# Learners' Autonomy Through The Use Of Project-Based Learning

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*Abstract:*

Learning is not a ready-made fact. In order to learn, one should take responsibility for building new meaning and understanding. This idea has emerged in modern education which pictures the learning and teaching process differently; learners are active agents in their learning process and teachers are facilitators of that learning. One such engrossing topic within the field of education is the way learners become more autonomous and independent in their learning process. Many teaching methods and vectors of a changing educational process towards learner-centered approaches consider project-based learning the best way to achieve this goal. It is one of the ways thought to foster learner autonomy. Therefore, we choose to investigate project-based pedagogy as an activity that reflects learner's involvement and its relation to learning autonomy in the Algerian context. Ultimately, the purpose of this paper is to look at the present problem of how Project-based Learning supports Learner Autonomy in the Algerian context. The research was conducted on secondary school learners in EFL classes

*Keywords:* Project-based learning; education; EFL Classes ; Algerian Context.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the academic year 2002/ 2003, Algeria has initiated an educational reform based on a competency–based approach, resulting in a shift in the teaching methodology of all school topics taught at various levels. As a result, foreign language instruction has prioritized the student and the learning process. Learners are no longer viewed as passive recipients who must learn and then duplicate the teacher's linguistics material. Instead, this method seeks to empower learners to be active participants in their own learning.

## 2. Learner–Centred Approach

Many people identify the learner–centered approach as an acceptable paradigm that corresponds to modern education. In 2014, D'Napoli attempts to define learner–centred approach through comparing it to teacher–centred approach. He discovers that; unlike teacher–centred approach, A learner–centered approach acknowledges learning as an active and dynamic process. Students must create their own meaning by debating and

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thinking on information, ideas, and concerns. According to Attard et al (2010), it is not possible to find unique definition to learner-centred approach, but scholars agree on the idea that The learner-centered approach is founded on the idea that students should be at the center of the learning process. Harris and Spina (2013) explain that the learner-centered approach is designed to suit the requirements of the individual's (student), because it prioritizes meaning and comprehension over task completion. Second, it is built on challenging learning that is relevant to the learner's life. Third, it promotes student collaboration and requires them to actively participate in their own learning.

This approach employs many activities taking into consideration the learners' abilities and interests. As it is stated by Attard et al (2010), that through different activities, learner-centered approach empowers students to customize their own learning and assigns them the duty of actively participating in making their education meaningful. Speaking of those activities, we should remark that project work or project-based learning, which is the primary focus of this research study, is one of them.

## 3. The Origins of Project Work

Project work has a long history. Bas (2011) views the idea of assigning projects to students as an old activity. The benefits of learning by doing and practice have been encouraged by many people. Stressing on the origins of project-based learning, Bas stats that project work can find its roots in progressive education in the 1900's when John Dewey spoke about it. Just to remind Dewey is the one who made a change in the American philosophy of education. Bas mentions in his study that this American educator believes in the importance of learners' engagement, investigation and challenging. Grant (2002) elaborates that Dewey strongly believes that individuals learn best when they share with other and get feedback. Consequently, project-based instruction is developed and popularised to teachers by John Dewey's students then colleagues. This instruction is taken later by Kilpatrick who recontracted its methods, but keeps its principles like investigating real life issues, collaboration and others. Kilpatrick calls it project method (Gulbahar,2002).

In a recent study made by Zajkov and Mitrevski in 2012, it has been reported that in its beginning project work picked up bad reputation in some elements in 1970 for being unstructured. As long as educators find it beneficial in learning process, there were many works that attempted to fix this problem. Accordingly, there were some changes that makes it interesting and easier, the first thing is the integration of technology; this is to make students investigate various issues, have a high quality of products, keep record the whole process and share with others. The second thing is providing the projects with enough details as inquiry steps, timing, and resources to be done as good as possible. It is clear that project-based learning is not new phenomenon. Doing and creating projects has a long stand tradition in the history of education. Project work has developed over 100 years as a reaction to two main reasons. The first one is the revolution on learning theory, and the second is the world changes. Education is not far from these two reasonsat the very least it should adapt to the change through creating new instructional practices like Project-Based Learning (Bas, 2011)

## 4 Theories Underline Project–Based Learning

It has been mentioned previously that project-based learning is not new and it has a long history. Grant (2002) says that when Dewey advocates the notion of learning by doing he meant by it the constructivist theory. By its nature, project-based learning borrows its principles from different paradigms. To put it another way, it incorporates principles from John Dewey's philosophy, Piaget's cognitive theory, and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory.

### 4.1 Constructivism

Constructivism is based on the idea that learning is not given instead learning is constructed by individuals; People build their own understanding and knowledge by experiencing and thinking on things. It is a learning theory; according to Giesen (2008), that regards learning as an active process and knowledge is constructed from experiences, learners thanks to this theory could develop long life learning. Hadi (2012) defines constructivism as "a philosophy that promotes active learning through learners' engagement" (p: 17). This goes with Alimissi et al (2007) claim's in which they say that the aim of constructivism in education is to provide learners with good

opportunities, so that they can learn by doing much better than they could before. Zajkov and Mitrevski (2012) make an attempt to answer the question of why constructivism should be mentioned when talking about project work. They find that project work is based on the process that involves learners in discovering and constructing learning. Moreover, it is based on research, design and engagement. Stressing on the relationship between constructivism and project-based learning, Masrom and Syahrani stated that "project-based learning is a dynamic constructivist approach of teaching in which students explore real-life problems and challenges" (2013, p. 21). The view leads us to think that since constructivism theory of learning encourages learners to learn and construct meaning through experiences as project-based instruction, project-based learning with its feature is part of constructivism.

### 4.2 Dewey's Philosophy

John Dewey is an American educator and philosopher; he is the first who develops the notion of "learning by doing". Dewey (1998) describes education as involving the full range of students' life experiences, not only the academic experiences (cited in Hugg and Wendinger, 2007). More simply, Hugg and Wendinger say that Dewey believes that education is a social phenomenon which serves society as a whole. They add that Dewey believes in the effectiveness of students' participation in education, he also relates school context to real-life context. As it is said before project-based learning is not a new approach in education, project instruction is developed first by Dewey later Kilpatrisk reconstructs the method and called it project method that encourages learning through experiencing real life problems (Gulbahar, 2002). Kilpatrisk believes that it is alternative to the traditional teacher-centred way, because as we said learning is not given.

### 4.3 The Piagetian Perspective

Jean Piaget was a Swiss biologist and psychologist whose research focused on how children's minds grow and function. He was among those who emphasize on the necessity of learner's participation in learning process through different activities. In the same line with this, Hadi (2012) says that for Piaget knowledge is constructed; individuals build up new knowledge from their experiences. Thus, learners could simply be autonomous since they rely on a cognitive way to learn and construct new meanings. In 2012, Hadi argues that the philosophy of Piaget has been transferred to education

and accordingly the aim of education to learners becomes making them develop autonomy; by using their own experiences rather than relying on the teacher. So, the ideas that Piaget defends were to develop and raise the learners' autonomy by involving them in the process.

### 4.4 The Vygotskian Perspective

Lev Vygotsky, a psychologist, is connected with social constructivism. As the name implies, social constructivism is founded on the idea that infants learn through interacting with the social actors around them; family members, friends, teachers and peers. Therefore, learning construction would not be possible alone (Hadi, 2012). According to Roessingh and Chambers (2011), social constructivist education provides learners with chances to interact with others for the aim of debating, producing, and sharing knowledge. In their study, Roessingh and Chambers have mentioned that socio-constructivism defines project work as a comprehensive teaching approach that works to motivate and engage learners in task which generally in-depth their  learning. They have not related effective learning to society only; as Vygotsky suggests, but to project and group work too. And learners in order to realize good project work, they can look for information in books, magazines, libraries, furthermore, they can ask friends, parents or each other (Hadi, 2012).

### 5. Project-Based Learning Pedagogy

### 5.1 Definition of Project-Based Learning

Many researchers have used various terminology to define project-based learning. It has been viewed as: "a model that organizes learning around projects" (Thomas, 2000 P. 22). Bell said that: "(…) it is student-driven, teacher-facilitator approach to learning" (2010: P 39).

In other words, it is a learning-centred activity where learners are involved in the knowledge they learn, and regularly asking questions which are answered through doing research under the guidance and supervision of teachers. In a similar way, Klein et al (2009) see it as an instructional strategy of both processes of learning and teaching that enable learners to develop new ideas and gain topic knowledge on their own through a number of activities and presentation forms. The definition of Ferrar (2012) implies that it is a systematic method of teaching that ensures the learners engagement in

learning process and skill development through an inquiry process. It is structured around complex and authentic problem and it goes through well designed steps, and then ends up with a final product. But in the sense that project-based learning is a strategy in which students investigate real-world concerns and obstacles while collaborating.

Project-based learning (henceforth, PBL) seems to not have one single definition. It is seen as an approach, model, technique, also as a learning activity and teaching strategy. In fact, these terms are used interchangeably. And because it has not a unique and conventional definition, Klein et al (2009) puts some characteristics to project work. So, project-based instruction should:

- Direct students to study concepts and questions.
- Depending on the survey method.
- Learner-driven autonomous creation and presentation, as opposed to her information provided by a teacher.
- Requires the use of creative, critical and informational thinking.
- Ability to research, draw conclusions and produce materials.
- related to real-world and practical problems and situations

In 2011, Di'Napoli said that PBL does not necessary require students to create or to find solution to the issue they are investigating, it is rather designed to make students use inquiry mode. It stimulates the cognitive process and encourages group work. Not the same with projectbased learning where students design, plan and carry out project that produces output presentation as a product (Patton, 2012).

Despite the fact that project-based and PBL are instructional strategies in modern education, some scholars deal with them interchangeably. However, others believe that they are different methods to serve different objectives in modern classroom. In 2008, Barron and Hammord describe problem-based learning as a dose cousin of project-based learning. This description is typically based on the idea that both activities involved in a specific type of process that focus on using reasoning and resources. In our research, our main concern is PBL and in what follows PBL will stand for project-based learning not problem-based learning.

**5.2 The Importance of Project–Based Instruction in Language Learning**

There are several advantages to using projects as a tool for language learning in educational settings. Many research have been conducted in order to form conclusions regarding the effectiveness of project–based learning. In PBL Guide, it is mentioned that teachers should use project activity because "compared to other models, project–based learning enhances the quality of learning of a subject area" (p10). On his part, Wolff sates that

> *PBL is an active learning process that teaches critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, negotiation skills, reaching consensus, using technologies and take responsibilities. It aims to prepare learners to take role and responsibilities in work, family and community for the 21st century. (2002: p03)*

Bas (2011) investigates the effectiveness of PBL on the learners' academic achievements. The results of the study have proved that project work helps students to play active roles and take responsibility of what they are learning, it is also a motivation to learners to learn. Motivation, according to Gulbaharh (2002), is the major benefit from PBL. It is called intrinsic motivation by which the learners feel at ease and learn for pleasure. Masrom and Syohrami (2013) claim that PBL makes learning seem more interesting and exciting for learners, because they are generally unwilling to study under pressure or force as the traditional way. Bassou (2013) explains that project implementation puts directly a focus on the learners and promotes effective learning. These projects with its components (like group activity, field work, presentation, and so on) when combined result in increasing students' academic achievements, as well as help students to grow as independent learners of English language. Bell (2010) lists the benefits of PBL; these benefits are regarded among the most important according to him. The benefits of PBL in education are:

- Great understanding of the content.
- Deeper learning.
- High motivation to learn.
- Creates dependent thinkers.
- Provide valuable skills that will be used in the future.

Project–Based Instruction as mentioned previously prepares students to build skills to live in today's world. Roekel (2011) indicates that mastering the four language skills is not sufficient to survive in this technological global society, according to him besides these language skills learners need to be proficient communicators, creators, critical thinkers and collaborators (cited in Beers, 2011). Roekel supports his claim by a speech of the USA president who says: "I am calling on our nation's governors and state educators chiefs to develop standards and assessment that do simply measure whether they (learners) possess 21st century skills, like problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity" (OBAMA, 2009) as cited in Roekel, 2011).

**5.3 The Way Project–Based Learning Works**

The aforementioned definitions of PBL imply that it needs both process and product. Seungyeon and Kakali (2012) state that as learning and teaching strategy, PBL usually requires multiple stages that result in a final product. Bell (2010) calls these multiple stages "several phases". According to him, in the first phase learners should organize a careful plan and decide about the materials they are going to utilise. Next, students should investigate and make their findings in a form of presentation to audience who should be selected according to the topic. At the end students should evaluate the product as well as the process. Bell calls this "self–evaluation".

In the same context of the way PBL works, Klein et al (2009) say that project work should follow an inquiry frame. He presents this inquiry frame in a diagram, according to him this cycle is used by all students who engage in the process of project work.
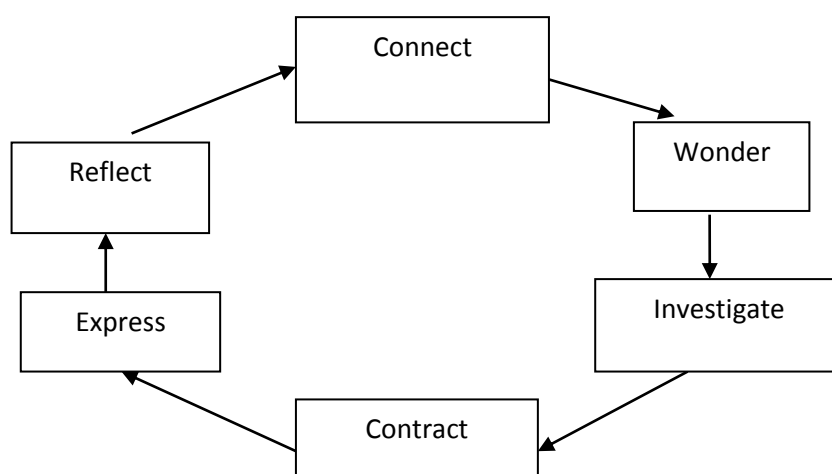


**Figure1**: Inquiry Process on PBL

**Source** (Klein et al, 2009. P.21)

Klein et al show in this diagram that students connect their previous knowledge to the real world, and then try to ask questions about what interests them and unknown for them (having an issue). After, students need to investigate that issue through research strategy to collect data. The data which is collected need to be analysed and interpreted in a form of charts, tables to construct new insight. The results are expressed in many formats; one of them is presentations to share with others. Lastly, there should be a reflection on the final product and sources used on the part of the audience and expertise.

## 6. The Setting

Because the number of English language teachers in charge of teaching 2nd and 3rd year foreign languages is limited in one school, our research is carried out in two secondary schools in the willaya of Relizane. The first school is called Dr, Ahmed Francis and the second school is named El Aakid Othman. We choose to work in two secondary schools in order to make the study legible and appreciable by gaining more opinions from teachers and learners about project work incorporation in EFL classes.

### 6.1 The Sample

To continue this research, we recruited informants among secondary school instructors and students. The teachers are asked to fill a questionnaire and learners are required to have a face to face interview. Both questionnaire and interview would serve as tools of data collection.

### 6.1.1 Teachers' Profile

In our study, the informants are teachers of English at two secondary schools in the wilaya of RELIZANE. Their teaching experience varies from person to person. They are teachers who are in charge of the literary stream; branch of foreign languages (2nd and 3rd year levels). The number of teachers who contributed in this dissertation is 5 out of 10 teachers; they are all full time teachers. The selection of secondary school teachers is due to the fact that they dealing with learners who have prior knowledge in English language. And also because these teachers are working with specialized learners in learning foreign languages, teachers need to develop the right ways that help learners learn English autonomously.

### 6.1.2 Learners' Profile

The study also concerns with secondary school learners. They are 20 learners who study in two secondary schools literary streams. In each school, we have interviewed 10

learners studying at different levels (2nd and 3rd year foreign languages). We choose to work with this kind of participants precisely, because they have prior knowledge about English and for their stream; literary stream, English is a very important subject. We also believe that these learners are supposed to have intellectual maturity and ability to take part in their own learning.

We select to deal with secondary education schools instead of middle schools, because we believe that it is quite difficult to speak about learning autonomy in middle school. Unlike secondary school learners, in middle schools, the learners are still beginners and they may not have intellectual maturity and the ability to take part in their learning process. In EFL classes, teachers are focusing on the development of the language four skills more than anything else.

## 6.2 Discussion

This research is conducted to investigate whether project work in Algerian EFL context at secondary education schools is done in a way that helps to promote learning autonomy. We have tried to study this issue from both teachers' and learners' sides. In what follows, we are going to discuss the data gathered from both teachers' questionnaires and learners' interviews. The analyses of the questionnaire's and interview's results reveal the following note.

First, speaking about their general believes in language teaching, Algerian teachers of English in secondary schools believe to a great extent that learners should be involved in the language teaching-learning process. And that doing projects is the best and appropriate way through which learners can exploit what has been learnt in each unit, and then learn new things relying on themselves. Through their perspectives of the necessity of learners' involvement and the effects of project work on language learning, teachers seem to be familiar with learner-centred approach and recommend its principles and activities in their classes. The following table shows that all the participants agreed on the fact that PBL foster learners' autonomy.

**Table 1 :Project Work and Learning Autonomy**

| Option | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Strongly agree** | 00 | **0%** |
| **Agree** | 05 | **100%** |
| **Disagree** | 00 | **0%** |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 00 | **0%** |
| **Total** | **05** | **100%** |

Second, concerning ending each unit with a project work in language teaching/learning process, both teachers and learners assert that each unit ends with a project work as it is highly recommended by the competency-based approach. Also teachers and learners confirm that the way projects are incorporated in EFL classes is done in one way:

**a–The Selection of Project's Topic**: It is believed that when learners face topics in which they are interested, their degree of involvement will increase. In 2010, Egenrieder state in his study that although the general topic of project is determined by the textbook designer, Many projects should allow students to select a topic connected to the overall one. In the Algerian secondary schools education, learners are not given this opportunity. Though it is uninteresting for them, pupils are not allowed to investigate topics more than the proposed ones.

**b– Class Grouping**: Doing project requires working in groups, in this concern, Baghrezadeh (2014) said that working in group and sharing information cooperatively and caring about each other's problems increase learners' feeling of responsibility for their learning and others learning. And Bassou in 2013 said that when When the learner selects his teamwork, he is expected to deal better with his classmates. In the case of Algerian secondary schools, teachers with their learners reveal that it is a matter of choice; each learner joins his favourite team or group. It is not because teachers recommend learners' choice and voice, but teachers do not have time to waste in order to set each learner in the right group.

 c– **Teachers' Supervision**: Learner-centred activities; like project-based learning, requires both teachers and learners in action. Learners should receive guidance on the language content and process demands of the project (Egenrieder, 2010). After we have analysed both teachers' and learners' responses, we can say that teachers of English at secondary schools do not act like guides or facilitators. They just assign the work and then take them back, without caring about whether or not learners follow all the steps (planning, creating and processing) while realizing their final work.

d– **Class Presentation**: In the article Chili wrote in 2010, she determined that after learners realize the project, they have to present it to their classmates using different forms. Thank to this presentation the competences that were developed while doing the work becomes observable and measurable. Talking about project's final work in our secondary schools context, it is clearly shown that project's final work has never been presented in EFL classes. Teachers have related this to time, and learners have related it to the luck of language proficiency.

e– **Self–Assessment**: Cotteall (2000) argues that if teachers want to promote learners autonomy, they need to encourage learners monitor and reflect on their performance (citedZhorabi, 2011. P: 122). In Algerian secondary schools, teachers and learners confirm that project work is neither read nor corrected on the part of both teachers and learners. Third, "if it is done appropriately, the benefits of project in language learning will be maximized" (Klein, et al 2009. P: 03). Since the research's participants believe that project work is not done in a good way, they strongly believe that it adds nothing to the teaching–learning process. Teachers of English at secondary schools said that already made work will never make learners take part in their learning, and learners describe project work as a "burden". Unlike learners who argue to not include it at all in language teaching–learning, teachers suggest to take steps to ameliorate the incorporation of PBL in EFL classes at secondary education schools. According to the teachers' proposed ideas, in order to be done perfectly and in a way that fosters autonomy, project work should be limited in term of number at all levels (1st, 2nd and 3rd year secondary schools); at least one for each trimester. And the work should be simplified according to the learners' needs and language level. Also, they suggest extending the hours devoted for projects, so that pupils could coordinate with teachers, collaborate with their classmates inside the school's walls, and have the final work presented. We believe that, as long as teachers of secondary

schools are complaining of workload and insufficient time, they would not be able to develop the right way to incorporate project work effectively.

The Analyses and discussion of the collected data have revealed that Algerian secondary school teachers have not yet develop a way to include project work in the teaching-learning process. And the way they are including projects will never be effective to develop autonomous learners; not only in English but in any other subject. Teachers are incorporating these projects because it is part of the syllabus and the official textbooks, and the learners have no choice, they still have in mind that they are obliged to follow the teachers' instructions word for word.

To sum up this work, we can assert that the way project work is incorporated in EFL classes requires no degree of autonomy or responsibility for learners at secondary schools education.

## 6.3 Suggested Solutions and Recommendations

Implementing project-based learning in a way that helps learners in secondary schools education develop autonomy may be daunting for teachers and burden for learners.

The following are some hints and suggestion for making project-based learning implemented in a way that fosters learning autonomy in Algerian secondary schools

### 6.3.1 "Semi–Autonomous Learning" as a Preparatory Phase

Developing autonomous language learners cannot be achieved over night. It is hard for learners to learn by themselves without the teachers' help. And since one of the objectives of the Algerian educational system is to develop independent individuals, Hadi in 2012 states that there should be a transitional phase or what she calls "Semi–Autonomous Learning". In this phase, teachers of English should put some responsibilities on the learners' hands through the use of project work by:

● Giving learners the freedom to choice between working individually or in groups.

● Making learners choose the materials to be used in the classroom, mainly in presenting their project's final work.

● Allowing learners select the project topics and themes rather than those provided in the official textbooks.

● Giving learners the opportunity to negotiate with their teachers and peers what present difficulty for them and what does not (make them reflect).

This semi-autonomous learning phase is made to bridge the gap between secondary school education and university level. If secondary school students are willing to take on some responsibility, the problem of spoon feeding and over-reliance on instructors will be eliminated. As a result, semi-autonomy learning is the first and most fundamental step to promoting learner autonomy in Algerian secondary schools.

## 6.3.2 Training Teachers

Teachers who are using project-based learning in their classes should be able to direct the process, because, if they cannot direct the process effectively, students may feel bored and the strategy will not be successful from the beginning (Bas, 2011). In this respect, Bassou claims in 2008 that in most Algerian secondary schools English professors appear to lack prior understanding of how project work should be completed. Consequently, seminars and courses should be organized as to train teachers to use this approach effectively in their classroom, to create a more positive classroom atmosphere. Also, educational programmes should be reorganized to contain both the practice and the theoretical framework of PBL (Bas, 2011). highlighting the importance of educating instructors to adopt PBL as an innovative method of teaching and learning that allows students to direct their own learning experience, Masrom and Syahrami (2013) suggest that The greatest method to train teachers is to put them through the PBL process themselves. They will then learn what it means to actively participate in the construction of new knowledge by drawing on past information and knowledge gaps.

## 6.3.3 Determining Teacher's and Learner's Role in Project–Based Learning in the Textbook

Although project-based learning is a learner-centered activity, it involves the engagement of both teachers and students. For teachers, it is not sufficient to "talk to learners" and assign them the task. Teachers need to learn how to engage learners in the classroom without simply telling them what to do (they cannot simply give them a project task and expect them to work it out on their own). In the same way, learners should not expect their teachers to give them everything concerning their projects. And it is very important for teachers and learners to see this change of roles as a contribution of power inside the classroom (Sharon Yam and Rossini, 2010). For these reasons, the teachers who answer our questionnaires call upon the textbook designers to develop a research model where both teachers' tasks and learners' tasks are determined to have coordinate project

final work between each group member and the teacher, and to create an environment where learners are gradually made (co)responsible for their own learning. So, both teachers and learners need to be aware of their roles in the project work. In this regard, Papandreous (1994) identified both language teachers' and learners' roles in project work as follows:

**Table1: Teacher's and Learners' Roles in Project Work According to Papandreou 1994**

| / | Learner's Tasks | Teacher's Tasks |
|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | Select topic | Describe parameters and suggests |
| **Objectives** | Set final objectives | Help in setting final objectives |
| **Preparation** | Direct | Advise |
| **Planning** | Direct | Contribute ideas |
| **Time** | Plan schedules | Make suggestion |
| **Research** | Coordinate and implement | Observe and facilitate |
| **Result** | Analyse | Observe |
| **Presentation** | Perform | Listen as a member of the audience |
| **Evaluation** | Participate in self-evaluation | Provide feedback |

**Source** (cited in Hadi, 2012. P: 159)

In this table, Padandreou in 1994 makes the realization of project work a responsibility of learner by using verbs like: select, direct, plan, coordinate, analyse, perform and evaluate. On the other hand, for the teacher he uses describe, help, contribute, suggest, observe, listen and provide. Understanding and being aware of these roles, teachers and learners will move a step toward learning autonomy using project works (Hadi, 2012)

## 6.3.4 Project Works as "A Process not a Product"

While answering the questionnaire, teachers have confirmed that all the projects assigned to learners are ready made work. They strongly believe that for many learners, project work means to get information from the net and copy them. Bassou (2013) has related this phenomenon to the teacher who is stressing on the importance of the project as a product over the project as a process; English teachers announce the topic of the

research at the start of the unit and then forget about it until the end of the unit, when he asks his students to present their work to the class, if they have prepared anything to read. Giving priority to the process, on the other hand, would keep the learners working with the teacher, who provides ongoing assistance and discusses the obstacles experienced by his students throughout the realization of their work until its presentation. This would undoubtedly assist the students. So, teachers; in order to make the learners deal with project work autonomously, should make them aware of the different processes that any project may go through.

### 6.3.5 Presentation of the Projects' Final Work

Presenting the projects' final work is considered to be very important. It is the step where the teacher is supposed to give constructive criticisms. For teachers who prefer to skip this phase because of time constrain may limit the classroom presentation to three (3) minutes just to make learners provide an abstract or an overview about their work to the listeners. Teachers should have the tendency to build confidence in learners and presentation skills without using the classroom precious time (Egenieder, 2010).

### 6.3.6 Self–Assessment

Although instructors and students consider the presentation of the group work to be the process's final phase, it is really quite helpful to encourage students to reflect on this experience. Students consider the language they used to accomplish the assignment, the material they learned about the intended topic, the procedures they used to complete their work, and the quality of their final result (Stoller, 1997 cited in Bassou 2013).

### 6.3.7 Doing Projects inside the School

In order to do projects appropriately and have its benefits maximized, teachers suggest to do project work inside the school's walls to be under the teachers' supervision and guidance. In other words, textbook designers should devote from 4 to 5 hours to have the teachers examine and control each aspect of the work. For instance; whether it is collaborative work or not, if it is based on processes like summarising and synthesising, and if there are any difficulties the learners may ask for the teacher's or peers' help. Therefore, here should be equipped rooms that enable learners to search, fulfil and present their works and this will develop in the learners the sense of ownership and pride in project engagement.

## 6.3.8 Secondary School Teachers' Workload

As we have noted in the second chapter of this study teachers at secondary school; mainly the teachers of English, are facing the problem of the huge number of lessons to be covered in a short time. Sipmson (2012) argues that in order to solve this problem of workloads and help teachers effectively apply the notion of learners' autonomy through the use of PBL, the corporation and support of school executives in relation to the class size, administrative tasks and timetable reorganization are needed. Also, the participant teachers in this research have suggest to reduce the headcount in each class and to allow the recruitment of more teachers which in turn will lighten the burden over the teacher whose teaching will then certainly be more effective

## 7. Conclusion

As the learner-centred approach has been implemented by the Algerian educational system, the whole vision of teaching and learning has been changed. On its part, the ministry of education via the official textbooks had adopted new activities that focus on the learner and learning process. Talking about teaching and learning English language at secondary education, developing the 21st century skills becomes as important as the 4 language skills in all levels. Self-directed learning or learning autonomy is considered to be one of the most important and complex skill that the language teacher needs to know where and when to start fostering it. And ending each unit with a project work could be the best activity where learners could experience some moments of autonomy. It has been designed as an opportunity for learner to show their identity and to establish their uniqueness in the learning process through selecting, developing and explaining their ideas.

The benefits of using project work as a technique for language acquisition in a classroom setting are numerous, and autonomy is being regarded as the most significant one. In other words, project work makes learners develop a sense of responsibility and ownership towards their learning process. To reach autonomy through project work in Algerian secondary schools, we have designed this study as a step to enhance the incorporation of project works in a way that encourages self-directed learning. Actually, our aim behind this research is to investigate project works in EFL classes and the way in which it is incorporated. Also, this research is conducted to examine the effectiveness of that way of on the development of learning autonomy.

Our research is made of two main pats. The first part is a theoretical background (the first chapter) and the second part is a practical orientation (both chapter two and three). Preceded by an overall introduction, the first chapter of our research aims at providing a literary review to the scope of our study. As its title suggests, it has provided nearly all the theoretical details on project-based learning and the notion of autonomy in learning foreign languages at secondary school. The second part of our research has been devoted to deal with the field of work more concerned with; the second and the third chapters. The second chapter of this research is reserved to describe the methodology adopted for the study of whether project incorporation is helping in the development of learning autonomy or not. It is the chapter where we have gathered data from different

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## **Appendix01: Questionnaire to Secondary School Teachers of English**

I am conducting a research to investigate the incorporation of project work and its effectiveness on the development of the learners' sense of responsibility at secondary school. So you are kindly requested to answer the following questions to help me gather data about my research.

Please tick the answer which fits best your opinion (you can choose more than one answer), or answer freely. Thank you very much for you collaboration.

- **Section One: General Information about the Participants**

1-Specify your gender:

Female ☐                    Male ☐

2-How long have you been teaching English language?

Less than 5 years
Between 5 and 10 years
More than 10 years

- **Section Two: Teachers' General Beliefs in Language Teaching**

3- In the process of teaching/learning English language, is learners' involvement considered to be important?

Yes ☐                    No ☐

4- "Project work is the most appropriate learner-centred activity that allows students take control over their learning".

Strongly Agree
Agree Disagree
Strongly Disagree

5-As a teacher, why do you think project work included in language teaching/learning process?

☐

a- It makes students reinvest knowledge.

b - It makes learners more independent and responsible ☐

c- Both ☐

### **Section Three: The Way Project Work is Incorporated in Language Teaching/Learning Process**

6- Do you end each unit with project work as proposed in the textbook?

Yes ☐          No ☐

7- Do you limit the choice of project's topic to the proposed one? In other words, if the project's topic is not favoured by students, are they allowed to choose another one? Say why?

Yes ☐          No ☐

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………….. .

8- Do you place your pupils in groups, or you set them free join the group they want?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………… .

9- While investigating their work, do you follow your learners' progress in each step of the project?

Yes ☐          No ☐

10- After they complete the whole work, do you ask each group to present their works to the whole class?

Yes ☐

No ☐

11- At the end of each project work, are your learners given the opportunity to assess their final work?

Yes

No ☐

Section Four: The Possibility of Developing Learner's Sense of Responsibility in EFLClasses through Project Work

12- In the way which project work is included in EFL classes, do you believe that it helps learners develop the sense of responsibility towards language learning? Why and why not?

Yes [ ]                    No [ ]

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

If you believe that the way in which project work is done do not help your learners to be responsible for their learning, what suggestion(s) can you give to improve the incorporation of project work to develop autonomous learners in language learning?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

**Appendix 02: Interview with Secondary School Learners**

**Section One: General Information about the Learners**

**1-**Specify your gender:

Male [ ]                    Female [ ]

**2-** In which level are you studying?

a-  $2^{nd}$ year foreign languages

b-  3rd year foreign languages

**Section Two: Project Work Way of Incorporation in EFL Classes3-**
In EFL classroom, do you end each unit with project work?
Yes [ ]                    No [ ]

**4-** Are you allowed to investigate project's topic that interests you?

Yes [ ]                    No [ ]

**5-**Do you join the group where you feel at ease or does your teacher place you in an appropriate group?

**6-**Do you complete your project under the teacher's guidance?
Yes [ ]          Sometimes [ ]          No [ ]
**7-**Are you required to present your final project work?

Yes [ ]                    No [ ]

**8-**Assessing the project final work, is it your responsibility in EFL class?

Yes [ ]                    No [ ]

By doing project work in English subject, do you feel that you are taking part in yourown learning? Why and why not?