Implementing learner autonomy through Communicative activities performed in CLT classroom:
An Investigation of the Learner's preferred activities which are carried out in CLT classroom and the potential of these activities to promote learner autonomy

Thesis
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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

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Abstract

Learner autonomy is in the heart of CLT approach. It is one of the central issues of Communicative Language Teaching. According to Holec's (1981) definition learner autonomy means "ability to take charge of one's own learning". Developing capacity for taking responsibility for one's own learning is claimed to be beneficial to learning (Benson, 2001, p.109). In fact, there is a belief that autonomous language learners are better language learners (Benson, 2001, p.2). The goal of Communicative Language Teaching is to enable learners to communicate in the target language. "Learners use the target language a great deal through communicative activities such as language games, role play and problem-solving tasks" (Larsen-Freeman,2000,p.129). Activities of the CLT based classroom are designed to improve learner's communicative competence. This study tries to find out which activities performed in CLT based classroom are believed to be most useful in promoting learner autonomy.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Learner autonomy addresses a subject's ability to comprehend the concepts that allows them to learn independently on their own. In other words, it means subject's capability of understanding the practical usages of what they have learnt in the classroom and utilizing it to expand that insight on a daily basis without any assistance all by themselves. That means subjects will able to achieve independence in the learning process even if they don't have enough support or resources to help their learning procedure in and out of the classroom. This would imply that successfully implementing learner autonomy enhances the subject's resourcefulness and keeps them from going through the same learning process over and over again, making their learning quick and efficient.

As English is undoubtedly one of the prominent languages in Bangladesh, students spend a considerable amount of time in learning English both in and outside the class. Students of Bangladesh need to study compulsory English language from class one to class twelve. In spite of spending so much time in learning English in educational institutions, most of the students do not have enough proficiency in using English. But as English is the prerequisite for either higher education or good job, Learners start to seek help from various sources-coaching centers, short courses, etc. But if the academic English curriculum itself can help the learners to improve all four English language skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening and show them ways which will support lifelong English language learning, then the learners don't need to spend unnecessary time and money to learn English outside the academic setting . The main aim of this paper is to seek the possibility of developing learner autonomy in Bangladeshi English Language classroom through the use of different communicative activities performed in CLT based classroom. The paper first describes CLT methodology and the concept of learner autonomy. Then the paper considers what communicative activities can be used to develop learner autonomy. The study was conducted in a general English language classroom of the first year undergraduate students who are studying BBA, LLB, CSE and EEE at Prime University, Dhanmondi Annex, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this chapter, relevant literature and theoretical framework of this study have been presented. This chapter begins with a discussion on Learner autonomy and Communicative language teaching. The design of the communicative activities is discussed in detail in this section.

2.1 Autonomy/Learner Autonomy

Learning is a personal act and the responsibility of learning lies within oneself. It is evident that however good the teacher is, he or she cannot do the learning for the learners. It is the learners who do the learning. So learner autonomy naturally earns an important position in the act of learning. The notion of learner autonomy has been a topic of discussion for the past few decades in language education.

MacAro, E. (1997) explains that "Autonomy is an ability which is learnt through knowing how to make decisions about the self as well as being allowed to make those decisions. It is an ability to take charge of one's own language learning and an ability to recognize the value of taking responsibility for one's own objectives, content, progress, method and techniques of learning. It is also an ability to be responsible for the pace and rhythm of learning and the evaluation of the learning process (p. 168)."

MacAro, E. (1997) asserts that "Independent learning derives its force from a need to develop long-term learner strategies which will be of use in current or future learning situations where a teacher may not be available (p.167)"

In Benson's word "history of autonomy in language education is well documented. In brief it begins with the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, which led to the publication of Holec's (1981) seminal report, in which autonomy was defined as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning'." Littlewood provides a well-formed definition of learner autonomy which encompasses the gist of the definitions of autonomy given by renowned researchers like, Holec, Benson, Dickinson etc:

> "Students should take responsibility for their own learning. This is both because all learning can in any case only be carried out by the students themselves and also because

they need to develop the ability to continue learning after the end of their formal education.

'Taking responsibility' involves learners in taking ownership (partial or total) of many process which have traditionally belonged to the teacher, such as deciding on learning objects, selecting learning methods and evaluating progress." (Littlewood, p.71).

Benson might be the first person "to introduce the idea of different 'versions', or ways of representing, the idea of autonomy" (Benson, 2006, p.24). He has argued current applied linguistics discourses have at least three versions of learner autonomy that need to be distinguished: technical, psychological, and political. He describes them as follows:

"1. In 'technical' versions of learner autonomy, the concept is defined simply as an act of learning a language outside the framework of an educational institution and without the intervention of a teacher.

2. 'Psychological' versions define autonomy as a capacity—a construct of attitudes and abilities—which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning.

3. Lastly, 'political' versions of learner autonomy define the concept in terms of control over the processes and content of learning. The main issue for political approaches is how to achieve the structural conditions that will allow learners to control both their individual learning and the institutional context within which it takes place"(Schmenk, 2005, p.109).

Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer (2006) refers to Cotterall who has presented the philosophical, pedagogical and practical reasons for the choice of autonomy. First of all it should be stated by us that the learner has the right to make choices. Secondly learner learns effectively and feels more secure if he has an involvement in program design. Thirdly, independent learning (learning without a teacher) has become more popular in today's society (p.66).

MacAro, E. (1997) reports that "the replacement of behaviorist learning by cognitive theory in the sphere of applied linguistics has contributed to a perception of the language learner as an intelligent, discriminating decision-maker (James,1990). The freedom which autonomy brings therefore, should not be associated only with external organizational considerations but with the relation between the learner, the content and the process of learning (Gathercole, 1990). This involves learner-teacher negotiation, involvement in decision making, learning contracts and participation in the organization of working groups (p.168)."

MacAro, E. (1997) presents teachers' definitions of learner autonomy "When in the interviews teachers were asked what they felt was meant by independent learning the following were the definitions most often mentioned. They are ranked approximately in the order of most often mentioned:

1.   Advancing at the learner's own pace (particularly the more able through extension work)

2.   Separate activities- e.g. going to a resource centre or resource area in the classroom, computer, etc.

3.   Independence from the teacher

4.   Home learning as opposed to classroom learning

5.   Giving pupils time to think about what they are doing (both during task and in post-task evaluation)

6.   Working independently is not synonymous with working individually

7.   Learner ownership of material (e.g. study packs)

8.   Choice of activities

"Teacher's examples of independent learning activities. Again, the following list is given in approximately the order of 'most often mentioned' in the interviews

1.   Use of dictionaries and textbook glossaries

2.   Extra reading or reading sessions

3.   Carousels

4.   Pupils recording own progress on paper/grids etc.

5.   Information Technology

6.   The school library as a resource

7.   Pupils using the learning support assistant as a resource (i.e. going to for help).

8.   Pupils using the teacher as a resource (surprisingly low)

9.   Pupils making recording in non-class time.

10.   Individual work /study packs

11.   Giving pupils choice through three columns of activities" (p.)

Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer (2006) refers to Cotterall's statement that "autonomy as a goal cannot be realized until it is translated into the structure of the programme" (P.66) . Again they points out Hermes argument that "autonomy is not to be taught theoretically but needs to be achieved by experiential learning" (p.66). Thus according to Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer (2006) "autonomy is a course strategy and concerns the entire curriculum, its materials, tasks and learning arrangements, with dialogue between teacher and students being especially important" (p.66). Again they (2006) argue that "the empowerment of the learner by enabling him/her to take responsibility by making informed choices is the main route to an autonomous learner"(p.66).

Mcclure (2001) refers to Bould who describes autonomous learning encompassing three groups of educational ideas:

> "First, it is a goal of education, an ideal of individual behavior to which students or teachers may wish to aspire…..Secondly, it is a term used to describe an approach to educational practice, a way of conducting courses which emphasizes students independence and responsibility for decision-making. Thirdly, it is an integral p[art of learning of any kind " (p.143).

Students tend to focus on passive and receptive activities like reading and listening than active and productive activities like speaking and writing. Hyland's study suggested that the reasons for student's avoidance of productive activities involved both individual and social/political factors principally the implications attached to using English and the fear of negative judgment (Hyland, 2004, p 180). Pickard's study also emphasizes the fact that students prefer the passive activities like reading and listening, due to the accessibility of materials, and the active skills of speaking and writing receive less attention (Pickard, 1996, p.150).

2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001) Communicative Language Teaching is "an approach that aims to a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication" (p.155).

Principles of Communicative approach-

1.   Learners learn a language through using it to communicate

2.   Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities

3.   Fluency is an important dimension of communication

4.   Communication involves the integration of different language skills

5.   Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and errors

6.   Authentic language is used in teaching-learning activities

7.   Emphasis is given on process of communication rather than mastery of language forms

8.   Students are given opportunity to express their ideas and opinions

9.   Context is important. ((Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p.128-129).

Richards & Rodgers (2001) claim that Communicative Language Teaching is an approach rather than a Method. It refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures. These principles include:

1.   Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.

2.   Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.

3.   Fluency is an important dimension of communication.

4.   Communication involves the integration of different language skills.

5.   Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error."

Richards & Rodgers (2001) refer to Johnson and Johnson (1998) who identify five core characteristics that underlie current applications of communicative methodology:

"Appropriateness: Language use reflects the situations of its use and must be appropriate to that situation depending on the setting, the roles of the participants, and the purpose of the communication, for example. Thus learners may need to be able to use formal as well as casual styles of speaking.

a) Message focus: Learners need to be able to create and understand messages, that is, real meanings. Hence the focus on information sharing and information transfer in CLT activities.

b) Psycholinguistic processing: CLT activities seek to engage learners in the use of cognitive and other processes that are important factors in second language acquisition.

c) Risk taking: Learners are encouraged to make guesses and learn from their errors. By going beyond what they have been taught, they are encouraged to employ a variety of communicative strategies.

d) Free practice: CLT encourages the use of "holistic practice" involving the simultaneous use of variety of sub skills, rather than practicing individual skills one piece at a time" (p.173).

2.2.1: Teacher's Role in CLT

Richards & Rodgers (2001) refers to Breen and Candlin who describes teacher roles within CLT:

"The teacher has two main roles:

The first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom.

The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning teaching group.

The teacher also needs to act as a resource, organizer of recourses, guide, motivator, counselor, analyst and a researcher.

Minor roles of a teacher include Actor and entertainer" (p.167).

2.2.2: Learners Role in CLT

Richards & Rodgers (2001) refers to Breen and Candlin who describes students' roles within CLT:

- Communicators

- Actively engaged in negotiating meaning- trying to make themselves understood and in understanding others

- Responsible managers of their own learning" (p.166).

2.2.3: Aim of learning a language in CLT

- To be able to communicate in the target language

- Vocabulary and grammar learnt from functional and situational context.

- Language skills- students work on all four skills from the beginning

- Characteristics of teaching-learning process- communicative activities, use of authentic material and group works

- Teacher-student interaction-Teacher interacts with students but for short time. He mainly facilitates communication. Sometimes acts as communicator.

- Student-student interaction- students interact a great deal with one another.

- Target Language- Authentic language, real-life language, language from newspaper, magazines, movies, songs etc.

- Native language/Translation into native language- Judicious use of student's native language is permitted in CLT. Target language is a vehicle of communication not only an object to be studied.

- Evaluation-

    Teacher evaluates students' accuracy and fluency

    Informally evaluates as an adviser or co- communicator

- Formally evaluates by giving an integrative test which has a real communication function.

- Errors-Errors are tolerated. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p.128-129).

Learner autonomy, in the context of foreign language teaching and learning, is not a new phenomenon. Just as in the study of the classics there was an element of inductive learning through memorization of large chunks of poetry so was there also the development of autonomous language learning skills, a 'knowing where to look' for knowledge (Evans,1993, p.17). An accomplished learner, according to Comenius, was one who could work independently (quoted in Evans, 1993).

2.2.4: Implications of the communicative approach for teaching purposes:

Mcdonough & Shaw (1993) states the seven implications the communicative approach for teaching purposes .These seven implications are discussed here:

1. 'Communicative' implies 'semantic, a concern with the meaning potential of language.

2. There is a complex relationship between language form and language function.

3. Form and function operate as part of a wider network o factors.

4. Appropriacy of language use has to be considered alongside accuracy. This has implications for attitudes to error.

5. 'Communicative' is relevant to all four language skills.

6. The concept of communication takes us beyond the level of sentence" (p. 21).

In addition Mcdonough & Shaw (1993) provides a number of reasons "why communicative approach is an attractive one, providing a richer teaching and learning environment. It can-

- Include wider considerations of what is appropriate as well as what is accurate

- Handle a wider range of language, covering texts and conversations as well as sentences

- Provide realistic and motivating language practice

- Use what learners 'know' about the functions of language from their experience with their own mother tongues

Little (2009) refers to "The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) embodies an action-oriented approach to language use that may be summarized as follows-

- We use language to perform communicative acts, which may be external and social (communicating with other people) or internal and private (communicating with ourselves).

- Communicative acts comprise language activity, which is divided into four kinds: reception, production, interaction and mediation

- In order to engage in language activity, we draw on our communicative language competence

- Language activity always occurs in a context that imposes conditions and constraints

- Because we must cope with often unpredictable contextual features, our communicative language competence has sociolinguistics and pragmatic components

- Language activity entails the performance of tasks, and to the extent that they are not routine or automatic, those tasks require us to use strategies in order to understand and /or produce spoken or written texts." (p.225).

2.3: Designing the activities:

Harmer (2011) claims that "Receptive skills and productive skills feed off each other in a number of ways. What we say or write is heavily influenced by what we hear and see. Our most important information about language comes from this input. Thus the more we see and listen to comprehensible input; the more English we acquire, notice or learn' (p.266). For this reason input plays a very important role in activities performed in CLT based classroom. In every activity of this general English class input is included. This input takes many forms: audio and video material reading texts and most importantly teacher.

Integrating skills in the activities: In real life communication more than one skill is needed at a time while communicating. For example: "When we are engaged in conversation, we are bound to listen as well as speak because otherwise we could not interact with the person we are speaking to" (Harmer, 2011, p.265). Harmer (2011) advocates integration of different skills in classroom activities. While designing classroom activities the teacher tries to integrate different skills in the activities.

2.3.1 Activities

The activities were designed for students to engage in a collaborative process in which they discussed the various aspects of language learning. It was felt that this activities would help them to become self-directed and autonomous learners. Various activities are performed basically to improve four language skills- Reading, writing, listening and speaking. These activities include-

Acting from the script, watching movie, Listening to podcasts/songs, Language Game/ Grammar practice, Giving speech/presentation, Role Play, Learning Vocabulary, Reading in groups

2.3.1.1 Acting from the script

Students were really interested in this activity. I had just explained the task to them. They choose topic of the short act by themselves. They have to write the script of the act and then act. Students wrote the script very enthusiastically. It was really imaging to see that how imaginative students can be! I just corrected few grammatical mistakes and provided some appropriate vocabulary. I spent two classes of 1.15 minutes for this activity. In the first class groups were formed to take part in the short act. 10 groups were formed each contains 3 students. In the first class the groups had to write the script of the act. All groups worked together for writing the script. I observed their activity and provided help when they asked me. The second class was after 3 days. During this period the groups arrange rehearsal sessions. On the second class 10 groups presented their acts. Learners really enjoyed this activity and said that this activity was really helpful for improving their writing, speaking and listening skills. It also made the students autonomous since they had to create and edit their own acts to make them interesting and enjoyable. Both intrinsic and instrumental motivation encouraged students. The intrinsic one is of course improving language skill and the instrumental one is that ten (10) marks was given for the successful completion of this activity.

2.3.1.2 Watching movie

On the first class the teacher had just explained the concept of summary and the way of writing it. Then she has given them a movie called "How to train your Dragon". I have advised them to watch the movie at least two times with subtitles. As the next class was after three days they have enough time to finish watching the movie. At the next class 24 out of 30 students were present. But only 20 students watched the movie. I told them to form 6 groups. The 4 students who didn't watch the movie, I told them to join different groups. Then they had to discuss about the movie and write a summary of the movie. All the groups had worked together to write the summary. I had just observed their activity and helped them out with few language points. After that all the groups presented their summary in front of the whole class. Out of 6 groups only 2 groups wrote the summary of the movie perfectly. The other 4 groups did considerably good. This activity made the students autonomous since they had to watch and understand the move on their own.

2.3.1.3 Listening to podcast and songs

Listening to podcast or song in the class is kind of a new experience for the students. At first students were little confused and also amazed when song was played in the class. First the teacher has written lyrics of the song on the board and omits few words from the lyrics. Then she asked students to listen for those words only. At first almost all the students were finding this activity difficult. They were saying they couldn't understand the lyrics properly because of the music and also for the accent of the singer. But when the teacher told them to see the lyrics on

the board first and then try to find out the missing words. Then it became easier for the students. Except three students almost all the students completed the task successfully.

2.3.1.4 Language Game/Grammar Practice

This is surprising but true most of the students like grammar exercises. According to the students, "It is more helpful if we learn the grammar rule first and then try to apply it in the context." But students reported that grammar lesson becomes more interesting if it is taught through interesting activities. In the class "Imperative sentence" was being taught by the teacher. At first she explained what imperative sentence is and for what purpose it is used. As we know imperative sentence can be used to give order, to place a request and to give suggestion. Four (4) groups were formed for this activity. Each group has two members. Five chairs placed in the middle of the class in hap shad manner. For this activity one member of the group had to be blindfolded and stand at one corner of the classroom and another member has to stand on the other corner of the class. The task was that one member had to tell the blindfolded member which way he should walk or turn to come to him without bumping into any chair.

2.3.1.5 Giving speech/presentation

Students were really hesitant to give presentations at first. But I made it compulsory to give daily presentation in the class. I was following the book called "The New Headway", I asked students to read reading passages from this book and in the class the students had to give presentations on these reading passages. As this was a big classroom every students didn't get the chance to give daily presentation. Few students were really disinterested to take part in this activity because of the fear of negative judgment.

2.3.1.6 Role Play

Though students were reluctant to give presentations, they are really interested in the "Role Play" activity. As they have imitated any one of their classmates, they find this activity really funny and interesting. Though mistakes were made by the students, they were really spontaneous and interested to take part in this activity. For this activity 7 groups containing 4 students. Each group had to imitate anyone of the group members. They worked in the group to write interesting few lines and to

2.3.1.7 Learning Vocabulary: For this activity the teacher prepared flip cards, on one side of the flip card a word was written and on the other side its meaning was written. The students were divided into two groups. Each group had given one set of the cards. At first the each group needed to go through the cards and try to memorize the meaning of the words. After that one member from a group came first and students from the opposite group asked that students meaning of the different words. Same procedure was done with the member of the other group

too. At the end of the task , the group member who could tell the most of the meaning correctly that team won.

2.3.1.8 Reading in groups: For this task two teams were formed and each team had given two different reading texts. The task was that each team had to read the text and write down a summary of the text. There eight members in each team. Though students were supposed to work in group, students were reading on their own. But one member from each team took the charge and started to explain the text to the whole group. At the time of summary writing, the groups worked collectively. One member wrote the summary and all the other members helped him/her with relative information. After that one member from each team came to present the summary of the text. Teacher gave feedback on their performance.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

This chapter will give us detailed information about the nature of this research, participants and instruments that have been used to collect data for the research, research design, procedure and above all, method of data analysis.

3.1 Background information and research questions:

As English is undoubtedly one of the prominent languages in Bangladesh, students spend a considerable amount of time in learning English both in and outside the class. Students of Bangladesh need to study compulsory English from class one to class twelve. In spite of spending so much time in learning English in educational institutions, most of the students do not have much proficiency in it. But as English is the prerequisite for either higher education or good job, Learners start to seek help from various sources-coaching centers, short course etc. But if the English curriculum itself can help the learners to improve all four skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening and provide them strategies which will give learners lifelong support for improvement of English language skills, then the learners don't need to spend unnecessary time and money to learn English again even after spending so many years in learning English. The main aim of this paper is to seek the possibility of developing learner autonomy in Bangladeshi English Language classroom through the use of Communicative Language Teaching or CLT method. The paper first describes CLT methodology and the concept of learner autonomy. Then the paper considers what communicative activities can be used to develop learner autonomy. The study was conducted in a general English language classroom of the first year undergraduate students who are studying BBA, LLB, CSE and EEE at Prime University, Dhanmondi Annex, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Research questions:

Specifically the study considers the following questions:

(1)   What communicative classroom activities do the students want to use to support lifelong English language learning?

(2)   Which activities do they believe are most helpful?

3.2 Participants and setting:

The subjects participating in this study was consisting of 30 Bengali speaking first year undergraduate students of Prime University. Three (3) of the learners are of Intermediate level and 27 students are of Pre-intermediate level students. Learners' language level is measured according to standards set by council of Europe. Eight of the participants were girls and the rest were boys. Three instruments were employed to collect data for this study; a questionnaire, a semi structured group interview and classroom observation. This semi structured interview was aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between classroom activities and learner autonomy and also about the learners' opinion about these activities. Interview was carried out with eight (8) students. Among these eight students four (4) were girls. Classroom observation gives the researcher more information about the learners' and teacher's attitude towards CLT based class and activities performed in the classroom. For this study both quantitative and qualitative approaches was used to provide a better understanding of the research problems.

3.3 Nature of the research:

This part describes the nature of the research in details.

3.3.1 Quantitative research:

In order to investigate the students preferred activities to support lifelong English language learning, this research used questionnaire.

3.3.2 Qualitative research:

A semi structured interview was aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between classroom activities and learner autonomy and also about the learners' opinion about these activities. Classroom observation gives the researcher more information about the learners' and teacher's attitude towards CLT based class and activities performed in the classroom.

3.4 Research design:

This part discusses about the research design in details.

3.4.1 Procedure:

In order to find out most preferred activities which will support lifelong English language learning that means which help the learners to become autonomous , this research collected data from 30 participants and among them 27 participants were pre-intermediate level students and the rest were intermediate level students. The data were collected following the proper procedure with the permission of the Director of the University and respective class teacher. At the beginning of the data collection and interview session, the researcher made it clear to the students that it was a voluntary work and the data will be used for research purpose. The researcher also assured the participants that the personal information will not be disclosed to anybody.

3.5 Administering the final questionnaire:

With the whole-hearted support teachers and the students, the researcher herself collected all the data from different groups of students. To collect data from the students, the researcher fixed a time with all the participants and it took almost half an hour to explain and get their responses on the questionnaire. To avoid confusions, the researcher moved from participants to participants and clarified every obscurity. But all the students were not present every day. So the researcher needed four days to collect data from all 30 participants.

3.5.1Conducting the Interview session:

Eight students agreed to participate in the semi structured interview session. The researcher has to arrange two interview sessions, because all the participants could be present at the same day.

3.5.2 Classroom Observation:

The teacher kindly agreed to let the researcher observe classes. To collect necessary data the researcher needed to observe 15 classes. The researcher sat at the one corner of the classroom from where he could have a good view of the whole class. She just observed class objectively and wrote down necessary information.

3.6 Research instrument for collecting data:

A questionnaire, a semi structured interview and classroom observation are used as research instrument for this study. Questionnaire provides quantitative data and the semi structured interview and classroom observation provide qualitative data for the study.

3.7 Questionnaire:

Questionnaire is the easiest way of collecting quantitative data and it allows the researcher to get a huge amount of data from a large number of subjects in the cheapest and fastest way. In any Questionnaire there might be two types of questions: closed and open questions. Closed questions are the structure questions which according to Seliger and Shohamy (1989) require the subject to mark responses, to check agreements or disagreements, or to select among a number of alternatives. On the other hand, open questions provide data that are more descriptive in nature. Questionnaire that has been used in this research has only closed questions. The different segments of the Questionnaire focus on the Teacher's and learners' Role in CLT based class and students views about activities performed in classroom.

A number of different ways are usually employed to collect data by questionnaires. The different items in the questionnaire were evaluated on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 and the number implies how interesting and helpful these activities to them are. These numbers also suggest also how frequently learners want to carry out these activities to support lifelong English language learning.

How helpful these activities are for them

Unhelpful =1

Not very helpful =2

Neither helpful nor unhelpful =3

Helpful =4

Very Helpful =5

The frequency of activities learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning

Very rarely=1

Rarely=2

Neither frequently nor rarely=3

Frequently=4

Very frequently=5

3.8 Interview:

Though interviews are time consuming, it provides valuable and profound amount of information. The interview followed a semi-structured format with open-ended prompts closely related to the research objectives and following up some responses given on the questionnaires. The interview prompts focused on students' feelings about using English, the activities performed in classroom they find most helpful and want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning.

3.9 Classroom Observation:

Classroom Observation is a process by which a researcher sits in on one or more class sessions, records the teacher's teaching practices and student actions, and then meets with the teacher to discuss the observations. Classroom observation provides great amount information. Through observing the classroom the researcher can get a firsthand experience of the activities performed in the classroom. The main goal of this classroom observation was to have closer look at the classroom activities and also to find how students perform these activities.

Chapter Four

4.1 Findings and Analysis

This section of the paper will present the results and findings of the study.

4.1.1 Findings from the questionnaire

A questionnaire was prepared to find out learners opinion about activities performed in CLT based classroom and their willingness to carry out this activity on their own to improve their English Language skills.

4.1.2 Results of question 3

Table 1 shows the learners' interestingness of English learning activities. Speaking in front of the class got a neutral response. 40% (12) learners find this activity neither interesting nor boring. It is surprising but true that Grammar practice is found interesting by 50% (15) of the learners. 40% (12) of the learners agree that listening to podcasts/songs is a very interesting activity.

Item	Very interesting	Interesting	Neither interesting nor boring	Not very interesting	Boring	Average score
Giving speech/presentation	3	5	12	9	1	3
Language Game/ Grammar practice	15	6	4	6	0	4.1
Reading in groups	8	10	3	4	5	3.4

Listening to podcasts/songs	12	8	5	3	2	3.8
Learning Vocabulary	10	9	9	2	0	3.9
Acting from the script	18	10	2	0	0	4.5
Watching movie	20	8	2	0	0	4.6
Role Play	20	7	3	0	0	4.5

Table 1: The interestingness of English learning activities

66.67 %(20) of the learners find Watching movie and role play very interesting. Acting from the script activity is found interesting by 60 %(18) of the learners. Group work is found interesting by 43.33 %(13) of the learners. Watching movie and Summary writing, dialogue acting and script writing, grammar practice, learning vocabulary and role play are not found boring by any of the responded.

4.1.3 Results of question 5

Table 2 shows the learners' view of helpful English learning activities. 73.33% (22) learners think that Grammar practice is very helpful to improve their English language skill. Dialogue acting and script writing is proffered by 60% (18) of the learners, Watching movie and Summary writing is preferred by 66.67% (20) of the learners.

Item	Very Helpful	Helpful	Neither helpful	Not very helpful	unhelpful	Average score

		nor unhelpful			
Giving speech/presentation	12	8	8	1	1	3.9
Language Game/ Grammar practice	22	3	5	0	0	4.5
Reading in groups	16	8	2	4	0	4.2
Listening to podcasts/songs	4	12	4	6	4	3.2
Learning Vocabulary	10	9	9	2	0	3.9
Acting from the script	18	10	2	0	0	4.5
Watching movie	20	8	2	0	0	4.6
Role Play	8	11	5	4	3	3.6

Table 2: Helpful English learning activities

4.1.4: Results of question 6

Respondents were asked about the frequency with which they carried out various activities in English. Table 3 shows the English learning activities which learners want to carry out on their own for improving English. Watching movie is chosen by83.33% (25) learners as the most frequently carried out activity in English. For supporting their lifelong English73.33% (22) of the learners prefer listening to podcasts/songs. Language Game/ /Grammar practice is preferred by 73.33% (22) of the learners. Reading in groups is chosen by 40% (12) of the learners. 33.33% of the learners want to continue learning vocabulary.

Item	Very frequently	Frequently	Neither frequently nor rarely	Rarely	Very rarely	Average score
Giving speech/presentation	2	7	9	4	8	2.7
Language Game/ Grammar practice	22	3	2	1	2	4.4
Reading in groups	12	13	2	3	5	4.3
Listening to podcasts/songs	22	6	2	0	0	4.6
Learning Vocabulary	10	10	2	1	2	3.3
Acting from the script	10	10	5	3	2	3.7

Watching movie	25	5	0	0	0	4.8
Role Play	3	5	0	2	20	1.9

Table 3: English learning activities which learners want to carry out on their own

4.1.5: Chart for the Results of question 5 and 6

For the purpose of this study the data from the table 2 and 3 is examined more closely. Watching movie gets the highest Average score of 4.6 as the most helpful English language learning activity. This activity also got highest average of 4.8 score as the activity learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning.
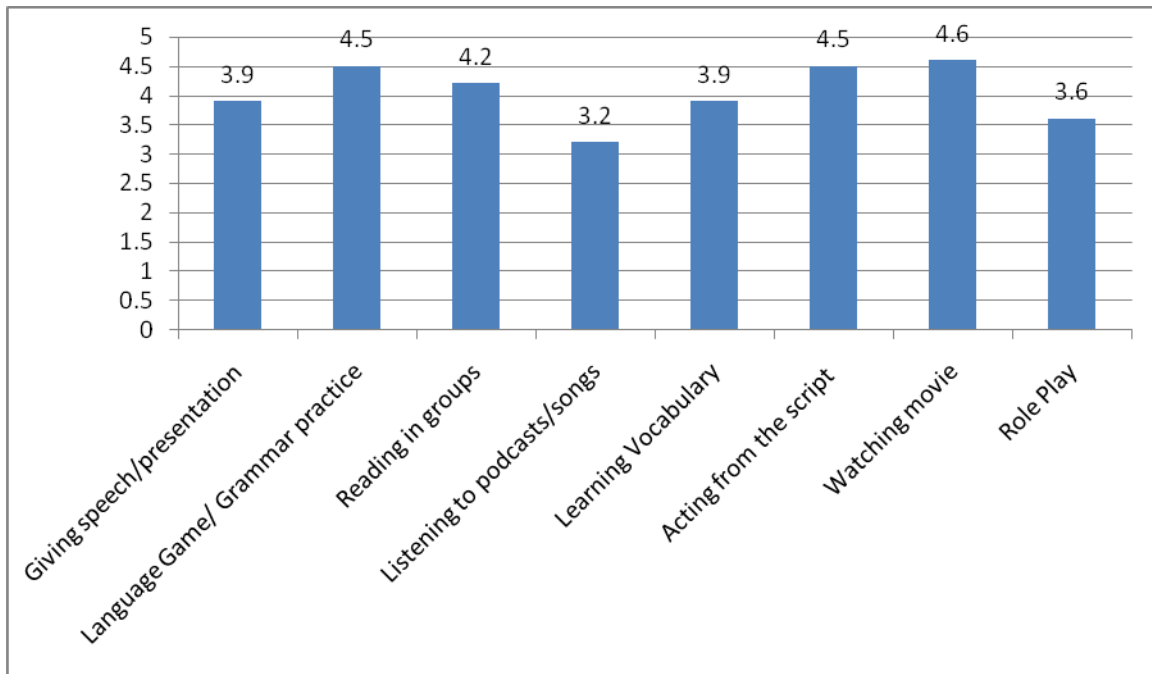

Figure 1: Learners view of helpful activities for improving their English
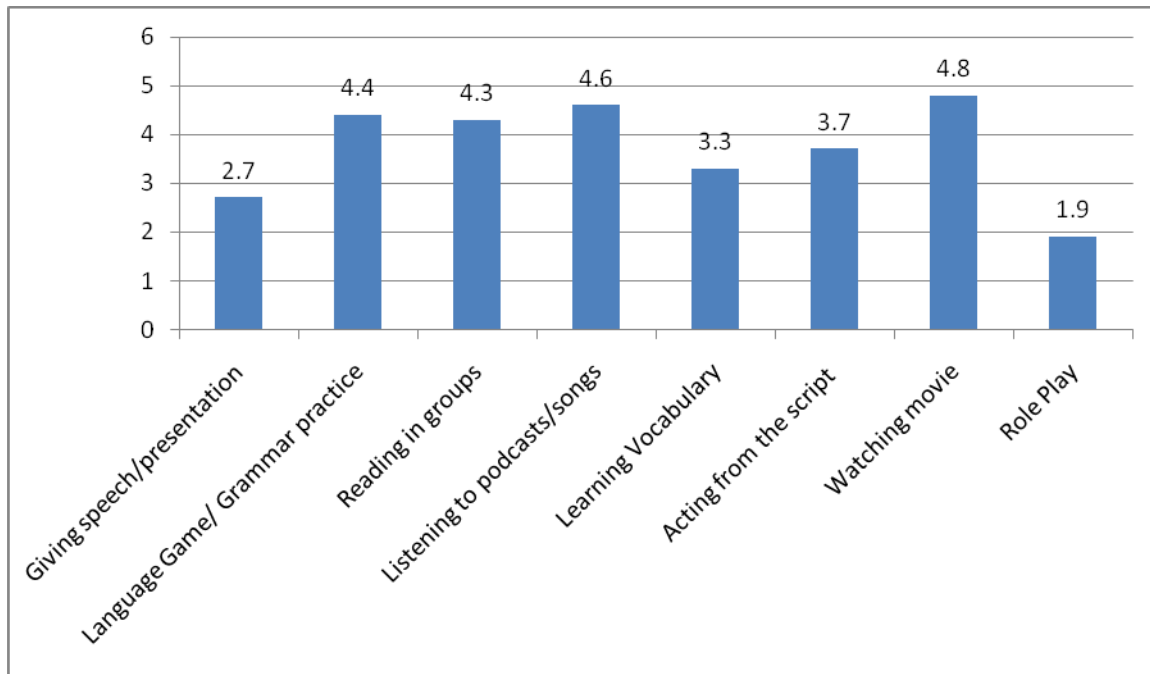
Figure 3: The frequency of activities learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning

4.1.6: Results of the Interview

Interview session was conducted with 8 students. Most of them find communicative activities helpful to promote lifelong support for English learning. Two of the learners were watching English movies for the first time. They find it quite hard to understand every word just by listening:

"At first I have to pause every scene a read the subtitle to understand what's going on. Moreover, it's quite hard to understand native speakers."

But as the movie was quite interesting, it motivated the learners to keep watching the move,

"I like the movie because it's animated and the story of the movie is good."

Listening to the podcast was more challenging for the learners. The podcast was taken from website of BBC English. As the speakers were using British English most of the learners find it quite difficult to understand:

"British English is quite hard to understand. The way they pronounce every word was quite difficult to understand"

It is surprising but true students find listening to song entertaining but understanding the lyrics accurately very difficult.

"I can't understand the Lyrics properly because of the music."

Another student said-

"The way native speakers pronounce a word is really different from the way we do."

Interview data gives a great insight of the learner's opinion about participating in communicative task in the classroom. Students found these activities helpful. But they also felt that class time was not enough for performing these activities properly.

4.1.7: Result of the classroom observation:

Classroom Observation is a process by which a researcher sits in on one or more class sessions, records the teacher's teaching practices and student actions, and then meets with the teacher to discuss the observations. The classroom observation revels it is hard to ensure participation of all the students. Many students face difficulty understanding the tasks. Passive students prefer to sit back and let the active students take charge.

Load shedding also created problem performing the task. In the listening to podcast task, the teacher had to stop the activity two times because there was no electricity.

Poor sound system created problem too. As it was a large classroom, all the students could not hear the podcast properly. The students in the front row had advantage in this task.

But it is safe to say that most of the students were really interested in taking part in the activities. Though it was hard to ensure equal participation, the teacher tried her best to give equal opportunity to every student.

4.2. Discussion

In this part of the paper, the major findings of the study will be discussed

4.2.1 Major findings of the study:

This study finds out that most of the students are really interested in classroom communicative classroom activities. Learners really want to be able to communicate competently. There preferred communicative activities include- Acting from the script, watching movie, Listening to podcasts/songs, Language Game/ Grammar practice, Giving speech/presentation, Role Play, Learning Vocabulary, Reading in groups. Learners also want to carry out these activities to support lifelong English language learning. A great number of students truly want to be autonomous. They also agree that teachers cannot be with them all the time. So it would really beneficial if they know the ways of learning on their own.

Here the activities, which got more average score as the activity learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning, are discussed in more detail. These activities are discussed on the basis of their recognition among students and their helpfulness.

<u>Watching movie:</u> Watching movie got highest average of 4.8 score as the activity learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning. The reasons behind it includes movies considered the most reliable source of authentic language and can show paralinguistic features (facial expression, gesture, proximity, posture and echoing) of language at its best become clearer in the interview session. Moreover the students can aquire different language forms and a variety of vocabulary effortlessly because they aim mainly to understand the story of the movie not particularly on the language form. The use of authentic material in improving communicative competence is supported by Larsen-Freeman (2000) "To overcome the typical problem that students cannot transfer what they learn in the classroom to the outside world and to expose students to natural language in a variety of situations, adherents of CLT advocate the use of language materials authentic to native speakers of the target language" (p.132). Movies can be a rich source for providing authentic language. Movie watching serves two purposes –a) movie is a reliable source of real-life language and b) the students will try to understand the story of the movie for this reason consciously or unconsciously they have to notice language forms. can easily understand the use of different language forms in different situations. That means for the purpose of communication they have to "focus on form" (Harmer, 2007, p.53). Harmer (2007)

states that focus on form happens "when students direct their attention to some feature of the language, such as a verb tense or the organization of paragraph" (p.53). Further he (2007) claims that " Focus on form is often incidental and opportunistic, growing out of tasks which students are involved in, rather than being pre-determined by a book or a syllabus" (p.53). Harmer (2007) argues that "this kind of acquisition is intrinsically superior to asking students to focus on a series of pre-determined forms" (p.54).

Listening to podcasts/songs: Listening to podcasts/songs got average score of 4.6. Podcast and songs also provides authentic language. Availability and its relation with enjoyment and relaxation are prominent reasons behind Students' choice of listening to songs as their preferred activity to support lifelong English language learning. A large number of learners preferred listening to songs for improving their English skills. According to Gardner's multiple intelligences theory this types of learners have Musical/ rhythmic intelligence- "an ability to recognize tonal patterns and sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, melody" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p.170).

Language Game/ Grammar practice: Language Game/ Grammar practice got average score of 4.4 as learners' most favored activity to support lifelong English language learning. Language games are major activities in CLT classrooms. Language games become truly communicative when Morrow's three features of communicative activities are evident in them. Morrow's three features of communicative activities were manifested in language games performed in the classroom: "An information gap existed, a degree of choice and the existence of feedback" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p.133). Jarvis & Szymczyk's (2009) study shows that "Students had positive attitudes towards learning grammar independently, considered grammar practice a vital part of foreign language learning" (p.38). In this study average 4.4 students preferred Grammar practice to support lifelong English language learning.

Reading in Groups: Reading in Groups got average score of 4.3 as the activity learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning. Group activities promote interdependence. As Little (2009) points out that "we are social beings, our independence is always balanced by dependence, and our essential condition is one of interdependence" (p.223). Further he claims that "the development of learner autonomy depends on social interaction" (p.223). His argument is very true for group activities "autonomous learners always do things for themselves, but they may or may not do things on their own" (p.223). Learners think that reading in groups is beneficial for improving their English. Individual reading takes more effort and time while reading in groups is less time consuming. If one learner cannot understand any word or sentence he can discuss it other learners and understand the particular word or sentence type more effectively.

Acting from the script: Acting from the script got average score of 3.7 as the activity learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning. This activity has parts-a)learners has work in group b) they have to write the script, c) they have act in it. Through this task they get the opportunity for improving these three skill-writing, speaking and listening. Creativity and entertainment are integral part of this activity. Though in real life the chances of practicing this activity is really slim, large number of learners want to carry out this activity on their own.

Learning Vocabulary: Learning Vocabulary got average score of 3.3 as the activity learners want to carry out to support lifelong English language learning. As Nunan (2003) claims "Vocabulary learning is large and continuing task" (p. 141), learners have to continue learn new vocabulary own their own. Nunan (2003) advocates that teachers should "encourage learners to reflect on and take responsibility for leaning" vocabulary (p.140). He (2003) states that taking this responsibility requires- " 1) knowledge of what to learn and the range of options for learning vocabulary, 2) skill in choosing the best option, and 3) the ability to monitor and evaluate progress with those options "(p.140). In the classroom teacher "inform the learners of the different types of vocabulary" and also provide examples how these vocabulary is used in context. But it is the learners' responsibility to practice these vocabularies to own their own for better understanding of the use of these vocabularies. So we can say that autonomous language learners have a better chance to be proficient language user.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this chapter implication of the study, limitations of the study recommendation for future researches along with an end note have been presented.

5.1 Implications of this study

Learning a language is really vast and continuous process. In Bangladesh English is seen as the language of success and valued as a passport to higher education and better career prospects. Bangladeshi students become frustrated when they can't use English properly even after learning English throughout the whole educational phase. They seek help from outside the academic setting e.g. coaching centers or language centers and waste their valuable time and money. In this scenario if the academic course curriculum provides opportunity to improve English Language skills and encourage learners to become responsible manager of their own learning. Then learners can save their time and money and concentrate on achieving other important goals in life.

5.2 Limitations of the study:

Difficulties implementing activities includes-

- Reluctant learners

- Learners are not familiar with CLT based classroom procedures; as a result a lot of time is wasted just to clarify the activities to the students

- Big classroom

- Limited time

- Students preference of lecture based class

- Load shedding

- Poor sound system

- Poor internet connection

- Different levels of proficiency of the students

5.3 Recommendations for further studies:

It will be a good idea to try to find out the possibility of promoting learner autonomy through the activities performed in CLT based classrooms in Bangladesh and conduct another research to make sure that there is no obscurity in the questionnaire in terms of language. The findings of that research can be compared with the findings of this current research which will amplify the reliability and validity of the findings of both the researches. Future researches on this area should employ other research instruments (in depth classroom observation, learners' journals etc) to ensure the validity of the reported information.

5.4 End Notes

The research is particularly focused on finding out the potential of communicative activities in encouraging learner autonomy through simplification of familiar contexts with their education. Though this research has been done in a small scale, it shows significant impact in the field of ELT along with the elevated productivity of the target group. The results also illustrate that communicative activities are really appealing to the students and with proper guidance incentive a large number of students are willing to make an effort to adapt these activities to support ideal English language learning.

This study can be very helpful in the context of Bangladeshi Education System as students in Bangladesh are constantly needed to work with English Language. English is not only our second language it is truly a language of success in Bangladesh. This research has the potential to provide a range of language learning activities and can also suggest what activities are more reliable than the others along with promoting learner autonomy.

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Appendix-A

English Learning Activities Questionnaire

This survey is being carried out to investigate Prime university student's choice of classroom communicative activities and their preferred English language learning activities which the want to carry out on their own. All responses will remain anonymous. Please try to answer all the questions.

Name: …………………..Program   …………………..   Date……………………..
Age………………… Gender……………

Communicative Language Teaching

1. **Teacher's Role**

   Tick beside the appropriate response.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
The teacher should to explain everything rather than engage learners in activities			
The teacher should be authoritative			
The teacher should be friendly			
The teacher should appreciate students			
The teacher should talk throughout the class			
The teacher should let the students talk			

2. **Learner's Role**

   Tick beside the appropriate response.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
The student should take part in classroom activities			

The student should be very active			
The student should be sit silently and listen to teacher's lecture			
The student should appreciate fellow students			
The student should get the chance to express their opinion in the class			
The student should			

Communicative activities

3. Which activities are helpful to improve your English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)? Put a tick.

Item	Very Helpful	Helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Not very helpful	unhelpful
Giving speech/presentation					
Language Game/ Grammar practice					
Reading in groups					
Listening to podcasts/songs					

Learning Vocabulary					
Acting from the script					
Watching movie					
Role Play					

4. What do you like /don't you like. Tick the box

Item	Like	Don't like	Comment
Giving speech/presentation			
Language Game/ Grammar practice			
Reading in groups			
Listening to podcasts/songs			
Learning Vocabulary			

Acting from the script			
Watching movie			
Role Play			

5. Which of these activities you find interesting? Put a tick.

Item	Very interesting	Interesting	Neither interesting nor boring	Not very interesting	Boring
Giving speech/presentation					
Language Game/ Grammar practice					
Reading in groups					
Listening to podcasts/songs					

Learning Vocabulary					
Acting from the script					
Watching movie					
Role Play					

6. Which of these activities you want to carry out or practice on your own for improving your English language Skills?

Item	Very frequently	Frequently	Neither frequently nor rarely	Rarely	Very rarely
Giving speech/presentation					
Language Game/ Grammar practice					
Reading in groups					
Listening to podcasts/songs					
Learning					

Vocabulary					
Acting from the script					
Watching movie					
Role Play					

Thank you for spending time to answer this questionnaire. Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

Appendix-B

Interview Prompts

Feelings and beliefs about using English

  • How important is English in your life?

  • How confident do you feel about your English ability? Are there any specific areas that

  you would like to improve?

  • Why do you want to improve your English?

  • Do you feel comfortable when you use English for work/study-related reasons ?

  • Who do you mostly use English with? (Colleagues/students, family friends, officials,

  etc.)

  • Do you look for opportunities to use English or do you avoid it whenever possible?

  Why?

Activities carried out in English

• What percentage of time do you spend using English in a typical week including time at home,

at work/university, and elsewhere? (Just give a rough estimate)

• In what kinds of situations do you find that you use English rather than Bengali?

• What activities do you usually carry out in English?

• Which of the activities you have mentioned do you find most useful for improving and

extending your English?

Activities carried out specifically to improve English

• Which of the above activities do you do with the main aim of improving your English?

• Do you purposefully engage in any particular activities to try to improve your oral skills/listening skills/ reading skills/writing skills/vocabulary /grammar in English outside the classroom? If yes, what are they?

• Are there any other activities you are currently doing or have done in the past to improve your English skills? What are these?

• If a friend told you that he/she wanted to find ways to improve his/her English without enrolling for a course, what activities would you advise him/her to do? Do you do any of these activities yourself? Why /why not?