
The Role of CLT in Promoting Learner Autonomy in English Language Classrooms: A Case Study on Bangladeshi Tertiary Education

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ABSTRACT

Exploratory, this study aims to discover how CLT is interconnected with learner autonomy and whether it effectively propagates autonomy in tertiary-level ELT classrooms in Bangladesh. A mixed-method approach is followed to conduct this research. Two separate sets of questionnaires have been developed and distributed among the tertiary teachers and students to collect the quantitative data. Additionally, the qualitative data is extracted from the semi-structured interviews of the tertiary students. The major findings from the interviews conclude with four essential themes: language teaching through collaborative tasks in CLT, teachers' role- facilitators, not dictators in CLT, freedom of learning in CLT, and CLT breeds self-sufficient learners. Moreover, the detailed analysis of the extracted data evaluates Bangladeshi tertiary students' stance on CLT and affirms that CLT sufficiently promotes learner autonomy in tertiary ELT classes. At last, the study concludes with recommendations for tertiary teachers to be more efficient in replicating CLT methods in language classrooms to ensure the everlasting display of autonomy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communicative Language Teaching commenced in 1970 in England (Harmer, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). It is considered a modern method of teaching language. It breaks the classical notions (e.g., Grammar Translation Method and Audiolingualism) of language teaching and propagates the concept of communicative competence (Harmer, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Communicative competence is a term that Hymes introduced in the year 1971 (as cited in Fahad, 2013, p. 287). According to Hymes, communicative competence is "one's ability to use a language in a social context" (as cited in Fahad, 2013, p. 287). CLT's core principle suggests that learners learn a language not by the instruction of grammar or by forming habits; instead, they discover a language naturally when they are communicating in it (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Begum, 2018; Farhad, 2013; Sultana, 2017). In this way, learners develop communicative competence in a language.

In Bangladesh, the concept of CLT was introduced in the year of 1990 because of the paradigm shift in the thinking of the policymakers as they focused more on a collaborative way of language teaching (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Ahmed, 2018; Ahmed, 2016). As a result, it significantly changes teaching English (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014). Moreover,

policymakers have started to dissect diverse approaches to teaching English and tried to make students' participation primary in classes (Ahmed, 2018; Ahmed, 2016; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). The gradual changes emphasize the shift of English teaching methods from grammar-based to communication-based. All these variations develop from the progression of English as a global language (Begum, 2018; Farhad, 2013; Ivan & Jony, 2016; Islam & Paul, 2019; Sultana, 2017). Though CLT could not advance more in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels, it has greatly impacted the tertiary level of education (Ahmed, 2018; Ahmed, 2016; Farhad, 2013; Ivan & Jony, 2016; Islam & Paul, 2019). Thus, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is not unfamiliar to tertiary-level students and teachers.

CLT is intertwined with learner autonomy (Harmer, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Besides, CLT facilitates learners' autonomy so that learners can take responsibility for their learning (Harmer, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Learner autonomy is a concept that Holec introduced in 1981 (Hossain & Mustapha, 2020; Sultana, 2017). According to Holec, learners must be independent in deciding their learning styles, process, and pattern, a prerequisite for successful learning (Ahmed, 2018; Begum, 2018; Fahad, 2013; Hossain & Mustapha, 2020; Sultana, 2017). Thus, an approach like CLT, which facilitates learners' autonomy, is necessary in any country's education system (Begum, 2018; Hossain & Mustapha, 2020; Sultana, 2017). Despite the advantages, learner autonomy is deeply undervalued in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, learner autonomy and student-centered classrooms are challenging to implement (Begum, 2018; Farooqui, 2014). Even After years of having CLT, it is not properly implemented in the lower levels of education (Farooqui, 2014; Farhad, 2013; Ivan & Jony, 2016; Islam & Paul, 2019). However, tertiary educators are somehow implementing it, achieving quite successful outputs in teaching students and trying to produce more autonomous learners (Karim, Mohamed, Rahman, & Haque, 2017; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Therefore, this area needs to be well-researched to understand whether CLT is responsible for producing autonomous learners. Moreover, this is the right time to address this situation. To materialize this thought, data from students and teachers must be collected and analyzed simultaneously as both parties play an equal role in the successful outcome.

Since the emancipation of Bangladesh as an independent country, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) has earned massive respect for teaching English to students. In continuation, in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels, teachers follow the same method to teach English (Haider & Chowdhury, 2012; Hossain, 2014; Karim et al., 2017; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). As a result, even after striving in Bangladesh for 30 years, CLT is incapable of creating a solid base in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels of education (Haider & Chowdhury, 2012; Hossain, 2014; Karim et al., 2017; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Though CLT is a prominent method of teaching English in tertiary-level classes, it is unable to secure itself from heavy criticism (Haider & Chowdhury, 2012; Hossain, 2014; Karim et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2019). As the practice of CLT is flourishing at the tertiary level in

Bangladesh, the possibility of learner autonomy needs to be explored quite extensively because Learner autonomy is essential in an EFL context since students do not have the opportunity to communicate in English with other native speakers (Islam, 2020; Kabir, 2015; Mamun, Sultana, & Us-Saleheen, 2011; Rahman et al., 2019). Thus, without the learners' zeal and passion, it is challenging to acquire a language in the limited class time of an EFL context like Bangladesh (Islam, 2020; Kabir, 2015; Mamun et al., 2011; Rahman et al., 2019).

There have been several types of research about CLT and learner autonomy individually, but whether or not they are interconnected and whether CLT effectively promotes autonomy in the tertiary level of Bangladesh from the perspective of teachers and students is not studied successfully. Thus, conducting research in this area and collecting data from students' and teachers' perspectives on CLT and learner autonomy is essential. After combining both perspectives, a proper conclusion can be extracted. Therefore, this topic is important and an essential research subject in a country like Bangladesh. Therefore, this research aims to know how CLT relates to learner autonomy and how it effectively propagates autonomy in Bangladeshi tertiary education. The findings from the research will surely provide more conclusive information about the situation, which is necessary to understand the contribution of CLT in promoting autonomy in the tertiary education of Bangladesh. Hopefully, this will show the path to tertiary-level students and teachers and create further research scope.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study aims to determine how CLT and learner autonomy are connected and if CLT effectively produces learner autonomy in tertiary-level classes in Bangladesh. Here, a mixed-method approach is followed to conduct this research. The study collects data from tertiary-level teachers and students in Bangladesh. The data is collected with questionnaires and online semi-structured interview sessions. Moreover, the questionnaires include both open-ended and close-ended questions. There are separate survey questionnaires for both stakeholders. Additionally, there are interviews taken with the tertiary students. The interview sessions include a few open-ended questions to generate the students' opinions, views, and thoughts about CLT promoting learner autonomy in tertiary classes in Bangladesh. The table 1 is provided for a brief and comprehensive glance at the sample size of this research-

Table 1. Research Participants

Objective	Instrument	Research samples	No. of samples
Decoding the role of CLT in promoting autonomy in tertiary classes	Survey Questionnaires (Quantitative data)	Tertiary students	50
		Tertiary teachers	6
	Semi-structured interviews (Qualitative data)	Tertiary students	6

2.1. Research Questions

To be very specific, this study aims to know whether CLT effectively promotes learner autonomy in the tertiary education system of Bangladesh. The central theme of the research paper can be explored by investigating the following research questions:

1. How does CLT impact learner autonomy in tertiary-level classes?
2. How do teachers perceive CLT and its relationship with learner autonomy in tertiary-level language classes?
3. How do students perceive CLT and its relationship with learner autonomy in tertiary-level language classes?

2.2. Participants

The participants of this study are from two top-ranking private universities in Bangladesh. To preserve confidentiality, the identity of the participants is kept hidden. A Total of 50 tertiary-level students from North South and East West University have participated in the survey section. Moreover, six tertiary teachers from the Department of English of both universities have also participated in a separate survey specifically designed for the teachers. Furthermore, six students from both universities are also called for a face-to-face interview session over Google Meet.

2.3. Instruments

Two separate instruments are designed to collect the quantitative and qualitative data from the participants. For the collection of the quantitative data, two separate survey questionnaires are designed and distributed among the tertiary students and teachers. Moreover, six students were called for a semi-structured interview session over Google Meet to collect qualitative data. They were asked 7 to 8 open-ended questions in the interview session, and every interview lasted for around 30 minutes.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis Process

The survey questionnaires for the teachers and the students were designed with the tool Google forms. For the collection of the responses, the distribution link of the Google Forms was provided to each participant via Gmail, WhatsApp, and Facebook messenger. Additionally, the participants were notified seven days before conducting the semi-structured interviews, and the sessions were operated smoothly with the help of Google Meet. After extracting the data from qualitative and quantitative sources, the researcher has critically studied each and every research question and drawn proper conclusions from the data so that an accurate and realistic path can be shown from this research

3. RESULTS

3.1. Results Collected from the Survey Questionnaires

The five most important questions from section 1 of both survey questionnaires are presented in the following tables. The others are discussed elaborately in the discussion section.

Table 2. Responses from the Survey Questionnaire of Teachers (Section 1)

Questions	Not at all	A Little	Partly	Fairly Much	Very much
Do you think CLT is beneficial for promoting learner autonomy at tertiary level classes?	0%	16.7%	16.7%	50%	16.7%
As a teacher, do you think CLT helps learners to take charge of their own learning?	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
As a teacher, do you find CLT increases students' independence in classes?	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
Do you think in terms of producing autonomous learners CLT is better than traditional language teaching approaches such as the Grammar-Translation Approach, Direct Approach, and Audiolingual Approach	16.7%	0%	16.7%	66.7%	0%
Do you think CLT helps your students to find their language learning philosophies, styles, and needs?	0%	16.7%	33.3%	50%	0%

Table 3. Responses from the Survey Questionnaire of Students (Section 1)

Questions	Not at all	A Little	Partly	Fairly Much	Very much
Do you think CLT helps you to take control of your learning?	6.1%	4.1%	16.3%	61.2%	12.2%
Do you think CLT increases your independence in language classes?	0%	2%	28%	44%	26%
Does CLT help you to find your language learning philosophies, styles, and needs?	0%	10%	34%	36%	20%
Do you think in terms of producing autonomous learners, CLT is better than traditional Language Teaching Approaches such as the Grammar-translation Approach, Direct Approach, and Audiolingual Approach	6.3%	2.1%	16.7%	52.1%	22.9%
Do you think collaborative tasks help you to be more responsible as a learner?	0%	4%	10%	36%	50%

3.2. Themes Extracted from the Semi-structured Interviews

This section extracted themes by analyzing the semi-structured interviews with the tertiary students. To ensure the confidentiality of the students, their names will not be disclosed, and they will be referred to with a code name– ST- Students.

Table 4. Themes Generated from Semi-structured Interviews of Students

Participants	Excerpts from Interview Data	Coding	Themes
ST. 5	A student can participate in group discussions and collaborative tasks through CLT. This builds strong communication in the classroom. It changes the learning scenario of the whole class. It enhances positivity as well as self-belief among the students. As students can keep track of their learning, surely, it makes them a responsible learners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborative tasks in CLT change the learning scenario 2. Collaborative tasks increase positivity and self-belief in Students 3. With collaborative tasks in CLT, students can keep track of their learning 4. Collaborative tasks make students responsible learners 	Language Teaching through Collaborative Tasks in CLT
ST. 3	Language learning requires communication, and communication cannot occur without getting independence in the learning process. CLT gives me that independence, but in the initial days, the right amount of guidance and intervention from the teacher is mandatory. Without their intervention, I would not be able to learn many things. I think in the initial days of teacher intervention is a must. It is not to dominate you but to facilitate your learning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Right amount of intervention from teachers during the first stages of learning 2. Teachers should not dominate but rather facilitate learning 	Teachers' Role-Facilitators, Not Dictators in CLT
ST. 1	CLT is better than traditional. Language Teaching Approaches produce autonomous learners because in CLT, communication is less teacher-directed, and students have to take their responsibility for learning, and I can choose my own methodology, which will be more creative than others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication is less teacher-directed 2. Autonomous classroom 3. Students are responsible for their learning 4. Promotes creativity of the students 	Freedom of Learning in CLT
ST. 2	If I feel the independence to learn a language, I will be more dedicated to it as it would be fun and exciting instead of boring and complicated. My learning philosophy aligns with the strategies of the communicative approach. I learn better when implementing my learning philosophies into my communication process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Become independent 2. Dedicated to learning 3. Learning becomes fun and exciting 4. Student's learning philosophy aligns with the strategy of a communicative approach 	CLT Breeds Self-sufficient Learners

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Discussion on the Teachers' Survey Questionnaire

The teacher's questionnaire is divided into two sections. Therefore, the discussion part also follows the exact chronology.

4.1.1. Section 1:

The survey results indicate that 50% of the tertiary teachers follow CLT in their classes. Also, 33.3% of the teachers *partly* follow CLT. In addition, 83.3% of respondents think that learner autonomy is a prerequisite for successful learning outcomes at the tertiary level. This emphasizes the claim of Jahanara Begum (2018), as she suggests that it is difficult for tertiary students to learn much without autonomous learning, as they will only depend on classroom education. Of the six tertiary teachers, 4 agree that CLT is beneficial for promoting learner autonomy at tertiary level classes. In response to the next question, 50% of the teachers think CLT helps learners take charge of their learning, and 50% of teachers partly believe that, but no teacher has selected the options a little or not. When teachers are asked to justify their answers, one teacher claims that *they work as facilitators with CLT, and students find their rhythm to learning*. Another one suggests that, *If students are required to maintain communication and interaction in the classroom, they feel obligated to take control of their learning*. Thus, when CLT is implemented in the classroom, students are essentially required to maintain interaction which eventually helps them to take charge/control of their learning.

Moreover, 83.3% of respondents suggest that teacher-centered classrooms are not suitable for successful learning outcomes at the tertiary level. While answering the open-ended questions, one teacher claims that *student-centered classrooms provoke students to apply their skills and knowledge in the field. Ultimately, it is training to face the real world*. In addition, another teacher opines that *students at the tertiary level should be more independent in learning, and student-centered classes allow them to control their learning*. Besides, CLT promotes student-centered classrooms and stresses that teachers should work as facilitators, not dictators, in classes (Qiang, 2017; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Roy, 2016). It also considers that students' opinions and choices should prevail in classes as it makes students more aware and responsible, which results in learner autonomy (Qiang, 2017; Roy, 2016). Furthermore, on this matter, one teacher adds that *as tertiary-level students are adults, they are hard to control, so it is better to seek their opinions, give them choices, and make them feel like an important part of the lesson*. Besides, 83.3% of respondents suggest that tertiary-level students do not like to be dominated by teachers, and 16.7% of respondents opt for the option *partly* in this case. This concludes that students do not like to be dominated by teachers and prefer independence in learning. To elaborate on this question, one teacher comments that *Tertiary students are adults anyway, so giving them the charge without controlling them and showing them the way is better than forcing them to do something. And They can also learn better with CLT as their peers are there to help them*.

In addition, 66.7% of respondents think CLT is an excellent way to make tertiary students autonomous, and 33.3% of teachers *partly* agree. Besides, out of the six respondents, two suggest that CLT reduces teachers' domination in classes, and three *partly* agree with this. Moreover, almost 50% of teachers indicated that CLT increases students' class independence,

and the other 50% voted for the option *partly*. Not a single teacher has chosen the options, *not at all* and *a little*. This is a clear indication that CLT reduces teachers' domination in classes. Furthermore, 83.33% of the teachers suggest that CLT is better than traditional teaching approaches such as Grammar-translation, Audiolingualism, and Direct Method. Additionally, 66.7% of teachers also claim that in terms of producing autonomous learners, CLT is better than Grammar-translation Approach, Direct Approach, and Audiolingual Approach. Therefore, according to the tertiary teachers' survey data, it can be concluded that CLT is an effective approach to producing better autonomous learners than traditional ones. Furthermore, 50% of teachers agree that CLT helps students find their learning philosophies, styles, and needs, and 33.3% partly agree. As a result, it helps us to understand that CLT is possibly the best way to achieve learner autonomy, as students get opportunities to discover themselves.

Lastly, 66.7% of teachers agree that collaborative tasks, teamwork, and pair works help learners to become more responsible. Responsible learning is a prerequisite for becoming autonomous (Ahmed, 2018; Islam, 2020; Qiang, 2017). In this regard, one teacher elaborates that *If the student has to work in a group or pair, he/ she learns to take responsibility for the whole group, not only for himself or herself*. Moreover, CLT emphasizes collaborative tasks for teaching a language; thus, it indicates that with CLT, students will gradually become more responsible and perceive autonomy (Islam, 2020; Qiang, 2017; Roy, 2016). Also, all the teachers agree that responsible learners can help themselves learn a language outside the classroom. This characteristic is quite common in successful autonomous learners and a necessity for the students of this modern age (Islam, 2020; Rubel, 2019).

4.1.2. Section 2:

In the second section of the survey questionnaire, teachers have to answer five questions where they are asked to respond to the classroom circumstances when they follow Communicative language teaching at their tertiary level classes.

Teachers suggest that most students express their opinions and ideas in classes when CLT is followed. Besides, teachers also accept that students are often more motivated to participate in classes with CLT. In addition, almost 100% of teachers agree that students are more encouraged to communicate in the target language with CLT. It is pretty astonishing that even if teachers follow CLT in tertiary classrooms, students do not get enough opportunity to select their study materials by themselves, and they do not even question the material selection of the teachers. This is one area where teachers and students need to improve and agree, which is essential for better learning outcomes.

4.2. Discussion on the Students' Survey Questionnaire

Fifty North South and East West University students participated in the research survey. Like the teacher's questionnaire, the student's questionnaire is divided into two segments. Therefore, the discussion part also follows the same.

4.2.1. Section 1:

According to the survey results from the students' questionnaire, 47% of students suggest that their teachers follow CLT in the classroom, and 32.7% suggest that their teachers *partly* follow CLT. This concludes that teachers mostly follow CLT at tertiary level classes. Moreover, 84% of students agreed that CLT is an excellent option to teach language to the tertiary level students of Bangladesh. In the following questions, 74% of students believe that CLT promotes learner autonomy, and 73.3% recommend that CLT helps them take charge/control their learning. Taking charge or responsibility of own learning is the first step to learner autonomy (Begum, 2018; Rubel, 2019). Since students agree that CLT is helping them to do that, it concludes that CLT effectively promotes learner autonomy. Besides, most tertiary students accepted that they dislike being dominated by their teachers. This finding concludes that students want freedom, independence, and views prevailing in the classes. One student elaborates that *learning is fun when I fully engage in the process; hence, freedom of learning is important for me*. Another emphasized that *Self-learning is the best way to acquire a language*. These statements are clear indications that students prefer an independent classroom environment. Furthermore, 70% of the respondents comment that CLT increases their class independence, and 28% suggest that they partly agree.

According to the survey results, 56% of students voted that CLT helps them to make the necessary decisions regarding their learning patterns, needs, philosophies, and styles. In addition, 36% of students *partly agree* with this. While justifying his/her answer in the survey questionnaire, one student claims that *CLT helps a lot regarding my learning needs and styles, and with CLT, I can understand my interests and skills*. In the semi-structured interview session, one student states that *"My learning philosophy aligns with the strategies of the communicative approach. I learn better when I can implement my learning philosophies into my communication process"* (ST. 2). Astonishingly, 84% of students think CLT is better than traditional language teaching approaches such as the Grammar-translation Approach, Direct Approach, and Audiolingual Approach in terms of producing autonomous learners. This is an essential discovery since teachers and students agree on the same point and prefer CLT for tertiary classes. In this regard, one student elaborates that *with traditional approaches, students cannot utilize their thoughts and creativity properly because they are bound to follow the rules, which is, memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary. However, in CLT, students can exhibit their thoughts and abilities in a classroom*. Moreover, like the teachers, the tertiary students believe collaborative tasks, teamwork, and pair works are great ways to breed responsible learners.

4.2.2. Section 2:

In the second section of the survey questionnaire, students were asked to provide their opinions when their teachers followed CLT.

Only 2% of students suggest that they cannot express their opinions and do not feel powerful, while CLT is followed in the classroom. On the contrary, 98% responded positively about expressing their opinions. Moreover, 96% of students agreed that when they follow CLT, they are more encouraged to use their target language and feel more motivated to participate in classroom activities. All the data collected from the survey questionnaire of teachers and students are positive for CLT. This concludes that CLT is successfully promoting learner autonomy in tertiary-level classes.

4.3. Discussion on the Themes

The following paragraphs broadly discuss the themes extracted from the interview data.

4.3.1. Language Teaching through Collaborative Tasks in CLT

According to the primary data, teachers and students suggest that collaborative tasks in the Communicative Language Teaching method help learners become more responsible and aware of their learning process. Moreover, responsibility is a prerequisite for attaining autonomy, especially for tertiary students (Sultana, 2014; Rubel, 2019). In this regard, one student stated, *"In collaborative tasks of CLT, learners need to research a lot to gather ideas by themselves; then, they share the ideas and choose better ones to present them successfully. Thus, together as a team, they try their best to succeed, which makes them more responsible"* (ST. 02). This statement concludes that collaborative tasks teach students to work in a team, eventually making them more aware and responsible of their learning and starting their journey towards autonomous learning. Student number five opines, *"Through CLT, a student can participate in group discussion and collaborative tasks. This builds strong communication in the classroom. It changes the learning scenario of the whole class. It enhances positivity as well as self-belief among the students. As students can keep track of their learning, surely, it makes them a responsible learner"* (ST. 05). Thus, collaborative tasks work towards making learners responsible and builds a positive atmosphere in the class where students communicate and help each other. This positivity also generates self-belief in students, an essential criterion for becoming a self-sufficient learner (Sultana, 2014).

4.3.2. Teachers' Role- Facilitators, Not Dictators in CLT

A teacher's intervention is needed to accelerate autonomy in the initial semesters of a tertiary student's career (Rubel, 2019; Sultana, 2014). CLT also suggests that learners should be monitored or intervened at the juvenile stages of their learning. Gradually, teachers will take the back seat so that learners can take charge and own their learning, mistakes, errors, and failures (Harmer, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Therefore, it is the role of the teachers to

equip the learners with all the necessities so they can access autonomy (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). On this matter, student number one comments, *"Not every time the learners will understand their fault by themselves, they will need the teacher. Therefore, at the initial days of university life, proper instructions and domination are necessary to promote autonomy in the later stages of education"* (ST. 01). The data suggests that teachers' intervention or teacher-centered classroom is not harmful in the early stages of a tertiary student. Otherwise, without proper instructions, learners cannot learn appropriately (Rahman & Pandian, 2018).

Student number two claims that communication is essential in any language-learning journey; no one can effectively learn a language without communication. She also suggests that CLT provides her with that opportunity. However, in the starting days of tertiary education, *"the right amount of guidance and intervention from the teacher is mandatory"* for growth (ST. 02). Indeed, teachers need to remember that when learners are self-sufficient, they need to hold themselves back from any intervention (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Moreover, student number four adds that learning independently is fun, but the teacher's intervention organizes learners.

4.3.3. Freedom of Learning in CLT

CLT ensures learners' freedom in language classes, which is essential to promote autonomy (Sultana, 2017). Student number 3 opines, *"Learning a language is like playing a complex game. And I will not win this game if I cannot be myself in the field. She also stated that CLT develops students' enthusiasm and makes them autonomous learners, unlike traditional methods"* (ST. 03). Moreover, she also emphasizes in her speech that tertiary students prefer "freedom" in learning, which is available in CLT. Another student again emphasizes this point by commenting, *"CLT has provided learners with more independence, autonomy, and sense of responsibility. The students just memorized previous English grammar or other terms. However, with the CLT approach, we can now implement our learnings into real-life situations, which is more effective and longer lasting"* (ST. 06). Though student number 4 has declined all these claims and opines that CLT does not help promote independence. As a result, there can be unique examples too. However, the other empirical data cannot be disregarded due to one or two unique cases, as uniqueness cannot be examples. Moreover, student number one and two states that CLT gives them enough freedom to communicate and engage in different classroom discussions. They can also express their opinions freely when CLT is implemented in the classrooms. Besides, all the students in the interview session except student number 4 agree that CLT is better than traditional language teaching approaches because classrooms are not teacher-directed, and students are not dominated by their teachers. Also, in CLT, students can apply their creative techniques to learn according to their goals. This indicates that CLT is helping learners discover their psyche to learn more about their learning philosophies, styles, goals, and patterns, eventually making them autonomous.

4.3.4. CLT Breeds Self-sufficient Learners

Student number four and three states that CLT has made them confident, self-reliant, self-conscious, responsible, and independent. These characteristics are prerequisites to making a learner autonomous (Rahman & Pandian, 2018; Sultana, 2017). Another student also claims that CLT gives her a "practical view of language" and increases her "motivation and proficiency" level (ST. 06). Moreover, student number 2 states that *"If I feel the independence to learn a language, then I will be more dedicated towards it as it would be fun and exciting instead of boring and hard. My learning philosophy aligns with the strategies of the communicative approach. I learn better when I can implement my learning philosophies into my communication process"* (ST. 02). As previously stated, students become autonomous when dissecting their learning patterns, philosophies, needs, and styles. Indeed, CLT is doing the same for student number two. This point is also emphasized by student number 1 when she says, *"Yes, CLT helps me a lot regarding my learning patterns, needs, and styles. CLT gives us independence in the learning process, and this helps us become autonomous learners. Our tertiary education is meant to prepare us for our careers. Independent and autonomous learning with CLT will also help us become independent decision-makers in our career"* (ST. 1).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Tertiary-level classes are a blooming ground for CLT. Therefore, the current research aims to discover if CLT and learner autonomy are interconnected and whether learners can perceive autonomy with CLT at the tertiary level. The study has gleaned data from the two major tertiary education stakeholders and acquired a constructive conclusion from the extracted data, demonstrating a proper blueprint for achieving autonomy for the other educational sectors of Bangladesh. The discussion section of this current research illustrates the connection between CLT and learner autonomy and exhibits how CLT successfully promotes autonomy in the tertiary classes of Bangladesh. Despite some limitations, communication between teachers and students can solve all the issues. Therefore, the teachers and students need to reach common ground and discuss what methods and approaches they can work on for a successful learning outcome. After considering the summary of this research's findings and major observations, the following recommendations can play a significant role in achieving a congenial classroom environment in the tertiary ELT classrooms of Bangladesh.

- a. The tertiary level teachers should be conscientious about collaborative language teaching as these are preferred by most of the students. Teachers must design classroom tasks so students can talk, communicate, and discuss with each other by sharing their ideas and becoming autonomous in the learning process.
- b. Teachers need to be very careful about their authority in the classroom. The data suggests that having a teacher's intervention and domination at the initial stages of their

university career is better. Gradually, teachers need to loosen their grip so the students can come to the front seat and take control of their learning.

- c. Students must remember that they must be cooperative with their teachers, or the classroom will not be a fruitful place for learning. Moreover, students should be thoughtful about their teacher's comfort and weaknesses to work as a unit because teachers are not angels. Besides, teachers can commit mistakes too. Thus, if teachers and students help each other, a positive classroom environment will be constant.
- d. Teachers must be practical in designing classroom activities that help students inside and outside the classroom. To accelerate students' learning outdoors, teachers can provide tasks such as visiting learning websites, watching YouTube tutorials, and doing online courses. Interestingly, all the learning websites and even YouTube have algorithms that suggest similar videos to students according to their watch history. As a result, when a student is watching an educational video, the algorithms suggest similar videos after he/she finishes watching it. Therefore, these tasks will accelerate autonomous learning since students must perceive responsible behaviors outside the classroom, as no one can monitor them.
- e. Teachers must remember not to make the lectures and tasks tedious or complex. Otherwise, it will decrease students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

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