State of Learner Autonomy among Secondary School Students in CLT Classroom in Dhaka

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Declaration

I declare that the Dissertation titled 'State of Learner Autonomy among Secondary School Students in CLT Classroom in Dhaka' is submitted to the BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University in partial fulfillment of the degree MA in TESOL. This paper is the result of my personal investigation; it has not been presented and submitted wholly or in part for any other degree.

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Key Words

Autonomy, CLT, Communicative activities, Communicative competence, ELT, ELT practitioners, *English for Today*, Independence, Motivation, Learning strategies, NCTB, Responsibility, Secondary English curriculum

Abstract

Learner autonomy engages the learners in effective decisions and various learning strategies through becoming aware in ELT classroom. As a result, learners' communicative competence level increase and learners become more interested in varied learning strategies day by day in CLT classroom. Therefore, the aim of this research is to explore the present state of learner autonomy among secondary school students in English classes using communicative activities. Qualitative approach has been taken in this research. Four secondary English teachers and ten students have participated in interview session and six different classes have been observed for primary data collection. Therefore, data has been collected through the process of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and class observations. In this research, literature review also has been presented as secondary source of data.

Autonomy is considered as the ability to control someone's own learning. On the other hand, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach creates communicative competence for language teaching and using language where real information will be changeable through four English skills. Therefore, it can be said that learners will be able to become self-motivated through communicative activities an autonomous atmosphere. In addition to, it can also be said that there is a connection between learner autonomy and CLT approach according to their nature. This research actually reflects that there is a gap between secondary school teachers' understanding regarding CLT approach and the following process of CLT approach in the classroom which is a major issue in this present situation. It also highlights that there is a distance between teachers and students in their communication system in English classroom which is not being helped implementing the principle of CLT approach and becoming autonomous learner. Finally, this report discusses the research questions based on the findings and data analysis to investigate the aim of this report purposefully. Brief summaries are also provided for recommendations and conclusion part.

Statement of Original Authorship

I declare that all the materials of this thesis paper are my own work. Some others work help me a lot for preparing this thesis paper such as books, journal articles, thesis papers - personal webpage. All the materials of this thesis paper have not been published before or written by any other person. The materials are original and have not been taken from other sources except where this work has been cited and included in the text.

Candidate's Signature: _____

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Date: _____

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Chapter-1 Introduction

In language learning students' autonomy is vital because it is very helpful for motivation, personal learning strategies and language acquisition in general. The main objective of this research is to explore the present state of learner autonomy among secondary school students in English classes. This research paper also tries to investigate the challenges and advantages of learner autonomy regarding teachers and students attitude and understanding. In this research, qualitative approach has been taken. The finding explains state of learner autonomy and both teacher and student experiences along with their understanding about communicative language teaching approach in English language teaching classroom. Some recommendations are also mentioned in the conclusion part.

1.1 Problem Statement

As English is one of the important languages in Bangladesh, students of this country spend time in learning English both in classrooms and outside of the classrooms. In spite of spending more time in learning English in educational institutions, a large number of learners do not have enough ability in using English. The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach was launched in 1996 in Bangladesh's Secondary and Higher Secondary English courses to change the real scenario of English Language Teaching in 1996. The principles of CLT approach is that the teacher needs to react as a facilitator to create a learner centered classroom and involve the learners in authentic and meaningful communication which creates a chance to express learners' ideas and opinions to fulfill the aim of classroom activities. On the other hand, learner autonomy is the central issue of CLT approach. Autonomy is considered as the freedom and ability to manage of one's own activity which creates a right to make decisions.

This researcher has seen that, in Bangladesh one of the most problems of CLT is that the teacher is considered as a main figure in the classroom and the learners follow their teachers. This common Bangladeshi culture hinders teacher –student and student – student interaction in the classrooms. As a result, students only accept their teachers' lectures, which do not help to create communicative learning environment. In this way, students also do not get chance to express their opinions or ideas in the classroom. At the same time, students do not get chance to speak in

English to communicate with others. Students are also not inspired to take part in authentic or meaningful communication. Because students' final evaluation depends on written examination and most of the secondary school students are habituated to memorizing their answers to pass their examinations.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 History of Learner Autonomy

The word autonomy is a Greek word and the meaning of this word is law. It started to be used in the sector of language learning. It also was used in other sectors of philosophy, religion and medicine.

Galileo presents the significance of autonomy that if a person does not have own motivation, no one can teach himself. At the beginning of 1970's, the concept of autonomy was introduced in language learning with the foundation of the Centre de Recherches st d' Applications en language (CRAPEL) for the first time and the main target was for the adult education (Benson, 2001).

1.2.2 History of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach

Hymes (1971) first introduced the communicative language teaching (CLT) at the beginning of 1970s as an approach. It has become popular because of its innovative teaching and learning system in many Asian countries. It is considered as a medium of communication (Hymes, 1971, as cited in Majumder, 2011).

1.2.3 Introduction of CLT in Bangladesh

Before 1996 Grammar Translation method was followed to teach English from the class one to twelve as a compulsory subject in Bangladesh. By following the Grammar translation method, students had to memorize the answers and they did not have chance to practice the four English skills (Podder, 2007, as cited in Majumder, 2011).

The CLT approach was started in the syllabus of Bangladesh in 1996 (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 1996).The new textbooks were designed to follow the new syllabus which helped to focus on all English skills. The *English for Today* books which are known to us as the

English textbooks designed based on CLT approach for grades 6 to 12. The Government of Bangladesh started providing training to English teachers in 1999 as the English teachers had to take responsibility for implementing the communicative English curriculum. A total of 28,886 secondary school English teachers took training as a part of the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) on March 2007 (Podder, 2007, as cited in Majumder, 2011).

1.3 Objectives

Though CLT approach is introduced in Bangladesh, students cannot get chance to participate in communicative activities in an autonomous environment. Therefore, research objectives of this report are given below:

General Objective

- To find out the possibility of developing learner autonomy in English language classroom through using different communicative activities.

Specific Objectives

- To find out the problems of CLT in the secondary level based on teachers and students opinions
- To explore the benefits of CLT from both teachers' and learners' perspectives.

1.4 Research Questions

To address the general objective of this paper I have decided the following research questions.

General Question

- How does CLT allow learner autonomy in the English version and Bengali medium schools of Dhaka city?

Specific Questions

- What problems do the students face as independent learners? Do they get the freedom to work as autonomous or independent learners through independent learning activities?

- To what extent are the students feel satisfied or get benefited as independent learners with their English lessons?

1.5 Significance of the Study

CLT approach is followed in the secondary English curriculum and the textbooks for English learning and teaching. This paper will give an idea to the language teachers about using of CLT approach for learner freedom or autonomy. I expect the findings of this study will help the language teachers to know how to improve in learner autonomy through using communicative activities in the classroom. Therefore, this study will be a medium as a guideline for the English language teachers in the secondary schools.

1.6 Scope and Definition

1.6.1 Learner Autonomy

Autonomy has an inner significant meaning which indicates about ability. Different types of capacities can be engaged in learning language. Scholars actually agree that most significant capacities depend on learners who can plan their own learning activities, observe their improvement and assess their outcomes. (Benson, 2003)

1.6.2 Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)

The goal of communicative Language Teaching approach is to create communicative competence for language teaching and improve the methods of four English language skills to teach which confess the interconnection of language and communication. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

1.6.3 Relation between Communicative Practice and Learner autonomy

Communicative practice indicates that practice should be justified in an actual communicative context for using language where real information will be changeable and using language will be unpredictable.

For example, students are asked to discuss a map of their neighborhood. They also have to answer some questions relating with the new different places such as the nearest cafe or bus spot (Richards, 2006).

From the above discussion it can be said that there is a relation between communicative practice and learner autonomy to create a communicative atmosphere which makes an opportunity to be an autonomous learner independently.

1.6.4 Different Types of Communicative Activities

There are many varieties of communicative activities. (Richards, 2006); for example,

Task – Completion Activities
These kinds of activities actually emphasize using language resources. For example: Puzzles, map- reading, games etc.

Information- Gathering Activities
Students involve themselves into interviews, surveys and observations where they are expected to use linguistic resources to gather information.

Opinion-Sharing Activities
Students share their opinions, thinking and understating with others. For example: Students will make a list based on an importance of a memorable incident.

Information –Transfer Activities
This kind of activities is used to transfer information in different forms. For example: Students read instructions to match something from A to B and later paint a map which shows the sequence of previous one, they can also read some information about a topic and finally present it within a graph.

Reasoning –Gap Activities
New information needs to connect with practical reason in reasoning -gap activities. For example: Compare the teachers' timetable on the basis of actual class timetable.

Role Plays

In these activities students involve themselves in roles to participate in a scene based on given information or clues.

1.6.5 Students' Problems as Independent learners

Finally, this report also presents the problems students' face as independent learners in the classroom. Teachers should react as their learners' cooperators to fulfill the purposes of learner autonomy. Learners are motivated by their teachers. (Benson, 2001, as cited in Cakici, 2015)

1.7 Work Plan:

Chapter one mentions the background and context, aims, significance and scope of this research.

Chapter two includes the literature review and opinions of the researches. This chapter helped to ensure how other researchers identified about learner autonomy through CLT approach for teaching and learning language.

Chapter three presents the methodology part where data collection of the study, instruments of the data collection, participants of the study and the limitation of this research were present.

Chapter four discusses the findings and data analysis of this study. I designed this chapter based on the observation data and responses of teachers and students interviews.

Chapter five includes the discussion on the result of the study. In this chapter I discussed the real scenario of using CLT approach in language teaching related to learner autonomy in the classroom.

Chapter six discusses the overall summary of this report. I also mentioned some recommendations as probable solutions in this chapter.

Chapter -2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Learner autonomy has an inner meaning which indicates about ability of someone. On the other hand, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach creates communicative competence for improving four English language skills to teach which helps the interconnection of language and communication. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

Learner autonomy is one of the main factors of Communicative Language Teaching.

2.1.1 Definitions of Learner Autonomy

Autonomy is considered as the ability to control someone's own learning. Researchers have given their own opinions about the term of autonomy based on its nature.

Helec first thought about the term autonomy. He thinks that learner autonomy is an ability to take charge of one's own learning (Helec, 1981, as cited in Benson, 2001).Therefore, learner autonomy is an effective ability which helps to perform on independently in a learning situation and learners will be able to fix their improvement of their learning process.

 As autonomy is ability, it helps to learn how to make decisions about self and this ability also helps to identify the importance of taking responsibility for one's own objectives, improvement and techniques. On the other hand, this ability also helps to make the impact of learning and the evaluation of the learning process. However, the independent learning starts from a need to develop long-term learner strategies. This process will apply in present or future learning environment where a teacher cannot be present or available. Moreover, learner can evaluate the effect of learning when he/she desires to learn something through selecting and planning how to learn and what should learn and learners plan or make his /her decisions through a capacity (Aoki, 1998, as cited in Onozawa, 2010).

Observing the above definitions it is shown that in learner autonomy the ability of a learner is his/her dynamic quality which already exists in his/her inner side.

2.1.2 Link between Learner Autonomy, ELT and CLT

The most significant capacities depend on learners who can plan their own learning activities, observe their improvement and assess their outcomes in the classroom (Benson, 2003). Consequently, describing Benson's opinion it can be mentioned that the system of classroom activities of CLT plays a vital role in the ELT classroom for teachers and learners. According to CLT approach, learners now have to take part in classroom activities. Learners have to be comfortable with listening to their classmates in group work or pair work tasks, instead of depending on the teacher. They are hoped to take responsibility for their own learning as autonomous learners. Teachers now play a role as a simplifier and observer in the ELT classroom.

For this reason, it can be said communicative activities encourage learners to be autonomous using CLT approach in the ELT classroom. Therefore, I want to know the present situation of learner autonomy among secondary school students in ELT classes in Dhaka city through my study.

2.2 Features of Learner Autonomy

2.2.1 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Benson and Voller (1997) mention that the capacity of taking responsibilities of one's learning depends on:

- the circumstances where learners involve themselves for their own learning
- an inborn ability which puts down the institutional education
- the right of learners to fix the instruction of their own learning

 (Benson and Voller, 1997)

Finally, the above characteristics reflect that learners become more autonomous when they can create their choices regarding what they study and how they study.

2.2.2 Autonomy and Responsibility

Autonomy and responsibility have a connection. Autonomy is considered as the freedom and ability to manage one's own matter which helps to make a right decision. Responsibility also connected with the ability to manage one's own matter and one has to work with the results of his/her own activities. Autonomy and responsibility both present active involvement and they are very much connected (Agota and Szabo, 2000).

Thus, from a clear point of view it needs to explain that autonomy can be equal in meaning to responsibility when learners are learning in groups. Without taking help of other, the learners need to get involved in learning

2.2.3 Autonomy and Motivation

The effective learning is possible when learners develop in motivational patterns (Benson, 2001, as cited in Cakici, D. 2015).

In addition to, Dornyei (2001) also gives importance on the role of motivation which helps to fix success or failure in any learning situation. He thinks 99 percent students will be able to develop in language learning who are really motivated.

Besides, he describes that without motivation learner autonomy will destroy and motivation makes freedom to choose, instead of acting on others desire.
Therefore, learners can make a spontaneous atmosphere in the classroom being motivated.

2.2.4 Autonomy and Language Learning Strategies

The useful use of learning techniques can simplify the language learning process. As a result, all language learning techniques are connected with the features of power, autonomy and goal. Learning techniques always should make chance for the learners to be more autonomous. Thus, the target of learning language relies on learners' own responsibilities and attitudes (Oxford, 2001, as cited in Agota and Szabo, 2000).

Specifically, it can be mentioned that learning techniques are considered as a main way in the field of language learning for autonomous learners.

2.2.5 Teachers' Role to Promote Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy indicates to the teachers to perform as an adviser, researcher and mentor and plan the learning process in different ways carefully (Little, 1991, as cited in Cakici, 2015).

On the contrary, teachers should think their learners as their partners to achieve common aims of learner autonomy. They inspire learners to become self-confident. As partners, teachers can help learners to overcome barriers. (Benson, 2001, as cited in Cakici, 2015)

Consequently, from my point of view it is clear that when a teacher becomes partner, students feel relaxed to express their understanding easily with the whole class. They get the chance to be independent learners in the classroom environment. In these circumstances, teachers need to be patient, open and non- judgmental to make a scope of freedom of the learners.

2.2.6 Advantages of Learner Autonomy

In learner autonomy learners are habituated to taking part in active role instead of accepting the traditional approaches. There are some advantages regarding on learner autonomy (Rodrigues, 2014):

- Learners can receive responsibility for their own learning
- Autonomous learners are free to select their materials, objectives and needs
- Learners get chance to be more confidence
- Learners become self-motivated through the classroom teaching atmosphere

Accordingly from the above portion it presents that learner autonomy has made a new dimension for innovative learning system in English language teaching (ELT) where learners show their best abilities in a fee environment.

2.2.7 Challenges of Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy is challenging for the ELT teachers. The teachers should be their learners' partners to gain aims of learner autonomy (Wenden, 1998, as cited in Cakici, 2015).

Hence, from a clear understanding it indicates that teachers always have to help to the students to remove their confusions and share their understanding. Finally, it can be said teachers have to

take learner autonomy as a challenge to make a learner autonomous environment. For the development of learner autonomy in ELT classes, teachers have to help their students to set objectives and evaluate themselves to acquire the knowledge and skills which are necessary for them.

2.2.8 Learner Autonomy in ELT in Bangladesh

Pair and group work help implementing the learner autonomy in the classes. Group work is one of the most important steps in the learner autonomous environment. But many teachers face problems to organize group activities and they do not have ability to take part in group work successfully (Cakici, 2015). In my research I therefore wanted to explore the possibility of developing learner autonomy through using different collaborative activities, particularly in English language classrooms. In this regard, I investigated both teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions towards establishing learner autonomy in the CLT approach of English teaching and learning. Specifically, from my personal experience I have seen the teachers of Bangladesh are habituated to taking classes in a lecture mode. For this reason, this research actually wants to explore how much the teachers feel challenges to motivate the students, simplify the process of language learning and giving proper guidance to make the students more autonomous in ELT classes.

2.3 Learner Autonomy in CLT Classes

Learner autonomy is a part and parcel of CLT approach in the present teaching and learning situation. The features of CLT approach are given below:

2.3.1 CLT Features

2.3.1.1 Principles of Communicative Approach

In communicative approach learners learn a language through using this approach to communicate. Authentic and meaningful communication needs to be the aim of classroom activities. Fluency is a significant part of communication and communication includes the different language skills. In this approach authentic language is used in teaching and learning activities and emphasis is given on the process of communication instead of language structures.

Students are given chance to express their ideas and opinions and context is also important here (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

At last, there is no doubt CLT activities need to practise according to the principles of communicative approach for the students' better improvement in communicative competence.

2.3.1.2 Characteristics of Communicative Approach

Richards & Rodgers (2001) describe five main characteristics to follow Johnson and Johnson (1998) that indicates current strategies of communicative methodology:

Appropriateness: Language use presents the situations of its use and it must be depends on the setting, the roles of the participants, and the purpose of the communication.

Message Focus: Learners should be able to make and understand messages which are real meanings. Therefore, information sharing and information transferring are connected in CLT activities.

Psycholinguistic Process: CLT activities give chance to involve learners in the benefit of using cognitive and other processes that are important points in second language acquisition.

Risk Taking: Learners are inspired to create guesses and learn from their errors. Actually, learners are motivated to involve in a different of communicative techniques.

Free Practice: CLT inspires the learners to share their own skills, instead of practicing individual skills.

The characteristics of communicative approach have been mentioned on the above part of this report present a set of rules which reflect a communicative view of language learning and these characteristics of communicative approach needs to use to implement the CLT activities in the classroom.

2.3.1.3 Aim of Learning a Language in CLT

Larsen-Freeman (2000) explained that in CLT approach students get a chance to work on all four skills from the starting time. Vocabulary and grammar are learnt from functional and situational context. The main purposes of language teaching and learning process are communicative activities, use of authentic material and group activities. Other purposes of language using in CLT approach are Teacher – student and student –student interaction. Authentic language, real – life language, newspaper, magazines, movies, songs etc are used for target language. Students' native language is also acceptable in CLT approach. Teachers assess students' accuracy and fluency informally as a co – communicator.

Therefore, all of these necessary points are included to learn language properly to fulfill the purposes of CLT approach.

2.3.1.4 Role of Students and Teachers in Communicative Approach

From the discussion of communicative approach it has been found that the role of students and teachers in a communicative classroom is a very important topic. The aim of communicative approach is to communicate. The role of a learner is to be responsible for making a connection with both the listener and the speaker which makes an environment to communicate in the target language and teachers' role is to make this opportunity for the students.

Learners have to involve themselves for class activities in a group where they will maintain their classroom conditions. As a result, learner needs to participate based on their ability and they will learn in an autonomous environment (Richards and Rodgers, 2001)

In other words, Richards & Rodgers (2001) narrate teachers' roles in CLT. They think that teachers have two main roles. The first role is to make an easy process so that all participants can communicate in the classroom. The second role is to perform as an independent performer so that the teachers can involve themselves in learning and teaching group. The teachers also are expected to perform with the students and perform as leader, motivator, adviser, and an investigator. Besides, teachers can also be entertainers in the classrooms.

2.3.1.5 Classroom Activities in Communicative Language Teaching

CLT class creates opportunity for the students where they have to perform and practise language even outside of the classroom. There are two main activities of CLT:

a) Accuracy versus Fluency Activities and b) Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Task-Based Instruction (TBI)

a) Accuracy versus Fluency Activities

One of the aims of CLT is to develop fluency in language use. Fluency is a natural language using process. It happens when a speaker involves himself/herself in meaningful interaction. Fluency is improved through classroom activities in which students must discuss meaning, use communication process and correct misunderstandings with each other. **(**Richards, 2006)

On the other hand, accuracy practice is an opposite side of fluency practice. There are some differences between the activities of fluency and activities of accuracy. At the time of activities of fluency actual use of language is used. It helps to create meaningful use of language, creates language which is not preplanned and joins the language use with the context. At the same time, activities of accuracy create classroom use of language, create language out of context and do not create meaningful communication (Richards, 2006).

Fluency activities and accuracy activities create a chance of using group work and group work is not compulsory in fluency task (Brumfit, 1984, as cited in Richards, 2006).

Finally, from my own understanding it is being mentioned as fluency is a natural language using process, it makes the communication instead of facing problems in communicative competence when learners involve themselves with others.

b) Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in CLT Approach
Content-based instruction (CBI) and task-based instruction (TBI) are known as process – based methodology. Content-based instruction and task-based instruction (TBI) help to explore the aim of communicative teaching .They promote the learners' communicative competence (Richards, 2006).

Furthermore, various activities were proposed in the early days of CLT. For example: information-gap and information-sharing activities. These activities are used to design many course books and ELT materials .As a result, from the point of view of TBI, pedagogical task and real – world task can be considered as classroom activities. However, two learners can try to search the number of differences between two same pictures which is an example of pedagogical task. In this way, learners can use specific kinds of language skills, grammar and vocabulary. Besides, real-world task creates a chance to use language in a real atmosphere. Therefore, a role play is an example of real-world task and students can practise a job interview with others in the classroom as real-world task (Richards, 2006).

Willis (1996) proposes six kinds of activities with examples based on the TBI:

Listing tasks: students can create a list of things because of going on a beach vacation.

Sorting and ordering: Students can work in pairs and create a list of significant features of a vacation.

Comparing: Students can talk to compare with two different supermarkets.

Problem-solving: Students can share a solution to the writer's problems after reading a letter to an advice columnist.

Sharing personal experience: Students can share their opinions on moral issues.

 Creative tasks: Students make plans to decorate a house (Willis, 1996, as cited in Richards, 2006).

For this purpose, task-based instruction or TBI can be considered as an important part for the students to justify their communicative competence in the communicative language teaching classroom.

2.3.1.6 Activities of Functional Communication

Functional communication activities give chance for the students to use language sources for solving a problem and overcoming an information gap (Littlewood, 1981, as cited in Richards, 2006). In this way, students get chance to realize their own abilities and imagination power and become more confidence on them.

2.3.1.7 Pair Work and Group Work in Communicative Approach

Learners become benefited through pair work and group works. They can learn from listening to other members languages at the time of group activities. As a result, they will be able to use a language in their activities with others. Similarly, their motivational level will increase and they will get chance to improve in fluency. (Richards, 2006)

2.3.1.8 Authenticity in Communicative Approach

Communicative approach creates relationship between classroom activities and real life. Clarke and Silberstein (1977) narrate the authenticity of communicative approach:

Classroom activities should similar with the real world. As language is a medium of communication, methods and materials should be prepared following the real world and the aim of reading also needs to be similar with real life in the classroom (Clarke and Silberstein, 1977, as cited in Richards, 2006).

At last, based on the varied features of CLT it can be assumed that CLT classes require higher autonomy from the students. As autonomy gives opportunity to be confidence, most of the improvement depends on students' motivation. As a result, scholars think motivated students become more interested in participating in various communicative activities. Therefore, it can be mentioned the importance of autonomy is connected with the features of CLT approach.

2.3.2 Linking CLT and ELT Features with Learner Autonomy Features

2.3.2.1 Autonomy and the Communicative Approach

Nunan (2000) finds out the connection between autonomy and the communicative approach for language learners. The development of autonomy is connected with the development of a communicative competence and the target language. He mentions that proof regarding is absent there (Nunan, 2000, as cited in Onozawa, 2010). Besides, Benson (2001) indicates autonomy has a direct connection with the learner –centered practice through communicative teaching and autonomy gives importance on learner as a master in language learning process. Finally it can be said that both autonomy and communicative approach make a chance to use target language and communicative competence in an independent way.

2.3.2.2 Autonomy in the ELT Classroom

Learning is considered as a system of new steps of autonomy. Autonomy helps to gain the learner's motion through their independency or freedom. On the other hand, in CLT classroom autonomy relies on learner's opinions. Again, most useful activities are selected based on the students' decision where students' expectations are given importance (Benson, 2003).

At last, observing the above discussion it can be said the learners become more confidence when they get chance to ensure their own experiences with their learning process. Thus, this learning process helps for self-management and self instruction that the learners gain for good language learning in the ELT classes.

2.3.3 State of ELT and CLT in Secondary Education in Bangladesh

This research wants to explore about the current state of learner autonomy through communicative activities in ELT classroom. From my personal experience it can be said always teachers follow the traditional teaching style where students do not get chance to improve their communicative competence through using target language as they totally depend on their teacher opinions and both teachers and students do not fell the importance of CLT approach in English class.

Chowdhury (2003) presents the problems that are related to the communicative language teaching and the learners of Bangladesh based on ELT situation. He discusses the importance of culture in language teaching and learning and how this problem applies the local trained teachers. Chowdhury thinks the techniques for communicative language teaching are followed by the local English teachers and trainers which damage the CLT atmosphere in Bangladesh. He discusses that language teaching materials should be reorganized in a new pattern based on the reality of the Bangladesh culture.

However, Hamid and Baldauf (2008) expect learner will improve their weak communicative competence through CLT approach and they also improve in English education in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Chowdhury (2003) identifies the connection among the process of ELT in Bangladesh, the culture of Bangladesh and the ELT textbook patterns are almost absent.

Finally, from the above discussion it is can be said the relation between CLT approach and learner autonomy are almost missing in the secondary English class in Bangladesh. As a result, the purpose of CLT approach is not being followed in the ELT classroom as well as there is no connection between CLT and Learner autonomy.

2.4 Preparing Teachers for Learner autonomous ELT Classes

As learner autonomy creates an opportunity to prove learners ability in the classroom through communicative activities, English language teachers need to be expert to arrange an independent environment in the classroom .Therefore, teacher's preparation is very important for learner autonomous ELT classes.

2.4.1 Teachers' Roles in Learner-Autonomous ELT Classrooms

The teacher needs to arrange the classroom lecture in this way so that learner can use the target language based on communication goal (Benson, 2003).

Therefore, from the above opinion it can be said that autonomous learners get an important role to manage the learning process. The autonomous learners analyze new topics that help them to take responsibility. They are also taught to cooperate and share responsibility in learning process. Therefore a learner can be autonomous when a teacher will know how to motivate learners to think spontaneously. Consequently, teachers' roles are necessary in the autonomy –oriented ELT classroom.

2.4.2 Challenges of Teacher Training

Communicative approach is proposed for improving the English proficiency of students of Bangladesh as students of Bangladesh are very weak in English and they cannot apply English in their daily life properly. (NCTB, 2003, as cited in Hamid and Baldauf, 2008)

There are two objectives according to the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) (Hamid and Baldauf, 2008):

- English Textbooks will be produced based on CLT-based for secondary and higher secondary students
- Training will be given to the school teachers so that they become able to teach communicative English

After introducing the CLT approach, CLT textbooks are designed in the new pattern and English teachers take CLT training for 13 days in some schools. Besides, there is little change in English teaching and learning which continues in the same classroom and it is enclosed by the same socioeconomic and political realities with the same students and the same insufficient facilities (Hamid and Baldauf, 2008). As a result, the policy makers and the planners also need to plan English teachers' training for the CLT approach otherwise teachers will not be able to reflect the real scenario of CLT approach among secondary level students in ELT classroom.

2.4.3 The present Situation of Educational and Management Policy of Bangladesh

Siddique (2004) gives an idea about the present situation of CLT in Bangladesh after implementing the CLT approach in secondary and higher secondary levels. She describes that CLT is facing so many problems in the surface of Bengali medium schools in Bangladesh. Siddique mentions and lists the following reasons which are destroying the shaping of CLT in Bangladesh:

2.4.3.1 Lack in Academic Competence and Ability of Local ELT Practitioners

Siddique (2004) gives her opinion from the real scenario of Bangladesh that teachers can teach without any formal training only in Bangladesh. She identifies that very limited in-service training is delivered to the teachers. Teacher trainers and teachers inform her that most of the teachers at the primary and secondary level have less ability in four basic skills and it hampers the communicative competence in the ELT classroom.

She claims that a large number of teachers do not have clear concept of CLT. Therefore, the textbooks are used ineffectively in the ELT classroom though the CLT approach has been started in the form of textbooks in the primary and the secondary level.

2.4.3.2 Economic Constraints

Bangladesh has limited resources and economic constraints which are destroying the ambition and inspiration of local ELT practitioners. A large number of teachers involve in extra teaching jobs as private tutors or in many institutions to be financially safe. This situation does not inspire the teachers to create a communicative teaching in the classroom.

She mentions that sufficient materials and related teaching aids such as computers, tape recorders, projectors and photocopies etc. are necessary for successful implementation in CLT classroom.

2.4.3.3 Administrative Set-Up

 Local ELT practitioners have pressure to complete exam-oriented teaching from the institutions and the guardians. As a result, the scope of using communicative competence is limited. Moreover, teachers also have a pressure for completing and focusing on the syllabus. For this reason, teachers cannot pay attention on speaking and listening skill.

2.4.3.4 Cultural Conflicts

The impact of Bangladeshi cultural situation compares with CLT approach. Teachers and students cannot accept the new change where class will be learner-centered in Bangladesh. Local students prefer the common traditional methods of reading loudly with their teachers.

2.4.3.5 Seating Arrangement, and Language Teaching and Learning

In the traditional classrooms benches are fixed or chairs and desks are organized in long rows that are appropriate for lecture mode of teaching and learning. As a result, pair or group work is not possible in this circumstance.

2.4.3.6 Class size and Language Teaching and Learning:

The size of Bangladeshi classrooms is also a significant part for classroom teaching and learning. She mentions that small size of class helps the teachers to get attention of each student and find out each individual problem. It also ensures the classroom activities and all students' participation.

The above discussions should consider to the policy makers and the planners to implement the CLT approach in ELT classroom so that students can get freedom and take responsibility to involve themselves in their learning process.

2.4.3.7 Testing and Assessment

Reading tests are taken in the format of comprehension tests but questions are mostly given from the direct reading passages and students copy their answers from the passages. She also explained that the writing test is actually a test of memory. Students only memorize answers to present them in the examination. When they asked to write some sentences from their own thinking, they feel helpless and the test of listening skills is regarded as difficult to the administration in a national scale.

2.5 Conclusion

In Bangladesh CLT approach is launched in 1996. But the principles of CLT approach are not followed in ELT classroom in Bangladesh properly. From the above discussion it can be assumed that autonomy makes an environment in which the learners create their own decisions and they have a chance to become an independent learner at the time of learning. It is also clear that learner autonomy is very much connected with the principles of CLT approach. Autonomy and CLT approach help to make learners' interested in their learning and learners discuss with their peers in group or pair works that helps them to be confident to share new areas independently. In both sectors the ELT teachers need to pay attention on developing of learners' positive attitudes to make them autonomous. However, the secondary students of Bangladesh are not encouraged to participate in authentic or meaningful communication. Therefore, this report has been designed to explore the possibility of developing learner autonomy in English language classroom through using different communicative activities.

Consequently, this research paper explores the present state of learner autonomy among secondary school students in CLT classrooms. While investigating this paper, it also tries to understand the challenges of learner autonomy in the communicative classroom and the advantages of learner autonomy for improving communicative competence which have been tried to link with the many scholars opinion in this chapter so that actual findings can compare with the previous information.

Chapter-3 Methodology

3.1 The Importance of Research in Education

Education is an important element of academia. For improving learning and teaching research findings can help. The state of learner autonomy is an important topic in English learning and teaching practice. As a result, the findings of this study explore to know how to improve in learner autonomy through using communicative activities in the English classroom. Based on the importance of research in education an educational research is a process of steps that generally starts identifying a research problem of study. After that, it includes reviewing of the literature, specifying an aim for the study, collecting and analyzing data and forming an explanation for the information. This process is followed in a research paper for the audiences for assessing and using in the educational class or society (Creswell, 2002).

Creswell explains the various aims of educational research; such as

- **Improve Practice**

Research can point out ways of improving practice that have been justified with many strategies and by many various kinds of people.

- **Add to Knowledge**

Research can join what we know about how people learn and what we can simplify for the learning process.

- **Address Gaps in Knowledge**

Research can explore specific areas, for example: the difference between the impacts of online learning and the traditional classroom learning.

- **Expand Knowledge**

Research can give permission for increasing what we know in different ways.

- **Replicate Knowledge**

Research can perform as a test to justify previous findings.

However, there are various approaches to investigate various areas. A research approach has quantitative approach, qualitative approach and mixed method**.** According to the characteristics

of research approaches, they are plans and the process for research that measure the steps from assumptions to in detail methods of data collection, analysis, and explanation. On the other hand, the purpose of research method is to collect data and the task of data collection starts after a research problem fix and research plan. Observation methods, interview method, survey, through questionnaires are different research methods. Nevertheless, research tool is specific mens to collect data. Questionnaires, interviews, observation, case study, sample survey etc. are research tools. Questionnaire can be a tool to collect educational data.

3.2Research Approach, Research Method and Research Tool in this Research

3.2.1 Qualitative Approach

For qualitative research the researcher goes to the people, talks with them and observes their behavior from their real-life situation. The researcher is the main medium who collects data himself/herself by observation, interviewing participants or analyzing documents. (Majumdar, 2011)

The researchers collect their data themselves rather than depending on others' instruments. Then they analyze the data and organize the ideas into categories or themes. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Majumdar, 2011)

Qualitative approach selected for this research paper. From the above discussion it is clear that qualitative approach helps describing the qualities and characteristics of something. It means qualitative research can provide details about human behavior, emotion, personality, needs, desires and different information that is essential to design a research paper. Therefore, I used qualitative approach in this research to involve the secondary school students and teachers to know their personal opinions and attitudes towards learner autonomy and class activities of CLT.

3.2.2 Methods and Tools

Both interview method and observation method were used with open ended questions. I also mentioned the literature review as my secondary data collection. I observed six different classes and took four teachers' and ten students' interview as my primary data collection.

On the other hand, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and class observations were the process of data collection. These were the main forms of data collection. The similarity of a

research method depends on the aim of the research and the questions patterns (Seidman, 2006, as cited in Majumdar, 2011)

a.) Semi Structured Interview

I took a semi structured interview of learners and teachers to know about the understanding of the relationship between learner autonomy and classroom activities and also know about the learners' and the teachers' opinion about these activities.

In students' questionnaire, students were asked total five questions. Students' questionnaire (Appendix-4 and Appendix-6) is given below with the purposes of their themes:

Table 1: Purposes of Students Interview Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Students' Interview	Themes and Purposes of Students' Interview Questionnaire
1. What kind of activities do you get in your English language classes?	According to the principles of communicative approach, authentic and meaningful communication needs to be the aim of classroom activities. As a result, first question asked to identify how much students get chance to participate in communicative activities.
2. Do you get an opportunity to express your ideas and opinions in your English language classes?	Learner autonomy is considered as the ability to control someone's own learning and it is possible when students get chance to express their own ideas in the classrooms. Therefore, second question reflects about chance of expressing students' opinions.

3. Do you think that group work/pair work allows you to find out problems for yourself and helps to improve your English?	Scholars think students can learn from listening to the language by other members at the time of group work and they will use language in their activities. As a result, students' motivational level will increase. Therefore, question three presents to explore how much students improve in English through group/ pair work.
4. How confident do you feel about your English ability in your English language classes? Are there any specific areas that you would like to improve?	Question four is related with the purposes of question two and question three. Question four is about students' confidence in English ability which may help the students to participate in group work as well as express own opinions.
5. Which of the activities do you find most useful for improving your English?	Finally, question five indicates students' attitude on most useful activities for improving English.

Teachers' questionnaire (Appendix-5 and   Appendix-7) is given below with the purposes of their themes:

Table 2: Purposes of Teachers Interview Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Teachers' Interview	**Themes and Purposes of Teachers' Interview Questionnaire**
1. What does the term "learner autonomy" mean to you? Can you give more details about it?	In teacher's questionnaire, the main focus was on teachers understanding between classroom activities and learner autonomy. That is why, teachers were asked to share their perception on learner autonomy.
2. What are the characteristics of an ideal autonomous learner?	Second question was asked to know teachers' perception regarding learner autonomy more appropriately through characteristics of ideal autonomous learner.
3. What do you think about your present	Based on the importance of learner autonomy teachers

students in terms of learner autonomy?	also asked to share their view on their students' abilities where their students were autonomous or not.
4. What do you understand about communicative task? Which activities do you think are more communicative in the English language classroom?	Question four was designed to understand about teachers' understanding about communicative task and importance of it. Because, if teachers have a proper knowledge in CLT approach, they will give importance on communicative task and encourage the students to become more autonomous.
5. What do you often do to encourage your students to become more autonomous through using communicative activities?	Teachers were asked how they motivated their students to become more autonomous through communicative activities.

b.) Class Observation:

I observed six different classes in two renowned schools (Bengali medium school and English version school) of Dhaka City. Classroom observation helped me to get more information about the learners' and teachers' attitude towards CLT based classes and activities. Class observation checklist (Appendix- 1) is given below with the purposes of it:

Table 3: Purposes of Class Observation Checklist

Themes of the Class Observation Checklist	Purposes of Class Observation Checklist with Their Themes
Process of Using the Target Language	First part was designed to know how teachers and students used target language with each other , how teachers used linguistic modifications when it is necessary to make target language more comprehensible for the students and encourage the students to use target language in the classroom.

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Process of Following the Communicative Language Teaching Approach	Second part was designed to observe how the teachers followed the principles of communicative language teaching approach. Because teachers need to use authentic communication to motivate language use and classroom should be student-centered according to CLT approach.
Lesson Implementation	Different classroom techniques, proper direction of the teachers, frequency of changing different activities, students' motivation and varied interaction patters such as teacher/student, student/teacher and student/student were observed as lesson implementation.
Class Atmosphere	Finally, class atmosphere observed to explore how much suitable environment the students get to express their own ideas.

3.3 Participants:

The participants of this research were four English language teachers (Two Bengali medium teachers and two English version teachers) of two renowned schools of Dhaka City. Besides, ten students (Five Bengali medium students and five English version students) participated in the data collection process of the same two schools that are doing English courses in secondary school levels.

3.4 Procedure and Timeline

Different procedures were followed to collect data. First of all, six classes were observed within two weeks (April 16 - April 27, of 2016). At the time of class observation, a class observation

checklist was used to observe the data. Then four senior English teachers were interviewed by four days and finally ten secondary students were interviewed by eight days. Both teachers and students were asked from different pre-planned questions.

3.5 Data Analysis:

The whole research was based on qualitative research data. Observation and interview were used as research tools. At first, with the permission letter, I started class observation sessions at two renowned school of Dhaka City. After completing class observations, I described all of the points or ideas which were related to the research topic. Later I took the interviews of teachers and students. I asked questions to the participants (teachers and students) from the interview questions and asked them to clarify points which were prepared in the questionnaire. With the permission of the participants (teachers and students), I recorded the interviews with a voice recorder and later transcribed and included them in the research. I read the transcripts for several times and highlighted important points which had relation with the questions. The interview gave an overview or overall idea of the teachers' and students' own experiences, about their understanding, and what they thought or said about CLT and learner autonomy. Then finally I described the transcripts into different categories and topics. These categories helped me to present the current situation of learner autonomy and both teachers' and students' experiences along with their understanding about CLT and learner autonomy in more detail.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

I did not use the real name of the participating students, teachers and school names. I took necessary permissions from the participants before recoding their interviews, the school authority before observing classes and taking interview of the participants. Finally, I was not being biased and I tried to do that objectively and transparently while analyzing the data.

3.7 Limitations

The data of this research was collected from two secondary schools and I was able to manage only four teachers' interview which may not represent the relationship between classroom activities and learner autonomy in teaching and learning English class in the secondary level of Bang

Chapter-4 Findings and Data Analysis

The findings of this study have been presented based on the interview questions and the data of class observation checklist.

The secondary English curriculum, English syllabus and English textbook are same in Bengali medium school and English version school. Only the process of using the target language is different in both schools. That is why; I tried to know about the present situation of both secondary level schools (Bengali medium school and English version school) through my data collection.

The secondary school level teachers (Bengali medium school teachers and English version school teachers) ensured that they took classes to follow the CLT approach and arrange the classes based on communicative activities before observing the classes. Finally, the researcher found different research data after observing the classes.

4.1 Findings from the Class Observations

Some meanings are being presented here based on some specific words such as always, sometimes, never, most, some and a few to make the readers understand about using time and numbers by the teachers and the students for many reasons or situations.

In findings the words are mentioned on the following meanings:

Always means continuously (a work has been done for more than five or six times), Sometimes means repeatedly (less than four times), never means nothing has been done, most means highest numbers or time, some means others and few means very little.

4.1.1 Process of Using the Target Language

Teachers always maintained a balance between target language and native language in the classes of the English version school. Although teachers tried communicating through the target language, most of the students responded in Bengali. As a result, teachers also kept using of the native language clearly along with target language so that students could understand about their class activities and instructions of their teachers properly.

Sometimes teachers used linguistic modifications when it was necessary to make the target language more comprehensible for the students. The use of target language was minor compared to the use of native language among the students of English version school. However, the teachers of English version school encouraged the students to use target language more.

Teachers even discouraged some of the students not to use native language and asked them to try using target language. As a result, at the end of the classes students tried to use target language. Even teachers gave them chance to mix Bengali words with the English sentences so that students felt comfortable with others and shared their understanding in their classroom.

On the other hand, Bengali medium school teachers did not encourage the students to use target language in the classroom. Only one teacher asked his students to use target language for two times. In Bengali medium school, only students of class ten tried to use target language after asking their teacher to use target language. However, students did not answer from their own thinking when they had to use target language. At that moment, students tried to answer to follow their textbook. Only they shared their own thinking when they got chance to use native language.

Although Bengali medium teachers started using target language at the beginning of the classes, it did not help as the way of classroom communication. At last, teachers kept using the native language as their students did not response in English.

Therefore, this situation helped me to understand that both teachers and students were not habituated to using target language in the classroom in Bengali medium school.

4.1.2 Process of Following the Communicative Language Teaching Approach

I found some differences between English version school and Bengali medium school when I observed their classes. The principles of communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach are not followed properly in the schools. In contrast, a little bit of principles of CLT approach had been followed in English version school although this was not enough for the students. However, the principles of CLT approach was absent in Bengali medium school.

In each class of English version school students were asked to share their own experiences related to their discussing topic. All topics were selected from their textbook and topics were

'The man who love trees', 'travelling by train', and 'Make your snacks'. As a result, all the reading and writing passages were based on student- centered experiences.

Students shared their experiences from their daily life in the classroom. They shared how much they were interested in loving to take care of trees, travelling by train and making snacks at home. Some other students had different opinions on their topics. As a result, most of the students expressed their opinions from their own feelings or experiences which provided real exchanges of information and opinions. Finally, it can be mentioned that teachers tried to use authentic communication to motivate target language use through their topics in English version school.

Each teacher followed textbook for reading passages which was a compulsory task for the students. At the time of reading passages, vocabularies were introduces in meaningful contexts.

There was no chance to use authentic communication to motivate language use in each class of the Bengali medium school. Teachers directly started reading passages and asking to their students to solve their questions /answers through writing from the textbook. Students did not ask any questions to their teachers to overcome any confusion regarding their topics. Only few students asked about some meaning of the English words. As a result, there was no chance for real exchanges of information and opinions. Especially, listening activities were totally absent in the classroom.

4.1.3 Lesson Implementation

Group activity and reading passage were two common activities in both Bengali medium and English version schools. Group activity was arranged only for writing purposes. At the time of group activity some of the English version students discussed with their group members to organize their writing part. On the other hand, the Bengali medium students did not discuss with their group members. One or two students copied their answers from their textbook.

In each class, teachers only gave direction for once. They did not use any examples to make their students understand about their discussing topics easily. Teachers did not change activities frequently. On the other hand, some English version teachers tried to change the activities logically. In each class, students were not active throughout the class period. At the same time,

some of the students became active at the time of group activities in each class. There was no interaction between teacher/student, student/teacher and student/teacher in the class of Bengali medium school.

4.1.4 Class Atmosphere

The teachers of Bengali medium school were not enthusiastic and motivated in the classroom to join with the students. As a result, a few students became enthusiastic and motivated at the time of group activities. However, one thing impressed me most was that teachers were thanking their students when they answered right.

Moreover, teachers were carefully monitoring and observing the students and even some of the teachers made jokes to make them feeling relaxed in the classroom of the English version school. As a result, it is clear that some of the teachers communicate with their students in the classroom enthusiastically. However, teachers did not give feedback in varied and appropriate way to make the students understand properly about their mistakes.

4.2 Findings from the Teacher Interview

Two Bengali medium teachers and two English version teachers interview were taken and they are identified as T1, T2, T3 and T4. The teachers were asked questions on the following topics:

4.2.1 Teachers' Perception on Learner Autonomy

Agreeing with the point of learner autonomy, three teachers mentioned that students had to have their own ability to express about any topics from their confidence.

Teacher controls the whole class through her/his smartness, voice quality and body language. She/he has to have good subject knowledge at the time of teaching. All of these necessary things help to get students' attention properly. If students get interest on any topic and teacher can make a suitable environment through her/his teaching style, students will feel relaxed to share something at that moment learner autonomy can be created in the classroom. In this way, one of the senior teachers shared his own perception on learner autonomy.

Another teacher responded,

In English classes students cannot express their opinions properly. Most of the students feel shy to express something in English. (T2)

He also mentioned that there was a limitation to express something in English classes. Most of the topics are not related with reality based on academic sector. I always have to emphasize on academic purposes and examinations.

One of the teachers mentioned that if someone can share something from his/her own thinking confidently in the classroom that will be considered as learner autonomy.

Another one of the teachers described learner autonomy is related with the students' ability and responsibility for doing their own study without help from the teachers.

4.2.2 Teachers' Perception on Characteristics of an Ideal Autonomous Learner

In response to the question, only two teachers came up with similar response. On the other hand, other two teachers could not make me understand about their perception on about an ideal autonomous learner.

In response to this question, one of the teachers stated that,
An ideal autonomous learner never feels nervous to ask any questions. It is only possible when students can communicate with their teachers easily. An ideal autonomous learner tries to solve his/her confusion with the help of his/her teacher. In this way, students feel confidence on him / her and become more interested to complete his/her lesson properly. (T4)

Other teacher mentioned that an ideal autonomous learner needs to be confident on their own thinking. Their answers might be wrong but they will express their own understanding.

4.2.3Teachers' View of Their Students' Abilities to Become Autonomous Learners

The teachers did not express positive beliefs about their present students in terms of learner autonomy. They shared students in their class are not ready to take control of their learning and express their own thinking confidently in English.

One of the teachers mentioned that-

It is unthinkable that students will share something by themselves. They actually feel shy and want to hide themselves so that they do not have to express something in front of others in English. (T3)

Teachers believed that learner autonomy cannot be achieved by all students. It can be achieved by some certain students' .Because in all classes there are a few number of students who try to present their understanding without help of their teachers in the classroom.

Other teacher mentioned that the lack of students' interest in their class and students' low level of English language proficiency is the reason for the present lack of learner autonomy in their class.

4.2.4 Teachers' Understanding about Communicative Task

Among four teachers, three teachers had partial idea about communicative task. One of the teachers did not have any concept about communicative task. Overall teachers' understanding about communicative task was not satisfactory. One of the teachers thought at the time of students' activities he also had to involve with the students so that students discuss with him about their confusion. One of the senior teachers shared his understanding about communicative task to mention that now students do not have to memorize answers. Students can answer reading an unseen passage.

Another senior teacher had twenty-four days Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training in English language class. From his training he could have known when students participated in pair work /group work, they would be able to share their ideas with each other.

He stated that,

When students talk with each other in English, they will develop on speaking. Again if I give a writing topic to the students as a group work, I will be able to know students' writing skills. (T1)

4.2.5 Teachers' Opinion about More Communicative Activities in English Language Classroom

As teachers had partial idea about communicative task, they could not mention about more communicative activities which should be applied in the English language classroom. Almost all teachers tried to avoid answering about more communicative activities.

To answer the question, only one teacher replied,

If teacher presents any well-known incident, students will respond more positively. For example: There is a topic in our textbook and the name of the topic is An Unseen beauty of Bangladesh. In this chapter students have known about Birishiri of Nethrokona district. (T1)

I asked them to tell about another unseen beauty of Bangladesh. Most of the students wanted to share whatever they knew about any places. One of the students shared about Ratargul which is situated in Sylhet and others also became more interested to share their experiences.

4.2.6 Teachers Motivate Their Students to Become More Autonomous

Teachers came up with different opinions while answering the questions. Some teachers thought teachers did not get enough time in the classroom. Therefore, they actually tried to finish their regular syllabuses. As a result, they did not focus on other activities and students also did not get chance to participate in different activities. But they asked their students to read and write something properly and follow grammar rules at the time of writing.

One of the teachers mentioned that it will be better if a teacher prepares his/her own materials for the students and students will accept it as a new thing. Students will realize that today's class will be different from the regular classes. As a result, they will be encouraged to participate in a new topic more. But teachers have to follow their text book.

One teacher had different opinion on students' encouragement. He replied, *I tell my students about their mistakes indirectly. I am used to telling them you have said well but you could have said better* (T4)

He also added that he tried to avoid all the words which could make the students discourage to express something. He always used some positive words like well done, excellent etc. He also focused on less attentive students and sometimes so that they also felt that they also had to participate in class.

4.3 Findings from the Students' Interview

Five Bengali medium students (S) and five English version students (S) interview were taken and the students were asked questions on the following topics:

4.3.1 Students Get Activities in English Language Classes

Students responded that writing, speaking and listening activities are done in their classroom. They think when someone reads passage they can listen from others and when they answer to their teachers they get chance to speak in the classroom. Side by side, they also get chance to write question/answer in the classroom.

Majority of the students shared that teachers mainly followed their textbooks for doing class activities. Some of the students told that teachers actually asked to answer from the previous discussing topic or reading passage. Almost all students mentioned that they are habituated to reading passages from their textbook and answering about true/false, gap filling, question/answer after reading passages. Students also mentioned that class activities can be based on letter writing, paragraph writing etc.

One student said,

Sometimes our teachers give us new questions to know how much we can respond after getting new questions which are related with our textbook passages. (T1S)

So it is clear that secondary students do not get chance to participate in communicative activities in the classroom.

4.3.2 Students' Opportunity to express Their Own Ideas in the Classroom

Most of the Bengali medium students narrated that sometimes they are asked to write down whatever they can share which is related with their textbook passages as well as their experience from their home as homework. Suddenly, teachers give them chance to share their opinions in one of the classes.

On the other hand, almost all the students of English version school came up with the idea that chance of expressing their ideas in the classroom makes the class environment interesting and enjoyable. But they do not get this chance in all classes.

4.3.3 Group Work/Pair Work Allows Students' to Improve in English

Majority of the students of English version directly shared that they did not speak in English with each other at the time of pair work/ group work.

Another three senior students pointed out,

We try to speak in English with the group members. But we cannot maintain it because of other group members. Other group members do not try to speak in English. (T1S)

Most of the students claimed that when they have to prepare a sentence for writing, they cannot express their ideas in English properly. As a result, they decide on speaking in Bengali with the group members so that they express their ideas easily to complete their task.

On the other hand, all the students of Bengali medium school shared different opinion on group work/pair work. They told that they did not do any group work/pair work in the classroom. As a result, they do not have any chance to speak in English with themselves at the time of class activities.

4.3.4 Students' Confidence about English Ability in English Language Classes

In response to this question, most of the Bengali medium students replied that they do not have to face more problems at the time of reading passage. They have to read passage from their textbook and teachers help them about meaning of the English words. They also claimed that they can write something about any topic. At the time of writing, they become confused when

they do not know about spelling of new English words and they have to select new English words. They also added that they need to improve in speaking and listening skills. They try to improve in grammar rules and it is a main solution to them that if they can know proper grammar rules, they will be able to improve in four English skills.

English version students had different opinions on English ability in the English classes. One of them did not like English classes and she could not present any reason for it. Two students shared they do not feel confident when they have to speak in English. Actually they cannot organize Bengali sentences into English as early as possible.

One of the students pointed out,

I try to write something as a creative writing. Where I want to present some different ideas which will only reflect my own thinking and nobody will be able to compare my writing with others. When I try to write something in my own words I feel confident that I will improve in English writing. (T4S)

At last, all students agreed that they need to improve in speaking and listening skills.

4.3.5 Students' Opinion on Most Useful Activities for Improving English

Different students had different opinions on most useful activities for improving English. To respond this question, students tried finding out so many solutions in different ways. Students mentioned that teachers can make different class environment through most useful activities and most useful activities should be selected based on students' necessity in English classes. One of the students narrated that the teacher can give them worksheet where they have to write different single English sentences based on so many English grammar rules. It will be more helpful when teachers correct their mistakes and they will feel confident on their writing. Moreover, all students have interest in improving in speaking skills. Some of them claimed that teacher can make an environment or make two big groups where each student will try to speak in English. Teacher will not help them to make any English sentences. They also added that it will be only for the students' speaking class where all students will be participated in speaking and teacher will give feedback after finishing the speaking session or next class.

Bengali medium students felt bored in their regular English classes. They expected some different activities which made them more interested in participating class activities. But they could not realize which kind of activities would be most useful in their English classes.

Only one of the students replied that teachers can play an audio in the classroom and ask to the students to know how much a student can have understood the listening audio and how much they can make others understand whatever they realize from the listening audio. Thus, one of the students gave importance on listening skills which was also most important skills to other students for improving English.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, both participants (teachers and students) share the most important issues through their personal understandings and opinions. Both teachers and students do not have proper idea about relationship between learner autonomy and communicative activities. Some of the teachers have partial idea regarding learner autonomy and communicative activities. On the other hand, the researcher finds out the dissimilarities between class activities at the time of class observation and answers of the students regarding class activities at the time of their interview. Therefore, the class observation result shows the real scenario of the English language classes where CLT approach is not being implemented as teachers are not able to follow the principles of CLT approach. Teachers avoid the CLT approach to complete the regular syllabus as students' final examination question is prepared from the regular syllabus.

Chapter -5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter shows the summary of my findings in relation to the research questions and discussion of the literature review. Here my opinions are focused to the secondary school context too.

Addressing to individual research questions:

5.2 Research Question 1

What problems do the students face as independent learners? Do they get the freedom to work as autonomous or independent learners through independent learning activities?

The findings indicate participants (English version and Bengali medium students) do not have any specific idea on independent learners or autonomous learners. For this reason, participants (English version and Bengali medium students) identify their own problems face in their classrooms. On the other hand, they can also understand that if they become autonomous they will be able to improve in English. As students are familiar with the traditional teaching style, they think they face problem to understand the real context of their reading passages from their textbooks when their teachers do not help them to know the meaning of vocabularies. The findings find that all students have similar problems regarding writing and speaking skills. According to the participants, they actually cannot organize Bengali sentences into English as early as possible both at the time of writing and speaking. Therefore, they also do not have confidence to speak in English. Side by side, they also cannot prepare a sentence for writing when they have to express their own ideas in English. Siddique (2004) mentioned her clear view based on the problems of students as independent learner .She shared her perception in this way that the writing test is actually a test of memory. Students only memorize answers to present them in the examination. When they asked to write some sentences from their own thinking, they feel helpless. Findings also show that participants (English version and Bengali medium

students) claim that if they can learn the grammar rules properly, they will be able to develop in four English skills.

Chowdhury (2003) thought the teaching techniques of communicative language teaching are still absent in English classes. These techniques specifically are followed by the local English teachers and trainers which damage the CLT atmosphere in Bangladesh. He also discussed that language teaching materials should be reorganized following a new structure based on the reality of the Bangladesh context. The findings also show the same result from students' responses. From the class observations and participants (students) response the findings identifies that teachers mainly follow their textbooks for class activities. Teachers are habituated to asking reading the textbook passages and students answer about true/false, gap filling, question/ answer after reading passages. Therefore, it highlights that the participants (students) do not have ideas about independent learning activities. As a result, participants (students) feel they can listen to others when someone reads textbook passages. Similarly, they get chance to speak in the classroom when they answer their teachers to follow their textbook passage. Besides, they also think they get chance to write question/answer regarding the reading passages in the classroom. However, according to the principles of CLT, these kinds of activities are not acceptable as independent learning activities in the classrooms.

The findings find another important issue regarding group activities. The researcher observes in the classrooms that all teachers tried to make groups to fulfill the purpose of the CLT approach as they have partial idea about it. But surprisingly participants (Bengali medium secondary level students) respond to their interview that they never do group or pair works in the classroom. Richards (2006) found several benefits for the learners through pair work and group works in his study. He stated that learners can learn from listening to the other members when others use languages at the time of group activities. For this reason, students will be able to use a language in their activities. Side by side, their motivational level will increase. They will also get chance to improve in fluency. Although findings show the English version secondary level students sometimes do group or pair works, they (English version students) shared they cannot try to use English as other group members are not interested to speak in English. Other participants (Secondary level teachers) have partial ideas on communicative activities or independent learning activities and they think that it is not possible to arrange group works with a large

number of students within 40-45 minutes in the classrooms. As a result, they are not being able to help the learners to involve in independent activities. Siddique (2004) also found the same result in her study and she mentioned that benches are connected in long rows in our classrooms and this system is not helpful for arranging pair or group work. She also mentioned small size of class helps the teachers to pay attention on each student and find out each student problems.

5.3 Research Question 2

To what extent are the students feel satisfied or get benefited as independent learners with their English lessons?

The findings present that although the government of Bangladesh tries to develop the CLT approach at the secondary level, the participants (teachers) think that the CLT approach is not being implemented properly in the classroom of Bangladesh. The findings also find that teachers mainly emphasize on teaching reading, translation and writing as these are the examination oriented activities. Siddique (2004) also gave same opinion regarding the same traditional class activities. She found the same result in her study that the local English teachers have pressure to complete exam-oriented teaching from the institutions and the guardians. As a result, students do not get chance to participate in different independent activities and there is no chance to feel satisfied as independent learners.

This research identifies that teachers try to use CLT approach partially which cannot fulfill the principles of CLT approach. The participants (Bengali medium students) claim that sometimes their teachers give them chance to write whatever they can share regarding their textbook passages as homework. According to other participants (English version students), the environment of the classroom becomes more enjoyable when their teachers give a chance to express their ideas which is limited in the classrooms. Rodrigues (2014) also agreed with this finding as he suggested that autonomous learners become free to select their objectives and needs. They also become self-motivated through the classroom teaching atmosphere.

The findings identify that students expect to participate in different activities which will be different from the regular class activities. A very few students share their opinions as solutions which reflect their interests in improving on speaking and listening skills where they expect that

only they get chance to present their own understanding through speaking and listening activities. According to Rodrigues (2014), independent learners can take responsibilities for their own learning and get chance to become more confidence (Rodrigues, 2014).

5.4 Conclusion

The main purpose of this research is to explore the present state of learner autonomy among secondary school students in English language classroom. In this chapter, the real scenario of CLT approach implementation has been reflected as challenges and all the challenges represent the current situation of learner autonomy in English language classroom. The main challenges are to make communication between teachers and students in English language classroom through using different communicative activities and implement the four English skills an autonomous environment with proper teaching aids and materials. In this regard, some recommendations are made in the next Chapter (Chapter - 6 Conclusion) which may help teachers create more learner-autonomous English classes.

Chapter - 6 Conclusion

6.1 The Value of the Research and My Personal Gains

This research was designed to find out the possibility of developing learner autonomy in English language classroom through using different communicative activities. The findings of this report especially focus on present situation of learner autonomy among secondary school students along with teachers' and students' perception in English classes. It reflects the specific institutional education and social contexts of Bangladesh culture that have a negative impact on the principle of CLT approach particularly on the secondary level teaching process. From the findings of this report it is assumed that there is a gap between educators and the secondary school teachers regarding CLT approach and this major issue indicates a proper attention from the administrations of education to remove this gap and suggests more research on this issue. In addition to, this research gives me opportunity for designing methodologies, tools, data collections through different procedures. It has also given me opportunities to observe both the Bengali medium school classes and English version school classes. It gave me the boarder concept of English teaching in Bangladesh. It also gave me a chance to think critically the educations issues. On the other hand, the findings may help the teachers and policy makers to identify how to improve in learner autonomous teaching through using communicative activities in the classroom.

Similarly, this research helped me to achieve some experiences from the real situation. Therefore, I was able to contact with the secondary level school teachers and students through conducting the research. As a result, I could realize there was a difference between teachers attitude towards learner autonomy and students expectations regarding their English skills improvement. Both teachers and students can realize about importance on autonomous learning in English classroom. However, the present learning strategies are still followed based on traditional teaching style and written exam – oriented. That is why; the four English skills are not equally focused on the classroom. Besides, there are also many limitations based on financial facilities such as inappropriate classroom management and insufficient teaching aids especially for the listening and speaking skills in communicative classroom. Moreover, I learn one of the

important leanings from this research. I could have understood that there should be a mutual understanding between teachers and students in English class so that teacher can realize about students interest in different ways and students can also understand what their teachers expect from them in CLT class. Therefore, I think this situation is possible when students feel relaxed to communicate with their teachers in a learner-centered environment and teachers need to join with their students to make them more confidence for giving opinions on and participating in class activities individually. However, it is a new experience for me that Bengali medium students shared if they can share what they want to learn and how they want to learn, they will be benefited in English class. Above all, it is clear that there is a distance between teachers and students in their communication system in English classroom in most of the classes.

In other words, I had to face some challenges for data collection. As I started collecting data before the Ramadan vacation, summer vacation and the first term examination was going on most of the secondary schools, I could not manage permission from many secondary schools for data collection. At the same time, teachers were very busy regarding examination activities as well as for class schedule. For this reason, although my target was to take at least five teachers interview, I could have managed only four teachers' interview. As a result, I can understand the data collected from the teachers are not sufficient to justify in a boarder way.

6.2 Recommendations for Improving Learner Autonomy in English Classes

Some recommendations have been mentioned as probable solutions based on the real findings of this research paper and these recommendations also have been tried to connect with some scholars' opinions:

- Students have a tendency of memorizing answers from their text book till now. It can be better that the written questions will be structured in this way that students will be compelled to think individually and independently to answer their questions. Therefore, it suggests that an autonomous learner's learning relies on an inborn capacity and this capacity helps taking responsibilities which puts down the institutional education. (Benson and Voller, 1997)
- Teachers need to make a free environment through communicative activities where students will express or share their own understanding and experiences, for example ; role play, discussions, puzzles solving, reading in groups, language games, listening to

songs or story to solve task etc and other activities can be given from textbooks or from teachers' own prepared materials. In this way, students can get chance to be more independent to express anything in the classrooms. Therefore, teachers can inspire the learners as their partners to overcome barriers and become more confidence to achieve common aims of learner autonomy. (Benson, 2001)

- As CLT approach is learner centered, teachers need to understand about importance of CLT approach for the English language classroom and think how to arrange a big class into groups and pairs to complete communicative activities with proper planning to create an autonomous or independent environment. Learners also should involve themselves in a group and follow the class instructions and activities in that group.
  Therefore, it suggests that learners need to participant in group works so that they can learn how to be autonomous learners in an interdependent way. (Richards and Rodgers, 2001)

6.3 Future Direction of the Study:

The research has been designed to find out the present state of learner autonomy in English classroom through using communicative activities. On the contrary, it could be better if I would collect data from the teachers' educator who might criticise some issues regarding the present relationship between the training system and the implementation of CLT approach. Similarly, it was also important to know what kind of problems the teachers and the students face in rural school context which I could not manage at all. Therefore, these issues can be done for further research in future. Finally, I will work on these issues more specifically so that I can find out the English teaching and learning style in secondary level in Bangladesh at the time of my PhD degree. Side by side, this research may create a way for further research for others in future. The findings of this research can be compared with the findings of the future research to explore the next changeable or similar issues. Therefore, this research can also be used as the authenticity of the findings for the future researchers.

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Appendices

Appendix-1 Class Observation Checklist

Process of Using the Target Language:

-------------- Teacher uses target language as the general and expected medium of classroom communication.

-------------- Teacher uses linguistic modifications if it is necessary to make the target language more easy for the students.

-------------- Teacher uses the native language clearly instead of the target language.

Process of Following the Communicative Language Teaching Approach:

-------------- Teachers habituated to using authentic communication to motivate language use.

-------------- Listening and speaking experiences are connected with reading and writing for communication.

-------------- Writing and reading skills are based on student-centered experiences.

-------------- Question and activities provide for real exchanges of information and opinions.

-------------- Students ask and answer questions.

-------------- Meaningful contexts are informed and practiced for grammatical structures and vocabularies.

Lesson Implementation:

------------- Teacher uses different kinds of classroom techniques.

------------- Teacher gives clear direction and examples.

------------- Teacher changes activities repeatedly and logically.

------------- Students are active in the whole class period individually / as a member of group.

------------- There are various interaction patters ____ teacher/student _____ student/teacher _____ student/student.

Class Atmosphere:

------------- Teacher looks enthusiastic and motivated.

------------- Teacher shows patient with student attempts to communicate.

------------- Teacher uses different and appropriate feedback.

------------ Students appear passionate and motivated.

------------ This is a language class where I would be glad to be a member.

Appendix-2 Class Observation Schedule

School - A (English Version School)

Serial No.	Date & Day	Class	Section	No. of Students	Time
1	19.04.2016 Tuesday	Class- VIII	Sec-A (English 1stpaper)	21	8:30-9:20 (am)
2	19.04.2016 Tuesday	Class- VI	Sec-A (English 1stpaper)	22	10:10-10:55 (am)
3	19.04.2016 Tuesday	Class- VII	Sec-A (English 1stpaper)	18	12:05-12:50 (pm)

Appendix-3 Class Observation Schedule

School - B (Bengali Medium School)

Serial No.	Date & Day	Class	Section	No. of Students	Time
1	26.04.2016 Tuesday	Class- IX	Sec-A Science (English 1stpaper)	38	9:15-10:00 (am)
2	26.04.2016 Tuesday	Class- X	Sec-A Science (English 1stpaper)	35	12:45-01:30 (pm)
3	27.04.2016 Wednesday	Class- X	Sec-B Commerce (English 1stpaper)	32	1:30-02:10 (pm)

Appendix-4 Questionnaire for Students' Interview

Class:

Sex: Male / Female

Age:

1. What kind of activities do you get in your English language classes?

2. Do you get an opportunity to express your ideas and opinions in your English language classes?

3. Do you think that group work/pair work allows you to find out problems for yourself and helps to improve your English?

4. How confident do you feel about your English ability in your English language classes? Are there any specific areas that you would like to improve?

5. Which of the activities do you find most useful for improving your English?

Appendix-5 Questionnaire for Teachers' Interview

Sex: Male / Female
Years of teaching:

1. What does the term "learner autonomy" mean to you? Can you give more details about it?

2. What are the characteristics of an ideal autonomous learner?

3. What do you think about your present students in terms of learner autonomy?

4. What do you understand about communicative task? Which activities do you think are more communicative in the English language classroom?

5. What do you often do to encourage your students to become more autonomous through using communicative activities?

Appendix-6 শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য ইন্টারভিউ প্রশ্ন

ক্লাস :

লিঙ্গ : ছেলে/ মেয়ে

বয়স :

১। তোমার ইংরেজী ক্লাসে কি কি ধরনের অ্যাকটিভিটিস করানো হয়?

২। তুমি কি তোমার নিজের চিন্তা এবং মতামত প্রকাশের সুযোগ পাও তোমার ইংরেজী ক্লাসে ?

৩। তুমি কি মনে কর, গ্রুপ ওয়ার্ক / পেয়ার ওয়ার্ক তোমাকে ইংরেজী শিখতে সাহায্য করে?

৪। তোমার নিজের ইংরেজী দক্ষতায় তুমি কি সন্তুষ্ট? ইংরেজীর কোন কোন দিকগুলো তোমার উন্নতি করা প্রয়োজন?

৫। কোন ধরনের অ্যাকটিভিটিসগুলো তোমার ইংরেজীর উন্নতির জন্য বেশি কার্যকর?

Appendix-7 শিক্ষকদের জন্য ইন্টারভিউ প্রশ্ন

লিঙ্গ : পুরুষ/ মহিলা

শিক্ষকতার সময়সীমা:

১। আপনার কাছে 'শিক্ষার্থীর স্বতন্ত্রতা / স্বাধীনতা' অর্থ কি? আপনি এ সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত বলবেন কি?

২। একজন আদর্শ স্বতন্ত্র / স্বাধীন শিক্ষার্থীর বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলো কি কি?

৩। শিক্ষার্থীর স্বতন্ত্রতার ভিত্তিতে আপনি কি মনে করেন আপনার বর্তমান শিক্ষার্থীদের সম্পর্কে?

৪। 'কমিউনিকেটিভ টাস্ক ' বলতে আপনি কি বোঝেন/ মনে করেন? আপনার মতে কোন অ্যাকটিভিটিসগুলো বেশি আগ্রহ তৈরি করে কথা বলায় ও মতামত প্রকাশের জন্য ইংরেজী ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ ক্লাসে?

৫। আপনি প্রায়ই কি করেন আপনার শিক্ষার্থীদের উৎসাহিত করতে যাতে তারা আরও বেশি স্বতন্ত্র হতে পারে কমিউনিকেটিভ অ্যাকটিভিটিসগুলোর মাধ্যমে?