University of Southampton

Faculty of Humanities

Modern Languages

The impact of a pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module on the development of teacher autonomy in initial teacher education
A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican university

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics/ELT

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Abstract

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Relevant literature in the field states that by promoting autonomy in language teacher education programmes, teacher trainers empower teachers to theorize from their practice, construct their own pedagogy, and self-direct their own teaching and learning, based on their learners' needs and the particularities of their work contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006). However, research suggests there is a lack of teacher education programmes which provide teachers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to exercise their autonomy during their training and promote autonomy in their own classrooms (Benson 2011; Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2008; Manzano Vázquez, 2016).

This action-research study was conducted at the B.A. in ELT programme at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, Mexico, in the context of a Teaching Practice module, to investigate how teacher autonomy can be developed in initial teacher education. Drawing on two of the six dimensions of teacher autonomy proposed by Smith (2003), teacher autonomy for this research refers to the pre-service teachers' capacity to self-direct their teaching (professional action) and self-direct their learning as teachers (professional development) during the module.

The action-research included two cycles during which two different cohorts of pre-service teachers were exposed to a pedagogy for autonomy in a Teaching Practice module at the end of their studies. This pedagogy for autonomy is based on the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (PA) suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) and integrates three components to support the development of teacher autonomy: Reflective practice, action research, and community of practice.

Data were collected in each cycle through a focus group, pre/post-questionnaires, student-teachers' reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews. Throughout the research, the teacher-researcher also kept reflective notes to document her intervention and identify aspects that needed more attention, presented challenges, and required some modifications.

Findings suggest that through the implementation of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, pre-service teachers were able to develop some degrees of teacher autonomy and became aware of their strengths and weaknesses as teachers and learners. They took actions to improve their practice and were able to make more informed and independent decisions regarding their professional action and development. Their confidence to teach and face problems was also fostered as they realised that they were able to find solutions to the problems they encountered in their teaching practice. However, results also show that the development of teacher autonomy is related to their willingness, responsibility, and commitment to become better professionals. Contextual factors among pre-service teachers and the role of the supervisors and mentors were also found to impact the development of teacher autonomy in the study.

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Academic Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

The impact of a pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module on the development of teacher autonomy in initial teacher education/A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican university

I, Martha Guadalupe Hernández Alvarado, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature:

Date: November 11th, 2024

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Chapter 1 Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

This action research study aims to investigate the development of teacher autonomy in the context of a Teaching Practice module in a B.A. in ELT programme in central Mexico. In the study, the concept of teacher autonomy is adopted as the pre-service teachers' capacity for self-directed professional action and self-directed professional development, two of the six dimensions of teacher autonomy identified by Smith (2003). The terms 'pre-service teachers' and 'student-teachers' will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis to refer to the student-teachers who participated in the study.

The research focuses on the ways teacher autonomy is developed during the Teaching Practice module through the implementation of a pedagogy for autonomy that incorporates reflection, action research, and community of practice as the basis for the development of teacher autonomy. This pedagogy for autonomy also builds on the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (PA) suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) to promote autonomy in language education. Although reflection, action research, and community of practice have been investigated in previous initiatives for autonomy in different language teacher education programmes (Kohonen, 2003; Smith, 2006; Brown et al., 2007; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Ushioda et al., 2011; Vieira, 2007a, 2007b, 2010; Mello et al., 2008; Genc, 2010; Wang & Zhang, 2014, see section 2.5), this study implements a comprehensive pedagogy for autonomy applying the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (ibid.) in initial language teacher education.

This chapter is organised into six sections. Section 1.1 introduces the chapter by stating the focus of the study and presenting the rest of the sections. Section 1.2 explains the rationale for conducting the research considering its relevance in language teacher education and the researcher's motivation for investigating the field. Section 1.3 explains the main concepts that underpin the study and the relationship among them. Section 1.4 provides a general description of the research context. Section 1.5 presents the aim as well as the research questions addressed in the study. Finally, section 1.6 provides an overview of the thesis and its chapters.

1.2 Rationale for the study

Teacher autonomy is a relative new concept in teacher education and applied linguistics; therefore, it is an area of debate for teacher trainers and researchers willing to make

contributions to the field. Whether they conceive it as a prerequisite for learner autonomy (Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Aoki, 2002) or as an independent teacher attribute (Smith, 2003; Huang & Benson, 2007; Xu, 2007; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008), there have been previous initiatives to promote teacher autonomy in language teacher education in different contexts.

The value of teacher autonomy in language teacher education lies in the identified need for teacher education programmes to provide teachers with opportunities to experience autonomy both as learners of teaching and as teachers of learning (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017). By experiencing autonomy in these two roles, research suggests that language teachers are more likely not only to promote autonomy in their learners (Little, 1995; Huang, 2008; Smith, 2008), but also to self-direct their teaching and learning as teachers.

In my own practice as a language teacher, teacher trainer, and researcher, the work of Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2006) on postmethod pedagogy has had a great influence due to the key role teacher autonomy is given to teachers to develop a context-sensitive pedagogy that responds to their learners' needs and the characteristics of their teaching contexts. Kumaravadivelu (2001) conceives postmethod pedagogy as a three-dimensional system consisting of three pedagogic parameters: 1) particularity, 2) practicality, and 3) possibility.

In terms of particularity, Kumaradivelu (ibid.) explains that "language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu" (p. 538). This parameter requires a critical awareness of local exigencies in a way that allows teachers to observe their teaching acts, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems as well as find and try solutions to see what works and what does not.

Regarding practicality, Kumaravadivelu states (ibid.) that no theory of practice can be useful unless it is generated through practice; therefore, it is the practicing teacher who is best suited to produce such practical theory. Teachers can develop their theory of practice by engaging in continuous reflection and action to understand and identify problems, analyse and assess information, and consider and evaluate alternatives. The best available option can then be subject to critical appraisal.

Finally, possibility stresses "the need to develop theories, forms of knowledge, and social practices that work with the experiences that people bring to the pedagogical setting" (Giroux, 1988, p. 134). Language learners' experiences are shaped by the learning/teaching episodes they have encountered in the past and the social, economic, and political

environment in which they have grown up. These experiences can alter pedagogic practices in unintended and unexpected ways. Thus, as ELT professionals, teachers should not ignore the sociocultural reality of their learners when constructing their own pedagogy to teach languages.

Kumaravadivelu (ibid.) highlights the relevance of teacher autonomy for defining the heart of postmethod pedagogy as he states that:

> Teacher autonomy in this context entails a reasonable degree of competence and confidence on the part of teachers to want to build and implement their own theory of practice that is responsive to the particularities of their educational contexts and receptive to the possibilities of their sociopolitical conditions. (p. 548)

He claims that in the field of second language education, most teachers enter the realm of professional knowledge following a set of preselected and presequenced body of knowledge, and it is not only until they begin to teach that they recognize the need to break away from those preconceptions and start building their own theories of learning and teaching. However, as he argues, professional knowledge does not develop instantly, it develops over time. Therefore, there is a need for language teacher education programmes to provide (prospective) teachers with opportunities to experience autonomy as teachers and as learners during their education (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017).

By implementing a pedagogy for autonomy, language education programmes will empower pre-service teachers to theorize from their practice and self-direct their teaching and learning based on their learners' needs, the characteristics of their teaching contexts, and their own needs to improve their practice and become better ELT professionals (Shor, 1992; Vieira 2009; Jiménez Raya et al. 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006).

1.3 Theoretical framework

The main theoretical concepts that support this research are teacher autonomy (Smith, 2003), pedagogy for autonomy (Vieira, 2003; Jiménez Raya et al., 2007, 2017), and the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017). As discussed in section 1.2, this study first draws on postmethod pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006) to emphasize the need for the promotion of teacher autonomy in language teacher education so that teachers can construct their own theory of practice based on the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility. By constructing their own pedagogies, teachers can become producers of knowledge instead of

just consumers of principles and theories appropriate for teaching contexts different from their reality and working conditions.

In applied linguistics and language teacher education, teacher autonomy has not been extensively investigated. Conceptualisations of teacher autonomy vary depending on the way it is researched, as a pre-condition for learner autonomy (Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Aoki, 2002) or as an independent teacher attribute (McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2003; Huang & Benson, 2007; Xu, 2007; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008). This study does not seek to explore the relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy. Instead, it focuses on teacher autonomy as the teacher's capacity for self-directed professional action and self-professional development, two of the six dimensions of teacher autonomy identified by Smith (2003). These capacities include the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence for teachers to make informed decisions about what and how to teach (professional action) and what and how to learn (professional development).

Research (Little, 1995; Huang, 2008; Smith, 2008) suggests that teacher autonomy can be developed through educational interventions in language teacher education programmes. In this study, reflective practice, action research, and the creation of a community of practice are investigated as activities that have contributed to the development of teacher autonomy in other programmes and can be included as components of a comprehensive pedagogy for autonomy in this context.

The concept of pedagogy for autonomy is also explored in this research. Especially, the implementation of the principles of pedagogy for autonomy suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) to promote autonomy as an educational goal in language education. Pedagogy for autonomy refers to approaches to classroom-based learning where the goal of promoting autonomy is explicit (Kuchah & Smith, 2011). These approaches seek to engage learners in their learning process by enhancing conditions that increase motivation to learn, interdependent relationships, discourse power, abilities to learn and manage learning, and a critical attitude towards teaching and learning (Vieira, 2003). Even though these principles have been used in language education before, they were adapted and implemented in the design and delivery of the Teaching Practice module. Their application in initial language teacher education seeks to provide student-teachers with opportunities to develop teacher autonomy as a second educational goal in the course.

1.4 Context of the study

The study takes place on a B.A. in English Language Teaching programme at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, in central Mexico. The programme was created in 1999 due to

the need to professionalize the teaching of English in the state of Hidalgo. Since its creation, many efforts have been made by the university and the faculty to improve the quality of the programme, which was redesigned and approved by the University Council in 2013.

The programme was redesigned following the principles established in the philosophical, pedagogical, sociological, legal, and operational dimensions of the university's educational model (UAEH, 2004). The educational model establishes that the design of academic programmes, curriculums, teaching methods, and learning activities are oriented to the acquisition of significant knowledge and the certification of skills for employability, promoting that learning is the result of reflection so that it becomes relevant and permanent.

Even though the educational model of the university does not adopt an exclusive learning theory in its pedagogical dimension, it promotes a learner-centred teaching/learning process where the student is coproducer of knowledge, is responsible of his learning process, and builds knowledge as the result of exploration, discovery, active participation, and interaction with other students. In this sense, it is the role of the teacher to facilitate the construction of knowledge by implementing teaching strategies that contribute to a comprehensive education for students. Examples of these teaching strategies include problem-solving, cooperative and collaborative learning, case studies, and project-based learning, among others.

Based on the educational model of the university (2004), the curricular objectives of the B.A. in ELT programme (as translated from Spanish, 2013) are:

- *To provide student-teachers with the conceptual foundations of applied linguistics for teaching English.*
- *To develop in pre-service teachers the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to become teachers or consultants of English with a high sense of professional ethics.*
- *To prepare analytic, critical, and reflexive professionals that contribute to solving problems in their discipline.*
- *To foster student-teachers' tolerance and respect for multiculturality so that they adapt to teaching English in different contexts and promote these values in their students.*
- *To promote pre-service teachers' interest in research so that they engage in continuous professional development activities to improve their teaching practice.*

- *To foster student-teachers' interest in their professional development to increase their competitiveness and wellbeing at work.*

As stated in the graduation profile, by the time students graduate from the four-year programme, they are expected to have achieved an English language proficiency equivalent to C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) standards (Council of Europe, 2001). In addition, they should have acquired all the knowledge and pedagogical skills to work as teachers of English or consultants in middle and higher education public and private institutions. As professionals in ELT, they are also expected to integrate the use of new technologies, promote learning autonomy, and engage in reflective practice in the activities they are assigned as part of their work.

The curriculum of the programme includes 49 modules distributed in eight semesters. The Teaching practice module where the study takes place is taught in the eighth semester of the programme, along with a Lesson Planning module. By the time pre-service teachers take the Teaching Practice module, they have already taken other teaching-related modules in previous semesters, such as English Teaching Methodology, Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary, Materials and Resources, Teaching Receptive Skills, Teaching Productive Skills, and Evaluation in the Teaching and Learning of Languages. All these modules are part of the mainstream curriculum; however, student-teachers also take optional modules in the sixth and seventh semesters according to their interests and future areas of specialization. These optional modules include Administration of Educational Institutions, Introduction to the Teaching of English for Specific Purposes, Teaching Children, Literature, Introduction to Translation, and The use of Information and Communication Technologies for the Teaching of English.

The Teaching Practice module where the pedagogy for autonomy was implemented is taught in the last semester of the academic programme, in the context of student-teachers' professional practices. The objectives of the professional practices (as translated from Spanish), according to the regulations of the Department of Social Service and Professional Practice of the university (2008), are to: 1) contribute to an integral education of the student-practitioners; 2) strengthen the links of the University nationally and internationally; 3) assure that the service that student-practitioners provide to the community is based on reciprocity and supports disadvantaged groups in the public and private sector; 4) develop professional competencies in the student-practitioners, and 5) establish links between the student-practitioners and the potential recruiting institutions.

The Department of Social Service and Professional Practice sets the guidelines for the professional practices and social service all student-practitioners enrolled in Bachelor programmes do, no

matter their field of study. A complete description of the design and structure of the Teaching Practice module is given in section 3.3 as well as a detailed account of the pedagogy for autonomy used during the course.

1.5 Aim of the study and research questions

The aim of the study is to investigate how teacher autonomy can be developed in initial teacher education through the implementation of a pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module that integrates reflective practice, action research, and community of practice as its main components and builds on the principles of pedagogy for autonomy suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017).

The study intends to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How can teacher autonomy be developed appropriately in pre-service language teacher education?

> RQ 1.1: What are the respective contributions of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice?
>
> RQ 1.2: What is the contribution of adopting the principles of pedagogy for autonomy?

RQ2: What are the outcomes of the intervention?

> RQ 2.1: To what extent do student-teachers develop the capacity to a) self-direct their teaching and b) self-direct their learning?

The first question seeks to identify how teacher autonomy is developed throughout the module and the contribution of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice on such development. It also focuses on the contribution of adopting the principles of pedagogy for autonomy proposed by Jiménez Raya et al. (ibid.) in language teacher education. The second question explores the extent to which student-teachers develop their capacity to self-direct their teaching and learning during the module.

With the integration of all these concepts in the design and implementation of the Teaching Practice module, it may be possible to shed light on the ways teacher autonomy can be developed in initial language teacher education. To answer both research questions, data from student-teachers were collected at different moments during the course through various instruments: a focus group, pre/post questionnaires, student-teachers' reflective journals, and semi-structured

interviews. The teacher-researcher's reflective journal also provided enriching data to reconstruct her practice and aid the analysis of data from student-teachers (see section 3.6).

1.6 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study by explaining the rationale for conducting the research and establishing the main concepts that support the study. It also provides a general description of the context where the study takes place and states the aim of the study and research questions. Then, it presents an overview of the organisation of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework that underpins the study based on existing literature and previous research on teacher autonomy. It discusses the concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy and points out the characteristics of autonomous teachers identified by scholars. It also analyses previous initiatives for autonomy implemented in different language teacher education contexts. Then, it highlights the identified need for language teacher education for autonomy focusing on the role of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice for the development of teacher autonomy. Next, it introduces the concept of pedagogy for autonomy and the principles of pedagogy for autonomy that were adopted to promote teacher autonomy in this study.

Chapter 3 explains the research design and method to conduct the study. It also provides a description of the research context and explains the design and structure of the Teaching Practice module as well as the pedagogy for autonomy used to support the development of teacher autonomy. The following section describes the participants who took part in the study, the role of the researcher, and the ethical considerations followed in the investigation. The different instruments used to collect data are also listed and described in this section. This chapter also describes how data were coded and analysed and the categories and subcategories used for the analysis. Finally, the aspects of validity and reliability in action research are discussed as well as how they were checked in the study.

Chapter 4 reports findings emerging from the data analysis. It first gives the teacher-researcher's narrative account of her practice based on reflective notes kept at different moments of the intervention in the two cycles. Then, it presents teacher-learners' perceptions of the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module and its individual components on the development of teacher autonomy. The teacher-learners' initial understanding of the concept of teacher autonomy and their previous experiences of autonomy in other modules of the programme are also reported. The following section describes changes in teacher autonomy

according to the pre-service teachers' perceptions and self-assessment of teacher autonomy, in relation to their capacity to self-direct their teaching and learning. Data related to participants' later understanding of teacher autonomy are contrasted to their initial understanding of the concept at the beginning of the module. Finally, this chapter lists internal and external factors that were found to either facilitate or hinder the development of teacher autonomy.

Chapter 5 answers the research questions and discusses findings concerning existing literature. It analyses the development of teacher autonomy during the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module and the impact of reflection, action research and community of practice on such development. It also discusses the contribution of the implementation of the principles of pedagogy for autonomy to promote teacher autonomy in initial language teacher education. This chapter also highlights the main contribution of the study, states the advantages and disadvantages of using the pedagogy for autonomy implemented in the module, and provides practical implications and recommendations to promote teacher autonomy in initial language teacher education. Finally, the chapter describes the limitations encountered while doing the study and provides recommendations for further research in the field.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of current thinking on teacher autonomy, language teacher education for autonomy, and the concept of pedagogy for autonomy in language teacher education. These are all key areas of research which underpin the current study. Section 2.1 introduces the main concepts that support the research and gives an overview of the organisation of the chapter.

Section 2.2 discusses the concept of teacher autonomy proposed by different authors as the basis to conceptualise teacher autonomy as it was adopted in the study. It also explains the two dimensions of teacher autonomy which are addressed in the investigation. Finally, it presents a review of attributes that have been identified as characteristics of autonomous teachers according to research.

Section 2.3 reviews previous initiatives for teacher autonomy investigated in different language teacher education contexts describing the interpretation(s) of teacher autonomy addressed in the studies. This sections also explains their approach to the development of teacher autonomy as well as their main contributions to the field.

Section 2.4 discusses the identified need for language teacher education programmes to foster teacher autonomy as a main educational goal. It also explores the implementation of the three components that are part of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, reflective practice, action research, and communities of practice, to foster the development of teacher autonomy in language teacher education.

Section 2.5 analyses the concept of pedagogy for autonomy (PA) and reviews the ten principles of pedagogy for autonomy suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) to promote autonomy in language education. The adoption of these principles for language teacher education are the basis for the construction of the pedagogy for autonomy implemented in the Teaching Practice module.

Finally, section 2.6 summarises the content of the chapter and states the aims for the intervention and thesis research as well as the research questions addressed in the study, based on identified gaps to develop teacher autonomy in initial language teacher education. This section also gives an overview of chapter 3.

2.2 Teacher autonomy

Teacher autonomy is a relative new concept in teacher education and applied linguistics; therefore, it is an area to be explored by teacher trainers and researchers who are willing to conduct more studies on teacher autonomy whether they conceive it as a prerequisite for learner autonomy (Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Aoki, 2002) or as an independent teacher attribute (McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2003; Huang & Benson, 2007; Xu, 2007; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008). The concept of teacher autonomy has been connected to learner autonomy (Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Aoki, 2002; Barfield, 2002; Vieira, 2003; Benson, 2011), self-directed teaching (Little, 1995; Smith, 2003; Huang & Benson, 2007; Xu, 2007), teacher education (Smith 2003; Vieira 2007; Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Jiménez Raya et al., 2017), and professional development (McGrath 2000; Smith, 2003; Huang & Benson, 2007; Xu, 2007). For Xu (2007), the main reason for the difficulty in defining the concept of teacher autonomy lies in the multi-roles of the language teacher; the teacher as an instructor to the students, the teacher researcher, and the teacher learner as well. Smith (2003) points out that in language teaching and learning, definitions of teacher autonomy have tended to advocate one aspect to the exclusion of others.

In the subsequent paragraphs, the concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy proposed by different authors are presented and discussed as the basis to define the concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy addressed in this study.

2.2.1 Concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy

Little (1995) was one of the first to introduce the term teacher autonomy in this work on teachers' roles in self-access centres extending to classroom settings. For him,

> genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest possible degree of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process, and exploiting the freedom that this confers. (p. 175)

From his view, teacher autonomy is a prerequisite for learner autonomy and to support it, teachers need to be autonomous in relation to their own practice. This autonomy would allow them to make students accept responsibility for their own learning and engage in a pedagogical dialogue so that they are involved in all the decisions regarding their learning (learning objectives, learning materials and assessment of learning progress) through negotiation. To initiate and sustain this negotiation, according to Little (1995), teachers need to draw on their disciplinary expertise which includes 1) knowledge of universal features and

individual differences in second language learning; 2) views on the appropriate balance between controlled and communicative language practice; and 3) knowledge of practical measures such as learner journals and regular reviews of progress to make learners' developing autonomy more explicit. Furthermore, this disciplinary expertise must include an awareness of the different forms of classroom discourse can take so that teachers can make use of them to best advantage.

Thavenius (1999, as cited in Benson, 2011) also acknowledges this dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy and defines teacher autonomy as the "teacher's ability and willingness to help learners take responsibility for their own learning" (ibid., p. 160). For her, an autonomous teacher is "a teacher who reflects on her role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous, and who is independent enough to let her learners become independent". She views awareness as a crucial dimension of teacher autonomy and argues that becoming more aware of one's role in the development of learner autonomy requires not only recurrent in-service training and classroom practice, but also a radical change of attitudes and a good insight into introspection. In line with Little (1995) and Thavenius (1999), Aoki (2002, as cited in Benson, 2011) also considers teacher autonomy is linked to learner autonomy and aims at supporting it. Aoki (2002) defines teacher autonomy by making an analogy with learner autonomy and states that teacher autonomy is "the capacity, freedom and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one's own teaching" (p. 111). However, she considers this definition problematic as it does not imply that teacher autonomy has any relevance to teachers' capacity to support the development of learner autonomy.

On the other hand, instead of providing a single definition of teacher autonomy, McGrath (2000) identifies two dimensions of teacher autonomy: 1) teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action or development and 2) teacher autonomy as freedom from control by others. He points out that these two dimensions are mutually constitutive since to be self-directed, teachers need to have freedom from control by others, and to be free from control, teachers need to be self-directed. McGrath associates self-directed professional action with other terms such as teacher development, teacher research, reflective practice, and action research. In this sense, teacher autonomy is perceived as a professional capacity connected to the ability to control the processes involved in teaching and the ability to control own's development as a teacher.

For Smith (2003); however, professional action (teaching) and professional development (teacher-learning) are two separate things. He claims that even when teachers may self-direct their teaching, they do not necessarily learn in a self-directed way as teachers learn from many

sources, not just teaching itself. Smith also points out the need to make a distinction between capacity for and/or willingness to self-direct one's learning (or teaching) and actual self-directed learning (or teaching), the actual behaviour. Based on these two claims, Smith (2003) develops McGrath's (2000) previous work on the dimensions of teacher autonomy and proposes the following different dimensions of teacher autonomy, as it can be seen in Table 1. On the left are the dimensions of teacher autonomy and on the right are alternative expressions which might help to clarify what each dimension refers to.

Table 1 Dimensions of teacher autonomy

In relation to professional action:	
A. Self-directed professional action	i.e. 'Self-directed teaching'
B. Capacity for self-directed professional action	i.e. 'Teacher autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's teaching'
C. Freedom from control over professional action	i.e. 'Teacher autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's teaching'
In relation to professional development:	
D. Self-directed professional development	i.e. 'Self-directed teacher learning'
E. Capacity for self-directed professional development	i.e. 'Teacher-learner autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher)'
F. Freedom from control over professional development	i.e. 'Teacher-learner autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's learning as a teacher)

Regarding freedom over professional action, Benson (2011) points out that most teachers work under conditions in which the control they have over their teaching is constrained by factors such as educational policy, institutional rules, and conventions as well as conceptions of language learning as an educational process. Therefore, the roles assumed by teachers in the development of learner autonomy must involve a critical approach towards the ways in which these constraints are mediated through their agency. For Benson, the teachers' willingness to create spaces within their working environments for students to exercise greater control over their learning is a crucial aspect of teacher autonomy.

Lamb (2000) also stresses that "teachers need to understand the constraints upon their practice but, rather than feeling disempowered, they need to empower themselves by finding the spaces and opportunities for manoeuvre" (pp. 126-127). This view is also supported by McGrath (2000) who also considers that it is crucial how teachers react to constraints. He claims that the non-autonomous option would be simply to accept decisions made by others and carry them out in

the classroom; however, an alternative is to exercise independent judgement to establish a principled strategy which involves compromise and negotiation as well as determined autonomous action.

On the other hand, Barfield et al. (2001) propose a definition of teacher autonomy that not only addresses the need to deal with institutional constraints, but also to foster teacher professional development and promote learner autonomy. The "Shizuoka" definition of teacher autonomy includes many different points raised during the collaborative discussion of teacher autonomy that took place in the *Developing Autonomy, Proceedings of the College and University Educators Conference* in Shizouka, Japan. In the discussion, it was stated that:

> Characterised by a recognition that teaching is always contextually situated, teacher autonomy is a continual process of inquiry into how teaching can best promote autonomous learning for learners. It involves understanding and making explicit the different constraints that a teacher may face, so that teachers can work collaboratively towards confronting constraints and transforming them into opportunities for change. The collaboration that teacher autonomy requires suggests that outside the classroom teachers need to develop institutional knowledge and flexibility in dealing with external constraints. It also suggests that teacher autonomy can be strengthened by collaborative support and networking both within the institution and beyond. Negotiation thus forms an integral part of the process of developing teacher autonomy.
>
> Teacher autonomy is driven by a need for personal and professional improvement, so that an autonomous teacher may seek out opportunities over the course of his or her career to develop further. Teacher autonomy is a socially constructed process, where teacher support and development groups can act as teacher-learner pools of diverse knowledge, experience, equal power, and autonomous learning.
>
> Within the classroom, developing teacher autonomy will overlap with principles of fostering learner autonomy and with an evolving body of professional knowledge, skills, and expertise. Because society confers teachers and learners with different roles, rights, and responsibilities, it is not possible to identify a perfect match between the processes of teacher autonomy and learner autonomy. The interrelationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy becomes clear when the values of co-learning, self-direction, collaboration, and democratic co-participation are consciously highlighted in relation to the following three critical principles of action: Critical reflective inquiry, empowerment, and dialogue.

> It is the quality of interdependence between these values and actions that links the development processes of teacher autonomy and learner autonomy. The processes by which those principles of action can be achieved centre on observing, negotiating, evaluating, and developing in collaboration with one's learners and colleagues. These action research processes are made explicit through dialogue and critical reflective inquiry, the richness of which empowers teacher autonomy and helps it develop further.
>
> Crucially, developing teacher autonomy involves questioning and flexibly re-interpreting the exercise of authority within the classroom. An autonomous teacher works with his or her learners openly and accountably in ways that will best stimulate their learning. An autonomous teacher continually searches, in collaboration first and foremost with his or her learners, for better answers to the different problems inevitably arising in developing and re-interpreting learner autonomy further. (pp. 4-5).

As can be observed, this definition of teacher autonomy covers a wide range of definitions of teacher autonomy proposed by other authors. In particular, it acknowledges the relevance of the teaching context and the teacher's ability or capacity to understand constraints and transform them into opportunities for change as a result of the collaboration and networking with other teachers within the institution and beyond. Teacher autonomy is driven by a need for personal and professional improvement and further professional development during which teachers can benefit from participating in support and development groups to establish a socially constructed process where they get immersed in diverse knowledge, experience, equal power, and autonomous learning. Teacher autonomy is also perceived as a continual process of inquiry into how teaching can best promote autonomous learning and the interrelationship between learner and teacher autonomy is established by engaging in three critical principles of action: critical reflective inquiry, empowerment, and dialogue. These principles of action can be achieved by observing, inquiring, negotiating, evaluating, and developing in collaboration with learners and colleagues.

Another definition that highlights the collaborative nature of teacher autonomy is the one provided by Smith & Erdoğan (2008), who build upon the Bergen definition of learner autonomy (Trebbi, 1990, as cited in Smith & Erdoğan, 2008) and state that teacher autonomy is "an ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others" (p. 88). In their pre-service teacher education work, with students working towards their MA in English Language Studies and Methods at the University of Warwick, they have promoted teacher autonomy as the capacity to self-direct one's own learning as a teacher. Smith & Erdoğan (2008) argue; however, that although

teacher-learner autonomy has been seen as a condition for the promotion of pedagogy for autonomy with language learners (Little, 1985; Jiménez Raya et al., 2007), teacher-learner autonomy can also be seen as an important goal in its own right (Barfield & Smith, 1999; Smith, 2000, 2003) as it is the engine that powers career-long professional development.

Jiménez Raya et al. (2007); on the other hand, define teacher and learner autonomy as "the competence to develop a self-determined, socially responsible and critically aware participant in (and beyond) educational environments, within a vision of education as (inter) personal empowerment and social transformation" (p. 1). The most important idea behind it is that "education is a moral and political activity whose goal should be to transform (rather than reproduce) the anti-democratic forces that constrain it" (Vieira, 2009, p. 16). Jiménez Raya et al. (2007) explain that in their definition, competence involves attitudinal dispositions, knowledge and abilities to develop self-determination (self-knowledge, responsible self-agency, self-regulation, self-direction), social responsibility (voice, respect for others, negotiation, co-operation, interdependence), and critical awareness (cultivation of an inquiring, independent mind) within and outside of an educational institution with a view of autonomy as a collective interest oriented by democratic and emancipatory ideals. Figure 1 highlights the assumptions behind their definition of learner and teacher autonomy.

competence	To govern oneself one must be in a position to act competently. Competence involves attitudinal dispositions, knowledge, and abilities to develop self-determination, social responsibility and critical awareness.
to develop	Autonomy is not an all or nothing concept, it is better conceived as a continuum in which different degrees of self-management can be exercised at different moments.
as a self-determined	Autonomy has an individual dimension (e.g., self-knowledge, responsible self-agency, self-regulation, self-direction).
socially responsible	Autonomy also has a social dimension (e.g., voice, respect for others, negotiation, co-operation, interdependence).
and critically aware	Autonomy has moral and political implications and involves the cultivation of an inquiring, independent mind.
participant	Autonomy involves assuming a proactive and interactive role.
in (an beyond) educational environments	Formal educational settings can and should allow individuals to exercise the right to develop autonomy, and thus promote life-long learning, which may occur both within and outside of an edicational institution.
within a vision of education as (inter) personal empowerment and social transformation	Learner and teacher development towards autonomy assumes that education is a moral and political phenomenon whose goal is to transform (rather than reproduce) the status quo. In this sense, atuonomy is a collective interest oriented by democratic and emancipatory ideals.

Figure 1 A definition of learner and teacher autonomy (Jiménez Raya et al., 2007, p. 2)

For Vieira (2008, as cited in Han, 2017), the concept of teacher autonomy is also related to the phases of development teachers find themselves in. In preservice teacher education, the (student) teacher learns how to teach as a learner of teaching, and in an in-service context, the teacher teaches students how to learn as a teacher of learning. Tort-Moloney (1997, as cited in Wiśniewska, 2007) also agrees on this dichotomy of teacher autonomy by referring to an autonomous teacher as "one who is aware of why, when, where and how pedagogical skills can be acquired in the self-conscious awareness of teaching practice itself" (p. 51). Thus, teacher autonomy involves the teachers' ability and willingness to control their learning and teaching by reflecting on the teaching process and positioning themselves in the role of the learners, learners of teaching. At the end, as Smith (2003, as cited in Benson, 2011) states, in the context of foreign language education, teachers are also learners, not only of the craft of teaching but also, either of the languages they teach or of their students' first languages.

In the light of the discussion above, this study draws on Smith's (2003) dimensions of teacher autonomy and investigates teacher autonomy as the student-teachers' capacity for self-directed professional action (capacity to self-direct one's teaching) and self-directed professional development (capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher). This capacity includes the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence to make informed decisions about:

1. what and how to teach based on the characteristics of the teaching context and the students' learning needs (professional action)
2. what and how to learn as a teacher (professional development) based on the areas of improvement in their teaching practice.

The study also draws on Barfield et al. (2001) and Smith & Erdoğan's (2008) definitions of teacher autonomy and considers teacher autonomy as a socially constructed process where student-teachers develop their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning; as a result of critical reflection, collaboration with other ELT practitioners, and action-research oriented to teacher empowerment, improvement, and transformation in teaching practice. Even though this study does not investigate the relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy, it centres on teacher autonomy as a goal in its own right (Barfield & Smith, 1999; Smith, 2000, 2003), which is worth investigating given the prominence of the development of autonomy as an educational goal in language education (Manzano Vázquez, 2018).

The next section presents different attributes that have been identified by research as characteristics of autonomous teachers, some of which are related to the two dimensions of teacher autonomy focus of this study, the capacity to self-direct one's professional action and the capacity to self-direct one's professional development (Smith, 2003).

2.2.2 Characteristics of autonomous teachers

Dikilitaş (2020) in his review of attributes of autonomous teachers identified that autonomous teachers possess qualities and abilities that can be linked to the different interpretations of teacher autonomy used by Manzano Vázquez (2018) in his studies: 1) Teacher autonomy as control over professional activity (TA1); 2) teacher autonomy as control over professional development (TA2); and 3) teacher autonomy in relation to learner autonomy considering both as two interconnected phenomena (TA3).

Table 2 below shows the attributes of autonomous teachers identified by Dikilitaş (2020, p. 55).

Table 2 Attributes of autonomous teachers

Autonomous teachers are characterized by qualities such as: – being willing and able to exert control over educational settings (Vieira, 2003) – having inner desires to influence the environment (Mackenzie, 2002) – having the power to act, influence, make decisions and choices, and take stances related to their work and professional identities (Vähäsantanen, 2015) – being transformative and critically reflective (Vieira et al., 2008) – being reflective, risk-taking, and effortful (McGrath, 2000) – being personally responsible, continuously reflective and analytic, and affectively and cognitively controlling (Little, 1995) **Autonomous teachers are able to:** – develop a collaborative attitude (Vangrieken et al., 2017) – react to dilemmas or tension in the classroom (Wermke & Höstfält, 2014) – make personal choices and collaborative decisions (Zeng, 2013) – struggle against various constraints, be self-critical (Benson, 2010) – prioritize when one becomes self-aware, produce something oneself, and make decisions (Smith & Erdoğan, 2008) – develop internal capacity to grow and to widen the space of professional freedom (McGrath, 2000; Benson & Huang, 2008) – develop a personal sense of freedom from interference or in terms of teachers' exercise of control over school matters (Usma Wilches, 2007) – develop appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes for oneself as a teacher in cooperation with others (Smith, 2003) – empower themselves to create "spaces and opportunities for manoeuvre" (Lamb, 2000, p. 128) – make informed choices based on an awareness of their needs, interests, and values (Koestner & Losier, 1996) – permit choice in learning situations, make pupils responsible for the activities, and allow and encourage learners to begin to express who they are, what they think and what they would like to do (Kenny, 1993)

From the previous table, the qualities and abilities that are relevant to this study and relate directly to two of the dimensions of teacher autonomy identified by Smith (20003), the teachers' capacity to self-direct their teaching and self-direct their learning, are the following: Autonomous teachers possess qualities such as willingness to exert control over educational settings (Vieira, 2003), inner desires to influence the environment (Mackenzie, 2002), and power to act, influence, make decisions and choices, and take stances related to their work and professional identities

(Vähäsantanen, 2015). Autonomous teachers are also transformative and critically reflective (Vieira et al., 2008), reflective, risk-taking, and effortful (McGrath, 2000), and responsible, continuously reflective and analytic, and affectively and cognitively controlling (Little, 1995).

Some of the abilities of autonomous teachers include their capacity to develop a collaborative attitude (Vangrieken et al., 2017), to make personal choices and collaborative decisions (Zeng, 2013), and to struggle against constraints and be self-critical (Benson, 2010). Other abilities are related to teachers' capacity to prioritise, produce something, and make decisions (Smith & Erdoğan, 2008), to develop a sense of freedom from interference over school matters (Usma Wilches, 2007), and to develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes for oneself in cooperation with others (Smith, 2003). Autonomous teachers also have the capacity to create spaces and opportunities to manage constraints (Lamb, 2000) and make informed choices based on awareness of their needs, interests, and values (Koestner & Losier, 1996).

Dikilitaş' (ibid.) study on the relationship between good language teachers and autonomy in Turkey also found that participants considered being reflective, developing learner autonomy, being self-directed, and developing freedom for themselves and their learners as characteristics of autonomous teachers related to being good language teachers. Particularly, regarding self-direction in professional action, participants expressed that autonomous teachers can decide how to teach and why, identify challenges and take actions on their own, create their own teaching and learning designs, are spontaneous and responsive to students' needs, and are aware of their professional capacity and can push their limits beyond their existing capacities. They can also take initiatives for themselves and their students, adapt to students' pace and needs, and develop ways of teaching to support the development of autonomy.

Concerning self-direction in professional development, teachers reported that autonomous teachers know the relevance of continuous professional development, are self-directed in professional development, and take an exploratory stance in self-directed development.

Based on his findings, Dikilitaş (ibid.) suggests that to develop teacher autonomy, teachers are provided with training for autonomy in explicit and implicit ways. The difference between explicit and implicit autonomy development is that in the first scenario, the goal of the training is the development of autonomy and adopts activities that aim for autonomy development. In the second context, teachers are assigned tasks that are likely to make them become more autonomous but without being aware of the process. In both cases, Dikilitaş (ibid., p. 61) recommends focusing on the following aspects as part of training for autonomy:

- Providing training to develop positive attitudes toward autonomy and to develop a deeper sense of autonomy not only requiring individual but also collective efforts in learning and development (Vangrieken et al., 2017).
- Engaging teachers in awareness-raising tasks and situations where they not only need to make their own decisions, implement them, and monitor the process, but also learn to how to engage in collaborative decision-making (Willner, 1990).
- Developing effective ways of learning and development within communities of practice (Wegner, 1998) or in groups that collaborate to complete certain tasks.
- Helping teachers develop a reflective attitude to facilitate collaboration and development of autonomy (Vangrieken et al., 2017).
- Introducing freedom as an opportunity to make professional choices about their teaching rather than operating in isolation (Willner, 1990).
- Offering hands-on experience of research that promotes a stance of teacher as pedagogical researcher (Castle, 2006).
- Providing activities that involve critical reflection on practice (Harrison et al., 2005).
- Developing pedagogical knowledge to mediate a concurrent change in attitudes and confidence (Dierking & Fox, 2013).

Dikilitaş' (ibid.) suggestions for the development of teacher autonomy in language teacher education provide enriching recommendations for what aspects language teacher education for autonomy should include. The following section reviews previous initiatives for teacher autonomy that have incorporated some of these aspects and have been implemented in other contexts, their outcomes, and main contribution to research in the field.

2.3 Initiatives for teacher autonomy in language teacher education

Initiatives for autonomy in language teacher education programmes have varied in terms of conceptual framework, objectives and the scope of strategies used for teacher development. Manzano Vázquez (2018) provides a grid summarizing 20 initiatives conducted inside and outside Europe (Appendix A) pointing out the different interpretations of teacher autonomy assumed to carry out each study: 1) Teacher autonomy as control over professional activity (TA1); 2) teacher autonomy as control over professional development (TA2); and 3) teacher autonomy in relation to learner autonomy considering both as two interconnected phenomena (TA3).

In the following paragraphs, some of these initiatives for autonomy in language teacher education are reviewed in detail, in particular, the ones that underpin the current study; the development of teacher autonomy as a capacity to self-direct one's teaching and one's learning as a result of a

pedagogy for autonomy that builds on the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017) and integrates reflection, action research, and community of practice in a language teacher education programme. To facilitate the review of these initiatives, teacher autonomy will be referred to as TA1, TA2, and TA3, depending on the interpretation of teacher autonomy given in each study (as explained above).

Galinienė (1999) implemented an initiative for autonomy in an in-servicer teacher education programme in Lithuania to foster TA2 and TA3. The project was developed with a group of thirteen teachers of English from different secondary schools, who had between 15-28 years of teaching experience. Teachers were exposed to and experienced the concept of learner autonomy through selected readings, group discussions, the assumption of great responsibility for their learning, and individual reflection on their own level of autonomy as part of a training course on learner autonomy which lasted from August 1997 to November 1998. Teachers also involved their students in autonomous learning through the implementation of experimental projects. At the end of the study, teachers answered a questionnaire about the training course, their understanding of learner autonomy and its impact at classroom level. According to the data collected, teachers improved their knowledge on learner autonomy and its impact at the classroom level, realised how autonomous they were themselves, and developed a greater sensitivity to their learners' needs. However, to get more stable results, Galinienė (1999) recommends that teachers and students experience autonomy for a longer period of time since teachers need further training on autonomy and students more opportunities to exercise their autonomy for learning a foreign language.

A similar initiative for autonomy was carried out by Camilleri Grima (1999) in the context of a B. Ed. degree programme at the University of Malta in 1997-1998. The research project intended: 1) To expose teachers in their initial training to the concept of learner autonomy through a variety of readings (TA2); 2) To help them become aware of their own attitudes toward, and practice of, learner autonomy, and to experience autonomous learning themselves (TA2); and 3) To be creative in applying learner autonomy in the production of materials and lessons for schools, hence improving classroom practice (TA3). The study adopted a reflective approach by engaging student-teachers in workshops, group discussions, and the use of a questionnaire and a diary to reflect on the concept of learner autonomy as well as assess their own autonomy. Student-teachers also carried out a small-scale action research project during their practice to promote autonomous learning in their students. At the end, the study concluded that practically all student-teachers evaluated themselves very positively in terms of learning and understanding the concept of learner autonomy. Regarding the development of autonomy in their students, student-teachers commented that even though there are multiple benefits for its promotion, it was

difficult for novice teachers to instil a new culture of learning where students had to accept responsibility for their own learning.

Another initiative for autonomy that engaged pre-service teachers in a process of reflective teacher development through systematic inquiry into the promotion of autonomy was the one conducted by Vieira and her colleagues (Moreira, 2009; Vieira & Moreira, 2008; and Vieira et al., 2008) at the University of Minho, in Portugal. During the studies, pre-service teachers were involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of supervised, small-scale action research projects which operationalised the concept of pedagogy for autonomy in the classroom. Their experience was reported in reflective portfolios and journals. The studies reported that through the implementation of the action research projects, teachers gained TA1 and TA2 and explored TA3. However, the teacher educators also acknowledged that the limitations of their approach to autonomy had to do with criticality and role democratisation. While student-teachers felt empowered to make decisions, these decisions were constrained by the teacher educators' agenda to promote autonomy in schools and their role as evaluators of the student-teachers' willingness and ability to do so. Teacher educators provided practical solutions to these problems by enhancing more collaboration and discourse as empowering practices for autonomy.

Vieira's work in a master's degree programme at the University on Minho (2007a, 2007b, 2010) also involved in-service teachers in small-scale action research experiments that served their own and their learners' interests and needs. The experiments were documented in a portfolio and involved four stages: 1) Identifying a personal area of concern to promote learner autonomy, 2) pro-active planning to design an intervention to deal with the selected area of concern, 3) monitored intervention by acting upon reflection, reflecting upon action as well as collecting and analysing information, and 4) evaluating and replanning – evaluating the value and shortcoming of the intervention for professional growth and learning autonomy as well as designing a new intervention within the same area of concern or finding a new area of concern. The structure of the portfolios was determined by the teachers after doing research in the field and coming to an agreement to set a democratic basis for building a framework of reference for action and reflection. As part of the initiative, teachers also attended 15 four-hour weekly sessions that were planned according to needs and interests emerging from the inquiry. In the sessions, collaborative problem-solving and decision making were promoted. Using the teacher educator's journal and the teachers' portfolios, Vieira (2007a, 2007b, 2010) concluded that this approach to teacher education enhance personal empowerment, pedagogical innovation, and the democratization of knowledge (TA1, TA2, and TA3).

Jiménez Raya (2009, 2011, 2013) implemented initiatives for autonomy in a pre-service language teacher education programme in Spain, which adopted a case-based approach. In the studies, cases, questionnaires about language teaching, and a learning portfolio were used to empower pre-service teachers to take a pro-active role in their professional development (TA2) and to reflect on and put into practice the implementation of pedagogy for autonomy in language teaching (TA3). According to Jiménez Raya (2011), "the use of cases is definitely a promising approach for teacher development for learner autonomy because teachers can form, test and confront their own hypotheses, ideals, dilemmas, and actual teaching practice against that of the teacher and their own, providing a principled way to transfer what they learnt in one context to another" (p. 160). As a result, this initiative for autonomy does not only lead to professional development (TA2) but also to a more democratic view of language education that empowers teachers and learners (TA3).

On the other hand, Kohonen (2003) implemented an experiential reflective learning framework aimed at enhancing teacher's professional growth (TA1 and TA2) and socially responsible student learning (TA3) by promoting a collegial school culture. The study was conducted at the Department of Teacher Education in Tampere University from 1994 to 1998 and involved 40 teachers from six different schools. The objective of the project was to develop instruction within an experiential learning approach emphasizing reflective, autonomous, and intercultural learning. During the four-year project, teachers were encouraged to conduct action research projects, evaluate them, and disseminate the findings in different contexts. Teachers received support for site-based curriculum design and participated in seminars, workshops, and lectures to promote collaboration and exchange of experiences. They also kept a diary and wrote reflective essays to report their experiences and findings. From the data collected from teachers' essays and open-ended interviews, Kohonen (2003) reports that the language teachers grew professionally by acknowledging that promoting self-directed, reflective language learning called for a change in their personal views of teaching and the roles they play in the language classroom (enhancement of their professional identity). They also found collaboration beneficial for teacher development as their colleagues provided a mirror for each teacher to reflect on their own teaching and implement changes accordingly.

Similarly, Mello et al. (2008) carried a collaborative action research study in Brazil with around 50 English public-school teachers involved in a continuing education programme. This initiative for autonomy investigated the pertinence of collaborative action research to inquire into classroom problems and enhance teachers' professional autonomy (TA1) and professional development (TA2). Before getting involved in action research, teachers read action research literature and discussed its relevance in class. Then, they brainstormed class problems and were grouped

according to the problem they wanted to research. They gathered in groups of 4, also with a university professor or a graduate student and one or two pre-service teachers. Groups met every month to plan and evaluate the action-research project. To help teachers systematise their research, two seminars and written papers were scheduled on which teachers were given feedback. Findings showed that participants choices (development of teaching plan and projects, implementation of new techniques, development of materials and production of theoretical papers) led them to become more autonomous, confident, and motivated to do action research in the future; however, participants showed different levels of commitment and some teachers misunderstood what action research is and came out with different results.

Smith and his colleagues (Brown, Smith, & Ushioda, 2007; Smith 2006; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Ushioda et al., 2011) also carried out an initiative for autonomy based on reflective learning and action research to promote teacher-learner autonomy (TA2) in an M.A. in English Language Studies and Methods programme at the University of Warwick. During the projects, teacher-learners were engaged in a process of reflective practice and learning through an action research cycle. In pairs, teacher-learners planned an English lesson, taught it to a group of peers and then evaluated it based on the feedback from peers, discussion with their tutor, and the analysis of a video and audio recording of their lesson. Based on this evaluation, students identified a particular aspect of their teaching they would like to improve and investigated this research area to improve their lesson and teach it again. Teacher-learners also wrote a piece of reflective writing in which they evaluated what they learnt and expressed what they would take from the action research experience for their future professional practice and development. Although findings reveal evidence of growth in teacher-learner autonomy through the action research cycle, the researchers point out that a limitation in their studies is that the teaching experiences teacher-learners were exposed to did not engage them in real teaching scenarios (Smith, 2006).

In general, all the initiatives for autonomy reviewed in this section have revealed their potential for fostering the development of teacher autonomy (TA1, TA2, and TA3) through the implementation of reflective, collaborative, and action research-oriented language teacher education programmes. The initiatives undertaken by Kohonen (2003) and Mello et al. (2008) report having helped pre and in-service teachers adopt a critical view of language education, gain confidence and motivation to implement innovative teaching practices and be prepared to regulate their teaching (TA1 and TA2). The work carried out by Smith and his colleagues (Brown, Smith, & Ushioda, 2007; Smith 2006; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Ushioda et al., 2011) shows evidence of growth in teacher-learner autonomy in participants as they developed the ability to teach reflectively, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and engage in self-directed professional activity (TA2).

On the other hand, the initiatives conducted by Camilleri Grima (1999), Vieira and Moreira (2008), and Vieira et al. (2008) also stress the value of action research for helping pre-service teachers understand the concept of learner autonomy and how it could be promoted in the foreign language classroom (TA3). The initiatives for autonomy implemented by Galinienė (1999) and Camilleri Grima (1999), apart from helping pre and in-service teachers become more aware of their own autonomy, also encouraged them to exercise their autonomy in their process of learning how to teach (TA2). Some initiatives (Galinienė, 1999; Vieira, 2007b) also reveal having helped in-service teachers develop a deeper concern for their students' learning progress and need for autonomy as well as a greater sensitivity to their students' learning needs and interests (TA3). Finally, the initiatives developed by Vieira (2007b), Jiménez Raya (2009, 2011, 2013), and Kohonen (2003) report having changed pre and in-service teachers' views of teaching in favour of a more democratic learner-centred pedagogy for teaching languages (TA2 and TA3).

The following section discusses the identified need for language teacher education programmes to foster teacher autonomy as a main educational goal, with a special emphasis on reflective practice, action research, and community of practice as the three components that were included in the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module.

2.4 Language teacher education for autonomy

According to Manzano Vázquez (2018), "the development of autonomy is acknowledged as a prominent educational goal in discussions of language education; however, it is hardly a reality in many schools" (p. 387). He states that one of the reasons for this discrepancy is the lack of teacher education programmes which address teacher and learner autonomy as valid educational concerns. As he points out, most research on autonomy has focused on teaching and learning rather than on teacher education. Therefore, there is a need for more research-based accounts of approaches to teacher education for autonomy.

Drawing on Dam (2011), Serrano Sampedro (2008), and Silva (2008), Manzano Vázquez (ibid.) also argues that even though different experimental projects on the implementation of pedagogy for autonomy have demonstrated that promoting learner autonomy in the language classroom is satisfactory in terms of learning gains, the most common way of teaching is still teacher-centred. In his view, one of the main reasons for this, as suggested by research (Benson 2011; Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2008; Manzano Vázquez, 2016), may be the lack of teacher education programmes which provide language teachers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to exercise their autonomy during their training and promote autonomous learning in their own classrooms.

Kincheloe (2003) considers that despite current developments in the teacher education field, teacher education strategies often rely on a theory-to-practice rationale, according to which teachers are seen more as technicians than as critical intellectuals, curriculum developers, and agents of change. Traditional teacher education programmes, based on lecturing and transmitting a pre-determined body of knowledge from the teacher educator to the teacher, as Manzano Vázquez (2018) states, have failed in preparing prospective teachers for the complex realities and new demands of the classroom and in bringing about substantial changes in classroom practice.

Building on Shor's (1992) ideas on teacher empowerment, Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) suggest that teacher education programmes need to inspire and prepare teachers to become empowering educators. For Vieira (2009), teacher empowerment towards autonomy should be a major goal of teacher education which is based on three interrelated assumptions: First, that autonomy is seen as a collective and ideological interest where teacher autonomy is in the service of learner autonomy only to the extent that a philosophy of education based on democratic values is embraced (Jiménez Raya et al., 2007). Second, that pedagogy for autonomy entails resistance linked to transformation; therefore, teacher educators need to encourage teachers to analyse their professional contexts critically so that their resistance against antagonistic ideas, conflicting interests, constraints, dilemmas, and tensions become a major condition for teacher empowerment towards autonomy, not an impediment to it (Vieira, 2009). Finally, that teacher educators become agents of empowerment by exercising a facilitative power (Robinson 1995, as cited in Vieira, 2009) and establishing a relationship with teachers based on respect, openness, commitment to valid information, public scrutiny, and freedom of choice.

This study includes reflective practice, action research, and community of practice as the three components of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module. In the next paragraphs, arguments for the use of these components are presented, based on existing literature in the field.

2.4.1 Reflective teacher education for teacher autonomy

Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) argue that reflective teacher education not only entails the adoption of reflective strategies but also the development of collegial relationships between academic teacher educators and teachers as well as a dynamic interplay between knowledge for work and knowledge in work. In this sense, experiential pedagogies are needed in teacher education settings to allow teachers to theorise from practice with a transformative purpose

and facilitating the construction of personal theories and practices that are conceptually and ethically sound, locally valid, and socially relevant (Vieira, 2014a/b).

According to Manzano Vázquez (2017), there are different reasons which support the implementation of reflective practice in teacher education for autonomy. First, reflective practice can be a valuable tool for preventing the "uncritical acceptance" (Beyer, 1984, as cited in Manzano Vázquez, 2017) of existing teaching practices that may not conform to the context where teaching and learning takes place. It also enables teachers to develop greater awareness of their personal beliefs while they investigate the reasons for those beliefs. It builds upon the idea that professional experience plays a significant role in teachers' professional knowledge and empowerment. In addition, it allows teachers to participate consciously in their own professional growth and development and supports teachers adopt a critical stance towards their teaching and the context where it takes place.

Some of the activities that can help teachers engage in such reflection are suggested by Richards and Farrell (2005) in Table 3.

Table 3 Teacher development activities

Individual	**One-to-one**	**Group-based**	**Institutional**
Self-monitoring Journal writing Critical incidents Teaching portfolios Action research	Peer coaching Peer observation Critical friendships Action research Critical incidents Team teaching	Case studies Action research Journal writing Teacher support groups	Workshops Action research Teacher support groups

These types of activities apart from promoting reflection, "attribute a crucial role to self-direction" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 14). The authors explain that the insider approach used in these activities encourage teachers to explore their own contexts and construct their knowledge and understanding of what takes places in their classrooms. At the same time, it allows them to assume responsibility for setting goals for self-development and to manage their own learning.

For Jiménez Raya & Vieira (2011, p. 22), these types of activities can also help teachers develop their competence to promote autonomy as a goal in language education by helping them…

- Uncover their pedagogical beliefs, values, priorities, dilemmas, concerns…

- Document their practice and reflect on its conceptual, practical, and social justifications
- Question the implications of their practice for the development of learner autonomy
- Be sensitive to their students' beliefs, values, priorities, dilemmas, concerns…
- Look at pedagogical problems as starting points of inquiry
- Take an exploratory approach to teaching with a focus on learning
- Collect student data to assess the quality of teaching and learning processes
- Be attentive of how contexts of practice foster or hinder their own and their own and their students' autonomy
- Find strategies to manage constraints on autonomy
- Learn to deal with the complexity, uniqueness, and indeterminacy of pedagogical situations
- Enter communities of practice where collaboration and dialogue sustain individual and collective efforts to promote autonomy.

Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) state that different proposals for reflective teacher education have emerged emphasizing the need for teachers to become critical enquirers and stressing the centrality of experience for professional renewal and empowerment (Schön, 1987; Smyth, 1987, 1989; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991; Tom, 1985; Zeichner, 1983; and Zeichner & Liston, 1996). However, he claims that the way institutions organise and develop teacher education programmes has been different and teacher educators have different positions about what learning to teach means, making it impossible to reach an agreement about the role of teacher education in school cultures.

In particular, the use of journals in teacher education programmes has many benefits as it can help pre-service teachers become reflective practitioners (Lindroth, 2014). A journal is defined as "a teacher's or a student teacher's written response to teaching events" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 7). They can be used to keep a record of events and ideas for the purpose of later reflection and to trigger insights about teaching (Richards & Lockhart, ibid.). Journals allow student-teachers to create questions and respond freely (Crème, 2005), self-assess their educational philosophy and instructional approach in the classroom (Hume,

2009; Lee, 2008), and create a dialogue with themselves (Hedlund et al, 1989; LaBoskey, 1994; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1993).

Mann and Walsh (2017) state that reflective journals have a learning value as teachers have an opportunity to reflect as they write and then, reflect on what they have written. Another benefit they highlight is that writing journals can help teachers understand their practice more fully and consider options or alternatives to current practices. They explain that even though keeping a journal may be considered problematic for non-experienced teachers, the use of a series of questions to structure a journal entry can make the process of writing less intimidating and more straightforward.

Genc's (2010) study on the use of reflective journals to develop the autonomy (control over professional action) and decision-making of in-service teachers in Turkey provided evidence that the journals guided teachers to criticise, build knowledge about teaching a language, and gain autonomy to make more conscious and informed decisions. By keeping a reflective journal on their teaching, teachers were able to explore and analyse factors affecting their instruction, become autonomous in restructuring the teaching and learning processes in their context, and gain skills to go beyond the use of teaching methods and reflect on their own practice. They could also be aware of and understand their beliefs and knowledge about learning/teaching, become more sensitive and respond to their students' needs, and develop teaching strategies.

2.4.2 Action research as a tool for teacher autonomy

Similarly, action research is another activity that encourages teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and allows them to develop their autonomy. Lieberman (1995) suggests that teachers who initiate and carry out research in their classrooms have the potential to promote teacher autonomy. Drawing on previous research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kincheloe, 2003; Noffke & Stevenson, 1995), Moreira (2009) points out that action research is a powerful tool for engaging teachers in the critical analysis of their school contexts and in pedagogical action towards learner autonomy. He also states that the characteristics of action research make it appropriate to enhance teacher development interrelating the theory and practice of autonomy in teacher education since it is pragmatic and action-oriented, intentional and systematic, reflective and dialectical, critical and democratic, with a view to personal and social transformation (Baumann & Duffy-Hester, 2000; Flamini & Jiménez Raya, 2007; Vieira, 2007b).

Dikilitaş and Griffiths (2017) also point out that action research "is an important strategy for professional development since it allows teachers to create opportunities for developing awareness and autonomy in teacher development" (p. 2). The authors explain that by doing

action research, teachers are encouraged to make decisions on salient issues, to freely select the topic of research for their benefit, to identify ways of developing a research plan, and to interpret findings for their own purposes.

In action research, teachers' engagement in their own pedagogic issues is critical because it allows them to address aspects of teaching and learning relevant to their contexts. It also allows for follow-up monitoring and impact of the developing teaching and learning practices and liberates teachers with a sense of agency and ownership to deal with problems, critical questions, points to improve or puzzles, all that conducive to developing teacher autonomy (Dikilitaş & Griffiths, ibid.).

Wang and Zhang's (2014) study on the development of teacher autonomy (control over professional action)) through collaborative action research found out that participants in the study were able to go beyond their teaching routine and reflected on their practice, which enhanced their understanding of their context and made them more active participants in educational reforms. Student-teachers became more learner-centred and began to change from a concern for their own teaching to developing their learners' interests, learning strategies, and life-long learning capacities. In the study, it was possible to observe that student teachers also increased their awareness of working as a team with other colleagues and became more autonomous and active in teaching and research. Participants increased their ability to research their classroom problems and learnt how to build research in their teaching and became more reflective professionals.

2.4.3 Communities of practice to foster teacher autonomy

Wenger at al. (2002) refer to communities of practice as "groups or people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in the area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). In language teacher education, communities of practice have been studied to foster teacher development and the construction of identity through the interaction of their members. Considering the social dimension of teacher autonomy (Sinclair, 2000; Barfield et al., 2001), this study includes communities of practice as one of the components of the pedagogy for autonomy used in the module to promote mutual collaboration and support among student-teachers, their individual supervisors, and the course facilitator.

According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), in a community of practice, teachers learn by doing, reading, reflecting, and collaborating with other teachers. Their work on communities of practice concluded that a supportive community of practice allows teachers to achieve a balance between autonomy and collegiality as they create an informative

interaction between their individual experience within the community of practice and their work with others. Teachers can support their autonomous learning by engaging in dialogic reflections with peers as they coach each other and share perceptions about pedagogical practices (Hargreaves & ElHawary, 2020).

In her study on the use of communities of practice as a framework for teacher development, Yildirim (2007) found that communities of practice are more beneficial than the traditional learning opportunities used in many in-service training models. Her findings suggest that communities of practice create a powerful learning environment where teachers find opportunities to share, cooperate, understand, and support each other. Teachers also become aware of their weaknesses and strengths and enhance their perception of teaching through collaborative, dialogic, and reflective learning. Similarly, Gülşen & Atay (2002) also found that teacher autonomy (control over professional action) can be increased due to social interdependence through collaborative decision-making.

Richards and Farrell (2005), identify that among the benefits of being part of a teacher group are gaining greater awareness of language teaching, increasing motivation to participate in professional development activities, becoming empowered and more confident in oneself and one's own work, overcoming isolation, and facilitating teacher initiatives. Students are also benefited from this collaboration as teacher groups focus on issues related to learners and learning leading to more effective teaching and innovations in teachers' practice. Communities of practice or what Richards and Farrell (ibid.) refer to as teacher support groups offer a forum for teachers to discuss relevant issues, getting support and advice in a nonthreatening environment. In their words, "support groups can help develop a culture of collaboration in an institution and enable teachers with different levels of training and experience to learn from one another and work together to explore issues and resolve problems" (p. 60).

For Richards and Farrell (ibid.), the goals of collegial forms of professional development are to promote greater interaction between teachers, peer-based learning through mentoring as well as sharing skills, experience, and solution to common problems. To develop such collegiality, opportunities need to be created for teachers to work and learn together through their participation in activities with shared goals and responsibilities.

This section has discussed the identified need for language teacher education programmes to develop teacher autonomy to empower teachers to become agents of change who can challenge the status quo, theorize from practice, construct their own pedagogies for language teaching and develop professionally. It has also presented arguments for the

implementation of a reflective teacher education for autonomy and the use of action research and communities of practice to promote teacher autonomy.

The following section discusses the concept of pedagogy for autonomy and reviews principles for the development of such pedagogy. This concept is particularly relevant as the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module builds on these ten principles which were adopted to be implemented in language teacher education.

2.5 Pedagogy for autonomy in language education

According to Holec (1981), autonomy is not an inborn capacity but "must be acquired either by 'natural' means or (as most often happens) by formal learning, i.e. in a systematic, deliberate way" (p. 3). This idea has given rise to the term pedagogy for autonomy in language education. Pedagogy for autonomy as opposed of pedagogy of autonomy, as discussed by Kuchah and Smith (2011), describes approaches to classroom-based learning where the goal of promoting autonomy is explicit, whereas in a pedagogy of autonomy, student's existing autonomy is engaged but developing this capacity is not an explicit goal.

For Vieira (2003):

> A pedagogy for autonomy in the school context seeks to move the learner closer to the learning process and content, by enhancing conditions which increase motivation to learn, interdependence relationships, discourse power, ability to learn and to manage learning, and a critical attitude towards teaching and learning. (p. 224).

In pedagogy for autonomy, as Manzano Vázquez (2017) explains, teachers and learners assume a critical view towards teaching and learning. Learners are empowered to play an active role in their own education by taking control over their learning and having a voice in the decision-making process. Pedagogy for autonomy also empowers learners to take action and bring about change in their lives and the society where they live. Teachers, on the other hand, should also be empowered to challenge the status quo and promote change, not only in their classroom, but in the school. In this sense, teachers play a decisive role in creating the environment in which learners exercise their autonomy and in promoting a teaching-learning process that is more democratic and just.

Vieira & Barbosa (2009) claim that there is no single way to develop a pedagogy for autonomy and that contexts of practice play an essential role not only for deciding what can be done but also for assessing the validity of the approach, considering that a pedagogy for autonomy is not only the responsibility of teachers and students, but also of teacher

educators, educational researchers, syllabus designers, material writers, school managers, and politicians. Therefore, Vieira & Barbosa (2009), instead of referring to pedagogy for autonomy, they refer to pedagogies for autonomy emphasising the context-sensitiveness and the plurality of the efforts to promote autonomy in schools and accepting that any effort to promote autonomy is valuable, regardless of its range.

This study draws on Jiménez Raya et al.'s (2017) understanding of pedagogy for autonomy which builds on five assumptions:

1) Pedagogy deals with the particular, the practical, and the possible: Based on the three pedagogic parameters suggested by Kumaravadivelu (2001) for a postmodern pedagogy: particularity, practicability, and possibility (discussed in section 1.2), there is a need for a framework that is comprehensive, context-sensitive and flexible. Therefore, pedagogy for autonomy "should attempt to integrate diverse contributions, should be interpreted through and confronted by other perspectives, and should instigate critical reflection rather than compliance" (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017, p. 19).

2) Pedagogy for autonomy is educationally and socially relevant: There are different reasons for developing pedagogy for autonomy: It constitutes a strategic endeavour in the pursuit of democracy in education and society. It is associated to a number of positive learning gains: intrinsic motivation, increased perceived language competence, critical awareness of the learning process, cooperative attitudes, decision-making abilities, and willingness to learn (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Boggiano & Katz, 1991, as cited in Jiménez Raya et al., 2017). And it promotes that teachers become empowered agents of change.

3) There cannot be a unified approach to pedagogy for autonomy: The complexity of the concept of autonomy does not allow the implementation of a straightforward unified approach to pedagogy for autonomy. Autonomy manifests itself in different ways, depending on the context in which it is found, the purposes and principles which underpin it, and the broader philosophical, ideological, political, cultural, social, and educational influences which are at play. However, the contextual nature of autonomy suggests that it can be interpreted in different ways by adopting a critical analytical approach to understand what is happening and why.

4) Pedagogy for autonomy is much more than a teaching methodology: As Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) explain, pedagogy for autonomy should refer to a vision of

education as empowerment and transformation rather than oppression and reproduction. This means that learners and teachers should be seen as critical consumers and creative producers of knowledge, co-managers of teaching and learning processes, and patterns in pedagogical negotiation. It also means accepting the view of knowledge as a dynamic construct of the knower and the view of education as an opportunity to struggle for a better, more rational, just, and satisfactory life.

5) Pedagogy for autonomy is not language specific: "The notion of learner autonomy as an educational goal pervades school curricula worldwide" (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017, p. 22). Therefore, their approach to pedagogy for autonomy moves beyond the particularities of the language teaching field and considers broader issues that will be of interest to any teacher or teacher educator.

2.5.1 Principles of pedagogy for autonomy

Based on the assumptions presented above, Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) propose ten pedagogical principles which can be seen as interrelated conditions that favour a pedagogy for autonomy. Figure 2 below shows the pedagogy for autonomy framework suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (ibid.) which includes considerations for the context, the learner, and the teacher as well as the ten principles of pedagogy for autonomy that according to the authors may transform existing traditions and enhance an empowering view of education.

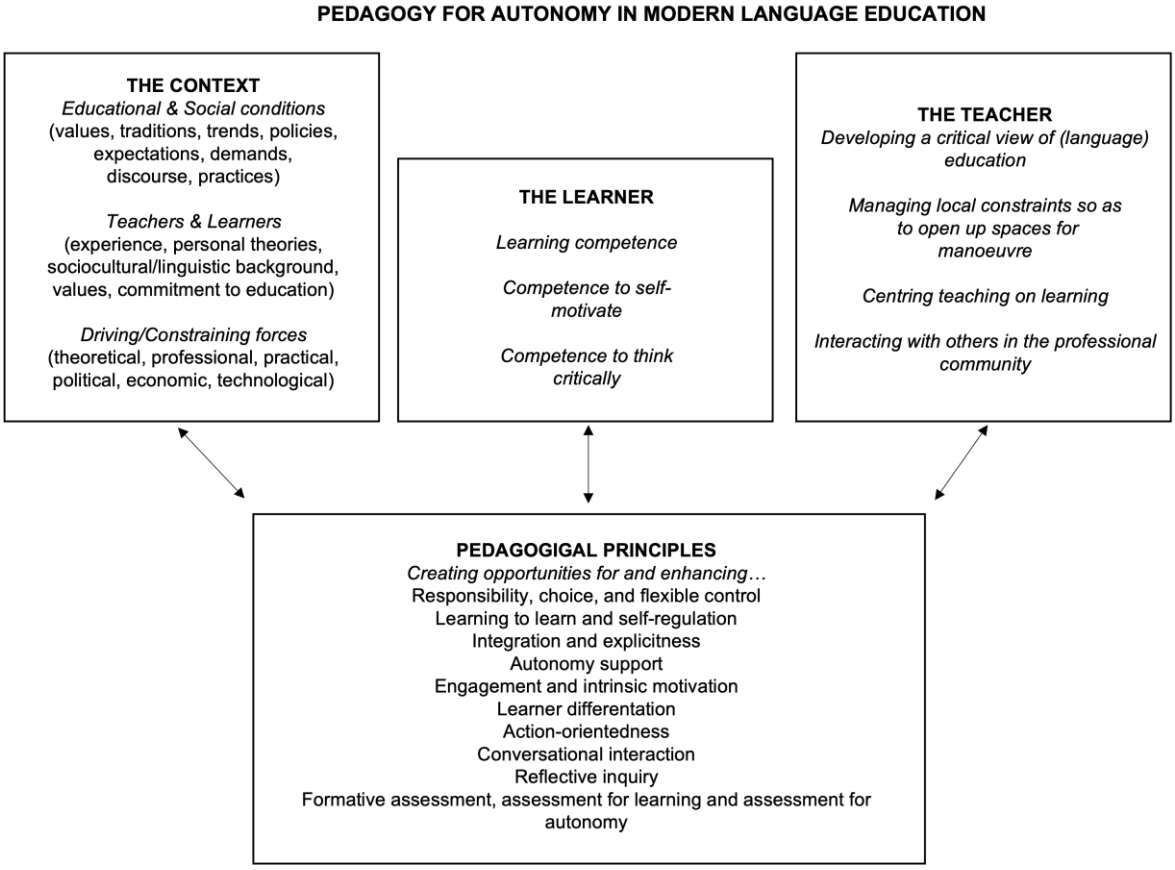

Figure 2 Pedagogy for autonomy framework (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017)

The principles of pedagogy for autonomy listed in Figure 2 are explained in the following paragraphs:

Responsibility, choice, and flexible control

Teachers need to encourage learners to assume responsibility for their learning process by planning, carrying out and evaluating their own learning. Pedagogy for autonomy should involve learners in identifying their learning needs and interests, setting learning objectives, determining the learning content and pace of learning, planning, and designing learning activities, selecting learning materials, methods, and strategies, monitoring their learning procedures, and evaluating their learning process and outcomes. The degree of control provided by teachers will depend on the stage of the learning process students are in and the circumstances under which learning takes place.

Learning to learn and self-regulation

One of the aims of pedagogy for autonomy is to provide learners with the skills and knowledge to learn by themselves. Teachers can help learners to learn how to learn by helping them enhance their metacognitive skills as well as develop learning strategies and attitudinal dispositions to carry out purposeful and successful language learning. By creating learning situations that allow

students to exercise responsibility, agency, and control over their learning, teachers can also provide opportunities for students to self-regulate throughout their learning process. According to Zimmerman (1989), self-regulation refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions used to attain goals. Self-regulation involves the regulation of three aspects of learning: the control of material and human resources, the control and changes of motivational beliefs, and control of cognitive strategies for learning.

Integration and explicitness

Learning tasks should integrate learner training with language activities in a way that learner development and language learning take place simultaneously. Research (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Wenden, 1991; Wenden & Rubin, 1987, as cited in Jiménez Raya et al., 2017) suggests that the impact of learning to learn can be enhanced if learners have the opportunity to experience its usefulness in communicative tasks and use regulation strategies to perform them. This can be applied to the learning of another subject by putting into practice learning to learn strategies for the actual learning of content in the classroom. On the other hand, explicitness can be achieved by making the rationale, aims, procedures of language and learner development explicit to learners, as a condition for awareness of and participation in curriculum.

Autonomy support

Learners can be provided with three types of autonomy support: organizational, procedural, and cognitive. Organizational autonomy support encourages student ownership of the environment and includes cooperation between the teacher and the students in choices over environmental procedures. Procedural autonomy support encourages student ownership of form and takes into account the students' own ways of working when doing a task as well their freedom to present it. Cognitive autonomy support, on the other hand, encourages learners' critical reflection about their needs, interests and beliefs about themselves and their learning process.

Engagement and intrinsic motivation

"The degree to which learners experience autonomy in learning is closely related to the quality of their engagement and intrinsic motivation" (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017, p. 102). Consequently, it is essential to create an atmosphere in the classroom where learners feel engaged and motivated to learn in order to promote their autonomy. Pedagogy for autonomy, according to Manzano Vázquez (2017), encourages learners to experience a sense of personal agency and self-determination which make them identify more with their learning process as the goals and decisions are seen as their own and therefore, students feel more responsible for achieving them.

Learner differentiation

Learners differ in terms of interests, attitudes, learning styles, cognitive abilities, motivation, prior knowledge, and beliefs about learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to foster learning situations that are open to learner diversity (Trebbi, 2011). Differentiation is not easy to achieve in large classes; however, Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) state that "it is precisely in these classrooms that it is more necessary, not only to accommodate and foster learning diversity, but also to allow learners to develop the self-regulation abilities that enable them to become more independent in a formal collective environment" (pp. 93-94).

Action-orientedness

This principle implies an action-oriented approach to language education where learners do not only need to develop responsibility for their own learning, but also to take a pro-active role in making decisions about their learning and performing a variety or purposeful tasks while they develop academic and learning competences, apply language learning processes, activate relevant strategies as well as monitor and assess their learning. As Manzano Vázquez (2017) state, "learners have to view themselves as agents of their own learning" (p. 94). Agency in this sense, according to Jiménez Raya et al. (2017), "implies voice, feeling that one is in control of one's own actions" (p. 106).

Conversational interaction

Another goal of pedagogy for autonomy is to enhance discourse power so that learners engage in meaningful interactions among themselves and with the teacher. Through this interaction, participants can negotiate the pedagogical agenda and co-construct meanings and events to build a more democratic environment where everyone's expectations, interests and concerns are considered. This principle requires teachers to determine the circumstances under which the use of the mother can be allowed and become an empowering instrument for conversational interaction to take place in the language classroom.

Reflective enquiry

This principle includes the possibility of involving learners as partners of inquiry, as well as the need to provide them with opportunities to analyse their own learning experiences. Reflective enquiry is essential for learner development and it enhances teacher knowledge of the learners which leads to an improved teaching-learning process. According to Jiménez Raya (1997, 2002, 2006), reflection plays an important role in helping individuals to reorganise or restructure their knowledge; therefore, it is crucial to give students opportunities to think about their learning

process so that they become aware of their own beliefs and how what they do to facilitate language acquisition/learning is influenced by those beliefs. Reflective inquiry can be undertaken through the use of teaching and learning portfolios, journals, and other oral or written records that help teachers and learners understand the nature and impact of teaching and learning practices.

Formative assessment, assessment for learning and assessment for autonomy

According to Clark (2011), formative assessment is assessment for and as learning, requiring a classroom environment of equality and mutuality where learners understand what they are learning and what they are expected to learn, receive constructive feedback and advice on how to improve, participate in decision-making, build metacognitive knowledge, and take responsibility for learning. Formative assessment is an essential principle of pedagogy for autonomy as it provides invaluable information on students' communicative and learning competences, helps language teachers adjust their teaching to local learning needs and can become a driver of curriculum development and innovation (Costa & Kallick, 2004, as cited in Jiménez Raya et al., 2017).

2.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed key areas of research which underpin the current study, the concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy, characteristics of autonomous teachers, and previous initiatives for autonomy that have been investigated in different language teacher education programmes. It has also explored the use of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice and the principles of pedagogy for autonomy as the key components that were implemented in the Teaching Practice module to support the development of teacher autonomy.

The Teaching Practice module had two objectives: 1) To engage student-teachers in professional development activities that allow them to improve their teaching practice and 2) To help pre-service teachers develop their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning. The first objective responds to the goals of the B.A. in ELT programme, while the second relates to the aim of this study, to investigate how teacher autonomy can be developed in initial teacher education through the implementation of a pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module that integrates reflective practice, action research, and community of practice as its main components and builds on the principles of pedagogy for autonomy suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017).

The research questions addressed in the study are:

RQ1: How can teacher autonomy be developed appropriately in pre-service language teacher education?

RQ 1.1: What are the respective contributions of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice?

RQ 1.2: What is the contribution of adopting the principles of pedagogy for autonomy?

RQ2: What are the outcomes of the intervention?

RQ 2.1: To what extent do student-teachers develop the capacity to a) self-direct their teaching and b) self-direct their learning?

As stated in section 2.4, there is a need for more research-based accounts of approaches to teacher education for autonomy as most research on autonomy has focused on teaching and learning rather than on teacher education (Manzano Vázquez, 2018). By promoting reflective practice, action research, and community of practice and adopting the principles of pedagogy for autonomy and implementing them in language teacher education, this study intends to follow an innovative approach to the development of teacher autonomy.

Although these principles have been studied before to promote autonomy in language education, establishing a relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy as two interconnected phenomena, this study focused on the development of teacher autonomy as an independent teacher attribute (Smith, 2003; Huang & Benson, 2007; Xu, 2007; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008), considering its relevance for teachers to construct a critically-informed and context-sensitive theory of practice for English teaching.

Moreover, by providing opportunities throughout the module for student-teachers to experience teacher autonomy and exercise their capacity to self-direct their teaching and learning in real teaching scenarios, this study attempts to fill the research gaps of previous initiatives for teacher autonomy discussed in the chapter. Unlike other studies, this research did not interpret teacher autonomy in connection with the promotion of learner autonomy; therefore, the course facilitator and individual supervisors did not constraint in any way pre-service teachers to make the decisions they deemed necessary for their development of teacher autonomy.

The following chapter explains the research design adopted to conduct the study. It describes the research context and the design of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module. A description of the participants, the role of the researcher, and ethical consideration is also given. Then, it provides an explanation of the different research instruments and the way data were analysed checking the validity and reliability of the study.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study to investigate the development of teacher autonomy in the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module. The chapter is divided into eight sections. Section 3.1 introduces the chapter and describes the content of the different sections. Section 1.2 explains the research design of the study. Section 3.3 provides a description of the research context within which the research takes place. Section 3.4 describes the Teaching Practice module implemented as part of the study and the rationale for the design of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the course. Then, section 3.5 provides a description of the participants, the role of the researcher and the ethical considerations followed to conduct the study. Section 3.6 presents the research instruments employed in the investigation justifying their use for data collection. Section 3.7 explains how data from the different research instruments were analysed and lists the categories and subcategories used for analysis. Finally, section 3.8 summarises the contents presented in the chapter and provides an overview of the following chapter.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Research approach

The two philosophical worldviews (Creswell, 2014) that shaped the approach to conduct this study are constructivist and pragmatic. According to the constructivist paradigm, the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied as they construct its meaning through the interaction with other people. Constructivist researchers analyse the specific context in which participants live and work to understand their historical and cultural settings and interpret their findings based on their own experiences and background (Crotty, 1998). On the other hand, the study also aligns with the pragmatic paradigm as it employs different approaches to understand the research problem. Therefore, the researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and research procedures that best meet their needs and purposes.

Based on these two philosophical worldviews, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach of inquiry to address the two research questions (see section 1.5). According to Creswell (2014, p. 32), "the core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and

quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone". As Strauss and Corbin (1998, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007) point out, qualitative and quantitative forms of research play together an important role in the development of a theory. The qualitative should direct the quantitative and the quantitative feedback into the qualitative in an evolving process with each method contributing to the theory in ways that only each can.

By adopting a mixed-method approach, this study is characterised by the strengths of this form of research (Dörnyei, 2007). The use of qualitative and quantitative approaches allows researchers to bring out the best of both paradigms in a way that each method can be used to overcome the weaknesses of the other. Collecting qualitative and quantitative data also allows researchers to conduct a multi-level analysis of the phenomenon studied to gain a better understanding of it. The findings resulting from multiple methods increase the external validity of the research and the generalizability of the results. Finally, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods provides results that are usually acceptable for a larger audience compared to the outcomes of a monomethod study.

3.2.2 Action research

The investigation also adopted the form of action research in which the researcher designed and implemented a pedagogy for autonomy to deliver a Teaching Practice module over two semesters. The study aims to investigate how teacher autonomy can be developed in initial teacher education through the implementation this pedagogy for autonomy. Although different definitions of action research have been proposed (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Burns, 1994; Wallace, 1998), the definition that best describes the nature of this study and the teacher-researcher motivation to conduct the research is given below:

> Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.162)

Cohen and Manion (1985) identify three main characteristics of action research. It is situational since it is concerned with identifying and solving problems in a specific context; it is carried out collaboratively, and it aims to improve the current state of affairs within the educational context in which the research is carried out. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) coincide with these characteristics as they state that the three defining features of action research are that it is carried out by practitioners rather than outside researchers; it is collaborative, and it is aimed at

changing things. However, for Nunan (1992), collaboration should not be seen as a defining characteristic of action research. He states that many teachers interested in conducting action research in their own contexts are unable or unwilling to do collaborative research because of practical or personal reasons. He also claims that action research does not necessarily have to involve change. He supports this claim by explaining that:

> A descriptive case study of a particular classroom, group of learners, or even a single learner counts as action research if it is initiated by a question, is supported by data and interpretation, and is carried out by a practitioner investigating aspects of his or her own context and situation. (Nunan, 1992, p.18)

This study complied with all the characteristics of action research discussed above as it addresses problems within a specific context, a B.A. in ELT programme in a public university in central Mexico. Although the research was not carried out collaboratively, it included the participation of part of the faculty as well as the collaboration among student-teachers during the Teaching Practice module and their own practicum. The action research involved the redesign and implementation of a Teaching Practice module which used a pedagogy for autonomy aimed at the development of teacher autonomy during two cycles. The analysis of findings and the reflection carried out by the teacher-researcher throughout the first cycle of the study were the basis to inform her practice, bring out improvement, and draw her own theories about teaching and learning during the second cycle.

For Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), action research takes place through a dynamic and complementary process, which consists of four moments: 1) Planning, 2) action, 3) observation and 4) reflection. These moments are the steps of a spiral process through which researchers:

- develop a plan of critically informed action to improve what is already happening,
- act to implement the plan,
- observe the effects of the critically informed action in the context in which it occurs, and,
- reflect on these effects as the basis for further planning, subsequent critically informed action and so on, through a succession of stages.

(Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 10)

However, this model has been criticised as it seems to assume a fixed sequence of procedures that are self-contained and deals with the complexity of the action research

process superficially (Ebbutt, 1985; McNiff, 1988; Elliott, 1991; Hopkins, 1993; Burns, 1999). Ebbutt (1985) suggests that action research is more accurately represented by a series of successive cycles that allows interaction and feedback among them. Somekh (1993, as cited in Burns, 1999) considers that the plans, actions, and observations through which action researchers proceed should be able to be transformed by their social, educational, and political settings as well as their values, beliefs, and histories. For her, action research can be seen as a research methodology that is characterised by the following features:

- the research is focused on a social situation;
- in the situation participants collaborate with each other and with outsiders to decide upon a research focus and collect and analyse data;
- the process of data collection and analysis leads to the construction of theories and knowledge;
- the theories and knowledge are tested by feeding them back into changes in practice;
- to evaluate these changes, further data is collected and analysed, leading to refinement of the theories and knowledge which are in their turn tested in practice, and so on and so forth…;
- at some point, through publication, these theories and knowledge are opened up to wider scrutiny and made available for others to use as applicable to their situation. This interrupts the cyclical process of research and action, but is useful in bringing the research to a point of resolution, if only temporarily.

(Somekh, 1993, as cited in Burns, 1999, p. 29)

Burns (1999) also stresses that action research should be seen as flexible and that researchers in different situations need to make their own interpretations of what are appropriate processes for the circumstances of the research. Through her experience conducting action research studies in Australia, she found that participants perceived a series of interrelated experiences rather than a sequence of cycles. These experiences are described as: 1) exploring, 2) identifying, 3) planning, 4) collecting data, 5) analysing/reflecting, 6) hypothesising/speculating, 7) intervening, 8) observing, 9) reporting, 10) writing, and 11) presenting. Participants also reported that the collaborative discussions throughout the process were crucial to their experiences. The discussions provided points of

reference that enabled their thinking and subsequent changes in their teaching practices in a way that they could not have been achieved by individual reflection and action.

Taking into consideration the discussion above, this study included two cycles (see Table 4 below). The first cycle was designed and implemented after a careful analysis and observation of the ways in which the Teaching Practice module was taught in previous semesters. This analysis and the review of the theoretical framework that supports this research (see sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5) fed into the design of the pedagogy for autonomy used in the Teaching Practice module during the first cycle of the study (Cycle 1).

After the semester finished, the teacher-researcher reflected on the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module and analysed the data collected to revise and improve the module implementation during Cycle 2. Although the same pedagogy for autonomy was implemented in Cycle 2, small changes were made in the way the teacher-researcher facilitated the module by emphasising the promotion of reflective practice activities, pre-service teachers' decision-making, and the development of a community of practice. More personalised guidance and feedback were also provided to student-teachers in Cycle 2 to support the development of teacher autonomy.

Table 4 below gives an overview of these two cycles:

Table 4 Outline of the study

Action research cycles	**Date**
Cycle 1 Implementation of the pedagogy for autonomy during the Teaching Practice module	(July-December 2018)
Cycle 2 Revision of the pedagogy for autonomy and implementation of a revised Teaching Practice module	(January-June 2019)

3.3 Research context

The study was carried out in a Teaching practice module on a B.A. in ELT programme at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, in central Mexico (see section 1.4). By the time the student-teachers take the module, they have completed most of the teaching modules included in the programme, except for Lesson Planning (see section 1.4). These pre-service teachers take this

module in the context of their professional practices (as translated from Spanish), which are regulated by the Department of Social Service and Professional Practice at the university.

As part of their professional practice, student-teachers undertake a 496-hour practicum over a semester. Student-teachers are free to select the schools where they want to do their practicum, based on a range of choices provided by the Department of Social Service and Professional Practice. However, they are advised by the B.A. in ELT programme to select a school or institution where they can teach at upper secondary or higher education institutions since the programme is directed to those educational levels. Generally, the diversity of teaching contexts among pre-service teachers provides opportunities for reflection, discussion, and sharing of ideas, which results in an enriching learning and teaching experience for all participants.

To promote academic mobility during their professional practices, all student-practitioners enrolled in the different academic programmes of the university are not obliged to attend classes anymore as they are in the last semester of their studies. However, on the B.A. in ELT programme, pre-service teachers are asked by the programme coordinator to attend a two-hour session twice a week to meet their academic counsellor (the teacher-researcher), who provides academic support and supervises their practicum. Considering the nature of the programme, this is particularly relevant so that student-teachers can have the opportunity to get continuous feedback from the academic staff and engage in activities that allow them to continue learning about the teaching of English and improve their practice.

At the end of their professional practice, based on the guidelines established by the Department of Social Service and Professional Practice, student-practitioners are not given a numerical grade; instead, they just pass or fail the module. Even though it is important for pre-service teachers to comply with all the activities instructed by their academic counsellor (the teacher-researcher), the main criteria for passing the module is to have completed the 496-hour practicum and to have a letter from the institution where they did their practicum saying that they fulfilled all the activities assigned there.

The fact that the Lesson Planning module is taught in the eighth semester along with the Teaching Practice module has been identified as one of the weaknesses of the programme because by the time student-teachers are learning the theory and practice behind planning a lesson, they are already in the field teaching language learners for a semester. In my experience, this causes uncertainty and lack of confidence in pre-service teachers since most of them have only taught isolated language lessons before in other modules of the programme and do not have any other kind of teaching experience. However, both the teacher of the Teaching Practice module and the teacher of the Lesson Planning module have worked together to provide a rich and meaningful

learning experience to the student-teachers so that they are able to integrate the learning gained in both modules and put it into practice to plan and deliver language lessons in real teaching scenarios.

3.4 Design of the Teaching Practice module

The pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module was designed to meet two objectives. The first objective is based on the curriculum of the B.A. in ELT programme, while the second relates to the aim of this study:

1) To engage student-teachers in professional development activities that allow them to improve their teaching practice and

2) To help pre-service teachers develop their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning.

The design of the module was informed by the key research areas that underpin the study: the concept of teacher autonomy, language teacher education for autonomy, pedagogy for autonomy, and the principles of a pedagogy for autonomy (see sections 2.2, 2,4, and 2.5). Previous research initiatives for teacher autonomy implemented in different contexts were also explored to inform the design of the present study (see section 2.3). Finally, the analysis and observation that the teacher-researcher made of the way the module was taught by a colleague in previous semesters also allowed her to construct a Teaching Practice module that could address the two objectives stated above.

3.4.1 Structure of the Teaching Practice module

The Teaching Practice module was organised into 4 learning units during which reflective practice, action research, and the creation of a community of practice were promoted as part of the pedagogy for autonomy used during the module (discussed in section 3.4.2). An overview of the 4 learning units and their contents can be seen in Table 5. For further reference, a detailed structure of the module can be seen in Appendix B.

Table 5 Structure of the Teaching Practice module

Unit 1: Postmethod pedagogy	**Unit 2: Teacher autonomy**	**Unit 3: Professional development**	**Unit 4: Negotiated contents**
1. Postmethod pedagogy	2. Teacher autonomy	3.1 Self-monitoring	Review and discussion of topics suggested by

Unit 1: Postmethod pedagogy	**Unit 2: Teacher autonomy**	**Unit 3: Professional development**	**Unit 4: Negotiated contents**
1.1 The role of teacher autonomy in postmethod pedagogy	2.1 Concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy 2.2 The relevance of teacher autonomy in teacher education and professional development	3.2 Teacher support groups 3.3 Teaching journals 3.4 Peer-observation 3.5 Action research 3.6 Individual professional development plan	student-teachers based on their learning needs and areas of opportunity to improve their practice

In Unit 1, after reading and discussing the implications of postmethod pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006), student-teachers were asked to reflect on the characteristics of the teaching context where they were doing their practicum in relation to the parameters suggested by Kumaravadivelu (ibid.), particularity, practicality, and possibility (discussed in section 1.2). This reflection was the basis for pre-service teachers to make informed decisions and construct their own pedagogy for teaching English accordingly. Within the discussion of postmethod pedagogy, the key role of teacher autonomy was stressed to develop a context-sensitive pedagogy that responded to their language learners' needs and the characteristics of their teaching contexts. In this sense, student-teachers were given the freedom to use any teaching method/approach, learning activities, materials, resources, and evaluation instruments they considered appropriate within the institutional constraints of the schools or institutions where they were doing their practicum, as long as their pedagogical choices were informed.

Before pre-service teachers were introduced to the concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy in Unit 2, they were invited to participate in a focus group to find out their initial thoughts, experiences, and perceptions of teacher autonomy as the basis to inform the development of their teacher autonomy during the module. After the focus group was conducted student-teachers were guided to analyse and discuss the concept of teacher autonomy (Little, 1995; Tort-Moloney, 1997; Thavenious, 1999; Aoki, 2002; McGrath, 2000; Barfield, 2002; Smith, 2003; Benson, 2011), identify its different dimensions (McGrath, 2000; Smith 2003) and reflect on its relevance for teacher education and professional development (Richards, 2003; Vieira, 2007; Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Jiménez Raya et al. 2017).

In Unit 3, pre-service teachers were provided with the theoretical foundations and suggested procedures to engage in different professional development activities (Richards & Farrell, 2005) to improve their practice over the semester. In particular, self-monitoring was used as a starting point for student-teachers to become aware of their weakness and strengths in teaching and identify possible areas of improvement. After video recording and observing themselves teaching, pre-service teachers were asked to select one or two focus areas so that they could write an individual professional development plan to improve their practice throughout the semester (see Appendix C).

Other activities for professional development, such as teacher support groups, teaching journals, peer-observation, and action research, were also promoted so that student-teachers could have different options for professional development activities to improve their practice. To provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to exercise their autonomy and self-direct their teaching and learning, they were free to choose the professional development and learning activities they could engage in. Then, they were asked to write an individual professional development plan based on their focus areas to improve their practice. This individual professional development plan was personalised to the needs of each student-teacher and included different professional development activities as well as other learning activities selected by them to be carried out with the support of their academic counsellor, individual supervisor (see section 3.4.3), and peers.

Finally, in Unit 4, pre-service teachers reviewed and discussed different topics related to their possible areas of improvement in teaching. The contents of this unit were the result of the negotiation between student-teachers and their academic counsellor/teacher-researcher (negotiated syllabus) based on their learning needs and areas of opportunity to improve their practice. To facilitate these learning sessions, the academic counsellor/teacher researcher asked student-teachers to do previous research on the different topics so that they could discuss their findings in class. Therefore, in the sessions, participants shared their teaching experiences, identified challenges, and exchanged solutions to the problems they encountered in their practice. The discussion of topics as well as the exchange of teaching experiences and ideas intended to create of a community of practice among pre-service teachers so that they could support each other in the implementation of their individual professional development plan, which was directed towards accomplishing the objectives of the Teaching Practice module.

3.4.2 Pedagogy for autonomy

The pedagogy for autonomy used to deliver the Teaching Practice module was founded on the ten pedagogical principles of pedagogy for autonomy identified by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017). For Vieira (2003):

> A pedagogy for autonomy in the school context seeks to move the learner closer to the learning process and content, by enhancing conditions that increase motivation to learn, interdependent relationships, discourse power, ability to learn and to manage learning and a critical attitude towards teaching and learning. (p. 224)

These ten pedagogical principles are listed below explaining how they were promoted in the pedagogy for autonomy to accomplish the goals of the Teaching Practice module. The principles enhanced and created opportunities for:

1) Responsibility, choice, and flexible control: By allowing student-teachers to develop their own individual professional development plan based on their learning needs and areas of opportunity and deciding in which professional development activities to participate, the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher created conditions for the participants to take responsibility for their own learning, make informed decisions and assume control over their learning process. The discussion and reflection on the topics presented in Units 1, 2 and 4 also encouraged pre-service teachers to make informed decisions regarding their teaching and learning.
2) Learning to learn and self-regulation: In the module, the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher enhanced pre-service teachers' development of metacognitive skills by guiding them to plan and implement an individual professional development plan that could let them improve their teaching practice and develop their teacher autonomy. At the same time, self-regulation was promoted so that student-teachers could manage their behaviours, emotions, and actions to accomplish their goals.
3) Integration and explicitness: The academic counsellor/teacher-researcher made explicit the rationale, aims, and procedures used in the module so that participants were aware of how the different elements of the pedagogy for autonomy were integrated to help them accomplish the objectives of the module. Then, they were invited to participate in all the activities of the module accordingly.
4) Autonomy support: This principle was accomplished by supporting pre-service teachers' reflection on their learning needs and areas of opportunity to improve their practice. The community of practice among student-teachers in the classroom also created opportunities for sharing teaching experiences and exchanging ideas about how they

could self-direct their teaching and learning to improve their practice. The academic support provided by the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher and the individual supervisors (see section 3.4.3) also provided a framework for participants to develop their autonomy in collaboration with others.

5) Engagement and intrinsic motivation: By creating a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom, the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher intended to help student-teachers be willing and motivated to take part in all the activities included in the module. In addition, by allowing them to exercise their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning, they felt more engaged to take actions that could result in an improvement in their teaching practice.
6) Learner differentiation: Considering the differences in student-teachers' individual characteristics, learning needs as well as areas of improvement in their teaching, the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher provided different options for professional development activities. Pre-service teachers had the freedom to integrate the ones they consider more appropriate for their needs into their personalized individual professional development plan. Moreover, by encouraging student-teachers' reflection on their own teaching contexts and learning needs, the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher favoured a pedagogy for inclusion and diversity.
7) Action-orientedness: Through the implementation of the pedagogy for autonomy in the Teaching Practice module, participants were encouraged to take action over their teaching and learning to improve their practice. This action-oriented approach was also promoted by allowing them to make informed decisions about their teaching and learning and take responsibility for those two processes.
8) Conversational interaction: This principle was promoted by creating a space for interaction and negotiation of the syllabus in the module, especially to decide the contents of unit 4, based on student-teachers' needs and areas of opportunity in their teaching practice. This negotiation and co-construction of meaning, according to Van Lier (1996, as cited in Jiménez Raya et al, 2015, p. 45) builds a more democratic environment where interaction becomes exploratory, conversational, and contingent on everyone's expectations, interests, and concerns.
9) Reflective enquiry: Reflective enquiry was promoted by making pre-service teachers reflect on their language learners' needs as well as the characteristics of their teaching contexts so that they could construct their own pedagogy for teaching English. By identifying their areas of improvement in teaching and planning an individual professional development plan to improve their practice, the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher

also guided student-teachers to reflect on the actions they needed to take to become better ELT professionals.

10) Formative assessment, assessment for learning, and assessment for autonomy: At the end of the semester, participants were asked to reflect on their general teaching and learning experiences throughout the module and the extent to which they were able to develop their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning and improve their practice. This reflection not only served to self-assess their teaching and learning throughout the semester but also to establish the basis for future professional development autonomously and in collaboration with others.

The pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module also incorporated reflective practice, action research, and the creation of a community of practice as the key elements to help student-teachers not only to develop their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning, but also to improve their practice. By doing the different activities described in section 3.4.1 pre-service teachers were able to engage in different reflective practice activities, increasing their opportunities to reflect on their teaching and learning, taking actions to improve their practice autonomously, and collaborating with peers, the course facilitator, and their individual supervisors at different points during the module.

Figure 3 illustrates the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module based on the principles described above and the integration of reflective practice, action research, and the creation of a community of practice, as the three components of the pedagogy for autonomy.

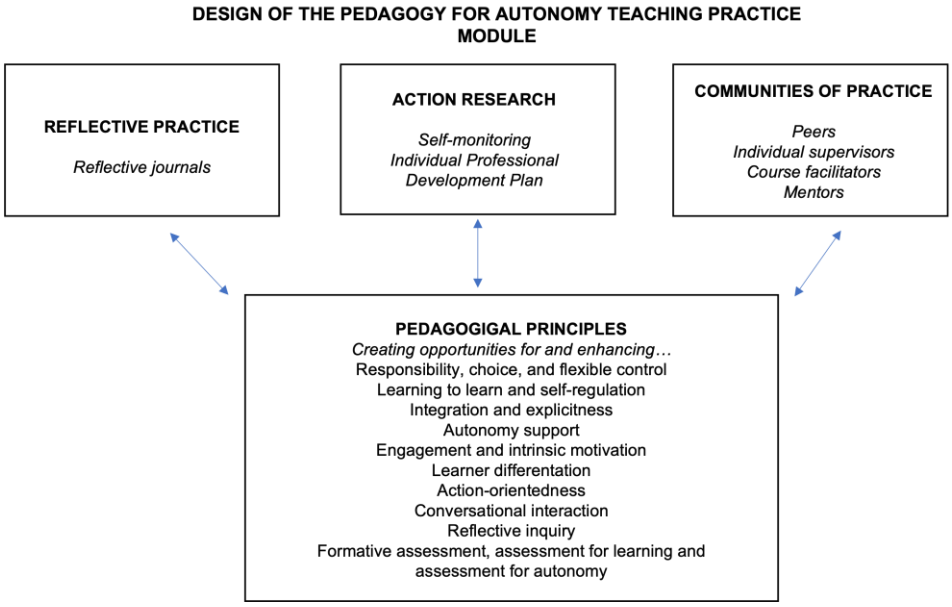

Figure 3 Design of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module

3.4.3 Additional academic support and personalised supervision from other ELT professionals in the faculty

Apart from the academic support and supervision provided by their academic counsellor/teacher-researcher, student-teachers also benefited from the expertise of other ELT professionals in the faculty. Each pre-service teacher chose an individual supervisor to work with over the semester. These individual supervisors were coordinated by the academic counsellor/teacher-researcher and met participants from 2-4 times over the semester to provide additional academic support and personalised supervision, especially for the implementation of their individual professional development plan to improve their practice. Student-teachers were encouraged to select the individual supervisor they felt more confident with to guarantee a positive learning atmosphere and an enriching pedagogical dialogue so that they, as pre-service language teachers, could benefit from the expertise of more experienced language teachers and teacher trainers.

The main reason why this academic staff were named individual supervisors and not mentors is because some student-teachers had mentors (teachers working in the teaching contexts where they were doing their practicum). Therefore, it was necessary to differentiate these two roles and the functions that individual supervisors served in the study. Unfortunately, not all pre-service teachers had mentors, which may have an impact on their development of teacher autonomy during the module.

The participation of these individual supervisors also contributed to the creation of a community of practice where student-teachers could not only exchange learn, discuss, and exchange ideas with their peers, but also with more experienced teachers who could give them feedback on their practice and suggest ways to improve. The role of the individual supervisors was key to give personalised feedback to pre-service teachers on their first activity, self-monitoring, and to follow the implementation of the individual professional development plans.

3.5 Participants

The participants of the study were pre-service teachers from the eighth semester of the B.A. in ELT programme who took the Teaching Practice module as part of the curriculum. As the study is an action-research project with two different cycles, the participants who took part in the study were from two different cohorts, 29 student-teachers in the first cohort and 20 in the second cohort. In both cycles, all participants enrolled in the module participated in the research (convenience sampling). According to Mackey & Gass (2005), convenience sampling is the selection of individuals who are available for the study.

Even though all participants were involved in the pedagogy for autonomy and all the activities used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module, they could refuse to take part in the study and therefore, their data would not be used for the purpose of the research.

After the teacher-researcher explained the aim of the research to student-teachers and provided them with an Information Participation Sheet (see Appendix D) with additional information related to the study, all pre-service teachers (in both cohorts) agreed to take part in the research by signing a Consent Form (see Appendix E). Student-teachers were told that their participation was voluntary and that even when they had accepted to participate in the research, they could withdraw from the study at any moment.

As explained in section 3.3, student-teachers chose the schools or institutions where they wanted to do their practicum from a list of choices provided by the Department of Social Service and Professional Practice. Therefore, their teaching contexts were very different, and they had to adapt to the conditions of each context and construct a pedagogy for teaching English accordingly. While some pre-service teachers assisted and taught language lessons in collaboration with a mentor, others taught language lessons alone and took full responsibility for teaching a group of language learners throughout a complete course.

The teaching contexts where participants did their practicum included public schools at kindergarten, elementary and upper secondary levels, universities, private institutions as well as self-access centres. See Appendix F for detailed information about the schools where student-teachers did their practicum. Only in cases where pre-service teachers' professional practice did not involve any teaching, they were given the option to work with a group of students provided by the B.A. in ELT programme.

3.5.1 The role of the researcher

Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest a range of possible roles which can be adopted by action researchers:

> First there is the single teacher operating on her own with her class. She will feel the need for some kind of change or improvement in teaching, learning or organization, for example, and will be in a position to translate her ideas into action in her own classroom… Second, action research may be pursued by a group of teachers working cooperatively within one school, though of necessity functioning against a bigger backdrop than the teacher working solo… And third, there is the occasion…where a team of teachers work alongside a researcher or researchers in a sustained relationship,

> possible with other interested parties like advisors, university departments and sponsors on the periphery… (p. 189)

In the study, the teacher-researcher played different roles at different points of the research. First, the role of an academic counsellor who was in charge of a group of student-teachers taking a Teaching Practice module in the context of their professional practice. It was her experience facilitating the module and her need to improve her practice and the quality of the programme what motivated her to carry out the action research. She was also a researcher who constructed a pedagogy for autonomy to facilitate the Teaching Practice module to investigate to what extent the pedagogy for autonomy contributed to the development of teacher autonomy. Finally, the teacher-researcher undertook the role of general supervisor of the pre-service teachers' practicum establishing the guidelines for the individual supervisors and being a link between the academic programme and all the schools where the participants were doing their practicum.

3.5.2 Ethical considerations

The study followed the procedures established by the University of Southampton's Ethics and Research Governance Online system (ERGO) that included disseminating Participation Information Sheets to all participants (see Appendix D) and asking them to sign consent forms (see Appendix E) to make sure participants had all the necessary information before any data were collected for the research.

Winter (1989, as cited in Burns 1999), states that the gathering methods employed in action research involve the professional practitioner(s) in new sets of relations with participants and colleagues. These new sets of relations may compromise professional relationships or exploit colleagues and students who are the subjects of research. Therefore, as suggested by Winter (ibid.), it is essential to follow three key principles in the ethical conduct of action research, which are responsibility, confidentiality, and negotiation.

In this sense, the teacher-researcher made clear to participants the aim and benefits of the study, guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected and emphasized that their participation was totally voluntary; thus, they could withdraw from the research at any time (as explained in section 3.5). Although the teacher-researcher played the roles of academic counsellor, researcher, and supervisor at the same time, she tried to make participants feel at ease by telling them that their participation in the study in no way represented any harm to them, so they could express their opinions freely. Because of the nature of the Teaching Practice module (as stated in the syllabus), student-teachers are not given a grade at the end of the module (the

only possible outcomes are Pass or Fail), which also helped reduce any concerns or harm feelings on the participants.

3.6 Research instruments

The instruments that were used for data collection were a focus group (see Appendix G), pre/post questionnaires (see Appendix H), student-teachers' reflective journals (see Appendix I), semi-structured interviews (Appendix J), and the teacher-researcher's reflective journal. It is important to mention that as the student-teachers' proficiency in the English language is B2-C1 (Council of Europe, 2001), the language used to administer all the instruments was English as participants did not have any problems to express their ideas in English. Still, they were encouraged to use their mother tongue, Spanish, in case they felt more confident doing so. A detailed description of each instrument as well as the rationale for selecting them will be provided in the next paragraphs.

Table 6 presents a summary of the relationship between the research questions and the instruments used to collect data from the participants.

Table 6 Relationship between research questions and instruments

Research question	**Instrument**	**Data collected in both cohorts (Cycles 1 and 2 of the study)**
RQ1: How can teacher autonomy be developed appropriately in pre-service language teacher education? RQ 1.1: What are the respective contributions of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice? RQ 1.2: What is the contribution of adopting the principles of pedagogy for autonomy?	Focus group Student-teachers' reflective journals Semi-structured interviews Teacher-researcher's reflective journal	2 focus groups (1 per cohort) 49 pre/post questionnaires 49 student-teachers' reflective journals (4 entries per participant) 14 semi-structured interviews (30-40 minutes average per participant) Teacher-researcher's reflective journal
RQ2: What are the outcomes of the intervention? RQ 2.1: To what extent do student-teachers develop the capacity to a) self-direct their teaching and b) self-direct their learning?	Focus group Pre/post questionnaires Student-teachers' reflective journals Semi-structured interviews Teacher-researcher's reflective journal	

3.6.1 Focus groups

Focus group interviews involve a group format whereby an interviewer records the responses of a small group, usually 6-12 members, and it is based on the collective experience of group brainstorming. In focus group interviews, participants think together, inspire, and challenge each other as well as react to the emerging issues and points (Dörnyei, 2007). Because of their versatile purposes and flexible nature, focus group interviews are often used in mixed-methods research as the only method of inquiry or most often, for generating ideas to inform the development of questionnaires and subsequent deep interviews. In the study, focus group interviews were used to find out the participants' initial thoughts, experiences, and perceptions of teacher autonomy and as the basis to inform the development of their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning as a result of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module.

Two focus group interviews were used in the study (1 per cohort) and were conducted at the beginning of the Teaching Practice module. The teacher-researcher (moderator) used an interview guide (see Appendix G) which included open- and close-ended questions to facilitate the discussion. The questions the teacher-researcher asked participants were:

- What do you understand by teacher autonomy?
- How can you exercise your autonomy as a teacher?
- How can you exercise your autonomy as a learner (the teacher as learner)?
- How important do you think it is for a language teacher to be autonomous?
- What implications do you think this has on students' learning?
- How have your previous teaching practice courses helped you develop your autonomy as a teacher?
- How have your previous teaching practice courses helped you develop your autonomy as a learner?
- Have you been provided with opportunities to reflect on your practice along your previous teaching practice courses? If so, how has this contributed to your teacher autonomy?
- Have you been provided with opportunities to do action research along your previous teaching practice courses? If so, how has this contributed to your teacher autonomy?
- Have you been provided with opportunities to collaborate with other student-teachers in your previous teaching practice courses? If so, how has this contributed to your teacher autonomy?

Following some strategies suggested by Dörnyei (2007), in the focus group interviews, the teacher-researcher welcomed participants, explained the purpose of the group interview, and invited them to contribute to the discussion, emphasizing that the discussion was about their

personal views and experiences; therefore, there were no right or wrong answers. The teacher-researcher also explained why the group interview was being video recorded and asked participants to speak one at a time emphasising once again that the data collected would only be used for the purpose of the research. Thus, nobody else in the faculty would know what they expressed in the session. Finally, the teacher-researched concluded the group interview by asking participants if there was any other issue or concern that required further discussion and by giving positive feedback on their participation. The focus group interviews lasted approximately one hour per cohort. Attendance to the focus group sessions in both cohorts was voluntary, so only 13 pre-service teachers participated in the research first cycle and 12 in the second.

3.6.2 Pre/post questionnaires

Questionnaires are defined by Brown (2001, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007) as "any written instruments that present respondents a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers of selecting from among existing answers" (p. 102). In the study, pre and postquestionnaires were used to collect data from participants at the beginning and at the end of the Teaching Practice module (in both cohorts). Both questionnaires included 10 Likert scale items as well as open-ended questions (see Appendix H). The 10 Likert scale items were intended to find out participants' perceptions of their teacher autonomy before and after taking the module.

Another reason for the use of pre/post questionnaires was to lead student-teachers to assess their own teacher autonomy by reflecting on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence they possess to do activities related to their professional action and development. The last principle of the pedagogy for autonomy proposed by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) was implemented in the module by promoting assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning in different activities of the module, including the pre/post questionnaires. In this way, the teacher-researcher could inform her practice for the module, provide feedback to pre-service teachers about their learning and how to improve, and involve participants so that they could self-direct their own learning process and reflect on their progress. Finally, the assessment of student-teachers autonomy served to evaluate the achievement of the module objectives.

To answer the Likert scale questions, participants had to choose from the options given, the one that best described their opinion (*Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree or Totally disagree*). Regarding the open-ended questions, they were included to explore participants' perceptions, beliefs, or opinions and to provide opportunities for unforeseen responses or for responses which may be richer and more detailed (Burns, 1999). The open-ended questions in each questionnaire

were different. In case of prequestionnaires, they asked participants about their expectations from the module in relation to the development of their teacher autonomy. In the postquestionnaires, they asked participants about their learning experience and the development of their teacher autonomy during the module.

To ensure questions in both questionnaires were clear enough to lead to the data being sought, questionnaires were piloted and trialled with colleagues and a small number of students to reduce any ambiguities or misunderstandings beforehand. Both questionnaires were administered in English as participants' proficiency in the language by the time they took part in the study was B2-C1, based on CEFRL standards (Council of Europe, 2001). After explaining the purpose of the questionnaire, the teacher-researcher administered the questionnaires in one of her lessons (at the beginning and at the end of the study) and supported participants as they were answering the questions to clarify any doubts, if necessary. The use of questionnaires in the study allowed the teacher-researcher to collect participants' perceptions of their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning before and after taking the Teaching Practice module and then follow up the initial findings with more in-depth questions in the semi-structured interviews as well as the analysis of the reflective journals.

3.6.3 Student-teachers' reflective journals

Diaries, logs, and journals are important introspection tools in language research, and they have been used in investigations of second language acquisition, teacher-learner interaction, teacher education, and other aspects of language learning and use (Nunan, 1992). Bailey (1990, p. 215) defines diaries as "a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analysed for recurring patterns or salient events". The main benefits of using diaries/journals according to Dörnyei (2007) is that 1) they allow researchers an unobtrusive way of tapping into areas of people's lives that may otherwise be inaccessible; 2) they elicit the participants' own descriptions and interpretations of events and behaviours; 3) they enable researchers to study time-related evolution within individuals by collecting data on many occasions from the same individuals; 4) they provide ongoing background information that can help resolve ambiguity regarding causal direction between variables, and 5) they offer a self-report format that reduces inaccuracies stemming from not remembering something correctly, because when participants write their entries, they recall recent rather than distant events.

In the study, participants were asked to write four journal entries at different times throughout the Teaching Practice module (in both cohorts). In the first entry, participants were asked to

reflect on their language learners' needs as well as on the characteristics of their teaching contexts based on the three parameters suggested by Kuramavadivelu (2001, 2006); particularity, practicability, and possibility to construct their own pedagogy for teaching English.

After student-teachers video recorded one of their lessons and watched themselves teaching, they were asked to write a second journal entry on the aspects of their practice they wanted to improve during the module. They also designed an individual professional development plan with activities that could lead them to improve on those areas. This was the part of the module where participants were involved in some form of action-research by identifying areas of their practice to work on, plan accordingly, and reflect on the changes at the end of the semester.

Later in the module, pre-service teachers were asked to write another journal entry on their identity as teachers and the way they considered they were perceived by their peers, their language learners, and themselves.

Finally, at the end of the Teaching Practice module, student-teachers were asked to reflect on the extent to which they had been able to develop teacher autonomy and improve their practice as a result of the implementation of their professional development plan. To write the four journal entries, participants were given some guidelines (see Appendix I) to facilitate their writing process.

3.6.4 Teacher-researcher's reflective journal

Research journals are diaries kept by the researchers themselves during the course of a research project (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Silverman (2005), by keeping a research journal, researchers can show readers the development of their thinking, help their own reflection, improve their time management, and provide ideas for the future direction of their work. Another benefit highlighted by Duff is that journals apart from helping researchers remember important details later on, they become part of the analysis and interpretation process itself as researchers start to consider new data and themes.

In this action research, the teacher-researcher kept field notes of her own observations and perceptions as the study was being implemented in both cohorts, with special emphasis on the things that needed more attention, presented a challenge or did not work as expected. Ideas that may be relevant for the research were also included. Finally, the observations and feedback provided by individual supervisors were also documented with field notes, considering individual supervisors' key role in supporting the development of teacher autonomy in the module. These

notes were used mainly to reconstruct the teacher-researcher's practice and aid the analysis of data from participants.

3.6.5 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are the most often used method in qualitative inquires and they are applied in a variety of applied linguistic contexts for diverse purposes (Dörnyei, 2007). Although interviews are time-consuming, they have the advantage of enabling the researcher to follow up in more detail particular issues which have been identified, insights or observations already made but not fully reflected upon (Burns, 1999). In the study, semi-structured interviews were used at the end of the Teaching Practice module (in both cohorts) to follow up previous findings collected in the other instruments used in the research; the focus group, pre/post questionnaires, and the student-teachers' reflective journals. The reason why the teacher-researcher decided to use semi-structured interviews is because although there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions, the format is open-ended, and the interviewees are encouraged to elaborate on issues raised in an exploratory manner (Dörnyei, 2007).

The semi-structured interviews were the only instrument where participants were selected using purposeful or purposive sampling. In a purposive sample, researchers select participants based on their knowledge of the population to elicit data in which they are interested (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The main goal of this sampling procedure was to select student-teachers who could provide rich and varied insights into their development of teacher autonomy as a result of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module. In this case, 7 participants from each cohort were chosen for the interviews based on their positive perception of their development of teacher autonomy in the student-teachers' reflective journals and post questionnaires, their willingness to improve their teaching practice, and the high level of responsibility and commitment they showed during the module. The rationale for focusing on only these 7 participants per cohort for the interviews lies on the assumption that by discovering how these willing, committed, and responsible student-teachers proceed in their development of teacher autonomy, it should be possible to support other pre-service teachers who did not perceive the same development in their capacity to self-direct their teaching and learning.

To conduct the semi-structured interviews, the teacher-researcher prepared an interview guide (see Appendix J) to provide the underlying focus of the interview. The questions included in the interview guide were the following:

- How much autonomy do you feel you had as a pre-service teacher?
- What were the limits to your autonomy?

- In your experience as a pre-service teacher, how much influence do you feel you had over:
  - Curriculum
  - Instructional methodology
  - Assessment
  - Classroom environment
- In the module, you worked with your partner (s) to discuss the implementation of lesson plans, in what ways did you do this?
- During your teaching practice, how far did you and your partner(s) give feedback to each other?
- In what ways did the feedback and guidance you received from your partner(s) help you become more autonomous as a teacher and as a learner?
- How did the nature of collaborative work with your partners help you become more autonomous?
- How often did you reflect on your teaching practice? How did you do this?
- In what ways, did the continuous reflection on your teaching practice help you become more autonomous?
- During your teaching practice, you probably thought of areas that you could improve, which ones are they? What did you do about it?
- In what ways could you improve in these areas? How did the module help you? What did you do to help each other?
- In what ways, do you think the action research project helped you become more autonomous?
- In what ways, did the feedback and guidance you received from your trainer help you or not help you become more autonomous as a teacher and as a learner? How could it have been better/more constructive? Could you give some examples where was it particularly helpful?
- To what extent did you have freedom to make your own decisions independently from your module trainer?
- How far do you think the module helped you or not helped you become more autonomous as a teacher or as a learner?
- What do you think teacher autonomy means and how can the module be improved to promote and support it?

Based on some techniques suggested by Dörnyei (2007), at the beginning of the interview, the teacher-researcher explained the reason for conducting the interview and reminded the participants that the data collected would only be used for the purpose of the study. Therefore, the

information shared with the interviewer would remain confidential. The teacher-researcher also made participants feel comfortable to express themselves by initiating the interview with small-talk and creating a relaxed atmosphere. At the end of the interview, participants were encouraged to make additional comments they considered relevant and were not developed before. Finally, the teacher-researcher expressed her gratitude and respect to participants for taking part in the study All the interviews took place in the participants' classroom and were audio recorded for data analysis.

3.7 Data analysis

Burns (1999) stresses that the reflexive nature of action research means that analysis occurs over the entire investigation; however, she suggests having a framework to shape the overall process of analysis. Based on this framework, the teacher-researcher followed five main stages for data analysis; 1) assembling the data collected, 2) coding data, 3) comparing the data, 4) building interpretations, and 5) reporting the outcomes.

Data from participants from both cohorts were collected and analysed individually to find similarities among participants' responses and make possible generalisations. To identify the participants of the study, they were given a pseudonym starting with the same initial of their names to protect their identity and facilitate data handling. Participants were also identified by the cohort in which they took the Teaching Practice module, Cohort 1 (CO1) or Cohort 2 (CO2). Finally, codes were also given to the different research instruments used in the study to identify where data come from. So, for instance, in the code Carlos/CO2/SSI data was collected in cohort 2 through the semi-structured interview.

Table 7 below shows the codes used for the different research instruments.

Table 7 Coding of instruments

Code	Research instrument
FG	Focus group
PRQ	Pre-questionnaire
JE1	Journal entry 1
JE2	Journal entry 2
JE3	Journal entry 3
JE4	Journal entry 4

POQ	Post-questionnaire
SSI	Semi-structured interview

Data from the focus groups and student-teachers' reflective journals were transcribed verbatim to keep an electronic record. Then, the data from these instruments were uploaded to NVivo in electronic form to be coded. The teacher-researcher used an inductive approach to data analysis; therefore, she induced emerging themes from the data. This kind of data analysis, according to Dikilitaş (2017) allows researchers to build potential theories about the phenomenon under investigation rather than test preconceived hypothesis or theories.

Data collected through the semi-structured interviews were not transcribed fully. Instead only the necessary information was selected from the participants, following the steps suggested by Dikilitaş (2017): 1) reading the manuscripts again and again until no more meaning could be drawn (saturation), 2) identifying and underlining words or groups of words that have negative or positive meaning relating to the theme being researched (open coding), 3) seeking meaning relations among all these words (emerging themes) and looking for thematic grouping (axial coding), and 4) looking for an overall theme which unifies the study thematically (selective coding). Data were also transcribed and kept in an electronic record. Then, the data were coded in NViVo with the same themes used in the focus groups and student-teachers' reflective journals.

The pre/post questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics. As suggested by Dikilitaş (2017), Likert-type instruments produce non-numerical data and they should be analysed using nonparametric tests such as medians, Spearman's correlation, and Mann-Whitney U or Kruskal-Wallis H tests of difference. In this case, data were analysed and the medians calculated manually. As stressed by Dörnyei (2007), descriptive statistics offer a neat and tidy way of summarising quantitative data but cannot be used for generalising results beyond our own context and research participants. However, the assessment of teacher autonomy by student-teachers at the beginning and end of the module set the basis for the analysis of qualitative data. The frequency of occurrence of themes was also calculated in NVivo to identify and analyse the concepts that participants related to the study main categories of analysis.

At the beginning of data analysis, three main categories were identified based on the literature review and research questions: the understanding of teacher autonomy by student-teachers; changes in teacher autonomy in terms of the knowledge skills, attitudes, and confidence teacher-learners possess to self-direct their teaching and learning, and the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy and its individual components on the development of teacher autonomy. As data from

the different instruments were coded, other categories and subcategories emerged. Table 8 illustrates the categories and subcategories that were used for the analysis:

Table 8 Categories and subcategories of analysis

Categories	Subcategories
Initial understanding and perceptions of teacher autonomy by teacher-learners	• Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action • Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional development • Promotion of teacher autonomy in other modules of the programme
Changes in teacher autonomy	• Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action • Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional development • Understanding of teacher autonomy and its relevance in language teacher education
Impact of the pedagogy of autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module	• Reflective practice • Action research • Community of practice
Factors that facilitated/hindered the development of teacher autonomy	• External factors • Internal factors • Autonomy support
Relationship between teacher autonomy and professional identity	• Self-perception of themselves as teachers of English • They type of teachers they would like to become

While data from the pre/post questionnaires were used to support qualitative data, information from the focus groups, student-teachers' reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews allowed a more in-depth analysis of themes and categories listed above to further the understanding of the development of teacher autonomy and the impact of the module and its individual components on that development.

3.7.1 Validity and reliability in action research

According to Burns (1999), although action research involves a different set of assumptions and research activities from quantitative research, researchers still face the challenge of responding to questions about the rigour and credibility of their investigations.

One of the most used ways of checking for validity is triangulation. As explained by Burns (ibid.), the aim of triangulation is to gather multiple perspectives on the situation being studied. By using multiple methods and the perspectives of different participants, it is possible to gain a richer and less subjective interpretation than by relying on a single data gathering technique. In this sense, in this study, data from participants in two cohorts were collected through different research instruments which made possible to triangulate the results, find similarities and differences among participants, and make generalisations.

Validity was also checked by engaging in peer debriefing (Creswell, 2014), where the teacher-researcher had the possibility to comment the research with a colleague who teaches the Teaching Practice module nowadays. This colleague reviewed the research and asked questions about the study. By involving somebody else in the interpretation of the data, validity was added to the investigation. Finally, as suggested by Gibbs (2007), reliability was checked by making sure transcripts did not have mistakes made during transcription.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has presented the research design adopted to conduct the study. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 provided a detailed description of the research context and the rationale of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module. The profile of the participants, the role of the researcher, and the ethical considerations followed in the study were described in section 3.5. Then, the chapter explained the rationale for the use of the different research instruments and how the data from the research instruments were analysed.

The following chapter reports findings from the data analysis. It provides a narrative account of how the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module was developed and evolved during the two cycles of the research. It describes the contributions of the components and principles of pedagogy for autonomy implemented in the module and presents student-teachers' initial understanding of teacher autonomy as well as their previous experiences of teacher autonomy in other modules. Then, the chapter describes changes in teacher autonomy during the Teaching Practice module based on data collected at different points of the course. Finally, the factors that were found to impact the development of teacher autonomy are also given.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the data analysis described in the methodology chapter (see section 3.7). Findings are organised into seven sections based on the research instruments used by the teacher-researcher as well as the main themes and categories that emerged from the literature review, the research questions, and the analysis of the data collected.

Section 4.1 introduces the chapter and describes the organisation and content of each of the following sections. Section 4.2 narrates how the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module was developed and evolved during the two cycles of the intervention. It also mentions the changes the teacher-researcher would like to implement after conducting the study to continue promoting teacher autonomy as one of the goals in the Teaching Practice module. Section 4.3 reports the contributions of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module and its individual components on the development of teacher autonomy based on the student-teachers' perceptions.

Section 4.4 presents pre-service teachers' initial understanding of teacher autonomy as well as their previous experiences of teacher autonomy in other modules of the programme. Section 4.5 describes changes in teacher autonomy during the module in terms of the knowledge skills, attitudes, and confidence student-teachers developed to self-direct their teaching and learning. It also shows how the participants' understanding of teacher autonomy evolved throughout the module. Section 4.6 lists factors that were identified to facilitate or hinder the development of autonomy during the course. Finally, section 4.7 summarizes the findings presented in the chapter and gives an overview of the contents in the next chapter.

4.2 Development of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice Module

This section provides a narrative account of how the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice Module was developed and evolved during the two cycles of the action research based on the teacher-researcher's reflective notes. In the journal, the teacher-research kept notes of aspects of the pedagogy for autonomy that needed more attention, the challenges faced by student-teachers and herself during the module as well as the comments and observations made by the individual supervisors who worked with the student-teachers.

4.2.1 Background for the design of pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module

Before the curriculum of the B.A in ELT programme was redesigned in 2013, the Teaching Practice module delivered to student-teachers provided them with the opportunity to teach children in elementary schools located in rural areas all Saturdays of the semester. In small groups, pre-service teachers visited the schools and gave classes to children.

Student-teachers were supervised by teacher-trainers from the faculty who also checked their lesson plans before they were implemented. However, teacher autonomy was not promoted as one of the goals of the module. Pre-service teachers mainly made their lesson plans and were given feedback on their teaching performance. Student-teachers' learning of teaching was guided and largely influenced by the faculty, not giving them enough opportunities to freely make independent decisions about their teaching and learning.

At the time, one of the challenges of the programme was to find different teaching contexts where student-practitioners could do their professional practice. Thus, pre-service teachers had to do their practicum in schools and other institutions where they were allowed to teach, without paying too much attention to the characteristics of the teaching contexts. As a result, student-teachers did not have enough practice opportunities in middle and higher education institutions, which is what the B.A. in ELT trained for and did not face teaching scenarios similar to the ones they would find once they graduated.

After the curriculum was redesigned, the Department of Social Service and Professional Practice of the university set the guidelines for all practices done by student-practitioners in all Bachelor programmes. Even though, the B.A. in ELT followed these guidelines, as faculty, we also tried to implement changes according to the needs and characteristics of the programme. In this case, it was important that the practice pre-service teachers had led them to improve their teaching and develop a more critically informed pedagogy for teaching English.

I was the first teacher-trainers to facilitate the Teaching Practice module after the programme was resigned, so I had the opportunity to make the modifications I considered necessary to design the intervention for the promotion of teacher autonomy. As mentioned in section 1.2, Kumaravadivelu's (2001, 2006) work on post-method pedagogy was the starting point for me to get interested in teacher autonomy considering its relevance for teachers to build their own theory of practice as a result of a critical analysis of their teaching contexts so that they could challenge the status quo and develop a context-sensitive pedagogy that responds to their learners' needs and the characteristics of their working contexts.

After investigating more about teacher autonomy, Smith's (2003) proposal of the six dimensions of teacher autonomy helped me identify the two dimensions which were addressed in the study and introduced me to existing discussions on the need for language teacher education for autonomy. Then, Vieira (2009) and Jiménez Raya et al. (2007; 2017) with their work on pedagogy for autonomy and principles of a pedagogy for autonomy guided me to implement the referred principles in language teacher education so that the development of teacher autonomy could become one of the goals in the Teaching Practice module.

My previous teaching experience facilitating a learning autonomy module also guided me in putting into practice the principles of pedagogy for autonomy suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (ibid.). Through the implementation of those ten principles, my intention was to provide student-teachers with opportunities to exercise teacher autonomy by guiding them to make informed decisions about how they would teach English in their contexts and about what and how they could learn to enhance their practice based on their own identification of areas of improvement.

The inclusion of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice also allowed me to implement a comprehensive pedagogy where these three components complemented each other and contributed to the development of teacher autonomy in initial language teacher education. As explained in section 3.4, the principles of pedagogy for autonomy were promoted and integrated through these three components and the activities that were part of the course. I made sure that throughout the module, there were opportunities to enhance responsibility, choice, and flexible control; learning to learn and self-regulation; integration and explicitness; autonomy support; engagement and intrinsic motivation; learner differentiation; action-orientedness; conversational interaction; reflective inquiry; and formative assessment, assessment for learning, and assessment for autonomy (see section 3.4.2 for a detailed explanation of how each of the principles of pedagogy for autonomy was included and promoted in the module).

4.2.2 First cycle of the intervention

During the implementation of the first cycle of the intervention, one of the aspects that was highly emphasised was the importance of identifying contextual factors that could help student-teachers make informed decisions to self-direct their teaching. So, after reading about post-method pedagogy, student-teachers were encouraged to reflect on the particular factors that could guide their decision-making in their teaching contexts. They were given freedom to make independent decisions regarding the content, methodology, materials, and assessment used to deliver their lessons as long as those decisions were informed.

Student-teachers generally accepted and valued this freedom for them to make independent pedagogical decisions; however, some of them still expected the course facilitator to give them lesson plan templates and more support to plan and deliver their lessons. As this was the first time pre-service teachers faced a real teaching scenario and taught classes for a longer period of time (496-hour practicum), in class they expressed feeling uncertain about their pedagogical decisions and relied on the facilitator of the module and individual supervisors to tell them what to do or how to do things.

The lack of teaching practice opportunities in real and diverse teaching contexts in previous modules of the programme was something that also made the process of making decisions about what and how to teach difficult for student-teachers. They expressed that it was necessary to have the experience of teaching in other contexts so that they could see how they work and reflect on how the particularities of each institution could make them take different decisions.

Regarding their learning as pre-service teachers, they were guided to do the self-monitoring activity at the beginning the module. They were asked to record themselves teaching and then, identify some areas of improvement in their practice. Based on their own observations and the feedback provided by their individual supervisors, pre-service teachers then completed an action plan with activities they set for themselves to improve the areas they had previously identified.

Although all participants set areas of improvement and completed their action plans, not all of them followed them. It was observed that pre-service teachers showed different degrees of commitment and responsibility towards their learning as teachers. Individual supervisors also noticed and expressed this lack of commitment or responsibility over their learning, as student-teachers in some cases did not show any evidence of improvement in their practice or engagement with activities that could lead them to enhance their teaching.

When interrogated in class about it, student-teachers mentioned that giving them too much freedom on their learning process may be dangerous as not all of them have the same degree of responsibility. They suggested implementing supervision forms to give a follow-up to their development of teacher autonomy and guide them in the process.

Another challenge that was identified in the module was that the workload and schedules of the individual supervisors made it difficult for pre-service teachers to be in close contact with them. Consequently, participants suggested to strengthen the relationship with them and find ways in which they could be observed by their individual supervisors not only through the video-recordings, but also face-to-face.

The teacher-researcher herself identified in her notes the need to work closely with individual supervisors so that student-teachers could be supported in their development of teacher autonomy in the same way, building a community of practice where pre-service teachers, the individual supervisors, and the course facilitator could share experiences and feedback as well as work collaboratively towards the same goal.

4.2.3 Second cycle of the intervention

Even though the same components of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module were implemented In the second cycle of the research, small changes were made in the way the teacher-researcher facilitated the course by emphasising the relevance of teacher autonomy, the promotion of reflective practice activities, pre-service teachers' decision-making, and the development of a community of practice.

Although the concept of teacher autonomy had been introduced to participants in the first cohort, in the second cycle of the research, the teacher-researcher emphasised its relevance for teachers to develop a context-sensitive and critically informed pedagogy for language education. The two dimensions of teacher autonomy addressed in the module were made explicit to participants so that they were aware that one of the objectives of the module was oriented towards the development of teacher autonomy. It was expected that by making the objective explicit to participants, they would take a more proactive role and make informed decisions in their professional action and professional development.

At the same time, more support and scaffolding were provided to student-teachers so that they could complete their Individual Professional Plans and follow them throughout the semestre. Pre-service teachers were introduced to different activities for professional development that could help them improve their practice and learning of teaching on their own and by collaborating with peers and more experienced teachers. They were also told they could make the necessary changes to their Individual Professional Plans as they were implementing them based on their experiences in their practicum.

Student-teachers were also encouraged to try different teaching methodologies in their practice to find out what could work better for them based on their learners' needs and the particularities of their teaching contexts. As described in section 3.4, the syllabus of unit 4 of the Teaching Practice was negotiated with student-teachers based on the areas of improvement in their practice. In the sessions, participants were invited to share with their peers the challenges they were facing in their practicum and the strategies they found effective for those problems. They

were prompted to exchange feedback on lesson plans and even engage in peer-observation or teacher support groups to collaborate with others.

Nonetheless, creating the community of practice in the classroom did not work as expected as participants did not engage in enriching and effective collaboration when asked to do so by the teacher-researcher. Interestingly, it was observed that the student-teachers who got involved in and benefited from communities of practice to self-direct their teaching and learning did it on their own outside the classroom. They approached their friends to share ideas, teaching resources as well as exchange mutual feedback. As reported by student-teachers in section 4.3, this collaboration helped them make more informed decisions to teach English and improve their practice through different learning activities.

4.2.4 Changes I would like to make to improve the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module in the future

Based on my experience facilitating the Teaching Practice module and researching the development of teacher autonomy, there are areas I would like to explore further to expand my understanding of how teacher autonomy can be developed in initial language teacher education. Some of these areas include the role of mentoring and supervision in the development of teacher autonomy, the relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher identity as well as the implementation of diverse tools so that pre-service teachers could engage more effectively in reflective practice.

Regarding the first aspect, the few student-teachers who had the support of mentors in their teaching contexts acknowledged their role in supporting them to develop their confidence and capacity to make decisions in their teaching practice. Unlike supervisors, mentors accompanied pre-service teachers during their practicum, continuously observed them, and established a closer relationship with them which had, in most cases, a positive impact on their development of teacher autonomy and the improvement of their teaching practice. Therefore, I would like to find a way in which individual supervisors could work more as mentors of student-teachers supporting them throughout their practicum.

When interacting with student-teachers in class, it was noted in the teacher-researcher's reflective journal that some pre-service teachers, as seen in Appendix K, did not feel their practicum as a real teaching experience. The fact that they were still enrolled in the BA in ELT programme as students somehow affected their teacher identity and the way they experienced their teaching. Even though they taught classes to language learners in their contexts, they felt it was only a practicum and not part of their professional experience as they were not totally

responsible for the students' learning. As a course facilitator interested in the promotion of pedagogy for autonomy in language teacher education, I would also like to emphasise the development of teacher identity and investigate how this concept is related to teacher autonomy as this something that emerged in the findings (see section 4.5.3).

Finally, in some cases in the two cycles of the research, I noticed that some student-teachers (the ones who showed less autonomy in the teaching and learning), wrote the reflective journal entries because they knew it was part of the activities of the module and not because they were convinced they could help them reflect on their practice, document their teaching, and make better decisions in their teaching and learning. Thus, I would like to familiarise student-teachers with other reflection tools such as blogs, video, and audio-recordings so that they could select the one they feel more practical or effective to reflect on the practice. The fact that they perceive that they are writing their journal for somebody else to read diminishes the value of reflection as a powerful that can contribute to the development of teacher autonomy,

4.3 Contributions of the components of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module on the development of TA

This section reveals findings on the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module and its individual components on the development of teacher autonomy according to pre-service teachers' perceptions. Data come from student-teachers' reflective journals and the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with 7 participants from each cohort at the end of the course.

The first part of the section presents participants' perceptions of the overall impact of the module on their development of teacher autonomy. Then, the second part of the section shows findings about the impact of each individual component: reflective practice, action research, and community of practice. To facilitate the presentation of findings in this first section, they will be organised under the headings Awareness of the need to improve professional action, Confidence in the capacity to self-direct professional action, Awareness of activities to self-direct professional development, and Changes in teacher identity.

Awareness of the need to improve professional action

In Guadalupe's case, she expressed that the module helped her be aware of her mistakes or areas of improvement in teaching and look for solutions. She pointed out that listening to her partners, individual supervisor, and other teachers was helpful to reflect on what she could do at that moment as a teacher. She mentioned the module also pushed her to step out of her comfort zone

and look for supplementary materials and resources she could use with the institutional textbook to catch the attention of her language learners:

"…it helped me… be aware of my own mistakes, and seek how (I can) solve them, also it helped me in knowing different perspectives from different partners, from different teachers because some of them were already teaching, so it helped me think, 'oh, now it's my time, how am I going to do this?'…" (Guadalupe/SSI/CO2).

Dalia also mentioned that the module helped her realise she had to make changes in the methodology she was using to teach the language as the procedures she followed were repetitive. Even though she was asked to use a specific teaching methodology in the place where she was doing her practicum, she realised there was space for her to make different decisions to support her students' learning:

"I used to work a lot with the same methodology the place (where) I was (teaching) asked me to use and I tried to use it as I had to and with your class, I learned that probably I could change some aspects, like, probably the school wouldn't know but I could change some aspects of my class, so it wouldn't be repetitive…" (Dalia/SSI/CO2).

Confidence in the capacity to self-direct professional action

Being confidence one of the aspects of teacher autonomy addressed in the study, it is relevant to find out Mayte's perceptions of the impact of the module to improve her teaching skills and develop confidence in her teaching and the decisions she made as part of it. She considered this relevant because by the time most student-teachers took the module, they had not had any significant teaching experience.

She stated *"in my opinion this was a really important experience to improve our teaching practice and to be more confident while teaching, because not all of my classmates (had) the experience before this semester"* (Mayte/JE4/CO2).

Similarly, Elizabeth expressed that her experience taking the module reassured her confidence to make decisions as she had freedom to teach the way she considered appropriate *"…it did help because mmm from the beginning, I felt free to work as I wanted in the classroom and also in the course, so it helped, it helped feeling that you could make decisions"* (Elizabeth/SSI/CO1).

However, Elizabeth mentioned that at the beginning it had been difficult for her to make her own choices about what and how to teach because she was used to following the guidelines given by other teachers in other modules of the programme. She responded in the interview: *"…it was a little bit complicated because I was used to following the guidelines or the rules that the teachers*

gave me, so I was a little bit lost at the beginning because I didn't know how to make my decisions…, but it did help, it helped me see that I can make decisions but also asking for help from educators".

Even though she developed her confidence to self-direct her practice, she acknowledged the support from more experienced language educators to inform and guide her decision-making process. This relates to the social dimension of teacher autonomy where teachers' involvement and collaboration with peers and more experienced ELT professionals can act as pools of knowledge, experience, equal power, and autonomous learning (Barfield et al., 2001).

Awareness of activities to self-direct professional development

When asked about the impact of the Teaching Practice module on his development of autonomy as a teacher, Eduardo mentioned that the course exposed him to different activities he could be involved in to develop professionally. In his journal entry 4, Eduardo expressed that during the module, he also became aware of the need for teachers to continue learning as a life-long permanent activity.

"… I must express that this course has opened my mind to different ways I can do to improve in my professional practice because I was told one…being a teacher is great opportunity to learn for the rest of our lives" (Eduardo/JE4/CO1).

Adrian also acknowledged that the activities included in the module made him engage in continuous reflection, which according to his perception, contributed to making him more critical of the decisions he made when teaching. In his journal entry he wrote "*because in the course I was asked to analyse continuously my teaching performances, I was more critical when making decisions about the content of the course and strategies"* (Adrian/JE4/CO1).

Changes in teacher identity

Carlos's response to one of the questions in the semi-structured interview was interesting. He expressed that the nature of the module made him play two different roles at the same time. On one hand, he was still a learner of teaching but on the other, he was also a teacher who was working with a group for students for a longer period of time. Assuming himself as a teacher, for him, was the biggest change in the course. In his view, this also raised his awareness of the need to improve as a teacher:

"…this was a very peculiar subject because it was a different approach, it had a different approach from the whole BA… because even if you were learning to be a teacher, you still felt like a student,

right? That's the biggest switch cause, you are learning all this information, but you still feel like a student but then, this was the big switch, right?" (Carlos/SSI/CO1).

Something similar was shared by Jaime who explained that through his experience in the module, he could see himself as a teacher for the first time. He mentioned: *"it helped me because… at that time, I (couldn't) see myself as a real teacher, so, you know when you are a student, many people don't believe on the things that you are doing…and in your subject teacher… it helped me because I can see myself as a real teacher inside the classroom"* (Jaime/SSI/CO2).

It is interesting to observe how Carlos and Jaime saw themselves as teachers for the first time during the module, although they were enrolled in the last semester of their studies. The reason for this may be related to the lack of teaching practice they had throughout the B.A. programme and the lack of reflection on the roles teachers play as learners of teaching and teachers of learning at different points of their education and professional careers (Smith, 2003).

Daniel also mentioned another aspect related to professional identity. From his perception, the module was helpful for him to discover his true identity as a teacher and realise that he could make decisions by himself. He added that it was important to always look for opportunities to become better without waiting for someone else to do things for him:

"it was helpful for me because I've got to know like my true identity as a teacher, that would be the most important thing that I can get and also to understand that you as a teacher can make decisions on many situations, problems, and things that you want to improve, that it's on you… you don't have to be like… comfortable or satisfied enough with what you have or waiting for others to do the things for you, you can actually… do it yourself…" (Daniel/SSI/CO1).

In his journal entry 4, Daniel also pointed out that the Teaching Practice module allowed him to identify the areas of his teaching practice to strengthen. Noticing these areas of improvement by himself, in his words, is more reliable than when someone external (teacher trainer or supervisor) tells pre-service teachers what areas to work on:

"I consider this autonomy raising part towards our teaching performance was good because you actually do not believe a lot in the feedback you are given as much as you can believe (on) what you can see and identify of yourself; I will dare to say that if you want to actually become better at identifying and correcting your mistakes, this type of practice is better, for its direct awareness on the situations you live every day" (Daniel/JE4/CO1).

All excerpts above provide insights into how student-teachers perceived the overall impact of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module on their development of teacher autonomy. In

the next section findings about the impact of each individual component of the pedagogy are presented.

4.3.1 Reflective Practice

During the module, pre-service teachers were encouraged to reflect on their teaching practice and the decisions they made to self-direct their teaching and learning through the implementation of reflective journals. Throughout the module participants wrote four journal entries (see section 3.6.3) which intended to raise their awareness of their teaching context, the areas of their practice they could improve, their identity as teachers of English, and finally, the extent the module was useful for them to improve their teaching practice through autonomy.

From the data gathered in the student-teachers' reflective journals and the semi-structured interviews, reflective practice contributed to the development of participants' teacher autonomy in different ways, mainly in their awareness of their professional practice, independent decision-making in their professional action, independent actions for professional development, and improvement of teaching practice through autonomy. Findings related to each of these aspects will be presented below.

Awareness of their professional practice

Student-teachers perceived the reflective practice component of the module as an activity that helped them be aware of their own practice and gain a deeper understanding of the things they were doing. Eduardo's excerpt from his journal entry 4 illustrates this perception:

"Having the opportunity to reflect on my own teaching (has) given me a different perspective of what I have been doing in my practice. Even though it was part of the curricula and a mandatory subject at university, I think I was able to comprehend better every single detail that being and English teacher (involves)" (Eduardo/JE4/CO1).

Similarly, Elizabeth expressed that by reflecting on her practice, she could be aware of the decisions she made and the activities she was doing. That helped her see she could make different choices in her lessons:

"I think it had to do with me being more aware of how often I was doing certain things, certain practices or activities, so for autonomy, I think that realisation of things I was doing helped me see that I had more choices, more things that I could do in the classroom" (Elizabeth/SSI/CO1).

Apart from raising participants' awareness of their teaching practice and the activities they could do to be better at specific areas of their teaching, the reflective journals also contributed to making student-teachers more critical of the decisions they were making. For example, Adrian mentioned:

"Because in that course I was asked to analyse continuously my teaching performance…, I was more critical when making decisions about the content of the course and strategies" (Adrian/JE4/CO1).

Flor pointed out that *"it is vital for teachers to reflect on their teaching and the reasons why their students are not learning or are having difficulties to learn the language".* She considers that by reflecting on those aspects, teachers can find ways to change that situation by doing research and looking for other materials and resources.

Independent decision-making in professional action

For Vicente, the reflection journal entries allowed him to make independent decisions about how to teach and what to teach, selecting the content of his lessons based on what he considered more important for the students. He explained:

"…you are almost (on) your own, like working or designing your class…so (they) helped me a lot to be independent in the way I want to teach or also the topics that I consider more important, so I would say that (they) made me more autonomous maybe unconsciously" (Vicente/SSI/CO1).

This aspect of autonomy was also emphasized by Sandra, Vicente, and Milton who realised that many times, they were alone in the process of teaching English; therefore, they were responsible for the activities and decisions they made and implemented in their classrooms. Sandra mentioned:

"When you reflect and you see there's no one close to you that can help you, you start looking for new ideas… researching what (to) do… you look for new options…" (Sandra/SSI/CO2).

Milton also stressed that through the reflection, he realised he was the only person responsible for changing things in his practice, he added *"… somehow we are alone in the process, and if you don't do it, no one else is going to do it because it's your teaching, it's your moment"* (Milton/SSI/CO2).

Independent actions for professional development

Daniel pointed out that reflecting on his practice was *"…a good way (to become) more autonomous and especially, to have one starting point from where to work"* (Daniel/SSI/CO1).

Dalia agreed with Daniel and mentioned that the reflective journal entries had helped her be conscious of what she could improve and then look for solutions by herself and with the support of others.

In line with Daniel and Dalia, Zully mentioned that, for her, *"probably… the most important thing about the reflections (is) that (they) made me look for more things, not only stay with the things that the teachers told me or what my partners told me once, no, (they) make you reflect and look for more, you become more curious about what you are doing"* (Zully/SSI/CO2).

Improvement of teacher practice through teacher autonomy

Guadalupe also explained how by reflecting on her practice, she could improve certain aspects of her teaching. She particularly described how she could improve the way she gave instructions by thinking and paying close attention to the techniques she used and how her students reacted to them. After engaging in such reflection, she could look for support and talked to a more experienced teacher, who recommended some other techniques for giving instructions.

Another benefit participants perceived of reflecting on their practice was that it helped them keep track of their progress and make sure they did not make the same mistakes they had identified in their teaching. For instance, Flor mentioned:

"…when I did another written reflection, I read the previous one and I said 'I have changed this', you can see like the progress that you are doing, so, in that way because you notice the previous mistakes and you notice if you continue doing that or if you have changed a lot of things" (Flor/SSI/CO2).

All the student-teachers that were interviewed expressed that apart from the journal entries they were asked to write during the module, they all reflected informally on their teaching practice. Some of them decided to have their own informal journals such as Elizabeth and Milton, but most pre-service teachers only dedicated some time after each of their lessons to think about how their teaching went and what they could improve in the next sessions. Doing this helped them make more informed decisions in their teaching practice.

4.3.2 Action research

In the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, there were two activities where student-teachers were involved in some kind of action research: The self-monitoring activity where participants identified areas for improvement in their teaching practice based on a video

recording and the design on an individual professional development plan to improve their practice on their own and in collaboration with others (see section 3.4).

Through the semi-structured interviews and student-teachers' reflective journals data were gathered to analyse the participants' perceptions of how these two activities helped them develop their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning. Findings are presented below under the headings Awareness of strengths and weakness in teaching practice through self-monitoring, Development of teacher identity through self-monitoring, and Autonomous professional development.

Awareness of strengths and weakness in teaching practice through self-monitoring

Pre-service teachers especially acknowledged the role of self-monitoring as key for them to identify their weaknesses and strengths in their teaching practice. The identification of their areas of improvement allowed them to become aware of their learning needs and reassured them of their capacity to improve, as can be read below:

"Having noticed, from my first observation, how much I used Spanish in the classroom gave me the chance to be more aware (of this) in (the) following (lessons). I also tried to plan differently to make my classes more appealing and enjoyable; however, I do know I need to keep working on this aspect… This experience has taught me how to learn more about the aspects I need to improve on and that I can change the way I work as much as I want" (Elizabeth/JE4/CO1).

Eduardo mentioned that becoming aware of his weaknesses and strengths in teaching was a necessary step for him to make his individual professional development plan, which he felt enthusiastic to implement during the module. (Eduardo/EJ4/CO1). Silvia (EJ4/CO1) and Jaime from (SSI/CO2) also expressed the relevance of observing their own practice to notice aspects to be improved.

Guadalupe mentioned that through self-monitoring, she could have an outsider's perspective and discover many aspects about their teaching. She added: *"…if I hadn't recorded myself, I wouldn't have noticed what I told you about not monitoring all the class…, so recording myself helped me notice that."* (Guadalupe/SSI/CO2).

On the other hand, Daniel's comment was interesting. He highlighted that self-monitoring is particularly useful to get an objective self-assessment without having to rely on somebody else's. He wrote in his journal entry 4 *"I consider this autonomy raising part towards our teaching performance was good, because you actually do not believe a lot in the feedback*

you are given as much as you can believe (in) what you can see and identify of yourself… if you want to actually become better at identifying and correcting your mistakes, this type of practice is better for its direct awareness…" (Daniel/JE4/CO1).

Development of teacher identity through self-monitoring

Lucia pointed out that self-monitoring allowed her not only to discover the areas to work on but also to reflect on the kind of teacher she is and the kind of teacher she would like to become in the future. She argued that by observing herself teaching, she could notice aspects to enhance her practice and could plan accordingly, which contributed to her professional development:

"When I watched the video, I discovered that I still have problems with my body language… During this period of time, I (became) aware of who I am and who I want to be in the future, what aspects I have to improve and how to plan better. For me, this subject was so useful for my development as a teacher" (Lucia/JE4/CO1).

Autonomous professional development

Regarding the implementation of their individual professional development plans, pre-service teachers expressed not having completed all the activities they had included, mainly due to lack of time (as discussed in section 4.6). However, participants provided examples of the activities they were involved in to improve their practice and develop professionally. Some of these examples are given below:

Vicente (Vicente/JE4/CO1), Eduardo (Eduardo/JE4/CO1), and Belen (Belen/JE4/CO1) reported that some of the activities they decided to do as part of their professional development involved searching for information, reading articles about how to teach grammar inductively, watching videos of other teachers around the world to get fresh ideas, and finding strategies to improve their classroom management. These student-teachers were able to self-direct their learning based on their needs so that they could improve their practice and contribute to their students' learning in a more effective way.

The completion of the Individual Professional Development Plan for Silvia involved continuous learning for her as a teacher. She considered her students' interests and needs as the basis for her decision making and continually reflected on those decisions and their impact on her students' learning. This was also mentioned by Alejandra, who adapted her practice according to her students' needs and teaching context. She shared that, for her, *"…doing research is essential for*

teachers to have better tools and find more suitable content and techniques that can be used for the profile of their students" (Alejandra/JE4/CO1).

4.3.3 Community of practice

Regarding the impact of the community of practice component on the development of student-teachers' autonomy, participants expressed they had benefited in different ways by having the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and receive feedback from their partners, individual supervisors, and mentors. Below findings are organised under the headings Awareness of teaching practice, Development of teacher autonomy to self-direct professional action, and Opportunities to discuss challenges and find solutions for professional action.

Awareness of teaching practice

For pre-service teachers, the collaboration with their partners allowed them to notice aspects of their teaching that they were not aware of. Elizabeth for example mentioned that the support of her partners made her aware of what aspects of her practice she could change and which she could continue doing:

"I think it helped me notice the things that I was doing, that could be done differently, and also the things I was doing right, so, in terms of autonomy, I think (by) taking into account what I heard from my classmates…, I had the chance to make decisions, like to change something I didn't feel comfortable with or to keep doing certain activities" (Elizabeth/SSI/CO1).

For Daniel, the possibility of getting somebody else's ideas and feedback was also beneficial to help him realise aspects of his practice that he might not fully understand or even consider when teaching:

"…having the chance of involving some else into your practice…opens the same opportunity for you to realise things that you may not be understanding or taking into consideration, so I would say that is the main (benefit) that providing feedback has among us" (Daniel/SSI/CO1).

Some participants even asked their peers to watch the video they had recorded in the self-monitoring activity so that they could get somebody else's feedback apart from the one given by individual supervisors. According to Dalia, doing this helped her identify the areas where she could improve:

"They would let me know when I was probably doing something wrong, so for example, we had this task when we recorded ourselves, so I remember that I showed that video to a friend…she

highlighted my mistakes and told me where could I improve, and well, that helped" (Dalia/SSI/CO2).

Development of teacher autonomy to self-direct professional action

Adrian described how he and his friends shared ideas and materials they could use in their lessons. That exchange of ideas made them look for more materials and resources and then, decide what was more appropriate for their teaching contexts. Adrian explained:

"the feedback was a really important part because I remember that whenever we mentioned something, we tried to…research more about it…" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

In his view, getting ideas and feedback from peers motivated him to go beyond and look for more ideas, do research, and finally make independent decisions regarding his teaching practice:

"I think that's the way it makes me more autonomous because when they said an idea, I looked for it and I tried to research and I always tried to bring more ideas…we were trying to help each other and we were looking for more things, and we were learning by ourselves…" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

Vicente pointed out that even though he benefitted from listening to their partners' ideas and feedback, he could also develop his teacher autonomy when he made independent decisions for his students:

"… they shared with me some, well, different strategies and (other) advice and maybe that made me autonomous in the way that I had to decide which one could (be more appropriate for) my students" (Vicente/SSI/CO1).

Jaime added that the collaboration with other peers in the programme made him understand his teaching practice better and motivated him to look for additional information to make informed decisions which not only increased his autonomy, but also extended his knowledge in the field:

Opportunities to discuss challenges and find solutions for professional action

Another benefit reported by student-teachers regarding the collaboration with their peers is that they could talk about problems they were facing in their teaching. Adrian for instance, mentioned that the module had been a space for him to find solutions to common problems through the interaction with his partners. He explained:

"I saw that class like a forum…, you opened a forum for discussion…, you write a problem and you look for a solution and people…(give) you ideas… pieces of advice, so I think that helped

me because… we tried to resolve it…, we discussed about it, so I think that was helpful" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

Guadalupe and Milton (CO2) agreed on that statement and expressed that as some of her peers were good at teaching or already had some teaching experience than them, they could benefit from listening to their advice:

"the advice from my partners helped me because I think they were good (at) teaching and some of them…had more experience than me, so of course, that their advice helped me" (Guadalupe/SSI/CO2).

On the other hand, Jaime highlighted that by being part of that class, he could feel identified with someone else who was also facing similar problems. He realised he could benefit from other teachers' knowledge and advice, so this is an activity he continues doing at present when he encounters situations in his practice that he is not certain how to solve:

"I think it helped me realise that I am not alone…, that I am not the only teacher who struggles, all teachers have different experiences and have different knowledge about the situations and especially pieces of advice, this is something that I still do…up to this day, when I don't know what to do, I send a message to one of my best friends…and tell (them) 'I need…(help)" (Jaime/SSI/CO2).

Similarly, feeling identified with other participants strengthened Milton's confidence to accept that many times teachers experience situations that they do not know how to solve in their classrooms. His experience in the module made his realise that not every class is perfect; therefore, he does not have to be ashamed of sharing bad teaching experiences with other teachers. He mentioned:

"It builds confidence sharing your experience, not every class is perfect…, at the very beginning..., I felt the pressure for doing it perfect because I was (studying to become) a good teacher but then, it's not like that… in real life children are not robots… you may know all the methodology but at the end, only you know (how) it works" (Milton/SSI/CO2).

For Zully (SSI/CO2)., collaborating with a peer, a person you trust, has more benefits because that person knows you better and is closer to (you)… or in a similar (context). She explained that she preferred getting advice from her peers *"… because sometimes the teachers cannot see many things"* and her friend or partner, as is closer to her can give her a helpful piece of advice because they are in the same or similar teaching context.

However, there were some other participants who had a different view as they trust the feedback and ideas that come from more experienced ELT practitioners who teach lessons on a regular

basis. This was Sandra's case, who mentioned *"…it could be more useful receiving feedback from someone who has more experience, like for example, the (trainer), and someone that is really, for example, in front of a class"* (Sandra/SSI/CO2). I was interesting to observe how she did not consider she could benefit from the collaboration with her peers as they did not have much teaching experience.

Most pre-service teachers acknowledged the importance of being part of a community of practice as they could get ideas, share experiences, and get feedback from others. All those aspects informed their decision-making and let them take informed actions in their teaching contexts according to what they considered appropriate for their students. The support provided also allowed them to make decisions on the aspects they needed to develop professionally to improve their teaching and become better teachers.

However, it is relevant to point out that although there were opportunities during the module for participants to exchange ideas, get feedback, and collaborate with their peers, most student-teachers participated in these activities outside class. They reported having done so because they felt more confident to ask their closest peers and friends for feedback or ideas whenever they faced a situation in their practice rather than when they were asked to do it by the course facilitator.

4.4 Initial understanding and experience of teacher autonomy in teacher-learners

As participants had taken a learning autonomy module in the fourth semester of the B.A. programme, it was important to find out to what extent they understood the concept of teacher autonomy and the dimensions related to it. In addition, uncovering participants' initial perceptions and previous experiences of autonomy in other modules of the programme was essential to inform the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module and to understand student-teachers' attitudes and behaviours during the course.

The following sections present data regarding pre-service teachers' initial understanding of teacher autonomy, the extent to which they considered teacher autonomy was promoted in the programme, and their previous experiences in the development of teacher autonomy.

4.4.1 Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action

Self-directed professional action

Making decisions to meet learners' needs was mentioned by student-teachers as an activity related to teacher autonomy. Participants expressed how important it was for teachers to make decisions in terms of content, learning materials, and activities for their students.

For example, Mariana explained that teachers can exercise their autonomy by implementing different activities in every session and deciding how they are going to teach:

"It is the way teachers make decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it" (Mariana/FG/CO2).

Flor added that an example of teacher autonomy is when teachers improve their lessons and make changes based on their student's likes and interests, especially when the activities they have to use from the textbook are not interesting for the students. In her view, teachers can exercise their autonomy when:

"…the activities are not interesting enough for the students, (they) may improve the class with a topic they like, obviously having in mind the goal, (the) aim to achieve" (Flor/FG/CO2).

Challenging the status quo and making the decisions teachers consider appropriate was also perceived by participants as a trait of teacher autonomy. Jaime explained that for him being autonomous meant personalising his teaching and doing different things for him and particularly, for his students:

"Personalizing the classes even if you are under superiors' orders, you can try to (do) something different and special for the students and for you" (Alberto/FG/CO2).

Capacity for self-directed professional action

From the participants in the focus groups, only 2 teacher-learners (8%) referred to teacher autonomy as a capacity (attribute) to make independent decisions when teaching. Milton commented that this capacity is based on teachers' perceptions of their teaching context and course objectives, among other factors:

"I understand it as the teacher's capability to make decisions regardless of the curricula or institutions they work for, such decisions are made based on the teacher's perception of their context, objectives of the course, etc." (Milton/FG/CO2).

Flor also explained teacher autonomy as a situation where teachers are capable of using recourses and materials to teach creatively and independently from any book or syllabus:

"I think that is when you are capable of (using) your own resources, creativity, materials in order to give a class, like not (being) attached to the syllabus or book" (Flor/FG/CO2).

Freedom for self-directed professional action

From the 25 student-teachers that participated in the focus groups (13 participants from the first cohort, in cycle 1 and 12 participants from the second cohort, in cycle 2), 48% related the concept of teacher autonomy to freedom to make independent decisions on their teaching practice. When asked about what they understood by teacher autonomy, Maricruz, for example, said:

"*I think it's like certain freedom you have in the classroom, besides the syllabus you have to work…, maybe you can pick or omit or change certain things and I consider autonomy like freedom to (make) changes or to improvise or add things"* (Maricruz/FG/CO1).

Similarly, Jaime mentioned that for him, being autonomous as a teacher involved having freedom to use different teaching and learning strategies and not following a specific method or approach to teach English. For him, autonomy is when:

"teachers (have) freedom when applying strategies for their own teaching without attaching or stickling to one methodology or approach" (Jaime/FG/CO2).

Participants considered freedom to be important to meet the needs of the students so that they could create things and teach according to what the students really needed. Daniel pointed out that teacher autonomy involves not only identifying language learners' needs but also responding to them by adapting classes and materials accordingly:

"Maybe not only having the freedom to identify certain needs or certain characteristics of a group…, but also… (doing) something to adapt your classes and your materials to those necessities, by making that adaptation you are practicing that autonomy" (Daniel/FG/CO1).

4.4.2 Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional development

Self-directed professional development

Only 36% of the participants in the focus groups referred to the concept of teacher autonomy as self-directed-directed professional development. For instance, Milton commented that autonomy was not only about making decisions when teaching, but also about being proactive and looking for ways to improve one's teaching practice by *"…taking an active role in the classroom, not only administering tests and teaching the language, but also by looking forward to self-improvement in terms of teaching practice"* (Milton/FG/CO2).

Zuly had a similar opinion as she claimed that being autonomous involved *"being able to find ways to improve the classes given to students, being the best teacher possible"* (Zuly/FG/CO2).

Participants shared different ways in which they could exercise their autonomy as learners of teaching. Most of them agreed that they could search for information about teaching methodologies, strategies, the skills they wanted to enhance in their practice or any other topics that could be relevant or interesting for their students.

4 student-teachers (16% of the participants in the focus groups) pointed out that they could exercise their autonomy by collaborating with others. This is interesting because a common misconception of autonomy is that it implies individuals working alone. The fact that these participants acknowledged how they could be autonomous by learning and working with others is relevant for the study. For example, Flor (FG/CO2), Guadalupe (FG/CO2), and Jaime (FG/CO2) mentioned that they could be more autonomous not only by doings their own but also, by talking to more experienced teachers and asking them for advice.

On the other hand, Milton expressed that to be autonomous, it was necessary to be open and willing to listen to others, especially to the students so that he could make decisions in his teaching. He explained: *"…students are the most important individuals to take into account so, as a teacher, making decisions along with students can help me exercise my autonomy as a teacher/learner"* (Milton/FG/CO2).

Only one teacher-learner (4% of the participants in the focus groups) referred to independence in relation to teacher autonomy. Marisol (FG/CO2) described teacher autonomy as a situation where a teacher does not depend on anyone and does things by herself or himself.

Capacity for self-directed professional development

Some pre-service teachers perceived teacher autonomy as a necessary capacity or ability to improve their practice and become good professionals. This capacity involves, according to the participants' perceptions, identifying their learning needs and mistakes and looking for ways to correct them and improve.

Guadalupe, for instance, explained teacher autonomy as: *"The ability of a teacher to know what, when, and how to apply different techniques to perform a good teaching practice and also to be able to identify mistakes and correct them"* (Guadalupe/FG/CO2).

Miriam also described teacher autonomy as *"the capacity to apply whichever activity to improve any aspect of teaching"* (Miriam/FG/CO2) while Osvaldo (FG/CO2) understood

teacher autonomy as the *"skills that teachers develop in order to continue improving their teaching on their own".*

Relevance of teacher autonomy for language teaching

When asked about the relevance of teacher autonomy in language teacher education, participants in the focus groups expressed that it was important for teachers to continue learning things on their own and improve their teaching. Raquel (FG/CO1) pointed out that by being autonomous, she could go beyond the things she was taught in the B.A. programme and become better at teaching.

Dulce expressed a similar opinion, she said teacher autonomy was important for teachers to adapt to different situations, considering that groups are different from each other, and teachers need to be prepared to teach them in an effective way according to their characteristics:

"I think it is really important because you have to adapt to every situation, not every group is the same, so you have to be prepared in order to teach them in a successful way, because maybe some things that are successful for one group are not for the other, so you have to adapt, so at least, that is what I have learnt" (Dulce/FG/CO1).

Daniel also identified adaptability as one on the traits of being autonomous. He claimed that by being autonomous, teachers could be prepared to face different situations. Therefore, he considered teacher autonomy important: *"I think it's important to be autonomous because… it means that you are an adaptable teacher... that will make you be ready to work with any group…adaptation is an ability that any teacher should have"* (Daniel/FG/CO1).

Belen found a relationship between teacher autonomy and students' learning. She claimed that by being autonomous, teachers could continuously learn things to teach learners more effectively: *"I consider it's important because we need to be learning new things, we need to know things and if we are autonomous, we'll be able to teach our students everything they need to in order to learn faster and easier"* (Belen/FG/CO1).

4.4.3 Promotion of teacher autonomy in other modules of the programme

This section reports on findings related to student-teachers' previous experiences of autonomy as teachers and learners in other modules of the programme. Participants' perceptions varied as their experience depended on who their teachers were in the modules and the cohorts they belonged to. Data are presented under three subheadings Promotion of teacher autonomy for

professional action, Promotion of teacher autonomy for professional development, and Previous experiences with reflective practice, action research, and community of practice.

Promotion of teacher autonomy for professional action

Jaime claimed that other modules in the programme had helped him become more independent, but he realised he still had to improve: *"I think they have helped me somehow though I still have a few things to improve. One thing for sure I've learnt is to be more independent and look for my own style of teaching"* (Jaime/FG/CO2).

Likewise, Alberto explained that his teachers in other modules of the programme had allowed him certain freedom to plan his classes. Even though he was given the topic to teach, he could plan his lessons independently and could make his own decisions:

"I believe that in most of the cases our teachers have asked us to make lesson plans just by telling (us the) topic or grammatical structures or functions, but we have had the freedom to design our classes alone" (Alberto/FG/CO2).

On the contrary, Milton argued that he had to use specific methods when planning his lessons, which limited his autonomy in terms of the activities or materials he could include in his practicum: *"Since most of them focused on particular methods, I was not fully allowed to develop autonomy as a teacher"* (Milton/FG/CO2).

Susana's case (FG/CO1) was interesting as she originally belonged to a previous cohort and due to special circumstances, she was taking the Teaching Practice module with a different group of students. She mentioned that in her experience in other modules, she had freedom to choose the topics to teach in her lessons as well as the materials and activities to use. However, due to the lack of teaching opportunities in the programme, she could not implement her lessons fully. Therefore, her autonomy was constrained by this lack of practice:

Later in the focus group session, she commented that according to her perception, students from the following cohorts were not given as much freedom as she had. They were more controlled in terms of the choice of topics to teach in their practicum. Even when they made independent decisions, their autonomy was restricted and they had to follow the guidelines established by their teacher and the group leader:

"the problem is that the new generation…, (does) not have this autonomy because they are more controlled…, even if they select something different from what they want to teach or they are supposed to teach, the teacher, the group, the leader of the group always tells them you cannot teach this, you have to do this…" (Susana/FG/CO1).

Maricruz, on the other hand, was not certain whether autonomy was promoted in other modules of the programme or not. She agreed with Susana and identified the lack of teaching practice as an important factor limiting her autonomy to make informed decisions about what could work for her students:

"… we have a lot of theory and we know a lot of things and we know a lot of techniques, and theories, approaches, but when we were in our (practicum), we were lost, most of us, we were like ' how do I do that?' So, they give you the tools to be autonomous because you have plenty of choices, but the lack of practice makes (it) difficult (for us) to (see) if it's effective for your students…" (Maricruz/FG/CO1).

Promotion of teacher autonomy for professional development

Regarding, their autonomy as learners, participants in the focus groups all agreed that they had not been given opportunities to exercise their autonomy as learners because they were not involved in the decisions related to their learning process (content to be learnt, activities, materials, evaluation procedures, etc.).

When asked about the reasons why they had not talked to their teachers in other modules about this lack of autonomy or their concerns about their learning process, they mentioned that they did not notice those constraints on their learning and development of autonomy until the moment they were teaching semestres later.

Alejandra for example mentioned that it was not until she taught classes over a longer period of time that she became aware of the things she had missed in previous modules of the programme: *"The thing is that you don't have that kind of doubts until you really teach…you don't realise that until you are in front of a class…"* (Alejandra/FG/CO1).

Maricruz claimed that their lack of involvement in the decisions regarding their learning process was related to their experience in traditional education systems where all decisions were made by teachers without considering students' opinions. She considered they had no say in the decisions related to the content or activities they were doing as learners in other modules and relied completely on their teachers to make the decisions for them:

This shows lack of agency on the part of student-teachers to be more involved in their learning process and make decisions when they perceived they were not getting the amount of practice they needed as part of their education. When they identified these lacks in their learning, they just complained about what they had missed but did not take any further actions to compensate for the lack of practice they had had in previous semesters.

Previous experiences with reflective practice, action research, and community of practice

By responding to other questions in the focus groups, participants also expressed their views on the extent to which they had been involved in reflective practice, action research, and community of practice with their partners in other modules of the programme. They were also asked about their perceptions of how these three activities contributed to their development of autonomy as teachers and as learners.

All pre-service teachers agreed they had been provided with opportunities to reflect on their teaching practice in other modules of the programme; however, they were not certain about how by reflecting on their teaching, they could be more autonomous. They especially talked about their experience in a project some of the student-teachers had participated in a previous semestre in the context of a research module. As part of that project, they taught English lessons to students locked up in a Juvenile Correction Centre, supervised by academic staff of the faculty.

During the project, they were guided to engage in action research to improve their teaching practice. They were asked to write weekly reflections based on two questions: 'How was your teaching performance?' and 'How did you feel during your lesson?' The reflections were not focused on their development of teacher autonomy, so participants were not certain about whether they had helped them to be more autonomous.

After further questioning by the teacher-researcher, participants mentioned that the reflections informed their teaching and made them aware of what to improve.

Student-teachers expressed that during the project, they were not aware of the course objectives. It was not until almost the end of the module that they were told the reflections would be used for their action research. This lack of knowledge of the goals to accomplish affected participants' perception of their experience in the project in a negative way. On the other hand, pre-service teachers expressed that reflecting on their teaching based on only those two questions limited their thinking as they did not reflect on other aspects of their teaching that were also relevant.

Other participants from cohort 1, Raquel and Alejandra, shared their experience engaging in reflective practice in other modules of the programme where they used videos to record their lessons and watch themselves teaching. They did not write any reflections but shared what they had observed in their videos in class. Alejandra said:

"In some subjects we had to record ourselves, so we (could) see what we (had done) wrong or was not like in the lesson plan, (but) it didn't go that way because the only thing we knew back then was the theory, so our reflections were just based on the theory that (we went through) in the

(modules)" (Alejandra/FG/CO1). Likewise, Raquel added *"We only recorded ourselves, but it was like, I don't know, we didn't pay much attention. We could talk about anything we wanted; I didn't talk like that"* (Raquel/FG/CO1).

These two participants shared similar views and agreed that they had not benefited fully from reflective practice as they did not pay much attention to the activity, did not engage in in-depth reflection, or needed more support to guide their reflection.

Only one student-teacher in the focus groups mentioned that by asking them to do reflective practice, their teachers in other modules intended to make them more critical of their teaching practice: *"I think they have made us reflect to be critical"* (Flor/FG/CO2).

Regarding action research, all participants were familiar with the concept, the process of doing it, and the benefits it could bring to their practice as they had taken two research modules before. The student-teachers that participated in the project at the Juvenile Correction Centre had even been involved in action research there. So, the teacher-researcher asked them questions about how action research had helped become more autonomous as teachers and as learners.

From her experience, Dulce mentioned that action research had helped her make decisions about what content to teach her students based on a syllabus that she had also created for the project. Monica added they had been given freedom to choose the content for their lessons. She explained that as she was interested in writing a thesis, which is optional in the programme, she could make independent decisions based on her research interests. Through experience, she learnt about herself as a teacher and could implement the strategies she deemed effective for her student:

"… we had like this freedom to choose whatever we wanted to teach according to the students, in my case, I had a student that (had) a very good level of English, that's why it was easy for me to develop my topic… it was a good experience and the different strategies I found made me autonomous in the way that if I know that a student has like issues when speaking, I can apply these different strategies and one of those can help the student" (Monica/FG/CO1).

The extent to which teacher-learners benefitted from doing action research and its impact on their autonomy was related to their interest and satisfaction in the project. Some student-teachers perceived this as a mandatory activity and as they did not like the teaching context; they were not motivated enough to take full advantage of the reflective and research activities they did at the Centre:

"I think we had autonomy when we decided what to teach and at what…(pace)…, we were autonomous in that way, but the fact that it was mandatory, and that we had to reflect on something we didn't like, I think it just made us (not) like it, it was difficult for me to reflect on that because I didn't enjoy it" (Dulce/FG/CO1).

Only one participant expressed that the guidance and supervision provided by their course facilitators constrained her autonomy to make independent decisions when teaching her students there. Betzabel commented:

"…when the teacher checked my lessons said 'I don't like this topic, change it, and teach occupations' and I said 'why occupations? if I was teaching likes and dislikes and then I'm going to go with occupations', 'well, it's better than this" (Betzabel/FG/CO1).

Because of these limitations imposed on her teaching, she could not make independent decisions and decide what and how to teach her students. As discussed in the literature, for autonomy to develop, student-teachers must be provided with the necessary support so that when their decisions are questioned, they engage in a pedagogical dialogue with mentors and supervisors in a way that is conducive to the development of teacher autonomy.

About the opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop a community of practice with their peers in other modules and its impact on their development of teacher autonomy, it was interesting to find out how participants created their own communities of practice independently to give feedback to each other and exchange ideas outside classes.

Dulce, for example, mentioned her experience working with a partner and how working together had helped her make better decisions when she did not feel confident or certain about her practice:

"…every time I have lesson plans or something that I don't think I am sure, I share my lesson plans with Esther and she gives me feedback…, so we have found that it is good to have somebody else to check your work" (Dulce/FG/CO1).

Similarly, Raquel shared her experience teaching in a school with some of her partners and how they got together at the end of the day to talk about their lessons and provide mutual feedback: *"…I'm working in X on Saturday, Alejandra, Esmeralda, and Betzabel are also there, we are together, so at the end of the day, we get together and talk about our classes 'today, we were checking this topic, I did this activity, and it didn't work or it works, and we exchange (feedback)…' it has worked"* (Raquel/FG/CO1).

Alejandra added that by talking to her partners she could *"get a lot of ideas, 'oh maybe you should do this or I've tried this', 'I know that this topic is now good for them', so yeah, we support each other"* (Alejandra/FG/CO1). According to participants' perceptions, the support provided by their peers allowed them to inform their teaching and make better decisions when planning their lessons.

Maricruz pointed out that in her teaching context, she and her partner, Kacey, had been given a lot of freedom to implement their own pedagogy for teaching English; however, as there were no guideless to feed into their decision-making process, they felt lost at the beginning and had the need to work together to make collegial decisions:

"Well, I am with Kacey (in my practicum), we are in the same school, so when we (got) there, they gave us like certain freedom to teach because the school hadn't (offered) English (lessons) before, so we were the first teachers there…, we didn't even have a book, we were very lost, we didn't know what to do, and I started to make my plans, and she started to make her plans and it didn't work, so one day… we started to (plan together) with what we had…, and it has been working until now…" (Maricruz/FG/CO1).

When the teacher-researcher asked participants if they had had opportunities to build this community of practice as part of their classes in other modules of the programme, they responded that yes, but as they were not teaching at that moment, they had not taken advantage of the opportunity to collaborate with their peers. For instance, Belen expressed:

"Because we don't see this helps us really, we are not facing the problem, so we don't think that this would help us" (Belen/FG/CO1).

Maricruz agreed with Belen and added *"we didn't see the importance before, because we had the opportunities, but we worked isolatedly like 'no, yo solito', you think that you didn't need any anybody"* (Maricruz/FG/CO1).

Another reason why participants did not take advantage of the community of practice supported by their teachers in the classroom was related to the lack of confidence to get effective feedback from their partners. Daniel even mentioned "It's just that not everybody can give good feedback" (Daniel/FG/CO1). Alejandra claimed *"maybe we don't trust each other, I think that is part of the problem, I don't know"* (Alejandra/FG/CO1).

This lack of confidence on their peer's feedback could be related to their experience in traditional education systems where the teacher is the only authority in the classroom and the only person whose feedback can be considered effective.

Finally, another reason why, pre-service teachers did not engage in a community of practice before was due to the lack of responsibility and commitment by some of their partners when working on projects collaboratively. Monica (FG/CO1) and Dulce (FG/CO1) explained that many times because of their teachers' instructions, they had to work with different people who were not responsible, so they preferred to do everything themselves not to be affected on their grades.

This section has provided data about the participants' initial understanding of autonomy and experience of it in other modules of the programme to set the basis to analyse to what extent student-teachers could develop their autonomy during the Teaching Practice module. Findings related to those changes identified by participants are presented in the following section.

4.5 Changes in teacher autonomy

This section presents findings related to the ways student-teachers perceived changes in the development of their teacher autonomy, that is, their capacity to self-direct their teaching and learning during the Teaching Practice module. This capacity was analysed in terms of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence pre-service teachers gained to make informed decisions about what and how to teach (self-directed professional action) and what and how to learn (self-directed professional development). It is important to emphasise that data from pre/post questionnaires was only used to understand student's expectations and perceptions of their teacher autonomy at the beginning and the end of the module. As no statistical tests were carried out, mainly qualitative data was used for indications of change in teacher autonomy.

The section also presents data about student-teachers' understanding of the concept of teacher autonomy after taking the module.

4.5.1 Teacher autonomy as self- directed professional action

From the data collected in the pre/post questionnaires, it is possible to observe changes in student-teachers' perceptions of their development of teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action. Table 9 shows participants' initial responses at the beginning of the module.

Pre-questionnaire						
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
1. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about curriculum implementation based on my students' needs and teaching context.	10.2%	26.5%	28.6%	34.7%	0.0%	2.9
2. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding methodology based on my students' needs and teaching context.	0.0%	10.2%	32.7%	57.1%	0.0%	3.5
3. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about assessment based on my students' needs and teaching context.	10.2%	14.3%	16.3%	51.0%	8.2%	3.3
4. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding classroom environment based on my students' needs and teaching context.	0.0%	10.2%	22.4%	59.2%	8.2%	3.7
5. I feel confident/capable of identifying and solving problems in the classroom.	0.0%	10.2%	34.7%	44.9%	10.2%	3.6

Table 9 Student-teachers' perceptions of their TA as self-directed professional action at the beginning of the module

The results reveal that regarding their capacity for self-directed professional action, most pre-service teachers felt confident and capable of making decisions regarding the teaching methodologies they could use with their students (57.1% Agreed), the implementation of assessment methods (51% Agreed, 8.2% Strongly agreed), and the classroom environment (59.2% Agreed, 8.2% Strongly agreed). Participants also felt confident and capable of identifying and solving problems that could emerge in their classroom (44.9% Agreed, 10.2% Strongly Agreed). The only aspect where student-teachers showed more diversity in their responses was related to their confidence and capacity to make decisions about curriculum implementation according to their students' context and needs (10.2% Strongly disagreed, 26.5% Agreed, 28.6% were Neutral, 34.7% Agreed, and 0% Strongly agreed).

Table 10 below shows data from student-teachers' responses to the post-questionnaires after taking the module.

Post-questionnaire						
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
1. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about curriculum implementation based on my students' needs and teaching context.	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	51.0%	42.9%	4.4
2. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding methodology based on my students' needs and teaching context.	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	28.6%	65.3%	4.6
3. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about assessment based on my students' needs and teaching context.	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	44.9%	49.0%	4.4
4. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding classroom environment based on my students' needs and teaching context.	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	12.2%	81.7%	4.8
5. I feel confident/capable of identifying and solving problems in the classroom.	0.0%	0.0%	12.2%	28.6%	59.2%	4.5

Table 10 Student-teachers' perceptions of their TA as self-directed professional action at the end of the module

Findings show that according to pre-service teachers' perceptions of their development of autonomy to self-direct their teaching practice, they could increase their confidence and capacity to make decisions regarding curriculum implementation (51.0% Agreed, 42.9% Strongly agreed), teaching methodology (28.6% Agreed, 65.3% Strongly agreed), assessment methods (44.9% Agreed, 49.0% Strongly agreed), and classroom environment (12.2% Agreed, 81.7% Strongly agreed) according to their context and students' needs. Their confidence and capacity to identify and solve problems in the classroom also increased (28.6% Agreed, 59.2% Strongly agreed).

Even though data from the pre/post questionnaires provides a general picture of student-teachers' development of autonomy during the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, data derived from the semi-structured interviews and the participants' journal entries were used for indications of change. Data collected through those two research instruments are presented in the following paragraphs.

Regarding teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action, findings suggest that pre-service teachers became more aware of their teaching practice and this awareness made them more critical about the decisions they made to teach the language. For instance, Isabel mentioned that during the module, she became more aware of what she was doing when teaching:

"… it helped me because I realise, for example…, when I am giving a class, I can realise or I can notice at that time what I'm doing, so I can be aware of my teaching in the real… time" (Isabel/SSI/CO1).

Vicente also shared this view and expressed that the module helped him continually reflect on his teaching and what his students needed. He mentioned that by identifying the aspects of his practice he needed to improve and getting feedback from the course facilitator, he could become more autonomous, so he tried to improve his teaching each class:

"… before I said 'I did my class, I think my students learnt more or less and just that', and maybe with this, I (say) 'well, I didn't (go) well…, my students had problems with this, I used this way of teaching or this strategy, this activity, it didn't work, ok, so I'm going to change it to another one', so I think that with the suggestions that you gave us, the aspects that we can identify to improve, I would say that I (became) more autonomous and obviously, I tried to improve in each of my classes" (Vicente/SSI/CO1).

Daniel realised that he could identify aspects of his practice he liked and did not like, make decisions and then, improve his practice. This aspect is particularly relevant since he became more critical of his teaching as a first step to decide and construct his own pedagogy to teach English.

"I could make decisions…, I was able to understand, to identify many things and actually decide whether I liked them, whether I didn't… and to modify my own practice" (Daniel/SSI/CO1).

Milton also perceived a development in his capacity to become aware of his practice and identify the aspects he needed to change. The problems he faced while doing his practicum made him question the decisions he had made in terms of his syllabus and plans and then, adapt his pedagogy to teach the language by responding to his teaching reality:

"…I already had my syllabus planned, but then, when the students were leaving little by little, I had to change it, I had to… adapt my plan, and then, I realised I was being autonomous by noticing, by identifying the things I had to change, again, by myself" (Milton/SSI/CO2).

Belen, apart from becoming more aware of her teaching, added that she became aware of what she needed to do to engage her students in class and help them improve in the language: *"I consider I am more aware of what I should do to engage my students and to help them to improve their English"* (Belen/JE4/CO1).

Elizabeth also mentioned that the module helped her become more autonomous as she could make her own decisions based on her students' needs for learning the language and not only the goals of the curriculum. She considered that making her own decisions independently from the curriculum allowed her to help her students and focus on what they really needed as sometimes teachers take for granted their students' knowledge of the language and make decisions just based on assumptions:

"…sometimes we (assume) that (students) know some things, but when you go, you are there in the classroom, you notice that they don't, so that helped me see that I could make choices based on my students' needs and not only the needs or requirements of the curriculum, so that helped a lot, because… sometimes I used to just teach what they told me to teach because they were supposed to know things, but now I know I can make other choices because my students need different things" (Elizabeth/SSI/CO1).

Jaime pointed out that before taking the module, he used to teach only with materials and activities he was given, but now, he looks for other supplementary materials and even

creates his own materials. Therefore, he considered he is more autonomous and open to using different strategies which could be more helpful for his students:

"… I guess before the course…, I always expected to use maybe certain book and to do this activity like this…, but now…, I use completely different materials, I also design my own materials, something I didn't do in the past, now…, maybe right now I use audios, I use Power Point presentations, I use pictures from the Internet, and in the past, I was like ok, so the book says that I have to do this first, I have to do this next, etc. But now I'm definitely more open and more autonomous to use the strategies and the activities that I think are good for my group" (Jaime/SSI/CO2).

Alike Jaime, Dalia mentioned that during the Teaching Practice module, she also started to make her own decisions regarding the methodology and activities she used to teach English. She looked for materials and activities she considered more helpful to supplement her classes and even created her own content, which allowed her to plan her lessons in a different way:

"…I think that's where I started to be more autonomous because I stopped like following only the methodology that I was told to use, I tried to change the methodology and also the type of activities…, I tried to look for another type of activities that could also be helpful or create my own content if the one that I found is not useful, but I think the main characteristic that I changed when I learnt to be autonomous was how I plan my classes, how I plan lessons" (Dalia/SSI/CO2).

Student-teachers realised that even though there were some constraints in the institutions where they were doing their practicum, such as having a pre-established curriculum or using a specific methodology to teach the language, they could make certain decisions which were more appropriate for their students' needs. Dalia mentioned that the Teaching Practice module helped her learn there were aspects of her teaching she could change:

"…I used to work with the same methodology (they) asked me to use and I tried to use it as I had to and with your class, I learnt that probably I could change some aspects, probably the school wouldn't know but I could change some aspects of my class, so also it wouldn't be repetitive because I think the methodologies can get repetitive and the moment…t I started taking notice of this, thanks to your class, I started feeling that I was actually being very repetitive with my lessons…, so I think it was very helpful" (Dalia/SSI/CO2).

She explained that following the same teaching methodology was repetitive and even made her feel bored about her teaching. She realised that even though there were regulations to teach the language where she was teaching, there was some space for freedom for her to

make her own teaching decisions. Therefore, she mentioned that she could become more autonomous in the way she planned her lessons.

On the other hand, Zuly stated that she was not able to increase her autonomy as she considered herself to be autonomous before the module. However, she became aware of what her students needed and the fact that she needs to look for things (materials and activities) students find interesting as nobody else can do it for her.

"…probably not like I didn't increase my autonomy but at least it made aware, you know (of), what my students need, also I need to look for all those things that they find interesting and it's not like everybody is going to give me everything, you know, sometimes, you need to research, you need to read more about it…" (Zuly/SSI/CO2).

Another aspect of teacher autonomy was highlighted by Adrian, who mentioned that during the module, he reassured his commitment and responsibility for teaching, which made him look for ways to facilitate his students' learning. He felt committed to looking for other teaching resources, to innovating in his teaching, and doing things that could make his students be part of a good learning atmosphere.

"…I think that… I became more autonomous after this course, mainly in my teaching…, like in my teaching commitment with the students, I don't know how to say this, but like this commitment that you feel with the students, like you want to… make like a good atmosphere or establish a good atmosphere with the students, and if you want to do so, you want, you really try to give your best during the classes, so, I figured out that… to attain this objective, you need to look for resources, you need to innovate, you need to do many things, so I think that was the part that I made myself more autonomous" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

He elaborated on his previous comment and explained that during his practicum, he realised that nobody else but himself could look for materials and resources to supplement his teaching. He mentioned that even though textbooks are a guide for teachers, many times it is necessary to look for supplementary activities and strategies that could work better for the students. Therefore, it is important to find a balance between using the institutional textbook and making his own choices, in terms of the activities and strategies used for teaching:

"… I realized that the book is… like a guide but it is not everything, I mean the book has like the least…of the information that they need, you use it, that's perfect, you (do) not need to make it aside, (but) you need to find a balance…, you need to implement different strategies, and that's the way I progressed, I mean and who is going to give you those strategies, those

activities? You, you the teacher, so you need to look for them…, you need to adapt activities, so that's the way you do it" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

Confidence was another aspect of teacher autonomy that was strengthened during the module. Student-teachers expressed that they realised they have the capacity to overcome problems in their practice and find different possible solutions to them. For instance, Vicente mentioned that through his practicum, he reassured his ability to face challenges and learnt how to overcome them:

"I know there will be more challenges to face (other) problems but I am sure I can overcome them. This practice helped me a lot to know how to face possible situations in the future and possible solutions I can take" (Vicente/JE4/CO1).

Betzabel stated feeling being more prepared to face the real world and not being afraid of the challenges she might experience in the future. She is conscious of the fact that being a teacher implies hard work but is convinced of the importance of the teachers' role and their impact on students' lives. In addition, her decision of becoming a teacher was reassured by her experience in the module:

"At this moment, thanks to this grateful experience I feel more prepared to work in the real world, to graduate without any fear, and I'm pretty sure that I (chose) the correct (job) for me. Being a teacher could be (hard) but it is beautiful due to the importance teachers (have) in each student's life" (Betzabel/JE4/CO1).

Adrian also reported that throughout his practice, he was always able to find solutions to the problems he faced in the classroom. This teaching experience made him reassert his decision of becoming a teacher of English. This student-teacher always demonstrated willingness to improve his teaching practice and an internal drive to become a better professional:

"I always found the best ways to solve the problems in the classroom. I consider this experience made me aware of the fact that being a teacher was the best decision I have made" (Adrian/JE4/CO1).

Guadalupe highlighted that she did not have a mentor in the place where she was doing her practicum; therefore, she was challenged to make her own decisions. However, this experience made her more confident throughout the course and allowed her to develop her autonomy to self-direct her teaching:

"…at the beginning of the course, I was like scared, nervous, and as the course passed, I felt more confident…, I couldn't ask (anybody) because as I said my coordinator… is not a teacher, so I had to make my own decisions and I had to be autonomous" (Guadalupe/SSI/CO2).

4.5.2 Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional development

Regarding pre-service teachers' development of autonomy as self-directed professional action, findings reveal that during the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, participants could increase their capacity to self-direct their learning to improve their practice. To illustrate these changes, Tables 11 and Table 12 below show participants' responses to the pre/post questionnaires before and after taking the module.

Pre-questionnaire						
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
6. I feel confident/capable of identifying and solving problems in the classroom.	0.0%	10.2%	34.7%	44.9%	10.2%	3.6
7. I feel confident/capable of carrying out action research to find solutions to pedagogical problems in the classroom.	0.0%	20.4%	59.2%	20.4%	0.0%	3.0
8. I feel confident/capable of directing my own learning in order to improve my teaching.	0.0%	26.5%	18.4%	49.0%	6.1%	3.3
9. I feel confident/capable of working with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.	0.0%	10.2%	12.2%	59.2%	18.4%	3.9
10. I am willing to work with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	49.0%	44.9%	4.4

Table 11 Student-teachers' perceptions of their TA as self-directed professional development at the beginning of the module

As can be seen in Table 11, before taking the module, pre-service teachers responded they felt confident and capable of directing their learning to improve their teaching (49.0% Agreed, 6.1% Strongly agreed). They also felt confident and capable of working with others to develop their autonomy as teachers and as learners (59.2% Agreed, 18.4% Strongly agreed). Participants expressed their willingness to work with others to develop teacher autonomy (49.0% Agreed, 44.9% Strongly agreed). However, the two aspects where student-teachers did not feel confident and capable were about their capacity to reflect on their teaching practice and identify areas for improvement and investigation (0% Strongly disagreed, 26.5% Disagreed, 28.6% were Neutral, 30.6% Agreed, and 14.3% Strongly agreed) and their confidence and capacity to do action research to find solutions in their teaching practice (0% Strongly disagreed, 20.4% Disagreed, 59.2% were Neutral, 20.4% Agreed, and 0% Strongly agreed).

Post-questionnaire						
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
6. I feel confident/capable of identifying and solving problems in the classroom.	0.0%	0.0%	12.2%	28.6%	59.2%	4.5
7. I feel confident/capable of carrying out action research to find solutions to pedagogical problems in the classroom.	0.0%	0.0%	16.3%	44.9%	38.8%	4.2
8. I feel confident/capable of directing my own learning in order to improve my teaching.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	46.9%	53.1%	4.5
9. I feel confident/capable of working with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	32.7%	67.3%	4.7
10. I am willing to work with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	32.7%	67.3%	4.7

Table 12 Student-teachers' perceptions of their TA as self-directed professional development at the end of the module

In Table 12 results show that participants' confidence and capacity to self-direct their professional development increased. Student-teachers considered themselves confident and capable of reflecting on their practice to identify areas for improvement and investigation (34.7% Agreed, 65.3% Strongly agreed) and of doing action research to find solutions to problems in the classroom (44.9% Agreed, 38.8% Strongly agreed). They responded they were also confident and capable of directing their learning to improve their teaching (46.9% Agreed, 53.1% Strongly agreed) and of working with others to develop their autonomy as teachers and learners (32.7% Agreed, 67.3% Strongly agreed). Their willingness to work with others to develop their autonomy as teachers and as learners was also fostered during module (32.7% Agreed, 67.3% Strongly agreed).

Data from the pre/post questionnaires suggest that pre-service teachers were able to develop their confidence and capacity to self-direct their learning during the module. However, data collected through the student-teachers' reflective journals and semi-structured interviews are presented below to triangulate these findings.

Student-teachers expressed they became more aware of the areas of their teaching practice they needed to improve and the different professional development activities they could carry out to do so. For instance, Adrian stated that during the module, he was aware of many aspects related to his teaching, including the things he did not like and wanted to change about his teaching. His autonomy involved not only being aware of his practice, but also looking for information about the aspects he wanted to improve and implementing changes in his teaching.

"I mean all the time I was aware of many things…but at the end of the day, my next step was always to look for information and then… bring something that solved that problem, it was not only… looking for information, but also (implementing) those resources… I became more

autonomous because it was the part of the implementation, like doing the things, trying to solve the things …" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

Carlos also mentioned that he was continually improving his practice during the module since he was aware of the problems he was facing in his teaching. As he was one student-teachers who started working while doing his practicum, he even mentioned that he used some of the activities from the module on his own to develop professionally. For instance, recording himself while teaching to be more conscious of this performance as a teacher and make the necessary changes to improve his practice:

"I was more autonomous because I was aware of the problems, and not only that, but also, I was also constantly improving, so when I got my first job…, I was constantly checking everything, I (recorded) myself… so that I could hear the speed and everything…, and the vocabulary… because I was teaching elementary, so maybe the vocabulary that I was using was too high for the level, so I was like always… applying this type of strategies in order to improve all the time" (Carlos/SSI/CO1).

Sandra pointed out that after taking the Teaching Practice module, she is also more autonomous as she looks for information, does research, and looks for ways to improve her teaching on her own: *"Ok, I'm autonomous, looking for strategies…, doing some research, and planning my lessons or looking for new ways to improve"* (Sandra/SSI/CO2).

Another change in participants' autonomy to self-direct their learning is related to their attitudes towards future professional development activities as they acknowledge the importance of continuous professional development to become better ELT professionals in the future.

Lucia explained that the module helped her realize the kind of teacher she is and wants to be in the future. She also mentioned that throughout the module, she learnt about the aspects of her practice to be improved and how to develop a plan to do it. She acknowledges this learning is vital to develop professionally:

"During this period of time, I (became) aware of who I am and who I want to be in the future, what aspect I have to improve and how to plan better. For me, this subject was so useful for my development as a teacher" (Lucia/JE4/CO1).

Finally, Luis was also able to identify the areas of his teaching practice he needed to become better at and emphasised that teachers learn on a continuous basis and that this process takes

place as teachers are in service. He mentioned "there are plenty of things I still have to polish. As teachers, we never finish learning, but perfecting ourselves is done enroute."

From the results presented in this section, it is possible to observe that the student-teachers became more aware of the different activities they could be involved in to develop professionally on their own and in collaboration with others. They also realised the importance of continuous professional development and were more willing to do so in the future.

4.5.3 Understanding of teacher autonomy and its relevance in language teacher education

This section presents student-teachers' understanding of teacher autonomy after taking the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module. Participants also commented on its relevance for teachers to self-direct their teaching and learning. From the participants' initial understanding of teacher autonomy presented in section 4.4, it is possible to identify how participants at the end of the module not only associated teacher autonomy with self-directed professional action and development, the capacity for self-directed professional action and development, and freedom for self-directed professional action and development, but also with other concepts such as good language teaching, teacher identity, and the relationship between teacher autonomy and language learner autonomy.

Their responses in the semi-structured interviews reflected a deeper understanding of the concept and its importance for teachers to improve their practice, solve problems in their classrooms, and adapt their teaching to their students' needs. They also perceived professional development as a life-long learning activity that was necessary to be good English teachers and develop their identity as language educators.

Self-directed professional action

For Jaime, teacher autonomy was related to teachers' proactivity to change things in their classroom when they are not working. He explained that it is when teachers make decisions to change the way in which they teach:

"…if you see that your group is having a problem, they are not learning or they don't have any motivation, don't just wait (until) they drop out of the course or they fail an exam, do something about it, for me that's being an autonomous teacher, to look for the correct ways to fix things that are not working in…, (to) do all the activities that you can do to improve the way that you teach" (Jaime/SSI/CO2).

In Jaime's opinion, there are many teachers who do not care about looking for new ways to respond to their students' needs and interests, they just continue using the same strategies and resources they have used before due to a lack of autonomy in their professional careers.

For Sandra, being an autonomous teacher involves *"… being aware of your teaching practice, (taking) totally control of your teaching practice to reflect on it, and every time there are situations that are not working, look for the ways to improve them"*.

Milton (SSI/CO2) and Zuly (SSI/CO2) also associated teacher autonomy with taking actions. Milton explained that when teachers are in their classrooms alone, they are responsible for the teaching-learning process, so it is in their hands to make changes when something is not working

Capacity for self-directed professional action

Adrian stated that teacher autonomy is related to the teachers' ability to progress in their teaching and become better professionals by being aware of their practice, implementing different activities, strategies, and techniques to overcome the problems they encounter in their practice:

"…teacher autonomy is like the ability to look for strategies, and activities, and techniques to implement in your class, but at the end of the day, to progress, I mean it's the ability that you have to progress and to make yourself a better teacher…, it's like having the desire of progress, looking for the way to progress…" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

He considered this ability to be especially relevant because he has observed there are many teachers who do not innovate in their teaching practice and just do the least they can to do their work. He emphasized the need for teachers to be aware that not everything is perfect in their teaching practice and that their performance as teachers should be improved to become better.

Likewise, Guadalupe understood teacher autonomy as a skill, *"…something essential that a future teacher has to learn"*. She mentioned that this skill is relevant because once you get a job and work as a teacher, sometimes there is no one else to ask for advice or even if there are some other teachers, you may not feel the confidence to ask them questions. For her, this skill is something that teachers need to develop as part of their education while they are doing their practicum.

It is interesting how Guadalupe associated teacher autonomy with a skill to be independent from others. Her responses in the semi-structured interview, do not seem to reflect her understanding of autonomy as a capacity that can be exercised in collaboration with other teachers.

Freedom for self-directed professional action

Dalia pointed out that for her, teacher autonomy is "*like the free will of a teacher, the teacher not being controlled by a methodology, like being creative, (having) innovation in their classes".* She explained that teacher autonomy is relevant for teachers to adapt to different learning scenarios considering the characteristics of their students so that they could teach them in an effective way. She mentioned:

"I think every teacher has different type of students, and not only as a group but every student… is like a world, like they are not the same, even if they are in one group, so I think autonomy is very important because we need to look for our own strategies, our own methods, so that we (can teach) effectively…" (Dalia/SSI/CO2).

Elizabeth shared a similar view and associated teacher autonomy with having *"the chance to choose what you consider is more helpful for your students and for yourself…, knowing you have that chance…".* She interpreted teacher autonomy as the freedom to teach the language based on what she considered more appropriate for her students.

Zuly (SSI/CO2) also identified teacher autonomy as something related to freedom when she mentioned that sometimes teachers can feel trapped in some schools when they must follow certain guidelines, procedures, or methodologies they do not agree with. She claimed that in Mexico, it is a challenge for teachers to be autonomous because of the constraints imposed on them in some institutions.

Self-directed professional development

For Flor, teacher autonomy is *"the motivation of learning something different"* (Flor/SSI/CO2). She emphasized the importance of this motivation when teachers realise their students are not learning or they are having problems learning the language. It is what pushes teachers to reflect on the problem, reflect on their teaching, do research, look for materials and resources, and find ways to change their practice according to what their students need.

Then, she elaborated on her previous idea and stated *"…if you were not a teacher that makes decisions on (her/his) own, I think you would be like a copy paste of what you have been taught, so… if those things are not necessarily correct or useful, you are going to be repeating that all the time, so if you start making your own decisions and finding what works for you, I think you would be more successful as a teacher and more comfortable with what you do".* (Elizabeth/SSI/CO1).

Zully SSI/CO2) highlighted that teacher autonomy involves going beyond the knowledge and skills she was taught in the B.A. programme, it requires to do research and look for ways to be a better teacher and improve practice.

These comments are relevant because they reflect participants' understanding of the need for teachers to build their own theory of practice according to the particularities of their students and teaching contexts and the importance of finding out the pedagogy that best works for them as teachers through different professional development activities.

Teacher autonomy and good language teaching

Vicente's case is worth mentioning as he defined teacher autonomy as a pre-condition to be a good teacher, "*… something (necessary) to be a good teacher, because a good teacher always wants to improve and to become better with the class that he or she is (teaching), this requires you to do research, to see your strengths, your lacks and obviously, to improve them, to make you better…, so I would say that it's also like a requirement because a teacher that investigates, that wants to improve, that looks (for) many ways to become better, obviously he is going to give like a better class"* (Vicente/SSI/CO1).

Vicente explained that teacher autonomy and good teaching were related because a good teacher is always looking for ways to improve and become better. This implies having to identify his strengths and weaknesses in teaching, doing research, and looking for ways to enhance his teaching skills for the students.

Cesar's understanding of teacher autonomy even extended beyond education. He explained that teacher autonomy was *"the most crucial part of being a good person and teacher for the rest of your life because then, you don't require or you don't depend on somebody to tell you what to do (as) one of main lessons that life teaches you when you finish studying is that you are on your own most of the times…"* (Cesar/SSI/CO1).

For him, teacher autonomy meant developing independence of action from others. This independence, in his words, is relevant because when teachers face different situations in their work contexts, they are alone, so it is important to learn how to deal with those situations. Therefore, for him, teacher autonomy is *"…one of the most mandatory things that you can have as a teacher to improve all the time".*

Teacher autonomy and teacher identity

Daniel, on the other hand, made a connection between teacher autonomy and professional identity as he stated that *"being an autonomous teacher is to be like a true teacher…, in the sense*

that you will have your own identity…, it's something that everyone should have and should be promoted because it makes you more efficient, more adaptable… to fix problems faster that they can appear, and that is completely useful in the professional context" (Daniel/SSI/CO1). In his view, having this professional identity makes you a more efficient and adaptable teacher able to fix problems in the work context, so teacher autonomy contributes to the development if this desirable teacher identity in English teachers.

Teacher autonomy and language learner autonomy

Sandra's case is interesting because she established a relationship between teacher and learner autonomy when she responded *"…if you are not autonomous, first of all, what are you going to teach your students? We should teach them to be autonomous too"* (Sandra/SSI/CO2). This finding is related to previous research in the field which identifies teacher autonomy as a prerequisite for learner autonomy (Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Aoki, 2002).

This section has provided findings related to student-teachers' understanding of teacher autonomy at the end of the module. While participants still referred to teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action and development, a capacity for self-directed professional action and development, and freedom self-directed professional action and development, it is worth mentioning that they also associated the concept with good language teaching, teacher identity, and the relationship between teacher autonomy and language learner autonomy.

4.6 Factors that impacted the development of teacher autonomy

This section reports on findings related to the factors that either facilitated or hindered the development of teacher autonomy in participants during the implementation of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module. These factors were categorised as internal factors, external factors, and other factors related to the autonomy support provided by their individual supervisors, mentors, and peers.

4.6.1 Internal factors

One of the internal factors that impacted the development of student-teachers' autonomy was the participants' willingness to exercise their responsibility for their professional action and development. This aspect was observed in the participants' reactions and commitment to the activities included in the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module. As explained in section 3.3, the fact that the pre-service teachers did not get a grade in the module affected their motivation in the course. The 14 participants (7 from each cohort) that were selected for the

interviews at the end the module were the student-teachers who demonstrated more willingness and responsibility for their development of autonomy as teachers and as learners.

For instance, Adrian mentioned:

"I became more autonomous because it was the part of the implementation, like doing things, trying to solve things…, I actually progressed because… in my case…, I always tried to improve, I wanted to be a better teacher because…at the very beginning, I didn't like a lot of things… and tried to always progress, so that's what makes me more autonomous…, this desire of being better every day" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

It was his internal drive to become a better ELT professional what pushed him to develop and exercise his autonomy on his teaching practice and professional development. This was the case of the other 13 participants who shared the same willingness to make teaching and learning decisions that could lead to better learning experiences for their students.

Another internal factor that affected participants' development of teacher autonomy was their commitment to their own teaching and learning. The 14 participants interviewed wanted to get the most of their experience in the Teaching Practice module as this was the first time they taught students for a longer period of time, so they felt responsible for their students' learning.

Having the support of their individual supervisors, mentors, and peers was perceived as an advantage for them to get advice and feedback from someone external during the process. They mentioned that normally that does not happen in a work context as teachers go to their classrooms and do not have many opportunities to collaborate with colleagues.

By analysing these 14 cases in detail, it is hoped to find strategies that could help language teacher educators to promote the development of teacher autonomy in other pre-service teachers with less willingness, responsibility, and commitment for their teaching and learning.

4.6.2 External factors

Teaching context

One of the most important factors that affected the student-teachers' development of teacher autonomy in either a positive or negative way was the context where participants did their practicum. Depending on the nature of the school/institution, participants were given more or less freedom to make independent decisions on their teaching practice; therefore, this limited their capacity to self-direct their professional action and development.

The participants that did their professional practice in Self-Access Centres were not fully able to plan their sessions with objectives, activities, and materials of their choice. Even when they tried to exercise their autonomy when conducting the writing and speaking sessions they were in charge of, the unpredictable diversity of students who attended the sessions made it difficult for them to build and inform their own theory of practice. The guidelines established by the centres also restricted participants' autonomy having to conform to the teaching/counselling activities the centres suggested.

The student-teachers that gave counselling sessions to language learners on demand in some schools and institutions were not totally able to exercise their autonomy to teach English either. Although they were advised by the course facilitator to plan their sessions by selecting the teaching methodology, objectives, activities, and materials that could be more appropriate to the students' needs, the nature of the contexts made it difficult for them to follow up the impact of their teaching on students' learning. Language learners only attended the sessions when they chose to, and the student-teachers could not know in advance what aspects of the language students wanted to learn or practice in their sessions.

Considering the constraints of these two scenarios, the Teaching Practice course facilitator, with the support of the B.A. programme, advised pre-service teachers to look for groups of students they could teach English and even helped them find some groups of students at the university. However, the number of lessons these participants could teach was limited and the informal nature of their groups also restricted their development of autonomy compared to other student-teachers who could teach a larger group of students on a regular basis throughout the module.

The pre-service teachers who could exercise more autonomy in their professional practice and development were the ones that selected contexts where they could teach lessons having the total responsibility for teaching or assisting more experienced teachers. The conditions of those contexts allowed student-teachers to exercise their autonomy regarding the curriculum, teaching methodologies, assessment procedures, and classroom environment.

Another aspect that is related to the teaching context is the conditions and resources available in the schools and institutions where participants were teaching. Not having a board, projector, or an ideal physical space for teaching was reported by one of the student-teachers, Silvia (Silvia/JE4/CO1) as a limiting factor in her development of autonomy as she could not implement some strategies and activities she considered necessary for her students.

Participants' role as student-practitioners in their teaching contexts

Students' negative attitudes and behaviours for learning English and not having the authority to make decisions to solve those issues were also identified as factors that hindered Betzabel's (Betzabel/JE4/CO1) development of autonomy. She explained that the teacher responsible for that class did not contribute to the solution of her students' discipline problems and as Betzabel was only a student-practitioner she could not implement the strategies she deemed necessary to solve the problems. This factor not only limited her development and exercise of teacher autonomy but also impacted her teaching practice in a negative way.

Limited time to develop teacher autonomy in the module

Finally, another factor that impacted participants' development of teacher autonomy during the module was the lack of time participants had to implement all the activities they had included in their individual professional development plans. Some of the activities involved more opportunities to talk to their individual supervisors or invite their peers to observe their lessons, but the incompatibility of their study or work schedules made even more difficult for participants to look for this collegial support.

The module was taught during four months during which student-teachers' attended the module sessions and completed a 496-hour practicum in their teaching contexts, which in fact left them limited time to look for support outside the time they spent at the university.

Sandra (CO2) reported this constraint in her journal entry 4 *"I could not talk to teachers from my institute because of my and their lack of time; however, I looked for teachers from the institution where I did my professional practice".* Similarly, Milton expressed *"sadly, because of the lack of time, I could not meet my mentor…as many times as I would have liked, However, I believe her feedback and comments gave me the idea I needed to fill in my plan"* (JE4/CO2).

Vicente also shared that even though he tried to follow his plan, he could not talk to his individual supervisor as much as he wanted. He wrote *"…as my professional practice was in the morning and my individual supervisor was available in the morning, I did not have time to go with her…our schedules did not match and honestly, I did not look for the time to meet her"* (Vicente/JE4/CO1).

Mayte identified the same constraint in the implementation of her individual professional development plan with the support of her peers, she mentioned *"…there were other aspects that I really wanted to try, but there was no opportunity to do (it), such as observing a peer or having the observation of one of my classmates"* (JE4/CO2). Dalia experienced the same problem due to lack of time, she wrote *"I could not invite any of my classmates to observe my*

class (because) they did not have the time, so I could not get a second opinion about how I teach" (Mayte/JE4/CO2).

They explained that it could have been helpful to be observed by peers as they would not feel the same pressure they regularly experience when they are observed by a teacher of superior.

4.6.3 Autonomy support provided by individual supervisor, mentors, and peers

Another factor that impacted student-teachers' development of teacher autonomy, according to their perceptions, was the support of their individual supervisors, mentors, and peers during the Teaching Practice module. With respect to individual supervisors, most participants agreed that the academic discussions with them and their feedback allowed them to identify aspects of their teaching practice they were not aware of. Individual supervisors' feedback was also helpful to inform their decision-making about the activities or strategies they could implement to improve on the areas of their teaching practice they decided to focus on.

For instance, Raquel mentioned that her individual supervisor advised her to focus on one area of her teaching and even provided her with some tips to foster the use of English in her students:

"…after recording a class, I talked to my supervisor and she suggested me to focus on the use of L1 inside the classroom. She gave me some tips that I implemented. Those tips, along with the discussions I had with my colleagues, helped me realize that it is not necessary to repeat everything in Spanish and that you must not underestimate your students' potential" (Raquel/JE4/CO1).

She also reported at the end of the module that by talking to her individual supervisor, she could realise that she needed to spend more time scaffolding and explaining the topics to the students, considering that they had a different background from hers and not necessarily were familiar with some language terms.

Esmeralda (JE4/CO1) shared that after putting into practice her individual supervisor's suggestions, she could use different activities to make reading interesting and entertaining for her students. She involved students in the activities and created a friendly environment to make students feel free to ask her any question when they were in doubt. In line with her, Karen commented *"…(by) taking into account my individual supervisor's feedback and recommendations I started to work differently"* (Esmeralda/JE4/CO1).

Dalia also acknowledged her individual supervisor's role in helping her notice mistakes she made when teaching, especially one related to teacher's talking time. She appreciated the support of her supervisor and shared *"I appreciate the support of my supervisor because she did not scold me but instead, guided me to analyse and reflect (on) my own teaching and provided me with a lot of good advice I will use in the future"* (Dalia/JE4/CO2).

Based on participants' perceptions, they support provided by individual supervisors was key not only to guide them in their learning process as teachers, but also to make them aware of aspects of their teaching they were not even aware of.

Only one student-teacher, Eduardo, mentioned not liking the feedback his supervisor gave him as she could not watch his video recording and did not know what he needed to improve his practice. He wrote *"something I did not like was the feedback my supervisor provided me, mainly for one reason, she was unable to watch my video, so she did not know what I needed to improve and she did not work with me the whole course" (*Eduardo/JE4/CO1).

As some pre-service teachers reported having problems to meet their individual supervisors because of lack of time, some participants looked for additional support and benefitted from the discussion and feedback from their mentors (teachers they were assisting or experienced colleagues in their teaching contexts). The feedback and support provided by mentors helped student-teachers inform their decision-making in their teaching practice and professional development.

For instance, Belen shared *"I remember that at the beginning of my practice, I felt very lost and confused on how I should be teaching and what strategies I should use, but I relied a lot on the teacher in charge of my group, since he was the one who already knew them, he was really able to give me some advice and some strategies that I must say were really valuable for me and that helped me a lot"* (Belen/JE4/CO1).

Eduardo described how his mentor and peers' advice helped him adapt the content of the textbook he used for his lessons. He mentioned *"regarding the use of the textbook in class…, I constantly asked classmates, co-workers and teachers to provide me with tips on how to adapt the content of the book (for) my classes"* (Eduardo/JE4/CO1).

Likewise, Vicente expressed he had to look for support in the place where he was teaching because he could not meet his supervisor, he mentioned *"my source was the teachers from my professional practice and especially my boss, they helped me a lot in my improvement and in the classes I gave"* (Vicente/EJ4/CO1).

Most student-teachers that had mentors in their teaching contexts could develop teacher autonomy by engaging in academic discussions with these experienced teachers who provided them with continuous feedback and support in their practice. However, there were also cases where pre-service teachers were given freedom to exercise their teacher autonomy but were not provided with any kind of support in the process by their mentors.

(Guadalupe/SSI/CO2) pointed out that having a mentor that gives them total freedom for them to make independent decisions in their teaching does not necessarily support them in their development of teacher autonomy. In her view, mentors must be open to discuss ideas and provide feedback so that student-teachers can make better independent decisions when teaching.

On the contrary, not having a mentor, in some other cases had a positive impact on the development of teacher autonomy because that situation pushed participants to be proactive and look for support either from more experienced teachers or their peers to develop their capacity to make decisions in their teaching practice and professional development.

Finally, pre-service teachers expressed how they were supported in their development of teacher autonomy by their peers. Mainly, participants perceived that the sharing of ideas, experiences, and feedback provided by their classmates allowed them to enrich their thinking and understanding and led them to make better decisions in their professional action and development as can also be seen in section 4.3.3.

Alejandra shared how she benefitted from the tips given by her peers who she considered good teachers and critical thinkers, she mentioned *"I asked the teacher that was observing for help and she gave me some comments and tips for each class, (I came) with specific doubts (with) my colleagues who I believe are good teachers and critical thinkers… that helped me create some activities for my students and a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom"* (Alejandra/JE4/CO1).

Nadia also commented having asked her classmates for advice and ideas to improve specific aspects of her teaching practice. She wrote in her journal entry 4 *"I presented a class in front of my teachers and my classmates and, I received feedback from them, I found it really useful what they perceived from my class… According to the plan I developed, I implemented strategies taken from them. I asked some of my classmates to help me and give me ideas of how to improve this aspect"* (Nadia/JE4/CO1).

Adrian described how by listening to his peers' teaching experiences, he could come up with solutions to the possible problems he could face when teaching. He mentioned *"I also had*

more examples of possible problems and possible solutions that I could face in my teaching practices by listening to my classmates' experiences" (Adrian/JE4/CO1).

He explained how he could make more informed decisions appropriate for his teaching context after engaging in academic discussions with his peers in section 4.3.3. Finally, Silvia highlighted the role of her peer to help her become more aware of her teaching and improve her practice *"Nowadays I feel more confident and I think that the support of my partner Maricruz helped me realise and improve aspects of my teaching"* (Silvia/JE4/CO1).

4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented findings related to the teacher-researcher's account of her practice during the implementation of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module. Data about the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module and its individual components on the development of teacher autonomy were also reported. Then, the chapter described changes in teacher autonomy during the module and how the participants' understanding of teacher autonomy evolved during the course compared to participants' initial knowledge and experience of autonomy at the beginning of the module. Finally, internal and external factors that facilitated or hindered the development of autonomy were mentioned.

The following chapter discusses findings in relation to existing literature and research in the field. The chapter also states the main contribution of the study, advantages and disadvantages of using reflective practice, action research, and community of practice as well as the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (Jiménez Raya et al, 2017) for the development of teacher autonomy in language teacher education. It discusses the practical implications for the teacher/researcher's context, describes the limitations of the research, and suggests how the pedagogy for autonomy used in the Teaching Practice Module can be improved to promote teacher autonomy more effectively in the future. Finally, some recommendations for further research in the field are provided.

Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the research questions set in the study and discusses findings in relation to existing literature and previous research in the field. Section 5.1 introduces the chapter and describes the organisation and content of the following sections. Section 5.2 discusses the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy and its individual components on the development of teacher autonomy, according to student-teachers' perceptions. Section 5.3 analyses the development of teacher autonomy in the participants during the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module. Section 5.4 presents the main contribution of the study to the development of teacher autonomy in initial teacher education based on previous research. Then, a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using reflective practice, action research, and community of practice and promoting the principles of pedagogy for autonomy in language teacher education is included in section 5.5. Section 5.6 discusses practical implications and recommendations to promote teacher autonomy in language teacher education. Section 5.7 states the limitations of the research and suggests recommendations for further research in the field. Finally, section 5.8 provides a summary of the chapter.

5.2 Impact of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module on the development of teacher autonomy

This section attempts to answer RQ1 and its related sub questions:

RQ1: How can teacher autonomy be developed appropriately in pre-service language teacher education?

RQ 1.1: What are the respective contributions of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice?

RQ 1.2: What is the contribution of adopting the principles of pedagogy for autonomy?

The following paragraphs discuss in detail how each component contributed to the development of teacher autonomy in the participants of the study, according to their perceptions.

5.2.1 Reflective practice and teacher autonomy

Regarding the implementation of student- teachers' reflective journals during the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, participants perceived reflective practice as an activity that helped them become aware of their teaching and gain a deeper understanding of the things they were doing in their teaching practice. They considered reflection as a starting point for them to identify aspects to be improved in their professional action and development through autonomy. This awareness made participants go beyond the activities done in class and look for ways to become better at their teaching and learning. Wang & Zhang's (2014) study reported similar findings in relation to the use of reflection to enhance participants' understanding of their context and to make them more active participants in educational changes.

Reflective practice also allowed student-teachers to make more independent and critical decisions about how to teach and what to teach, selecting content for their lessons according to what they consider appropriate for the students. These findings are consistent with Genc's (2010) research on the development of teacher autonomy through reflective journals in Turkey, where she found that journals guided teachers to gain autonomy to make more conscious and informed decisions, become more sensitive, and respond to their student's needs. Similarly, Wang & Zhang (2014) through their initiative for autonomy found that participants in their study became more teacher-centred and focused on their learners' interest and needs.

Other participants mentioned that by reflecting on their practice, they could keep track of their progress and make sure they did not make the same mistakes they had identified in their teaching. There were two student-teachers who even decided to keep their own journals, apart from the journal entries they were asked to write during the module. They explained that writing about what happened in their classrooms allowed them to document their students' reactions to their teaching and plan accordingly in the coming lessons.

The rest of the pre-service teachers expressed that even though they did not write additional journal entries from the ones they were asked to submit in the course, they reflected informally after each lesson on how the lesson went and how they could improve their practice next session. This reflection led them to make more informed decisions in their teaching practice.

However, as it was noted in the teacher-researcher's journal, it seemed that some participants (the ones that were not selected for the semi-structured interviews due to their lack or responsibility or commitment to their practice) wrote their reflections because it was one of the activities included in the module but there was not much evidence of deep thinking on how by analysing their teaching contexts, self-monitoring their practice, and planning actions to improve

they could become critical and autonomous teachers, able to self-direct their teaching and learning.

5.2.2 Action research and teacher autonomy

Pre-service teachers acknowledged the relevance of action research to help them identify their weaknesses and strengths in teaching and made them aware of their learning needs. This activity allowed them not only to discover the areas where they could become better, but also to reflect on the kind of teachers they are and would like to become in the future. Kohonen (2003)'s previous study also reported that by being involved in action-research projects, teachers perceive the need for a change in their views of teaching and the roles the play in their students' learning, leading to an enhancement of their professional identity.

Identifying the areas where they could improve their practice enabled them to develop an individual professional development plan they could follow autonomously and with the support of their individual supervisors, mentors, and peers. Wang & Zhang (2014) also found that by doing action research, student teachers could become more autonomous and increase their ability to research their own classroom problems.

Even though student-teachers experienced problems to fully implement their individual professional development plans due to lack of commitment or time, they were able to engage in activities where they could exercise their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning. Some of those activities included searching for information, watching videos of other teachers giving lessons, finding strategies and materials to implement in their teaching, and talking to peers and other teachers to get feedback and ideas to enrich their practice. These activities informed their decision-making and helped them be proactive in their learning process so that they could improve their teaching practice. Mello et al. (2008) found that participants' levels of commitment in the accomplishment of their action research have an impact on their development of autonomy.

The fact that by the time pre-service teachers took the Teaching Practice module, they had taken two research modules and participated in a research project themselves, gave them a very good idea of what was required for them to enhance their teaching. However, not all student-teachers were able to overcome the internal and external factors that somehow limited their autonomy in their professional development (see section 4.6).

5.2.3 Communities of practice and teacher autonomy

Participants reported that the community of practice they had formed with their peers, individual supervisors, and mentors had contributed to their development of teacher autonomy in different ways. They could talk about the problems they faced in their teaching and could get advice and ideas from their peers, mentors, and supervisors, which informed their independent decision-making.

They valued the opportunities to collaborate and get feedback from peers who they considered were good at teaching or with more experience. This collaboration made them become aware of aspects of their teaching they had not even noticed or did not completely understand.

Participating in a community of practice also made participants feel identified with other colleagues who were facing similar problems. This strengthened their confidence to accept that many times teachers do not know how to solve some situations and they do not have to feel ashamed of sharing challenges and problems with colleagues to find possible solutions with the support of others. This was also reported by Kohonen (2003), who found that through collaboration teachers provided a mirror for each teacher to reflect on their own teaching and implement changes accordingly.

Even though the community of practice was intended to be initiated in the classroom, most student-teachers formed smaller communities of practice with their closest peers and friends outside class. They benefitted from the exchange of ideas, experiences, and feedback provided by their peers, people they trust, to make more informed independent decisions based on their contexts and students' needs. This collaboration even motivated some participants to search for more information to guide their decisions in their practice, which not only increased their autonomy, but also their knowledge as teachers.

While some participants preferred to collaborate and get feedback from peers, there were other student-teachers who expressed feeling better about getting feedback from someone with more teaching experience (a mentor or individual supervisor). In the first case, participants shared that in their perception, peers knew them better and as they were teaching in similar contexts, it was better to get feedback from them.

These small communities of practice formed by student-teachers and their closest peers and friends provided the ideal scenario for them to discuss ideas, share experiences, analyse challenges, and feel identified with one another. Their collegial support was a way for them to become aware of their teaching, share materials and resources, cooperate with others to find solutions to common problems, and get support to be improve their practice through their own

actions and their mutual collaboration. As Yildirim (2007) states, communities of practice constitute a powerful environment where participants can find opportunities to share, cooperate, understand, and support each other.

5.2.4 Extent to which components of PA Teaching Practice module complemented each other

When asked about the components of the pedagogy for autonomy that helped student-teachers develop their teacher autonomy best, some participants responded that the three components had been useful for them to self-direct their teaching and learning. For instance, Flor mentioned:

"I think that it was the combination of the three because I think that since we are not having like classes every single day…, we need to look for the information, and then, when you find something, you start thinking and reflecting about it, and then, you exchange information with your classmates, you disagree or you agree, and then, you watch your video, you analyse yourself or maybe if you show the video to your classmates and they give you feedback, so it's a combination of the three what makes you feel motivated about improving, about becoming aware, about changing ways of thinking" (Flor/SSI/CO2).

Vicente shared the same view, he pointed out that by engaging in the three activities, he could become more autonomous by reflecting on his practice, getting feedback from others, and looking for ways to improve:

"…I would say that the combination of the three because the reflections also include action research with the video, so I think that those two combinations were essential to us to become more autonomous, because as I said previously, we reflect on ourselves and also we have the perspective of (others) so that we can improve more and obviously that requires (you) to be autonomous, to look for some ways to improve" (Vicente/SSI/CO1).

Sandra agreed with her peers as she mentioned that reflective practice, action research, and the community of practice complemented each other to support them in their development of teacher autonomy. In her perception, one activity led to the other in a continuous way:

"It was the combination of the three, I think you can start or we always start with reflection, what you (are) doing (well), what you (can) improve and do action research, I think action research also starts with (reflection), something you want to change and then… implement changes and analyse (if they work) or not…" (Sandra/SSI/CO2).

In line with these pre-service teachers, Zully responded that the three components had been helpful and supported her to become more autonomous:

"…the combination of the three was very helpful, not only one because the reflections were helpful but thanks to the recording, I could see more what my weaknesses and strengths (were), and (by) talking (to) you (mentors and supervisors), well, it was perfect because you were the ones who guided me through these process of autonomy…" (Zuly/SSI/CO2).

Milton also expressed having benefited from the three components in his development of teacher autonomy as the components complemented each other. However, he mentioned that the activity he liked the most was reflective practice because he had done it before in previous modules and he considered it helpful to identify problems and then, take actions in his practice:

"I think the three, but I think the one that I enjoyed the most was reflective (practice) because we had done it (before) in seventh semester… we already had the experience…, I like it, this is the way I can read myself and I can identify my own problems and also the actions (to do)…" (Milton/SSI/CO2).

On the other hand, there were some participants who expressed having mainly benefited more from the community of practice established with peers, mentors, and supervisors to develop and exercise their teacher autonomy. Jaime mentioned that by collaborating with others and seeking guidance, he could improve his teaching:

*"Collaboration, definitely… because I think it's better to listen to a person's guide…, if that person needs my help, it's better to talk to each other and… make a collaboration and see what you can do to improve your classes, so definitely the part of collaboration and also the feedback and discussions, and suggestions, and everything" (*Jaime/SSI/CO2).

Dalia also perceived being part of a community of practice as an activity that could help her develop her autonomy. Especially, she felt more confident to collaborate with peers in a more relaxed and trustworthy environment. She pointed out that the relationship with mentors is different because they give them more technical feedback and they may even call them out when they do something wrong: *"I think the one that helped me the most was the one with my friends, mostly because I think there (was) more trust, we could talk more freely than with our mentors…" (*Dalia/SSI/CO2).

Similarly, Guadalupe valued the support and feedback received from her peers when they revised her lesson plans and they shared their teaching experiences. She said *"I think three of them are*

very important but on the top, when my partners revised my lesson (plans) or when we (talked) about what happened in our classes, it was the most helpful (activity)" (Guadalupe/SSI/CO2).

For Adrian, the community of practice with his peers was the component he enjoyed the most as he could share ideas, find solutions to problems, improve his practice, and make progress along with his friends:

"… the feedback with classmates…, it goes along with the action research because it's when you (identify) like the problem and you want to look for a solution but I think that sharing with partners, like with all the trainees helps you a lot because you get a lot of ideas, and you recognize a lot of aspects that you don't see in yourself,, so that was like my favourite part… because at the end of the day, I did it with my friends, so I liked it a lot because we shared and we progressed together" (Adrian/SSI/CO1).

Finally, Elizabeth was the only one who mentioned that action research was the component of the pedagogy for autonomy she considered helped her the most as it involved getting feedback from others and reflecting on her teaching as well:

"I think for me, it was the action research the one that helped the most. I think it was because it was like made up of two things, not only me teaching but also receiving the feedback, and also me seeing the way that I was teaching, so it was like a combination of the other ones, that's why I felt it was more helpful" (Elizabeth/SSI/CO1).

In her reflective journal, the teacher-researcher noted that during the implementation of the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, the three components did complement each other as some of the activities included in the course involved reflecting, collaborating with others, and planning actions to change things at the same time. In some of the activities, it was even difficult to differentiate when one individual component was being promoted or it was two or three of them together. The three components integrated a comprehensive pedagogy for autonomy that contributed to the development of participants' teacher autonomy in different degrees.

5.2.5 Contribution of the principles of pedagogy for autonomy to the development of teacher autonomy

The implementation of the principles of pedagogy for autonomy suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) in language teacher education intended to help student-teachers experience autonomy not only as teachers, but also as learners of teaching. As explained in section 3.4, the teacher-researcher used the principles to guide participants in the process of identifying their learning

needs (areas to improve in teaching practice), setting learning objectives (deciding what to focus on), selecting activities and resources that could help them accomplish those goals (activities in individual professional development plans) as well as monitoring and assessing their learning process (through continuous reflection in their teaching and learning).

As activities were planned and carefully designed for the module, the teacher-researcher used the principles of pedagogy for autonomy as a checklist to make sure she was providing opportunities for participants to learn and continuously reflect on their learning. Even though some of the topics and activities in the module were already decided and related to the components used (reflective practice, action research, and community of practice), the teacher-researcher encouraged participants to make their own decisions about the aspects of their teaching they wanted to improve and the way in which they could do so in their individual professional development plans (principle of responsibility, choice, and flexible control).

The principle of integration and explicitness was promoted by informing participants at the beginning of the module that teacher autonomy was one of the objectives to be achieved throughout the semestre. It was also explained to them that all the components and activities integrated a comprehensive pedagogy for autonomy designed with that objective in mind. On the other hand, the principle of engagement and intrinsic motivation was raised when the course facilitator made participants experience a sense of agency and self-determination to improve their teaching through autonomy.

By encouraging student-teachers to take actions in their learning process according to their needs, the teacher-researcher also adopted an action-orientedness approach where participants could choose different paths in their learning process with the support provided by individual supervisors, peers, and the course facilitator (principles of action-orientedness and learner differentiation).

Through the reflective practice component, pre-service teachers were guided to continuously reflect on their learning and at the same time assess their progress to self-direct their future learning activities as needed (principle of reflective inquiry). By allowing student-teachers to negotiate the topics of unit 4 of the syllabus, the course facilitator also intended to engage in a conversational interaction with participants where everybody's voices could be heard on a democratic and just basis (principle of conversational interaction).

The principle of autonomy support was promoted by the course facilitator and the individual supervisors who continually supported student-teachers in their decision-making process by suggesting areas of their practice to focus on, strategies and activities to improve on those areas,

and additional materials that could contribute to participants' learning. Additionally, individual supervisors also engaged in a pedagogical dialogue with pre-service teachers to discuss feedback and foster the principle of formative assessment, assessment for learning and assessment for autonomy through the analysis of participants' teaching performance based on an observation rubric and the discussion of their individual professional development plans.

As presented in the previous section, the components of the pedagogy for autonomy all contributed to the development of teacher autonomy in participants to different extents (see section 5.2). The principles of pedagogy for autonomy related quite well to the nature of reflective practice, action research, and community of practice and all together provided plenty of opportunities for student-teacher to develop teacher autonomy. However, there were external and internal factors that limited the student-teachers' capacity for self-directed professional action and development.

While most external factors were related to participants' teaching contexts, there is one factor that is related to the principles of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the module. As mentioned in section 4.2.2, it was observed that student-teachers showed different degrees of commitment and responsibility for their learning and teaching. After discussing the issue in class, the teacher-researcher found out that participants perceived having too much freedom as a negative aspect in their development of autonomy. They mentioned that they needed more guided control and a closer follow-up to their learning during the module. Therefore, this is an aspect to be improved in future courses.

Another principle that can be more effectively emphasised is the one of learning to learn and self-regulation. As suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017), this principle can be promoted by creating situations that allow participants to exercise responsibility, agency, and control over their learning and providing opportunities for them to self-regulate their thoughts, feelings, and actions to attain their goals. Doing this may contribute to a stronger sense of commitment and responsibility for their learning as teachers.

5.3 Development of teacher autonomy during the module

This section attempts to answer RQ2 and its related sub question:

RQ2: What are the outcomes of the intervention?

> RQ 2.1: To what extent do student-teachers develop the capacity to a) self-direct their teaching and b) self-direct their learning?

From the data collected at different points during the course, it is possible to observe how student-teachers perceived changes in their capacity to self-direct their teaching and learning during the module. These changes were related to their capacity to make decisions in their professional action and professional development. This capacity (as stated in section 2.2.1) includes the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence to make informed decisions about what and how to teach (self-directed professional action) and what and how learn to improve one's teaching practice (self-directed professional development).

The following paragraphs report and discuss finding of participants' development of teacher autonomy throughout the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, in relation to these two dimensions of teacher autonomy (Smith, 2003).

5.3.1 Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action

According to student-teachers' perceptions, they increased their skills, attitudes, and confidence to make independent decisions about curriculum implementation, teaching methodology, assessment procedures, and classroom environment based on their teaching contexts and their students' needs. They also observed that their confidence and skills to solve problems in their classroom were fostered during the Teaching Practice module.

The list below illustrates the traits of teacher autonomy reported by student-teachers as changes in their skills and confidence to self-direct their professional action. This list is compared to other attributes of teacher autonomy identified by previous research in other contexts:

- Becoming aware of their teaching practice which led them to making more critical decisions to teach English to their students (Koestner & Losier, 1996; Vieira et al., 2008; Brown et al., 2007; Smith, 2006; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Ushioda et al., 2011; Genc, 2010).
- Reflecting continually on their teaching and on what their students needed as the basis for their decision-making (Little, 1995, McGrath, 2000, Genc, 2010; Wang & Zhang, 2014).
- Looking for/designing activities, teaching materials, and strategies that were more appropriate to their learners (Vieira, 2003, Usma Wilches, 2007; Genc, 2010; Wang & Zhang, 2014).
- Finding spaces to go around institutional constraints (Lamb, 2000).
- Looking for ways to facilitate students' learning (Vieira, 2003; Usma Wilches, 2007; Genc, 2010; Wang & Zhang, 2014).
- Developing a capacity/confidence to overcome challenges and problems in their practice (Vieira, 2003, Usma Wilches, 2007; Benson, 2010).

The pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module provided opportunities for participants to analyse their practice, reflect on it, and take independent and collaborative actions to enhance their teaching through autonomy. Even though pre-service teachers developed teacher autonomy to different degrees, they all became aware of their teaching and could self-direct their practice in a way that it could be more effective for the students they were teaching in their particular context.

They also increased their confidence to face challenges, solve problems, and make independent informed decisions despite the constraints they had in their teaching contexts. They realised that even though there are external factors that limit teacher autonomy in institutions, there is still space for them to make different choices in benefit of their students' learning. Participants' experience in the module also contributed to reassuring their commitment and responsibility for teaching as they realised, they were the only people who could improve their practice to become good ELT professionals.

5.3.2 Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional development

About their professional development, participants reported having developed their confidence and skills to reflect on their practice, identify points for improvement and investigation, do action research, and self-direct their learning. Their confidence, capacity, and willingness to work with others to develop their autonomy also increased during the module.

The list below illustrates the characteristics of teacher autonomy reported by pre-service teachers as changes in their capacity to self-direct their professional development. This list is compared to attributes of teacher autonomy identified by previous research in other contexts:

- Being able to identify aspects of their practice they did not like or needed to improve (Brown et al., 2007; Smith, 2006; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Ushioda et al., 2011; Genc, 2010).
- Becoming aware of the different professional development activities they could participate in to improve their practice.
- Engaging in professional development activities to improve their teaching practice (Brown et al., 2007; Smith, 2006; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Ushioda et al., 2011).
- Developing willingness and a positive attitude towards continuous professional development (Vieira, 2003).

It is important to mention that all student-teachers developed different degrees of teacher autonomy in their capacity to self-direct their professional development. While some participants

only became aware of the aspects of their practice they could improve and the different activities they could participate in to do so, some pre-service teachers could select learning goals and activities to work on from the options and feedback provided by their peers, individual supervisors, and mentors. Student-teachers shared that the experience of observing their own teaching was the best way to get objective feedback about the aspects of their practice that were in need of improvement.

There were other participants who could even modify or create their own learning goals and activities for their individual professional development plans so that they could self-direct their learning. During the module, some pre-service teachers also showed a positive attitude towards future professional development as they realised how important it is for them to become better language teachers.

Some other student-teachers associated teacher autonomy and teacher identity as they considered the first was conducive to changing their identity based on the kind of teachers they would like to become in the future.

In general, all pre-service teachers were able to develop their capacity to self-direct their professional development in different degrees. By making an analogy with Nunan's (1997) proposal of five levels of learner autonomy (Awareness, Involvement, Intervention, Creation, and Trascendence), it can be concluded that all student-teachers who participated in the study reached the level of Awareness by being conscious of their capacity to self-direct their teaching and learning. They even got involved in activities of their choice to improve their practice through independent and collaborative activities set by themselves.

Participants also were able to take independent actions guided by their individual supervisors, mentors, and peers to make an intervention in their practice and change the things they did not like or identified as weaknesses in their teaching. Although there was not much evidence of the levels of Creation and Transcendence, according to research, autonomy is a capacity that is not innate (Sinclair, 2000) and needs to be developed as a goal in language teacher education (Manzano Vázquez, 2018).

5.3.3 Student-teachers' understanding of teacher autonomy during the module

During the pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module, participants developed a further understanding of the concept of teacher autonomy and not only associated it with self-directed professional action and development, capacity for self-directed action and development, and freedom for self-directed professional action and development, but also with other relevant

concepts such as good language teaching, teacher identity, and the connection between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy.

Student-teachers became aware of the relevance of being autonomous to innovate in their teaching practice, self-direct their teaching when they do not have anybody else to support them and adapt or improve their practice based on their students' needs. Student-teachers also considered being an autonomous teacher as a necessary condition to be successful and a good teacher, to solve problems in their teaching, to make changes when something does not work as expected in their classrooms, to develop their identity as teachers, and to teach their students how to be autonomous.

5.4 Main contribution of the study to the development of teacher autonomy in language teacher education

This study attempted to investigate how teacher autonomy can be developed in initial language teacher education through an educational intervention that provided student-teachers with opportunities to experience autonomy as teachers and as learners of teaching, as suggested in the literature (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017). During the Teaching Practice module, the teacher-researcher investigated the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the course to support participants' development of teacher autonomy, understood as their capacity to self-direct their professional action and self-direct their professional development.

This pedagogy for autonomy included three components reflective practice, action research, and community of practice to support the development of participants' teacher autonomy. Although these components have been used to promote teacher autonomy in previous research in other contexts (Kohonen, 2003; Smith, 2006; Brown et al., 2007; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Ushioda et al., 2011; Vieira, 2007a, 2007b, 2010; Mello et al., 2008; Genc, 2010; Wang & Zhang, 2014, see section 2.5), the approach used in the intervention for the development of teacher autonomy involved a comprehensive pedagogy that also adopted the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017) and applied them in the context of language teacher education.

Although these principles have been studied before to promote autonomy in language education, establishing a relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy as two interconnected phenomena (TA3), this study focused on the development of teacher autonomy as an independent teacher attribute (Smith, 2003; Huang & Benson, 2007; Xu, 2007; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008), considering its relevance for teachers to construct a critically-informed and

context-sensitive theory of practice for English teaching based on their students' needs and the characteristics of their teaching contexts.

Findings suggest that most student-teachers considered the three components of the pedagogy for autonomy complemented each other during the module. Even though reflective practice was used to set the basis for the other two activities, action research and community of practice also involved continuous reflection on their teaching and learning as teachers. As some of the activities included in the module involved more than one component at time, it was difficult for participants to differentiate which component was used in their development of teacher autonomy. In their view, the three components integrated a comprehensive pedagogy for autonomy that contributed to the development of their teacher autonomy in different degrees.

However, some participants identified the community of practice as the most important component to inform their decision-making and benefitted from the exchange of ideas, experiences, and feedback from their peers and more experienced teachers. The collaboration with them made them become aware of aspects of their practice they needed to improve and the activities they could do to accomplish their learning and teaching goals autonomously and with the support of other colleagues. Moreover, they could feel identified with other colleagues who were experiencing similar problems in an environment of mutual trust and support.

Through the pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module, student-teachers were able to get a deeper understanding of teacher autonomy and its relevance for language teachers. Participants also perceived changes in their capacity to self-direct their professional action as they were able to raise their awareness of their teaching practice, make more critical decisions to teach, reflect continually on their practice, and use activities, materials, strategies they consider more appropriate for their students' needs. They could also find ways to manage institutional constraints, facilitate their students' learning, and develop their capacity and confidence to overcome challenges and problems in their practice.

Regarding their capacity to self-direct their professional development, pre-service teachers perceived that during the module, they were able to identify aspects of practice in need of improvement, become aware of the activities they could do to improve them, and engage in professional development activities autonomously and with the support of colleagues. Finally, participants also developed willingness and a positive attitude towards continuous professional development.

5.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the pedagogy for autonomy used to develop teacher autonomy

The implementation of the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017) in language teacher education, as mentioned in previous sections allowed student-teachers to experience autonomy as teachers and as learners of teaching. The principles were totally aligned to the components used in the module (reflective practice, action research, and community of practice) to support student-teachers in their development of teacher autonomy.

The comprehensive pedagogy for autonomy used to facilitate the module provided opportunities for pre-service teachers to identify their needs, set learning objectives, decide the activities and resources they would use to accomplish those objectives as well as monitor and assess their learning progress. All those activities were intentionally planned to guide student-teachers to reflect on their learning as teachers as a necessary condition to self-direct their professional development and professional action through independent and collaborative actions.

The activities included in the module allowed participants to personalise their learning and teaching based on their needs and wants, taking into consideration their teaching contexts and the profile of the learners they were teaching. The continuous dialogue between the course facilitator and the participants in the study allowed a pedagogical interaction and negotiation of the topics in the last unit of module (unit 4).

However, one of the disadvantages of using this pedagogy for autonomy was that it required the collaboration among different actors during the implementation of the intervention. The collaboration and support provided by individual supervisors and mentors was essential to contribute to the development of teacher autonomy by forming a community of practice working towards the same goal. Unfortunately, time constraints and the fact that not all student-teachers had mentors in their contexts made it difficult for some pre-service teachers to take full advantage of the benefits the pedagogy for autonomy offered.

The flexible control and autonomy support provided by the course facilitator was something that also needs to be considered as participants expressed having too much freedom to make decisions in their teaching and learning can be counterproductive since not all student-teachers showed the same degree of commitment for their professional action and professional development.

5.6 Practical implications and recommendations to foster teacher autonomy in language teacher education

According to the findings derived from the study, reflective practice, action research, and community of practice contributed individually to the development of teacher autonomy in student-teachers, but also complemented each other in the process. As suggested by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017), there is not a unified approach to pedagogy for autonomy, language teacher education programmes need to design their own pedagogies based on their contexts and goals; however, findings suggest the inclusion of these components individually and in an integrated way to provide student teachers with experiential activities that make them reflect on their practice, develop teacher autonomy, and grow professionally.

Based on the findings presented in the previous sections, it is also possible to conclude that student-teachers developed different degrees of teacher autonomy through the implementation of the principles of pedagogy for autonomy adopted for the module (Jiménez Raya et al. 2017). They became aware of their strengths and weaknesses as teachers and took actions to improve their practice through different professional development activities on their own and with the support of individual supervisors, mentors, and peers. Student-teachers were able to make informed decisions regarding their practice according to their contexts and students' needs, which contributed to developing their own theory of practice based on what they considered appropriate. They could also manage constraints and exercise their autonomy to make changes in their practice. Their confidence to teach and overcome problems was also fostered as they realised they could find solutions to the problems they encountered in their teaching.

However, factors such as participants' commitment and responsibility for their own teaching impacted their willingness and capacity to develop and exercise their autonomy on their professional action and development. Willingness and responsibility have been identified as two of the characteristics involved in the development of learner autonomy. Sinclair (2000) points out that autonomy involves willingness on the part of the learner to take responsibility for his or her learning. For her, developing positive attitudes towards learning is crucial to the success in the development of autonomy. By analogy, teacher autonomy would require willingness on the part of the teachers to take responsibility for their own teaching in a way that leads to more a transformative education.

For Jiménez Raya and Vieira (2015) teacher autonomy is also about being willing and able to challenge non-democratic traditions and developing a professional sense of agency in teaching that is linked to agency in learning. Gabrys-Barker's (2017) research on the internal factors that

limit teacher autonomy found out that language teachers' perceptions of their own inadequacies, the amount of time and effort necessary to be autonomous, and teachers' unpreparedness to respond to the challenge of being autonomous are internal factors that limit pre-service teachers' development of autonomy.

The development of autonomy by teachers implies opportunities to choose goals for autonomy to be exercised (Jiménez Raya, 2017). It also involves some degree of intellectual, practical, and affective engagement with pedagogical choices and decisions so that they can be made with the responsibility they deserve. Hung et al. (2019) stress the need for teacher education programmes to provide novice teachers with opportunities to utilize their professional expertise and develop professional judgments. Drawing on Webb (2002) and Reed (2000), Huang et al. (ibid) also recommend language teacher education programmes to empower teachers and raise their awareness of the way to exercise their power, autonomy, and professional conduct responsibly and effectively.

In this action research, it was observed that

Other factors that impacted the development of teacher autonomy in participants were related to the contexts where they did their professional practice and the role of the mentors and individual supervisors. Regarding contextual factors, some of the schools and institutions where participants did their practicum did not allow them to exercise their autonomy and, in some cases, participants could not manage the constraints imposed on their practice, having to conform to the teaching policies of the school or institution.

Having constraints of time, large classes, and syllabus or examination demands (Gabrys-Barker, 2017) limits language teachers' power to make the pedagogical decisions they deem appropriate to exercise autonomy in their teaching practice and professional development. In line with this, Aoki (2002) states that teachers' not appropriate working conditions and the lack of spaces for participation in institutional decision making may lead teachers to conform rather than transform in education.

On her study of pre-service teacher's perceptions of teacher autonomy, Gabrys-Barker (2017) also found out that participants identified context as one of the major agents inhibiting autonomy, but at the same time, as the factor that has the strongest power to facilitate teacher autonomy. These pre-service teachers identified the need for school policies and educational systems to allow teachers to participate in the decision-making process and provide an optimal level of support for them to be autonomous.

While the distance between reality and ideals shortens by opening up to possibilities conducive to a more rational, just, and satisfactory education (Jiménez Raya et al., 2007), it is essential that language teachers develop the skill to deal with constraints. Lamb (2000) emphasizes the need for teachers to understand the constraints upon their practice but, rather than feeling disempowered, to empower themselves by finding the spaces and opportunities for manoeuvre.

Similarly, McGrath (2000) points out that it is crucial how teachers react to constraints. While the non-autonomous option would be simply to accept decisions made by others and carry them out, professional autonomy entails developing a professional sense of agency, willingness, and ability to find spaces for manoeuvre and navigate through constraints (Jiménez Raya, 2017).

Therefore, it is necessary that language teacher education programmes look for ways to provide their student-teachers with opportunities to teach the language in environments where they can exercise their autonomy and start developing their own theory of practice based on their teaching experiences, on their own and with the support of other colleagues.

The role of mentors and individual supervisors also has a great impact on the development of teacher autonomy. In the study, it was found that having a mentor or supervisor does not necessarily support the development of teacher autonomy. Good mentors and supervisors guide student teachers, provide them with feedback, engage them in pedagogical discussions that make them question their practice, and give them freedom to exercise their autonomy. Bad mentors and supervisors, on the other hand, limit teacher-learners' capacity or freedom to make independent decisions in their practice or do not provide the necessary support for teacher autonomy to develop. Based on these findings, it is essential that language teacher education programmes raise teacher educators' awareness of their impact on the development of teacher-learners autonomy and work together towards the promotion of autonomy as a common education goal.

5.7 Limitations and recommendations for future research

The main limitations found in the study were related to institutional constraints in the research context and the teaching contexts where student-teachers did their professional practice. Regarding the research context, the fact that in the Teaching Practice module pre-service teachers did not get a grade upon completion affected participants' motivation during the course. Not all participants were intrinsically motivated to engage in the activities of the module and did not show the same willingness and commitment to develop their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning. Even though the teacher-researcher tried to raise awareness of the importance of autonomy for teachers to build their own theory of practice and become critical

ELT professionals, not all participants were willing to assume the same responsibility for their professional action and professional development.

Another limitation to the development of pre-service teachers' autonomy was the time. The pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module is taught in four months, which might not give participants the necessary time to notice significant changes in the development of teacher autonomy. During those four months, student-teachers attended the module and a Lesson planning module at the same time. Additionally, they completed a 496-hour practicum. All those activities limited the time they had available to contact their individual supervisors or their peers to get support and participate in other types of collaboration such as peer-observation, team teaching, having a critical friend, among others.

On the other hand, as participants were free to select the schools or institutions where they wanted to do their professional practice from a catalogue provided by the Department of Social Service and Professional Practice, not all of them chose institutions where they could teach. This affected the implementation of the pedagogy for autonomy used in the module and constrained participants' autonomy to make choices on their teaching and learning. Although the teacher-researcher and participants looked for alternative scenarios where they could teach, the number of lessons was limited and the informality of the contexts did not give them the same opportunities to develop and exercise their autonomy.

Recommendations for further research in the development of teacher autonomy in language teacher education include using other instruments for data collection such as class observations to triangulate data with the participants' perceptions of their development of autonomy. Another recommendation is to follow student-teachers for a semester or two once they have graduated and start working to analyse the impact that teaching a group of their own in a formal work context can have on their development and exercise of teacher autonomy. During this study, some participants expressed not feeling totally responsible for the classes they were teaching as student-practitioners, so it would be interesting to analyse how their professional identity changes once they start working and the relationship between professional identity and teacher autonomy.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has attempted to answer the research questions set in the study and discussed findings in relation to existing literature and previous research in the field. It also analysed the impact of the pedagogy for autonomy and its individual components on the development of teacher autonomy and the development of teacher autonomy in the participants during the

pedagogy for autonomy Teaching Practice module. It stated the main contribution of the study and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using reflective practice, action research, community of practice and the principles of pedagogy for autonomy (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017) for the development of teacher autonomy. Then, the chapter suggested practical implications and recommendations to promote teacher autonomy in language teacher education. Finally, it described the limitations of the research and provided recommendations for further research in the field.

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Appendix A Language teacher education initiatives for autonomy

Source	*Context*	*Focus*	*Teacher development strategies*
Breen et al. (1990)	ITE (Denmark)	TA1, TA2, TA3/LA	Workshops/group discussion Collaborative action research projects
Cakir and Balcikanli (2012)	PTE (Turkey)	TA2	Reflective tool (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages)
Camilleri Grima (1997, 1999)	PTE (Malta)	TA2, TA3/LA	Workshops/group discussion Reflective tools (questionnaire/diary) Action research project Self-assessment
Endo (2011)	PTE (Japan)	TA2	Peer-teaching situations Peer-/Self-assessment
Galinienė (1999)	ITE (Lithuania)	TA2, TA3/LA	Workshops/group discussion Reflective tool (questionnaires) Pedagogical experimentation Self-assessment
Gatt (1999)	ITE (Malta)	LA	Group discussion Pedagogical experimentation Self-assessment
Jiménez Raya (2009, 2011, 2013)	PTE (Spain)	TA1, TA2, TA3/LA	Plenary sessions Reflective tools (questionnaires/portfolio) Case-based approach (case analysis/case construction)
Jiménez Raya and Vieira (2015)	PTE/ITE (Portugal, Spain)	TA1, TA2, TA3/LA	Case-based approach (case analysis/case construction)
Kohonen (2003)	ITE (Finland)	TA1, TA2, TA3/LA	Action research projects Exchange of experiences Reflective tools (diary/reflective essays)
Little, Ridley, and Ushioda (2002)	ITE (Ireland)	LA	Seminars/workshops/lectures Pedagogical experimentation
Martins (2009)	PTE (Portugal)	TA2	Reflective tool (portfolio Pedagogical supervision
Mello, Dutra, and Jorge (2008)	ITE (Brazil)	TA1, TA2	Seminars/group discussion Collaborative action research projects Exchange of experiences
Miliander (2008)	PTE (Sweden)	TA2	Group discussion Exchange of experiences Reflective tool (portfolio) Peer-assessment

Nissilä (1999)	PTE (Finland)	TA2/LA	Reflective tools (portfolio/diary)
Smith (2006), Brown, Smith, and Ushioda (2007), Smith and Erdoğan (2008), and Ushioda et al. (2011)	PTE (UK)	TA2	Peer-teaching situations Peer-/Self-assessment Reflective report
Suso López and Fernández (2008)	PTE (Spain)	TA1, TA2	Personal syllabus design Cooperative/self-directed work
Trebbi (2008a, 2008b)	PTE (Norway)	TA2	Lectures/seminars ICT tools (digital portfolios/logs/forums)
Vieira (2007a, 2007b, 2010)	ITE (Portugal)	TA1, TA2, TA3/LA	Plenary sessions/group discussion Action research projects Reflective tools (questionnaires/portfolio) Case-based approach (case analysis/case construction) Exchange of experiences
Vieira et al. (2008), Vieira and Moreira (2008) and Moreira (2009)	PTE (Portugal)	TA1, TA2, TA3/LA	Plenary sessions Action research projects Reflective tools (portfolio/journal) Exchange of experiences
Yildirim (2013)	PTE (Turkey)	TA2	Reflective tool (portfolio) Cooperative/self-directed work Self-assessment

Note: ITE: in service teacher education; PTE: pre-service teacher education.

Mánzano Vázquez (2018)

Appendix B Teaching Practice module weekly plan

Sessions	Topics	Objectives	Activities
1	Introduction to the course	To find out what expectations, questions or concerns teacher-learners have regarding the Teaching Practice module. To explain the objectives of the module, how it is structured, what the learning outcomes are as well as the roles of the facilitator and supervisors to support their practice.	Group discussion
2	Post-method pedagogy	To reflect on postmethod pedagogy and its relevance for their teaching practice.	Group discussion Teacher-learner reflective journal
3	Teacher autonomy	To find out teacher-learners' initial thoughts, experiences and perceptions of teacher autonomy as the basis to inform the development of their autonomy to self-direct their teaching and learning during the module.	Focus group interview
4	The role of teacher autonomy in postmethod pedagogy	To reflect on the role of teacher autonomy for the construction of their own pedagogy for language teaching, based on the characteristics of their teaching context and their students' learning needs.	Group discussion
5	Concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy	To discuss the concept and dimensions of teacher autonomy, especially the dimensions of teacher autonomy that are promoted as part of the pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy used to facilitate the Teaching Practice module.	Group discussion
6	The relevance of teacher autonomy in teacher education and professional development	To reflect on teacher autonomy and how it can be developed to improve their practice.	Group discussion
7	Self-monitoring	To discuss what self-monitoring is, its potential for professional development and how it can be carried out.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of previous experiences Video recording of a language lesson

8	Self-monitoring	To identify weaknesses and strengths in teacher-learners' teaching practice based on their video recording. To share comments, concerns and feedback after watching their own video recordings.	Group discussion Exchange of experiences recording and watching their video Sharing video recordings with individual supervisors and getting feedback
9	Teacher-support groups	To discuss what teacher support groups are and how they can be used for professional development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of previous experiences
10	Teaching journals	To discuss what teaching journals are and how they can be used for professional development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of previous experiences
11	Peer-observation	To discuss what peer observation is and how it can be carried out for professional development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of previous experiences
12	Action research	To discuss what action research is and how it can contribute to professional development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of previous experiences
13	Individual professional development plan	To write an individual professional development plan based on own areas for improvement in teaching practice.	Group discussion Presentation of an example of an individual professional development plan
14	Individual professional development plan	To share and give mutual feedback on individual professional development plans.	Sharing of individual professional development plans Teacher-learner reflective journal
15	Review and discussion of topics negotiated with teacher-learners	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide opportunities for teacher development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of teaching experiences and strategies to improve on that area
16	Review and discussion of topics negotiated with teacher-learners	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide opportunities for teacher development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of teaching experiences and

			strategies to improve on that area Follow-up on individual professional development plan
17	Review and discussion of topics negotiated with teacher-learners	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide opportunities for teacher development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of teaching experiences and strategies to improve on that area
18	Review and discussion of topics negotiated with teacher-learners	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide opportunities for teacher development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of teaching experiences and strategies to improve on that area Follow-up on individual professional development plan Teacher-learner reflective journal
19	Review and discussion of topics negotiated with teacher-learners	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide opportunities for teacher development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of teaching experiences and strategies to improve on that area
20	Review and discussion of topics negotiated with teacher-learners	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide opportunities for teacher development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of teaching experiences and strategies to improve on that area Follow-up on individual professional development plan
21	Review and discussion of topics negotiated with teacher-learners	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide opportunities for teacher development.	Class presentation Group discussion Exchange of teaching experiences and strategies to improve on that area
22	Review and discussion of topics	To review topics to consolidate students' knowledge and provide	Class presentation Group discussion

	negotiated with teacher-learners	opportunities for teacher development.	Exchange of teaching experiences and strategies to improve on that area Follow-up on individual professional development plan
23	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
24	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
25	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
26	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
27	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal

28	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
29	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
30	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
31	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal
32	Delivery of a language lesson	To deliver a language lesson focusing on the areas teacher-learners wanted to improve in their teaching practice.	Language lesson delivery Feedback from individual supervisor and module facilitator Teacher-learner reflective journal

Module faciliator: Martha Guadalupe Hernández Alvarado.

Supervisors: Hilda Hidalgo Avilés, Norma Angélica Espinosa Butrón, Tomás Hernández Ángeles, Eleanor Occeña Gallard, and Martha Guadalupe Hernández Alvarado

Appendix C Individual professional development plan

Name: Jordan Hernandez Date:_____

Action	Notes
1. Identify an area of your teaching that you would like to learn more about	Work on collaborative supplementary materials development project with colleagues.
2. Identify strategies to help you achieve your goal	Find and read articles on how to design and evaluate English language teaching materials Contact teachers who might want to collaborate; share ideas at a meeting or online (skype, WhatsApp) and maybe even set priorities for the kinds of materials we want to begin to develop.
3. Identify people who can help you and talk to them	In my own institution, talk to more experienced teachers and LELI and Language Centre teacher development team members, and ask for support such as advice on: How they go about it, what they've learnt from experience, what recommendations (e.g. reading, examples, procedures) they could make.
4. Decide on the specific kinds of help you will need	Get support from English coordinator at my school and ask for help with resources. Get a volunteer(s) to read our new materials and discuss strengths and areas for improvement.
5. Select a colleague or colleagues to work with	Invite another colleague to be a "critical friend" who can meet with you/talk online regularly to help me self-evaluate and keep the project on track.
6. Set realistic goals and establish a time frame	Divide the activities into stages with a goal and a date for completion of each stage.

	Set a calendar of completion dates for the whole semester. Share with the team and assign areas of commitment.
7. Evaluate what you have learnt and share the results with others	Have discussions with collaborators Reflect on my own learning and how the process could be improved for next time Ask for a space in the academia meeting to present results to colleagues and get feedback Ask for a space in Language centre training workshops to share

UAEH Language Centre (2018)

Appendix D Participation information sheet

Study Title: The effect of a pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy in initial teacher education/A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican University **(Main study)**

Researcher: Martha Guadalupe Hernandez Alvarado **Ethics number:** 45222

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

I will appreciate your participation in this study, which will be conducted to obtain the degree of PhD in English Language Teaching from the University of Southampton.

This study aims to investigate to what extent a pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy-based Teaching Practice module helps teacher-learners to develop their autonomy as teachers and as learners. The promotion of teacher-learner autonomy is vital since researchers suggest that language teachers are more likely to promote autonomy in their learners if their own education has encouraged them to be autonomous through educational interventions (Little, 1995; Huang, 2008; Smith, 2008).

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are currently taking a Teaching Practice module and I want to find out to what extent this module helps you to develop your autonomy as teachers and learners.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You are expected to:

1) Participate in a focus group at the beginning of data collection (less than an hour).
2) Answer a questionnaire to find out your perceptions of your own autonomy as a teacher and as learner at the beginning of data collection and at the end of the module.
3) Collaborate with partners to develop teacher-learner autonomy (throughout the module).
4) Reflect on your teaching practice by keeping a diary (throughout the module).
5) Do a small-scale action research project to improve a specific aspect of your teaching you feel weak at autonomously (throughout the module).
6) Be interviewed at the end of the module about the extent in which the module helped you to develop your autonomy as teacher and learner (less than an hour).

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

With the results of my study I intend to:

- share the results of my research with my colleagues at the B.A in ELT in an attempt to improve the quality of the programme and the education we provide to our future ELT professionals
- share the results of my research with colleagues in other contexts through publications, participation in conferences, etc.

Are there any risks involved?

Participants might be afraid to express their real opinion on the effectiveness of the module or their perceptions regarding their own autonomy, the programme, etc. However, it is important for you to know that confidentiality of your participation will be maintained at all times. Your participation in the study in no way represents any harm to you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time in case you consider it necessary.

Will my participation be confidential?

Participants' confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Procedures for protecting the confidentiality of participants will be strictly followed. Apart from me, nobody else will have access to the data you provide and your names will be coded in the study to protect your identity. Data will also be stored in a computer and protected with a password.

What happens if I change my mind?

You are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time without being affected under any circumstances.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In case something goes wrong or you have any complaint, you can contact the Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee Prof Chris Janaway (023 80593424, c.janaway@soton.ac.uk).

Where can I get more information?

Feel free to contact me for further information.

My contact details are:

e-mail: martha.hdez.alvarado@gmail.com

Appendix E Consent form

Study title: The effect of a pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy in initial teacher education/A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican University **(Main study)**

Researcher name: Martha Guadalupe Hernández Alvarado.

ERGO number: 45222

Participant Identification Number:

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (August 27th,2018 /1) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	

Name of participant (print name)……

Signature of participant…….

Date…….. ……

Name of researcher (print name)……

Signature of researcher …….

Date……..

Appendix F Practicum schools

Participant	Cohort	School/teacher-learner's role
Diana	C01	Public university, teaching assistant working with content teachers
Tatiana	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Isabel	C01	Public university, teacher
Betzabel	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Esther	C01	Private company, translator
Jennifer	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Carlos	C01	Public school, teacher
Dulce	C01	Public school, teacher
Susana	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Raquel	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Elizabeth	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Lucia	C01	Public school, teacher
Joel	C01	Public university, assistant in a Self-Access Centre
Leo	C01	Public university, assistant in a Self-Access Centre
Esmeralda	C01	Public university, assistant in a Self-Access Centre
Karen	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Vicente	C01	Public school, teacher
Daniel	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Kacey	C01	Public school, teacher
Alejandra	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Eduardo	C01	Public school, teacher
Belen	C01	Public university, teaching assistant

Adrian	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Nadia	C01	Public university, teacher working with children
Silvia	C01	Public university, assistant in a Self-access Centre
Miguel	C01	Private university, teacher
Maricruz	C01	Public school, teacher
Monica	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Julian	C01	Public university, teaching assistant
Alberto	C02	Public university, teacher
Luca	C02	Public school, teacher working with children
Moises	C02	Public university, translator
Ivonne	C02	Public university, teacher
Flor	C02	Public university, teaching assistant
Zuly	C02	Public university, teaching assistant
Miriam	C02	Public university, translator
Sandra	C02	Public school, teacher
Mariela	C02	Public university, teacher working with children
Magdalena	C02	Public university, teacher
Osvaldo	C02	Public university, teaching assistant
Pablo	C02	Public university, teaching assistant
Mayte	C02	Public university, teaching assistant
Milton	C02	Private company, teacher
Guadalupe	C02	Public university, assistant in a Self-access Centre
Cecilia	C02	Public school, teacher
Marisol	C02	Public university, teaching assistant
Jaime	C02	Public university, assistant in a Self-access Centre
Dalia	C02	Public university, teaching assistant

Carolina	C02	Public university, materials designer

Appendix G Focus group questions

Study Title: The effect of a pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy in initial teacher education/A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican University **(Main study)**

Researcher: Martha Guadalupe Hernandez Alvarado **Ethics number:** 45222

- What do you understand by teacher autonomy?
- How can you exercise your autonomy as a teacher?
- How can you exercise your autonomy as a learner (the teacher as learner)?
- How important do you think it is for a language teacher to be autonomous?
- What implications do you think this has on students' learning?
- How have your previous teaching practice courses helped you develop your autonomy as a teacher?
- How have your previous teaching practice courses helped you develop your autonomy as a learner?
- Have you been provided with opportunities to reflect on your practice along your previous teaching practice courses? If so, how has this contributed to your teacher autonomy?
- Have you been provided with opportunities to do action research along your previous teaching practice courses? If so, how has this contributed to your teacher autonomy?
- Have you been provided with opportunities to collaborate with other student-teachers in your previous teaching practice courses? If so, how has this contributed to your teacher autonomy?

Appendix H Pre/Post questionnaires

Prequestionnaire/Survey

Study Title: The effect of a pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy in initial teacher education/A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican University **(Main study)**

Researcher: Martha Guadalupe Hernandez Alvarado **Ethics number**: 45222

Student's number: _____

I. The following questions are to find out your views on teacher autonomy as pre-service teachers of English (teacher-learners). Read each sentence and indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the statement by circling the option that best describes your opinion.

1. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about curriculum implementation based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

2. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding methodology based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

3. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about assessment based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

4. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding classroom environment based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

5. I feel confident/capable of reflecting on my teaching practice and identifying points for improvement and investigation.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

6. I feel confident/capable of identifying and solving problems in the classroom.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

7. I feel confident/capable of carrying out action research to find solutions to pedagogical problems in the classroom.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

8. I feel confident/capable of directing my own learning in order to improve my teaching.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

9. I feel confident/capable of working with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

10. I am willing to work with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

II. Respond to the following statements/questions as honestly as you can.

11. Briefly outline what you expect from this Teaching Practice module. Please explain your answer.

12. Do you think it can help you develop your autonomy as a teacher and as a learner? If so, how? If not, why?

Postquestionnaire/Survey

Study Title: The effect of a pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy in initial teacher education/A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican University (Main study)

Researcher: Martha Guadalupe Hernandez Alvarado **Ethics number:** 45222

Student's number: _____

I. The following questions are to find out your views on teacher autonomy as pre-service teachers of English (teacher-learners). Read each sentence and indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the statement by circling the option that best describes your opinion.

1. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about curriculum implementation based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

2. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding methodology based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

3. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions about assessment based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

4. Within institutional constraints, I feel confident/capable of making decisions regarding classroom environment based on my students' needs and teaching context.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

5. I feel confident/capable of reflecting on my teaching practice and identifying points for improvement and investigation.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

6. I feel confident/capable of identifying and solving problems in the classroom.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

7. I feel confident/capable of carrying out action research to find solutions to pedagogical problems in the classroom.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

8. I feel confident/capable of directing my own learning in order to improve my teaching.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

9. I feel confident/capable of working with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

10. I am willing to work with others in order to develop my autonomy as a teacher and as a learner.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral d. Disagree e. Totally disagree

II. Respond to the following statements/questions as honestly as you can.

11. Briefly outline what you learnt from this module in terms of teacher autonomy. Please explain your answer.

12. Did the module meet your expectations? If so, how? If not, why?

13. What did you benefit the most from this module? Please explain your answer.

14. Are there any further thoughts about the module you would like to add? Please explain your answer

Appendix I Guidelines to write the journal entries

Journal entry	Prompt questions
1. Teaching context	- Who are your learners? - What are their learning needs? - Do they have any interests/wants for learning English?/Are they motivated to learn? - What makes your context different from others? - What are some possible constraints? - Do you have to use any textbook/approach to teach? - Will you be able to use equipment/additional materials in your class? - What is practical considering the characteristics of your context/learners? - What do you think will be a challenge for you as a teacher in that context? - Will there be opportunities for you to exercise your autonomy as a teacher?
2. Areas of improvement/Individual professional development plan	- How did you feel when you watched yourself teaching? - What are your strengths and weaknesses in your teaching practice? - Were you able to accomplish your lesson aim? Why? Why not? - How did your students react to your teaching? - What area(s) of your teaching practice would you like to improve? Why? - What strategies/actions do you think will help you improve them? - What kind of support do you need from me (the facilitator of the Teaching Practice module) and your individual supervisors to improve your teaching practice?
3. Teacher identity	- What kind of teacher are you? - According to your peers, what kind of teacher are you? - What kind of teacher do you want to be? (Díaz A. M. E., 2017)

4. Improvement in practice/Implementation of individual professional development plan	- To what extent you were you able to improve your practice as a result of the implementation of your individual professional development plan? - To what extent did you implement the individual professional development plan you developed to improve your practice? - What activities included in your individual professional development plan did you carry out? How did they help you improve your practice? - What activities included in your individual professional development plan you did not carry out? Why did you not do them? - How do you feel about your practice now (at the end of the Teaching Practice module) considering your own perceptions of your practice and your supervisors' feedback?

Appendix J Interview guide

Study Title: The effect of a pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy in initial teacher education/A study of pre-service language teachers in a Mexican University **(Main study)**

Researcher: Martha Guadalupe Hernandez Alvarado **Ethics number:** 45222

- How much autonomy do you feel you had as a pre-service teacher?

- What were the limits to your autonomy?

- In your experience as a pre-service teacher, how much influence do you feel you had over:
  - Curriculum
  - Instructional methodology
  - Assessment
  - Classroom environment

- In the module, you worked with your partner (s) to discuss the implementation of lesson plans, in what ways did you do this?

- During your teaching practice, how far did you and your partner(s) give feedback to each other?

- In what ways did the feedback and guidance you received from your partner(s) help you become more autonomous as a teacher and as a learner?

- How did the nature of collaborative work with your partners help you become more autonomous?

- How often did you reflect on your teaching practice? How did you do this?

- In what ways, did the continuous reflection on your teaching practice help you become more autonomous?

- During your teaching practice, you probably thought of areas that you could improve, which ones are they? What did you do about it?

- In what ways could you improve in these areas? How did the module help you? What did you do to help each other?

- In what ways, do you think the action research project helped you become more autonomous?

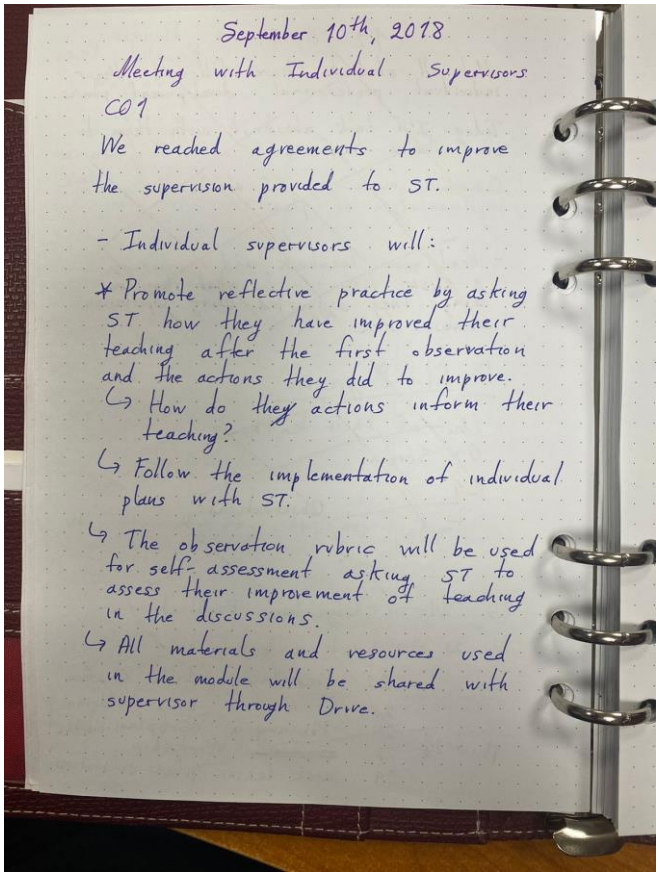
- In what ways, did the feedback and guidance you received from your trainer help you or not help you become more autonomous as a teacher and as a learner? How could it have been better/more constructive? Could you give some examples where was it particularly helpful?

- To what extent did you have freedom to make your own decisions independently from your module trainer?

- How far do you think the module helped you or not helped you become more autonomous as a teacher or as a learner?

- What do you think teacher autonomy means and how can the module be improved to promote and support it?

Appendix K Teacher-researcher's reflective journal



September 10th, 2018

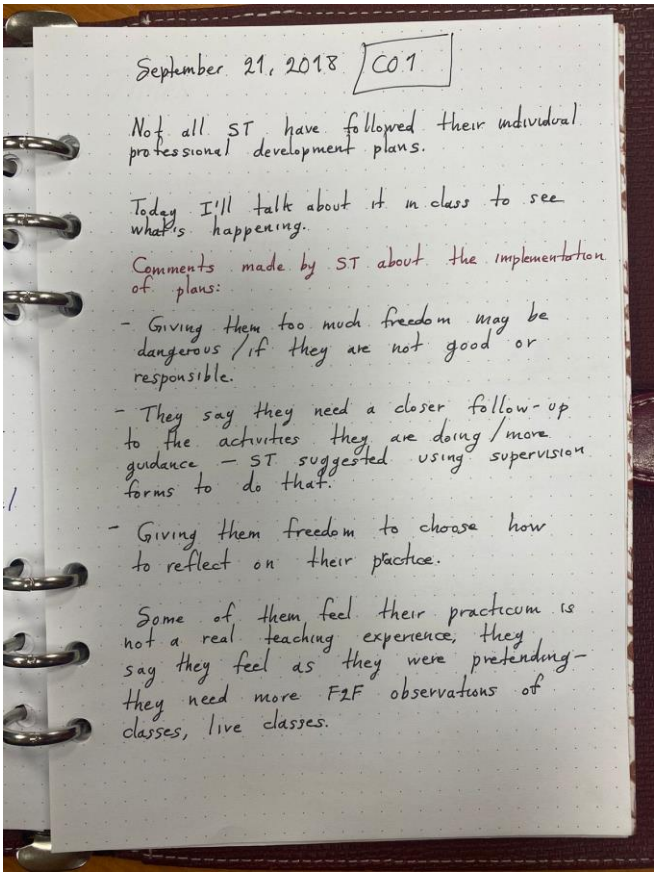
Meeting with Individual Supervisors

CO1

We reached agreements to improve the supervision provided to ST.

- Individual supervisors will:

* Promote reflective practice by asking ST how they have improved their teaching after the first observation and the actions they did to improve.
  ↳ How do they actions inform their teaching?
  ↳ Follow the implementation of individual plans with ST.
  ↳ The observation rubric will be used for self-assessment asking ST to assess their improvement of teaching in the discussions.
  ↳ All materials and resources used in the module will be shared with supervisor through Drive.



September 21, 2018 CO1

Not all ST have followed their individual professional development plans.

Today I'll talk about it in class to see what's happening.

Comments made by ST about the implementation of plans:

- Giving them too much freedom may be dangerous / if they are not good or responsible.
- They say they need a closer follow-up to the activities they are doing / more guidance – ST suggested using supervision forms to do that.
- Giving them freedom to choose how to reflect on their practice.

Some of them feel their practicum is not a real teaching experience, they say they feel as they were pretending – they need more F2F observations of classes, live classes.