

**LEARNER AUTONOMY PRACTICES IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING
CLASSROOMS: AN OBSERVATION AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL
LEARNERS IN BANGLADESH**

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ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy has been playing an essential role in EFL learning for over thirty years. In Bangladesh, English speaking classrooms are mainly teacher-centered, and only limited space on learner autonomy paves the way for this study. The study focuses on the present scenario of practicing learner autonomy in an English-speaking classroom and the challenges of implementation at the tertiary level. In Bangladesh, enormous work has been done on developing English speaking skills, but a few works have been conducted on practicing learner autonomy in an English-speaking classroom. The study was non-experimental research and followed a casual-comparative design. The research used mixed methods for data analysis. In the quantitative approach, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics have been used. The results have been analyzed by SPSS 28.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science) and Microsoft Office excels. For qualitative approach, focused group interview has been done. The findings show that learners' autonomy is not being practiced adequately in an English speaking classroom. Both teachers and learners tend to practice "reactive autonomy" than "proactive autonomy." The study also sheds light on the positive attitude of both learners and teachers on practicing learner autonomy in an English speaking classroom and the challenges of its implementation in the English classroom at the tertiary level. This work can be useful in supporting learner autonomous classroom and will be beneficial for further study. Moreover, the study anticipates further study in this field is necessary.

With the advent of globalization, English has been taught as a second language or foreign language across the world. Teaching English as a second language is one of the most familiar as well as challenging tasks all over the world. In Bangladesh, teaching English at the classroom is mainly a teacher-centered approach where the teacher plays the authoritative role, and the role of the learners are almost silent listeners. The concept 'learner autonomy' has become a buzzword in EFL speaking teaching and learning at the end of the twentieth century. Several theories have emerged to define the term, where some theories focus on the cognitive strategies that make learners autonomous and responsible, conscious, and complete social entities (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990), other approaches emphasize on learners' ability and willingness 'to take the charge of their learning' (Holece 1981, p.3). This research work describes the theoretical framework, background, rationale, existing approaches, the research gap, and scope of the future research on learners' autonomy practices in English speaking classrooms.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Teaching English as a foreign language is not a new trend in Bangladesh. Indian subcontinent has a long history in British colonialism from 1858 to 1947. From the very first years of colonialism, English had been taught as a foreign language in educational institutions. A very good command in English was necessary for getting jobs. However, even after the ending of colonialism, English language teaching had not lost its importance in formal schooling. Meantime, English has emerged as an international language across the world and learning English language becomes a necessity to cope with the present advance world. In Bangladesh, students used to learn English from the very first year of their formal schooling. In pre-tertiary level in Bangladesh, the four basic skills- reading, writing, speaking, and listening, getting emphasized for developing learners' communicative competence. With the introducing of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in pre-tertiary level education where English is a compulsory subject, the listening and speaking skills have been getting some importance alongside the reading and writing skills (Maniruzzaman, 2008). Moreover, teaching English speaking at the tertiary level in Bangladesh is one of the most Herculean tasks for the English teacher because in the pre-tertiary level, students hardly get any opportunity to practice their English speaking at the classroom. Though most of the universities (both public and private) in Bangladesh has some courses in English speaking skills, but the course design and teaching methodology are not enough for developing learners' English-Speaking skill (Alam, 2006; Jahan, 2008). Besides this, in English language classes teacher plays the major role and classes are taken on a fixed syllabus or curriculum which most of the time fail to meet a particular student's need. This scenario is not an exception in an English-speaking classroom in Bangladesh tertiary level education. Here, learners hardly get the opportunity to practice learner autonomy in the classroom as current syllabus and curriculum do not provide any room for practicing learners' autonomy in a vast scale. In this regard, Chowdhury (2001) believe that the problem mainly lies in the cultural orientation to the academic atmosphere rather than with students' competence level.

In the traditional pedagogical system, classroom activities were based on a teacher-centered approach where a teacher was the authoritative figure who delivered lectures and led demonstrations. Here the teacher played an active role. He/she organized his/her classes, set objectives, and chose materials according to an exam-oriented curriculum plan, and at the end of the course, the learners would be assessed and evaluated by the teacher. In a traditional teacher-centered speaking class, generally, the teacher chooses some topics for the learners to speak for a particular time. Then, the teacher monitors and corrects the mistakes of the learners at the end of the session. Here, the focus is to be fit for the examination system entirely than that of the learner's particular need analysis. In the late twentieth century, most language educators believe that not teachers, but the learner should take charge of his/her learning process.

Now, in an EL speaking classroom, learners' autonomy can be practiced developing learners' English-speaking skills. In speaking the English language, most learners face a mental block that generally springs from inhibition, anxiety, or shyness, where the speaker struggles for appropriate words, expressions, and delivery. Autonomous learning can help the learners to overcome the mental block while shifting between L1 and L2 language. However, in Bangladesh, education pedagogy is mainly based on teacher-centered classrooms. The scenario is also prevalent in tertiary level English speaking classroom also.

In Bangladesh, the concept of learner autonomy is a relatively new area (Mehrin, 2017). Here the classrooms of most learning contexts are run in a traditional teacher-directed manner, which does not accelerate learner autonomy (Begum, 2008). Moreover, in pre-tertiary level education, schools and colleges are mainly based on a teacher-centered approach (Mehrin, 2017). At the tertiary level, classes are mainly lecture-based (Bashir, 2012). Consequently, it becomes challenging to appropriately implement learner-centered approaches as most learners are not prepared for them (Mehrin, 2017). At the tertiary level, as the students are adults, they can take charge of their learning in some cases. An autonomous English-speaking classroom will help learners choose their materials and methods for developing their speaking skills. Learners will be aware of their vast potentiality and be independent, confident in taking charge of their learning with the teacher's help.

The study surrounds the following research questions:

1. Is learner autonomy being practiced in English speaking classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?
2. Is there any difference in score between the learners who practiced learners' autonomy before an oral English presentation performance and those who did not?
3. What are the challenges of implementing learner autonomy in English speaking classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learner autonomy is mainly based on adult education as here the learners will take charge of their learning. The learner autonomy in adult education mainly pays it attention to the “need to develop the abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives” (Holec, 1981, p.1). However, many works have been done in the late twentieth century on learner autonomy in adult EFL learning and teaching inside and outside the classroom. These research works mainly deal with various theories, aspects, perceptions, attitudes, and implications of learner autonomy in L2 classes worldwide. In using the theoretical framework, most of the research works are based on Holec's (1981) theory of learner autonomy regarding defining the term ‘learner autonomy’ (Nunan, 2003; Littlewood, 2006; Khenoune, 2007; Yildirim, 2008; Bashir, 2012; Deng, 2012; Lazar, 2012; Jamila, 2013; Mehrin, 2017). Holec (1981) defines learners' autonomy as the 'ability to take charge of one's (own) learning' (p.3). It is a capacity for detachment from other's control and exhibits the quality of decision making, independent work and critical thinking. In education, “autonomy” indicates enjoying a degree of freedom as well as taking one's responsibility.

Besides Holec's theoretical framework, some works also used Little's (1991) theoretical framework for learners' 'psychological relation to the process and content' of learning (Jamil, 2010; Jamilla, 2013). Little's framework is also based on Holec's (1981) framework and Little adds adequate overview and leading the theory to practice. However, Little's (1991) psychological relation to the learner autonomy focuses Kelly's approach to psychotherapy and teaching, where the patient is conscious of the whole process and gradually he consciously control the process. It indicates that learner will gradually develop a capacity for ‘conscious autonomy’ (p.20).

However, regarding the measurement of learners' autonomy in EL classrooms in the research works, some research works measured learners' attitude, readiness and willingness (Khenoune, 2007; Yildirim, 2008; Bashir, 2014; Mehrin, 2017), whereas some research works measure on various dimensions of learners' autonomy through the research works which are only linguistically different (Deng; 2012; Hu and Zhang, 2017).

As learners' autonomy implies that learners should take responsibility for their learning, it is essential to find out whether the learners are willing to take responsibility for their learning. Regarding learners' willingness or readiness, the existing works share some striking similarities as well as dissimilarities. For example, some research works conclude that learners' autonomy has a positive relationship between learners' perception of ability and willingness to take responsibility in an EL classroom (Khenoune, 2007; Yildirim, 2008; Mehrin, 2017; Koh and Frick, 2010).

Khenoune's (2007) research was conducted on sixty-eight Algerian students of the English department. The study assessed learner autonomy in three significant areas: motivation level of the learners, their using strategies, and their sense of awareness or responsibility to learn the language. The research was mainly based on Spratt, Humpherey, & Chan's (2002) idea that motivation should be ensured as a key factor before starting any research analysis. The study found that the learners are willing, but they seek motivation from external sources such as their teachers

or peers. So, the relationship between willingness and taking responsibility is not linear. What the learners think and what they do is not the same. The researcher assumed that the reasons can arise from their long-term habit of teacher-dependency classrooms and learners' lack of necessary skills prevent them from having the courage to take their learning responsibility.

Yildirim (2008) conducted research on 103 ELF Turkish learners to investigate their readiness, perception on learners' autonomy. The study found that learners are positive about learner autonomy. Moreover, they eagerly want to practice learner autonomy in the classroom. However, though the learners' have readiness and willingness for practising learners' autonomy in the EFL classroom, they want to divide into the responsibility between their teachers and themselves. For example, they think that for some of the activities (e.g., deciding what to learner outside), students should have the 'greatest responsibility, where for some of the actions (e.g., choosing activities to use), teachers should have the 'greatest responsibility' (p.73).

However, conflicting research findings are also found. Many students agreed that they are willing to take responsibility for the class but are willing to do it only in the presence of their teacher. Some research findings demonstrate learners' dependency on 'teacher-centred' classrooms (Khenoune, 2007; Yildirim, 2008; Mehrin, 2017). Littlewood (2004) defines this attitude as 'reactive autonomy' rather than 'proactive autonomy'. Yildirim (2008) and Khenoune (2007) concluded in their research works that this approach is related to the learners' cultural and learning backgrounds.

Besides theories, some research works illustrate that the realization of learner autonomy is also affected by the educational and cultural context of both learners and teachers (Yildirim, 2008). For example, some critics think that the idea of 'learner autonomy' suits the western cultural tradition, and the definition of 'learner autonomy' is unfamiliar to non-western learners. They also say that it does not fit the non-western pedagogical tradition (Jones, 1995).

However, In Bangladesh, the concept of learner autonomy is a new area. Here, schools and colleges mainly follow a teacher-centred approach. Even in universities, classes are mostly lecture-based (Bashir, 2012). Consequently, it appears to be a challenge to implement learner-centred approaches appropriately as most learners are not prepared for it (Mehrin, 2017). However, some research works conducted in this area found that practising learner autonomy in a speaking classroom is challenging for both the learners and the teachers in Bangladesh (Sultana, 2016; Mehrin, 2017; Jahanara, 2018).

Jamil (2010) researched the possibility of ensuring learners' autonomy and the advantages and difficulties of practising learner autonomy in a particular course English for Academic Purposes (EAP), in a private university of Bangladesh. Five participants were interviewed, and twenty students participated in a survey. The result showed that prioritizing the learners and handing the responsibilities to them has its pros and cons. The positive result was that the learners chose their learning strategies; they devolved very swiftly in their learning process. Nevertheless,

conversely, the learners become alienated and isolated from their peers and other social and interpersonal communications.

In another work, Begum (2018) investigated teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding practising learner autonomy in Bangladesh EFL classrooms. Six ELT (English Language Teacher) teachers participated in a semi-structured interview. The teachers opined that the learning environment does not promote practising learning autonomy in the classroom. From the students' side, they are found shy, passive, and dependent learners. But, on the other hand, teachers are not willing to share their pedagogical methods and agenda with the learners.

The same findings were also found in Jamila's (2013) study on practising learner autonomy in teaching speaking in the tertiary level classrooms in Bangladesh. The research was conducted on thirty teachers in three private universities in Bangladesh. The research conducted a survey on teachers' using learner autonomy based on planning and setting objectives, learning material, learning method, evaluation process, learning environment, and teachers' rapport. Regarding setting objectives and learning materials, most teachers opined that learning objectives and materials are mainly decided by the institutions via syllabus and curriculum, and teachers do not promote learning autonomy in these sectors. Although all teachers said that they provide a very comfortable learning environment to the students, but large numbers of teachers (93.33%) prefer evaluating learners' exam scripts by themselves, and only a few teachers (13.33%) discuss with the students regarding their evaluation process. It implied that Bangladeshi learners are not still efficient enough to hold their responsibilities and do not get that much opportunity for choosing materials and methods of their speaking class and can hardly evaluate themselves.

However, Sultana (2016) tried to find out the reason why promoting learning autonomy is difficult in Teaching English as a Second language (TESL) classroom and how practising learning autonomy will be more effective. She found that after implementing learner autonomy in the classrooms, the learners were more active and were able to complete their assignments independently. Furthermore, teachers find difficulty involving learners in decision making and bringing learner autonomy into the classroom because they think the students come from cultures that mainly depend on the authority of both the teachers and institutions.

Mehrin (2017) conducted research on students of the department of English at the University of Dhaka to observe their attitudes and perceptions on autonomous language learning Bangladeshi students' attitudes and perception on autonomous language learning. The study results had similarities with some previous research works, such as Khenoune (2007), and Yildirim (2008). The result showed that students have a positive attitude toward using learner autonomy in the classrooms. Learners' readiness and willingness for autonomous learning is found. However, the result itself is a bit contradictory like the previous research works conducted in Bangladesh. Although students say that they are ready and willing to take responsibility for their learning process, when they were asked about the role of the teacher in their learning process, most students' responses reflect "teacher-centeredness" in their learning process. They expect that their teacher should choose their learning materials and methods. The students showed their dependency

attitude toward their teachers, and they hardly wanted to evaluate their own learning process. That indicates that learners are willing to take responsibility within a confined framework and under teachers' direct supervision. Mehrin concluded, though the students 'had a tendency to think like autonomous learners but were not behaving like one. Their dependency on teachers is seen for all kinds of learning and pedagogic decisions, and their perception that they were not ready to take charge to manifest itself strongly in their attitudes' (p. 132).

Bashir (2014) investigated sixty-nine Bangladeshi learners' readiness, perception, and attitude toward teachers' role in autonomous learning. To identify learners' readiness for autonomous learning, a questionnaire survey was conducted with fifty questions. The questions were divided into two segments. First, twenty-five questions were designed to know about students' opinions on autonomous learning, and the rest are regarding students' opinions on teacher-centred learning. The result showed a mixed response. The results could not determine students' standpoint appropriately that which one they prefer because respondents chose some aspects of autonomous learning and some aspects of teacher-centred learning.

However, in the same research, we find a different result from the pair-samples t-test. The paired sample t-test showed that the learners preferred autonomous learning to teacher-centred learning. Furthermore, some other items also reflected students' teacher-centred attitudes. For example, 81.1% of students preferred their teacher to select their learning activities inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, regarding assessment and feedback, students' extreme dependency on teachers were also found. As a part of collaborative learning, the students' like getting feedback from their peers too, but most of the learners (84%) thought they needed feedback from their teacher to understand their learning progress in English.

Another important issue is that learner autonomy was originated and developed in western countries only a few decades ago, reflecting their cultural values and paradigms. As a result, practising learners' autonomy may not be thoroughly applicable for non-western countries like Bangladesh. Pokhrel's (2016) states that the world is full of diverse social, economic, political, and cultural environments. Western learner-centered classroom approach where learners are identified as an individual identity may not be applicable for a non-western culture where learners adhere to elders' views and norms. In this regard, Pokhrel's (2013) study exposed that in non-western cultures, English teachers are not willing to engage learners in classroom activities. As students are accustomed to teacher-centred classrooms for the long term, they develop a teacher-centred attitude where a teacher is seen as an omniscient person who will solve all their study-related problems, and this attitude is also applicable for the Bangladeshi tertiary level learners.

However, in the above discussed research works, we also find hints of this thing. Most of the research works conducted in Bangladesh, we find that there is a contradiction in results. Most of the learners and teachers' attitudes, beliefs, readiness, and willingness toward the concept of learners' autonomy are self-contradictory. For example, most of the research works found learners'

readiness and willingness to take responsibility for their learning and their teacher-centred attitude simultaneously. However, learners' autonomy should be practised in non-Western countries like Bangladesh, as an African proverb says, "A good father does not give his son meat. Instead, he gives him a bow and arrow, and teaches him to hunt (Kuchah & Smith, 2011). So, this research aims to address the research gaps in this area. The existing research works have some gaps:

1. There is a gap in learners' autonomy theory and in implication in the non-Western country Bangladesh.
2. A very few research works are conducted on implementing learner autonomy in an English language speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. So, these areas need extensive attention for more research works.

This study explores the gap between the learners' autonomy theory and its implication in EFL speaking classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. More research should be done to address how to practice learners' autonomy in English speaking at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

Setting

The research setting included three tertiary level educational institutions in Bangladesh. All of the universities are located in Cumilla district. Among these three universities, one university was a public university, and the rest were the private universities. All of the universities were located in a suburb area far away from the downtown.

Participants

The participants were the tertiary level learners and the teachers in Bangladesh. The researcher aims to select the freshmen tertiary level students including and excluding the English department students. In Bangladesh, most of the universities have a basic English language course at their first year of undergraduate level where English speaking is taught. The researcher collected data from sixty participants (one hundred participants from the students, and twenty participants from the teachers) through the questionnaire survey. Moreover, ten participants (five from the teachers, and the rest are from the learners) was randomly chosen for focus group interview.

Sampling

Regarding sampling, a mixture of probability sampling and purposive sampling was done. For qualitative data analysis, purposive sampling was done by using the researcher's expertise. It helped find out the most useful sample which will meet the purpose quickly. In addition, for the quantitative data analysis, probability sampling was considered for collecting data.

Research Methods

Quantitative Analysis

The researcher used mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative approach) for the research work. The detail was given below:

For quantitative data analysis, both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were done. The quantitative data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 28.0). The descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the survey data from the teachers and the learners (see Appendix A, B). However, the questionnaire items will be designed following a five-point Likert Scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (5), 'agree' (4), 'neutral' (3), 'disagree' (2), to 'strongly disagree' (1). The questionnaire survey was done with twenty teachers and one hundred students. The questionnaire mainly focused on learners' and teachers' attitude on practicing learner autonomy in Bangladesh, its' prospects and challenges.

In addition, for inferential statistics, an independent t- test will be conducted to test the following research hypothesis:

The Null Hypothesis: the test scores mean will be equal between the treatment group and the control group.

The Alternative Hypothesis: the test scores mean will not be equal between the treatment group and the control group.

The independent t-test was conducted to determine if treatment group and control group differs in their mean in the test scores of English oral presentation performance. The test was conducted setting an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis was that the test scores mean will be equal, and the alternative hypothesis was that the test scores means will not be equal. Here the independent variables were the treatment group and the control group, and the dependent variable will be the test scores. The researcher tried to find out that whether the research is statistically significant or not, that means we will reject the null hypothesis or failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Qualitative Analysis

Although the questionnaire has a great advantage of taking a wide range of data from a large sample within a short time, it also has some limitations to reach the objectives appropriately. So, to reach the answers to the research questions more accurately, a qualitative approach also was conducted through the 'semi-structured interview' of both teachers and students (see Appendix C, D). For qualitative data analysis, phenomenological design was used to explore the thinking and opinion of the learners and teachers for practicing learner autonomy at English speaking classroom. The data was collected through focus group interviews. Interview was conducted online via Zoom and offline both. But telephone interview was not conducted as it might lose gesture data.

Pilot Study

However, prior to the main interviews, questionnaire surveys, the researcher conducted some pilot studies with both the teachers and students. The researcher maintained all privacy with the teachers and the students to make it sure that the questions are feasible and serve the purpose. In this regard, four students were selected for students' questionnaire and interview and three teachers were selected for the teachers' questionnaire and interview. The researcher worked on the feedbacks of the teachers and students and worked with it before running the fieldwork in the full scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One hundred learners and twenty teachers from one public university and two private universities are taking part in filling in the questionnaire. The response of the teachers and the learners were collected by face-to-face communication and also via e-mail. The results indicate that an English speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh is still a teacher-centered classroom than that of a learner-centered and learning autonomy is hardly practiced in the classrooms.

Students Questionnaire Results

In response to the questionnaire for students (Appendix-1), we see most of the respondents (90%) say that they hardly get any chance to practice learner autonomy inside their English speaking classroom. Most of the respondents (63.34%) feel that they are mature enough to control their learning process. Regarding selecting the objectives, choosing materials and methods and evaluation, only a few numbers of students say that they set the objective and choose materials and methods of their learning (6.66%). All respondents say that they do not get any chance to evaluate their learning. So, from the learners' response, there is hardly any place for practicing learner autonomy inside the English speaking classroom. Most of the respondents (90%) think that they present syllabus and curriculum are not sufficient for practicing learner autonomy inside the speaking classroom. Most respondents (83.33%) agree that learner autonomy should be introduced at the pre-tertiary level of learning in Bangladesh.

Table 1
Students Questionnaire Results

Descriptive Statistics

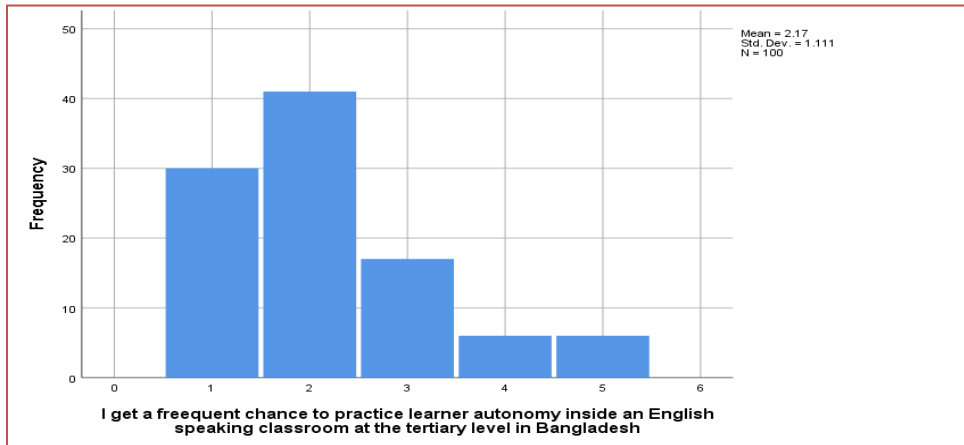
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I get a frequent chance to practice learner autonomy inside an English speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh	100	1	5	2.17	1.111
I think the present syllabus and curriculum are sufficient for practicing learner autonomy inside the English speaking classroom	100	1	5	1.82	.968
I think the presence of teacher in the classroom is unnecessary	100	1	4	1.72	.866
I decide on my learning objectives	100	1	4	1.82	.626
I decide on materials or methods for learning	100	1	4	1.94	.489
I get full freedom to evaluate my activities	100	1	4	1.47	.703
I get a relaxing environment in the class	100	2	4	2.97	.758
Teacher plays the role of facilitator than that of a lecturer in the class	100	1	5	4.21	1.038
I think I am mature enough to take charge of my own learning process	100	1	3	1.98	.512
I think learner autonomy should be introduced in pre-tertiary level of learning in Bangladesh	100	4	5	4.65	.479
Valid N (list wise)	100				

Note: The above table shows that most of the respondents think that learner autonomy is not being practiced in English speaking classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, where the mean is 2.17, and the Standard deviation is 1.11. Most of the respondents say that they hardly get any opportunity

to set the objectives, choose materials and methods, and evaluate their learning process. Here it is seen that the means are 1.72, 1.82, and 1.94, and the Standard deviations are .626, .489, 703. Some important questions are discussed detailed below:

Figure 1

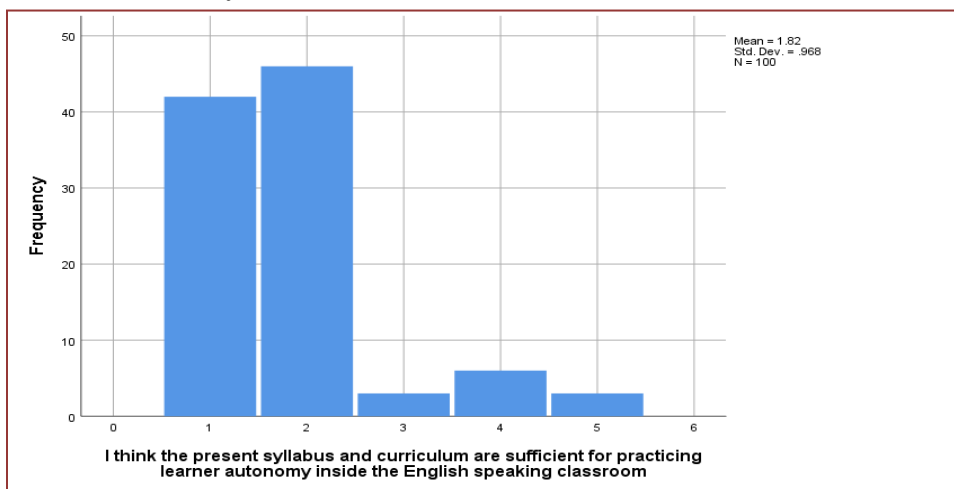
Bar Chart Result for Question 1



Note: The above figure shows that most (72%) of the participants think that learner autonomy is not being practiced in an English speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. 17% of respondents are not sure about its practice in English speaking classrooms, and 11% of the respondents think that learner autonomy is being practiced in English speaking classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.

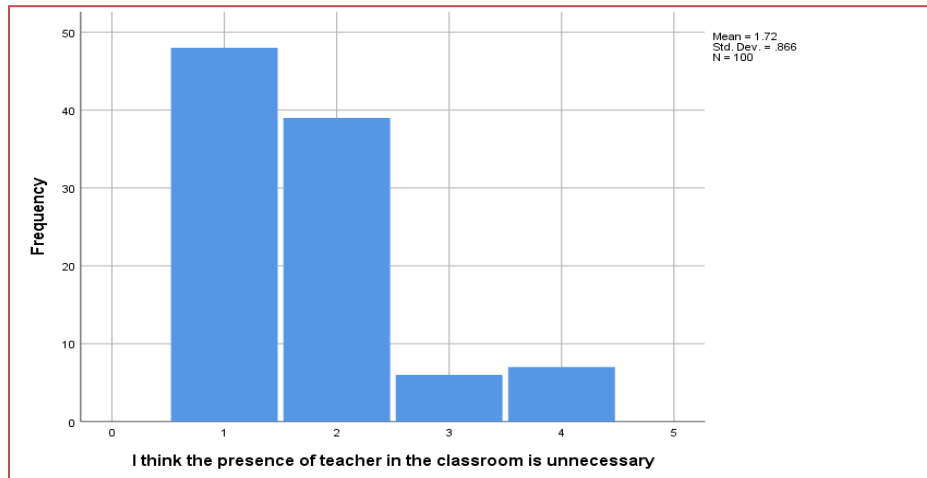
Figure 2

Bar Chart Result for Question 2



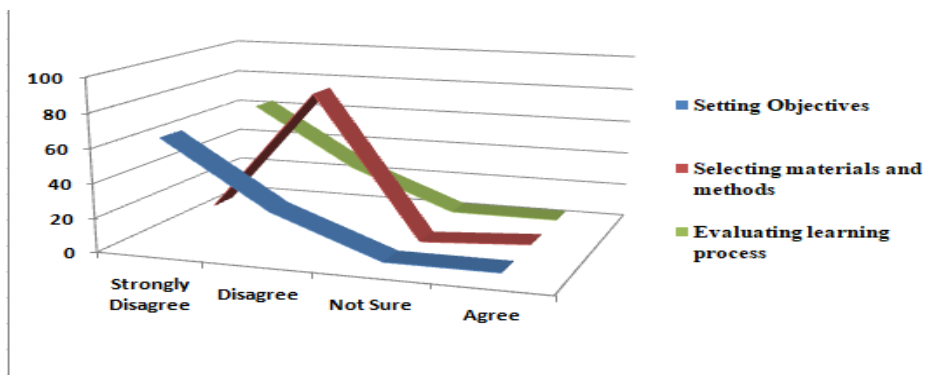
Note: In the above figure, it is seen that 87% of respondents think that present syllabus and curriculum for English speaking course is not sufficient for practicing learner autonomy in English speaking classroom. 4% of respondents are not sure about it, and 9% think the existing syllabus and curriculum are sufficient.

Figure 3
Bar Chart Result for Question 3



Note: The above figure shows that 87% of respondents believe in a teacher's presence in a learner-autonomous English-speaking classroom, while 6% are not sure about it, and 7% of respondents think the teacher's presence is unnecessary.

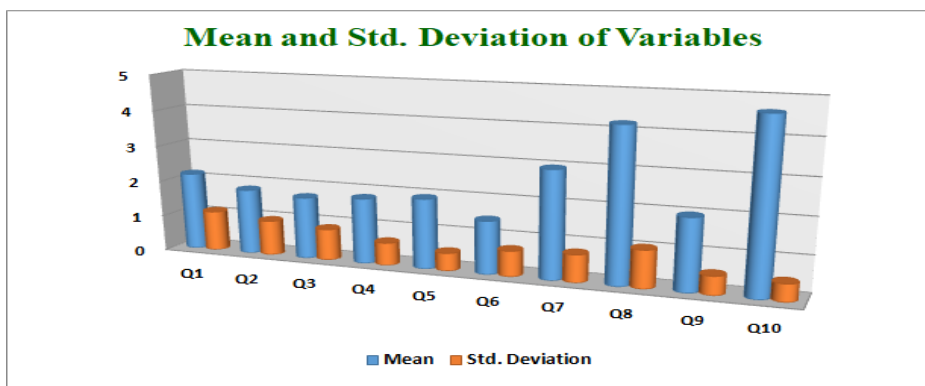
Figure 4
Line Chart Result for Survey Questions



Note: Regarding the decision to set the learning objectives, it is found that 92% of respondents think that they do not set their learning objectives, 4% of respondents are not sure about it, and 4% of respondents do it. Regarding the decision of selecting materials and methods of learning, it is found that 96% of respondents think that they do not select their materials and methods of learning, 4% of respondents and 4% of respondents that they do it. The evaluating learning process that 92% of respondents think that they do not evaluate their learning 4% of respondents is not sure about it, and 4% of respondents do it.

Figure 5

Bar Chart Result of Mean and Std. Deviation of Variables



Note : The above figure makes a comparative study between the Mean and Standard deviation of the variables. It is seen that the highest mean is 4.65, and the lowest mean is 1.47, and the average mean is 2.47. On the other hand, the highest Standard deviation is 1.111, and the lowest Standard deviation is .0479, and the average Standard deviation is .755, which indicates that there is no significant fluctuation between mean and standard deviation.

Teacher Questionnaire Results :

Table 2

Descriptive Result of Teachers' Questionnaire

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learner autonomy means learners' autocracy in the classroom	20	1	2	1.50	.513
Learner autonomy is being practiced in my English speaking classroom	20	2	4	2.75	.851
Learners decide on their learning objectives	20	1	2	1.85	.366
I negotiate learning objectives with the learners	20	2	4	3.50	.889
Learners decide on the materials and methods for their learning	20	1	3	2.00	.459
Learners get full freedom to evaluate their activities	20	1	2	1.80	.410
Learners get a relaxing environment in the classroom	20	4	5	4.25	.444
I play the role of a facilitator than that of a lecturer in the class	20	4	5	4.20	.410
I think the present syllabus and curriculum are sufficient for practicing learner autonomy inside the English speaking classroom	20	2	3	2.50	.513
I think learners are mature enough to control their learning	20	2	3	2.10	.308
I think learner autonomy should be introduced at the pre-tertiary level in Bangladesh	20	2	4	3.05	.759
Institutional factors highly hinder practising learner autonomy inside an English speaking classroom	20	1	4	2.80	1.152
In Bangladesh, learners' excessive dependence on the teacher in their pre-tertiary level learning prone to be a passive learner in the classroom than that of an active learner	20	1	4	3.25	1.333
Valid N (listwise)	20				

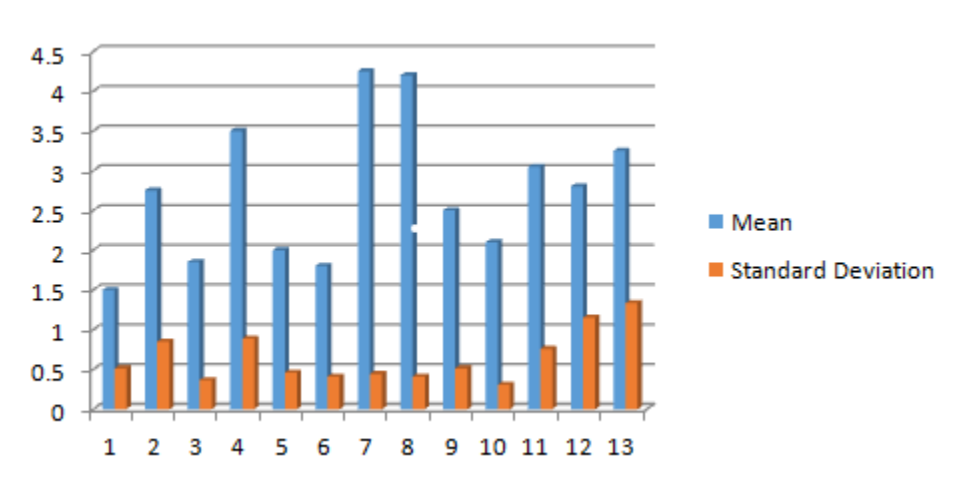
In response to the teachers' questionnaire (Appendix-2), we see that most teachers have a highly positive attitude toward learner autonomy. Almost all respondents (90%) believe that learner autonomy is not a negative term, or it should not think as an autocratic attitude of learners in the classroom. All respondents think that learner autonomy is most beneficial for adult or mature learners than that of the beginners. As in a learner autonomy classroom, learners will take charge or responsibility of learning, and all respondents agree that learners must be willing to do it.

Whether learners set the objectives, choose the materials and methods of their learning, a significant number of teachers say that they do not allow their learners to set their learning objectives (63.34%) or select the materials or methods for their own (73.3%). Most respondents (70%) say that they even do not negotiate with the learners regarding setting objectives. These are a complete clash with practicing learner autonomy in the classroom. So it can be found that learner autonomy is not being practiced in some areas. Almost the same picture is seen regarding the evaluation process. All respondents (100%) agree that they do not give full freedom to the learners to evaluate their activities. Though the scenario is very disappointing in this area, it has been seen that in some other sectors, such as the classroom environment and the teacher's role in the classroom is pretty positive. Regarding the challenges, most of the respondents agree that in pre-tertiary level students' excessive dependence on teachers (76.67%), institutional constraints (93.33%) such as syllabus, curriculum, technological support, etc. also hinder them from practicing learner autonomy in the classroom for developing speaking skill.

The above table shows that most of the respondents think that learner autonomy is not being practiced in English speaking classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, where the mean is 2.75, and the Standard deviation is .851. Most respondents say that they set the objectives to choose materials and methods and evaluate their learning process. Here, the means are 1.85, 2.00, and 1.80, and the standard deviations are .366, .459, .410. The average mean is 2.73, and the average standard deviation is .64, which indicates that there is no significant fluctuation between mean and standard deviation.

Figure 6

Bar chart result of Mean and Standard deviation of the Variables of Teachers' Questionnaire Results



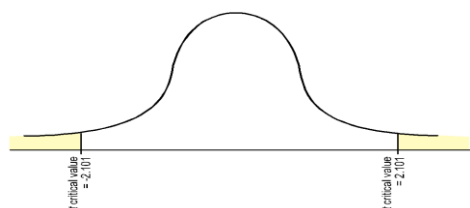
Note: In the above graph we see a gap between the mean and the standard deviation.

Independent t-test

An independent t-test was conducted to determine if treatment group and control group differs in their grade for oral presentation performance. The test was conducted setting an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis is that the grade means are equal, and the alternative hypothesis is that the grade means are not equal. The critical value is + 2.101, -2.101, and the t is 2.280. The effect size, $d=.62$. Using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, this is interpreted as a moderate effect. The assumptions were met as both the treatment group and the control group are independent. Here the dependent variable is interval or ratio in scale, and the independent variable is nominal or ordinal in scale. The population distribution for the outcome (i.e., dependent variable) is normally distributed for each group, the homogeneity of variance is met.

Figure 7

Critical Value and Region For The t- test



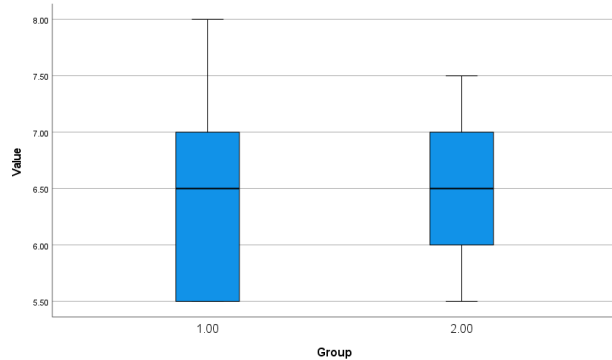
Note. The figure demonstrates the graphic representation of the critical value and critical region. Here the shaded areas indicate the critical region. As the test is a two-tailed, non-directional test, the areas above the critical value determine the critical regions.

The assumption of normality is tested and not met for both the treatment group and control group. For the treatment group, the review of the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality ($SW=.878$, $df=10$, $p=.124$), skewness ($-.342$, $SE=.687$), kurtosis (-1.227 , $SE=1.334$) boxplot with no outliers, and Q-Q plot have suggested that the values are not normally distributed. Standardizing skew and kurtosis by dividing by their standard errors and comparing to a critical value of ± 2.101 , we find statistically significant skew and kurtosis. This provides further evidence that normality has not met. Similar result was found for the control group. The review of the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality ($SW=.871$, $df=10$, $p=.103$), skewness ($-.386$, $SE=.687$), kurtosis (1.340 , $SE=1.334$). Standardizing skew and kurtosis by dividing by their standard errors and comparing to a critical

value of ± 2.101 , we find statistically significant skew and kurtosis. This provides further evidence that normality has not met. In addition, boxplot with no outliers, and Q-Q plot have suggested that the values are not normally distributed.

Figure 8

Boxplot Results For The Assumption of Normality



Note: In the above boxplots we see that the distance between Q3 and highest value and the distance between Q1 and the lowest value are not same which indicate that values are not normally distributed. Moreover, in the first category we do not find any outliers, but the second category has.

However, Levene's test supported the assumption ($F = .001, p = .972$). However, $p < .05$, that indicates that the test was statically significant. We failed to reject the Null Hypothesis. There is not enough evidence to support the claim that the treatment group have different mean in grade than the control group.

Interview with the teachers and the learners

A semi-structured interview has been taken from both learners and the teachers (Appendix-3,4) as in the questionnaire, they do not get to add anything. In Bangladesh, all learners and teachers at the tertiary level have a positive tendency to learners' autonomy, and all of them believe that if they can implement it properly in an English-speaking classroom, it will be beneficial for them. Both learners and teachers had almost the same attitude to learner autonomy. Some students thought it would be 'helpful' for them, and teachers thought it would 'build independence and freedom'; students would be 'self-dependent' and help them reduce 'shyness' or 'inhibition' of the learners. In response to the question, what does learner autonomy mean to them (Appendix-3), it found that most of the teachers did not have a clear conception of it. T1 said, "independent learning

in a certain framework without much supervision." T2 said, "teacher-guided learning." However, most of the teachers agreed that learner autonomy is a must in a speaking classroom of the tertiary level learners as here all learners are an adult or mature learners.

Nevertheless, some teachers were skeptical about whether learner autonomy is appropriate for a mature learner than an adult learner. They put their argument that in Bangladesh, the tertiary level learners are adults in terms of age, but we come across a massive number of students who are not mature enough to control their learning. In this case, they accused the pre-tertiary level learning system of Bangladesh, where students have been treated as passive learners than active learners. So in the tertiary level, students are reluctant to take the responsibility of their learning, and they expect 'spoon-feeding' from their teacher in all classes, including a speaking class (Appendix-3). However, we see a different picture in students' opinions in this regard (Appendix-4). Most of the students said that they are highly willing and courageous to take responsibility for their class. They believed though at the beginning it will challenge for them they are optimistic about overcoming challenges. Both teachers and learners agreed that (Appendix-3,4) present scenario of an English speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh is mainly teacher-centered. Teachers choose the objectives, set the materials and methods for learning and teachers evaluate the learners. Both teachers and learners agree that the present syllabus and curriculum design forced them to do so.

The role of the teacher in a learner autonomy speaking classroom, both teachers and learners, believed that the presence of the teacher in such a classroom is necessary (Appendix-3,4). While learners expected 'friendly and supportive' behaviour and as behavior 'motivator' from the teachers, the teachers thought along with the role of a 'facilitator,' the teachers also should 'control' others. T3 said, learners will enjoy freedom but in our structured form than that of going beyond any boundaries. Moreover, students found out some strengths and weak points of their own for practicing learner autonomy in their English speaking classroom (Appendix-3), where some of them found 'willingness,' 'confident,' 'curious,' 'self-motivated,' 'mature learner,' 'active in peer works' etc. were the strong points of them. In contrast, some weaknesses such as 'phobia in English speaking,' 'lack of confidence,' 'lack of standardization,' 'lack of maturity,' 'lack of knowledge,' etc. Regarding the challenges, both teachers and learners (Appendix-3,4) put institutional factors as a first choice, for instance, the English-speaking course's present syllabus does not provide enough opportunity to practice learner autonomy in the classroom. Moreover, classroom sizes are not appropriate. Many universities in Bangladesh (both private and public) do not have proper technological support. Teachers believed to be successful, we need to ensure learner autonomy from the pre-tertiary level education to some extends.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study surrounds whether learner autonomy is being practiced in an English speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Overall it has been seen that learner autonomy is not properly practiced in most of the public and private universities of Bangladesh. To some extent, learner autonomy is being practiced, but it is not “proactive autonomy” suggested by Littlewood (2000), which means learners will be independent and have full autonomy to take charge of their learning. Instead, we find the similarity of “reactive autonomy” similar to the studies of Khenoune (2007), Yildirim (2008), Mehrin (2017). Regarding challenges, it is found that there is a myriad of institutional, cultural, and external challenges in the implementation of learner autonomy in an English speaking classroom. Moreover, it has been seen that in Bangladesh, there are very few research works in this field. More research works should be done in this field. A bright and practical picture of practicing learner autonomy at the tertiary level in Bangladesh will be found which will provide scope for further study. To capitulate, an English speaking classroom without learner autonomy will not be an effective one.

Based on work, the following recommendations are given below:

1. In Bangladesh, the teaching-and-learning pedagogy is mainly teacher-centered. The shift from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered classroom demands time to implement learner autonomy in an English speaking classroom.

1. The present syllabus and curriculum of English speaking course should be revised and should be designed newly providing much scope for practicing learner autonomy in the classroom.
2. As it is found that both learners and teachers are still imbibed in “reactive autonomy,” a gradual shifting from “reactive autonomy” to “proactive autonomy” is necessary to apply learner autonomy fully-fledged way in the English speaking classroom.
3. Teachers should be trained on how to play their role in a learner autonomy English speaking classroom.
4. Learner autonomy classrooms should be introduced in the pre-tertiary level of learning to a limited extent as the learners are not adult or mature enough in this level to take the whole responsibility of their learning, so a small portion in the syllabus should include the scope for practicing learner autonomy in the classroom with the guidance of the teacher.
5. Large classroom size affects practicing learner autonomy correctly. An English speaking classroom should contain at best 20-25 students to practice learner autonomy in the classroom.
6. Teachers may provide some guidelines regarding how to set objectives, choose materials and methods, and evaluate one’s learning. Teachers may set some boundaries regarding dos and don’ts of practicing learner autonomy in the English speaking classroom.
7. Institutional supports are needed more, such as advanced technological supports, logistic supports, etc.

8. Students should be encouraged to be proactive inside and outside the classroom to build an independent and confident learner.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Students

Sl No.	Statement	Strongly	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly	Disagree
		Agree	Agree			Disagree	Disagree
1.	I get a frequent chance to practice learner autonomy inside an English speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.						
2.	I think the present syllabus and curriculum are sufficient for practicing learner autonomy inside the speaking classroom.						
3.	I think the presence of teacher in the classroom is unnecessary						
4.	I decide on my learning objectives.						
5.	I decide on materials or methods for learning						
6.	I get full freedom to evaluate my activities						

7.	I get a relaxing environment in the class					
8.	Teacher plays the role of a facilitator than that of a lecturer in the class.					
9.	I think I am mature enough to control my own learning process					
10.	I think learner autonomy should be introduced in pre-tertiary level of learning in Bangladesh					

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Students

Sl No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Learner autonomy means learners' autocracy in the classroom.					
2.	Learner autonomy is not affected by the age factor of the learners.					
3.	Learner's willingness for conducting a learner autonomous classroom is an important factor for effective development in English speaking skill.					
4.	Learners decide on their learning objectives.					
5.	I negotiate learning objectives with the learners.					
6.	Learners decide on the materials or methods for their learning.					
7.	Leaner autonomy is being practiced in my classroom.					

8.	Learners get full freedom to evaluate their activities.					
9.	Learners get a relaxing environment in the classroom.					
10.	I play the role of a facilitator than that of a lecturer in the class.					
11.	The present syllabus and curriculum are sufficient for practicing learner autonomy inside the speaking classroom.					
12.	I think learners are mature enough to control their own learning process					
13.	I think learner autonomy should be introduced at the pre-tertiary level of learning in Bangladesh.					
14.	Institutional factors (e.g. syllabus and curriculum, technological support) highly hinder practicing learner autonomy inside the classroom for developing English speaking skill at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.					
15.	In Bangladesh, learners' excessive dependence on the teacher in their pre-tertiary level learning prone to be a passive learner inside the classroom than that of an active learner.					
16.	In Bangladesh tertiary learners are not efficient enough to control their own learning process.					

Appendix C

Interview Questions for the Learners

1. How will you define the term 'learner autonomy'?
2. Do you think 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom is important for developing English speaking skill?

3. Do you think a learner autonomous classroom will be more effective for you to develop your speaking skill?
4. How far you get the opportunity to practice learner autonomy in your English speaking classroom?
5. What do you hope to gain from this class?
6. What learning strategies do you plan to use?
7. How far your peer interaction help you in developing English speaking skill in the classroom?
8. What is the role that you expect from your teacher in the speaking classroom?
9. Identify your strong points for autonomous learning in a English speaking classroom.
10. Identify your weak points for autonomous learning in a English speaking classroom.
11. What are the challenges that you have faced in practicing 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom for developing English speaking skill at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?

Appendix D

Interview Questions for the Teachers

1. How will you define the term 'learner autonomy'?
2. Do you think 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom is important for developing English speaking skill?
3. If the answer to the previous question is yes, then for which category of the learners it will be more suitable? Beginners and adults?
4. What materials or methods can be designed for practicing 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom for developing English speaking skill? Who will design the materials or methods? Learners or teachers?
5. Do you think 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom is important for developing English speaking skill at the tertiary level learners in Bangladesh?
6. How far learner autonomy is being used in an English speaking classroom at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?
7. What are the materials and methods of 'learner autonomy' are used in an English speaking classroom for developing speaking skill at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?
8. Do you find 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom is helpful for developing English speaking skill at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?
9. Do you think 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom is suitable for the non-western pedagogical system?
10. What are the challenges that you have faced in practicing 'learner autonomy' inside the classroom for developing English speaking skill at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?