that was implemented in order to carry out this research Project. In order to do so, it is important to address in the first place the host institution; “El Colegio Colsubsidio Las Mercedes.” This school provides public educational services from pre-school and primary school in the morning and high-school in the afternoon Monday through Friday. It is a public school which is run by a private company. This fact gives this school certain special features in contrast with the regular public schools in the city of Bogota.

This pedagogical intervention focused on providing a support practice for English students which consisted of working with self-chosen authentic material. This meant that students had the full chance of selecting some material of their interest to work on them, apart from the regular classes they have at school and the lessons on Saturdays. The students selected the material through discussions with the teacher. In such discussions not only material was selected but also, aims, times, assessment and activities were also established. After the selection of the material and the discussion on the activities, students were expected to share their experiences and advancements or difficulties with their teacher. They were also asked to present some performance tasks which will be further explained later in this document. This whole idea was framed inside the theory of communicative approach, since the project aims at describing how this practice impacts communicative competence. According to Berns (1984), in communicative approach the students need to be challenged in the classroom with real life situations and contexts that require interaction and communication. In addition, language study has to do with the use of the language in context (functions), and both the linguistic (what is utter before and after a given piece of discourse), and socio-linguistic (who is speaking, man or woman, social role, type of group,
etc…) use of the language. All these components lead to interesting and motivating class discussions using real life language.

Having all this into account the general pedagogical focus was to have students more exposed to real life language by the use of self-chosen authentic material, which are known as all those contents produced in genuine language for native speakers and are not designed for pedagogical purposes whatsoever, in order to foster autonomy so that students could generate positive changes in their communicative competence. This pedagogical support was suitable for the project because the aspects to be addressed in the process resulted in direct and concise data to answer the research questions.

In relation to the research questions, this pedagogical intervention as mentioned in the above paragraph, allowed the collection of enough data to answer the questions about the impact on communicative competence. Through communicative performance tasks based on communicative approach theory, the incidence of the work with self-chosen authentic material could be analyzed and described. It could be said that this intervention was innovative from a didactical point of view, since the use with authentic material has been known and documented positively before, but not as means to generate learning autonomy as an added value to impact communicative competence.

9.1 Instructional objectives

To support the school’s language practice of the students with the use of their own self-chosen material as means to be in closer touch with the target language.

To give the students the chance to explore their possibilities to enrich their own independent language practices and to start leading their own language learning processes.
To take advantage of students’ inner motivation towards self-chosen authentic material as a pathway to succeed in the target language.

9.2 Topic development

Due to the nature of the practice that was provided for the students, there was no a strict set of topics to deal with. It is important to remember that the project aims at fostering language learning autonomy. Because of this, all the independent practices were based on what students suggested for every week. Nevertheless, there were some topics that were addressed in the sessions according to the A1 level of proficiency in the CEF. Topics such as: daily routines, descriptions of appearance, personality, and preferences. These base topics helped to frame the contents of the communicative performance tasks in order to evaluate the changes in communicative competence. They are all functions of language in order to communicate in the appropriate contents. Each topic was developed along the sessions taking three sessions as maximum to develop from vocabulary to grammar.

9.3 Methodology

The whole setting of the project had two main sceneries; the one with the work on authentic material (specific group) and the communicative instruction during Saturday sessions (the whole class). In a nutshell, students had to come every Saturday (during 14 sessions) for their normal communicative lessons, programmed and designed according to the A1 level of proficiency. In these sessions students had to complete communicative language tasks, and discussions. Apart from that, the group of students involved in the project had to show their advancements on their independent work with the authentic material carried out during the week, at the end of every Saturday session. They also had to discuss what they were going to do for next week, and set new goals, once their previous goals had been achieved. Those goals could be either linguistic (grammar), or pragmatic (communication in context).
The teacher helped define and empower these goals, and was a facilitator in order to orient students’ materials and interests towards their aims. As an added value, the reference of the teachers’ own experiences as a learner using self-chosen authentic material helped the students understand the purpose and the importance of the practice in terms of communication. Moreover, the insights about an adequate and effective use of the material, were empowering in order to make students consider other ways to enrich their language practices and make them more interesting and meaningful. The role of the teacher in this sessions combined reflective and transformative features according to the definitions on teachers’ role explained by Kuramaravadivelu (2003), since the guidance and accompanying in the activities was the most important during the process. Neither the teacher did appear as the owner of knowledge to be imparted; on the contrary, situations were set in which language could emerge naturally. Giving the students tools to develop their own learning and helping them realize that language belongs to social and wider context in and out of the classroom, was one of the main focus of the practice. Furthermore, the reflections on the weekly process carried out every Saturday, provided great opportunities for the teacher to adjust strategies, pacing, activities and goals with the students. The whole process was adapting itself and reinventing by following the insights from both teacher and students, in order to more successfully achieve the goals. The entire teaching-learning philosophy of the whole practice was grounded on student-centered instruction. The former, is the ‘father’ of many modern approaches including communicative approach. Therefore, the link between the method and the approach adopted for this pedagogical intervention is consistent, logical and suitable, if we are to contrast the formative visions of the two. Centered-based instruction, in mixing the ideas of Ellis (2009); Kuramaravadivelu (2006); Lightbown & Spada (2006) ; is the type of instruction that allows the student to be engaged in their own learning, and practice the language in ways that are relevant and appropriate for them in their lives outside the classroom. In other words, teachers’ role in this kind of method allows students to
transcend the barrier of classroom instruction and facilitates the appropriation of their own learning processes making them fruitful and meaningful on a daily basis.

Communicative approaches using student-centered parameters to language teaching, focus their emphasis on what learners know and can do with language, as well as what they want and need to achieve (Savignon, 1983). Student-centeredness is a founding and generating principle of communicative language teaching, which is “based on the premise that successful language learning involves not only knowledge of the structures and forms of a language, but also the functions and purposes that the language serves in different communicative settings” (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 196). All the theoretical elements discussed before served as the basis for the programming of the activities for both the people participating in the project and the rest of the group attending the Saturday sessions.

In addition to all that have been described, the practice also considered students affective aspects and thinking towards the language. It was important for this project to focus on this, since much of the nature of autonomy stems from the inner feeling of fulfillment that students may have. In other words it was necessary that they felt completely willing and comfortable with the material they were choosing; this type of attitude towards the process of the students relates to one vision of language described by (Tudor, 2001) who claims that language self-expression is an important feature to be considered in the process of learning a language, since this process is not only about performing correctly in a particular context, but also interacting with your thoughts, feelings and ideas in a world that is emotionally connected to the individual. This means that students need language also to communicate how they feel and how they perceive the world. This aspect of language is important when setting language goals.
Language goals define learning. Therefore, in this project it was necessary to expose the students to authentic materials in order to gain as much input as possible and to be naturally in touch with the target language. In the long run, this is the way in which all of us acquire an L1. This vision of learning is suggested also by Tudor (2001) as experiential learning. This type of outlook towards learning states that the direct experience aimed at communicative purposes serves as the basis for learning. In other words, there is a substantial language ‘pick-up’ when exposed naturally to authentic sources.

But this intervention could not only base on this direct experience and leave the students unattended picking up whatever they wanted to. It was relevant to guide them so they could take the most advantage of this natural and independent approach to materials. It was necessary to discuss and define the purposes and steps to follow to make their experience more productive in terms of communication. In relation to this, Tudor has also something to say when he suggests that in addition to the vision of ‘experiential learning’, ‘learning by doing’ is an important support, providing structures and procedures in order to empower learning.

As a final comment to the way this practice envisioned the intervention, it is worth mentioning that the classroom was set as the right place to share and discuss ideas freely and openly. All the students had the chance to express their opinions and feelings towards the practice. The atmosphere in the classroom was communicative. This means that all the intention was rooted in the free interchange of ideas, considering feelings and thoughts and not only the plain functions of language. In Tudor’s thoughts, the classroom has to become a space in which communicative confidence emerges and flourish.

The regular activities provided to the whole class in the sessions were communicative activities focused on the basic functions of the language according to the A1 level. Dialogues, interviews, fill in
The main activities developed during the pedagogical intervention were the three language performance tasks, designed precisely to measure communicative competence in the group of students. These tasks consisted in a set of activities comprising the four basic skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing) linked to the functions of the language. These activities were all taken from textbooks and were adapted and administered by the teacher. The performance tasks pursued one communicative goal based on something that you communicate in real life, for example, task number one included for activities, the first dealt with listening and watching a video of a young girl talking about her daily life. The second regarded the organization of ideas about the girl’s daily life. The third consisted in writing a paragraph about students’ daily life and a moment for peer correction of possible mistakes afterwards. The fourth and final was the oral socialization of the students’ information. The communicative aim of this task was to perform using the language to express daily routines and habits along with everyday expressions. As to the second task, the first activity proposed to watch a celebrity talking about her life profile. The students were supposed to take notes on this information. Then, in the second activity they had to organize the ideas in a paragraph and read it to the class. After that in the next activity students had to design a profile creating a celebrity, and socializing the celebrity’s life profile to the class. Finally, the last performance task was intended not only to assess communicative competence, but also to see if they had become anymore communicatively autonomous. Therefore, the first activity was related to choose a topic on their own to share in oral presentation in the class. The second activity demanded the organization of the presentation, and the last was the sharing the presentation to the rest of the class. As a follow-up activity, a reflection on the selection of the topic, purpose and organization of the class was submitted. These performance tasks were administered right after a communicative unit finished. They took place three times during an 8 week instruction.
Regarding specifically to the activities with the group of students working with self-chosen material, it can be said that they were varied according to the preference of the students, some of them worked on learning their favorite English songs, some others were working on the pronunciation of these songs, and some others were reading short stories. The activities were advancing and changing according to the progress of the students. The evaluation of these alternate activities was varied also, since some of them preferred to write or simply comment about the experience with the class; discuss doubts and express feelings towards the practice. The evaluation on communicative competence, though, was based on the standard performance tasks administered to the whole class, since the aim of the project was to see the impact of the practice on communicative competence.

Having explained how the project was developed and how it was pedagogically conceived, it is important to focus now how that data were collected and analyzed in the next section.
10. DATA ANALYSIS

In the previous chapters the set of instruments to collect the data were specifically described, along with the instructional and research procedures that were followed in order to carry out the collection of enough data to answer the research questions. In general terms, it was essential to go through a whole systematic process of data collection in order to get the relevant information, since the answers to the questions in this study could not be predetermined. In addition, the students’ views appraisals and feelings towards the project during the process needed to be taken into account. In order to constraint and sharpen the scope of the project, it was appropriate to focus on clear and concise aspects to analyze such as autonomy and communicative competence. How satisfactory the answers to the research questions were going to be, depended entirely on the rigorous observation of these two aspects. Consequently, it was necessary to put together the data in order to make sense out of them, so the research questions could be answered as properly as possible. The triangulation was achieved taking data from multiple collecting and saturating of information, combination of the information generated by three different sources previously explained in the former sections. The analysis procedures were applied in order to consolidate patterns from the three different instruments; a comparison of the information from the instruments was carried out in order to group the commonalities together, where eventually the categories emerged. These procedures have their foundations on the grounded theory to analyze data, in which the categories emerge from the data gathered (Glaser, 2011). These categories were organized according to the relevant information they contained related to the research questions. The next contents of this paper will be devoted to explaining every category related to the research questions, and the general analysis. For privacy and ethical reasons the real names of the students
involved in the project will not be mentioned in this paper, so they will be referred to as participants (1 to 8). The first category is called first steps into language learning autonomy, the second is perception of language learning autonomy and the third is skills of communication. The way these categories were related to the questions will be displayed in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN QUESTION</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
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<tr>
<td>How does the work with students’ self–chosen authentic material foster language learning autonomy and impact communicative competence in a group of nine graders at Colegio Las Mercedes School?</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUB QUESTIONS</td>
<td>CATEGORIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>How students’ self–chosen authentic material might influence students’ communicative competence?</td>
<td>- Skills of communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>How closely related are the use of self-chosen authentic material and the development of autonomy?</td>
<td>- First steps into language learning autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Perception of language learning autonomy</td>
<td>- Perception of language learning autonomy</td>
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<td>What impact does this project have on students’ learning autonomy awareness?</td>
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**First steps into language learning autonomy**

Based on the patterns found in the data this category is called **first steps into language learning autonomy**. The students were involved in the project voluntarily and autonomously in order to participate and choose their own authentic material. For example in the first session of the practice students justified their choices on their material as follows: “escogi soul sister porque me gusta mucho la musica y pienso que la podria utilizar para mejorar mi vocabulario y pronunciación.” “y además aprender nuevas canciones sabiendo q dicen y q me gustan”  (Participant 1- students’ journals).
“prefiero libros porque me parece que requiere de mas (sic) trabajo y mas (sic) entusiasmo que en la música o películas” (Participant 6 – questionnaire 2).

“poker face, me parece mas (sic) sencillo y como mas (sic) fácil de aprender a pronunciar y hasta leer; además que uno se deja llevar del ritmo de la música y pues uno se interesa mas (sic) en aprender”

(Participant 4 – students’ journals).

“inuyasha, porque me gusta mucho el anime y puedo practicar entendiendo lo que hablan y de que se trata”

(Participant 7 – questionnaire 2).

The above extracts also show how students individually decided what was better to begin their practice, stating their own valid reasons why they chose their authentic materials. Besides, the extracts also suggest that the participants first took on the responsibility of enriching their own practice with the help of materials of their interest. Kuramaravadiavelu (2003) states that learning is highly effective when it is developed within a personal framework.

Another evidence for this category is the fact that students were capable of deciding how they were going to start working with this authentic materials and the setting of attainable short term objectives. According to Little (2008), this is a main feature of autonomy. For instance, some of the participants working with songs established the learning of the first verse of the song as their priority. “yo después de haber leído y poder leer bien la primera estrofa, pase a la segunda, la primera fue muy fácil” (Participant 6, questionnaire 2). Others focused on pronunciation along with the learning of the song as seen in this example “utilizo un programa para programar la velocidad de la canción, así (sic) es más (sic) fácil captar como pronunciarla” (participant 2 students’ journal). The participant working with the book aimed at reading the first chapter while identifying characters and setting. “estoy leyendo el libro Round the
The one with the TV series did the same as the book reader as the participant stated “miro el capítulo y defino los personajes también el lugar donde pasan los hechos y que es lo que pasa” (participant 8 questionnaire 2).

These participants consciously began to set their own rules about their independent language practices and they were confident in the decisions they made. Their interests could be noticed and triggered attitudes towards a future learning autonomy. Taking into account that this feature in these participants was born at this stage of the project, it can be described as first steps into a wider experience in learning autonomy, generating a whole perception on the matter.

**Perception of language learning autonomy**

The second category that emerged from the analyzed data is the one called *perception of language learning autonomy*. The information grouped under this evidences how the concept of autonomy in the participants improves during the development of the project with self-chosen materials and also the way in which the awareness of autonomy becomes important and necessary along the process. At the beginning, most of participants did not have any feature related to autonomy before the project, nor did they have a clear vision about autonomy at all. Some of them shared the following at the first sessions. “*no realizo ninguna practica de ingles (sic) por mi cuenta, solo lo del colegio y ya*” (Participant 2 – questionnaire 1). “*no no realizo nada relacionado con ingles aparte del colegio ni veo algo relacionado con el*” (participant 8 – questionnaire 1). However, very few of them had some other independent activities closely related to autonomy. These following examples support this claim. “*tomar clases aparte del colegio osea (sic) de lo diario de la vida real eso debe ser autonomía (sic)*” (Participant 1 – students’ journal)
“estudio en un instituto de ingles (sic) por fuera del colegio y practico por las mañanas.” (participant 5 – questionnaire 1) “escucho música en ingles (sic) todo el tiempo y practico las letras para saber que dicen las canciones” (Participant 8 – students’ journal). The former students’ opinions somehow evidence the situation regarding autonomy at the beginning of the project.

Eventually, a perception of autonomy was developing every step of the way, every time participants had more contact with their materials. For instance, on the third sesión, a participant described: “esto es para la parte lingüística y vocal, con esto puedo enriquecer mi vocabulario para reconocer más de lo q (sic) se en mi vida cotidiana.” “lo básico es hacer algo q valga la pena y poder hacer algo más productivo con lo visto en varias clases” (Participant 3 – students’ journal). Another suggested: “cuando me aprendi (sic) una parte pues no la podía seguir de largo, entonces la practique mas y pude notar que podía pronunciarla mejor.” “pero en la parte que es un poco rápida me falta practica” (participant 7 – questionnaire 2). These extracts illustrate what was happening with students’ autonomy at that stage. Later on during the process, the participants were able to adopt some strategies on their own in order to achieve their own goals in their practice, such as: Distributing their work in parts, self-motivation, and working on weaknesses (participants 1,3,4,7 – questionnaire 2).

Implementing some other resources to achieve aims, helping their peers, self-monitoring of activities and time limits (participants 1 – 8 – questionnaire 2). All of the former are present characteristics in autonomous language learners (Little, 2008).

By the middle to the end of the sessions, most of the participants also reached deeper reflections on their processes and felt responsible enough to make decisions on their materials, as suggested in the following extracts. “que cambie la canción ahora por la de on the floor pues con esta mejore (sic)
porque con esta me identifico (sic) mas” (participant 3 – students’ journal). Here the participant showed that his interest is critical for him to carry out the task.

“me siento mas independiente porque ya no le tengo que preguntar al profesor ni a otras personas tan seguido, aprendi (sic) nuevos conceptos que me ayudan a practicar mejor” (participant 1 – performance task 3). Decision making is clear here in this example in order to strengthen autonomy.

“cambie (sic) la canción lose yourself porque me parece que el lenguaje es muy complicado, intentare con un más lenta esta semana con la misma actividad.” (participant 2 – students’ field notes).

This participant is already gaining awareness of his limitations and strengths to succeed language.

The work with self-chosen materials seemed to trigger students’ learning autonomy. They presented pertinence of ideas with the activities carried out, and some of them generated a clearer vision of what somehow suits them best in order to make their learning experiences more satisfactory and productive, as put by this participant in one of the middle sessions “me aprendí la primera canción super rápido asi es que seguí con una segunda canción” (Participant 4 – questionnaire 2). Furthermore, participants began to be interested in the concept of autonomy and tried to understand what this term implies, and how this aspect was improving their practice. They perceived the benefits of being autonomous language learners and got more engaged in their own practices as they saw progress in the development of the tasks with their materials and the performance tasks in the sessions. “cambie la canción porque me gusta esta mucho más para trabajar, se llama when you believe the mariah carey y estoy más segura de continuar mi practica” (Participant 6 – students’ journal). This participant showed a real interest and confidence in her own process. “autonomía es tomar las decisiones sin necesidad q’ otros las tomen x nosotros estar seguro de las decisiones q vas a tomar” (Participant 2 – questionnaire 2). In this case the participant showed a little understanding of the concept of autonomy and the direct connection of it
to decision making towards learning. “es comprometerme con mi aprendizaje, y avanzar cada día (sic) mas y ser responsable en mi estudio y con cada actividad propuesta” (Participant 3 – questionnaire 2).

” para mi es hacer lo que me gusta lo que kiero (sic) sin que nadie me mande para aprender cada día un poco más” (Participant 5 – task 3). The aspects of responsibility and compromise are evident in these former quotes. Engaged students approach their own learning in a confident and promising attitude.

The perception of autonomy is a little more concise in these participants’ opinions above, since autonomy is related to responsibility, reflection and awareness of the learning process (Little 2008). Awareness and approximation to language learning autonomy in some students is evident in the procedure and the results by the end of the project as student registered the following “Haciendo esto me di cuenta que es importante trabajar en mejor vocabulario y pronunciación.” “es bueno para que las otras presentaciones sean mejores.” “Me gusta el tema asi (sic) es que me quedo más sencillo trabajar. La música me ayuda a aprender mejor” (Participant 8 – performance task 3).

“escogí este tema porque estoy trabajando lecturas en el proyecto, mis objetivos son tratar de alcanzar las metas que me he puesto, quiero mejorar vocabulario y pronunciación para la próxima presentación” (Participant 5 - task 3). As seen in the extracts before, aspects of deeper self evaluation were also present by the end of the sessions. Following this idea, more suggestions related to reflection by the middle to latter sessions of the project were described by the participants this way. “miro en que no me va bien y pues trato de cambiarlo en algunos casos. Cuando casi todo sale bien pues me enorgullezco y pues me pongo otra vez a leer pues para corregir en lo que me equivoque” (participant 2 - students’ journal).

“llevo el control de mi actividad y la mido según mi capacidad” (participant 4 – questionnaire 2).

“miro en que avanzo y en que no y cada vez que avanco me exijo un poco mas” (Participant 6 – questionnaire 2).
“ayudará mas a mi aprendizaje porque me encuentro haciendo algo que realmente me interesa, por eso quiero hacer lo mejor. Pienso que debo enfocarme mas (sic) en la pronunciación a la hora de hacer la presentación” (Participant 3 – task 3). The features present in the extracts above, support self regulation in their learning processes besides a deep insight of their learning. As Holec (1981) explained, self evaluation and deep reflection are also essential elements of autonomy. As seen before students’ achievement of more focused ideas on autonomy were increasing, and even some other ideas related to communication were implicit in their appreciations. Therefore, the next category will explain the effects of the project on this matter.

**Skills of communication**

This next category is called *skills of communication* and the interpretation of data will be based on the standards for communicative competence in the CEF which were assessed in the performance tasks. Students showed different levels in communicative competence during the development of the performance tasks, according to the A1 level standards explained before in this paper. Based on the participants’ results in the performance tasks, it cannot be 100% stated that the participants involved in the project presented a vast difference in communicative skills than the rest of the group. However, their attitude towards the communicative language practice was definitely more proactive and enriching as they describe. “haciendo esta práctica reflexiono y pienso q he aprendido o tengo q reforzar en algunas cosas de las que hago” (Participant 1 – questionnaire 2). This participant’s attitude towards his own process of communication is completely active and compromised. “miro mis avances también lo que me ha servido, y en lo que quiero mejorar para aprender a hablar bien” (Participant 7 – students’ journal) both claims evidence willingness towards an effective communication in the target language.
Some participants engaged in the project presented high receptive skills (listening, reading) that stood out above the other students of the course. These participants’ performance in the listening and reading activities about daily routines, habits, preferences and free time, presented in the performance tasks, were completely satisfactory. Regarding productive skills on the same functions of language, these students achieved some above standard ability, especially when they were asked to produce information in written way. Nevertheless, most of the participants achieved below standard in oral activities, since they were not able to fully communicate their ideas without following notes closely, but this condition is completely natural for A1 students and it is improved when periods of practice are extended and made more often.

The impact of self-chosen materials was completely noticeable on both the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of communicative competence since participants appeared to be more confident and determined towards the correct use of the language, they felt free to communicate their ideas regardless of mistakes, and the increase in vocabulary was significant when they put out their ideas in written activities. Some participants’ claims help support the direct incidence on communication produced by the work with authentic material as follows: “esta práctica me ha ayudado a aprender a escuchar y saber algunas palabras que no conocía, que me sirven para mi vocabulario en inglés.” “en esta presentación quiero que mis compañeros me entiendan y trato de pronunciar lo mejor posible, me kiero sentir bien hablando y sin pena” (Participant 1 - task 3).

“pronuncio más fácil y entiendo mas lo que dicen.” “mostrarle a mis compañeros como manejo el inglés (sic) con la música y mostrarle una importancia a todos para aprovechar este lenguaje en el tiempo libre” (Participant 4 – students’ journal).
As displayed in the extracts before, the use of self-chosen materials made students gain vocabulary in order to better express their ideas and got intrinsically motivated towards language; therefore, the participants had a genuine willingness to approach any task related to language. As Phillips & Shettesworth (1978), and Peacock (1997) stated, authentic materials have positive effects on learners’ self esteem because they are intrinsically more interesting that created materials and are familiar to students’ preferences. There were few but significant changes students in participants’ communicative competence when working with self-chosen authentic materials when seen as follows: “pues ya se como escribir y pues hago preguntas y pues tal cual me contestan” (Participant 3 – task 3). In this example the student evidences interaction in the field of conversation and interchange of ideas.

“he aprendido la escritura y a pronunciar mejor el ingles.(sic)” “esto me puede ayudar tal vez para saber la pronunciación de unas palabras más, o puede q no las pronuncie bien pero al verlas escritas si las podre identificar” (Participant 1 – students’ field notes). The impact here on writing skills and pronunciation showed a direct link between these two abilities for this student.

“he aprendido a pronunciar mejor muchas palabras, y expresarme mejor” (participant 5 – questionnaire 2). “si pues entiendo algunas cosas q no comprendía al escribirlas y con la canción mejora mi fluidez.” “para llegar a aprender a hablar bien el ingles para así poder habar sin pena. Me (sic) sentía nerviosa hablando ingles (sic) pero vacano (sic) porque mejore” (Participant 7 – students’ journal). This two last extracts evidence a slight change in fluency as the authentic material supports this process.

As it is evident in the laid out examples in this category students’ self-chosen material also helped students focus on specific aspects of communication they consider including their communication with their peers and school; this fact deals directly with the sociolinguistic aspect of communication.
This chapter summarized in a comprehensive way the analysis procedures and the strategies used to organize the data gathered for this research project. The data organization into categories provided enough and appropriate information to meet the research questions. In the next chapter, the conclusions from this study will be laid out and explained along with its limitations and implications.
11. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this Project was to foster language learning autonomy and impact communicative competence by the use of self-chosen authentic materials. In order to achieve this aim, a pedagogical strategy using these materials was implemented and by observation and following of the process, relevant information was gathered in order to answer the inquires that the research questions pursued. Having all this into account I can conclude that participants were not really in touch with learning autonomy, since their previous condition as language learners did not present features of autonomy. Participants’ willingness and interest in their own communicative processes were awakened by the use of something appealing and familiar to them as were their self chosen authentic materials.

Subsequently, participants found their materials intrinsically motivating as Phillips and Shettesworth (1978), and Peacock (1997) suggested they would. Students did not have the need to be encouraged to develop language practices with those materials since the very substance of participants’ preferences was flagrant in their choices. Participants liking towards the work with their self-chosen material triggered the beginning of responsibility and the setting of communicative goals in the target language. They needed and wanted to succeed the comprehension of language from these materials from the moment they knew they had a choice in the matter. Since everything began with their choice, it cannot be denied that these participants showed the very first step into what an important part of autonomy is all about.

The intrinsic and motivated urge to conquer their own communicative goals in any task as explained by Little (2008) was definitely present in the process. The volition towards learning and the step in responsibility for choosing something to build up some benefit out of it, is essentially the label for the beginning of something genuinely autonomous coming out. These first little innings into
autonomy generated a more concise idea about what autonomy was and the benefits of it. However, even by the end of this process it cannot be stated that they are autonomous learners.

Participants were engaged in their own practices allowing their personalities and feelings to be part of their whole communicative experience, adding a personal touch to their practice that empowered them in terms of confidence and determination, similar to the conditions described by Broady & Kenning (1996). The communicative process responded to the permanent work of self-chosen authentic materials. These incited the participants not only to work proactively but also impacted their language input in a manner that cannot be easily achieved just with the work of regular lessons. Students improved their ability to listen and read information in the target language. They did it mainly because this was the result of the constant exposure to their authentic materials. In a nutshell, listening to music is an extended listening exercise so the level of comprehension is going to improve every time you are in contact with it. Besides, understanding the lyrics of a song can sometimes be more difficult than understanding regular spoken language; so the results are keener listening abilities, little by little. In the case of the reader participants, it can be assumed that the enrichment of vocabulary and getting use to English language structures enable the learner to have improvements in his / her comprehension of the language. To conclude this explanation, participants’ ability to comprehend detailed information from texts and listening extracts was improving every step of the way. The acquisition of vocabulary was also another advantage they obtained from their work with the materials. In their paragraphs, the use of new vocabulary could be evidenced, almost as if the more the contact with the authentic material, the more the benefit in communication. In other terms, it seemed to have generated a directly proportional link between the two. According to Cook (1981) this is expected to occur so, due to the intrinsic communicative nature of the materials.
Nevertheless the impact of these materials could not be evidenced as powerfully for the oral skills. Participants were not reluctant at all to have spoken interventions, but they felt they needed more practice in order to communicate all they wanted. It can be said that for this aspect the work with their materials was not enough to empower this single ability. But it cannot be left unnoticed that participants felt confident at least while making mistakes. Unlike the other students who felt always on the spot and insecure when they had to participate orally. These clearly-goal-set materials played an important role in confidence for communication (Senior, 2005). Participants were able to center their attention in aspects such as pronunciation, use of new vocabulary. These main concerns in the participants show that they had the ability to identify what their difficulties were and felt confident enough to strengthen them through their authentic material practice. It also means that there was an awareness of their learning processes in addition a reflective attitude towards their performance. It is logical to believe that the hardships they have to communicate their ideas orally were all owing to these two aspects previously mentioned.

The more students advanced in their work with self-chosen authentic materials, the deeper became the compromise and identification with the improvement of their communicative skills, along with the approach to autonomy. Participants certainly began to look for strategies to assist their processes and their partners’. Self-monitoring, time limit setting, goal setting, self-evaluation and reflection; were vital part of their daily work. Discussions with the teacher in order to clarify what autonomy was and the benefits it brought arouse early in the process, which means that their practice was generating a personal purpose as explained by Kuramavadivelu (2003). This means that students had the need to explore the field in which they were immersed into.

Participants got to know what the basic features of autonomy are and interpreted them their way, and also expressed them their way. These students shared their particular views of responsibility and
commanding of their own learning. They understood autonomy as that genuine initiative that students
generate towards their learning process. They also comprehended that autonomy is not developed in
isolation. Instead, it is a condition also produced by the interaction of their ideas with their teachers’ and
their peers’. They roughly understood that to be autonomous means readapting everyday as students in
order to reach your personal fulfilling purpose, matching to a big extend the description made by

In general terms, I can state that learning language autonomy was approached and envisioned in
this project thanks to the engaging nature of the authentic materials participants chose. They did not
have the chance to experience a development in autonomy, but definitely, completed their practice with
strong insights into it. Their perception helped them get responsibility, purpose, interest, self-evaluation,
awareness of their learning processes and confidence. These are all features of successful autonomous
language learners; these participants will be capable of develop their autonomy in their near future with
no doubt, since in this project they generated good learning tools in order to begin their path into
autonomy.

This leading path into autonomy will implicitly enhance their communicative competence more
and more. These participants already know what their strengths and weaknesses are and have their own
strategies in order to overtake them in the future. Their communicative competence will continue
improving non-stop as long as they keep working on their authentic material. This process that began as
a research project is now part of the students’ very life and they will keep on doing it, since they already
know its purpose and nature. Participants felt identified with it and adopted it as productive way of
approaching the target language. Having into account the interesting results this project produced, it is
also important to take a close look to the pedagogical benefit, and also those aspects that did not
represented an advantage for this project in the next section of this paper.
12. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Working on this Project generated in me a special interest in developing more activities involving the use of self chosen authentic materials in the classroom. As a researcher, I feel the need to keep on working to see what other aspects I can impact with this kind of pedagogical intervention. Pedagogically talking, the use of self chosen materials as a support for any language practice brings “the real world” in contact with the students, which is very important for them in order to build up a more realistic and applicable knowledge of English. The practice with students’ self chosen materials produces a sense of belonging among themselves, and add self-confidence when participation in language interaction is required. This pedagogical intervention solves the issue of motivation in the classroom since students are intrinsically engaged in what they are exploring and doing in and out of the school. As a teacher, it is important to generate a linguistic link between the language seen in class and the authentic material contents developed by students in their daily life.

It is essential to be autonomous and creative in order to guide and assist students to enrich their work with self chosen materials. For instance, the students working with literature could focus on deep descriptions of characters and their feelings towards them. They could also do some research work related to the plot of the story, for example, about the time in which the story was written, and finding out more about people and society at that time, in other words, all the information they can access and is related to their material. For students working with songs, it might be beneficial to work on artists’ profiles. This activity in special, was carried out in this project and resulted into something highly motivating and beneficial for students, since it triggered students’ interest for reading and listening to interviews.
The work with self chosen materials does not only represent what they can immediately offer, but also all the important task links that can stem from them in order to impact the development of language. Teachers can use the genuine preference that students manifest for their own material to explore content linked to them, making the students’ language experience more meaningful and motivating. This type of pedagogical support gives the students a feeling of familiarity and deep appropriation to what they are doing.

In summary, this pedagogical support strategy can give a whole new atmosphere to English classes as it did in this project. Motivated students can generate autonomy, which is a critical element in order to succeed a language, since they take responsibility and decide on their own tasks in order achieve meaningful aims for them. The practice with self-chosen authentic materials really transcends the walls of the classroom to become a familiar motivating every day activity, which is pleasant and entertaining and at the same time rewarding in terms of communication improvements. English is not going to be visualized by students as a regular academic subject anymore, but as a tool for life, something they can use and is completely purposeful in their regular lives. Applying this strategy will bring an air of confidence to students that will later be represented in richer participation and language production. As a final benefit, we could think that individualized language programs could be offered in the future to small classes, basing all the contents of the instruction to the development of students’ proposed materials.
13. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Even though this research project was fairly successful in terms of getting the information needed regarding the impact of authentic materials. There were some aspects that did not benefit the process to make it stronger and more significant. For instance, the schools’ facilities did not have enough technology to develop presentations; neither did it have an appropriate room to develop formal presentations with appropriate visual aids and sound. Another aspect that worked against the optimal development of the project was the fact that not all participants had internet connection at home to be in contact and make any inquiry regarding their activities during the week. Only very few students could take advantage of constant feedback online; most of them received online feedback once a week when could go to an internet café for a chat with the teacher. One more last little hindrance that this project faced was the limited time that was provided in order to develop the whole idea of the project. This research needs more than a semester for students begin to really get a development in their autonomy; had it there been more time at hand, it would have been possible to register significant advancements in autonomy’s development. Therefore it is necessary to extend this research project in order to register more valid aspects that the work with self-chosen authentic materials could generate.

For instance, in a follow up research using the same strategy, one could focus on analyzing the part of the impact self-chosen materials have on motivation; it is important to have into account that motivation is one of the features for learning autonomy, since there cannot be autonomy if there is not a motivated attitude towards learning. Therefore, it would be interesting to explore this aspect independently and deeper in a further study. Another aspect for research could be how autonomy is developed using the same type of materials, since students did not reach that level in this research due to time constraints. Finally, not with the intention of being too ambitious, it would be enriching for the
language teaching field, to study the possibility of designing a whole program using self-chosen authentic materials as leading contents.
14. REFERENCES:


15.1 Appendix 1

FORMATO DE AUTORIZACIÓN
Proyecto de investigación:

Students’ Self-chosen Authentic Material Impacting Communicative Competence and Fostering Language Learning Autonomy.

Respetado Estudiante:

Este periodo académico planeo implementar, con el consentimiento del Colegio Colsubsidio las Mercedes IED, y la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad de San Buenaventura sede Bogotá, el proyecto de investigación Self-chosen Authentic Material Impacting Communicative Competence and Fostering Language Learning Autonomy.

La recolección de datos se llevara a cabo a lo largo de este semestre, en el aula de clases de Inglés Básico I, en ella se llevarán a cabo las observaciones y la recolección de datos de cada estudiante. Su participación en este proyecto es fundamental y de carácter voluntario, garantizando la reserva de su identidad si usted así lo determina, además de la confidencialidad de la información recolectada y que su participación no incidirá en sus calificaciones.

Agradezco su autorización para contar con usted como participante en este proyecto.

Cordialmente,

__________________________

ENRIQUE MORALES OYOLA
Estudiante Investigador

Autorizado por:

Nombre: ________________________
Firma: __________________________
Fecha: _________________________
15.2 Appendix 2

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

REGISTRO DE ACTIVIDADES

GUIA

• La actividad debe describirse de acuerdo con lo que el estudiante realiza semanalmente en la práctica; se debe describir el material utilizado.

• En la descripción se debe especificar brevemente el proceso de todas las actividades que realiza durante la semana de práctica.

• La reflexión debe contener opiniones personales acerca del proceso y los resultados semanales de la práctica realizada con respecto al objetivo general. Se debe reflexionar acerca del material, el proceso y el lenguaje en práctica.

• El tema se debe especificar solo si hay un aspecto del lenguaje en específico a trabajar con la práctica. Por ejemplo, tiempos verbales, preposiciones, o una función específica del lenguaje.

Objetivo general de la práctica:

Impactar la competencia comunicativa y fomentar el aprendizaje autónomo por medio del uso de material auténtico auto-elegido.

Actividad:
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<td>Reflexión:</td>
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15.3 Appendix 3

RESEARCH PROJECT

STUDENTS’ SELF-CHOSEN AUTHENTIC MATERIALS FOSTERING LANGUAGE LEARNING AUTONOMY AND IMPACTING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE.

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (language learning autonomy)

Name: _____________________________________ grade______

Marca con una X tu respuesta

1- ¿Sabes que es autonomía en el aprendizaje de idiomas?
   Si_______ No_______

2- Si tu respuesta a la pregunta anterior es ‘Sí’, describe brevemente lo que es:
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

3- ¿Realizas prácticas autónomas de inglés a parte del trabajo requerido en tu colegio?
   Si_______ No_______
   Cuales ________________________________________________________________

Si tu respuesta a las primeras tres preguntas es ‘Sí’ continua con el cuestionario.

4- ¿Escoges tu propio material para la práctica autónoma?
   Si_______ No_______
   Cual ________________________________________________________________

5- ¿Tienes algún objetivo con la práctica autónoma?
   Si_______ No_______
   Cual ________________________________________________________________

6- ¿Auto-evalúas tu práctica autónoma?
   Si_______ No_______ No se_______
7- ¿Determinas periodos de tiempo para tu práctica autónoma en términos de duración y frecuencia?
   Si _______ No _______

8- ¿Sabes cómo se te facilita aprender inglés?
   Si _______ No _______

   Como______________________________________________________________

9- ¿Aplicas algunas estrategias de aprendizaje a tu práctica autónoma?
   Si _______ No _______

   Cuales____________________________________________________________

10- ¿Sabes cómo medir los resultados de tu práctica autónoma?
    Si _______ No _______

    Como____________________________________________________________
15.4 Appendix 4

RESEARCH PROJECT

STUDENTS’ SELF-CHOSEN AUTHENTIC MATERIALS FOSTERING LANGUAGE LEARNING AUTONOMY AND IMPACTING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE.

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (language learning autonomy)

Name: ______________________________ grade________

Marca con una X tu respuesta

• ¿Tienes una idea más clara de que es autonomía en este momento de la práctica?
  Si_______ No_______

• Si tu respuesta a la pregunta anterior es ‘Sí’, describe brevemente lo que es:
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________

• ¿Realizas ahora prácticas autónomas de inglés a parte del trabajo requerido en tu colegio?
  Si_______ No_______
  Cuales ____________________________________________

• ¿Escogiste tu propio material para la práctica autónoma?
  Si_______ No_______
  Cual_____________________________________________________

  ¿Por qué escogiste el material?
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________

• ¿Tienes a este punto de la práctica un objetivo general claro?
  Si_______ No_______
• ¿Auto-evalúas tu práctica?
  Si________ No_______ No se_______

Como_______________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

• ¿Determinas periodos de tiempo para tu práctica en términos de duración y frecuencia? Si_______ No_______
  Cuales
____________________________________________________________________

• ¿La práctica te ha facilitado la comunicación en inglés?
  Si________ No_______

Como_______________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

• ¿Aplicas algunas estrategias a tu práctica?
  Si________ No_______

Marca las estrategias que mas aplicas – puedes marcar más de una opción

- Dedicas un tiempo específico de enfoque en la práctica únicamente (   )
- Tienes un interés particular por el material (   )
- Describe brevemente _____________________________ ________________________________
- Distribuyes el trabajo en partes que puedas manejar (   )
- Preparas las condiciones que te ayudan a aprender (   )
- Planificas tu práctica (   )
- Auto-monitorea tu trabajo (   )
- Tienes objetivos para cada sesión de práctica que apoyan el objetivo general (   )
- Recibes y envías mensajes a tu profesor para que te guíe (   )
- Analizas y razonas sobre tus tareas (   )
- Te auto-motivas (   )
- Cooperas con las tareas de los demás (   )
- Identificas tus limitaciones en el lenguaje y trabajas para superarlas (   )
- Utilizas otros recursos que te ayuden a cumplir la tarea (   )

Otra: _____________________________________________ __________________

• ¿Reflexionas sobre los resultados de tu práctica (autoevaluación)?
  Si_______ No_______

Como_______________________________________________________________
**Task**: oral interventions from students talking about daily life during the week and the weekends.

**Task’s Aim**: to evaluate communicative competence using the language of routines / habits and everyday expressions, on a basic (A1) level.

**Activity 1**: (Listening) (15 mins)

Watch and listen to a short video: a day in Andy’s life.

Take notes on her daily routine and habits. What does she do during the week? What does she do on weekends?

**Activity 2**: (Speaking) (20 mins)

Organize your ideas and tell the class about Andy’s daily life.

**Activity 3**: (Writing - Reading) (25 mins)

Write a paragraph talking about your daily life (week – weekends), then exchange it with a partner. Read your partner’s paragraph and correct mistakes if possible.

**Activity 4**: (speaking)

Read aloud and tell the class about your partner's daily life.

**Activity 1**: (take notes)

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
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**Activity 2**: (organize your ideas)

________________________________________________________________________________________
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**Activity 3**: (paragraph)

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

**Activity 4**: (tell the class)
15.6 Appendix 6

RESEARCH PROJECT

PERFORMANCE TASK 2

Task: elaborating and socializing a life profile

Task’s Aim: to evaluate communicative competence using the language of preferences and descriptions, on a basic (A1) level.

Activity 1: (Listening) (15 mins)
Watch and listen to a short video: Lindsey Lohan profile.

Take notes on her life facts. What is she like? What does she look like? Clothes?

Activity 2: (Speaking) (20 mins)
Organize your ideas in a paragraph and tell the class about Lindsey’s lifestyle.

Activity 3: (Writing - Reading) (25 mins)
Design your profile, and then exchange it with a partner. Read your partner’s profile and correct mistakes if possible.

Activity 4: (speaking)
Present your profile to the class.

Activity 1: (take notes)
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Activity 2: (organize your ideas)
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Activity 3: (Profile)

Activity 4: (tell the class)
15.7 Appendix 7

FINAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TASK

Objective: To communicate organized ideas in oral and written way in order to share information.

Activity 1: Organize an oral mini-presentation for your class about a topic of your interest.
(You can use visual aids) Be creative. (5 mins)

Activity 2: share your oral mini-presentation to your classmates.

Activity 3: submit a document with the discourse and the information of the mini-presentation. (10 – 15 lines)

Activity 4: Make a reflection in spanish about the task. Make comments on the contents, why did you choose it? Your own objectives, and the way how you evaluate the process and the final product of the task.