Socio-Cultural Factors in Promoting Learner Autonomy Among Tertiary Level EFL/ESL Learners: A Lens of Bangladeshi Context

Jahanara Begum[1]

Abstract

Learner autonomy has been a prominent area of research in foreign languages since the beginning of the millennium year. Lots of researches have been carried out to promote learner autonomy in different levels of foreign language education in different countries. Only limited space in the extensive literature is available regarding teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and its implementation in language classrooms in different social contexts, particularly in developing countries. This paper examines the prospects of enhancing learner autonomy among the tertiary level EFL/ESL students of Bangladesh through investigating the constraints related to social and cultural perspectives. To explore the perceptions of the language teachers regarding the viability of learner autonomy at the tertiary level, 10 English language teachers and 50 students have been selected purposively as a sample from two private universities, and semi-structured, informal interviews and focused group discussion (FGD) have been used as data collection techniques. In Bangladesh, learner autonomy is a relatively new concept in language teaching pedagogy. This study sheds light on the social and cultural factors which are hindering the development of learner autonomy as well as infers that unless these obstacles are removed, it is not possible to ensure learner autonomy among the tertiary level EFL/ESL learners in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Learner autonomy (LA), learner-centeredness, second language (L2), English as a foreign language (EFL), English as the second language (ESL), socio-cultural aspects, teachers' perception, learners' participation

Introduction

Recently there has been a pedagogical shift from lecture-based, teacher-centered to participatory, interactive, and learner-centered approaches in language teaching. Learner autonomy (LA) could be an effective concept that can immensely contribute to this movement. This concept has been drawing the attention of foreign language teaching professionals for almost the last 40 years (Little, 1991; Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). Benson (2013) defines learner autonomy as the capacity to take control of one's learning which is widely acknowledged as a desirable goal of a second (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning.

Learner autonomy was also defined as 'the ability" on the part of the learner "to take charge of own learning" (Holec 1981). It refers to the freedom of the learners in terms of their involvement in the entire learning process. They will enjoy the freedom of planning and controlling the learning tasks, material

---

[1] Lecturer, Department of English, Southeast University, Bangladesh
  Email: jahanara.begum@seu.edu.bd

selection, and assessment procedure according to their own needs, interests, and abilities. The pedagogical techniques in a learner-centered classroom shifted the role of a teacher from a knowledge provider to a facilitator. Previously, when grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods were followed in the language teaching process, learners' participation was neglected and they were identified as empty vessels or passive learners. But learner autonomy now ensures the active participation of the learners in their learning process inside as well as outside of the classroom. LA ensures the equal participation of both the teachers and learners in the pedagogical aspects so that they can share the responsibilities of the entire learning process.

Learner Autonomy and Culture

Learner autonomy can be implemented successfully in the teaching-learning process only when it is accepted both by the teachers and the students widely. It has been highly influenced by the socio-cultural readiness of the participants. The success of the incorporation of learner autonomy as an educational concept depends on several aspects like the educational system of a particular context, its cultural norms, religious values as well as issues related to individual learner differences. Different learners may have different personal characteristics and styles. These individual differences according to Dörnyei, (2014) are the reasons why an individual differs by degree. Human beings greatly differ from each other due to their biological factors as well as some beliefs and assumptions set by the particular culture.

Initially, learner autonomy was meant for western countries where the learners are exposed to well resourced, technically rich learning environment. A review of the literature shows that majority of the research on learner autonomy was carried out with those contexts. But, indeed, learner autonomy should not be confined to a particular context rather it can be practiced in different shapes in different contexts. Though in the history of western education, Learner autonomy is a common issue but apart from the western countries, practicing learner autonomy in developing countries like Bangladesh, where there are limited resources and fewer technological facilities is quite challenging. However, in this region, the teaching-learning process was greatly influenced by post-1970's 'learner autonomy movement' (Smith, Kuchah, & Lamb, 2018). Even in the early nineteenth century in developing learning contexts, there was a tremendous development in the language teaching pedagogy. Though there were no better infrastructure and technological facilities, still teachers of this region were very much enthusiastic to incorporate learner autonomy techniques in the existing learning environment and teaching with those limited resources. So, a tendency of practicing learner autonomy among the teachers in developing Asian countries was prevailing at that time.

Objective

Bangladesh is inching towards a developing country by producing human capital through the expansion of higher education. With the emergence of private

universities, education is made accessible to the grassroots level. English is the second language for the learners at the secondary and higher secondary level as well as the medium of instruction of the private universities. In every stage of their education life, these students are usually taught in the traditional mode of teaching and this causes them to have less exposure to the target language that is English. In Bangladesh, learner autonomy is a new concept for EFL/ESL teachers and learners. In this case, it has been assumed that societal and cultural factors are two vital issues in restricting the scope of enhancing learner autonomy among Bangladeshi learners. Two Private universities have been chosen for the current research, as in Bangladesh, the private universities are more suitable than the public universities for ensuring learner-centered classroom teaching and learning process in terms of infrastructure as well as pedagogical strategies. In line with this socio-cultural context, the present study focuses on the following objectives:

- To reveal the causes behind the learners' tendency of being dependent on someone superior or more capable than themselves.
- To investigate how the low rate of literacy, social taboo, traditional and teacher-centered learning process, etc. are hindering the teaching and learning process.
- To find out the reasons which are responsible for students being unmotivated about their studies.
- To realize how the students' conservative family or social background is making them prejudiced and afraid of taking charge of their learning.
- To explore the social and cultural barriers that are creating obstacles for ensuring learner autonomy at the tertiary level.

Literature Review

In recent years, learner autonomy has been considered as one of the ultimate goals in contemporary EFL education, (Little, 2001; White, 2003; Benson, 2003; Hurd & Murphy, 2005; Lamb & Reinders, 2008). Learner autonomy has been defined in several /many ways. Some scholars like Holec have defined learner autonomy as an "ability to take charge of one's learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3). This concept has been manifested as the ability to initiate, monitor, and evaluate the learning processes (Little, 2003). Socio-cultural or indigenous cultural factors play a great role in the teaching-learning process and most of these studies have not focused on this aspect (Yasmin & Shoail,2018). Learner autonomy has been elaborated based on four groups of perspectives like *psychological, technical, socio-cultural,* and *political-critical* (Benson as cited in Dang, 2012). Among these four, the socio-cultural perspective emphasizes the interactions between learners and their environment as well as its impact on the learning process like learners' access and control over their learning in a particular context within their community. Similarly, Benson (2001) mentioned autonomy as a concept of learning which is supported by social constructivism. Autonomous learners do not work in isolation. As they are actively engaged in the learning process within their social context, they construct knowledge socially. In this case, society plays

a great role in the learning process. If all the social parameters are convenient then the learners develop the capacity of becoming self-regulated learners who can do the analyzing and critical thinking of their own to form new perspectives. So, it creates a process of internalization within the individual learner which helps them become self-regulated as well as proactive in the learning process (Dörnyei, 2005). In line with this opinion, another researcher mentions that "critical reflection depends on the internalization of a capacity to participate fully and critically in social interactions" (Little,1996, p. 211).

As is mentioned in the previous section, it is possible to practice learner autonomy in any cultural context irrespective of being a developed or developing country. Though very few in numbers, still some initiatives have been taken to establish a correlation between autonomy and large classes in developing countries so far. Michael West (1960) emphasized that in large classes and more difficult circumstances, it is necessary to emphasize learning as the ultimate objective. If the elimination such as 'drop-out' rate is high it is more necessary to do so. In such circumstances, it is necessarily needed to make a learner learn how to learn by own-self so that he can go on learning afterward. So, learner autonomy can be seen as an appropriate approach in difficult circumstances, for example, large classes, learners having diverse needs, and limited resources (Fonseka,2003). In a developing country like Pakistan, as mentioned by Zakia Sarwar (2001), problems created by large classes can be solved by incorporating group work and project-based learning. On the other hand, Lamb (2004) researched young learners in a provincial town in Indonesia which made him utterly surprised. He was impressed by seeing the important role of out-of-class learning through different sorts of activities like listening to radio programs in English, listening to and learning pop songs, watching English language films or TV shows, playing computer games, reading English language teenage magazines and novels, studying independently at home, and practicing English conversation with friends. So, it was proved to him that many learners by practicing the language by themselves can learn the language independently.

As mentioned by Jamila (2013) in Bangladesh, EFL teachers are trying immensely for improving the current pedagogical scenario for making it more convenient and learner-centered. As a result, lots of research have been carried out in the field of ELT in Bangladesh and it has been found that ample research works have not been done on learner-centered approaches as well as developing learner autonomy at the tertiary level. One research gap has been observed from the review of literature that most of the works focused on the theoretical perspective of LA rather than focusing on the pedagogical implementation. It is found that exploring different aspects related to the implementation of LA faced by learners and teachers is more important to recognize the barriers which have not been focused on yet. Secondly, existing research is showing the picture of most of the Asian countries but the subcontinent countries are not focused on (Yasmin,2018). Culturally Bangladesh is quite a diverse country. Religion plays an important role in social behaviors as well as in educational practice. Economical instability is also causing uncertainty in the continuation of the study

of the root level people. Generally, people here are quite obedient to superiors and submissive to the teachers regarding study affairs. Hofstede, in his cultural model, mentions that "students from strong uncertainty avoidance countries expect their teachers to be experts who have all the answers" (2005, p. 179). All these factors are working behind for making Bangladeshi learners dependent on their teachers. The current study can be considered as one of the first studies on this aspect in the Bangladeshi context that intends to address both the gaps.

Methodology

This is qualitative research with an interpretive paradigm to focus on exploring the prospects of enhancing learner autonomy among the tertiary level EFL/ESL students of Bangladesh through investigating the constraints which are related to social and cultural aspects for restricting the development of learner autonomy. This study is experiential because the strategies included here are based on the experiences of the participants. The researcher was also interested in exploring the cultural factors which are hindering the development of learner autonomy. It has also been indicated that those societal and cultural obstacles should be identified accurately so that proper attention should be given by the professionals as well as the policymakers for making the teaching-learning process more autonomous and learner-centered.

Instrument

Among the participants, the teachers' reflection, classroom observation, and experience of incorporating the techniques as well as the students' perceptions are regarded as the main resources for the study. Instruments like semi-structured and informal interviews, focused group discussion (FGD) were used for data collection. Two survey questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the students were prepared to focus on the aspects such as students' and teachers' perceptions regarding learner autonomy, how the socio-cultural factors are playing a vital role in fostering learner autonomy in the teaching and learning process, and how cultural and religious values have shaped the mindset of the teachers as well as the students of Bangladesh in practicing learner autonomy inside their classrooms. The recording of the participants' responses was done through the cell phone. In some cases, their responses were needed to note down in notebooks. The observations experienced by the participants in different contexts have been accumulated to mark the reliability and validity of the study.

Sampling

A sample of 50 students and 10 ELT teachers has been selected through purposive sampling from two reputed private universities in Dhaka. All the selected teachers use to teach language courses and are selected based on their experience in English language teaching (ELT) and their educational background related to the specific subject. All the selected students are doing their compulsory English language courses in their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd semester. In the case of teaching experience, five years has been fixed as the cut-off value. Those who

had five years or less than five years experience were considered as less experienced. On the other hand, those who had more than five years of experience were perceived as experienced teachers. Teachers from both sub-disciplines: applied Linguistics and ELT and Literature, have been chosen, as academic background plays an important role in their teaching pedagogy. The purpose of making these two categories was to keep the sample homogenous. All these activities aim to reveal the participants' views regarding the impacts of socio-cultural factors on the development of autonomous learning.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis
The research questions have been answered by following a qualitative approach. Three semi-structured interviews, several informal interviews, and three FGD (one with teachers and two with students) have been arranged for exploring both teachers' and students' perceptions. Interview questions have been prepared in line with the literature review. Those questions are formed based on the participants' perceptions regarding practicing learner autonomy in their classroom and how socio-cultural issues affect that process. All the participants were supposed to sign a consent form informing them about the total procedure of conducting the research such as the purpose, procedure to be followed, level, and nature of participation. Initials, instead of full names are used for indicating the name of the participants for ensuring confidentiality, e.g., AZM, MMT, HBB, RZ, SNT, TA, etc. All interviews were recorded individually, face-to-face each with a time duration of 30–50 minutes. Recorded data were transcribed later.

An inductive approach with constant comparison is used for attaining the research objectives. For analyzing the data thematically, multiple reading of data was ensured which helped to divide the total discussion into different themes. Those themes were explained regarding the participants' opinions and relevance to the literature. To maintain the trustworthiness and validity of the study, respondents were supposed to verify the transcriptions as per the suggestions of Lincoln and Guba (1985). The respondents' responses have been presented here in the form of discussion which has explored different socio-cultural barriers related to the implication of learner autonomy in the teaching and learning process as well as some solutions from the point of view of the participants for eradicating those obstacles.

Research Questions
1. What does 'learner autonomy' mean to the tertiary level English language teachers?
2. What cultural and social barriers do Bangladeshi EFL/ESL teachers and learners face in the promotion of learner autonomy?

Results and Discussion
Through the analysis of the data collected from the participants, a picture of the socio-cultural setting for promoting learner autonomy has been unveiled.

Their responses to the research questions are almost similar to each other. The following socio-cultural barriers are being mentioned by the participants.

1. Teachers' unawareness

Learner autonomy is a recent pedagogical concept in Bangladesh where the teaching and learning process is mostly teacher-centered. EFL/ESL teachers here are not aware of this new concept as the culture is not supportive to encourage learner-centeredness and learner inquiry. As a result, LA has turned into an unfamiliar pedagogical concept to them and they treat it as a challenge to their authoritativeness. Many of the participants mentioned that most of the teachers have no idea of the importance of LA and its implementation which leads to unawareness about the expected roles of teachers in the learning process. One of the participants TZA said that the teachers are usually not provided any professional development training or workshop on LA and its implementation inside the classroom. As Nunan (1997) termed, awareness is the first step in the promotion of LA. It is obvious that if the teachers had not experienced LA, it would be quite difficult for them to develop it among their learners (Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012).

2. Teacher-centered classroom

Most of the participants mentioned that the teachers are authoritative inside the classroom which is very common in Asian cultures (Pham & Renshaw, 2013). In Bangladesh, teachers are treated as parents. So, the teacher controls the class as the supreme authority. As the family system in Bangladesh is patriarchal, the father controls the whole family and takes the important decisions which creates a depending attitude among the children. As they are not allowed to make the decisions by themselves, they gradually become careless and dependent and don't attain any control over themselves (Bernstein, 2013; Paulussen-Hoogeboom, Stams, Hermanns, Peetsma, & Van Den Wittenboer, 2008). It is the Bangladeshi culture that has made the teachers having an authoritative attitude as the society is mostly male-dominated. When the same teachers are going abroad for higher studies, their attitude is quite different and friendly. Many of the participants mentioned that the dominating attitude of the teacher is actually hindering the learning progress and affecting the way of good teaching negatively. Some female participants mentioned that they are not as expressive as their male counterparts. It is because the female students being more docile and obedient than the male students. According to Fischer and Sugimoto (2006), a dominating pedagogical environment being emerged from a power-driven society is utterly inconvenient for ensuring an interactive and learner-centered learning environment.

3. Teacher dependency among learners

In Bangladesh, learners are much dependent on conducting the learning process as the pedagogy from the early time of education is sort of spoon-feeding. One of the participants MH mentioned that the learners have a huge

expectation from the teachers. They expect that it is the teacher's responsibility to make everything easy and understandable to them. They tend to think that teachers are there to help them entirely. They participate in the activities only if the teachers ask them to perform. (Repetitive) They only participate in the learning process when they are asked to do so by their teachers. So, this type of participation of Bangladeshi learners can be termed as reactive autonomy as mentioned by Reinders and Lazaro (2011). In some cases, the students also think that the teachers are supposed to prepare every task related to the study, it is their job and they are paid for it. So, reactive autonomy is also visible among Bangladeshi learners. Culturally, students are exposed to teacher-dominated classes with no previous exposure to learner autonomy and for this reason, they inherit the tendency of dependency on teachers for the entire teaching-learning process.

4. Shyness

In the Asian context shyness is a common characteristic among the learners especially female learners. As Paulhus, Duncan & Yik (2002) mention that shyness is more prevalent among East Asians than among those of European heritage. Because of the conservative family values and religious norms, learners of Bangladesh are very introverted and less confident in participating in classroom activities. As their early family life is father-centered and the education atmosphere is also teacher-centered, these learners from their very early life develop a less confident, dependent attitude in their study life as well as in other aspects of life. Moreover, the female students feel uncomfortable in responding and participating in classroom activities. So, with all these circumstances, it is really difficult to incorporate autonomous activities inside the classroom.

5. Less tolerance towards learners' opinion

Socio-culturally and religiously, the learners in Bangladesh are accustomed to an authoritarian environment both in their family life and educational life. In their family life, their opinion is not taken under consideration in maximum affairs. The superiors usually impose their liking and disliking on the juniors. As a result, this creates a sense of dependency among them on others for the important decisions of their life. This same attitude also prevails among them in their education life. They always find that their opinion is not valued as one of the participants NT mentions that teachers like their parents are very much intolerant to new ideas put forward by the students. They also do not prefer to accept any difference of opinion. Another participant ASA mentions that if any student comes up with any new idea or opinion, the teachers usually get annoyed and reject it. In this way, the learners' potential and enthusiasm have been neglected here in Bangladesh for years. Gradually it has almost become a social taboo. This type of attitude of the teachers is related to the authoritative mindset of the teachers as well as their short-sightedness which together is impeding the

learning process of the learners and thus hindering the process of learner autonomy.

6. Highly ambitious to achieve

Some culturally rooted beliefs are prevailing in Bangladeshi society which is influencing the teaching and learning process. Confucian thinking has been reflected in the present scenario where great importance has been attached to education through which an ordinary person can turn into a superior one (Zhu, 1992). This utilitarian function of education has been practiced in different sectors of education. It is a firm belief in the Confucian tradition that through education, even a person of obscure origin can achieve upward social mobility. So, in the same way, in Bangladesh, pedagogical circumstances are not the same and it is not possible to incorporate autonomous strategies with those groups of learners who are deprived of good infrastructure, trained teachers, or financial assurance. To them, education is something very good and meant for the privileged group of people. So, they suffer from an inferiority complex which ultimately makes them less confident and dependent on others. For this reason, the underprivileged learners never feel at ease which restrains their learning capacity and potentials to the fullest extent. Learners do not feel the entire learning process of their own which ultimately results in causing mental blocks, rigidity, fear, and barriers among themselves. For this reason, it is difficult to ensure learner autonomy as a unique and common strategy in every sphere of society.

7. Teachers' biased attitude towards the learners

Prevailing cultural beliefs cause some deficiencies among the Bangladeshi teachers which are limiting their support to all types of learners equally. Almost in maximum educational institutions, as mentioned by several participants, teachers 'attention, support, and praises are always meant for the bright students. The weaker group feels deprived. It has also been mentioned by several participants that in maximum cases teachers especially male teachers are biased toward female students in terms of class performance and other learning activities. So, this biased attitude towards the sex and race of the learners hinders the process of enhancing learner autonomy. If the teachers put equal importance on all the learners regardless of their gender or race it will increase the learning achievements of the learner (Dee, 2005). Moreover, as Cooper (2001) mentioned, these types of unequal and biased attitudes negatively affect the motivation level of the learners.

Limitations of the Study

The current research was conducted on a small scale among the students of only two private universities within Dhaka city. There is confusion about whether the findings are applicable to a larger context or not. As we have selected two private universities only, it does not give a picture of the whole country. We have taken a small number of teachers (i.e. 10) and students (i.e. 50). Inclusion of

the views of teachers and students of the public universities could make the findings more acceptable. Moreover, the beliefs of the administrators were not addressed as well. If it was possible to include more variables, the research would have been able to explore a true scenario of incorporating learner autonomy in the prevailing socio-cultural context of Bangladesh.

Conclusion

This study aims at exploring the socio-cultural barriers in the development of learner autonomy at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. This study focuses on Bangladeshi teachers' and learners' perceptions regarding the various constraints that hinder the development of learner autonomy in the Bangladeshi context. The prominent barriers include unawareness of the teachers as well as the learners regarding learner-centered teaching and learning, teachers' biased stance towards learners' performance, and shyness of the learners. The above analysis also shows that though learner-centered pedagogy is sought everywhere, it is very difficult to some extent to develop learner autonomy at the mass level or in the public sector. Bangladeshi teachers and learners are so greatly acclimatized by the prevalent cultural era that they are not motivated enough of having a sufficient level of courage to change it. The teachers have opined that Bangladeshi learners have the potentials of being reactively autonomous rather than proactive one. They can be proactive if the other socio-cultural parameters are adjusted.

By focusing on the constraints, the current study aims to guide all the stakeholders like the parents, teachers, learners, institutional authorities to find out a remedy as the problems related to social and cultural context cannot be eradicated overnight by a single stakeholder. Proper training should be arranged for the teachers who are in service and utmost priority should be given on learner autonomy or learner-centered pedagogy through which teachers will be aware of their roles as a facilitator in the entire learning process. Besides, some psychological training sessions can be arranged for enhancing the moral values of the teachers so that they can remain unbiased and neutral as well as tolerant towards the learners regardless of their gender, race, or social class. For the successful implementation of the training, it is very important to monitor whether the training provided to the teachers is being translated in the classrooms or not. Moreover, it is equally important to increase the learners' motivational level in terms of their participation in classroom activities. By focusing on the constraints and the necessity of solving them, this study also shows the way how the learners can be encouraged to involve in the learning process from their enthusiasm. Lastly, the institutional authorities or the government being, the most prominent stakeholders of the entire procedure should perform their part of action perfectly. But this aspect is beyond the scope of the current study. Further studies can be carried out to focus on this aspect.

References

Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. London: Longman.

Benson, P. (2003). Learner autonomy in the classroom. In D. Nunan (Ed.), *Practical English language teaching* (pp. 289–308). New York: McGraw Hill.

Benson, P. (2013). *Teaching and researching: Autonomy in language learning*. London: Routledge.

Bernstein, D. A. (2013). Parenting and teaching: What's the connection in our classrooms? *Psychology Teacher Network*, *23*(2), 1–6. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/ptn/2013/09/index.aspx [Google Scholar

Borg, S., & Al-Busaidi, S. (2012). Learner autonomy: English language teachers' beliefs and practices. *ELT Journal*, *12*(7), 1-45.

Cooper, C. M. W. (2001). *School choice reform and the standpoint of African American Mothers: The search for power and opportunity in the educational marketplace* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles

Dang, T. T. (2012). Learner autonomy: A synthesis of theory and practice. *The Internet Journal of Language, Culture, and Society*, *35*(1), 52-67.

Dee, T. S. (2005). A teacher like me: Does race, ethnicity, or gender matter? *The American Economic Review*, *95*(2), 158–165. doi:10.1257/000282805774670446

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dörnyei, Z. (2014). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Routledge.

Fischer, G., & Sugimoto, M. (2006). Supporting self-directed learners and learning communities with sociotechnical environments. *Research and practice in technology-enhanced learning*, *1*(01), 31-64.

Fonseka, E. G. (2003). Autonomy in a resource-poor setting: Enhancing the carnivalesque. In *Learner autonomy across cultures* (pp. 147-163). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Hofstede, G. J. (2005). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. McGraw-Hill

Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Hurd, S., & Murphy, L. (2005). (Eds.). *Success with languages*. London: Routledge.

Jamila, M. (2013). Use of Learner Autonomy in Teaching Speaking by Tertiary Level English Language Teachers in Private Universities of Bangladesh. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *18*(4), 29-43.

Lamb, M. (2004). "It depends on the students themselves": Independent language learning at an Indonesian state school. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 17*, 229–245.

Lamb, T., & Reinders, H. (2008). Learner and teacher autonomy: Concepts, realities, and responses. *AILA Applied Linguistics Series, 1*.

Lincoln, Y. S., Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquir*y. California, USA: Sage Publications.

Little, D. (1991). *Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues, and problems*. Dublin.

Little, D. (1996). Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies. In R. Pemberton, S. L. Edward, W. W. F. Or, & Pierson, H. D. (Eds.), *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning* (pp. 203–219). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Little, D. (2001) Learner autonomy and the challenge of tandem language learning via the Internet. In A. Chambers & G. Davies (Eds.), *ICT and language learning: A European perspective* (pp. 29–38). Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Little, D. (2003). Learner autonomy and second/foreign language learning. Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, Guide to Good Practice. http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/ gpg/1409

Nunan, D. (1997). Designing and adapting materials to encourage learner autonomy. P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 192–203). London: Longman.

Palfreyman, D., & Smith, R.C. (Eds.). (2003). *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Paulhus, D., Duncan, J.H., &Yik, M. (2002). Patterns of shyness in East-Asian and European-heritage students. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*, 442-462.

Paulussen-Hoogeboom, M. C., Stams, G. J., Hermanns, J. M., Peetsma, T. T., & Van Den Wittenboer, G. L. (2008). Parenting style as a mediator between children's negative emotionality and problematic behavior in early childhood. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, *169*, 209–226. doi:10.3200/GNTP.169.3.09-226.

Pham, T. T. H., & Renshaw, P. (2013). How to enable Asian teachers to empower students to adopt student-centered learning. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(11), 65–85. doi:10.14221/ajte.2013v38n11.4.

Reinders, H., & Lazaro, N. (2011). Beliefs, identity, and motivation in implementing autonomy: The teachers' perspective. In G. Murray, X. Gao, & T. Lamb (Eds.), *Identity, motivation, and autonomy in language learning* (pp. 125-142). Bristol.

Sarwar, Z. (2001). *Innovation in English Language Teaching: A Reader*. London: Routledge, in association with Macquarie University and The Open University.

Smith, R., Kuchah, K., & Lamb, M. (2018). Learner autonomy in developing countries. In A. Chik, N. Aoki & R. Smith (Eds.), *Autonomy in language*

learning and teaching (pp. 7–27). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

West, M. 1960. *Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances*. London: Longmans, Green.

White, C. (2003). *Language learning in distance education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yasmin, M., & Sohail, A. (2018). Socio-cultural barriers in promoting learner autonomy in Pakistani universities: English teachers' beliefs. *Cogent Education*, *5*(1), 1501888.

Zhu, W.Z. (1992) Confucius and traditional Chinese education: An assessment. *Education and Modernization: The Chinese Experience* (pp. 3–22). Oxford: Pergamon.

Appendix A: Interview Questions for Teachers:
1. Please introduce yourself.
2. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?
3. How have you found teaching in a private university is different from teaching in a public university?
4. How would you define learner autonomy?
5. As a language teacher how would you ensure learner autonomy in the teaching and learning process?
6. What individual differences do you find among your students while conducting autonomous learning activities inside your classrooms?
7. What socio-cultural barriers do you face in developing learner autonomy in your English language classrooms?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Students:
1. Please introduce yourself.
2. What is your concept regarding learner autonomy?
3. How would you describe your classroom scenario in terms of class participation?
4. What is the teachers' attitude towards you inside the classroom?
5. How helpful and cooperative do you find your teachers in your learning process?
6. How would you explain the role of your family members in your learning process?
7. What social and cultural factors are influencing your learning process?