

**Contributing to a self-regulated English language learning process by teacher
feedback at an eighth grade at Concejo de Medellin high school**

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Abstract

This action research study reports how teacher feedback contributes to a self-regulated learning in an EFL classroom with 8th graders at a public educational institution in Medellin, Colombia. The actions developed were: choosing a topic to work with, dividing students into groups, developing activities connected to students' realities, giving feedback and having self and peer-assessment at specific moments, and evaluating the final results of project work. Data collection techniques included teacher's journal, two surveys to students, and an interview to the CT. Findings revealed that working by projects students were more autonomous and responsible, and also became aware that they needed to make some decisions to have progress in the English course. Teacher feedback was part of the process that allowed students to self-regulate their learning, because they learnt about their strengths and weaknesses and how to overcome difficult learning situations.

Keywords: teacher feedback, self-regulated learning, self and peer-assessment, project work.

Degree Requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement of the Bachelor of Education in Foreign Languages Teaching (English and French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, in Medellin, Colombia.

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Preface

I am a student teacher in the practicum stage of the Foreign Languages Teaching Program at Universidad de Antioquia. In this thesis I wrote about my personal experience with an action research study that consisted of showing the contributions of teacher feedback to a self-regulated English language learning process at an eighth grade at Concejo de Medellin, a public high school in Floresta neighbourhood in Medellín, Colombia.

Through this action research I was able to identify the aspects of feedback that contributed to a self-reflected learning in students. Autonomy and commitment were some values that encouraged students to advance in English and take decisions in order to obtain better results in the English course. Self and peer-assessment were also essential in this process. By working by projects and being attentive to every single event in the classroom, I could obtain important information as a teacher that would help me for my future teaching activities.

It is noteworthy to mention that I had only taught in private English institutions, where contexts are quite different from those in public institutions. It was a big challenge to adapt my teaching methodology to the resources and facilities in the action research context, but it was enriching and useful for my personal experience as a language teacher.

Context

The Institution

Institución Educativa Concejo de Medellín was a public school located in Calasanz neighborhood. There were three different schedules for students: in the morning for primary levels, in the afternoon for secondary students, and in the evening they had an exceptional program for those students with special learning needs and skills as part of an inclusive program that existed in this institution. The school had a headquarters that was bigger than the other three locations called: El Anexo, La Clodomiro and La Pichincha. Making reference to the headquarters' infrastructure, the place where I carried out my action research, there were some places starting by the classrooms with large windows, there were two computer rooms, there was a ramp for students with reduced physical abilities, a meetings room with special visual aids, a chemistry laboratory, a library, a music room, and a chapel for students that was used at least once a week.

The Classroom and the Students

I observed an eighth-grade called '8.5'. The English course was on Mondays from 10:35 am to 12:15 pm and on Tuesdays from 6:30 am to 7:20 am. The classroom was the first one from the entrance on the right side of the building. This was a big-sized white room with 49 chairs for students and two for teachers. There were two small wooden desks: one for teachers and one for placing stuff on it. There were also some other pieces of furniture distributed on the corners of this place. The classroom was quite illuminated and there were windows along two walls, the door was on another wall, and the other wall was not plastered and there were not any windows on it. The Cooperating Teacher decorated this wall with some posters in English and with a

poster that contained students' birthdays. The CT was the form tutor of the group in observation. There was a whiteboard behind the teachers' desk next to the door. Finally, there were some brooms, mops, dustpans and buckets behind the door. On the attendance sheet there were 38 students registered. They were between 13 and 16 years old. This was a very homogeneous group. Students' English level was basic because they expressed not to understand when the CT talked to them in English, but they could understand some basic expressions like greetings, farewells, and expressions of politeness, for instance, please. Students could develop without difficulties different written activities, so the oral ability was less strong than the written one.

The Cooperating Teacher

The CT was a thirty-two year-old woman. She graduated from a Foreign Languages Program at Universidad del Quindío in 2010. She also had a magister in Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning at Universidad de Antioquia. The CT worked as an English teacher for ten years in different private language centers and universities in Armenia and Medellín. This was the first time she worked in a public institution and in a high school. She expected to have a difficult experience in this place; however, she affirmed this had turned into a good experience for her. Regarding her philosophy, she tried to use English in her English courses all the time, but she switched to Spanish from time to time in order to clarify to students what she had just said in the target language. The Cooperating Teacher also tried to implement different kinds of activities to have varied classes, raise students' interest in English and avoid monotony. She expected to share her knowledge with her students and to help them learn a lot.

Statement of the problem

I observed the English course described above for the first three months of this year. During this initial observation process, I was concerned about different issues in the classroom, for instance, the lack of technological tools to have varied classes, learners' misbehaviour, the difficulty to use the board because the students at the end of the queues could not see clearly what was written on it, the big number of students in this course, a few students' reluctant attitude to pay attention and participate actively in the class, among others. Based on these concerns, I decided to carry out an action research on the contribution to a self-regulated English language learning process by teacher feedback. Action research, as defined by Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (2001), is:

A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities. (p. 1)

The interest for this issue emerged from the necessity to help students have a conscious English learning and the capacity to act in order to apply different strategies for a better learning process and assessment. I researched on this topic because there were some facts that caught my attention during the observation time. Project Work was stated in the PEI as the teaching methodology but it was applied awry in the English course, rubrics were absent during follow-up assessment, and teacher feedback was left aside at the end of activities or assessment tasks.

First, in this public institution, teaching was based on a methodology called Project Based Approach (it was not explicit in the PEI, but the Cooperating Teacher (CT) and the Academic Coordinator affirmed it), which meant that teachers and students were supposed to choose a different real-world topic to work with during each term that lasted 13 weeks. This Project Work, according to Fredricka L. Stoller (as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002), was focused on content learning, questions, stages, collaboration, process and product (p. 110). However, activities in this course were focused on vocabulary and grammar topics. Additionally, at the end of each term, students were assigned a written task that was not related to the term content. For instance, during the first term, students were taught greetings and farewells in English, useful expressions in an English classroom and the Simple Present Tense; as a final project, they had to submit a text about Colombian policies of “Colombia Bilingüe.” The CT told students the day of the submission that the text should be written in English. That was why she gave them one more day to redo the work. Students had written the text in Spanish.

She (The CT) also clarified that the Project must be written in English, so they were able to submit their work the next day in case they needed to change the language of the work. (Journal 4, March 22nd, 2018)

I wanted to emphasise that students and teacher would have worked on the project during the term if this had been a real project work itself.

Second, I observed that the CT assigned some activities and told learners when an activity was going to be graded, but there was no rubric or any pre-established criteria that guaranteed a fair students' assessment. Grading depended on students' behaviour in class.

Finally, activities developed by learners were checked, graded, and given back to them without any feedback. A new topic or a new activity continued. Students were not informed about the topics, objectives and assessment procedures, tasks, criteria and percentages in each term. Even more, the institution did not state a Project work methodology with tasks, stages, dates, products, and assessment procedures explicitly in its PEI. The academic coordination distributed a pre-established rubric for all the subjects which teachers could mark the Final Term Project with.

The CT delivered to students the worksheets she had just checked and marked and said nothing about that. She did not explain why some students' answers in the worksheets were right or wrong or why they obtained that mark. (Journal 7, April 23rd, 2018)

The most important part of students' learning process was not taken into account: feedback. This was a big concern to me and something I enquired every time it happened in the classroom.

Theoretical framework

In order to transform a decontextualized grammatical program into a contextualized and purposeful course plan, it was necessary to modify the teaching methodology that was used at the practicum center. This section will examine *Project work*, its principles and stages, as one of the main subjects that will guide such transformation, as well as the importance of *assessment* and *feedback* to generate students' self-regulation learning.

Project Work

Kapp (2009) defines project work as “a constructivist instructional method that supports students’ learning process through group work and social interaction in order to solve problems” (pp. 139-143). Learners are stimulated to conclude the steps of class projects concerning their own interests and needs and to develop the ability to think in a critical manner and use content knowledge (pp. 139-143).

Fredricka L. Stoller (as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002) mentions some important characteristics of this method: it is content learning focused; it is student centered; it is cooperative rather than competitive; it favours authentic integration of skills; it concludes with a product; and, it is motivating, empowering and challenging. This author also states the steps of project work: learners and teacher choose a topic for the project and the final product; they give a clear structure to the project; teacher provides students with the information they will need for developing the project; learners collect information; teacher helps students analyse the information collected; students analyse the information; teacher gives learners the bases for the presentation of the final product; students present the final product; and, they assess the project (pp. 110-117).

Assessment

Project work is a methodology that includes assessment in all the process. Herrera & Macías (2015) affirm that assessment is one of “the five components that contribute to determining the quality of instruction” (p. 303). Assessment does not take place in a specific moment in the classroom but it is a whole process that lets teachers measure and verify students’ strengths and weaknesses in their learning process, and it takes place in every situation in the

classroom. These authors also describe some advantages of assessment: it helps teachers validate the usefulness of a content in a lesson; it helps teachers observe and measure students' learning process; it supplies information concerning the efficacy of a particular teaching method; it also helps students monitor and measure their own learning process; and, it helps learners feel confident when being prepared for national standardised tests (pp. 302-312).

Assessment can be used for one of these two purposes: assessment of learning (summative) or assessment for learning (formative). William (2000) specifies the difference between these two concepts: summative assessment is "a well-established tool for documenting and communicating student achievement. Usually linked with the end of a learning experience, such as a subject or course, summative assessment serves to judge the learning achieved by the student" (p. 2). Summative assessment is the way in which teachers can measure students' knowledge with a grade. On the other hand, formative assessment is defined as "all those activities undertaken by teachers and learners which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (pp. 2-25).

Feedback

The big difference between summative and formative assessment was that the latter one included feedback. Hattie & Timperley (2007) claim feedback is:

Information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding. A teacher or parent can provide corrective information, a peer can provide an alternative strategy, a book can provide information to clarify ideas, a parent can provide encouragement, and a learner can look

up the answer to evaluate the correctness of a response. Feedback thus is a “consequence” of performance. (p. 81)

They also assert the purpose of feedback is to supply information regarding the learning process that fills the gap between what is understood and what is supposed to be understood (p. 82). Bao (2015) affirms that feedback can be given in different ways, depending on the type of feedback. He mentions two main types: teacher feedback (from teacher to student), which can be direct or indirect written feedback or written with oral explanations; and, peer feedback (from student to student), which can be face-to-face in classroom or online with anonymity (pp. 2-25).

Students' self-regulation

Feedback is one of the assessment practices that take students to self-regulate their learning process. Zimmerman (2002) declares that self-regulation is:

An active process of self-management. Three-phase self-regulation model comprises planning, performance control, and self-reflection. Planning sets the goals for action.

Performance control occurs during learning and affects motivation and action. In the final self-reflection phase, learners mentally review their performance and determine whether there is a need for changes in behavior or strategies. (pp. 1-27)

Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) mention some important benefits of self-regulation in students: it makes clear the definition of “good” performance, it makes easy students' self-assessment development, it provides students with information about their learning process, it elicits teacher and peer dialog about learning, it encourages positive motivational beliefs, it also gives teachers information to help shape their teaching, and it guides students from the current to the expected knowledge (pp. 199-218). These benefits are highly appreciated in project work

because students are empowered and given autonomy to work more independently in and out of the classroom.

To sum up this section, Project Work was the methodology used in the classroom in order to obtain the purposes of this action research. This methodology was divided into several parts which could be assessed to elicit information about the development of the sessions in the classroom. Moreover, feedback played a fundamental role in this research. It provided the teacher with the necessary information to take action in teaching and learning strategies in the classroom based on the results of learners' assessment and feedback. This feedback created in students a self-regulated learning, and it also helped them and the teacher to improve their English learning and teaching processes and course development.

Action research question

How can teacher feedback contribute to a self-regulated English language learning process in an eighth grade at Concejo de Medellin high school?

General objective

To contribute to students' self-regulated English language learning process.

Specific objectives

* To identify the aspects of feedback which contribute to students' self-regulated English language learning process.

* To describe the contribution to students' self-regulated English language learning process.

* To relate teacher feedback with students' self-regulation process.

Action plan

I designed and carried out an eight-week action plan taking into account Fredricka L. Stoller's (as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002) Project Work steps. To have an idea of what to teach, students answered a survey regarding topics that could be appealing to them. I chose the most voted, which resulted to be Music. I divided the implementation time into three different moments. Each moment contained an introduction, a practice and an assessment session. The first part lasted 3 weeks. During this section, students learnt about music genres and they were divided into groups to work on the project. I talked to them about the project we were about to carry out and how we were going to grade the different parts of it. I gave a portfolio to each group, in total eight, and assigned a different music genre at random. Learners read about music genres in English, answered some questions, and prepared and gave a short presentation about the music genre assigned. At the end of this section, students had time for a self and peer-assessment. This part was applied in July.

The second part, called Music genre singers, lasted 3 weeks too. During this section, learners read a biography and wrote a new one based on some information about three singers they had looked up in advance. They also created and performed a short dialog in English. This section finished with a moment for self and peer-assessment as well. I gave a piece of paper to each group and asked them to write in Spanish some questions or doubts about the class or content of the course and what they had learnt so far. This information was taken into consideration to change the future lessons. This section took place in August.

Finally, the third part lasted two weeks. It was applied during the first half of September. During this section, students prepared and gave a final oral presentation about a singer. They prepared a PowerPoint presentation and submitted the team portfolio in which they included all the activities and worksheets covered during project time. At the end of the implementation I talked to each group, gave feedback about their performances and portfolio completion, asked for a self-assessment mark and gave them a tutor assessment mark as well. I gave a sheet to each group in which I asked them to write about the aspects they needed to work on in order to improve their English learning process in and out of the classroom. They made compromises to change their weaknesses into strengths and to be attentive with their own learning process.

In the lesson plans, I detailed this eight-week term. I separated it by weeks with the specific topic to study, the purpose of each class, the strategies to carry out like activities and worksheets and the dates for those classes.

Furthermore, I implemented three different data collection techniques. Firstly, students had a short survey with some questions about teacher feedback before starting the eight-week term, the first week of June, and another one at the end of it, the third week of September. The objective was to compare the answers from both surveys. I chose only a small sample from them. Secondly, I wrote a journal in which I compiled information about the classes with the group. I focused my observation in order to find an answer to the action research question and to the topic I decided to research on. This data collection technique was applied the eight weeks of the project implementation. Finally, an interview took place the second week of October in which the Cooperating Teacher talked about the implementation of the project and what she could notice in the classroom during this time. The triangulation of these data collection techniques took me to draw some conclusions and suggestions about the project.

Development of actions

The first part of the application of the action plan was pretty difficult to me. It implied to have direct contact with students and change the teaching methodology. I started by talking to students about my research and what I wanted to do in that course. They seemed to be amazed by the idea of learning about music through English. I asked them to form groups of four or five students and I explained what we were supposed to work on during the eight-week term. We saw the predefined dates for tasks and assessment and the portfolio in which each group would keep the activities and tasks collected and they all agreed. However, the situation changed immediately the same very first day, because learners talked all the time and did not pay attention to me. The CT had to intervene several times during the first weeks because students' misbehaviour really interrupted the teaching and learning process. I had to readjust my lesson plans more than once because time was not enough to cover all the activities I had planned for each session. Autonomy was something new in this course and some students misunderstood the meaning of this concept.

Related to the content of the first part of the project, I planned to work on music genres in English. I assigned a different music genre by group and made students work on some activities and some homework related to the topic. At the end of this part, students were supposed to present their own music genre in front of the class. I felt overwhelmed when I saw that just five of the eight groups gave their oral presentations. The rest of the groups simply rejected to accomplish this activity. I did not take it personally, but I realised it was a really hard work what I had to do with these students. We wrapped up this part with self and peer-assessment. I asked learners to justify the grades on the pieces of paper I gave them. I read them at home and respected the marks, but it surprised me when I saw excellent grades in a group that did nothing

during this part. It seemed that those students were not capable of giving a fair self and peer-assessment. On the contrary, I noticed some low grades in groups that had worked hard.

The second section of the action plan application was more enjoyable and manageable. Most students were now adapted to the Project Work methodology and really did a good job. They were responsible and participated in class. I changed my lesson plans every time I finished a session with them because new things came about in the classroom. I still felt overwhelmed for some students' apathy but I started to understand that it was not my fault and that I had to do my best without being bothered if some students did not value my effort. I could notice that when they worked in groups, they menaced each other with a bad grade in the next peer-assessment when someone did not want to work. Those who did not present last time now were worried about their marks and decided to work to obtain a better grade in the course. I would say that this section of the project was fruitful and I really got to know almost all students' names. When I called someone by their names, they realised that I knew about their presence in the classroom and that they were not anonymous any longer.

Regarding the content of this section, I worked with singers who belonged to the music genres seen in the previous part. Students developed some activities about a biography in English, the different parts of it and then they produced their own biographies of some singers. Constant observation, clarification and feedback helped students to achieve the purpose of this part of the project, since they were able to write three biographies in English using Simple Past Tense and add them to the portfolio in which groups collected the activities and tasks carried out in class. At the end of the second part of the project, learners created a short dialogue in past and presented them in front of the class. It was a difficult task because they were not used to pronounce in English and so they had to practice a lot before presenting. This time, all groups

presented their dialogues, although some were more accurate and nearer to the instructions I gave them. They had self and peer-assessment again, but this time they were more conscious about it and assigned fair grades. To wrap up this section, I gave a piece of paper to each group in which they had to write about their weaknesses in their learning process and make compromises to overcome them. This definitely helped me with my research because with this I could realise that students were able to self-reflect and self-regulate their progress and attitude and make decisions to improve. This was absolutely useful. The CT had to stand in front of the class and scold them because of their noise; her interventions were fewer this time, though.

During the last part of the project, I noticed some progress in students' learning, since now I could talk in English for some periods of time and they tried to catch the message. They were attentive and participated regularly. However, misbehaviour and noise were some issues still presented in the classroom. Now I was able to call students by their names and they seemed to behave easily. There was a great connection between students and me because we could laugh and talk in good manners. No one disrespected me and now my word had more power when I talked to them. I noticed that students saw me now as an authority in the classroom. My CT continued intervening to make students silent and attentive, but sometimes this was even impossible for her.

Concerning the content of this part of the action plan, I gave instructions about the final product that students were supposed to do. They should create a PowerPoint presentation and talk about a singer's biography in English and submit the portfolio with the activities proposed during the whole eight-week term. We consecrated a week for the research and information selection for the presentation and to organise the activities for the portfolio. During the presentation day, only one group presented it. The rest of the group asked me to present the next

day. I was worried about that situation. The CT scolded them all and made it clear to them that next session will be the last chance to present. The next morning, six more groups presented. Only one group did not present. It was something that took me by surprise since these students had worked along the whole project. Regarding the submission of the portfolio, seven groups did an excellent job, but the same group that did not give their oral presentation did not submit their portfolio either. They excused themselves by saying they had lost the portfolio. I felt proud because almost all the groups responded positively to the methodology but at the same time sad, because one group of students did not do anything at the end of the project. We finished the project with the usual feedback and self and tutor assessment. I gave feedback at the end of every activity. It was sometimes personal and sometimes general. Students were disconcerted when I assigned a grade to each one of them depending on how hard I had perceived their personal work during the project. Some students did not agree when I assigned a low grade and I justified it.

To collect information about this project, I applied three different data collection techniques. First, I applied a survey before and after the project. Students answered some questions about feedback, its use and effect on them. The first survey was applied according to the action plan, but the second one was applied a week later because I had to stop teaching due to a mock test students had to take that week. The first survey consisted of five questions; however, only three of them were relevant for the results. The second survey consisted of four questions, all of them useful and relevant. The purpose of these surveys was to verify students' knowledge and perceptions about teacher feedback and self and peer-assessment. I randomly chose a sample of ten surveys and made a graphic with the summary of the questions and students' answers on a new Word document. I made a comparison between results and I found important differences. I wrote the main topic of the questions in a column in the same document. These main topics,

named as Categories, were separated on an Excel document to be triangulated with the other data collection techniques results.

The second data collection technique was a journal in which I took notes and gave details about the implementation of the project during each session. I observed issues related to feedback, project work methodology, students' responds in class and I reflected on them. I wrote in the journal for the entire eight-week term. The purpose of this journal was to have evidence of students' English language learning progress, students' self-regulation, self and peer-assessment and effects of teacher feedback. After finishing the eight-week term, I reread the journal completely, highlighted and gave a name to some relevant information taking into account the type of event described and the key concepts from the Theoretical framework. Later, I rewrote the assigned names, called Categories, in a new column on the same Excel document, in which I had previously included the categories from the surveys.

Finally, an interview was applied three weeks after finishing the implementation of the project due to time issues. I wrote five questions in Spanish about feedback, students' self-regulation, and students' learning process. The CT was the interviewee who kindly answered these questions according to what she observed in the classroom. The purpose of this interview was to verify the contribution of teacher feedback for a student's self-regulated learning process. I recorded the CT's answers and then I transcribed them on a Word document. After this, I reread the answers and assigned a category according to the questions and the answers. On the Excel document, I added a new column in which I included the categories from the interview. Next step, I proceeded to analyse the Excel document: I regrouped the categories bearing in mind the main concepts from the Theoretical framework in this paper. I looked for the concurrence of categories, at least in two from the three data collection techniques. Those concurrent concepts

from the triangulation became the names of the categories for the results of this project. Those concepts that did not have any concurrence were separated and discarded. Finally, I created a new document in which I included the emerging categories with a short description of it, some theoretical support, and two evidences from the data collected: one from the journal, which included my point of view, and one from the interview or the surveys, that included students or the CT's viewpoint. With the triangulation of these techniques, I could obtain the results of this action research.

Findings and interpretation

After the triangulation and analysis of the data collection techniques previously described, some categories emerged:

Contributions of Project work

The Cooperating Teacher stated that students were more responsible with their tasks in class because they had more autonomy and felt more empowered working in groups. They were encouraged to submit activities on time and so they learnt about commitment and punctuality. The CT expressed in the interview that "Project Work contributed to students' English learning because each learner had a different function in the groups, they had to accomplish every activity on time, and they had a specific role through the whole project." From the interview (question No.2). According to Kapp (2009), project work is defined as "a constructivist instructional method that supports students' learning process through group work and social interaction in order to solve problems" (pp. 139-143). This means that Project Work contributed generously to classroom work because it was a positive way to teach a big number of students at the same time.

They were able to work independently and in almost all the cases they submitted the expected activities on time. Project work helped learners be more responsible and committed.

Teacher feedback

Students confirmed that teacher feedback helped them know their strengths and difficulties, what to do to improve their learning process and how to do it. It gave learners the tools and strategies to overcome some situations in which students' learning was stuck. The third question from the second survey to students was "do you consider teacher feedback contributes to your learning process? Explain." The reasons from those who answered "yes" were: "I can know the reasons for my grades; I am aware of my mistakes; I am able to know what to improve and how to do it; it lets me know my strengths and weaknesses." From the second survey (question No.3). As stated by Hattie & Timperley (2007), feedback is "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding. A teacher or parent could provide corrective information." (p. 81). With the previous information, I found that teacher feedback is a powerful tool in the classroom because it gives students information about their strengths and weaknesses. It is not only focused on students' failures but also on students' achievements. Teacher feedback contributes to a learning improvement since it provides information with the steps and strategies students should follow in order to obtain better results.

Language development

Learners affirmed that they were able to learn English because they had constant supervision and guidance in the classroom; they enjoyed new classroom activities and had

independence in and out of the classroom. Some of them also explained that they realised the importance of English in life and felt interested in it. The fourth question from the second survey to students was: "Did you learn any English partly because of teacher feedback? Explain." Some reasons from those who answered "yes" were: "He made me think English is important for me; he explained topics well; he encouraged me to do the classwork; I liked his classes; he looked after my learning process; he told me what I had to improve." From the second survey (question No.4). According to Hattie & Timperley (2007), the purpose of feedback is "to supply information regarding the learning process that fills the gap between what is understood and what is supposed to be understood" (p. 82). Although time was an important issue in this project, I verified learners had some language development progress through it; because during the last weeks I realised they were able to answer some questions in English easier and some of them participated openly in class. I insist it is vital to give recurrent guidance to students and be attentive of their performance in class in order to have students' language development progress.

Self and peer-assessment

Students expressed that having self and peer-assessment, there were more individual and team commitment because they should be assessed themselves and by their own teammates who were constantly working with them and were aware of their process and performance. Some of them also expressed that fairness was a quality of this type of assessment. The first question from the second survey to learners was: "Do you prefer having self-assessment or peer-assessment when working in groups? Justify." Some reasons to have self-assessment were: "It is fairer and there is much individual effort." Now, one reason to have peer-assessment was: "There is much commitment." From the second survey (question No.1). As William (2000) specifies, formative assessment, that includes self and peer-assessment, is defined as "all those activities undertaken

by teachers and learners which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (pp. 2-25). I asseverate that self and peer-assessment give students the opportunity to assess themselves and their teammates in a conscious and fair way. This is because now learners know they have certain power in the group and they should use that power correctly. They also know their teammates have the same power as well and so they will be assessed by them. Self and peer-assessment not only provide a mark, but also a diagnosis of students' performance.

Students' self-regulation

The Cooperating Teacher asserted that students self-regulated their learning process through the project because they had to work in groups more independently with determined roles and they had to submit some tasks on a specific date, which made us work responsibly. She also confirmed that students had some learning progress thanks to their self-regulation. The CT affirmed that "working by projects contributed to students' self-regulated learning because each learner had a different function in the groups, they had to accomplish every activity on time, and they had a specific role through the whole project." From the interview (question No.2). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) declare that some important benefits of self-regulation in students are: "it makes easy students' self-assessment development, it provides students with information about their learning process, it encourages positive motivational beliefs, and it guides students from the current to the expected knowledge” (pp. 199-218). I found that students' self-regulation is a clue to obtain better results in the classroom because students are able to take decisions on their own learning progress and they are also conscious about their performance in the class. It is essential to work on this aspect to encourage students to think of their learning and what they should do to improve their results in an autonomy way.

Conclusions and suggestions

After knowing and analysing the results of this action research, I conclude that feedback plays an important role in the contribution to students' self-regulated learning. Aspects of assessment like marks are not enough to make students aware they need to make decisions on their own learning process to improve in the classroom. That is why aspects like self and peer-assessment and teacher feedback are relevant in the process, since they give learners the tools to have a self-reflected learning. Self-reflection is important in the classroom because it allows students to be conscious about the choices they have to make and the strategies they need to use to have progress in the English class. Self-reflection gives students autonomy and responsibility. Therefore teachers should accompany them continually and give constant guidance to light the path to success. In some cases students know they need to improve but they do not know how to do it; it is the moment when teacher feedback and advisory is highly required and expected.

Additionally, I affirm that teacher feedback is essential to take students to the expected knowledge, because teachers should know students' weaknesses and strengths and give advice to overcome situations in which students' learning is stuck. It is true that not all students are interested in knowing and learning English, but this is actually teachers' work: to catch learners' attention and show them the importance of it. Different strategies and teaching techniques can help the teacher have varied classes and new activities that boost students' interest and encourage them to participate and work in class. Sometimes students work in class just because they need to pass the course, but if teachers get to know students' interests and implement some strategies taking advantage of these interests, then teaching and learning will be more meaningful.

Apart from these conclusions, there are also some suggestions for future work on this topic. It is certain that an eight-week project implementation is not enough to help students self-regulate their English learning, so time is essential when trying to implement something new in students. The CT also suggests in the interview that it would be ideal to have some lessons about self-regulation, what it is, and why and how to do it. Also, knowing learners' opinions about self and peer-assessment would be helpful for the teacher to take future decisions, because this information provides teachers with some strategies to work on the same topic and make it more meaningful in the classroom. Finally, due to the short time available for this action research, it was impossible to help every single learner self-regulate their English learning and so the goals of this project were partly obtained, to wit, not in all students but just in some of them.

Reflection

It was a good experience to work for the first time in a public institution and to realise the big differences we face in these types of educational establishments. At the beginning it was really difficult to get used to the big number of students in the classroom and their noisy behaviour in the English course; however, as the time continued passing by, it was less difficult to spend mornings in the classroom with the learners and the CT. As a pre-service teacher, I felt really overwhelmed in many cases and felt I could not do it; however, it was a matter of time to understand students' natural behaviour and adopt a positive attitude towards them. It was hard to exert my authority in the classroom because I had never had to before; besides, students saw me as a friend not as a teacher, so when I exerted authority and behaved seriously in front of the class, they looked surprised but got to understand our different roles. As a researcher, I felt really

happy because I was able to obtain good results in my project, I could answer all the questions I posed at the beginning of this action research and so I felt it was a fruitful time.

This type of experience gives pre-service teachers a real context of what they are going to face when starting to work. I realised teachers have a lot of work to do in public classrooms and students really need someone who educates them to live properly in society. At the end of the implementation of the project, it was really gratifying to see positive results in students. They not only learnt English but also learnt that they had to do something when their learning process was stuck. Related to the project, there was some waste of time along the whole implementation and I had to readjust my calendar many times in order to cover all I needed to. Other times I had to make readjustments because students were not as fast as I expected them to be. This action research made me more responsible and conscious about teaching practices and learning strategies. I had to make a lot of effort to satisfactorily fulfill all the requirements and processes embedded in this research, but in the end everything was worth it: I learnt many things and helped students self-regulate their learning, which was the main objective of this action research.

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